

Voices of Music
Leonardo da Vinci: a musical odyssey
Program

Adam Gilbert (b. 1961) : Fanfare on Voices of Music

Prologue

Marchetto Cara (c. 1465–1525) : Non è tempo d'aspettare

I : The Shield

Domenico Da Piacenza (c. 1400–c. 1470) : Rostibuli gioioso

II : Streets

Josquin des Prez : El Grillo

III : Birds

Carnival song : Canto delle Parete (Florence, late 15th century)

IV : The silver lyre

Vincenzo Capirola (1474–1548) : Ricercar ala Spagnola

V : War

Carnival song : Canto di lanzi suonatori di rubechine

INTERVAL

Fanfare for the Medicis : Heinrich Isaac : Palle palle

VI : Aftermath

Philippe Verdelot (c. 1480–c. 1530) : Italia mia

VII : Poetry

Michelangelo di Lodovico Buonarroti Simoni (1475–1564) : S'i' avessi creduto

VIII : Michelangelo and Jealousy

Domenico Da Piacenza : L'amorosa & La Gelosia

IX : Women, Portraits, the Mona Lisa

Sebastiano Festa (c. 1490–1524) : O Passi Sparsi

X : Two Endings

Antoine Busnoys (c. 1430–1492) : Seule a par moy

Claudin de Sermisy (c. 1490–1562) : Tant que vivray

The geometers of ancient Greece, armed only with compass and straight edge, created entire branches of science out of thin air, and yet they could never measure a circle with a square. Leonardo da Vinci, using the mirror of his own mind, was able to capture the imaginations of people for centuries with his drawing of Vitruvian man: Leonardo did not calculate the value of π ; he captured the meaning of “I.” By linking the circle and the square to the human form, Leonardo “solved” the riddle of antiquity through humanism.

It is, in essence, Leonardo’s ideas that we remember today. We admire the artistry of the *Mona Lisa*; we remember the smile. We can imagine *The Last Supper*, but if we were to actually view the original, we would be struck by how little of this great painting remains. Leonardo finished only a few works, and, indeed, his output is transcended by his rival Michelangelo, yet he remains the quintessential renaissance person.

Virtually everything that can be written about Leonardo’s life has been written, but there remain a few corners that are relatively less explored. Tonight, we will illuminate some of the rich and vibrant musical cultures that flourished during his lifetime. It’s an interesting musical odyssey, for Leonardo lived during a time of transition and invention, and he mingled with some of the most brilliant composers of the renaissance. As he walked the streets of Venice, Florence, Rome and Milan, to name just a few, he was surrounded by a heady mix of popular music. He improvised and sang, as was the custom of the time, and he even built musical instruments.

An evening’s entertainment at court was a varied affair. Musicians were expected to improvise, either in formal compositions, or in free form. The declamation of poetry with an improvised accompaniment on the *lira da braccio* was considered one of the highest forms of art. The *lira da braccio* was a string instrument similar in size and range to a viola, but with the addition of drone strings, and Leonardo was held in high esteem for his performances on the *lira*, as well as for fashioning an instrument made of silver in the shape of a horse’s head for the Duke of Milan. In addition to readings and improvisations, musicians would arrange smaller, pre-composed pieces into groups, similar to the dance suites of the high renaissance and baroque, alternating instrumental and vocal works to taste. Many of these works were collected in large, elegantly-bound books which survive in no small part owing to the richness of the decorations and gilded miniatures which illustrate the music.

Our program for tonight presents several different genres of music from different times of Leonardo’s life, all sourced from the original manuscripts and prints in Italy. To recreate the experience of a court entertainment, poet Lawrence Rosenwald has written a narrative poem based on events in da Vinci’s life, and we have provided music from the time for each scene of the poem.

Da Vinci’s early life is represented by early 15th-century Italian dance tunes, Franco-Flemish composers, such as Josquin des Prez and Heinrich Isaac, as well as the Burgundian composer Antoine Busnoys. At the turn of the century, circa 1500, we draw from works published by Ottaviano Petrucci, the first music publisher of renaissance polyphony. Leonardo’s late period is represented by new forms in music: the earliest known Italian madrigals as well as the Parisian chanson.

In 1501, when Leonardo was nearly fifty, the completely unknown entrepreneur Ottaviano Petrucci turned the musical world upside down by inventing a way to print polyphonic music using multiple, sequential impressions of moveable type. Petrucci’s books set a high standard for music printing in the 16th century. Petrucci solved a problem which had confounded printers for decades: how could one align the musical notes vertically with the long, thin, horizontal lines of the musical staves? Petrucci painstakingly printed the music lines in one impression, and then he used highly accurate guides to align the second impression of musical notes to each staff. A third impression may have been used to print the text. Though expensive, these books changed the way people experienced music and ushered in the age of domestic music making, in which people could sit around the table and sing or play from printed partbooks. In addition, music printing allowed composers to achieve a previously unheard of level of fame and currency throughout Europe. Many of Petrucci’s books contained settings of Italian *frottole*—light, airy and homophonic music with witty and amorous texts. The style of these *frottole* contrasted sharply with the dense polyphony of the mid-15th century. The text of our opening frottola “*Non è tempo d’apettare*” foreshadows the *carpe diem* themes of the early baroque.

The frottola emerged as one of the leading genres under the patronage of Isabella d’Este (1474–1539); Isabella’s wide and influential circle included Leonardo as well as many of the leading artists of the time. Contrary to fashion, Isabella supported native Italian composers and poets, and this support helped to establish a new, highly innovative Italian style which was instrumental in defining many of the important musical genres such as the madrigal, the trio sonata, the concerto, and, of course, 17th century opera and oratorio.

At its inception, the frottola relied primarily on hack poets, and the home-grown combination of rustic music and rough verse was a big success. In addition, the Medicis developed their own, related versions of this music, the *canti carnascialeschi*, or carnival songs. Within ten years, audiences and royal patrons demanded—and received—a higher level of sophistication in both the music and the poetry, and this is reflected by the ever increasing numbers of poems by Petrarch set to music in Petrucci's printed books, as well as the inclusion of contemporaneous verses written in a more elevated style. In the 1530s, the frottola gave way to the Italian madrigal, which became one of the most important musical forms of the 16th century.

In Florence, Lorenzo de' Medici actively promoted carnival songs and even wrote his own verses, then required members of his court and entourage to perform them on demand. Lorenzo often chose stories drawn from classical mythology; in contrast, the songs performed in the streets were satirical, rowdy and obscene, full of double entendre and innuendo. After Lorenzo's death, the radical friar Savonarola largely eradicated both the music and the musical instruments in his bonfires of the vanities, although the festivals were revived in 1498. In addition to supporting the distinctly Florentine style of the carnival songs, Lorenzo also engaged the best musicians from France, Germany and the Netherlands to perform the complex polyphony for his chapel and formal events.

For our concert, Adam Gilbert has composed the fanfare for the shawms using the syllables of "Voices of Music" as the tenor part for the music. To honor Leonardo da Vinci, who often used mirror writing, the music also employs retrograde canons, in which the music can be played forwards and backwards at the same time. Da Vinci would have known of these musical techniques, as they were famously used to honour Duke Ercole I d'Este of Ferrara, the father of Isabella d'Este.

For our second scene, street music, we present a sampling of the music that da Vinci would have heard in the streets and in the markets, including dance tunes and music based on popular songs or fanciful themes. Da Vinci was known for buying and freeing caged birds, and birds and bird songs are prominent in renaissance music. Music based on bird songs appears in the late middle ages, and by the early 16th century the composer Clement Janequin had developed mimetic effects in music to a very high level. Janequin's early experiments in this genre, which incorporate the sounds of battle, may have been composed to celebrate the obscure yet decisive victory of the French over the Swiss at the Battle of Marignano in 1515. Janequin's "special effects" compositions created a sensation, and these were widely imitated throughout Europe. Da Vinci lived and worked in areas that were constantly at war, and this is reflected in the serious tone of Petrarch's poem "Italia mia." Isaac's composition "Palle palle," can be connected to a specific event in da Vinci's life, as it was performed at the coronation of Leo X. Leo X, a Medici and the second son of Lorenzo the Magnificent, was one of da Vinci's patrons, and da Vinci moved to Rome after his stay in Milan with the Sforzas. The "palle" or balls, were part of the Medici coat of arms, which consists of six *palle* arranged in a triangle, and "palle palle" was the street cry to herald Medici events.

In the year 1508, the Mantuan author Baldassare Castiglione began his book *The Art of the Courtier*, which was highly influential in the 16th century. In his book, Castiglione writes at length about the various types of music, and specifically mentions singing to the accompaniment of a lute and viols as one of the highest forms of musical art, as well as the recitation of poetry to a bowed instrument. For our program, we present both of these forms. For the recited verse, Lawrence Rosenwald will recite a sonnet of Michelangelo,

S'i' avessi creduto, and Shira Kammen will improvise an accompaniment on the lira da braccio.

We do not know the circumstances that caused da Vinci to move from his native Italy to France, where he spent his final days. Perhaps his fame had waned, or perhaps patrons had moved on to younger, more productive artists who were more in vogue; certainly, any artist in Rome at that time would have been overshadowed by the completion of the Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel paintings in 1512 or his monumental marble sculptures, such as the *Pietà*. Drafts of Leonardo's letters from this time reveal a bitter, melancholy tone. While living in Rome between 1513 and 1516, and enjoying the patronage of Leo X along with Raphael and Michelangelo, da Vinci had met the young ruler of France, Francis I, during an event in Bologna following Francis' military victory in Milan over Ludovico Sforza (who had commissioned Leonardo to paint the *Last Supper*). Leonardo must have made a grand impression on Francis, possibly as a result of creating a mechanical lion for the king. Leonardo's own health was not good, and when Leo X died in 1516, Leonardo accepted Francis' generous offer of an appointment, title and stipend. The original letter from Francis' letter survives, and may be viewed in Amboise, in which all Francis asked in return was "merely the pleasure of your conversation."

Our final set of music presents the chanson “*Seule a par moy,*” with its theme of separation and isolation, a chanson which was well-known both in Italy and France: our version is based on a Florentine manuscript from the time of da Vinci’s departure. The concluding work, “*Tant que vivray,*” was one of the most popular songs in the new Parisian style created expressly for the court of Francis I.

—David Tayler

<p>Non è tempo d’aspettare Quando s’ha bonazza e vento Che si vede in un momento Ogni cosa variare Non è tempo d’aspettare Quando s’ha bonazza e vento</p> <p>Se tu sali fa pur presto Lassa dir che dire vuole Questo è noto e manifesto Che non durano le viole E la neve al caldo sole Sòle in acqua ritornare Non è tempo d’aspettare Quando s’ha bonazza e vento</p> <p>Non è tempo d’aspettare Quando s’ha bonazza e vento Non aspecti alcun che volti Questa rota instabilita Molti sonon stati accolti Nel condur de la lor vita Non è tempo....</p>	<p>Now is not the time to tarry When the weather is fair and airy. In an instant Everything can change Now is not the time to tarry When the weather is fair and airy.</p> <p>If you are leaving, make it fast, Say what you want to say. It’s observed and noted That violets never last, And snow under the hot sun Quickly turns back to water Now is not the time....</p> <p>Now is not the time to tarry When the weather is fair and airy. Nobody should wait for this unstable wheel to change Many have been welcomed While living their lives Now is not the time....</p>
<p>El grillo è buon cantore Che tiene longo verso. Dalle beve grillo canta. Ma non fa come gli altri uccelli Come li han cantato un poco, Van de fatto in altro loco Sempre el grillo sta pur saldo, Quando la maggior el caldo Alhor canta sol per amore.</p>	<p>The cricket is a good singer He holds his notes a long time Drink up, cricket, drink and sing! But, he’s not like those other birds. After they’ve sung just a few notes They take their business elsewhere.... The cricket always stands firm, And when it really gets hot, He sings only for love.</p>
<p>Canto delle parete Donne, se’l cantar nostro ascolterete, ghustando quello a pieno, a tutte insegnerèno l’arte dell’uccellare alle parete. No’ sappiàm ch’ ogni donna sempremai D’ uccellar si diletta;</p>	<p>Song of the net Women, if you will listen to our song, Enjoying it fully It will teach all of you The art of catching birds in a net. We know that all women always delight in catching birds</p>

<p>Et son di noi miglior maeste assai d' impaniar la fraschetta: Ma perchè spesso_in van l' uccel s' aspetta, Et pocho frutto fate, Uccellare inparate alle parete.</p> <p>Quando si vede volteggiar l' uccello, nè di calar fa segnio, mettete, donne, allor mano al zinbello, usando industria e 'ngegnio; perchè tirare a tempo et con disegno esser quel si puo dire, c'ogni uccel fa venire sotto la rete.</p> <p>Nel coprir ben consiste ogni inportanza nel presente uccellare; ma soprattutto abbiate per usanza a ogni uccel tirare: et non vi paia invano affatichare, se nel calar vien solo, ma tirando, al piuolo ben v'atterrete.</p>	<p>And they are much better teachers than we are of flirting with sticky goo. But because sometimes you wait in vain for a bird And harvest only a little fruit Learn to catch birds with a net</p> <p>When you see the bird flying around And he doesn't seem to be coming down Women, put your hand on the decoy Using industry and wit To pull, shoot, grab in rhythm and with art Is such that, it can be said, it makes every bird come into the net</p> <p>A good disguise is very important In this bird catching But above all, generally, grab/aim/pull at every bird And if only one falls/is caught let the struggle not seem to you in vain but by pulling, you will attach well to the pole/peg</p>
<p>Canto di lanzi sonatori di rubechine</p> <p>Buon maestre rubechine Queste lanzi tutte stare: Chi ascolte suo sonare Un dolceze par divine.</p> <p>Queste poche istromentuze Dar dilette et gran sollaze, Tutte cuor salte et galluzze Chi 'l tener sonande in braze. Ma se star gran rubechaze, Non può far bel calatine.</p> <p>Per pigliar dolce confort habbiàn qui nostre marite, et sonande forte forte, sappiàn far belle stanpite: non afer ma' più sentite si ghalante coselline.</p> <p>Tutte sempre in ogni loche lanzi star liete et galante, et con gaudio, festa et guoche salte, suone, balle et cante: chè 'l ben nostre tutte quante</p>	<p>Song of the tiny-fiddle-playing soldiers</p> <p>These good masters of tiny fiddles These <i>Lanzi</i> stay firm To those who hear their playing The sweetness seems divine</p> <p>These few small instruments Give delight and great comfort All hearts jump and become lively Of those who hold them in their arms to play them But if they are bass fiddles They can't make beautiful <i>calatine</i> (music with a fast tempo).</p> <p>To take sweet comfort We have our husbands here And playing loudly, loudly We know how to make beautiful dance music You have never heard Such gallant/romantic little things.</p> <p>Always and in every place All the <i>Lanzi</i> are happy and romantic/gallant With joy, celebration, and games Jumping, music, dances, and songs: Because the contentment that fills all of us</p>

<p>stare in queste cotaline.</p> <p>Quando è poi cordate bene, caze in pugne quest'archette; su et giù diguaze et mene, taste destre et toche nette: chi più ingegne drente mette piu dolceze sente infine.</p>	<p>Is found in this little jewel case.</p> <p>When the fiddle is well-strung Take this little bow in hand Pull and push it up and down Play/touch dexterously and play cleanly He who puts the most talent into it Will feel the most sweetness at the end.</p>
<p>Italia mia, benché'l parlar sia indarno a le piaghe mortali che nel bel corpo tuo sì spesse veggio, piacem' almen che e' mia sospiri sian quali sper' il Tever e l'Arno e 'l Po, dove doglioso et grave hor' seggio Rector' del cielo, io cheggio che la pietà che Ti condusse in terra Ti volga al tuo diletto almo paese Vedi, Signor' cortese Di che levi cagion, che crudel guerra I cori, che indur' et serra Marte superb' et fero apri Tu, Padre, e intenerisci et snoda ivi fa che el tuo vero qual io mi sia per la mia lingua s'oda.</p>	<p>My Italy, though words cannot soothe the mortal wounds which cover your lovely body, I wish at least for my sighs to unite with the hopes of rivers Tiber, Arno and Po, where I sit sad and somber. Ruler of Heaven, I ask that mercy, which brought you down to earth, will return you to your dear, holy land. You see, my gracious Lord, what trivial reasons cause cruel war; hearts closed and hardened by fierce and proud Mars: open them Father, soften them, set them free and let the divine truth be heard through my words. —Petrarch</p>
<p>S'i' avessi creduto al primo sguardo di quest' alma fenice al caldo sole rinnovarmi per foco, come suole nell' ultima vecchiezza, ond' io tutt' ardo, qual più veloce cervio o lince o pardo segue 'l suo bene e fugge quel che dole, agli atti, al riso, all' oneste parole sarie cors' anzi, ond' or son presto e tardo. Ma perché più dolermi, po' ch' i' veggio negli occhi di quest' angel lieto e solo mie pace, mie riposo e mie salute? Forse che prima sarie stato il peggio vederlo, udirlo, s' or di pari a volo seco m' impenna a seguir suo virtute.</p>	<p>Had I but earlier known that from the eyes Of that bright soul that fires me like the sun, I might have drawn new strength my race to run, Burning as burns the phoenix ere it dies ; Even as the stag or lynx or leopard flies To seek his pleasure and his pain to shun, Each word, each smile of him would I have won, Flying where now sad age all flight denies. Yet why complain? For even now I find In that glad angel's face, so full of rest, Health and content, heart's ease and peace of mind. Perchance I might have been less simply blest, Finding him sooner : if ' tis age alone That lets me soar with him to seek God's throne.</p>
<p>O passi sparsi, o pensier' vaghi et pronti, O tenace memoria, o fero ardore, O possente desire, o debil core, O occhi miei (occhi non già, ma fonti) O fronde, honor de le famose fronti, O sola insegna al gemino valore! O faticosa vita, o dolce errore,</p>	<p>O wandering steps, O swift and yearning thoughts, O tenacious memory, O savage ardor,, O powerful desire, O weakened heart, O eyes of mine, (eyes no more, but fountains) O leaves, that honour famous brows, O sole emblem of twin virtues, O weary life, O sweet error,</p>

<p>che mi fate ir cercando piagge et monti! O bel viso ove Amor in seme pose gli sproni e 'l fren ond' el mi punge et volve, come a lui piace, et calcitrar non vale! O anime gentili et amorse, s'alcuna à 'l mondo, et voi nude ombre et polve, deh ristate a veder quale è 'l mio male.</p>	<p>that makes search the hills and vales. O lovely face where Love has placed the reins and spurs with which he makes me twist and turn, at his pleasure: I kick to no avail, O gentle loving spirits, if there are any in this world, and you, bare dust and shadows, stay a moment and witness my pain. —Petrarch</p>
<p>Seule à par moy dans chambre bien parée Fais maintz regretz de joye separée Disant a dieu qu'il me faisoit grant tort Puis qu'il souffroit que la dolente mort M'eust de tout bien ainsi deseparée</p> <p>Comme la plus du monde preparée A souffrir mort par moy tant désirée Je vey qu'alors mon mal croissoit si fort Que si espoir ne m'eust donné confort Cent mille foys fusse desesperée</p>	<p>All alone in my gilded chamber, Filled with regrets, bereft of joy, Saying to God that he has done me a great wrong, For he has let doleful death Take all good things away...</p> <p>More willing than anyone in the world To suffer a desperate death As my pain increased so much With no hope of receiving comfort A hundred thousand times would I despair.</p>
<p>Tant que vivray en âge florissant, Je serviray d'amour le dieu puissant, En faictz, et dictz, en chansons, et cords. Par plusieurs fois m'a tenu languissant, Mais après dueil m'a fait réjouissant, Car j'ay l'amour de la belle au gent corps. Son alliance, c'est ma fiance: Son cœur est mien, le mien est sien: Fi de tristesse, vive lyesse Puis qu'en amour a tant de bien.</p> <p>Quand je la veulx servir, et honorer, Quand par escripts veulx son nom décorer, Quand je la veoy, et visite souvent, Les envieus n'en font que murmurer, Mais notr'amour n'en sçaurait moins durer; Aultant ou plus en emporte le vent. Malgré envie, toute ma vie Je l'aimeray, et chanteray, C'est la premiere, c'est la derniere, Que j'ay servie, et serviray.</p>	<p>As long as I live in such magnificent times, I will serve the powerful god of love, In actions and words, with songs and music. I was left to languish many times, But after sadness I rejoiced Since I have the love of a beautiful woman. To be with her, I give my word: Her heart is mine, mine is hers: Fie on sadness, long live joy, Since in love there is so much good.</p> <p>When I want to serve and honor her, When with a fine hand I decorate her name, When I often see and visit her, Jealous people can only whisper But our love will still endure As far or farther than the wind. Despite envy, all my life I will love her, and I will sing: "‘She is the first, she is the last That I have served, and will ever serve.’" —Clément Marot</p>
<p>Translations by David Tayler, Cynthia Simon, Hanneke van Proosdij and Lawrence Rosenwald.</p>	