

Mogens Pedersøn (a. 1585-1623) is one of the most outstanding danish composers from the early 17th century. Like other of his contemporary music talented fellow country men he travelled to Venice in Italy to learn from the famous Giovanni Gabrieli at the saint Marco Church.

During his second visit to Venice a collection of his five part madrigals, *MADRIGALI A CINQUE VOCI. LIBRO PRIMO* was printed by the Venetian music publisher Angelo Gardano. The madrigals published here are modern editions of the compositions from this collection.

In English the lyrics of the madrigals mean something like:

1. *Ecco la Primavera* poem by Ercole Cavalletto

Her comes the spring which by the presence of the sun gives new life to the rose and the viol. The loving birds will, with the sweet pain of their hearts, intensify their singing.

2. *Se nel partir da voi*

If by leaving you, my dear, I feel torment and pain, I will exult thousand and thousand times at the day of my happy return. If without you, my sweetest heart, I live no more, then I will live singing of my life the whole day.

3. *Morirò cor mio*

I die, my heart, if you do not succour my tired life. Because night and day I live in pain and misery. My dearest, through which miracle are you doing it? You want my death, you cruel, for giving me full mercy.

4. *T'amo mia vita!* poem by Battista Guarini

'I love you, my life', my beloved says sweetly to me, and, with this one most lovely phrase, she seems serenely to change her heart, to make me master of it. O sweet and delightful words! Make haste, Love, to imprint them on my heart! Let my soul breathe through them alone: let 'I love you, my life' be my whole life.

5. *O che soave baccio* poem by Battista Guarini

Oh what a blissful kiss I got from my lady. I do not know if it was a gift from her or a theft by me. But even if that is theft then let nobody desire courteousness. Just make a thief of yourself, Cupid, for I forgive you, and entirely leave the gift for the theft.

6. *Son vivo e non son vivo*

I am alive and not alive. I am dead and totally deprived of death. Oh cruel love, oh hard fate, that you keep me in doubt of life and death. Tell me, my life, if I am alive and which life is mine. And if I live then I will be living loving you and serving you.

7-8. *Care lagrime mie*

My dear tears, messengers of my hard pains, alas, since you can't soften the heart that has no pity for my sorrow; if you [my love] from my weeping have grown fond of the sea then be so kind as to extinguish my burning fire. Rise so much that I may sink into my own weeping.

9. *Come esser può ch'io viva*

How comes it that I live when I am deprived of the nourishment that can keep me alive? And how comes it that I live at the same time as the hope of enjoying again lives in me? Just speak it out, you [my] heart, that I am a living corpse because of love.

10. *S'io rido et scherzo*

If I laugh and joke and at the sometime sing, then I do it, oh lady, to hide for others my great sorrow devouring my heart. What shall I do, what is your advice, Cupid, to put an end to my great pain?

11-12. *Nell' apparir dell' amorosa Aurora*

At the sweet dawn Filisto, sitting on his hide, together with Agrio, Mopso and the great shepherd Negrino began to strike up these words: while the sun appears from east let us sing in sweet style and greet the new and green April. Then they all let the air resound with beautiful harmonies. Now that the winds have been banished together with the white snow and the rime which used to threaten with so much misery and now that the elements stay quiet let us sing together and greet the month that renews the land with flowers.

13. *Tra queste verdi fronde*

Among these green leaves, at the murmur of the billows, among these herbs and flowers Aminta and Clori gathered the fruits of love. Friendly and courteous leaves formed hiding places which were the only to know the lovers' sweet and blessed thefts. Let Heaven guard you gracious like the laurel that preserves its green from (the time of) Gemini to (the time of) Taurus.

14. *Amor, per tua mercè*

Have mercy with me, Amor and go to her who is so cruelly refractory to me. Pierce her heart with an arrow and give me revenge. Say to her: how could you have the heart to let him die who loves you so much?

15. *Donna, mentre i' vi miro* poem by Battista Guarini

My lady, while admiring you I change visibly and take your appearance. And transformed I expire my soul in one single sigh: O life-giving beauty, O death-giving beauty, as a heart is so rapidly reborn by you and die born by you.

16. *Non voglio più servire*

I'll not serve any more that untrustworthy who makes me die, but joyfull I will sing everywhere, any time: insane is he that falls in love with a lady. Never more shall a lady torment me.

17. *Dimmi, caro ben mio*

Tell me, my dear, was the kiss you gave me sign of life or death? It was sign of life because I breathed out my soul on your lips. It was not sign of death because joy overwhelmed my heart. You are silent, oh traitor, your kiss was mortal life, life giving death!

18. *Io non credea già mai*

I did not imagine one could live in such misery. Now I feel it under pain and tears alone among the other lovers. For I would never have thought that one could live without soul and without heart.

19. *Lascia, semplice*

Permit, you simple, permit your aged lover to burn from love. And don't say that I'm less faithful than him because of my young age. You will see a green tree burning little by little when it has been lit by a prolonged fire. An arid trunk is consumed and extinct in a moment by a poor flame.

20-21. *Madonn', Amor*

My lady, Amor and I were singing together one day such that nothing was heard sung more beautifully. She sang about her arrows and about the beauties and I sang about both delights. And after a sequence of charming fughettas[1] she hove a sigh[2] - pause[3]. Then Amor merged her cantus firmus[4] with the tenor[5] and I joined in with a beautiful cointerpoint[6]. In due time she let the charming voices sound such that in comparison the song of the Muses was just fluttering[7] notes. Gentle accents[8], passages[9], ties[10] long and short meters[11] made the harmony[12] so delightful that she at that time left the song as far as one could hear. Tired she ceased her song and said: silence. And for me she performed both cadences[13] in blissed kisses.

The Italian text of *Madonn', Amor* is interspersed with words from (17th century) Italian music terminology reflected in the musical composition:

1. fughetta - short fugue
2. sospiro - short rest
3. pausa - rest
4. canto fermo - cantus firmus, plainsong
5. tenore - tenor voice, tenor part
6. contrapunto - counterpoint, rhythmically independant melody
7. confuse - fusa: mensural notation duration corresponding to an 8th note, semifusa: 16th note
8. accenti - accents, musical ornaments
9. passaggi - passages, figuration
10. legature - ligatures, ties
11. misure - relation between note values, meter
12. armonia - chord
13. cadenza - cadence, harmonic conclusion