

# bella dama

baroque cantatas



Raffaele Pé  
countertenor

Spiritato!

# Bella dama

## Baroque cantatas

Raffaele Pé *countertenor*

### Spiritato!

Kinga Ujszászi *violin 1*

James Toll *violin 2*

Joanne Miller *viola*

Alice Manthorpe Saunders *cello*

Kate Aldridge *bass*

László Rózsa *recorder*

Jadran Duncumb *theorbo*

Nicolás Mendoza *harpsichord/organ*

About Raffaele Pé:

*'[...] glorious sound, intense and dramatic eloquence'*  
Il Corriere

*'[...] stand-out vocal talent was on display in young countertenor Raffaele Pé'*  
The Irish World

Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741)

**Cessate, omai cessate**, RV 684

- |  |        |
|--|--------|
| 1. Cessate, omai cessate               | [1:58] |
| 2. Ah ch'infelice sempre               | [5:51] |
| 3. A voi dunque ricorro                | [1:20] |
| 4. Nell'orrido albergo ricetta di pene | [3:34] |

Nicola Porpora (1686-1768)

**Salve Regina**

- |                              |        |
|------------------------------|--------|
| 5. Salve Regina              | [4:34] |
| 6. Ad te clamamus            | [1:58] |
| 7. Ad te suspiramus          | [2:42] |
| 8. Eia ergo, advocata nostra | [1:24] |
| 9. Illos tuos misericordes   | [3:16] |
| 10. O clemens, o pia         | [2:33] |

Alessandro Scarlatti (1660-1725)

**Bella dama di nome Santa**

- |  |        |
|--|--------|
| 11. Introduzione                             | [3:30] |
| 12. Tu sei quella, che al nome sembri giusta | [1:01] |
| 13. Dal nome tuo credei                      | [3:22] |
| 14. Fedeltade, ne pur ottien ricetta         | [1:36] |
| 15. Il nome non vanta di santa colei         | [3:56] |

Alessandro Scarlatti

**Infirmita vulnerata**

- |  |        |
|--|--------|
| 16. Infirmita vulnerata puro deficit amore | [5:23] |
| 17. O care, o dulcis amor                  | [0:46] |
| 18. Vulnera percute, transfige cor         | [4:05] |
| 19. Cur, quaeso, crudelis es factus?       | [2:42] |
| 20. Vicisti, amor, et cor meum             | [0:43] |
| 21. Semper gratus desiderabilis            | [2:01] |

Total playing time [58:29]



Raffaele Pé

### **Bella dama: Baroque cantatas**

Forming a tribute to the image of the Lady (the *bella dama*), as represented in Italian eighteenth-century music between Naples and Venice, the four solo cantatas contained in this recording exemplify the representation of women in both sacred and secular texts through this chamber medium.

The role of women in Italy had changed substantially during a campaign of considerable reform that began in the latter half of the seventeenth century and, growing out of the Renaissance period, the Age of Enlightenment was central to this transformation. A movement that was particularly prominent in France, the Age of Enlightenment had grown rapidly becoming increasingly widespread. Begun mainly by philosophers it contributed enormously to reforms in society – including the position of women, who were to take on new levels of importance. The movement's main purpose though was to promote science and other intellectual exchange while being generally opposed to superstitious beliefs, discrimination and the general dominance of the Church and state. Alongside huge advances in science and society, ideas about arts and philosophy were discussed and developed, often consisting of regular meetings in salons or coffee-houses, where women

could act as hostesses.

Changes were considerable and highly visible; e.g. in Italy the death penalty was abolished while the powers of the Church began to retract noticeably. The aristocratic or otherwise wealthy grand tourists, travelling through southern Europe on their lengthy cultural finishing school recorded, albeit sometimes exaggerated and romanticised, images of an Italian society that was increasingly involved with the secular and displaying inflated vanity and pomp. These same grand tourists along with other travellers often expressed admiration at the liberties – both intellectual and social – granted to women in Italy. While women were allowed to become more liberal – the movement abandoned some ideas of tradition where the fairer sex was concerned – they were still inextricably tied to their domestic roles as mothers, wives, keepers of the home and upholders of the family reputation. And while women were to become increasingly vilified as objects of desire and curiosity, men were, perhaps inevitably, still the greater recipients overall of any benefits from the movement.

All forms of the arts were to undergo momentous changes under the Age of Enlightenment, with architecture, paintings (both religious and secular), literature and –

perhaps most importantly – musical works undergoing prodigious evolution. Women generally become more prominent in works of art, with a greater use of the nude in paintings and an increasingly prolific number of secular musical works including opera and the solo cantata (or *cantata da camera*). The genre of opera – where all forms of the arts united into one medium, often framed by spectacular architecture of the buildings where they were produced – experienced rapid growth, with the city of Venice possessing no fewer than seventeen opera houses at its height.

It was alongside these developments in the Baroque opera genre that its close relation the solo cantata also began to emerge. Elements of the solo chamber cantata and its structure and development can be traced back to late madrigals by Claudio Monteverdi, with various contributions to the cantata also coming from such names as Giacomo Carissimi, Francesco Cavalli and Alessandro Stradella, particularly in the lyrical development and style that dominated the peak of the genre in the early-eighteenth century. Many cantatas were composed for continuo and voice only, while others were accompanied by larger groups including violins, sometimes joined by viola and one or more wind instruments. A significant number of chamber cantatas were secular

and were presented in the vernacular Italian, while those works with sacred texts occasionally used the more traditional Latin, sometimes designated as *cantata de chiesa* (church cantata) or solo antiphons. The solo cantata was perhaps the leading form of chamber music in Italy in the early part of the eighteenth century and, significantly, they were written for, and equally popular with, both professional and amateur musicians, often used in domestic situations.

Central to these leaps forward in Italian music was the eldest of the three composers represented here, Alessandro Scarlatti (1660-1725). His contribution as a composer, and also as a teacher of younger generations, was nothing less than considerable. Surprisingly little scholarship has been undertaken about his life and output, with some of the limelight being shared by his son and composer Domenico as well as, latterly, living in the considerable shadow of Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741).

Sicilian by birth, Scarlatti's career was centred around Rome and Naples, and he is often regarded as the spearhead of Neapolitan opera, pioneering the construction and the use of the aria and recitative as well as developing the use of the orchestra. A much celebrated figure in his own lifetime; Scarlatti's contribution was pivotal in

perfecting the already established cantata form, writing close to 600 works in the genre spread over his lifetime as a composer, in addition to over 100 operas – a medium for which he was in huge demand. Even though these works were popular with both amateur and professional musicians, the quality of the music and some of the texts employed were prone to being quite variable but, nevertheless, were never written in a compromising or simplistic style.

The decorated, florid and almost constantly lyrical style that typifies the peak of the Baroque cantata is much in evidence throughout the two cantatas by Scarlatti featured here. In **Belle dama di nome Santa** the deceptively sweet sounding introduction, featuring the recorder, belies the mood of what follows, as the singer states his disgust with his former lover, the *Bella dama*, who has spurned him, stating how she is not deserving of her name, *Santa* (literally meaning sainted). With typical use of the recitative and the *da capo* aria, the slightly unusual character of the music masks the level of vitriol and anger contained in the text, while Scarlatti treats us to a glimpse of humour with the occasional musical joke, such as the sudden jolt into the minor at the word 'l'error'.

A darker mood prevails from the opening of

**Infirmata vulnerata** in which the singer tells of unrequited love, also a text by an unknown author. However, as the cantata unfolds, the grim complexion of the work gradually lifts a little as the singer allows himself to feel hope that his wishes may eventually be fulfilled. As in *Bella dama* frustrations are, perhaps surprisingly, controlled throughout with no sense of chaos or fervent anger. Here though, the mood of desolation is expertly portrayed, as is the infatuation and compelling worship of the fabled woman.

While Antonio Vivaldi's output of cantatas was not as prolific as that of Scarlatti – he is more widely remembered for composing concertos, of which he wrote over 500 – his contribution to the genre is nonetheless significant, and particularly known for its high quality. With a number of questionable attributions, the exact total of Vivaldi's solo cantatas is not entirely definitive, with certain extant works thought to number in the region of thirty-six, while his operas number closer to fifty. Famed for spending much of his career working in Venice, Vivaldi's music was influential and popular during his lifetime, but was largely neglected until its rediscovery, with new discoveries of lost works still occurring today.

Vivaldi's favoured structure for the solo cantata was Recitative – Aria – Recitative – Aria,

and **Cessate, omai cessate**, RV 684, is no exception to this particular pattern. The text, by an unknown author, returns to the theme of love lost. The opening introduction gives way to an accompanied recitative providing a somewhat torn denunciation of the former lover. The first aria sees a lament for the lost love from the singer before a mournful recitative precedes the angry closing aria, in which the passionate emotions of the singer come to the fore.

By far the youngest of the three composers featured here is Nicola Porpora (1686-1768). Born in Naples, Porpora had a varied, yet celebrated career as an opera composer and teacher of singing which saw him work in a variety of major cities beginning at the Neapolitan court and subsequently in Venice, London, Rome, Vienna and Dresden before returning to his native Naples. Among his many pupils were the celebrated castrato Faranelli and the composer Franz Joseph Haydn. His reputation during his own lifetime was sizeable and widespread, particularly in the field of opera, and in 1733 he was invited to take on Handel at London's King's Theatre, resulting in a three year stay in the city. Porpora composed more than forty operas, while also writing well over 100 secular and sacred solo cantatas.

With no narrative contained in the ancient

Marian antiphon text of the **Salve Regina**, the structure and also the overall quality of the work is largely different from its secular equivalent. There is particular calm and sense of adoration in this hymn that reveres the Blessed Virgin Mary. Of unknown certain origin, this comparatively short text was traditionally sung at Compline between Trinity Sunday and Advent and is considerably stretched by Porpora to form a relatively extended work. The opening 'Adagio' is dominated by the decorated word painting and lyrical melisma on the word 'salve' (hail), while the 'Allegretto' of 'Ad te clamamus' that follows shows agitation as cries of anguish are sent to Mary, before the cries become pained sighs. Hope returns with 'Eia ergo, advocata nostra' as Mary is asked to look kindly towards us, before the elegant and beautiful conclusion that talks of the 'sweet Virgin Mary', with a return to the extended melismas of the opening.

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Raffaele Pé and Spiritato! record in St John's Church, Notting Hill Gate, London

## Texts

Antonio Vivaldi

**Cessate, omai cessate**, RV 684

1. Cessate, omai cessate  
rimembranze crudeli  
d'un affetto tiranno;  
già barbare e spietate  
mi cangiaste i contenti  
in un immenso affanno.  
Cessate, omai cessate  
di lacerarmi il petto,  
di trafiggermi l'alma,  
di toglier al mio cor riposo e calma.  
Povero core afflitto e abbandonato,  
se ti toglie la pace  
un affetto tiranno,  
perché un volto spietato, un'alma infida  
la sola crudeltà pasce ed annida.

2. Ah, ch'infelice sempre  
mi vuol Dorilla ingrata,  
ah, sempre più spietata  
m'astringe a lagrimar.

Per me non v'è ristoro,  
per me non v'è più spene.  
E il fier martoro e le mie pene,  
solo la morte può consolar.

*1. Cease, henceforth stop  
savage memories  
of a potent love;  
heartless and remorseless,  
you have changed my joy  
into intense regret.  
Cease, henceforth stop  
to tear up my soul,  
to penetrate my spirit,  
to steal peace and serenity from my heart.  
Woeful, battered and abandoned are you, my heart,  
if a domineering passion  
can deprive you of calm  
because a merciless expression, a unfaithful spirit,  
shelters and fosters nothing but malice.*

*2. Ah, ungrateful Dorilla  
wants me to continue suffering;  
ah, always more unmercifully  
she induces my tears.*

*For me there is no cure,  
for me no more hope.  
Only death will quench  
my pain and sadness.*

*Cessate, omai cessate* (continued)

3. A voi dunque ricorro,  
orridi specchi, taciturni orrori,  
solitari ritiri ed ombre amiche;  
tra voi porto il mio duolo,  
perché spero da voi quella pietade  
che Dorilla inumana non annida.  
Vengo, spelonche amate,  
vengo, specchi graditi,  
alfine meco involto  
in mio tormento in voi resti sepolto.

4. Nell'orrido albergo,  
ricetto di pene,  
potrò il mio tormento  
sfogare contento,  
potrò ad alta voce  
chiamare spietata  
Dorilla l'ingrata,  
morire potrò.

Andrò d'Acheronte  
su la nera sponda,  
tingendo quest'onda  
di sangue innocente,  
gridando vendetta  
ed ombra baccante  
vendetta farò.

*3. So to you,  
hopeless places, soundless horrors,  
solitary caves and friendly shadows,  
that I come with all my sorrow,  
because I hope that you will have compassion,  
that cannot be seen in thankless Dorilla.  
I come, dear caves  
I come, hospitable places,  
until at last, destroyed by my grief,  
I will entomb myself there.*

*4. In this terrible sanctuary,  
hiding from my sorrow,  
I shall be able let go  
of my pains,  
and call out  
'hardhearted and  
thankless Dorilla';  
and perish.*

*I'll go to the grim  
edges of Acheron,  
soiling that river  
with innocent blood,  
crying out for vengeance  
and, like the dark Bacchante,  
I will exact revenge.*

Nicola Porpora  
**Salve Regina**

5. Salve, Regina, Mater misericordiæ,  
vita, dulcedo, et spes nostra, salve.

6. Ad te clamamus exsules filii Hevæ.

7. Ad te suspiramus, gementes et flentes  
in hac lacrimarum valle.

8. Eia, ergo, advocata nostra,

9. Illos tuos misericordes oculos ad nos  
converte; et Jesum, benedictum fructum  
ventris tui, nobis post hoc exsilium ostende.

10. O clemens, O pia, O dulcis Virgo Maria.

Alessandro Scarlatti  
**Bella dama di nome Santa**

12. Tu sei quella, che al nome  
sembri giusta, pietosa, e delli numi  
ogni perfezzion in te riserbi?  
E come bella, e come  
se al girar de tuoi lumi,  
non dai se non tormenti,  
pene, e cordogli acerbi?  
Ah! non bene convienti  
un nome tal se con dolor discerno  
che il nome tuo è mio tormento eterno.

5. *Hail, holy Queen, Mother of Mercy,  
our life, our sweetness and our hope.*

6. *To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve.*

7. *To thee do we send up our sighs,  
mourning and weeping in this valley of tears.*

8. *Turn then, most gracious advocate,*

9. *thine eyes of mercy toward us;  
and after this our exile,  
show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus.*

10. *O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.*

12. *Are you her, that in name  
is just, merciful, and in you is  
all the purities of the gods?  
Then how can it be, comely one, that  
when you turn away your eyes  
you can afford only pain,  
grief, and harsh sorrow?  
Ah! a name like yours does not suit you,  
with heartbreak I can see  
that your name is my unending torture.*

*Bella dama di nome Santa* (continued)

13. Dal nome tuo credei,  
che fosse in te pietà,  
giustizia, e fedeltà,  
ma vidi poi l'error.  
Pietosa se tu sei, il cor  
perché piagarmi?  
Se giusta, a che sprezzarmi,  
se non t'offese il cor?

14. Fedeltade ne pur ottien ricetta  
fel barbaro petto,  
che se fedel tu fossi, a che crudele  
esser così con chi non è infedele?  
I numi, si, si numi,  
volgon pietosi i lumi  
a chi gl'offre devoti,  
incenzi, prieghi, e voti.  
Ma tu barbaro core  
non ascolti li prieghi,  
e pietade anche nieghi  
a chi sol per pietà  
ti chiede amore.

15. Il nome non vanta  
di santa colei  
ch'al par degli Dei,  
non sente pietà,  
ma il nome d'austera,  
di fiera tiranna,  
ch'uccide, che inganna,  
con cruda empietà.

13. *With your name I thought  
that you would be merciful,  
fair, and faithful,  
but then could see my error.  
If you are merciful,  
why is my heart troubled?  
If you are fair, why does my heart fall apart  
Perhaps it displeased you?*

14. *Fidelity is not a cure  
to your savage soul,  
if you were loyal, what is to be gained  
in being brutal with one who has not strayed?  
The gods, yes the gods  
look mercifully  
on one who gives veneration,  
incense, prayers, and offerings.  
But you, cruel heart,  
do not pay heed to prayers,  
and also withhold compassion  
to one who solely with loyalty  
desires love for you.*

15. *The name does not talk  
of saintliness in her  
who does not feel mercy  
like the gods,  
but is a name of cruelty,  
and arrogant despotism,  
that destroys, and manipulates,  
with savage viciousness.*

Alessandro Scarlatti  
**Infirmata vulnerata**

16. Infirmata, vulnerata  
puro deficit amore  
et liquescens gravi ardore  
languet anima beata.

17. O care, o dulcis amor,  
quomodo mutatus es mihi in crudelem,  
quem numquam agnovisti infidelem?

18. Vulnera percute, transfige cor.  
Tormenta pati non timeo.

19. Cur, quaeso, crudelis  
es factus gravis?  
Sum tibi fidelis,  
sis mihi suavis.

20. Vicisti, amor,  
et cor meum cessit amori.

21. Semper gratus, desiderabilis,  
semper eris in me.  
Veni, o care, totus amabilis,  
in aeternum diligam te.

*16. Feeble, bruised,  
it yearns for true love  
and, dissolving with powerful adoration,  
my soul aches.*

*17. Beloved, sweet love,  
how can you be so harsh to me,  
as you know I have never been untrue?*

*18. Injure me, perforate my heart.  
I am not scared to suffer torture.*

*19. Why, I ask, brutal one,  
are you now so cruel?  
I am true to you,  
have mercy on me.*

*20. Love, you have overcome me,  
and my heart succumbs to love.*

*21. Always charming, always delectable,  
you will always be mine.  
Come, my beloved, perfectly loveable,  
I will love you for evermore.*

**Raffaele Pé**

Raffaele Pé is quickly establishing himself as one of the finest Italian countertenors of his generation. Acclaimed for the pureness and the beauty of his voice he has already performed and recorded with many leading conductors. These include Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Paul McCreesh, Nicholas McGegan, Christophe Coin and Claudio Cavina. He has appeared at London Spitalfields, Kings Place, Aldeburgh Festival, Bologna Festival, Amuz Antwerp, Festival van Vlaanderen, Salisbury Art, Brixen Geistliche Musik and PaviaBarocca.

Born in Italy, he started his studies in singing and organ when he was a chorister in Lodi Cathedral, from the age of six under Pietro Panzetti. Continuing his training in London with Colin Baldy and Nicholas Clapton, he was chosen by Sir John Eliot Gardiner for the Monteverdi Apprentices scheme in 2009.

Recent highlights include, Isaac in Charpentier's *Sacrificium Abrahae* and Pastore and Speranza in Monteverdi's *Orfeo* for La Nuova Musica, Handel Duets with La Venexiana, Bach Christmas Oratorio with Christophe Coin and the Ensemble Baroque de Limoges, Handel's *Israel in Egypt* with Nicholas McGegan and Cappella Savaria, and appearances at the side of Marco Beasley in Handel's *Joshua*, *Judas* and *Esther*.

Increasingly in demand on European opera stages, future engagements include Scarlatti's *Venere Amore e Adone* in Rome, collaborations with the renowned Milan orchestra La Verdi, Monteverdi's *Orfeo* in Krakow and Bucharest and Ottone in Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione di Poppea* as part of La Venexiana's 2014 Japanese tour. *Bella dama* will be his first solo recording for Resonus Classics.





## Spiritato!

Spiritato! is an exciting and dynamic group of young musicians based in London, performing music from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Founded in 2008, the group has sought to challenge and delight audiences with innovative programmes featuring lesser-known composers alongside more established names. The group has a special interest in English Restoration theatre music, and has recently been exploring this vibrant and unusual branch of Baroque music.

Recent performances have included *White Night* at the Brighton Early Music Festival in 2011, and a live broadcast of music by Henry Purcell and Godfrey Finger on *In Tune* for BBC Radio 3.

In addition to recording with countertenor Raffaele Pé, the summer of 2012 saw Spiritato! tour the south-west of France.

Members of the group can often be found working with period instrument ensembles across the UK and Europe, including the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique and the Gabrieli Consort and Players.

[www.spiritato.co.uk](http://www.spiritato.co.uk)

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Orchestra manager: William Russell

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