

Significatio-GESUALDO (2001)

Cinque madrigali a cinque voci

-Commission for the Hallenser Madrigalisten-

The process of bringing a composition into being is often strange, incomprehensible, sometimes even boring. So it was with my madrigals **Significatio-GESUALDO cinque madrigali a cinque voci**.

In Spring 2000 I received the commission from the renowned *Hallenser Madrigalisten* to compose a cycle of madrigals. A particular and decisive cause for the creation of this composition was the personal and direct contact with a member of the *Hallenser Madrigalisten*, Holger Schneider. Only he knows the search we had for suitable texts, the rejection of my original ideas, and the despair of the brave and imprudent task of composing Madrigals in the 21st century, of throwing new light on old texts from the 16th and 17th centuries in different languages, of enquiring of the actual value the texts held and of setting them to music anew. I am very grateful to Holger Schneider for his encouraging words during this stormy and sometimes seemingly hopeless time.

After a year of searching and researching the catalogue of an Art Exhibition fell into my hands quite by accident, its theme: **GESUALDO!** Art became once again for me, as it often had, my inspiration. Crystal clear and almost complete I saw (and heard) the pieces before me, and, as if in a state of intoxication, was able to compose them all in a few days:

What appeared important to me?

- ? “only” concentrating on one composer, Gesualdo.
- ? fixing on one language, Italian.
- ? the sound of the Italian language, also bringing its tonal colour into the pieces.
- ? the theatrical and dramatic aspects of Gesualdo’s biography as sources of inspiration.
- ? the filtering of Gesualdo’s emotional states from the original drafts and concentrating on **one** “state”.
- ? the shredding, collaging, shattering, and mutilation of the madrigal texts from the Madrigal Books IV-VI which I used.
- ? the creation of contrast using contemporary elements of style from whispers to screams.
- ? paying homage to the ideals of sound of these former times and trying to bring them back to life.
- ? the possibility which was offered of coupling the Madrigals of Gesualdo with my contemporary versions in performance.

Dolcissima mia vita!

Bernd Franke

Leipzig, April 2001