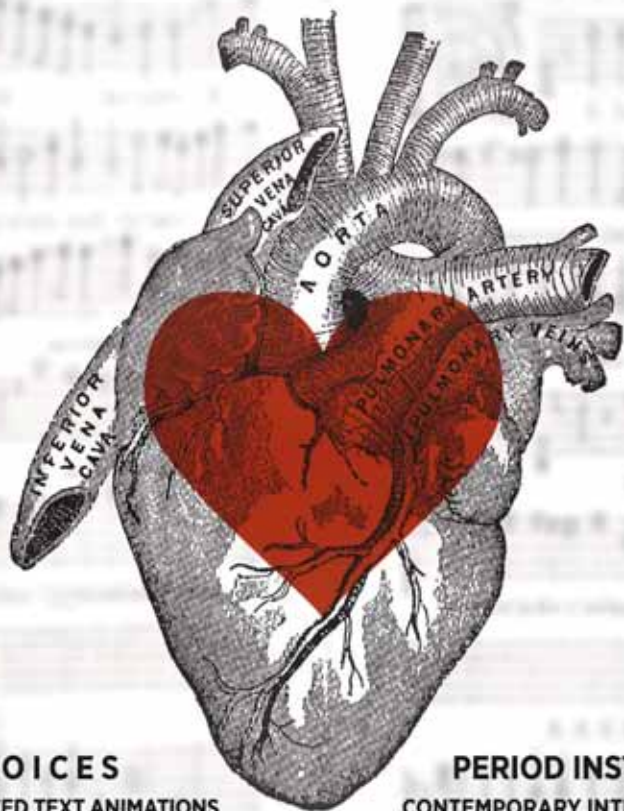


THE MONTEVERDI PROJECT - PART I

*The Matrix of the Madrigal*

**MONTEVERDI LIVE**



**FIVE VOICES**  
SYNCHRONIZED TEXT ANIMATIONS

**PERIOD INSTRUMENTS**  
CONTEMPORARY INTERPRETATIONS

**SUNDAY 12/19/26 FEBRUARY 2012 @ 18:00**

**THE CAPE CONSORT @ THE FUGARD STUDIO**

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## THE MATRIX OF THE MADRIGAL

Renaissance poetry, influenced largely by the works of Petrarca and Sannazaro is characterized by the ever-recurring motifs of unrequited love, the praise of physical beauty, the tension and interplay between life and death, worldly and divine love, as well as vernal descriptions of nature. Petrarca can be credited for single-handedly compiling a veritable matrix of pastoral images that would inspire and be used by generations of poets, playwrights and composers to come. With a few basic ingredients – flowers, leaves, grass, shades, groves, murmuring streams and gentle breezes – one is instantly transported into an imaginary realm, for which Sannazaro coined the term Arcadia, populated with frolicking nymphs and shepherds solely engaged in amorous adventures and music-making besides tending their flock.

Set to music countless times, this kind of poetry – indulging in the description of atmospheric scenes, emotional qualities and metaphorical analogies – determines the nature of the madrigal as a lyrical, pensive, and often rather sombre musical form. As the prevalent musical genre of its time it determines Monteverdi's compositional point of departure. His first publication is a book of madrigals and he continually returns to this genre throughout his career, eventually publishing 9 such books. Yet, from the very beginning he is intent on exploring and ingeniously highlighting any implicit dramatic content. Accordingly his preferred texts are those of like-minded dramatists such as Tasso, Guarini, Rinuccini, Striggio and Marino, who had been responsible for the evolution of the pastoral drama towards the middle of the 16th century. Replacing the anonymous Arcadian shepherds, generic figures like Thyrsis, Chloris, Phyllis, Ergasto and Alceo now abound. While these are still mere stereotypes, the seeds for individual characterization of roles in larger dramatic forms had been planted and Monteverdi was astute to convey this impulse into the musical domain.

Tonight's performance picks up on this somewhat hybrid state of affairs. Though indebted to the ideal of homogeneously blended consort singing, Monteverdi's treatment of this lyrical medium reveals remarkable variables and daring approaches. To do justice to his rich and highly differentiated musical expression of the textual imagery, a translation of the original lyrics proves necessary, especially when performing these works for a non-Italian audience. The ornate design of our text projections responds to the generally florid disposition of the genre, and its synchronized rendition aims to underline the remarkable congruity of musical and poetic expression.

With our Monteverdi Project we wish to perform Monteverdi's music in a contextualized and representative manner, demonstrating his pivotal role in music-dramatic developments, which eventually culminate in the full manifestation of opera. Our purpose is to not only present unusual ancient repertoire, but afford glimpses into the intricate incubating mechanisms through which music history gradually unfolds. We aim to trace and relate developments in instrumental and sacred music; investigate early forms of dramatic Intermedi to finally arrive at fully staged Baroque operas. This is no historicizing exercise as we believe period performances to be the most fitting way of approaching early music in a contemporary spirit, their most important aspect possibly being the implicit reflection on our own, current and local musical context. We are most grateful to the Fugard Theatre for sharing our vision and their beautiful space with us.

*Hans Huyssen*

References: Silke Leopold: *Monteverdi: Music in Transition* Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1991. Gary Tomlinson: *Monteverdi and the End of the Renaissance* University of California Press, 1987

## PLOT

Alceo, the shepherd, finds himself all but consumed by love after kissing the nymph, Lydia. Wallowing in the misery that only true love can cause, he is unable to appreciate even the blossoming of the idyllic Arcadian spring (*Zefiro torna*). Enraptured and enslaved by the sheer power of her exceptional beauty and charm (*Una donna fra l'altre*), and still baffled by the devastating effect of that one stolen kiss, he confides in his friend, Ergasto (*Perche fuggi*). Ergasto empathizes with his infatuation, but can at this moment provide little comfort to his friend; he has himself been struck down by the cruelty of his own lover, Clori, who, shortly after their latest romantic encounter, promptly left him for another (*Batto, qui pianse Ergasto*). To make matters worse, poor Alceo is forced to announce his departure from his new-found love, in search of greener pastures for his flock (*Misero Alceo*). In a classic misunderstanding, Lydia interprets "greener pastures" as Alceo leaving her to pursue romance elsewhere, and is utterly heartbroken (*Lamento della ninfa*). Such is the magnitude of her grief, that the tragic tale of Ariadne's abandonment by Theseus is retold that evening around every cooking fire (*Lamento d'Arianna*).

The next day, while poor besotted Ergasto quietly recovers, love is already in full bloom between his ex, the exquisite Clori, and the most dashing of all the shepherds, Tirsi, deliriously happy and enflamed by desire for his first love, (*Ecco di dolci raggi*), proudly escorts her to the evening dance, where their new-found love and joy fuels the spirits of every nymph and shepherd, resulting in festivities of epic proportions (*Tirsi and Clori: Ballo*). We take leave of our band of lovesick, moonstruck characters while they leisurely reflect on the perfection of their blissful Arcadian world: where falling in love is at once the worst and the best thing that can happen, and where very little else ever does (*Qui rise, o Tirsi*).

## PROGRAMME

**Zefiro Torna** (*Il sesto Libro de Madrigali a cinque voci*, C. Monteverdi, 1614)

**Una donna fra l'altre** (*Il sesto Libro de Madrigali a cinque voci*, C. Monteverdi, 1614)

**Perche fuggi** for tenor duet (*Concerto, Settimo Libro de Madrigali a 1,2,3,4, & sei voci, con altri generi de Canti*, C. Monteverdi, 1619)

**Batto, qui pianse Ergasto** (*Il sesto Libro de Madrigali a cinque voci*, C. Monteverdi, 1614)

**Misero Alceo** (*Il sesto Libro de Madrigali a cinque voci*, C. Monteverdi, 1614)

**Lamento della ninfa** (*Madrigali Guerrieri et Amorosì, Libro Ottavo*, C. Monteverdi, 1638)

**Division on "Ancor che dol partire"** (for cello and basso continuo) (*Motetti, Madrigali et Canzoni francese, Di diversi Eccellentissimo Auttori*, G. Bassano, 1591)

**Lamento d'Arianna** (*Il sesto Libro de Madrigali a cinque voci*, C. Monteverdi, 1614)

**Girolamo Frescobaldi** (1583-1643) *Cento Partite sopra Passacagli* from *Toccate d'intavolatura di cimbalo* (1615, rev 1637)

**Ecco di dolci raggi** for bass solo (*Sherzi Musicali, Cioe Arie & madrigali in stile recitativo*, C. Monteverdi, 1632)

**Tirsi and Clori: Ballo** (*Concerto, Settimo Libro de Madrigali a 1,2,3,4, & sei voci, con altri generi de Canti*, C. Monteverdi, 1619)

**Qui rise, O Tirsi** (*Il sesto Libro de Madrigali a cinque voci*, C. Monteverdi, 1614)

## THE CAPE CONSORT

The Cape Consort – a group of solo singers with basso continuo – is fast establishing itself as the country's leading Early Music Ensemble by virtue of introducing exciting new repertoire to South African audiences as well as embracing an approach of informed and contextualized performance practice on period instruments. Recent highlights have been concerts with Monteverdi's six-part Vespers, an all Purcell programme in collaboration with a consort of viols, the first South African performances of Neapolitan composer Caresana's Nativity Cantatas, as well as collaborations with the soprano Mandie de Villiers-Schutte and the renowned Dutch Baroque violinist Antoinette Lohmann. In 2011 the group was invited to the Oudtshoorn Klein Karoo Klassieke and the Odeion Musik Fest in Bloemfontein, while its immediate schedule entails appearances at the Oude Libertas Summer Concerts and the Stellenbosch Woordfees.

The Cape Consort was founded by Andrew Cruickshank (harpsichord) and Hans Huysen (Baroque cello) who together with Charles Ainslie (baritone) and Lente Louw (soprano) have been primarily responsible for its successful growth. Further founding members are Antoinette Blyth (soprano) and Nick de Jager (tenor). In the Matrix of the Madrigal they are joined by Willem Bester (tenor) and Uwe Grosser (chitarrone). Attempting to translate the old Italian texts into an understandable idiom required – apart from references to numerous existing versions – the mutual effort of Angela Paynter, Hans Huysen and Lente Louw. Text projection and animation are by Ragnar Sigrúnarson and the poster was designed André Úlfur of The North South Studio ([www.thenorthsouth.net](http://www.thenorthsouth.net)). Matthew Golesworthy is cueing the projections.

Patrons are invited to meet the musicians on the theatre's roof-top deck after the show, where drinks will be for sale.

## NEXT CONCERT

Hear the Cape Consort sing a program of French music in June/July 2012, with works by Couperin and Charpentier – including the moving setting of Couperin's *Leçons de Tenébres: A une et a deux Voix*.

## FRIENDS OF THE FUGARD

Join our mailing list to be the first to hear our news on upcoming productions and events, as well as to qualify for specials and early bird discounts. Complete a "Friends of the Fugard" form (available in the foyer), visit our website at [www.thefugard.com](http://www.thefugard.com) or e-mail [lamees@thefugard.com](mailto:lamees@thefugard.com).

## SUPPORT THE FUGARD THEATRE

The Fugard Theatre relies on our audience as an integral part of our sustained success. If you would like to know about sponsorship and donation options, please contact Daniel Galloway on [daniel@thefugard.com](mailto:daniel@thefugard.com) or on 021 461 4572.

## CONTACT THE FUGARD

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