

2025
YORK
EARLY
MUSIC
FESTIVAL

Sollazzo

The Angels are Singing

National Centre for Early Music

Thursday 10 July 7.00pm

Sollazzo

The Angels are Singing

Kyrie 'Rondello'

Anonymous 14th century
from Vatican Manuscript no. 1419

Somma felicità +

Francesco Landini c. 1325-1397

O pianta vagha

Landini

Creata fusti O vergine Maria
(Cantasi come Questa fanciulla)

Landini

Questa fanciulla

Landini

* * * * *

Che cosa quest'amor +

Landini

Tante belleçe +

Landini

Poi che veder non posso +

Anonymous/ ?Landini
from Codex Reina

La dolce vista +

Landini

Il megliè é pur tacere

Niccolò da Perugia fl. late 14th century

* * * * *

Quand amor

Giovanni da Firenze fl. c. 1340-1350)

Peccatrice nominata
Magdalena degna da laudare

Anonymous 14th century
from Laudario da Firenze

Cantano gli angeli
(Cantasi come Per larghi prati)

Giovanni da Firenze

Perche virtù

Landini

+ *instrumental*

The boundaries between sacred and profane, in life and in music, were less defined in the Middle Ages than they are today. Dance was practised inside churches, while preachers filled public spaces with their sermons. This was especially true in the vibrant city of Florence between 1350 and 1400, the setting of our concert today.

Thanks to new commercial developments, Florence became the epicenter of a cultural blossoming which continues to influence Italian culture today: aesthetics in architecture and the arts were changing, the Tuscan dialect was elevated to a literary language by poets such as Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio, and the population of the city became exceptionally cultivated and well-educated. More than two-thirds of the male population were able to read, and a new elite was born out of the blend of merchants with international trade relations and the culturally curious middle class. The production of manuscripts, notably musical ones, increased suddenly, resulting in not only professionally crafted luxurious, highly ornate examples, but also so-called 'zibaldoni' – personal notebooks – through which we can gain an intimate glance into intellectual life in Florence at that time.

This is the context in which a peculiar musical phenomenon appeared: the *lauda*, or song of praise, is a genre which originated from the thirteenth century in prayer groups formed by the laity. Members of these groups organised processions and meetings at which they sang songs called *laude*. Their rituals grew in intensity following periods of hardship such as epidemics, wars and natural catastrophes. They also varied from region to region: some branches, like the Flagellanti, practised public self-flagellation, while others, such as the Florentine company of Laudesi, placed music at the centre of their activity and joined forces with professional musicians. They all shared in the search for a state of ecstasy and spiritual exaltation, and came together through their songs as they aspired to divine mercy.

The blurring between the sacred and secular worlds resulted in a peculiar musical phenomenon. Numerous pieces exist in two versions, one with secular text, and another with a sacred one. For example, a song such as **Per larghi pratti**, which originally narrated a hunting scene, was the subject of such an adaptation. Its text was erased and replaced by an elaboration on a Sanctus – *Cantano gli angeli* – without any changes to the musical material. This process, called *cantasi come* ('to be sung like') or *contrafacta* was widespread in the Middle Ages, especially in Italy. In this concert we will present the case of the ballata **Questa fanciulla amor**, by the Florentine composer Francesco Landini. This ballata became extremely popular and was the subject of several *cantasi come* reworkings, such as **Creata fusti**.

Francesco Landini's fame during his lifetime was almost mythical. It was rumoured that he was able to make birds silent with his playing on the organetto. Payment

records show that he was extremely well paid as an organ builder and tuner. Landini was renowned for his poetry, for his intellectual views, but above all it was his compositional skills that he was admired for. His music was the most played in Florence. Extremely versatile, it could be enjoyed by all social classes. The son of a painter, he was only five when he lost his sight due to smallpox. However, his lyrics, which he very probably wrote himself, are very descriptive. The leitmotif of the eyes, sometimes crying, sometimes admiring, scatters his work, and description, colours, light are very present in his work.

Landini's music is a treasure that has accompanied Sollazzo Ensemble constantly in the last decade, since our participation in the International Young Artists Competition in York in 2015, that was a turning point for us. We are delighted and a touch nostalgic when coming back to York and bringing along the sounds of his songs, which have become our musical home!

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Kyrie eleison

Christe eleison
Kyrie eleison

Lord, have mercy
Christ, have mercy
Lord, have mercy

O pianta vagha che nell' alto monte
Se' confermata per virtù divina
Ogni mie sentiment'a te s'inchina
Pero ch'al onbra di tue belle fronde
Donna poso si piena di virtute
Si che in quel punto a me desti salute
Tal che pensando'l e da me partita
Ognor mi dol'e manca la mia vita

O beautiful plant, which by divine
virtue
has been placed on the high mountain,
All my feelings submit to thee.
But under the shadow of your fair brow,
A woman rests, so full of virtue,
At that moment you gave me salvation.
So, with these thoughts, she went
away.
All is pain, and life comes to fail me

Creata fusti,

O vergine Maria, da quel
Signiore in chui e la balia.
Per lo pechare d'Adamo, fu rimosso
il nostro Padre chon mente bramosa
del tuo Figliuolo, che tu portasi adosso
per ischamparti, o Madre gloriosa.
Vergine donna, se' saggia e vezosa:
Aiuta 'l pechator per chortesia.

O Virgin Mary,
you were created
by that Lord who has absolute power.
Because of the sin of Adam, our Father
eagerly deprived himself of your son
whom you bore for your salvation, O
glorious mother.
Virgin, you are a wise and gracious
woman;
Please help the sinner.

Questa fanciull' Amor fallami pia,
che m'ha ferito el cor nella tuo via.

Tu m'ha', fanciulla, sì d'amor percosso
che solo in te pensando trovo posa.
El cor di me da me tu ha' rimosso
cogi occhi belli et la faccia gioiosa;
però al servo tuo, deh sie piatosa
merçe ti chiego alla gran pena mia.

*Questa fanciull' Amor fallami pia,
che m'ha ferito el cor nella tuo via.*

Se non soccorri alle dogliose pene
il cor mi verrà meno, che tu m'ha'
tolto
ché la mia vita non sente ma' bene
se non mirando 'l tuo veçoso volto
Da poi, fanciulla, che d'amor m'ha
involto
priego ch'alquanto a me benignia sia

*Questa fanciull' Amor fallami pia,
che m'ha ferito el cor nella tuo via.*

Il megli'è pur tacere

Colui che troppo parla.
Ispesse volte falla.
E poi non val pentere.
l' mi fidai di tale
Che di me dice mala
E ben già non vol dile
Colui assai più vale.

Quand'Amor gli occhi rilucenti e
belli,
Ch'an d'alto foco la sembianza vera,
Volge ne' miei, sì dentro arder mi
fanno,
Che per virtù d'Amor vengo un di
quelli
Spirti que son nella celeste sfera,
Ch'amor e gioia ugualment' in lor hanno.

Love, make this girl compassionate, for
she has wounded my heart in our
fashion.

Lady; you have so stricken me with
love that I can only find rest when
thinking of you.
You have drawn my heart out of my
body with your beautiful eyes and
joyous face.
Yet have pity on your servant; I ask for
mercy in my great distress

*Love, make this girl compassionate, for
she has wounded my heart in our fashion.*

Unless you assuage my grievous pain
the heart which you have taken from
me will fail,
for my life never feels at ease save
when gazing on your gracious face
Since, lady, you have enfolded me in
love, I beseech you to show me
some measure of kindness

*Love, make this girl compassionate, for
she has wounded my heart in our fashion.*

The best is to be silent
To him who speaks too much.
For he misleads
And then it is not worth to repent
– I trusted him –
Because he says bad things about me.
It doesn't mean anything
To him who is worth much more.

When Love turns those shining and
beautiful eyes, which truly resemble a
high fire
towards me, they make me burn so,
for, by the power of Love I come [to]
one of those spirits that dwell in the
celestial sphere, that carry as much
love as joy in themselves.

Peccatrice nominata,
Madalena da Dio amata!

Magdalena decta stesti
dal castel nel qual nascesti;
Marta per sore avesti,
nel Vangelo asai lodata.

Laççaro fo tuo fratello,
santo, iusto, buono e bello;
Cristo amò sença ribello,
poi k'a lui fosti tornata.

Fosti plena de peccato,
gisti a Cristo re beato;
nel convito l'ài trovato
de Symon, ke t'ài spresciata.

Andasti dentro cum timore,
plangesti cum gram dolore,
basciast'i piei cum grand' amore
per la gratia k'ài trovata.

Magdalena degna da laudare
Sempre degge Dio per noi pregare.

Simon Phariseo fece convito,
A Ihesù Christo fece uno grande
convito;
Ançi ke'l mangiare fosse compito,
Magdalena andava per cercare

Di Christo, a cui avea lo suo amore
dato;
Et tanto lo cercò in ogni lato
Ke'n casa de Simon l'abbe trovato:
Cum timore prese a dubitare.

Magdalena degna da laudare
Sempre degge Dio per noi pregare.

El phariseo grande invidia avea
Di ciò k'a Magdalena far vedea:
Verso quelli ke tutto sapea
Con falso pensieri credea parlare:

You are called a sinner,
Magdalene, who is loved by God!

Magdalene were you called
by the town in which you were born;
Martha was your sister,
whom the Gospel praises highly.

Lazarus was your brother,
holy, just, good and handsome;
he loved Christ without rebellion
when you returned to him.

You were full of sin,
and went to Christ, the blessed king;
you found him at the feast
of Simon, who shunned you.

You entered fearfully,
cried with great grief,
kissed the feet with great love
for the grace that you found.

Magdalene, worthy to be praised,
You must always pray God on our
behalf.

Simon the Pharisee gave a banquet,
A great banquet for Jesus Christ;
Before the meal was over,
Magdalene came looking

For Christ, to whom she had given her
love.
She sought him everywhere
Until she found him in Simon's house.
Fearfully, he began to doubt.

Magdalene, worthy to be praised,
You must always pray God on our behalf.

The Pharisee greatly disapproved
Of what he saw Magdalene doing;
Against Christ, who knew all,
He spoke within himself, with false
thoughts:

'Se questi è propheta copioso
Di scientia, non siria coitoso:
Se sapesse ciò c'à en liei nascoso,
No la dignarebbe di guardare,

'Se sapesse com'è peccatrice,
C'ave d'ogne vizio in sé radice:
Poi receve da la meretrice
Tutto suo servitio per ben fare!'

*Magdalena degna da laudare
Sempre degge Dio per noi pregare.*

Christo lo represe et feli resposo:
'Falso pensiero è in te nascoso;
Ben cognosco et so ke [in lei] è kiuso
Volontà di bene adoparare.

'Duo debitori non possono ubedire
Al creditore ke tiene de loro avere:
Per pietade volse provedere,
A ciascuno volse perdonare.

'L'un dovea cinquanta veramente,
L'altro cinquecento veramente
Dimàndote, perké se' presente
Qual è più degno de lui amare?'

*Magdalena degna da laudare
Sempre degge Dio per noi pregare.*

Cantano gl'angiol lieti: Santus Santus
Santus
Dominus Deus la cui gloria
In ciel e'n terra laudando si storia
Cantan: Osanna, Benedictus, Santus
Santus qui venit in nomine Domini
Fede, speranza et charità de gl'omini
Benedecto sia quel dolcie chanto
Tu che portasti lo Spirito Santo.

'If this man were a prophet, full
Of knowledge, he would not be
puzzled:
If he knew what is hidden in her,
He would not deign to look upon her,

'If he knew how great a sinner she is,
And that she has the root of all evil in
her!
And now he receives from the harlot
All her services as good deeds!'

*Magdalene, worthy to be praised,
You must always pray God on our behalf.*

Christ reprimanded him and answered
him: 'False thoughts are hidden in
you. Well I know and acknowledge
that within her
Is the desire to do good.

'Two debtors could not satisfy
The creditor to whom they owed
money;
Out of pity he wanted to remit the
debt,
He wanted to forgive each of them.

'One of them owed fifty, in truth,
And the other five hundred, in truth.
I ask you, since you are present here,
Which of them should love him more?'

*Magdalene, worthy to be praised,
You must always pray God on our behalf.*

The beautiful angels are singing: Holy
Holy Holy
Lord God, of whom the glory should
be praised
in heaven and on earth.
They sing: Osanna, Blessed, Holy
Holy who comes in name of the Lord
Faith, hope and charity of humans
Blessed be this sweet song
Which carried the Holy Spirit.

Perchè virtù fa l'uom costante e forte
a virtù corra chi vuol fuggir morte

Che val fuggir quel che sempre
s'appressa
e che ci guid'ognor a mortal fine?
Corre la nostra vita e mai non cessa
in fin che giugne a l'ultimo confine;
chi più combatte contro a tai ruine
più tost'è vinto e più s'appressa a morte.

Che val terra cercare od aer sano
e 'n quello viver con l'alma corrotta?
O pensier cieco, ignorante e vano.
tant'è tua mente da' vizi condotta
che l'alma immortal conquidi ogn'otta.
e 'l mortal corpo vuo' campar da morte.

Che val più tardi che più tosto andare.
dove infinito è il tempo e loco?
Quanti son folli, che pur credon stare.
e trovansi ingannati da tal gioco
usando assai del male e del ben poco
tanto che vien la non saputa morte!

Che val, mia canzonetta, che tu canti
di quel che ciaschedun pianger dovria?
Vattene pur, e dillo a tutti quanti
ch'alcun non fu già mai ni è ni fia.
che passar non convegna quella via
che ciascun fugge e che ci guida a morte.

Since virtue does make humans steady
and strong.
run towards virtue, if you want to
escape death.

Why flee from what is all the time
approaching.
leading us hour by hour to a mortal
end?
Our life is like a never ceasing race
until it gets to its last boundary line.
The more one fights against such
devastation
the sooner one is vanquished, and near
death.

Why seek a healthy country with pure
air
and live therein with a corrupted soul?
You wish to save from death your
mortal body
because your mind is led astray by vice
and your immortal soul is overcome
always by blind, ignorant and vain
thoughts.

What is the point of going later or
sooner
when time and space are infinite?
How many fools there are, who think
they are staying
and find they have been deluded by
that game.
doing much evil and very little good
until upon them comes unforeseen
Death.

Why should you sing, O little song of
mine.
what should each one of cry about?
You may now go and tell everyone
that no one ever was, is, or shall be
who does not have to travel on that
road
which we all shun, and which leads us
to death.

Sollazzo Ensemble

Carine Tinney *soprano*

Jonatan Alvarado *tenor*

Lior Leibovici *tenor*

Natalie Carducci *vielle*

Roger Helou *organetto*

Christoph Sommer *lute*

Anna Danilevskaia *vielle, director*

The Sollazzo Ensemble is a critically acclaimed group dedicated to the performance of Medieval and Renaissance music. Founded in 2014 by Anna Danilevskaia, the ensemble is known for its highly expressive delivery and its distinctive sound and approach, shaped by the diverse musical backgrounds and personalities of its members. Drawing on historical repertoires and historically informed performance criteria, the group aims to convey emotions they have personally experienced or to express ideas that hold meaning for them. This process of appropriating historical artifacts through layers of rigorous creative work forms the basis of their communication with the public, as they seek to give each piece a voice that reflects the historical roots of the material as well as the ensemble's unique vision.

Since its inception, Sollazzo has collaborated closely with leading European institutions in the field of heritage preservation. They are currently ensemble in residence at the Arsenal in Metz and participate in The Makers programme at the Concertgebouw in Bruges. Their debut CD, *Parle qui veut – Moralizing Songs in the Middle Ages* (Linn Records), followed their success at the York Early Music International Young Artists Competition in 2015, when they received the first prize, the audience prize and the Cambridge Early Music prize.

The ensemble's partnership with the Alamire Foundation led to the publication of the complete repertoire contained in the recently discovered *Leuven Chansonier*, released across four volumes by Passacaille Records and Ambronay Editions between 2019 and 2024. They have been part of the EEEmerging Young Artists programme, supported by Creative Europe, and collaborated with the CCR d'Ambronay as an associated ensemble from 2017 to 2020.

Sollazzo's maintains an active international concert schedule, performing at major festivals and venues across Europe, the USA, and Asia. The ensemble's extensive and ever-growing discography is enriched by several recordings dedicated to repertoires from the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries, which have earned distinctions such as the Diapason d'Or, Disc of the Year by The Arts Desk, Editor's

Choice by *Gramophone*, Critic's Choice by *De Standaard*, CD of the Month by *BBC Music Magazine*, as well as the Diapason d'Or de l'Année in 2017 and 2021.

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