

Naxos 8.559304
Morten Lauridsen: Choral Works

[01] **O nata lux**

O nata lux de lumine,
Jesu redemptor saeculi,
Dignare clemens supplicium
Laudes precesque sumere.

Qui carne quondam contegi
Dignatus es pro perditis,
Nos membra confer effici,
Tui beati corporis.

Madrigali
Six 'Fire Songs' on Italian Renaissance Poems

- [02] Ov'è, lass', il bel viso? ecco, ei s'asconde.
Oimè, dov'il mio sol? Lasso, che velo
S'è post'inanti Te rend'oscur'il cielo?
Oimè ch'io il chiamo et veggio; ei non risponde.
Deh, se mai sieno a tue vele seconde
Aure, dolce mio ben, se cangi pelo
Et loco tardi, et se'l signor di Delo
Gratia et valor nel tuo bel sen'asconde,
Ascolta i miei sospiri et dà lor loco
Di volger in amor l'ingiusto sdegno,
Et vinca tua pietade il duro sempio.
Vedi qual m'arde et mi consuma fuoco;
Qual fie scusa miglior, qual maggior segno
Ch'io son di viva fede et d'amor tempio!

- [03] Quando son più lontan de' bei vostri occhi
Che m'han fatto cangiar voglia et costumi,
Cresce la fiamma et mi conduce a morte;
Et voi, che per mia sorte
Potreste raffrenar la dolce fiamma,
Mi negate la fiamma che m'infiama.

- [04] Amor, io sento l'alma
Tornar nel foco ov'io
Fui lieto et più che mai d'arder desio.
Io ardo e 'n chiara fiamma
Nutrisco il miser core;
Et quanto più s'infiama,
Tanto più cresce amore,
Perch'ogni mio dolore
Nasce dal fuoco ov'io
Fui lieto et più che mai d'arder desio.

O light born of light

O light born of light,
Jesus, redeemer of the world,
deign in mercy to accept
the offering of praise and prayers.

Who once to be clad in flesh
deigned for the lost,
grant that we may be made
members of thy blessed body.

Madrigals

Where, alas, is that lovely face? Behold, it is hidden.
Alack, where is my sun? Alas, what veil
now falls before it, darkening the sky?
Alack, I call to it, I see it; it answers not.
Ah, should propitious breezes ever fill
your sails, my sweet love, should you grow older,
and move elsewhere, and should Apollo of Delos
conceal grace and valour in your fair breast,
hear my sighs and permit that
they turn unjust disdain into love,
and let your mercy overcome this harsh torment.
See how flames burn and consume me;
what better reason, what greater sign be there
that I am a temple of love and true fidelity!
(Anonymous text)

When I am far away from your beautiful eyes,
which have made me alter my will and my ways,
the flame grows and leads me towards death;
and you eyes, who for my future destiny
could save me from that sweet flame,
deny me the very flame that inflames me.
*(Text attributed to Ivo (or Yvo) De Vento, 16th century
Flemish composer)*

Love, I feel my spirit
return to the fire where once
I was happy and now more than ever long to burn.
I burn and in the bright flames
my wretched heart is nourished;
and the stronger the blaze,
the greater my love,
for every one of my sorrows
is born from the fire where once
I was happy and now more than ever long to burn.
(Text from a Macchiavelli parody by Jhan Gero, fl. 1540-1555)

[05] Io piango, ch'è'l dolore
Pianger' mi fa, perch'io
Non trov'altro rimedio a l'ardor mio.
Così m'ha concio' Amore
Ch'ognor'viv'in tormento
Ma quanto piango più, men doglia sento.
Sorte fiera e inaudita
Che'l tacer mi dà morte e'l pianger vita!

I weep, for sorrow
makes me weep, and I
find no other cure for my ardour.
Thus does Love have me ensnared
ever to live in torment.
Yet, the more I weep, the less pain I feel.
Strange and cruel fate,
that silence brings me death and tears life!
(Anonymous text)

[06] Luci serene e chiare,
Voi m'incendiate, voi; ma prov'il core
Nell'incendio diletto, non dolore.
Dolci parole e care,
Voi mi ferite, voi; ma prov'il petto
Non dolor né la piaga, ma diletto.
O miracol d'amore!
Alma ch'è tutta foco e tutta sangue,
Si strugge e non si duol, mor'e non langue.

Serene and cloudless eyes,
you set me ablaze; but my heart
feels delight, not pain, in your fire.
Sweet, beloved words,
you cut me open; but my breast
feels neither wound, nor pain, only delight.
O miracle of love!
The soul that is all fire and blood
is tortured yet suffers not, dies yet does not
languish.
(Text by Ridolfo Arlotti)

[07] Se per havervi, oimè, donato il core,
Nasce in me quell'ardore,
Donna crudel, che m'arde in ogni loco,
tal che son tutto foco,
E se per amar voi, l'aspro martire
Mi fa di duol morire,
Miser! Che far debb'io
Privo di voi che siete ogni ben mio?

If, alas, because I have given you my heart,
such flames are lit within me,
cruel lady, as to consume every part of me
so that I am naught but fire,
and if, because I love you, bitter pain
makes me die of sorrow,
poor wretch! what should I do
without you, who are all that I love?
(Anonymous text)

English translation by Susannah Howe

**Les Chansons des Roses
(Rainer Maria Rilke, 1875–1926)**

Songs of Roses

[08] **(IV) En une seule fleur**

In a single flower

C'est pourtant nous qui t'avons proposé
de remplir ton calice.
Enchantée de cet artifice,
ton abondance l'avait osé.

Yet it was we who offered
to fill your calyx.
Enchanted by such a scheme,
your abundance had dared to agree.

Tu étais assez riche, pour devenir cent fois toi-même
en une seule fleur;
c'est l'état de celui qui aime ...
Mais tu n'a pas pensé ailleurs.

You were rich enough to become a hundred
times yourself
in a single flower;
this is how a man in love feels ...
But you thought only of yourself.

[09] **(XII) Contre qui, rose**

Contre qui, rose,
avez-vous adopté ces épines?
Votre joie trop fine
vous a-t-elle forcée
de devenir cette chose armée?

Mais de qui vous protège
cette arme exagérée?
Combien d'ennemis vous ai-je enlevés
qui ne la craignent point!
Au contraire, d'été en automne
vous blessez les soins
qu'on vous donne.

[10] **(VIII) De ton rêve trop plein**

De ton rêve trop plein,
fleur en dedans nombreuse,
mouillée comme une pleureuse,
tu te penches sur le matin.

Tes douces forces qui dorment,
dans un désir incertain,
développent ces tendres formes
entre joues et seins.

[11] **(XI) La rose complète**

J'ai une telle conscience de ton
être, rose complète,
que mon consentement te confond
avec mon coeur en fête.

Je te respire comme si tu étais,
rose, toute la vie,
et je me sens l'ami parfait
d'une telle amie.

(V) Dirait-on

Abandon entouré d'abandon,
tendresse touchant aux tendresses...
C'est ton intérieur qui sans cesse
se caresse, dirait-on;

se caresse en soi-même,
par son propre reflet éclairé.
Ainsi tu inventes le thème
du Narcisse exaucé.

[17] **O magnum mysterium**

O magnum mysterium et admirabile sacramentum
Ut animalia viderent Dominum natum
lacentem in praesepe.
Beata virgo, cuius viscera
Meruerunt portare Dominum Christum.
Alleluia.

Against whom, rose

Against whom, rose,
have you adopted these thorns?
Has your too-fragile joy
forced you
to become this armed creature?

But from whom does this
too-cruel weapon protect you?
How many enemies have I seen off for you
who fear it not at all?
And meanwhile, from summer to autumn,
you fight against the cares
lavished upon you.

From your crowded dreams

From your crowded dreams,
many-petalled flower,
moist as a mourner's face,
you lean into the morning.

Your gentle strength that sleeps,
in uncertain desire,
develops these soft shapes
between cheeks and breasts.

The perfect rose

I am so aware of your
being, perfect rose,
that my consent mistakes you
for my elated heart.

I breathe you in as if you were,
rose, all life itself,
and I feel myself the perfect lover
of such a beloved.

One would say

Abandon enveloped by abandon,
tenderness brushing against tenderness ...
within you, one would say,
all is sweet and endless caressing;

all caressing itself,
in its own limpid reflection.
Thus you invent the myth
of Narcissus fulfilled.

English translation by Susannah Howe

O great mystery

O great mystery and wonderful sacrament
that animals might see the Lord born,
lying in a manger.
Blessed Virgin, whose womb
was worthy to bear Lord Christ.
Alleluia.

English translation by Keith Anderson