

Il Giardino Armonico - Viaggio Musicale (2000)

Written by bluesever

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01. Sinfonia 02. Ciaccona a tre 02. Improvisation 03. Sonata IV 04. Diminuzioni sul "Anchor..." 04. Improvisation 05. Sonata X 06. Sonata a 4 06. Improvisation 07. Sonata sopra la Monica [play](#) 08. Aria sopra la Bergamasca 09. Sinfonia a 3 10. Sonata 11. Toccata 12. Sonata XVIII 13. Sinfonia in eco 14. Vestiva i colli 15. Gagliarda "Zambalina" 16. Sinfonia grave 17. Canzon "La Cattarina" [play](#) 18. Aria sopra 19. Sonata in sol 20. Ruggiero 21. "Norsina" Il Giardino Armonico

Baroque ensemble Il Giardino Armonico take a step away from Bach, Biber, and Vivaldi to create this intriguing disc of lesser-heard 17th century compositions from Italy. These short instrumental pieces--Dario Castello's Sonata IV is the longest, at over seven minutes, while Monteverdi's Sinfonia de Il ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria clocks in at under a minute--were all composed during the era of Monteverdi's operatic output, and they each seem to mimic the drama and intonation of the human voice. But the young ensemble's creative programming doesn't stop in the selection of compositions. This disc seamlessly melds Tarquino Merula's multilayered Ciaccona to a harpsichord improvisation (there are also wonderful improvisations for solo lute and violin scattered about the disc). From the jazzy opening of Uccellini's weird Aria sopra "la Bergamasca" for flute, cello, harp, and citterone to the slow-paced melancholy of Giovanni Battista Riccio's Sonata a 4, there's a treasure trove of great Baroque music here. These left-field works sound completely fresh and vibrant, a testament both to the composers and the sprightly playing of Il Giardino Armonico. Highly recommended. --Jason Verlinde

Our journey begins chronologically with the pieces by Salomone Rossi published in 1607, thus several months after the Mantuan "premiere" of Monteverdi's Orfeo, in which Rossi is believed

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to have taken part as a violinist. Echoes of Monteverdi's music resound very clearly (and movingly) in Rossi's aphoristic Sinfonie.

Passing through the works of Cima, Castello, Merula, Marini and the other composers represented on this recording, we arrive at Uccellini's collection of 1645, just shortly posterior to L'incoronazione di Poppea and Monteverdi's death. The works selected for this anthology are thus enclosed within the span of Monteverdi's operatic output - his lyrical adventure. All the pieces reflect the unflagging endeavor to imitate the vocal models and inventory of gestures of the burgeoning operatic theater. Dario Castello's two sonatas are emblematic in this sense.

It is also a journey through the colors of the most varied instrumental combinations of the period (actually, it is only a small sampling of possible combinations), the red thread of which is the trio sonata for two instruments and basso continuo. One finds among them the most variegated emotional contrasts as well: from the luminosity of the pieces by Merula and Marini to the ardent theatricality of Castello, and from the vaguely ascetic darkness of Riccio's sonata to the countless shadings and chiaroscuro effects so beloved in the early Italian Baroque.

Our journey also takes us to the towns of northern Italy which link the composers on our selection: from the Milan of Cima and Rognoni to the Mantua of Rossi and Monteverdi, and from Romagna of Uccellini and Spadi to the Venice of Riccio and Castello, where all the currents of music and art flowed together: for it is in Venice that Monteverdi spent a good part of his life and where the majority of the works presented here were printed. --- Giovanni Antonini

Il Giardino Armonico is an Italian period instrument chamber ensemble specializing in vigorous and earthy performances of music from the Italian Baroque. Founded in 1985 in Milan, the group has a flexible membership with as few as three and as many as 30 players. Since 1989, the ensemble has been conducted by flutist Giovanni Antonini. The group has toured worldwide and developed an extensive discography, mostly on Teldec Classics. The group's recordings of concerti by Vivaldi have garnered awards such as the Diapason d'Or, Choc de la Musique, the Grand Prix des Discophiles, and the Gramophone Award. The Grammy award-winning Vivaldi Album (1999) on Decca featured Cecilia Bartoli singing previously unrecorded and mostly unperformed opera arias by Vivaldi. The group has performed in both concert and staged productions of many operas and oratorios from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, including Pergolesi's *La serva padrona*; Handel's *Agrippina*, *La resurrezione*, and *Il trionfo del*

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tempo del disinganno; and Hasse's *I pellegrini al sepolcro di nostro signore*. In 1993, the group performed Claudio Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* in Milan to mark the 350th anniversary of the composer's birth. It regularly performs and records with a wide variety of soloists, including Cecilia Bartoli, Katia and Marielle Labèque, Eva Mei, Sumi Jo, Sara Mingardo, Lynne Dawson, Christoph Prégardien, Véronique Gens, Viktoria Mullova, and Giuliano Carmignola. Il Giardino Armonico's concerts and discography are notable for their inclusion of rarely performed works by composers such as Rossi, Riccio, Spadi, and Conti, alongside works such as Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*. Even in the most familiar repertoire, the ensemble distinguishes itself by its lusty and energetic readings, replete with glissandos and imaginative ornamentation. ~ Robert Adelson, *All Music Guide*

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