

BRIGHTON
EARLY MUSIC
FESTIVAL 2017

PER IMITAR LA VOCE

Gawain Glenton *cornetto*
Oliver Webber *violin*
Claire Williams *organ*

The Old Market, 1pm
Saturday 11th November

Event 26 PER IMITAR LA VOCE

THE PROGRAMME

Salomone Rossi 1570–c.1630
Sonata in dialogo detta *la Viena*
Il terzo libro de varie sonate, Venice, 1613

Giovanni Bassano c.1561–1617
Diminutions on Orlando di Lasso, 'Susanne
un jour'
Motetti, madrigali, et canzoni francese
diminuiti, Venice, 1591

Giovanni Battista Bovicelli d. after
1626
Diminutions on Giovanni Pierluigi da
Palestrina, 'lo son ferito'
Regole, passaggi di musica, madrigali et
motetti passeggiati, Venice, 1594

Francesco Rognoni d. after 1625
Diminutions on 'lo son ferito'
Selva de varii passaggi secondo l'uso
moderno, Milan, 1620

Anonymous
Mater Hierusalem
'Carlo G' manuscript, c.1600–1620

Adriano Banchieri 1568–1634
L'alcenagina, Canzon sesta sopra 'Vestiva
i colli'
Canzoni alla francese a quattro voci per
sonare, Venice, 1596

Dario Castello fl. early 17th century
Sonata prima a sopran solo
Sonate concertate in stil moderno, Libro
secondo, Venice, 1629

Girolamo Frescobaldi 1583–1643
Canzona quarta
Il secondo libro di toccate, Rome, 1637

Giuseppe Scarani d. after 1641
Sonata sesta sopra 'Re, mi, fa, sol, la,' a
due canti
Sonate concertate a due, e tre voci, Venice,
1630

Instrumental and vocal styles were closely connected in 16th and 17th-century Italy. While the innate human voice was regarded as the epitome of all musical instruments (making man-made instruments necessarily inferior by comparison), players could gain approval via their attempts to imitate the human voice on their instruments. As the Venetian cornetto, recorder and viol virtuoso Silvestro Ganassi wrote in 1535:

You should know how all musical instruments, in comparison with the human voice, are lacking. For that reason we should strive to learn from and imitate it ... If the painter imitates the effects of nature by varying colours, so the

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instrument imitates the human voice by changing the proportion of air, shading the tongue and the addition of fingers ... I have heard players make the words so comprehensible through their playing that it could be said that nothing was lacking to that instrument but the form of the human body, as one says of a well-made painting that nothing is missing but the breath. For these reasons you should be sure of your aim: imitate speech.

This concert aims to demonstrate ways in which instrumentalists went about this task. One aspect of this was the composition of instrumental pieces based on well-known vocal works; examples include Banchieri's Canzon 'Vestiva i colli' and Rognoni's virtuosic diminutions on 'lo son ferito' (both of which are adaptations of Palestrina madrigals), and Bassano's diminutions on Lasso's chanson 'Susanne un jour'. All three pieces adapt their originals in various ways to suit (or even show off) the technical capabilities of their instruments.

The concert also features two purely vocal pieces: Bovicelli's diminutions on 'lo son ferito', and the anonymous duet *Mater Hierusalem*. Both feature extensive written-in ornaments of the sort developed by virtuoso singers, showing that florid ornamentation was never the sole preserve of instrumentalists. The performance of these pieces on cornetto and violin

would have been uncontroversial at the time, not simply because performers of both instruments strove to imitate the human voice. In addition, the cornetto and violin were themselves considered interchangeable, with many pieces being composed at this time for 'cornetto overo violino' (cornetto or violin).

Our recital is bookended by a pair of instrumental sonatas that incorporate many features of early 17th-century song. Salomone Rossi's *la Viena* even suggests the idea of verbal communication through its title *Sonata in dialogo*. In this piece, the two solo instruments alternately present extended recitative-like solos, before coming together in a final duet that is stylistically indistinguishable from many texted vocal duets of the time.

Giuseppe Scarani's *Sonata sesta sopra 'Re, mi, fa, sol, la'* is more instrumental in nature, particularly in its *allegro* sections containing fast running scales and leaps. The overall form of the piece is still closely connected to vocal models, with the sudden slow sections reminiscent of the quick changes of mood found in countless madrigals. The title 'Re, mi, fa, sol, la' refers to the names of the notes in the five-note rising scale that begins the piece. Scarani gives the piece coherence by repeating and transforming this simple theme in different ways throughout the sonata.

Gawain Glenton

THE PERFORMERS

Gawain Glenton is a specialist cornetto player whose work as a soloist and an ensemble musician takes him all over the world, with leading international groups and directors such as Il Giardino Armonico, Concerto Palatino, l'Arpeggiata, Les Talens Lyriques, Concerto Italiano, I Fagiolini and The Taverner Consort. Gawain is a member of The English Cornett & Sackbut Ensemble, with whom he has recorded several acclaimed CDs, including *The Spy's Choirbook* with Alamire, The Taverner Consort's recording of Taverner's *Western Wind Mass*, and Monteverdi: *The Other Vespers* with I Fagiolini.

Now based in the UK, Gawain spent several years in Basel studying with Bruce Dickey at the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis. As a result of these years abroad, Gawain is closely involved with many 'next generation' ensembles, such as Ensemble Leones, and the Basel-based I Fedeli.

In 2016 Gawain launched his new ensemble, In Echo. Its debut CD, entitled *Music in a Cold Climate: Sounds of Hansa Europe*, will be released in January 2018 by Delphian Records.

gawainglenton.com

An eclectic, international education laid the foundations for **Oliver Webber's** adventurous approach to historical performance. His scientific studies and passion for historical Italian literature and language have inspired programming for his ensemble, Monteverdi String Band: recent performances have included poetry, sword-fighting and a specially commissioned play on the life of Galileo.

Outside MSB, Oliver can often be seen working as principal and guest leader with Gabrieli, London Handel Orchestra, Early Opera Company, and the English Baroque Soloists, and in chamber

concerts with Passacaglia and the London Handel Players. He makes his own gut strings, tirelessly working to connect the worlds of scholarship and performance, and teaches at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and throughout Europe.

Oliver lives in London with his wife and two sons, although they spend as much time as possible in the mountains of Liguria, where he also teaches on Deborah Roberts' Triora Musica 17th-century opera courses: a veritable feast of poetry, pizza and prosecco.

monteverdistringband.com

Originally from Bath, **Claire Williams** studied piano and harpsichord at the Royal College of Music in London. She subsequently completed a Master's degree at Trinity College of Music, studying harpsichord and chamber organ with James Johnstone. Claire has worked with a wide range of ensembles in the UK and abroad, including the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, English Chamber Orchestra and City of London Sinfonia, and she is a regular member of Musica Secreta, Flautotonic, Saltarello Ensemble and Baroque Encounter.

Claire has performed at numerous events including Manchester, Bath, and Chelsea Festivals, East Cork Early Music Festival, London Handel Festival, Spitalfields Music, Latitude Festival, Triora Musica, and Dartington International Summer School. She has been a regular artist at BREMF since taking part in their Early Music Live! scheme in 2008.

Claire is the current Fellow in Harpsichord/Continuo at the Royal College of Music. She can also occasionally be found shark diving, as a qualified PADI Open Water Scuba Diver.

clairewilliams.co.uk