

The Golden Century

Italian lute music of the 16th century

Alan Rinehart guitar

The music of the three generations of Italian composer/performers on this recording traces lute music in its development from dance, polyphonic and popular roots to a repertoire of expressive abstract composition, music of originality, rich harmony and exquisite detail. Unlike the lute music of Elizabethan and Tudor England, the majority of Italian music, beginning around 1500, survives in printed sources. A moveable-type music printing technique developed in the early 1500's by Ottaviano Petrucci meant that many copies of a lute book could be reproduced at relatively small cost. (Anyone looking at Petrucci's prints today will immediately recognize them as works of art in themselves)

see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francesco_Spinacino

It is a testament to the popularity and widespread use of the lute in Italy that the first printed books of secular instrumental music were of lute music by Spinacino and Dalza. This emphasis is an early and remarkable manifestation in music of the humanist movement in the Italian Renaissance.

Beginning in the middle of the 16th century, the dances give way to abstract compositions. Various called *ricercari* or *fantasia*, (in England *fancy*, *fantasy*, or *lesson*), these compositions used purely instrumental figures in sequences of overlapping melodic material to establish and maintain a musical narrative. It is the first repertoire in music history which exploits ideas unrelated to vocal or dance models. Capirola and Spinacino were exponents of this early style of *ricercar* and this "searching out" of musical material became a form used later by J. S. Bach in the middle of the 18th century.

The *Fantasias* by Francesco Canova (da Milano) are longer, explore more remote keys and musical material, and extend the range of the instrument's music melodically and rhythmically. This rapidly developing and widely copied type of composition may be found in virtually all contemporary printed and manuscript source in every country in Europe. Francesco's music enjoyed an enduring reputation long after his death. The Siena lute manuscript from 1585 contains music that is either confirmed to be by Francesco or certainly in his style.

In the later 16th century, stylized dance forms based on the concept of variation become predominate, as the music of Terzi and Molinaro shows. Lute composers began to place the pieces into short groups of *Corantos*, *Volts* and *Gagliardas* in the same key to avoid retuning and to extend the forms. Despite the popularity of dance pieces, the Fantasia style established by Francesco persisted well into the next century.

This wealth of musical riches is readily available and well-suited to the modern concert guitar with only minor changes, but today's students of the instrument study only a tiny fraction of this literature. The fact that most of the music is printed in tablature form has proven to be an impediment, since relatively little of the repertoire is available in conventional guitar notation. My objective in making this recording, aside from the enjoyment of listening to these superb masterpieces, is to open a window on this beautiful and personal music of the Italian Renaissance. I hope that hearing it played on the guitar will inspire others to explore these depths.

In playing this music, I followed some simple guidelines. It is important to understand that the music is played directly from its original notation--lute tablature--without changes, deletions or other enhancements. I prefer to think of them as adaptations rather than transcriptions and this is a guitar recording, not an attempt to imitate the lute. The pieces are played at the normal baritone pitch of the guitar, without the use of a capo on the neck, rather than at the higher pitch of the tenor lute. (Lutes were often made in families of instruments with different string lengths and body sizes adapted to ensemble playing, so it is entirely within historic practice that the music be played at this pitch. Indeed, it gives the music a meditative and appealing sonority.)

In order to preserve the chord structure and voicings so characteristic of the instrument, I opted to re-tune the guitar to the normal relative tuning of the lute, altering the third string so that the intervals remain the same (G=F#). In accordance with the speaking articulation of the period, I minimized the slurring of notes (one pluck, several notes) which is common in the music of the guitar.

One of the fundamental differences between the lute of the 16th century and the modern concert guitar is the stringing of the two instruments. In order to overcome the short sustain of gut strings, earlier lutes' bass courses were accompanied by a thinner string tuned an octave higher, which produces a shimmer in the sound, [an emphasis on higher partials]. There are numerous instances in which the higher of the two notes becomes important in the voicing, harmony and continuity of the melodic line. It is not really feasible to duplicate this feature on a single-stringed guitar, and I have added this note(s) where it is particularly important to the structure of the piece.

I am indebted to the work of Sarge Gerbode and Dick Hoban, who have made clear modern tablature versions of much of this music available both on the internet and in inexpensive printed versions. I recommend that anyone interested in the performance of these pieces consult their fine work in exploring the music of the period. Much of it is readily playable on the guitar--right from the page.

I acknowledge the advice and expertise of Clive Titmuss, early music specialist and luthier, who gave me valuable musical and editorial support in this project.

Finally I am most particularly grateful for the commitment of my wife, Janice Notland, without whose love and support this recording would not have been possible.

Alan Rinehart (SOCAN) January 2010

Notes on the composers:

Francesco Spinacino must have been highly recognized in his time for a major publication to be totally devoted to his music but there has been no biographical detail of his life discovered to date. The last of the four *ricercari*, *Recercare de tutti li toni* (*Recercar in all the keys*) is of particular interest for its bold tonal explorations.

Joanambrosio Dalza, also, is only known for the wonderful music in the publication of 1508. *Tastar de Corde*, literally- "*Touching of the Strings*" -is a semi-improvised introductory piece. The *Calata* and *Piva*, dances unique to this book are probably arrangements of pre-existing material.

Vincenzo Capirola was a Brescian nobleman who assembled a remarkable manuscript around 1517. Elaborately decorated to ensure its preservation, the book established the pattern followed by lute books of the period: a mixture of original *ricercari* in bold instrumental style, variations on chordal dance tunes and arrangements of polyphonic vocal pieces. *Et in Terra pax hominibus* ("and on Earth, let there be peace to all humanity") is an instrumental setting of a vocal work by Josquin des Pres, the foremost composer of the early Renaissance.

Francesco Canova (da Milano) was regarded as the foremost lutenist of mid-16th c. generation. Given the honorific title *Il Divino*, his music was published in almost every country of Trans-alpine Europe. He is unique in that only a few of his vocal arrangements and dance variations are preserved--virtually his entire extant output consists of architecturally intricate *Fantasias* and *Ricercari*.

Pietro Paulo Borrono may have been a student of Francesco, as he published some of the latter's finest fantasias along with his own chordal dance variations. It has recently come to light that he served as a spy for one of his employers, as well as musical duties for one of his employers. The *Salterello* was a common triple meter dance form, *La Traditorella* was a popular melody of the time and *Bel Fiore* means "*Beautiful Flower*".

Alberto da Ripa found fame and fortune at the French court of Henri II. His immense output includes some of the finest and longest contrapuntal Fantasias ever written, extending the boundaries of the form in multi-sectional works that went well beyond the lute technique of most of his contemporaries. He was one of only a few lute composers to write for the nascent four-course guitar. The long fantasia on this recording is an example of his audacious harmony.

Vincenzo Galilei was prominent in the group known as the *Camerata* and founded an important dynasty of Florentine thinkers: he was the father of Galileo Galilei, and Michelangelo Galilei, an influential lutenist at the Hapsburg court in Bavaria in the early 17th c. Vincenzo's output is concentrated in his treatise on singing, *Il Fronimo Dialogo*, which asserts the primacy of the voice in music. *Chiare, fresche e dolci acque* (*Clear, fresh and sweet water*) is a vocal setting by the Flemish composer Jaques Arcadelt (?1505-1568) on a sonnet by Petrarch (1304-1374).

Giulio Cesare Barbetta placed greater emphasis on the emerging dance variation style which would dominated instrumental music in the 17th century. His music shows the influence of Spanish models at a time when south-eastern Spanish cities were a part of the Duchy of Milan. The subtitles *Morescas* (Moorish dances?) give a clue to the character of the pieces--*Burgamasca* is a short repeated chord progression, *Canarie* refers to the Canary Islands, and *Mattacino* is the name of a *Commedia del'arte* ("stock comedy") clown. The *passamezo* ("*step and a half*") is in "ordinary" style (*Comune*) referring to the harmonic progression then in vogue.

Giovanni Antonio Terzi published two compendia of tablature in which the lute joined the fashion for diminution-playing. In this style the individual lines of famous madrigals and chansons are elaborately decorated by rapid notes. His music is distinguished by its dense texture and a fondness for the emerging stylized dances at the turn of the 17th century.

Simone Molinaro is a Roman contemporary of Giovanni Palestrina. His extensive collection is entirely dominated by complex and virtuosic dance variations. He published the sober compositions of his mentor Gorzanis at the conclusion of the volume, a fitting epitaph to the Golden Century's fascination with abstract composition on the lute.

Alan Rinehart has made many contributions to the guitar world as a performer, teacher and music editor. After completing studies at Western Michigan University and a Professional Music Training Diploma from Vancouver Community College, in 1978-79 he studied lute repertoire and technique in London, England at the Early Music Centre with Anthony Rooley, Jakob Lindberg, Nigel North, Christopher Wilson and Emma Kirkby.

In 1980 he gave a critically acclaimed London debut which was described by GUITAR INTERNATIONAL magazine as: "consistently clean and musical...he has a pleasantly relaxed stage manner which won over the audience right from the word go". In addition to many concert recitals, he has performed at international music festivals in Spain, the United States, Toronto and Quebec and appeared on CBC radio and TV.

He is a co-founder of The Vancouver Guitar Quartet, which became a regular part of the Vancouver and Western Canadian music scene from the late 1980s to 2003, with many concert and radio appearances.

He has released two solo CDs and one CD with the Vancouver Guitar Quartet that have received international critical praise; "Renaissance Masters and Latin Romantics" and "Musical Banquet" and "Estampas" with the VGQ.

From 1983 to 2003 he was a faculty member of the music schools at the University of British Columbia (where, with Michael Strutt, he founded the guitar performance program) and Vancouver Community College.

His editorial work has included arranging and engraving the guitar performance edition of Weiss's Moscow Manuscript for Editions Orphee and compiling and engraving a volume of music by A. J. Manjon for Chanterelle-Mel Bay as well as preparation of guitar solo and ensemble music for his own company NovaScribe Editions.

He moved to Nelson, B.C. in 2004 after many years of living in Vancouver, B.C.

Recorded at Serpico Audio Productions, Nelson BC December 2009/January 2010

Engineering and Mastering:

Sean Davies and Ohan Vandermeer

Digital Editing:

Alan Rinehart

Instrument:

Masaru Kohno 15 (1975)

Strings:

D'Addario J51

Web resources:

www.earlymusicstudio.com

www.mclasen.com/lute/lyre/index.html

www.editionsorphee.com

www.gerbode.net

www.melbay.com

www.alanrinehart.com