

Jacopo Peri - Il Zazzerino (1998)



01. *Hor Che Gli Augelli* [3:11] 02. *Lungi Dal Vostro Lume* [3:14] 03. *Ballo (instrumental suite)* [4:13] 04. *Tra le Lagrime E I Sospiri* [4:26] 05. *Uccidimi, Dolore* [8:27] 06. *Ricecar Delcprimo Tuono del Z* [3:40] 07. *Su Te Parti Da Me* [4:21] 08. *Tu Dormi* [6:48] 09. *Caro Dolce Ben Mio* [4:32] 10. *Tra La Donne Onde S'Onora* [4:06] 11. *Lasso, Ch'i Ardo* [4:09] 12. *Bellissima Regina* [7:00] 13. *Occhi, Fonti Del Core* [3:24] 14. *- O Miei Giorni* [3:44] 15. *Torna, Deh, Torna* [2:05] 16. *Tutto 'L Di Piango* [4:06] 17. *Al Fonte, Al Prato* [2:01] Ellen Hargis (Soprano) Andrew Lawrence-King (Harp) Paul O'Dette (Guitar)

Jacopo Peri was known as Il Zazzerino or the strawberry blond guy for his handsome face, reddish blond hair and his angelic tenor. He was noted in the history of music for being the first composer of what we call today "opera" with his "Dafne" in 1598 (mostly lost) and Euridice in 1600 the result of a committee called the Camarata that met in Florence in Count Bardi castle seeking to invent a new art form in imitation of what the ancient Greeks performed. However his arch rival Giulio Caccini beat him to press with his version of Euridice 1600. The music in the present album is mostly from Peri's 1609 collection called "La Varie Musiche". This music is primarily of the "new" style of monody rather than the polyphony of previous generations especially church music. Thus the songs have a simple single line of verse that tells a story understandable to the listener. This was the "new" music supposedly in imitation of the classic Greek method of presentation of their plays (this is undoubtedly wrong). Large collections of songs in the new style were published by some dozen or so composer in a relatively short time in the early 1600s. What makes Peri's contribution unique is his avoidance of simple catchy melody in favor of shifting into distant harmonies with use here and there of dissonance. Thus his songs sound more "modern" than those of Caccini and his entourage. That Peri wrote much occasional music and for special events and perhaps many more simple songs is quite probable but he does not seem to have collected and published them. Thus the one opera (Euridice) and the present anthology of monodies plus a few fragments of other music is all that have come down to us. The present collection is a beautiful assemble of poems and verses (some by Petrarch) of the simple declamatory style with simple but effective instrumental accompaniment. The vocal part is exquisitely and clearly sung by Ellen Hargis. Some of the numbers are from other fragments or sources of Peri's music. They show off the talents of this excellent quartet.

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Paul O'Dette plays the chitarrone, a large double-headed lute that was the "basso" instrument of the time. Andrew Lawrence-King plays on an authentic 17 string harp and Hille Perl performs on the lirone; a type of viola da gamba. This is an excellent album of stunningly beautiful music with quite a modern almost Britten or Barber touch. --- Dr. John W. Rippon, amazon.com

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