

BARBARA STROZZI

Performer Editions

Con le belle non ci vuol fretta

Opus 1.11

*Il Primo Libro de Madrigali
a due, tre, quattro, e cinque voci*

for SATB voices and continuo

Edited by Richard Kolb



Cor Donato Editions
Candace A. Magner, general editor

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1.11 Con le belle non ci vuol fretta

Mi tien Filli fin qui,
Né ben detto di no,
Né ben detto di sì.
Amore, e che farò, aspetto o lascio?
Amor non mi risponde,
Ma mi dice la speme: "Aspetta, aspetta,
Con le belle a goder non ci vuol fretta;
Viene il bene tal'hor, né si sa donde.
Non sai tu che consola
L'amante di molt'anni un'ora sola?"

(Giulio Strozzi)

With beautiful women you can't be in a hurry

Phyllis has kept me going this far,
not clearly saying no,
not clearly saying yes.
Love, what shall I do, should I wait or let go?
Love doesn't answer,
but hope says "Wait, wait, to be happy
with beautiful women you can't be in a hurry;
delight comes sometimes, you can't tell how.
Don't you know that just one hour
consoles a lover for many years' suffering?"

~translation Richard Kolb

NOTES

This work is number 11 of the composer's book of madrigals for voices and continuo, published in Venice in 1644.

The source is the five books of vocal - continuo score of the original edition:

IL PRIMO / DE MADRIGALI / DI BARBARA STROZZI / a DUE, TRE, QUATTRO e CINQUE VOCI / Consecrata /
Alla Serenissima Gran Duchessa / DI TOSCANA / D VITTORIA / DELLA ROVERE / IN VENETIA /
Apresso Alessandro Vincenti. MDCXXXVIII.

Accentuation in the text has been normalized according to modern practice, but 17th-century spelling has been otherwise maintained. Capitalization of first words in lines of poetry, and punctuation to clarify syntax have been added.

Accidentals are transcribed as found in the original source. By 17th-century standards Strozzi's printer was consistent in marking each accidental, including on the same pitch multiple times within a measure, but many ambiguities remain. Editorial accidentals have been added for sight-reading convenience, enclosed in parentheses.

Section breaks are often indicated in the original with the symbol $\|$: which is retained. It does not usually call for a repeat.

Shifts of meter are preceded with a double bar line, whether or not present in the original. Slurs are retained from the original without editorial additions.

Barring is often inconsistent in the original scores. In this edition dashed barlines have been added at regular whole-note intervals where they are missing in the originals. Because barring in triple meter often varies from one part to another in the original print, in this edition barring has been regularized with barlines at dotted whole-note or dotted breve intervals.

For more detailed editorial policies, and notes on the music of Opus 1, see the full modern edition published by Cor Donato Editions, and online at CorDonatoEditions.com

1.11 - Con le belle non ci vuol fretta

Giulio Strozzi

Barbara Strozzi, Op. 1, 1644

Richard Kolb, ed.

Sopr. *Mi tien Fil - li fin qui, Né ben, né ben det - to di*

Alto *Mi tien Fil - li fin qui,*

Ten. *Mi tien Fil - li fin qui, Né ben, né ben*

Bass *Mi tien Fil - li fin qui,*

B.C. *Mi tien Fil - li fin qui,*

S *no, Né ben det - to di sì, Né ben det - to di*

A *Né ben, né ben det - to di no, Né ben det - to di sì,*

T *det - to di no, Né ben det - to di no, Né ben det - to di sì, Né ben det - to di*

B *Né ben, né ben det - to di no, Né ben det - to di sì,*

B.C. *Né ben, né ben det - to di no, Né ben det - to di sì,*

S *no, Né ben det - to di sì. A - mo - re, e che fa - rò, as -*

A *Né ben det - to di sì. A - mo - re, e che fa - rò,*

T *no, Né ben det - to di sì. A - mo - re, e che fa - rò,*

B *Né ben det - to di sì. A - mo - re, e che fa - rò,*

B.C. *Né ben det - to di sì. A - mo - re, e che fa - rò,*

7 6

19

S

pet - - - - to o las - cio?

23

A

T

B

A - mor, A - mor non mi ri - spon - de, non mi

A - mor, A - mor non mi ri - spon - de, non mi

A - mor, A - mor non mi ri - spon - de, non mi

28

A

T

B

ri - spon - de, Ma mi di - ce, mi di - ce la spe - me:

ri - spon - de, Ma mi di - ce, mi di - ce la spe -

ri - spon - de, Ma mi di - ce, mi

34

S

A

T

B

Ma mi di - ce, mi di - ce la spe - me:

"A - spet - ta," Ma mi di - ce la spe - me:

me: "A - spet - ta," mi di - ce la spe - me:

di - ce la spe - me, ma mi di - ce la spe - me:

7 6 4 3

52

S
Vie-ne il be - ne tal' hor, né si sa, né si sa don - de."

A
Vie-ne il be - ne tal' hor né si sa don - de." A - mor, A - mor non mi

T
né si sa don - de, né si sa don - de." A - mor, A - mor non mi

B
sa, né si sa don - de." A - mor, A - mor non mi

57

A
ri - spon - de, non mi ri - spon - de, Ma mi di - ce, mi di - ce la spe -

T
ri - spon - de, non mi ri - spon - de, Ma mi di - ce, mi di - ce la

B
ri - spon - de, non mi ri - spon - de, Ma mi

64

S
Ma mi di - ce, mi di - ce la spe - me:

A
me: "A - spet - ta," ma mi di - ce la spe - me:

T
spe - me: "A - spet - ta," mi di - ce la spe - me:

B
di - ce, mi di - ce la spe - me, ma mi di - ce la spe - me:

* Dot missing in tenor partbook..

71

A "Con le bel - le, con le bel - lea go - der,

T "Con le bel - le, con le bel - lea go -

B "A - spet - ta, a - spet - ta, con le bel - le, con le bel - lea go -

6 b6 7 6 6

74

S "Con le bel - le, con le bel - lea go - der non —

A con le bel - le con le bel - lea go - der non ci —

T der, non — ci vuol,

B der, con le bel - le, con le bel - lea go - der non —

6 7 b5

77

S — ci vuol fret - ta; Vie - ne il be - ne tal' hor,

A — vuol, non ci vuol fret - ta; Vie - ne il be - ne tal' hor,

T non ci — vuol fret - ta, né

B — ci vuol fret - ta, né

80

S né si sa don - de,

A né si sa don - de,

T si sa don - de. Vie - ne il be - ne tal' hor,

B si sa don - de. Vie - ne il be - ne tal' hor, né si

83

S Vie-ne il be - ne tal' hor, né si sa, né si sa don - de. Non sai tu,

A Vie-ne il be - ne tal' hor né si sa don - de. Non sai

T né si sa don - de, né si sa don - de.

B sa, né si sa don - de

86

S non sai tu che con - so - la

A tu, non sai tu che con - so - la L'a -

T Non sai tu, non sai tu che con - so - la L'a -

B Non sai tu, che con - so - - - - la L'a -

89

S un' ho - ra so - la, Non sai

A man - te di molt' an - ni, Non sai tu, che con -

T man - te di molt' an - ni,

B man - te di molt' an - ni, l'a -

92

S tu che con - so - la L'a - man - te di molt'

A so - la un' ho - ra so - la

T Non sai tu, non sai tu che con - so - - -

B man - te di molt' an - ni, non sai tu che con - so -

95

S an - ni un' ho - ra

A L'a - man - te di molt' an - ni

T la un ho - ra so - la, un' ho - ra,

B la l'a - man - te di molt' an - ni un' ho - ra

98

S so - la, un ho - ra so - la,

A un' ho - ra, un ho - ra so - la, un ho - ra so - la,

T un' ho ra, un ho - ra so - la,

B so - la, un' ho - ra so - la, un

101

S un ho - ra so - la, un ho - ra so - la?"

A un ho - ra, un ho - ra so - la?"

T un ho - ra, un ho - ra so - la?"

B ho - ra, un ho - ra so - la?"

A SHORT HISTORY OF BARBARA STROZZI

Barbara Strozzi had the good fortune to be born into a world of creativity, intellectual ferment, and artistic freedom. She made a mark as composer and singer, eventually publishing eight collections of songs — more music in print during her lifetime than even the most famous composers of her day — without the support of the Church or the patronage of a noble house. She is sometimes credited with the genesis of an entire musical genre, the cantata. Her works were included in important print and manuscript collections of song which found their way to the rest of Europe and England. Yet she died in obscurity in Padua in 1677 with little wealth or property.

EARLY YEARS

Born in 1619 in Venice, Barbara was baptized on August 6 at the Santa Sofia parish. At that time, Venice was at its cultural peak, a city of wealth, peace, academic curiosity, and musical innovation. In addition to the luck of time and place, Barbara grew up in a household frequented by the greatest literary and musical minds of the age.

The adopted daughter of poet Giulio Strozzi was most likely his natural daughter, recognized or 'legitimized' in his will of 1628 as his *figliuola elettiva*. Her mother Isabella lived in the same household as Giulio and was his principle heir until Barbara should come of age. Though born in Venice, Giulio, himself the illegitimate and later recognized son of Roberto Strozzi, was nonetheless a member of one of the most powerful families of Florence, second only to the Medici in wealth and influence.

That the Strozzi name was recognized far and wide may have assisted Giulio in his ability to mix with many levels of Italian society. He was the founder of several *accademie* or groups of creative intellectuals, and was an influential member of the *Accademia degli Incogniti* formed by the writer Giovanni Francesco Loredano in Venice. This group was almost single-handedly responsible for the genesis and spread of what was to become known as Opera — music and theatre highly intertwined into a new art form which flourished in Venice throughout the 17th century and then expanded throughout the continent. The *Incogniti* counted among its participants famous authors, poets, philosophers, and musicians, possibly including the great Monteverdi. It was into this milieu that young Barbara was introduced as a singer and composer.

Frustratingly little is known about Barbara's childhood and musical training. We know that she studied with Francesco Cavalli, director of music at St. Mark's Basilica and a prolific composer of early opera, based on the dedication to Vittoria della Rovere of her first published opus, where she mentions Cavalli as her preceptor and teacher from early days. There are no other known documents pointing to her studies, and little reference to possible early and unpublished songs from the period before 1644.

PERFORMING AND COMPOSING

As early as 1634, however, her name was associated with the meetings of the *Incogniti*, where she sang informally. In the dedication of a group of songs called *Bizzarrie poetiche*, composer Nicolò Fontei in 1635 says that his songs were inspired by "principally the most kind and virtuosic damsel, Signora Barbara" [*principalmente la gentilissima, e virtuosissima donzella la Signora Barbara*]. Furthermore, in Book 2 of his *Bizzarrie poetiche* dated 1636 he calls Barbara *la virtuosissima cantatrice*, the 'most virtuosic singer' of Giulio Strozzi.

By 1637 Giulio had founded another academy, this one called *Accademia degli Unisoni*, at least partially to promote the performances of his daughter Barbara. The *Veglie de' Signori academia Unisoni havuta in Venetia in casa del Signor Giulio Strozzi*, a group of three reports of the proceedings of the academy, is subtitled *Alla Molto Illustre Signora la Sig. Barbara Strozzi*, dedicated to her and in part describing her singing and role as hostess or mascot in the meetings. Several song texts of her performances are printed, but the music is not yet known.

Her performances and participation in the academy activities were of sufficient interest — perhaps even scandal, since women were rarely included in such meetings — that scathing satires were written. The book *Satire, e altre raccolte per l'Accademia de gl'Unisoni in casa di Giulio Strozzi* (1637) includes the oft-quoted slur against Barbara's virtue: "It is a fine thing to distribute the flowers after having already surrendered the fruit." [*Bella cosa donare i fiori dopo aver dispensati i frutti*], and later, in regard to her chastity: "to claim and to be chaste are very different; all the same, I too consider her extremely chaste since as a woman with a liberal upbringing she could pass the time with some lover, yet she nevertheless concentrates all her affection on a castrato." [*...Il professare e l'essere sono termini differenti, tuttavia io anco la vedo castissima, mentre potendo è come femina, è come educata in libertà passarvi il tempo con qualche amore ella nondimeno impiega tutte le sue affettioni in un castrato*. Both quoted in Rosand, JAMS].

THE PORTRAIT

These quotes, along with a painting confirmed by Ellen and David Rosand as being a portrait of Barbara, have led some writers to assume Barbara was a courtesan, or at least a high-class entertainment plaything in the tradition of the Japanese geisha.

The portrait, painted between 1635 and 1639 by Bernardo Strozzi (no close relation, but who also painted Giulio, Monteverdi, and other members of the academies) reveals a young woman, blushing, impressively décolleté and with flowers in her hair — a perfect impression of the mythical Flora, dispenser of charms both intellectual and physical. In her hand she holds a viola da gamba and on the table next to her is duet music and a violin, an implication that she might be waiting for someone to come and play with her.

MATURITY AND FAMILY

More recent research (Glixon 1997 and 1999), however, has cast serious suspicion on this concept, discussing her financial dealings and her four children, at least three of whom she had with Giovanni Paolo Vidman (also spelled Widmann), a colleague of her father. The two obviously maintained a long-term relationship although they never married. This was not an uncommon circumstance during this period, where aristocratic patrimony was of higher importance than the legality of a relationship. The Vidman family nonetheless provided inheritance for three of her children. Barbara apparently lived with her parents until their deaths, and remained in the family house which was rented from a Vidman brother. None of these circumstances lead to the conclusion that Barbara was numbered among the many thousands of registered courtesans or prostitutes of Venice. It is more likely that she was too busy writing, composing, and attending to the needs of her parents and her children to have had an outside profession.

Her attempts to permanently secure the permanent patronage of a wealthy music lover never bore fruit, however. Each of her seven numbered collections is dedicated to a different patron (the eighth, Opus 4, is lost but believed to have been written for the Duke of Mantua). There is no record of what type of payment or privilege she received from her dedicatees, but aristocratic patronage was one of the few means a composer enjoyed to have music performed and published.

We can only wish that there were journals, diaries, or more letters regarding her work. Given the few bits of information we now have about Barbara's private life, we have a picture of an extraordinary woman of talent, beauty, intellect, and business savvy, who published 125 pieces of vocal music in her lifetime.

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