

## Claudio Monteverdi – Madrigals. Books 4 & 5 (1997)

Written by bluesever

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### CD 1

1. Book 4, SV 75-93: 1. *Ah dolente partita!*
2. Book 4, SV 75-93: 2. *Cor mio, mentre vi miro*
3. Book 4, SV 75-93: 3. *Cor mio, non mori?*
4. Book 4, SV 75-93: 4. *Sfogava con le stelle*
5. Book 4, SV 75-93: 5. *Volgea l'anima mia*
6. Book 4, SV 75-93: 6. *Anima mia perdona. Prima parte*
7. Book 4, SV 75-93: 7. *Che se tu se'il cor mio. Seconda parte*
8. Book 4, SV 75-93: 8. *Luci serene e chiare*
9. Book 4, SV 75-93: 9. *La piaga c'ho nel core*
10. Book 4, SV 75-93: 10. *Voi pur da me partite*
11. Book 4, SV 75-93: 11. *A un giro sol de' begl'occhi*
12. Book 4, SV 75-93: 12. *Ohimè, se tanto amate*
13. Book 4, SV 75-93: 13. *"Io mi son giovinetta"*
14. Book 4, SV 75-93: 14. *Quel augellin che canta*
15. Book 4, SV 75-93: 15. *Non più guerra pietate*
16. Book 4, SV 75-93: 16. *Sì ch'io vorrei morire*
17. Book 4, SV 75-93: 17. *Anima dolorosa*
18. Book 4, SV 75-93: 18. *Anima del cor mio*
19. Book 4, SV 75-93: 19. *Longe da te cor mio*
20. Book 4, SV 75-93: 20. *Piagn' e sospira*
21. *Con che soavità, labbra odorate (from Book 7), SV 139*
22. *Mentre vaga Angioletta ogn'anima gentil cantando alletta (from Book 8), SV 157*
23. *Tempro la cetra (from Book 7), SV 117*

### CD 2

24. Book 5, SV 94-106: 1. *Cruda Amarilli*
25. Book 5, SV 94-106: 2. *O Mirtillo, Mirtill', anima mia*
26. Book 5, SV 94-106: 3. *Era l'anima mia*
27. Book 5, SV 94-106: 4. *Ecco, Silvio*
28. Book 5, SV 94-106: 5. *Ma se con la pietà*
29. Book 5, SV 94-106: 6. *Dorinda, ah! dirò*
30. Book 5, SV 94-106: 7. *Ecco, piegando*
31. Book 5, SV 94-106: 8. *Ferir quel petto*

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- 32. Book 5, SV 94-106: 9. *Ch'io t'ami*
- 33. Book 5, SV 94-106: 10. *Deh! Bella e cara*
- 34. Book 5, SV 94-106: 11. *Ma tu, più che mai dura*
- 35. Book 5, SV 94-106: 12. *Che dar più vi poss'io*
- 36. Book 5, SV 94-106: 13. *M'è più dolce il penar*
- 37. Book 5, SV 94-106: 14. *Ahi, come a un vago sol*
- 38. Book 5, SV 94-106: 15. *Troppo ben può*
- 39. Book 5, SV 94-106: 16. *Amor, se giusto sei*
- 40. Book 5, SV 94-106: 17. *"T'amo mia vita!"*
- 41. Book 5, SV 94-106: 18. *E così a poc' a poco*
- 42. Book 5, SV 94-106: 19. *Questi vaghi concenti*
- 43. *Ogni amante è guerrier (from Book 8), SV 151*

Emma Kirkby, Poppy Holden, Evelyn Tubb (sopranos)

Cathy Cass, Mary Nichols (altos)

Joseph Cornwell, Paul Elliott, Andrew Lawrence-King (tenors)

Richard Wistreich, John Milne, David Thomas (basses)

The Consort of Musicke - Anthony Rooley (conductor)

This is a very fine presentation of some of the greatest madrigals ever written. Part of a whole series of recordings of the famous Books of Madrigals by Monteverdi, this double CD presents earlier recordings made by a group of distinguished singers led by Emma Kirkby together with Anthony Rooley's Consort of Musicke. One of the seminal groups of the Early Music movement, the Consort is known for its contributions to the performance of Renaissance music through the 1970s, 80s, and 90s.

I found this collection useful for the historical connotations of the program. One of the most important aspects is the birth of the new style in the first years of the seventeenth century. With the last six pieces of the Fifth Book, Monteverdi specifically demands the use of continuo instruments and through this he clearly marks the transition to the Baroque era. The *seconda pratica* (second practice) characterizes most of these two books of madrigals. The opening of the madrigal "Sfogava con le stelle" (Communing with the stars) represents an ensemble declamation on one chord in the rhythm of the text. In the new style, the words should govern the music, the sonorities must be in accordance with the textual images and ideas. The theatrical style is reinforced in the pieces of the Fifth Book by the particular dissonance treatment, such as unprepared sevenths and ninths. They were characterized at the time as improper.

The importance of the text is also evident through the thinner textures that Monteverdi uses at different moments in a piece. The composer writes passages where only alternating pair voices sing or if there are three voices at a time, one of them has a functional role while the other two move in parallel thirds, as in "Io mi son giovinetta" (I am young). Polyphony is not abandoned (a few madrigals have reminiscences of the prima pratica), but enhanced to smaller groups of voices competing or completing with each other.

The present recording sets apart through the clarity of the voices and the delicate ornamentation of certain passages, including a perceptible vibrato often used to enrich the sonority of such a small group. An impeccable vocal technique, which doesn't show off but serves the communication of emotions, an elegant treatments of the dynamics, including expressive accents, and an impeccable Italian diction are defining elements of this performance. Balance is sometimes a very difficult task in the context of Monteverdi's madrigals, but these singers are well coordinated and prove a highly trained sense of awareness. To give this recording an even more interesting angle, the collection is rounded off by other four substantial accompanied madrigals. "Con che soavità" and "Tempro la cetra" come from the 7th Book, while "Mentre vaga Angioletta" and "Ogni amante è guerrier" are taken from the 8th Book. These pieces give the listeners an idea about the direction of Monteverdi's music. ---Bogdan Minut, amazon.com

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