



THE ATLANTA EARLY MUSIC ALLIANCE BROADSIDE

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May, 2008

Festival Singers of Atlanta

AEMA MISSION

It is the mission of the Atlanta Early Music Alliance to foster enjoyment and awareness of the historically informed performance of music, with special emphasis on music written before 1800. Its mission will be accomplished through dissemination and coordination of information, education and financial support.

AEMA's Website:
www.atlema.org

In this issue:

Festival Singers of Atlanta ,	page 1
Annual Meeting,	page 2
President 's Message	page 2
Music on the Mountain	page 3
Francesco Portinaro	pages 4-7
Member Page	page 8

One evening years ago, I was standing next to a woman at a Christmas party singing Christmas songs. She turned to me and said I should audition for a group called The Festival Singers of Atlanta, where she was an alto. That was the beginning of a long and rich relationship.

I began singing with Festival Singers in 1983 or 1984 (a long time ago!) when the founder, J. Marcus Ritchie, was conducting. He was a talented director who eventually left to take a position as music director at St. Paul's Church in Washington, D.C. Later directors were Elaine Shaver, Lee Orr, Patrick Hagan and, currently, Jane Burke.

One of the joys of singing with this group over the last two decades is the range of music from medieval to modern and the challenge of performing music that is often difficult. This is a small group, never more than 30 singers, which makes each one of us responsible for our parts. There's no leaning on anyone else, another reason I love singing here.

Singing with Festival Singers is also a lot of fun. I have many fond memories of road trips to perform in Tampa and, over the past six years, to Charleston at the Piccolo Spoleto Festival, where we have a faithful following. I enjoy the camaraderie of the other singers on our trips and at our rehearsals.

The wonderful music we have performed has included Mozart's Requiem, Handel's Chandos Anthems and Coronation Anthems, several of Bach's cantatas, and the lovely "Miserere" by Allegri, as well as beautiful secular pieces, including Ralph Vaughan Williams' folk songs and Morten Lauridsen's Rose cycle. We have sung in many languages, even middle Dutch! We had to bring in an outside person to teach us how to pronounce that. Most of our music is performed a cappella.

Brenda Lloyd

The Atlanta Early
Music Alliance

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**Early Music
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*AEMA wants to help
spread the word!
If you want to make
announcements,
contact:*

Jorg Voss,
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AEMA's ANNUAL MEETING

is scheduled for June 7th

(The Board will meet from 3:00 to 4:00 PM)

AEMA members will meet in Atlanta for a Music Making, Potluck Dinner and a General Meeting.

Date: Saturday, June 7th, 4:00 PM to 7 PM

Place: St. Mark United Methodist Church

www.stmarkumc.org

781 Peachtree St NE

Atlanta, GA 30308

(404) 873-2636

Please bring:

2008 Mid-Winter Workshop Books (if you participated in the workshop)
Your Voice or other instrument (as early instruments, clapping-hands or spoons
may be acceptable as percussion:-)

A music stand

A potluck dish to share

Recyclable plate(s) and flatware

We hope that you can participate!

President's Message

The Board elections are in and counted. Thanks to our many members for casting your votes by mail or e-mail! **Gisela McClellan** was reelected for a second 3-year term. **Brad Hughley** is joining the Board to step into my vacated position. We have invited **Paula Fagerberg** to fill the vacant appointed position.

Thanks go to **Vaneesa Little's** and **Brenda Lloyd's** willingness to stand as candidates, and to **Jane McLendon** for her excellent work of recruiting the candidates and getting the ballots out to our membership!

It is all but certain that your new president will be **Susan Patterson**, starting on July 1, 2008.

My second term is coming to an end, and by the provisions of our bylaws, I will say farewell. My association with AEMA has been one of many pleasures. Your Board experimented with several ideas to get more of our members involved in Early Music activities. Some failed, and we may be permitted not to elaborate. Others apparently were successful: the timely dissemination of Early Music concert announcements and the staging of short workshops. AEMA organized the Mid-Winter workshop, co-sponsored by the Atlanta Recorder Society (ARS) and the Viola da Gamba Society; the Viol workshop with Alison Crum occurred in conjunction with the Music-on-the-Mountain workshop of the Viola da Gamba Society; the Recorder workshop with Marion Verbruggen was arranged by member organization New Trinity Baroque and supported by the ARS and AEMA.

Ah yes! All this involved a number of Early Music friends with shoulders to the spokes of the wheels to make it happen. I want to thank all of you who helped in so many ways!

My plans are to continue supporting AEMA projects in several ways to further the missionary work of Early Music playing, performance and appreciation.

Jorg Voss

Music on the Mountain

by Marilyn Humphreys



Memories of musical weekend by a novice.

I embarked with curiosity, excitement, and trepidation on the Music on the Mountain weekend this past February. Being a beginning treble viol player, I was first of all in awe that my travels to TN involved riding along with the world class player/performer/teacher Alison Crum. Needless to say I was initially intimidated, but fascinated in conversations and also grateful to find that Alison indeed was down to earth and fun to be with for the journey from Atlanta.

Arriving at the conference center early Friday afternoon we were greeted with cold temperatures, but warm welcomes. As people drifted in during the afternoon, checked in, and gathered in the lobby, old friends chatted and new friends were made. Following a delicious, ample dinner we all gathered for the Large Ensemble Session in the Chapel. We were seated mixed in two groups so that some antiphonal work could be explored. Each faculty member gave a short presentation. Alison shared a bowing technique practice which worked with "Greensleeves" - a helpful hint easily remembered to be used later. Standing out in my memory was the musical experience directed by Roy based on short ostinati he taught by rote and cued to produce interesting sounds. Other faculty had pieces for the group to play. Luckily for me as a beginner, I could play the parts that were comfortable for me and fake other notes without being terribly detected and without affecting the overall sound.

At Saturday breakfast time a list was posted of ensemble members and locations. It seemed to me a very efficient idea of having the groups stay in one location and having faculty rotate to the groups. Unpacking and tuning does take some time! We had two ensemble sessions in the morning and another after lunch. The faculty working with my group were well prepared to work with us at our rather inexperienced level and were exceedingly patient with our questions and many mistakes! At the same time they all challenged us and asked for our best efforts. Our particular group was fortunate to work with Jack Ashworth, Roy Marks, and Phil Serna, delving into beautiful pieces including two Ravenscroft canons and Dowland's "Lachrimae Antiquae." By 3:00 my spirit was overjoyed, but my brain was over taxed, and I appreciated a little down time in the late afternoon.

The highlight of the weekend for me, without question, was the Faculty Concert on Saturday night. I had not before heard the beauty of a consort of viols da gamba. With such world class players, the musicianship was exquisite. The chapel acoustics amplified the gorgeous music. The audience also appreciated how the players enjoyed working together, and they themselves seemed to have such fun making music as an ensemble. After a pre-planned presentation, the group submitted themselves to "being stumped" by sight reading anything anyone wished to throw at them. Amazing!!! They didn't seem at all "stumped" to me. Part of this fun was the opportunity for several player/composers to hear their pieces performed.

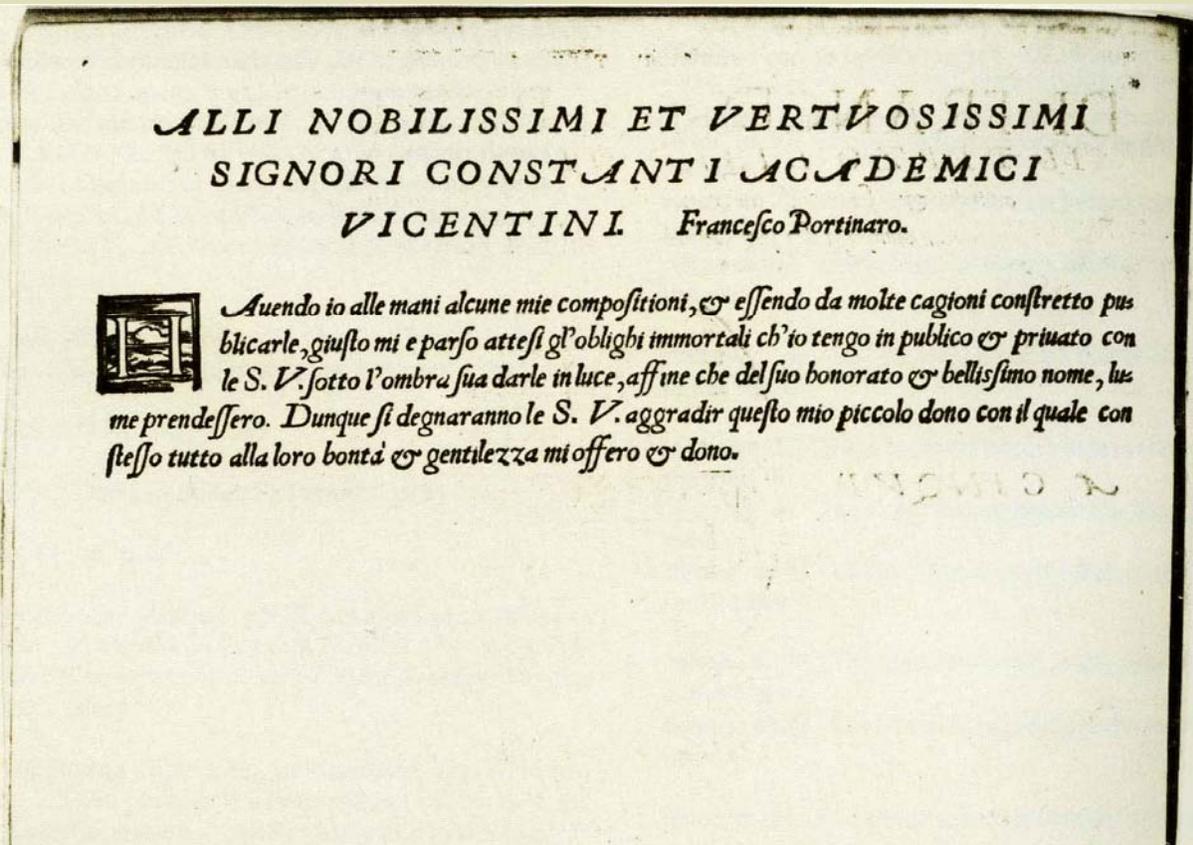
Sunday morning was the conclusion of our weekend experience. We had one last class, ours led by Gail Ann Schroeder, and then a session of choice. Even though I was up for another challenge, my brain and fingers barely made it through a beginning class in tablature. Ah - more to work on when I returned home.

For me, and I do think for others, this weekend of splendid camaraderie, study, application, and musical joy was an inspiration for going forth with one's own playing and for seeking out others with whom to play and share. It was a weekend not to be forgotten!

By a thankful participant



Title page from the Cantus Partbook of Francesco Portinaro, *Il Terzo Libro Di Madrigali* (Venice: 1557)
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Dedication page from the Cantus Partbook of Francesco Portinaro, *Il Terzo Libro Di Madrigali* (Venice: 1557)
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Bringing Forgotten Music to Life: The Madrigals of Francesco Portinaro in a Modern World-Premiere Performed by *New Trinity Baroque*

By Maria Archetto



Musicologists who study early music of the Western tradition spend much of their time pouring over old manuscripts and prints in the historic libraries of Europe. This was my occupation for several years in Italy as I experienced the beauty of cities such as Verona, Vicenza, Padua, Venice, Mantua, Bologna, and Rome while researching the life and music of Francesco Portinaro, a composer famous in the sixteenth century, but whose music was mostly forgotten after his death.¹

Portinaro (ca. 1520-ca. 1579) was a native of Padua who served noble patrons in northeast and central Italy. The Venetian printers Gardano and Scotto issued several publications under his name from 1548 through 1572, including seven books of madrigals² and three of motets. For my dissertation, I edited six books of Portinaro's madrigals. Four books appeared there and Garland press published two others.³

For several years after completing my Ph.D. I was occupied with full-time teaching, some administrative work, and new scholarly projects. However, in 2007, I had the opportunity to realize my long-time desire to have some of the music I had edited publicly performed and recorded by a truly outstanding early music ensemble. With the assistance of a grant from Oxford College of Emory University, I was able to work with Predrag Gosta, Artistic Director of Atlanta's *New Trinity Baroque*, to arrange for two concerts including music by Portinaro. The concerts were held on November 3, 2007 at Saint Bartholomew's Episcopal Church in Atlanta and on November 5, 2007 at Oxford College. For these concerts, Mr. Gosta prepared new performing editions of several madrigals based on my scholarly editions. The performing editions are available at www.Portinaro.com. These include the following: *Del piant'amaro*, *Di pensier in pensier*, *Nasce da bei vostr' occhi*, *Era il giorno*, *Hor' al piu alto ciel*, *Occhi, piangete*, *Per aspri boschi*, *Prencipe glorioso*, and *Signor in cui valor*.

The concert performances revealed to the listening audiences a composer whose style featured beautiful melodies and rich sonorities, as well as the sensitive setting of texts in complex contrapuntal textures. Aside from its purely musical value, Portinaro's work is interesting because it was closely associated with the Italian academic movement in the Veneto. The academies for which Portinaro worked were important sources of patronage whose activities reflect the social and political contexts of composition and performance in cities ruled by Venice.

Two academies active in the 1550s, the *Accademia dei Costanti* of Vicenza and the *Accademia degli Elevati* of Padua, employed Portinaro as *maestro di musica*. Portinaro's third and fourth books of madrigals, published in 1557 and 1560, are dedicated to the *Costanti* and *Elevati*, respectively. Each book has twenty-three compositions, including 5- and 6-voice madrigals and 7- and 8-voice dialogues. These books are among the few sources of information available regarding the interests of these academies, and they provide evidence concerning the membership, activities, and musical tastes of the members.

- 1 I am very grateful to the Eastman School of Music, the Fulbright-Hays Commission, and the Gladys Kreible Delmas foundation for funding my archival research in Italy.
- 2 Archetto, Maria. *Francesco Portinaro and the Academies of the Veneto in the Sixteenth Century*. (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Rochester, 1991).
- 3 Archetto, Maria, ed. Francesco Portinaro, *Il terzo libro di madrigali* (Venice, Antonio Gardano, 1557) in *Sixteenth-Century Madrigal* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1990), Vol. 23; Archetto, Maria, ed. Francesco Portinaro, *Il quarto libro di madrigali* (Venice, Antonio Gardano, 1560) in *Sixteenth Century Madrigal* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1991), Vol. 24.

From the third book we learn that the *Costanti*, (“the constant ones”) consisted of men from the oldest and wealthiest noble families of Vicenza. The title page bears their emblem, a seated female figure dressed in classical robes and enclosed in the Latin motto "Nec prece, nec precio, nec vi, nec sorte suprema" (Neither prayer, nor curse, nor force, nor supreme fate.) Perhaps she represents the virtue of constancy and the motto reflects the members’ desire to maintain their intellectual association in spite of any difficulties. Many academies founded in the Veneto from the 1540s onward were short-lived, and despite the implications of this motto, the academy of the *Costanti* appears to have existed only briefly.

The academy of the *Elevati* ("the elevated ones") appears to be the first in Padua that was seriously concerned with music. Its act of constitution, dated March 30, 1557, indicates that the members were interested in literature and music, and that they pledged to continue the academy for three years. Although the original records of meetings are lost, we know that they formulated elaborate rules and elected officers with invented titles such as *Prencipe* and *Censore*.⁴ The title page of Portinaro’s fourth book shows their emblem, a flying Daedalus with the motto "Levan di terra al ciel nostro intelletto" (Our intellect is raised from earth to heaven.) The dedication page includes a list of members revealing that, as with the *Costanti*, the membership of the *Elevati* was drawn primarily from the nobility of Padua.

As *maestro di musica* for the *Elevati*, Portinaro was required to be in the academy each day with three assistants to teach singing and playing, and to assist at academic musical performances.⁵ Perhaps the lessons included learning to play the *viola* owned by the academy. The fact that Portinaro was engaged to teach and not only to compose music and direct professional performers suggests that academy members wished to be active and practical musical participants, and not merely an audience engaged in scholarly debates about music.

Some musical events may have taken place in the house of member Marco Mantova Benavides (1489-1582.), an eminent jurist at the University of Padua who collected art and had a strong interest in music. His house had an area for musical performances, as well as a collection of about sixty instruments, including an organ.⁶

Why did Portinaro dedicate madrigal books to the *Costanti* and *Elevati*? He does not appear to have been a member of either academy, but rather an employee. Not long after his service, he was employed as *maestro di musica* by the *Accademia Filarmonica* of Verona.⁷ Perhaps the books were intended as commemorative volumes for members, since they contained collections of the music which they had commissioned and which they probably performed. The list of dedicatees in the 1557 print and the exhaustive list of academy members in the 1560 print suggest that the books might have been intended as keepsake editions.

Portinaro’s music is perhaps the most important source of information about the activities and the tastes of the academicians for whom he worked. The texts and the musical style indicate that the members desired compositions which paid homage to ideals of beauty developed in Venetian culture, but that they also wished to affirm themselves and their native cities as worthy of respect and praise.

An important exponent of Venetian literary ideals was Pietro Bembo (1470-1547), who had promoted the vernacular language.⁸ Bembo’s ideas were expressed in music by Adrian Willaert, the *maestro di cappella* at the Cathedral of Saint Mark in Venice from 1527-1562.⁹ Willaert set many vernacular texts, including Petrarch’s sonnets, in polyphonic madrigals for 5 and 6 voices and dialogues for 7 voices during the 1530s and 1540s.

4 Bruno Brunelli, "Due Accademie Padovane del Cinquecento," *Atti e memorie del R. Accademia di scienze, lettere, ed arti in Padova* 36 (Padua, 1920)

5 Bruno Brunelli, "Francesco Portinari e le cantate degli accademici padovani," *Atti del Reale Istituto Veneto di scienze, lettere, ed arti* 79 (Padua, 1919-1920), 596.

6 Lanfranco Franzoni, "Antiquari e Collezionisti del Cinquecento," in *Storia della Cultura Veneta* (Vicenza, 1980), 3/III: 232-233.

7 Turrini, Giuseppe, *L'Accademia Filarmonica di Verona dalla fondazione (Maggio 1543 al 1600)* (Verona: 1941), 84.

8 Pietro Bembo, *Prose delle volgar lingua*. (Ed. Mario Marti. Padua, 1967)

9 Martha Feldman, *City Culture and the Madrigal at Venice* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1995), 227.

The texts and music of Portinaro's compositions reflect these Venetian ideals. In the print for the *Costanti* four compositions are elegant settings of Petrarch's sonnets. "Occhi, piangete," for 7 voices, is outstanding among these. This book also has two settings of other poems by Petrarch, a *sestina* and *canzone*, and one on a text by Bembo himself.

The print for the *Elevati* has one sonnet by Petrarch and, three anonymous sonnets. Portinaro's pieces have stylistic similarities with those on the same or similar texts by Willaert. Portinaro writes 5- and 6-voice madrigals in a dense contrapuntal texture, or 7- and 8-voice dialogues which employ some homophony, and he uses an elegant and restrained musical style. His subtly crafted motives do not call attention to themselves, but move with beautiful fluidity. Chromaticism is reserved for the most harsh or sad words of the texts.

Besides the homage paid to Venetian literary and musical ideals, there is another strain of thought in the compositions for the academies, and that is the desire of the academicians to present themselves and their *patrie* as worthy of the highest respect and praise. Perhaps this glorification of themselves and their homelands was one way that these proud members of ancient *terraferma* families could express a reaction to their subjugation by the Venetian state.

Besides compositions on Petrarchan texts, Portinaro's books of 1557 and 1560 contain many pieces that appear to have been written for specific academic occasions. The texts refer to the academicians as a group, to their emblems and mottos, and to features of the local landscape. Several pieces are dedicated to individual members. For example, in the 1557 print, *Signor in cui valor* includes praise of the Porto family, and in the 1560 print, *Hor' al piu alto ciel* concludes, "in cielo e tra noi sempre rissone Conte di sanguine Gentil Leone" (in heaven and among us resounds always [the name of] hereditary Count Gentil Leone). This piece also refers to Leone as "novo Prencipe eletto" (newly elected Prince). Other pieces in both collections have similar references, and they may have been performed at ceremonies installing officers and new members. The poetry of these occasional pieces is anonymous.

In conclusion, while the academies for which Portinaro worked were active in the musical life of the Veneto, it is difficult to know the details of the context for the music dedicated to them. Composer and academicians have left few traces of their activities, so we must look at their poetry and music for clues about their thoughts, interests, and tastes. The *Costanti* and *Elevati* were undoubtedly influenced by Venetian literary and musical ideals, but they also wished to present themselves as worthy and equal participants in a culture dominated by Venice. The academicians' literary-musical praise of themselves and their *patrie* has a political sub-text, so that the artistic products of the academies are intimately connected to the social and political realities of their lives.

Further research into the connection between Portinaro, his music, and the academies of the Veneto must involve delving into the letters, diaries, and other records left by the noble academicians, their families, and their friends. Perhaps we may yet find the kinds of descriptions of music, musicians, instruments, and performance practice that would assist us in reconstructing a richer context for sixteenth-century academic music in the *terraferma* of the Venetian empire.



Landscape with Goat by Titian (Tiziano Vecellio) (Italian, Venetian, ca. 1488–1576, contemporary of Portinaro)

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- If you work for a company that matches charitable contributions, please check with your Human Resources department to see if they will match your contribution to AEMA.

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If you participate actively in early music, please fill in medium and check performance category:

Instrument or Voice Beginner Intermediate Advanced Professional

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- Up to six (6) subsidies between now and June 30th, 2008
- Each subsidy will be a maximum of \$200
- One subsidy per group or organization during this time span
- Each receiving group must be a member of AEMA in good standing
- The subsidy will support an audience event, such as a pre-concert discussion/lecture or reception.
- AEMA must be permitted to display its promotional materials.

Both in the program flyer and verbally during the event, it must be stated:

This event is cosponsored / supported by AEMA.

People are invited to join AEMA.

There will need to be two (2) complimentary tickets available for AEMA representatives.

Applications will be accepted immediately. Please send a letter of interest and explain your project.

Email Vicki Porter-Fink (preferred): sbvic@comcast.net

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