

**Johannes Ciconia - Complete Works (1997)**



CD1 Italian secular works 1. *Una Panthera* - John Dudley/Phillipe Cantor/Jo Gulink 2. *Chi Nel Servir* - Ingrid Smit Duyzentkunst 3. *Poy Che Morir* - Josep Benet 4. *I Cani Sono Fuora* - John Dudley/Nancy Long 5. *O Rosa Bella* - Josep Benet 6. *Chacando Un Giorno* - Huelgas Ens/Paul Van Nevel 7. *Lizadra Donna* - Ingrid Smit Duyzentkunst 8. *Deduto Sei A Quel* - John Dudley/Jo Gulink 9. *Merce O Morte* - John Dudley 10. *La Fiamma Del To Amor* - Nancy Long 11. *Per Quella Strada Lactea* - Philippe Cantor/John Dudley 12. *Dolce Fortuna* - Ingrid Smit Duyzentkunst

CD2 Motets 1. *Albane Misse Celitus* - Huelgas Ens/Paul Van Nevel 2. *O Petre Christi* - Philippe Cantor 3. *O Virum Omnimoda* - John Dudley/Nancy Long/Ingrid Smit Duyzentkunst 4. *Doctorum Principem* - Nancy Long/Ingrid Smit Duyzentkunst 5. *Petrum Marcello* - Nancy Long/Ingrid Smit Duyzentkunst 6. *Ut Te Per Omnes* - John Dudley/Josep Benet 7. *O Felix Templum* - Huelgas Ens/Paul Van Nevel 8. *O Beatum Incendium* - Huelgas Ens/Paul Van Nevel 9. *O Padua Sidus Praeclarum* - John Dudley/Nancy Long/Ingrid Smit Duyzentkunst 10. *Regina Gloriosa* - Nancy Long 11. *Venecie Mundi Splendor* - Huelgas Ens/Paul Van Nevel

CD3

French secular works

1. *Le Ray Au Soleyl* - Huelgas Ens/Paul Van Nevel 2. *Aler Men Veus* - John Dudley 3. *Quod Jactatur* - Huelgas Ens/Paul Van Nevel 4. *Sus un fontayne* - Josep Benet

CD4 Mass Settings - Et in terra pax & Patrem Omnipotentem

1. *Gloria & Credo* ( 2 voices, choir, 2 bombards, 2 sackbuts, organ) 2. *Troped Gloria & Credo* (2 voices, bombard, sackbut) 3. *Gloria* (4 voices, rebec, 2 sackbuts, organ) 4. *Gloria & Credo* (5 voices, cornet, vielle, sackbut) 5. *Troped Gloria* ( 4 voices, 2 cornets, 2 sackbuts) 6. *Troped Gloria* (2 voices, cornet, organ) 7. *Patrem omnipotentem - Credo* (voice, sackbut, organ)

Performers: Wim Becu (sackbut), Josep Benet (tenor), Willem Bremer (bombard, cornet), Philippe Cantor (bass), John Dudley (tenor), Nils Ferber (shawm, krumhorn, bombard), Christine Frantzen (lute, vihuela), Jo Gulink (bass), Nancy Long (soprano), Marcel Onsia (organ, sackbut), Ingrid Smit Duyzentkunst (soprano), Alain Sobczak (shawm, bombard, krumhorn), René Van Laken (rebec, vielle, bombard), Paul Van Nevel (recorders, bombard, échaquier, organ), Marion Verbruggen (cornet), Howard Weiner (sackbut); Anne Crabbe, Rila Joris, An Mertens, Chris Nieuwenhuysen, Ingrid Wage, Ingrid Westerlaak (choir)

I must thank the folks at Classical Net. If Ciconia wasn't mentioned in their list of recommended composers, I never would have heard of him. Secular music composed at the time when Ciconia lived can sound dreadfully similar--at least to our modern ears. But Ciconia has a passion and a humanity in his compositions that places him ahead of the pack. These CDs offer secular music that was composed in France and Italy as well as settings of parts of the mass. The Huelga's Ensemble led by Nevel give a touching performance of Ciconia's surviving works. Highly recommended. --- R. Rockwell, amazon.com

Johannes Ciconia was one of the most important Franco-Flemish composers of the pre-Renaissance era. His output encompassed both the secular and sacred realms and included, in the former, madrigals, ballata, virelai, and a Latin canon; and in the latter, mass movements (only Glorias and Credos, however), motets, and Latin songs. His style mixed Italian, specifically Pavan, features with those of the French so-called *ars subtilior*. It is believed that a substantial portion of his output was lost. Some of the surviving compositions, like the ballata *Amor per ti sempre*, may have been misattributed to him.

Ciconia was born in Liège, but details about the early years of his life are confusing and fraught with conjecture, so much so that it is often difficult to sift out the speculation from the facts. One factor contributing to the muddle is that there were two or three prominent men having the name of Johannes Ciconia with roots in Liège and living around the turn of the fifteenth century. Moreover, there is some speculation that the composer's given date of birth, "ca. 1370," is wrong by a whole generation; Ciconia conceivably could have been born as early as 1335. The reason for the wide gap in the two dates is that he may be confused with his father in certain biographical sources. Just who his father was is also a matter of controversy, since, according to a 1391 letter by Pope Boniface IX, a certain priest sired one Johannes Ciconia, who is thus referred to as illegitimate and thus placing him in Rome in the 1390s, which fits a likely scenario, as will be seen. There is a document confirming that Ciconia served as a choir boy in 1385 at the Liège Church, St. Jean l'Évangéliste, where a certain Johan de Chywongne was canon. This canon, another document suggests, was most probably the composer's father and the year 1370 the more likely time of Ciconia's birth. This last conclusion is supported most convincingly by the fact that all of Ciconia's surviving output can be dated to around and after 1390.

Ciconia himself was a cleric, though it is unclear whether he actually was a priest. In any event, he seems to have served Cardinal d'Alençon in Rome in the 1390s as *clericus capelle*, an important post usually occupied by young musicians. It is almost certain that Ciconia went into the service of Giangaleazzo Visconti at his Court in Pavia in the late 1390s, which would explain

the composer's use of stylistic traits generally associated with Pavian music of the time. In 1401, Ciconia accepted a chaplaincy at the cathedral in Padua and a benefice at St. Biagio di Roncalea Church, also in Padua. It appears that only a handful of Ciconia's works date to the 1390s, with the rest coming during his Paduan period. In the years following his appointment at the cathedral, Ciconia was granted further benefices at nearby churches. He wrote a good many of his works for wealthy patrons, like the politically powerful Carrara family and Francesco Zabarella, a good friend and mentor. It is thus quite probable that the composer lived in very comfortable circumstances in his last decade, perhaps even with a measure of wealth. Ciconia retained his post with the cathedral until his death in June or July 1412. --- Robert Cummings, allmusic.com

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