

95923

BRILLIANT  
CLASSICS

# CARESANA

SECULAR CHAMBER CANTATAS

Juliette de Banes Gardonne *mezzo-soprano* · Ensemble Démesure



Cristofaro Caresana c.1640-1709  
Secular Chamber Cantatas

1. Viver Senza Speranza 4'30
2. La Rosa 9'50
3. Volevo un dì combattere 4'58
4. Nella stagion novella 4'48
5. La dove il bel Sebeto 6'39
6. Il Narciso 13'59
7. Tancredi sulla morte di Clorinda 8'35

ENSEMBLE

DEMESURE

Juliette de Banes Gardonne *mezzo-soprano* · Alberto Guerrero *cello*  
Franco Pavan *theorbo* · Paola Erdas *harpsichord*

Recording: 29-31 October 2016, Temple of Corcelles, Reformed Church in Corcelles Cormondrèche, Switzerland  
Producer & Sound engineer: Fabio Framba  
Cover: © Archivio dell'arte, Pedicini fotografi  
© & © 2019 Brilliant Classics

*The discovery of a repertoire: the secular cantatas of Cristofaro Caresana*

From the last quarter of the 17th century, culture was very much alive in Naples, where secular society and members of the cloth followed the Roman example of meeting up in salons and academies to discuss intellectual pursuits and achievements. And this explains why one of the most interesting genres of the period, the secular chamber cantata, found fertile ground for development. Rooted in the refined madrigal tradition of the late 1500s, in Naples the chamber cantata was invested with new expressive potential. Performance was widespread, and audiences within artistic circles were many and varied, not least on account of the fact that the city hosted both the aristocracy of the viceroy government and an ecclesiastical hierarchy.

Cantatas and serenades were regularly included in patrician entertainments held in private palaces or public venues, such as the “*spassi di Posillipo*”, which were summer leisure events that the court and prominent families took part in along the coast overlooking the bay of Naples. The city boasted four time-honoured music Conservatoires: S. Onofrio a Capuana; S. Maria della Pietà dei Turchini; S. Maria di Loreto; and the Poveri di Gesù Cristo. The level of musicianship among composers and players was thus remarkably high, to the extent that the city attracted professionals, amateurs, antiquarians and general visitors interested in music right up to the end of the 18th century. Naples was a uniquely musical city, full of exciting possibilities for learning and widening musical experience.

Cristofaro Caresana (c. 1640 – 13 September 1709) was Venetian by birth, but Neapolitan by adoption. He is one of the few foreign musicians who managed to make a name for themselves in Naples within the city’s exclusive musical circles, challenging the competition of local composers. He had studied in Venice under Pietro Andrea Ziani (1616-1684), who in 1689 was appointed master of the Royal Chapel, but he arrived in Naples in the wake of the Febi Armonici, the famous company of actors and musicians then active in Rome. It was the Spanish viceroy Iñigo Vélez

de Guevara, Count of Oñate, who had invited the company to move to Naples to contribute to celebrations of the bloody quashing of the Masaniello revolt of 1647. The operation was hugely successful, paving the way for the introduction of Venetian style opera in Naples.

In all likelihood Caresana was part of this process. He had connections with the Venetian composer Francesco Cavalli (1602-1676), which means that he was in contact with the circles of Monteverdi. Cavalli was involved with young Neapolitan composers connected with the school of Francesco Provenzale (1632-1704), who were working on adaptations of original Venetian scores for performance for Neapolitan audiences. All this clearly gave Caresana a certain entrée into the city. In fact in 1659 he was employed as a tenor, and then from 1667 as organist at the Royal Chapel, and again from 1702 to 1704. Moreover, he was also engaged to teach at the Sant'Onofrio a Capuana Conservatoire from 1688 to 1690. His most important appointment came in 1699, however, when he was named successor to one of the city's foremost composers, Francesco Provenzale, as Chapel Master at the Tesoro di San Gennaro, a job that symbolically made him a "true" Neapolitan. Nevertheless he also continued to produce music for various other Neapolitan institutions, including the singularly important Oratorio dei Padri Filippini (Gerolamini), where he was a registered member from 1659 to 1706. And it is here that most of his extant compositions are still kept, including the manuscript sources of his unpublished cantatas, recorded for the first time ever in this CD. They are not only precious on account of their authenticity, but also in view of the relatively small number of surviving Neapolitan cantatas composed prior to 1683, which is the year Alessandro Scarlatti arrived in Naples.

It was Antonio Florio, a pioneer in the interpretation of Neapolitan baroque music, who first rediscovered the sacred and devotional works of Caresana, and it is thanks to the work of the Ensemble Démesure that we are now in a position to appreciate his stature as a composer of secular music. The genre involved is the chamber cantata,

which developed alongside opera but was intended for a more select audience. It was particularly congenial as a musical form for the school of the most interesting Neapolitan composers, who often wrote for private theatres and the salons of refined patrons and the musicians they supported. Like the cantatas by coeval musicians, Caresana's compositions for solo voice and basso continuo all consist of various sections, with distinct alternation between recitative and aria. The subject is love, the setting bucolic, and the mood contemplative or playful. Probably the product of Caresana's maturity as a composer, they reflect the narrative tendency of the period: little stories told in the text and illustrated in the music. On occasions the recitatives tend in the direction of arias, whereas the arias themselves are more structured in form. Some of them feature melodic lines that are repeated after instrumental refrains, others comprise juxtaposition between micro sections in contrasting tempi, with alternation between ternary and binary rhythms, and other still are built around less linear melodies that portray the events of the tale told. In this they represent a perfect synthesis of Venetian and Monteverdi-style reminiscence, and the musical idiom typical of Naples.

Particularly interesting is the attention paid to the verse, which is expressively set to music that reflects the meaning of the words. For instance, *Volevo un dì combattere* is a cantata with two arias that frame the central recitative. It features a last aria with a succession of binary and ternary parts, with marked emphasis on the exaltation of despair caused by pangs of love, returning to the initial literary motif regarding the futility of wishing to oppose the deceitful decisions of blind Cupid, the "*cieco dio d'amor*".

*Nella stagion novella* and *La Rosa* are two longer cantatas consisting of a number of sections. The latter is dedicated to the flower that stands for passion, a metaphor for beauty and love, where the thorns and the petals are associated with the grief and intensity of feelings: "*cresci pur, ch'io vo' baciarti; né mi curo delle spine*" (just grow, for I wish to kiss you; I care not for the thorns) and "*il rosso del colore è foco*

*del mio core*” (the colour red is the fire in my heart). The arias embody melodic motifs that reappear in the same section in different rhythms and styles, with richly intense, airy slow tempi. This is also the case for the second aria of the descriptive cantata *Il Narciso*, a *Largo* that becomes a *Largo assai* culminating in the lament on a descending bass. There is also a real lament in the aria that opens the cantata *Viver senza speranza* (To live without hope). It is underpinned by a descending motif in the basso continuo and features skilful handling of compositional elements and colour that owe much to the folk tradition in the way they enhance dramatic impact.

Another cantata of great interest is *Il Tancredi*, on verse that is evidently inspired by Torquato Tasso’s *Gerusalemme Liberata*, an epic poem that was dear to Neapolitan musical and intellectual circles. With its delicate succession of sections relating the episodes of the tragedy experienced by Tancredi, the cantata is also a tacit homage to Monteverdi’s *Combattimento*.

*Là dove il bel Sebeto* probably relates to the founding in Naples in 1703 of the Colonia Sebezia, the learned society that was part of the Roman Arcadia. However, the cantata also embodies stylistic elements of different, almost exotic origins, typical of an earlier stage in Caresana’s life as a composer.

Caresana’s secular repertoire, which is still little known, thus deserves a place of its own alongside his sacred works and his influence as a teacher, traces of which have come down to us in surviving scores of the period. Clearly he was a musician fully involved in the complete range of musical activities that a city like Naples, with its unique soundscape, was able to offer performers and composers of the time. Following centuries of oblivion, these compositions have been rescued from the mists of time, and for this we a truly grateful.

© Giulia Veneziano

Translation by Kate Singleton



Founded in 2006, *Démesure Ensemble* has made the Cantata – the emblematic genre of the 17th and 18th centuries – its core repertoire. The members of the ensemble hail from different countries, but share a particular interest in the Neapolitan Baroque School. They largely focus on unpublished works, delving deep into the baroque Extravaganza and its intrinsic contrasts with scholarly passion. In this sense they are *Démesure*: in other words, unconstrained, measureless, in their pursuit of musical chiaroscuro.

Born in France of Italian origins, **Juliette de Banès Gardonne** acquired an MD in solo voice at the Haute École de Musique de Genève, and was awarded grants to study at the SIGG and Ernst Göhner foundations, and the culture section of Migros. Her dark, velvety voice is particularly well suited to the baroque repertoire, so alongside her career as an opera singer she founded the Démesure ensemble with the Italian musicians Paola Erdas, Jorge Alberto Guerrero and Franco Pavan. *Tesori del Barocco Napolitano*, her first project, was included in various important festival programs. In 2018 and 2019 she obtained funding in Switzerland for her research and the subsequent publication and recording regarding a precious manuscript dedicated to “Signora Pignatelli”.

**Paola Erdas** is a harpsichordist whose varied interests comprise a considerable repertoire of less known works.

She studied under D. Petch, and then with K. Gilbert at the Mozarteum in Salzburg. She has recorded 15 CDs, which have met with widespread critical acclaim. She has published musicological studies with Ut Orpheus. Paola has worked with musicians such as the lutenist Rolf Lislevand, the tabla player Shyamal Maitra, the viola da gamba player André Lislevand, and also with Claudia Caffagni, specialized in the Middle Ages, with the dancer Daša Grgič, and the mezzo soprano Juliette de Banès Gardonne. For “Su Cantu in sas Laras”, a work devoted to Sardinian music by Sergio Ladu, Paola also performed as an actress as well as writing the texts. With Andrea Lausi she co-founded the Wunderkammer International Festival in Trieste. She teaches harpsichord at the Conservatoires of Messina and Trieste.

Born in Cali in Colombia, **Jorge Alberto Guerrero** first studied architecture at the University of the Andes in Bogota, at the same time working in the field of rock and experimental music.

He began studying the cello with Roger Morgan in Bogota in 1981, then moved to Milan in 1982, where he continued his studies, taking a Diploma at the Brescia Conservatoire under Enrico Egano in 1991, and ultimately deciding to focus on the baroque cello.

In 1992 he founded the Aglaia Ensemble, with which he has recorded and premiered various works. During the past 15 years he has also played first cello with ensembles such as I Turchini (Antonio Florio), Il Complesso Barocco (Alan Curtis) and Opera Fuoco (David Stern), playing in some of the world’s foremost venues and theatres. With the same groups he has recorded over 60 CDs, obtaining numerous awards and widespread critical acclaim. Along with Giulio Prandi, he is one of the founding members of Ghislieri C&C, which studies sacred music of the baroque period. He plays a cello built by Benoît Fleury in 1758.

**Franco Pavan** is an Italian lute and theorbo player. He took a first class degree in both in lute and musicology in Milan. He plays with the most important Italian early music ensembles, including Concerto Italiano, Accordone, La Cappella della Pietà dei Turchini, La Risonanza, La Venexiana and with the London based Trinity Baroque. He has worked with conductors such as Rinaldo Alessandrini, Fabio Bonizzoni, Antonio Florio, Enrico Gatti, Alessandro Ciccolini and Claudio Cavina. He has performed in the most important concert halls in Europe (Konzerthaus, Berlin; Konzerthaus, Vienna; Musikverein, Vienna; Cité de la Musique, Paris; Auditorio Nacional, Madrid) and elsewhere (Teatro Colon, Buenos Aires; Toppan Hall, Tokyo), as well as in Uruguay, Chile, Mexico, Colombia, Brazil, China, Egypt and Morocco. He has recorded over 50 CDs (with the Glossa, Opus 111, EMI, Virgin, Cyprès, Alpha, Arcana and Naïve labels), winning numerous awards, including the Gramophon Award, Diapason d’Or and the Premio Vivaldi della Fondazione Cini, Venice.

## SUNG TEXTS

### 1. VIVER SENZA SPERANZA

#### Aria

Viver senza speranza  
È gran tormento  
Mi consumo a poco a poco  
Negl'ardori del mio foco  
È non v'è chi consoli  
il mio lamento  
Empio amor perverso fato  
Dispietato mio destino  
Ingiustissimi tiranni  
Rivolgete i nostri danni  
Contro un misero infelice  
Crude stelle amor ingrato  
Incostante mia fortuna  
Spietatissimi nemici  
Che uccidete gl'infelici  
Dhe privatemi di vita

#### Recitativo

Che se contro di mè  
Han congiurato  
Cielo fato destino  
Amor è sorte

#### Largo

Giusto è ben ch'io non chieda  
Altro che morte

### 2. LA ROSA

#### Recitativo

Rosa, freggio d'april  
madre de fiori

porpora degli amori  
Che cresci alle rugiade  
Quai uniforma negl'occhi alba di pianto  
Non paventare in tanto  
Che sol focoso contro tè s'adiri  
Se pur cresci all'ardor de miei sospiri

#### Aria

Per formare il suo vermiglio  
Tutto un cielo si stemprò  
Ma per darti più rossore  
Con il sangue del mio core  
L'amor mio t'imporporò

#### Recitativo

Temo sol di mirarti  
Inaridita al mio sperar penoso  
O che nembo giocoso  
Ti sfrondi al mio desire.  
Ma nol permette amore  
Se afin che questo seno  
Il duol' non perdi  
Sol per farmi morir  
Sempre riverdi.

#### Aria

Cresci pur, ch'io vò baciarti  
Nè mi curo delle spine.  
Stimarò per gratia ancora  
Che per te quest'alma ogn'ora  
Si minacci alle rovine.

#### Recitativo

Veggio nelle tue foglie  
Il color di mia speme  
L'oro che cresce a inghirlandarti il crine

È l'oro di mia fede  
Il rosso del colore  
È foco del mio core  
Ma contro la mia pace  
Perch'esangue di piè  
È ben fugata.

#### Aria

Bella rosa del cor mio  
Non languire ch'io morrò  
L'agonia di si bel fiore  
Men d'un core valutare  
Amor non può  
Timidetta, ogni aurette  
Ti lusinghi corteggiando  
E col riso del pianto mio  
Veghi ogn'ora il piè baciando.  
Perché rosa, si vezzosa,  
Col mio duol va esalando.

#### Recitativo

Mà di lena già stanco.  
Taccio  
E spero pietà a miei conforti.

#### Arioso

Che le rose si danno ancora a morti

### 3. VOLEVO UN DÌ COMBATTERE

#### Aria

Volevo un dì combattere  
Co' il cieco dio d'Amor  
Di marmo era il mio petto  
Di gelo era il mio cor

Ma il fulminante dardo  
D'un vezzosetto sguardo  
Seppe quest'alma abbattere

#### Recitativo

Sostenni un tempo  
Di più vaghi soli  
Di più lucide stelle  
Le guerriere facelle  
Ma due nere pupille  
svegliano alfin nel core  
Amorose faville  
E quel cor che fù cieco  
A tanti lumi  
Per vendetta d'amore  
S'abbaglia di luci  
Al vago orrore

#### Aria

Chi non vuol pace  
Con il dio d'Amor  
Con la fervida sua face  
Con quel barbaro suo strale  
Qual Tesifone infernale  
Lacera sempre il cor

#### Recitativo

Ah che in mar si presume  
Resister all'impero  
D'ogni potente nume  
Pluto, Nettun e Giove  
Nell'Inferno nell'onde  
e su nel Cielo  
Di quel lume ch'hà l'ali  
Provato ogn'hor li strali  
Così chi vincer pensa il dio d'amore

#### **A battuta**

Quando men se lo crede ci perde il core

#### **4. NELLA STAGION NOVELLA**

##### **Recitativo**

Nella stagion novella  
pastore innamorato  
Fra zefiretti al prato  
La pecorella invita  
Ivi nascente il verde  
di rugiadose erbette  
Promettendo del frutto  
Amica speme  
Gliete appresta nel sen  
D'esso non teme

##### **Aria**

Godi o cara pecorella  
D'aure liete i donativi  
Son di flora segni vivi  
D'apparir leggiadra e bella  
Godi il bello verdegianti  
Nell'april del suo bel seno  
Di speranza il frutto ameno  
Ti promette il dio lattante

##### **Recitativo**

Che se rigido inverno  
Nel suo voler  
Con gellido disprezzo  
Dilegua del Amor  
L'amato fine  
Ma le dirò le brine  
D'un cuor che tutto gelo

Più s'indura al calor  
Del Dio di Delo

##### **Allegro**

Nò, che promette  
Quel verde mercè  
Pur dà le ricette  
D'amore la fè  
Insegna a sperare  
Di Clori il rigor  
Se teme d'amare  
Pur cerca il pastor

##### **Recitativo**

E se pastor lo son  
tu pecorella  
Lascia almen ch'una stilla  
Di Bianco e dolce latte  
Succhia dalle sue poppe  
Ove l'Aurora  
fra le perle stemprate  
Fra le rose  
D'Albastro il candor  
Ancor ripose

##### **Aria**

Si mio cor  
non si tema più languir  
Quell' erbette mezzosette  
Ti promettono gioir  
Si mio cor,  
Pallidetta nel rossore  
Perche tiene ascoso a notte  
Entro al fervido desir  
Si mio cor si.

#### **5. LA DOVE IL BEL SEBETO**

##### **Recitativo**

La dove il bel Sebeto  
Con dolce mormorio  
Al mar sen corre  
Il pescatore Tirsi  
Dopo un lungo adorar  
Clori vezzosa  
Quando sperava  
Alla sua pura fede  
Ricompenza o mercede  
Ella spietata un giorno  
di mirar li vietò  
Il suo bel volto  
Onde dolente e mesto  
Dopo haver sparso  
Le sue reti al vento  
Così al canto accordò  
Il suo lamento

##### **Aria**

Disprezzata è la mia fede  
Ben che sia fido e costante  
Ne cercai altra mercede  
Che mirare un bel sembante

##### **Recitativo**

Ma negasti crudele  
Ricompenza si lieve  
A tanto ardore  
Ah pria Euro spumante  
franga la nave mia carica di pene  
Se'l bel volto mirar non ho più speme

##### **Aria**

Dhe pria dimmi Tirsi  
Mori ch'ubedir ti voglio o Clori

Darmi morte per il tuo amor  
Ma voler ch'io non rimiri  
La caggion de miei sospiri  
Questo ho dio è gran rigor

#### **6. IL NARCISO**

##### **Recitativo**

Flagellava nel cielo  
Della fera d'Alcide  
Il tergo aurato  
con saette di rai  
lo dio di Delo.  
Cadean in braccio all'erba,  
Languidi e tramortiti  
Arsi da Sirio e di pallor di pinti.  
Col deliquio amoroso i fiori estinti,  
Quando agli orli d'un fonte  
Ne cui zaffiri  
Di sua bellezza affigurò l'immagine.  
Con gemiti e sospiri,  
Queste note dolenti  
De volubili argenti  
Al margo assiso  
Nel pianto immerso  
Articulò Narciso:

##### **Aria**

Ruscelletto che fugace  
Com'al mar con piè d'argento,  
E con fremito loquace  
Compatisci il mio lamento  
Ferma l'instabil corso  
Ne ti turbar intanto  
Con lacrimoso rio,  
T'amareggi la sponda  
Il pianto mio.

**Recitativo**

Ombra, ch'ombra non sei  
 Ma sol degli occhi miei  
 Dimmi perché t'ascondi  
 Tra l'acque e non rispondi?  
 Dhe, sorgi ombra cortese  
 Riccori a questo seno,  
 Volgimi un guardo al meno!  
 Ah ! sventurato  
 Con finte larme il mio dolor lusingo  
 Ti vagheggio t'abbraccio e nulla stringo.

**Aria**

Quell'immagine ch' il cor mi ferì  
 Ogni speme dall'alma disgombra  
 Per mio danno si cangiano qui,  
 le speranze in deliri e un sole un'ombra  
 Luci più belle chi vidde mai?  
 Vin con le stelle si dolci rai.  
 Venga, chi veder vuole sotto l'ombra  
 d'Aquario ardere il sole.

**Largo**

Lasso ma che deliro?  
 A chi narro i miei pianti?  
 Oh d'avverso destino !  
 Oh di barbaro Amore  
 Stravaganze in audite.  
 Idolo e idolatra del mio volto  
 Muto e di sensi  
 Privo in questa sponda  
 Estatico rimango  
 Me stesso adoro  
 E per me stesso piango.

**Air**

Acque gellide che in questo loco  
 Al mio pianto hor crescete,  
 Del gorgo Stiggio rampolli siete.  
 Se da voi nasce il mio foco  
 Maledice i vostri humori  
 Un amante avvelenato  
 Se a voi corre un assetato  
 Acque no, ma beve ardori.  
 Onde insaziabili  
 Che qui sgorgate  
 Con soave mormorio  
 I fiumi torbidi del pianto mio  
 Lacrimando accompagnate  
 le voragini di Lete  
 Fra quest'onde il cor distingue  
 S'io mi bevo in me  
 Si estingue l'Alma si,  
 Ma non la sete.

**Recitativo**

Qui svenne l'infelice  
 E troncando gl'accenti  
 Al suo dolore  
 Per volere del fato  
 Sulla sponda del rio  
 Cangiossì in fiore.  
 Ma seguendo il costume  
 Delle memorie antiche  
 Ove deluso giacque  
 Arioso  
 la sua forma vagheggia anche nell'acque.

**7. TRANCREDI SULLA MORTE  
 DI CLORINDA****Recitativo**

Ardea fiamma guerriera  
 Già de l'alta Sionne  
 A incenerir le barbare diffese  
 All'hor che di Tancredi  
 Con tiranniche guise  
 A notturni trionfi  
 Il fato arise  
 Egli de la sua vita  
 Poi ch'al lacero stame  
 Con importuno esame  
 Il guardo affisse.  
 Cadde, svenne, tremò,  
 risorse e disse

**Aria**

Astri fieri contro me  
 Che mi resta di vigor  
 Se delusa la mia fè  
 Sfido Marte e sveno Amor

**Recitativo**

Clorinda, oh dio Clorinda  
 chi mi t'inuola  
 Oh dio rispondi  
 Rispondi alma tradita  
 Ah il furor mio!

**Aria**

Cari Numi se così  
 Senza vita ho da languir  
 Perché almen non fate sì  
 ch'io finisca di morir

**Recitativo**

Sì, venga di morte  
 La pietade homicida  
 E mi sbrani e m'uccida  
 Io son contento  
 Morirà così meco  
 Il mio tormento

**Aria**

Fredde labra del mio bene  
 Caldi baci io vi darei  
 Ma non vo' de labri miei  
 raddolcir l'ultime pene  
 Già dolente rimembranza  
 Tiranneggia il cor che langue  
 E nel mar di sì bel sangue  
 il naufragio sol m'avanza

**Recitativo**

Così moria quand'ecco  
 A ritenerlo in vita  
 Corre provid'aita  
 E il dolo acheta,  
 Ah che non sempre lieta  
 Da le Cimmerie grotte

**Aria**

Amica de gli amanti, esce la notte