Il Ballarino - Italian Dances Around 1600 (2000)



1.Allegrezza D'Amore, cascarda for Renaissance ensemble
2.La Catena d'amore (from Le gratie d'amore)
3.Celeste Giglio (Ballet of the Noble Woman)
4.Gagliardas 'Moneghina' and 'La Canella'
5.Balletto Alta Carretta
6.Ballo Francese-Tedesca-Schiarazula Marazula-Ungarescha
7.Bassa gioiosa
8.La Nizzarda
9.Gagliarda Lombarda-Ballo Lombardo-Gagliarda Seconda
10.Sirena
11.Forza D'Amore (Ballet of the Noble Woman)
12.Balli d'Arpicordo, for harpsichord, Saltarello Del Pass'e Mezo
13.Alta Gonzaga (Ballet of the Noble Woman)
14.Dolce Amoroso Fuoco
15.Il Canario
16.Ballo del fiore

The Broadside Band
Jeremy Barlow – director

The music on this recording comes mainly from four Italian dance treatises of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries: two by Fabritio Caroso and one each by Cesare Negri and Livio Lupi. Also included are dances for harpsichord from publications by Antonio Gardane, Antonio Valente, Giovanni Maria Radino and Giovanni Picchi, arrangements of ensemble pieces by Giorgio Mainerio, and an arrangement of a vocal piece by Giovanni Gastoldi. Other sources of the period have also been used and consulted for comparative purposes.

In the dance treatises, music is provided in lute tablature, plus—usually—the melody and occasionally the bass line too in staff notation. These parts might seem at first sight to constitute a performing score for two or three instruments, but since the staff-notated melody is almost always doubled in the lute tablature it is perhaps more likely that the publisher was providing an outline guide to the music with alternative forms of notation. The aim, after all, was to show dancers how to dance and not to provide a full score for a dance band. The arrangements on this record were developed by The Broadside Band from the original scores.

Although the treatises were aimed at the nobility and the rich, the music in them varies greatly in character, from the lengthy, fully developed dances in two, three or four sections such as the balletti Celeste Giglio and Alta Carretta, to the catchy, popular-sounding tunes of Allegrezza d'Amore and La Nizzarda. The composers are unknown; it is possible that the authors of the treatises played some part in the musical settings. In those days, as Anne Daye says, dancing masters were also musicians. Nine of the dances (tracks 1, 3, 5, 7, 8, 11, 14, 15, and 16) have been played with repeats to match the dance instructions—hence the forty-two times through Il Canario!

The keyboard pieces (all by, or set by, the composers named with the sources) span a period of seventy years, from 1551 to 1621, yet they show little stylistic development. The melody is supported by chords, usually in root position, giving rise to parallel block harmonies full of consecutive fifths. This writing creates powerful resonances on the harpsichord, and, combined with great rhythmic vitality, makes the pieces all very danceable—a contrast to the sophisticated English keyboard style which developed over the same period, where elaborate embellishment and counterpoint often serve to obscure any dance origins. Many of the dances on the record are based on familiar grounds or chord sequences of the period, the most prominent being the ubiquitous passamezzo antico. ---Jeremy Barlow, hyperion-records.co.uk

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