

# LE TRE SOPRANO

*The Three Ladies of Ferrara*



Amanda Forsythe | Amanda Crider | Amanda Powell

JEANNETTE SORRELL – APOLLO'S FIRE



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## *The Three Ladies of Ferrara*

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Amanda Forsythe, *soprano*

Amanda Powell, *soprano*

Amanda Crider, *mezzo-soprano*

APOLLO'S FIRE | *on period instruments*

Jeannette Sorrell, *direction, harpsichord,  
& program design*

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Francisco Fullana & Emi Tanabe, *violin*

Andrew Fouts, *violin & viola*

René Schiffer, *cello*

William Simms & Brian Kay, *archlute, theorbo, & guitar*

Parker Ramsay, *baroque triple harp*

Anthony Taddeo, *percussion*





## I. *Dance of Life*

- ① **El Cant dels Ocells**, traditional Catalan, arr. J. Sorrell 3:59  
Francisco Fullana, violin
- ② Attributed to Stefano LANDI (1587-1639), arr. J. Sorrell 5:05  
**Passacaglia della Vita**  
Amanda Forsythe, Amanda Powell, Amanda Crider

## II. *In the Palace of Ferrara*

- ③ Andrea FALCONIERI (1586-1656), arr. R. Schiffer 2:45  
**Ciaccona in G Major, Primo Libro di Canzone & Sinfonie, 1650**
- ④ Luzzascho LUZZASCHI (c.1545-1607) 1:39  
**Toccata del Quarto Tono**  
Parker Ramsey, baroque triple harp
- ⑤ LUZZASCHI, ed. J. Sorrell 4:04  
**Dolcezza amarissime (Trio for the Concerto delle Donne)**  
Ms. Forsythe, Ms. Powell, Ms. Crider

## III. *Love is too Much*

- ⑥ Alessandro PICCININI (1566-1638) 2:58  
**Toccata in G minor**  
William Simms, theorbo
- ⑦ Biagio MARINI (1594-1663) 2:58  
**Passacalio à 4 in G minor, Op. 22 no. 25**
- ⑧ Samuel Friedrich CAPRICORNUS (1628-1665), arr. J. Sorrell 4:03  
**O Felix Jucunditas, from Theatrum Musicum, 1669**  
Ms. Forsythe, Ms. Powell, Ms. Crider
- ⑨ Benedetto FERRARI (c.1603-1681) 4:41  
**Amanti, io so vi dire – Ms. Forsythe**
- ⑩ MARINI 2:59  
**Sonata sopra Fuggi dolente core, Op. 22 no. 21**
- ⑪ LUZZASCHI, ed. J. Sorrell 3:47  
**Troppo ben può questo tiranno (Trio for the Concerto delle Donne)**  
Ms. Forsythe, Ms. Powell, Ms. Crider

## IV. *Disdain*

- ⑫ Barbara STROZZI (1619-1677), ed. J. Sorrell 4:21  
**Che si può fare, Op. 8 – Ms. Powell**
- ⑬ Claudio MONTEVERDI (1567-1643) 2:29  
**Quel sguardo sdegnosetto, from The Scherzi Musicali – Ms. Crider**
- ⑭ Virgilio MAZZOCCHI (1597-1646) 3:18  
**Sdegno, campion audace – Ms. Forsythe**

## V. *May I have this dance?*

- Diego ORTIZ (c.1510-c.1576), arr. J. Sorrell  
Two Recercadas from *Trattado de Glosas*  
Francisco Fullana, violin; René Schiffer, cello piccolo
- ⑮ **Recercada 7 sobre la Romanesca** 2:43
- ⑯ **Recercada 2 sobre la Passamezzo moderno** 2:28
- ⑰ Juan ARAÑES (died c.1649), arr. J. Sorrell 2:58  
**Un Sarao de la Chacona**  
Ms. Forsythe, Ms. Powell, Ms. Crider
- TOTAL TIME: 57:23**

### *Passacaglia della Vita*

*Oh come t'inganni  
se pensi che gl'anni  
non hann' da finire,  
bisogna morire.*

*È un sogno la vita  
che par sì gradita,  
è breve gioire,  
bisogna morire.*

*Non val medicina,  
non giova la China,  
non si può guarire,  
bisogna morire.*

*Non vaglion sberate,  
minarie, bravate  
che caglia l'ardire,  
bisogna morire.*

*Dottrina che giova,  
parola non trova  
che plachi l'ardire,  
bisogna morire.*

*La morte crudele  
a tutti è infedele,  
ogn'uno svergogna,  
morire bisogna.*

*È pur ò pazzia  
o gran frenesia,  
par dirsi menzogna,  
morire bisogna.  
Si more cantando,  
si more sonando  
la Cetra, o Sampogna,  
morire bisogna.*

### *Dance of Life*

Oh how you deceive yourself  
if you think that your time  
won't come to an end.  
We have to die.

Life is a dream  
that seems so pleasing  
it's a short-lived joy,  
we must die.

Medicine and quinine  
are of no avail;  
we cannot be healed,  
we must die.

Ranting and  
wailing are useless.  
Courage doesn't matter –  
we have to die.

No guiding doctrine  
finds the words  
to allay our fears,  
we have to die.

Cruel death  
betrays us all,  
abases us all,  
we must die.

It's folly to deny it  
and great madness  
to lie about it –  
we have to die.  
We die when singing,  
we die when playing the lyre  
or the bagpipe.  
Die we must!

*Si muore danzando,  
bevendo, mangiando;  
con quella carogna  
morire bisogna.*

*I Giovani, i putti  
e gl'Huomini tutti  
s'hann'a incenerire,  
bisogna morire.*

*I sani, gl'infermi,  
i bravi, gl'inermi  
tutt'hann'a finire,  
bisogna morire.*

*E quando che meno  
ti pensi, nel seno  
ti vien a finire,  
bisogna morire.*

*Se tu non vi pensi  
hai persi li sensi,  
sei morto e puoi dire:  
bisogna morire.*

We die while dancing,  
drinking and eating;  
with that carrion,  
die we must.

Youngsters, infants  
and all human beings  
are turned into ashes,  
we must die.

The healthy, the sick,  
the clever, the helpless,  
all shall perish,  
we must die.

And when you expect it  
the least,  
you feel it in your heart:  
we must die.

If you ignore it,  
you've lost your senses,  
you are dead, and can say:  
we must die.



## O Dolcezze Amarissime

*O dolcezze amarissime d'amore,  
quest'è pur il mio core  
quest'è pur il mio ben  
che più languisco.*

*Che fa meco il dolor se ne gioisco?*

*Fuggite Amor amanti, amore amico,  
o che fiero nemico!  
Allor che vi lusinga, allor che ride,  
condisce i vostri pianti  
con quel velen che dolcemente ancide.*

*Non credete ai sembianti  
che par soave ed è pungente e crudo  
Et è men disarmato all'hor che è nudo.*

## O Felix Jucunditas

*O felix jucunditas et jucunda felicitas,  
Sanctos videre cum sanctis esse  
et esse sanctum,*

*Deum videre et Deum habere in aeternum.  
O felix jucunditas et jucunda felicitas.*

## Oh, Bitter Sweetnesses

Oh, bitter sweetnesses of love,  
this is my heart indeed,  
this is my love indeed  
for which I languish most.

Why does pain stay with me  
if I rejoice for it?

Flee from Love, you lovers!  
Is love a friend?  
Oh, what a fierce enemy!  
While he is alluring you, while he smiles,  
he spices your weeping  
with venom that kills sweetly.

Do not be fooled by his appearance;  
for he seems gentle,  
but is stinging and cruel;  
and is more dangerous when unveiled.

## O Happy Delight

O happy delight and delightful happiness,  
To see the Saints, to be with the Saints,  
and be holy,

To see God and cherish God forever.  
O happy delight and delightful happiness!

## Amanti, io so vi dire

*Amanti, io vi sò dire  
ch'è meglio assai fuggire  
bella Donna vezzosa  
ò sia cruda ò pietosa  
ad ogni modo e via  
il morir per amor è una pazzia.  
Non accade pensare  
di gioir in amare  
amoroso contento  
dedicato è al momento  
e bella Donna al fine  
rose non dona mai senza le spine.*

*Vi vuol pianti a diluvi  
per spegner i vesuvi  
d'un cor innamorato,  
d'un spirito infiammato;  
pria che si giunga in porto,  
quante volte si dice:  
ohimè son morto.*

*Credete'l à costui che per prova può dir  
io vidi io fui se creder no'l volete  
lasciate star che poco importa à me  
seguitate ad'amar  
ad'ogni modo chi dè rompersi il collo  
non accade che schivi  
od'erta ò fondo  
che per proverbio senti sempre dire  
dal destinato non si può fuggire.*

## Lovers, I can tell you

Lovers, I can tell you  
it's much better to flee  
a fair and charming woman.  
Whether she's cruel or merciful,  
by all means, and in any way,  
dying for love is folly!  
The thought of rejoicing  
never occurs when loving.  
A happy lover  
lives for the moment.  
In the end, a beautiful woman  
never gifts roses without thorns.

It takes a flood of tears  
to quench the volcanic blasts  
of a heart in love,  
of a spirit on fire;  
before reaching the harbor,  
how many times we say:  
Alas! I'm dead!

Believe those who've been there and  
can say: "I saw it, I was there." If you  
don't want to believe, don't bother!  
– It doesn't matter to me.  
Go on with loving then.  
In any case, if you break your neck  
while trying to scale the heights  
or descend to the depths,  
just remember the old proverb –  
"You can't escape from fate."



*Donna sò chi tu sei  
amor sò i fatti miei  
non tresco più con voi  
alla larga ambi doi  
S'ogn'un fosse com'io  
saria un balordo Amor e non un Dio!*

## Troppo ben può

*Troppo ben può questo tiranno Amore,  
per far soggetto un core,  
se libertà non val, nè val fuggire  
chi no'l può soffrire.*

*Quando i' penso talor com'arde,  
e punge, i' dico: "Ah core stolto,  
non l'aspettar; che fai?  
Fuggilo sí, che non ti giunga mai."  
Ma non so com'ìl lusinghier mi giunge,  
e sì dolce e sì vago e sì soave,*

*ch'io dico: "Ah core stolto,  
perché fuggito l'hai?  
Prendilo sí, che non ti fugga mai."*

## Che si può fare?

*Lyrics by Gaudenzio Brunacci (1631-1667)*

*Che si può fare?  
Le stelle rubelle non hanno pietà,  
che s'el cielo non da  
un influxo di pace al mio penare  
che si può fare?*

Woman, I know who you are.  
Cupid, I know my stuff.  
You'll fool me no more.  
Stay away, both of you!  
If all were like me,  
Cupid would be considered a fool,  
not a god!

## This tyrant, Love

This tyrant, Love,  
holds too much power  
to subdue a heart.  
Even he who rejects it and flees  
cannot escape suffering.

When I think at how my heart burns  
and stings, I say: "Alas, silly heart,  
don't wait; what are you doing?  
Flee from it! May it never catch you."  
But then that flatterer Love somehow  
returns, so sweetly, so charmingly,  
so gently,  
that I say: "Alas, silly heart,  
why did you flee from it?  
Catch it, may it never slip away."

## What can you do?

What can one do?  
The rebel stars show no mercy;  
if heaven doesn't send a flow  
of peace to my pain,  
What can one do?

*Che si può dire?  
Dagl'astri disastri  
mi piovano ogn'or;  
Che si può dire,  
se perfido amor  
un respiro diniega al mio martire  
che si può dire?*

## Quel sguardo sdegnosetto

*Quel sguardo sdegnosetto  
lucente e minaccioso,  
quel dardo velenoso  
vola a ferirmi il petto,  
Bellezze ond'io tutt'ardo  
e son da me diviso  
piagatemi col sguardo,  
Sanatemi col riso.*

*Armatevi, pupille  
d'asprissimo rigore,  
versatemi su'l core  
un nembo di faville.  
Ma 'labro non sia tardo  
a rattivarmi ucciso.  
Feriscami quel sguardo,  
ma sanimi quel riso.*

*Begl'occhi a l'armi, a l'armi!  
Io vi preparo il seno.  
Gioite di piagarmi  
in fin ch'io venga meno!  
E se da vostri dardi  
io resterò conquiso,  
feriscano quei sguardi,  
ma sanami quel riso.*

What can one say?  
From the stars, disasters  
Rain upon me without end;  
What can one say,  
if evil love  
denies any respite to my torture?  
What can one say?

## That haughty little glance

That haughty little glance,  
radiant and defiant,  
that poisonous dart  
flies to wound my heart.  
Oh beauties, I burn for you  
and feel broken inside.  
Torture me with your glance,  
and heal me with your laughter!

Arm yourself, O eyes,  
with your most cruel hardness;  
pour upon my heart  
a cloud of sparks.  
But may your lips revive me quickly,  
after you've killed me.  
Let that glance strike me;  
but may that laughter heal me.

Oh fair eyes: to arms, to arms!  
I prepare my heart for you.  
Rejoice when torturing me,  
until I faint at last!  
And if I must succumb  
to your darts,  
let those glances wound me,  
but heal me with your laughter!



### *Sdegno, campion audace*

*Sdegno, campion audace  
de la ragion guerriera,  
spiegando sua bandiera  
non vuol più tregua  
nò non vuol più pace.*

*Se t'invita lo sdegno  
arma col suo furore  
rompi quel giogo indegno,  
ah, non ha pace il core  
hor che sdegno l'avviva.*

*Viva lo sdegno, viva  
Ch'innalzando la face  
non vuol più tregua  
nò non vuol più pace.*

### *Disdain, fearless champion*

*Disdain, fearless champion  
of a warlike reason,  
waving its flag,  
wants no more truce,  
No, wants no more peace.*

*If Disdain invites you  
armed with its fury,  
break that woeful yoke!  
Alas, a heart finds no peace  
when Disdain ignites it.*

*Long live Disdain!  
When it raises its face,  
Disdain wants no more truce.  
No, it wants no more peace.*

### *Un Sarao de la Chacona*

*Un sarao de la chacona  
se hizo el mes de las rosas,  
huvo millares de cosas  
y la fama lo pregona.  
A la vida, vidita bona,  
vida vámonos a Chacona.*

*Porque se casó Almadán  
se hizo un bravo sarao,  
dançaron hijas de Anao  
con los nietos de Milán.  
Un suegro de Don Beltrán  
y una cuñada de Orfeo  
començaron un guíneo  
y acabólo un amaçona  
y la fama lo pregona.  
A la vida, vidita bona,  
vida vámonos a Chacona.*

*Salió la Cabalagarda  
Con la mujer del Encenque,  
Y de Çamora el Palenque  
Con la pastora Lisarda.  
La mezquina donna Albarda,  
Trepó con pasta Gonzalo,  
Y un ciego dió con un palo,  
Tras de la braga lindona.  
Y la fama lo pregona:  
A la vida, vidita bona,  
Vida, vámonos a chacona.*

### *A Chaconna Party*

*A chaconna party was given  
in the month of roses.  
Oh, things happened!  
It was the talk of the town.  
To life, to good little life!  
Come and dance the chaconna.*

*For Almedan's wedding,  
a great party was set.  
Anao's daughters danced  
with Milan's grandsons.  
Don Beltran's father-in-law  
and Orfeo's sister-in-law  
danced a guíneo,  
and ended with a wild amazona.  
It was the talk of the town.  
To life, to good little life!  
Come and dance the chaconna.*

*Madame Cabalagarda came out  
with the wife of Mr. Encenque  
And Mr. Palenque from Zamora  
with Lisarda the shepherdess.  
Stingy old Mrs. Abarda  
tricked Gonzalo out of his money.  
And a blind man with a cane  
set off after the lovely underpants.  
It was the talk of the town.  
To life, to good little life!  
Come and dance the chaconna.*





Musicians, 1530s-1540s. Master of the Female Half-Lengths (First half of 16th century). Found in the collection of the State Hermitage, St. Petersburg.

# WOMEN AHEAD OF THEIR TIME

by Jeannette Sorrell

Their names were Laura, Livia, and Anna. Together, they were known in the late 1500's as the *Tre Donne di Ferrara* – the three ladies of Ferrara. Their ensemble was praised by contemporary poets and won highest renown throughout Italy and Germany. However, women were not *supposed* to become famous for their professional achievements. And so, one of them was murdered by her husband – a count – who went unpunished. Thus, this is a tale of revolutionary women ahead of their time, living in an era when women had no protections.

In this album, it has been my pleasure to collaborate with three extraordinary ladies of today – named Amanda, Amanda, and Amanda. The Amandas and I are proud to offer this homage to the unstoppable Italian women who broke the glass ceiling in 1580. We hope that their brilliance and boldness resound through this recording.

## *The Backstory*

In 1579, the quiet town of Ferrara in northern Italy suddenly became a livelier place. The Duke of Ferrara was getting a new bride... and she was 15 years old. Her name was Margherita Gonzaga d'Este.

At 46, Duke Alfonso II was three decades older than his new wife. It was important to keep her happy and entertained. Knowing that she had a passion for music, Alfonso encouraged her to seek out ladies-in-waiting with significant musical skill. Margherita quickly hired three extraordinary young female singers. And thus, the *Concerto delle Donne* (Consort of Ladies) was born.

The senior member of the trio was Laura Peverara, age 30. The others were Anna Guarini, age 17, and Livia d'Arco, age 15. All three of them were instrumentalists as well as singers. The ensemble soon brought international prestige to Duke Alfonso and his court. Praised by contemporary





Alfonso d'Este - Duke of Ferrara (Titian)

commentators and music publishers as “*virtuose giovani*” (young virtuosas), the ensemble’s fame spread across Italy. The *Concerto delle Donne* was active for 17 years, until the Duke’s death in 1597.

The *Tre Donne* revolutionized the role of women as professional artists in Italy. They were paid salaries and received dowries and apartments in the ducal palace. Several of the greatest poets of the time, including Tarquinio Tasso, wrote poems in their honor – both as individuals and as an ensemble. By 1600, thanks largely to the success of the *Tre Donne*, a talented female artist or musician in Italy could have a viable career, independent of her husband or father.

However, as we have seen today, progress in equality for women (or for people of color) can lead to a backlash from those who feel threatened. The *Tre Donne* knew that prominence and renown as female professional artists *could* bring great danger – but this did not stop them.

The young Anna Guarini, like her patroness Margherita, was given in an arranged marriage to a powerful man who was much older than her – the Count Ercole Trotti. While Duke Alfonso was alive, Anna remained safe. But in 1597, the Duke died. A few months later, Anna was murdered by her jealous husband, Count Trotti, while she lay ill with a fever. Trotti was never punished. As shocking as this seems, it was not an unusual story at all. (To mention two examples, Count Trotti’s own mother had been murdered by his father in the same villa in which Anna died. And composer Carlo Gesualdo, who worked for a time with the *Concerto delle Donne*, was never punished for having murdered his own wife.)

Weeks after Anna’s murder, the final blow came to the court of Ferrara: Pope Clement VIII took advantage of the Duke’s recent death to annex Ferrara to the Papal States. Duchess Margherita and the remaining courtiers had to abandon Ferrara in disarray. In what must have been a painful experience, Livia d’Arco and Laura Peverara, the two remaining members of the consort, sang a final performance for the Duchess just before her departure. Thus, the renowned ensemble came to a tragic end.

## *The Legacy*

The artistry of the *Concerto delle Donne* lived on through the musical style they created, which spread throughout Europe and remained prominent for 50 years. Their work also inspired the creation of similar ensembles, including at the powerful court of the Medici family.

While the three young ladies were the virtuosi, their in-house composer and director also deserves huge credit for his musical innovations. **LUZZASCHO LUZZASCHI** was born in 1545 and appointed principal organist at the Ferrara court at the age of 19. He had already been serving in that role for 14 years when he took on the added responsibility of leading, mentoring, and composing for the *Concerto delle Donne*. His adventurous madrigal-writing for these





O dolcezz'amarissime d'amore

ladies highlighted the ensemble's signature style of florid, highly ornamented singing.

Like his young female protégés, Luzzaschi was ahead of his time. His greatest musical innovation was the use of multiple ornamented upper voices – from one voice singing diminutions (16th-notes or 32nd-notes) above an instrumental accompaniment, to two or three voices singing varying diminutions at once. This type of singing requires extraordinary lightness in the quick ornamentation. The music is also somewhat complex rhythmically, as the notes are used in service of the poetic lyrics rather than the other way around. Many listeners found this practice remarkable. It is still striking today.

Luzzaschi was an important influence not only on his students, such as Frescobaldi and Gesualdo, but also on the great **CLAUDIO MONTEVERDI**. Born in nearby Cremona around the same time as Livia d'Arco and Anna Guarini, Monteverdi grew up in the shadow of the famous young ladies of Ferrara and their composer-director.

Monteverdi's bold use of dissonance, florid melismas, and musical notes serving the poetic lyrics did not come out of nowhere. Like Mozart, he arrived at a moment in history when a style that had been primarily created by others was ready for a genius to come and bring it to its culmination. Monteverdi's masterpieces were a response, at least in part, to the sounds he was hearing from down the road – where three girls and their teacher spent 17 years creating something astonishing and brilliant.





## A WOMAN'S JOURNEY: *Love and Life, Disdain and Dancing*

### I. *Dance of Life*

For hundreds of years, Italians have always looked west across the sea to the shores of Spain. Our program opens and closes with the alluring sounds of Catalan and Aragon, where many Italian musicians visited and soaked up the ambiance. We begin with the haunting traditional Catalan melody *El Cant dels Ocells* (*Song of the Birds*), performed by our Spanish violinist Francisco Fullana. This sets an evocative mood for the *Passacaglia della*



Stefano Landi

### *Vita (Dance of Life)* by STEFANO LANDI.

Landi's "Dance of Life" is a delightfully ironic meditation on the inevitability of Death. The song's sardonic refrain – *Bisogna morire*, we all must die – resonates strongly today for those who think about intensifying climate change and growing political turmoil. Landi was born in 1587 and grew up in Rome. In his early 30's, he spent two years in Venice where he encountered the influence of the *Tre Donne*, Luzzaschi, and Monteverdi. Landi composed this *Passacaglia* for two sopranos and lute or harpsichord, but I arranged it to feature all three of our sopranos as well as strings and plucked instruments.

### II. *In the Palace of Ferrara*

After a lively setting of the *Ciaccona* dance by southern Italian composer **ANDREA FALCONIERI**, we meet the work of **LUZZASCHI**. His instrumental keyboard toccata, *Toccata del Quarto*





Castello Estense and the Panfilio Canal, Ferrara (Giuseppe Coen 1812–1856)

*Tono*, is performed here on Italian triple harp (as Laura Peverara, the harpist of the *Tre Donne*, might have played it).

This leads into one of Luzzaschi's virtuosic trios for the *Concerto delle Donne*, titled *Dolcezza amarissime* – a reflection on the intense bittersweetness of love. Full of sighs and palpitations, this piece performed by three beautiful young women must have entranced the Duke and the male courtiers of Ferrara.



Andrea Falconieri

### III. *Love is too Much*

**SAMUEL CAPRICORNUS** was a Czech-Hungarian composer who was trained by Italians, as most musicians were in baroque times.

Eventually, he became Kapellmeister (music director) in Stuttgart. There, he complained about his musicians' unruliness, gluttony and drunkenness. His slinky vocal trio, *O Felix Jucunditas* (*O Happy Delight*) seems to evoke a smoky room with delightfully drunken musicians. Capricornus composed this piece for three male voices: alto, tenor, and bass. I arranged it for two sopranos and a mezzo. If a hint of jazz comes through the smoky haze in our performance, we hope you won't mind.



Samuel Capricornus

In Luzzaschi's *Tropo ben più questo tiranno*, his three ladies tell us that Love is a tyrant with too much power – (a deeply ironic message considering what Anna's husband was like). **BENEDETTO FERRARI's** *Amanti, io so vi dire* continues the irony, as its deeply cynical text is disguised by a lively and seemingly happy ground bass, the *Ciaccona*. The *Ciaccona* was a highly popular party dance and chord pattern, known throughout Italy and Spain around 1600.

### IV. *Disdain*

The need to show disdain to one's lover was a common theme in Italian 17th-century poetry and song.

**BARBARA STROZZI's** *Che si può fare* (*What can you do?*) is a devastating soliloquy by a rejected lover. Strozzi was among the last composers and performers in the style created by Luzzaschi and the *Tre Donne*. Born about 20 years after the *Concerto delle Donne* disbanded, Strozzi was renowned as a poet and composer. With eight volumes of her music published in her lifetime, she was considered the most prolific composer – man or woman – of printed secular vocal music in Venice in the mid-17th century.





Barbara Strozzi  
The Viola da Gamba Player  
(Bernardo Strozzi)

In baroque Venice, there were thousands of illegitimate children. One of them, it seems, was Barbara Strozzi. Scholars believe she was the illegitimate daughter of Giulio Strozzi, a politically influential poet and librettist in Venice, and his servant Barbara Isabella. Giulio referred to Barbara as his “adoptive daughter” and helped her establish a musical career. As a child, Barbara was noticed for her captivating singing and her ability to accompany herself

on the lute. Her father arranged for her to study composition with the prominent composer Francesco Cavalli. By the age of fifteen, Barbara was described as “*la virtuosissima cantatrice di Giulio Strozzi*” (Giulio Strozzi’s virtuosic singer). When Barbara was a teenager, Giulio actively started to publicize her musical talents. He established an academy for aristocrats and musicians, thus ensuring performance opportunities for Barbara.

Barbara Strozzi never married, but she had four children with the Venetian nobleman Giovanni Paolo Vidman. Vidman, a patron of the arts, was already married before he met Strozzi. It is assumed that Strozzi was his concubine. In a letter written after Barbara’s death, it is reported that she “was raped by Count Vidman, a Venetian nobleman.”

Strozzi’s lament is followed by disdained soliloquies by **CLAUDIO MONTEVERDI** and **VIRGILIO MAZZOCCHI**. Mazzocchi’s piece is another lively *Ciaccona*.

## V. *May I have this dance?*

At the end, the *Ciaccona* dance leads us back to Spain, where villagers loved to sing together, dance together, and share laughter and stories together. **JUAN ARAÑES** gave us a folk-inspired *Ciaccona* setting titled *Un Sarao de la Chacona (A Chacona Party)*. Arañes was born in Aragon in the early 1600’s but worked primarily in Italy. We offer his delightful bonbon in honor of all the women who have inspired us for centuries – wives, mothers, villagers, artists, and especially... Laura, Livia, and Anna.

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## Meet the Tre Donne



The *Tre Donne di Ferrara* all came from upper-class backgrounds, but they would not have had entrée into the court of Ferrara were it not for their musical talent. One came from a minor noble family; one was the daughter of a wealthy tutor; and one came from a prominent family of artists.

**Laura Peverara** or **Peperara** (c. 1550 –1601) was the eldest of the trio. A virtuoso singer, harpist, and dancer, she grew up in courtly society since her father was a tutor of princes. Laura was especially praised for her singing of solo madrigals. Three anthologies were put together in her honor, including one by Torquato Tasso (*Il Lauro verde*) in celebration of her marriage to Count Annibale Turco. In addition, many madrigals were dedicated to her.

**Livia d'Arco** (c. 1565–1611) was the daughter of a minor Italian noble from Mantua. She arrived at the court of Ferrara around the age of 15 – perhaps sent because of her musical potential. She began studying the viola da gamba with Luzzascho Luzzaschi, who served as director of the Concerto delle Donne. Poems were written in Livia's honor, including by Tasso. In 1585 she was married to Count Alfonso Bevilacqua.

**Anna Guarini**, Contessa Trotti (1563 –1598) was one of the most renowned singers of the era. The daughter of the great poet Giovanni

Battista Guarini (author of *Il pastor fido*), she joined the Concerto delle Donne at the age of 17, immediately attracting attention for her beautiful singing. She also played the lute. In 1584 she was given in an arranged marriage to Count Ercole Trotti, who was much older than her. In 1596 she was accused, apparently without justification, of having an affair with a prominent military advisor to the Duke. Duke Alfonso ordered Count Trotti not to harm Anna. However, shortly after the Duke's death in 1597, Trotti murdered Anna with a hatchet while she lay ill with a fever. Her own brother, Girolamo, was an accomplice to the murder. Count Trotti was never punished. Instead, he was pardoned by the Duke's successor. Years later, Anna's brother admitted that she was innocent of adultery.

– J.S.







Soprano **AMANDA FORSYTHE** enjoys bringing virtuoso artistry to major stages on both sides of the Atlantic. Praised as “simply dazzling” (*New York Times*), she has appeared repeatedly at such venues as the Royal Opera House at Covent Garden and the Rossini Festival in Italy. She is a frequent soloist with the Boston Early Music Festival, with whom she can be heard on the GRAMMY®-winning recording of Charpentier’s *La descente d’Orphée aux enfers*.

Ms. Forsythe has enjoyed a long and fruitful artistic partnership with Apollo’s Fire and Jeannette Sorrell. Forsythe’s solo debut album, *The Power of Love* with Sorrell and Apollo’s Fire, became an international bestseller in 2015, with *BBC Music Magazine* writing, “Forsythe sets arias on fire; her handling of war-horses like ‘Da tempeste’ (*Giulio Cesare*) will amaze even the jaded connoisseur.” She can also be heard on the Apollo’s Fire albums of Handel’s *Messiah*, Bach’s *St. John Passion*, works of Mozart, and her second solo album *Heavenly Bach*.

In North America, Ms. Forsythe has appeared with such orchestras as the Boston Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony, Boston Baroque, and recently made her début with the New York Philharmonic under the baton of Jeannette Sorrell. Opera house engagements have included Handel’s *Semele* (Philadelphia) and Pamina in Mozart’s *Die Zauberflöte* (Seattle Opera).

Her European concerts have included the Monteverdi Choir and Orchestra with John Eliot Gardiner, The Moscow Philharmonic, Rome’s Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia with Antonio Pappano, and Les Talens Lyriques with Christophe Rousset. On Europe’s opera stages, she has appeared at the Berlin Komische Oper and the opera houses of Geneva and Munich, in addition to several engagements at the Rossini Festival in Pesaro and Covent Garden, where her most recent performances as Marzelline in *Fidelio* received rave reviews.

Ms. Forsythe toured Europe and the USA with French countertenor Philippe Jaroussky, performing works based on the Orfeo myth. She recorded the role of Euridice with Jaroussky in the 1774 version of Gluck’s *Orfeo*, on the ERATO label. A graduate of Vassar College, she grew up in New York City and makes her home in Boston.



Soprano **AMANDA POWELL** has been praised as “the star of the evening” (*Seen and Heard International*, UK) and “charismatic and theatrically arresting” (*San Francisco Chronicle*). A highly versatile musician, she has toured internationally as a soloist in baroque opera, oratorio, and crossover folk programs. Her tour performances with GRAMMY®-winning baroque orchestra Apollo’s Fire (Jeannette



Sorrell) include such venues as the National Concert Hall of Ireland in Dublin, the Irish National Opera House, the Aldeburgh Festival (UK), the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the National Gallery in Washington, and Zellerbach Hall in San Francisco, among others. Her 2019 debut as *Messiah* soloist with the Calgary Symphony won kudos as “the soloist of the night... singing to perfection.” As a recording artist, Ms Powell has been featured on several Apollo’s Fire albums including *Sugarloaf Mountain*, *Sephardic Journey*, *Christmas on Sugarloaf Mountain*, and *O Jerusalem!*. Her 2015 solo debut album, *Beyond Boundaries*, is an intimate program of folk, jazz, and global music. She is a fluent improviser and has collaborated with such artists as Bobby McFerrin, Jamey Haddad, and Sheila Jordan. Amanda currently tours extensively with Italian folk-jazz group, Alla Boara.



Mezzo-soprano **AMANDA CRIDER**, recognized for her “gleaming vocalism” (*Boston Globe*), “star acting” (*Urban Milwaukee*), and “deep expressivity” (*New York Times*), has performed as a soloist with Apollo’s Fire in performances of Handel’s *Messiah*, Bach’s *B Minor Mass*, Monteverdi’s *L’Orfeo*, and their celebration of early American Music, *Come to the River*. In demand for performances of classical

and contemporary opera alike, Ms. Crider has sung leading roles with opera companies across the US. She created the roles of Alma in Keeril Makan and Jay Scheib’s *Persona* at Los Angeles Opera, and The English Teacher in Gregory Spears opera *Paul’s Case* with UrbanArias and the Prototype Festival. She has also performed the role of Poppea in *Lincoronazione di Poppea* with Florentine Opera, Cherubino in *Le Nozze di Figaro* with Florida Grand Opera, Des Moines Metro Opera and Eugene Opera, and was called “the true star” in Boston Lyric Opera’s production of Mark Anthony Turnage’s opera *Greek*. Other appearances include roles with Dallas Opera, New York City Opera, Opera Boston, The Castleton Festival, Glimmerglass Opera, and Opera Omaha, among others. She has appeared as a soloist with ensembles including the Calgary Philharmonic, Jacksonville Symphony, New World Symphony, Nu Deco Ensemble, Bach Festival Society of Florida, International Contemporary Ensemble, and is a core member of the GRAMMY® nominated ensemble Seraphic Fire. Ms. Crider has been a prize winner and finalist in many competitions, including the José Iturbi International, Jensen Foundation, Joy in Singing Debut Artist, Oratorio Society of New York, Center for Contemporary Opera, and is a recipient of a Richard F. Gold Career Grant from the Shoshana Foundation. Crider was also a 2022 Recipient of the Alumni Enterprise Award from the Innovation Institute at Music Academy of the West. Ms. Crider is the founder of the Miami-based concert series IlluminArts, and is the Executive Director of the GRAMMY® winning ensemble Roomful of Teeth.





**“Sorrell led a resplendent performance... breathtaking.”**  
– NEW YORK TIMES

GRAMMY®-winning conductor Jeannette Sorrell is recognized internationally as one of today’s most compelling interpreters of Baroque and Classical repertoire, and a leader in creative programming exploring multicultural roots. She is the subject of the documentary by Oscar-winning director Allan Miller, titled *PLAYING WITH FIRE: Jeannette Sorrell and the Mysteries of Conducting* (commercially released in 2023).

Sorrell studied harpsichord with Gustav Leonhardt in Amsterdam; and conducting at the Aspen and the Tanglewood music festivals under Leonard Bernstein and Roger Norrington. She won First Prize in the 1991 Spivey International Harpsichord Competition, competing against over 70 harpsichordists from four continents.

As a conductor, Sorrell made her New York Philharmonic debut in 2021 and Philadelphia Orchestra debut in 2022, both to rave reviews. She has repeatedly conducted the New York Philharmonic, Pittsburgh Symphony, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Seattle Symphony, Utah Symphony, Florida Orchestra, New World Symphony, and

Philharmonia Baroque in San Francisco; and has also led the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic (Bach’s *St. John Passion*), Royal Scottish National Orchestra, the Baltimore Symphony, Houston Symphony, Indianapolis Symphony, the National Symphony at the Kennedy Center, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, the Orchestra of St. Luke’s at Carnegie Hall, and Opera St. Louis with the St. Louis Symphony, among others.

As founder and conductor of APOLLO’S FIRE, she has led the renowned ensemble at London’s BBC Proms, Carnegie Hall, and many international venues. Sorrell and Apollo’s Fire have released 33 commercial CDs, including 14 bestsellers on the Billboard classical chart and a 2019 GRAMMY® winner. Her CD recordings of the Bach *St. John Passion* and Vivaldi’s *Four Seasons* have been chosen as best in the field by the *Sunday Times of London* (2020 and 2021). Her *Monteverdi Vespers* recording was chosen by *BBC Music Magazine* as one of “30 Must-Have Recordings for Our Lifetime” (September 2022). With over 18 million views of her YouTube videos, Sorrell has attracted national attention and awards for creative programming.



# APOLLO'S FIRE

*“Sorrell and her dazzling period band... are incandescent.”* – THE SUNDAY TIMES, London



Named for the classical god of music and the sun, Apollo's Fire is a GRAMMY®-winning ensemble. Founded by award-winning harpsichordist and conductor Jeannette Sorrell, the period band is dedicated to the baroque ideal that music should evoke the various *Affekts* or passions in the listeners. The Apollo's Fire musicians are creative artists who share Sorrell's passion for drama and rhetoric.

Apollo's Fire has performed six European tours, with sold-out concerts at the BBC Proms in London, Madrid's Royal Theatre, Bordeaux's Grand Théâtre de l'Opéra, the National Concert Hall of Ireland, and venues in France, Italy, Austria, and Portugal.

Chosen by the *DAILY TELEGRAPH* as one of London's "Best 5 Classical Concerts of the Year," Apollo's Fire's 2014 London performance was praised for "superlative music-making... combining European stylishness with American entrepreneurialism."

North American tour engagements include Carnegie Hall (twice), the Tanglewood and Ravinia festivals (3 times), the Boston Early Music Festival series, the Aspen Music Festival, Library of Congress, the

National Gallery of Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, and major venues in Toronto, Los Angeles, and San Francisco. Most of these concerts have been sold out. In 2021, Apollo's Singers made their debut with the New York Philharmonic under the baton of Jeannette Sorrell, winning rave reviews.

At home in Cleveland and Chicago, Apollo's Fire enjoys sold-out performances at its series, which has drawn national attention for creative programming.

With over 18 million views of its YouTube videos, Apollo's Fire has released 33 commercial CDs and won a GRAMMY® award in 2019 for the album *Songs of Orpheus* with tenor Karim Sulayman. Fourteen of the ensemble's CD releases have become best-sellers on the classical Billboard chart, including Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*, Monteverdi *Vespers*, Bach's *Brandenburg Concertos*, Biber's *Mystery Sonatas*, and Sorrell's crossover programs including *Sacrum Mysterium – A Celtic Christmas Vespers*; *Sugarloaf Mountain – An Appalachian Gathering*; and *Sephardic Journey – Wanderings of the Spanish Jews*.





# LE TRE SOPRANO

*The Three Ladies of Ferrara*

Recorded at First Baptist Church of Greater Cleveland,  
Nov 6, 7, 9, & 10, 2020

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