



THE COMPLETE GESUALDO MADRIGALS

CARLO
GESUALDO
DA VENOSA
(1566–1613)

THE COMPLETE MADRIGALS

Delitiæ Musicæ • Marco Longhini

Carlo Gesualdo, Prince of Venosa, became famous for two reasons: the bloody double murder of his first wife and her lover, and his passionate and erotic view of profane love. The *Books of Madrigals* chart the strong changes in his style, and contain some of the most inspired and anguished vocal works in the entire madrigal repertoire, on the themes of love, rejection, death, suffering, joy and sorrow. Brimming with often astonishing and sometimes unpredictable melodic and tonal contrasts to express the agonies and ecstasies of love, Gesualdo's *Madrigals* show him to have been one of the most inventive and eccentric musical minds of his age.

'If I could have just one set of these madrigals, I have no doubt that I would want to hear the songs spun out as broadly as they are done here. Chromaticism cannot be rushed, and the mannerist style of the turn of the 17th century, which reached its peak in Gesualdo, can absorb every bit of the attention Longhini provides'. J.F. Weber, Fanfare

'Music of incredible harmonic intensity and originality, given eminently precise and interpretively apt performances. Another commendable series on Naxos'. Steve Holtje, Culture Catch

'The singing on this album is simply phenomenal. Intonation is virtually flawless, and they offer just the right mix of homogenous and individual sound. The shaping of phrases, the ebb-and-flow, as well as the constantly changing dynamics is effortless – this is a group who seem to be of one mind, an essential aspect of the best madrigal singing. Additionally, the chosen keys often add to the expressive potential: most of these texts convey darker emotions, and there is thrilling emotional immediacy when the baritone and bass move into their lowest registers. The recording is excellent, the voices crystal clear, with the continuo instruments used selectively, which adds another layer of variety to these performances. The notes also include full texts, an absolute must when listening to any madrigal'. David A. McConnell, MusicWeb International

CD 1 The First Book of Madrigals

CD 2 The Second Book of Madrigals • Instrumental pieces

CD 3 The Third Book of Madrigals

CD 4 The Fourth Book of Madrigals

CD 5, 6 & 7 The Fifth and Sixth Books of Madrigals

Booklet notes in English • Commento in italiano

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