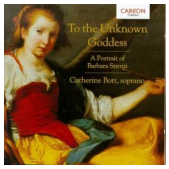
Barbara Strozzi - To the Unknown Goddess (1997)



01. Ardo in tacito foco [9:33] 02. Tradimento [2:26] 03. Pensaci ben mio cor [6:08] 04. Gite o giorno dolenti [8:31] 05. Lagrimae mie [8:58] 06. Spesso per entro al petto [2:41] 07. Amor, no dormi piu [2:31] 08. Voglio, volgio morire [7:32] 09. Non me dite ch'io canti [3:57] 10. La mia donna perche canta [4:43] 11. Appresso ai molli argenti [12:12] Catherine Bott - Soprano Paula Chateauneuf - Baroque Guitar, Chitarrone Frances Kelly -Double Harp Timothy Roberts – Harpsichord

What little is known about Barbara Strozzi (also known as Barbara Valle) suffices to make her an extremely intriguing figure. Perhaps the most outstanding female composer of the seventeenth century, Strozzi studied under respected musicians and published eight collections of her music. Music, however, was possibly not her only means of support as several sources indicate she may have been a courtesan as well.

Strozzi published her first compositions in 1644. These were madrigals that set poems by her father. The remainder of her eight published collections appeared after Giulio Strozzi died in 1652. He had little to leave her, and she may have been motivated to publish partly by financial necessity.

One of Strozzi's published works, Opus 4, is missing. The rest are dedicated to various royal or noble patrons, including the Grand Duchess of Tuscany, Ferdinand II of Austria and Eleanora of Mantua, and Nicolò Sagredo (a future doge of Venice). It is not known how Strozzi came into contact with most of her patrons, since only Sagredo was a Venetian. Other musicians from Venice rarely dedicated works to non-Venetian patrons.

Most of Strozzi's compositions, apart from the madrigals mentioned earlier and some sacred motets for solo voice, are secular works for soprano and continuo (described variously as "aria," "arietta," or "cantata." She probably sang the works herself, and many contain references to her name. At least one source calls Strozzi a poet, and about half the texts she set are anonymous, but there is no other indication as to whether she set her own poetry. --- musicacademyonline.com

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