



 Ensemble
OPERA OMNIA

Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina

CANTICVM
CANTICORVM

Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina

Liber Quartus ex Canticis Salomonis

The Fourth Book of Motets

CANTICUM CANTICORUM

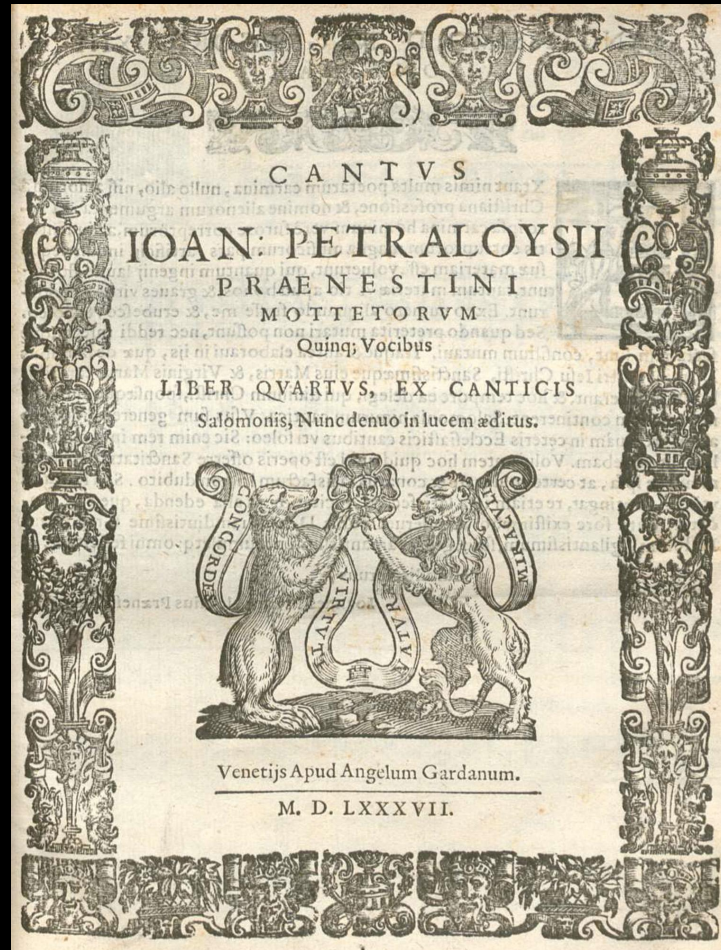
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Paola Alonzi *(Sulamite) Soprano*

Franco Todde *(Solomon) Tenor and Renaissance guitar*

Lorenzo Sabene *Renaissance lute*

Stefano Sabene *Renaissance transverse flutes*



Program

First part

Osculetur me
Trahe me
Nigra sum
Si ignoras te
Pulchre sunt
Fasciculus mhyrrae
Ecce tu pulcher es
Vulnerasti cor meum
Sicut lilium

Second part

Laeva ejus
Vox dilecti mei
Surgam et circuibo
Adjuro vos
Caput ejus
Quae est ista
Guttur tuum
Veni dilecte mi

Palestrina and the great love poem of all time

The program showcase a diverse selection of the twenty-nine pieces from the Book, arranged in the narrative sequence envisioned by Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina. The texts, are presented in dual form: the Latin version set to music by Palestrina accompanied by a modern-language rendition available in Italian, English, French, Spanish, German, Dutch. This enables the audience to appreciate not only the musical greatness of the compositions but also the lyricism of the text.

The arrangements deviate from the traditional 'a Cappella' vocal setting, with only the melodic lines of the two protagonists, Sulamite and Solomon, being sung by a soprano and a tenor. The remaining melodic lines are assigned to Renaissance instruments including the transverse flutes, guitar, and lute. The arrangements forms a lush sonic tapestry distinguished by nuanced phrasing and sustain of both the voices and the wind instrument, complemented by the crystalline airiness of the plucked instruments.

The timbral variety, due to these choices, transition from the rarefied sonority of the instrumental pieces

to the denser and more expressive sound of the voices. In this manner, our goal is to provide an unconventional interpretation of the work, while maintaining historical accuracy.

In the Renaissance context of sacred music, the "a cappella" style, intended exclusively for voices, prevails. However, the composer's original statement in the print of 1587 positions the collection in a borderland between the sacred *motet* and secular *madrigal*, where it was customary to use instruments that would double or replace the voices.

Our representational intent is expressed through a variety of arrangements, meticulously crafted to visually portray the fresco outlined by the sacred text's author. This depiction is marked by the "*time of singing*" (*Ct 2:12*), highlighting the alternation of seasons, day and night, the blowing of the winds, and the motion of the stars.

This is a time beautifully captured by Palestrina's music, capable of evoking, more effectively than many words and exegeses, the colors, sounds, and scents of the Middle Eastern setting in which the protagonists move.



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Active since 2010, the ensemble originated as the resident group of the Roma Opera Omnia festival, where it has performed hundreds of concerts and recorded various albums.

The group was founded by the artistic and musical director Stefano Sabene, who sought to bring together the legacy and experiences of the Schola Romana Ensemble. Since 2000, the Schola Romana Ensemble has been actively engaged in an intense concert activity on an international level, producing CDs, DVDs, radio and television appearances for major broadcasters, and exploring new repertoires while deepening the performance practice of Roman school repertoire from the 16th and 17th centuries.

Currently, the Opera Omnia Ensemble serves as the resident ensemble not only for the productions of the Roma Opera Omnia festival but also for the productions of the Spiritualia festival.

The ensemble develops artistic programs in the field of early music, spanning from the medieval to the Baroque period, presenting this repertoire in an innovative and often interdisciplinary manner. In addition to concerts, the ongoing activities include the realization of discographic and multimedia projects.