

Monteverdi - Altri canti (Christie) [1981]

Written by bluesever

Thursday, 07 March 2013 17:16 - Last Updated Thursday, 07 March 2013 17:27

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1 *Altri Canti di Marte* 2 *Perche Ten Fuggi O Fillide* 3 *Chiome D'oro, Canzonetta* 4 *Hor Ch'el Ciel E La Terra* 5 *Non Havea Febo Ancora Lamento Della Ninfa* 6 *Gira Il Nemico Insidioso* 7 *Amor Che Deggio Far* 8 *Tirsi E Clori, Ballo Concertato* Les Arts Florissants
William Christie – conductor

The eight madrigals performed here, taken from Monteverdi's Seventh and Eighth Books of Madrigals (1619 and 1638), demonstrate just how much the form had evolved since its heyday in the Renaissance, to the point that its name had lost almost any specific descriptive meaning, beyond the fact that multiple voices were involved. One of the madrigals from the Eighth Book, *Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda* is structured like a mini-opera, and *Tirsi e Clori*, from the Seventh Book and included on this disc, is designated as a ballet. William Christie and his ensemble, Les Arts Florissants, are veterans in this repertoire, and they perform it with consummate assurance.

Some of these madrigals are exceedingly odd. *Altri canti di Marte*, for example, has an episodic structure consisting of fragmentary sections juxtaposed with little immediately apparent musical logic, and it's a measure of the performers' inventiveness that they can pull it off as a coherent musical experience, albeit a strange one. In the more conventionally structured madrigals, such as *Chiome d'oro*, their performance has an easy graciousness. In the three-part *Lamento della Ninfa*, one of the composer's most familiar works, the grinding dissonances of the outer a cappella sections frame the lyrical, heartfelt chaconne at its center to create a poignant drama. The singers' voices are distinctive, warm, rich, and full of character, as is appropriate for this repertoire, which aims for expressive individual intensity rather than a homogenous blend. The sound is warm and present, and there is good balance between the voices and the instruments.
---Stephen Eddins, Rovi

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