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# Episode 9: Splendors of Baroque Italy

## La Grande Bande

Alyssa Anderson, mezzo-soprano  
Maryne Mossey, viola da gamba & baroque cello  
TJ Dalton, theorbo  
Michael Thomas Asmus, harpsichord

Friday 12 February 2021

### Program

Amarilli mia bella from <i>Le nuove musiche</i> (1602)	Giulio Caccini (1551 – 1618)
Non se so quel sorriso from <i>Il primo libro</i> (1618)	Francesca Caccini (1587–1637)
Io mi distruggo from <i>Il primo libro</i>	F. Caccini
*Arpeggiata from <i>Libro primo d'intavolatura di chitarrone</i> (1604)	Giovanni Girolamo Kapsberger (1580–1651)
Cantan gl'augelli from <i>Raccolta di arie a voce sola, e madrigali a più voci</i> (c. 1620)	Settimia Caccini (1591–1660)
Movetevi à pietà from <i>Le nuove musiche</i>	G. Caccini
*Ricercar No. 1 in g from <i>Ricercari, canone e sonata per violoncello</i> (1689)	Domenico Gabrielli (1651–1659)
Lasciatemi qui solo from <i>Il primo libro</i> (1618)	F. Caccini
Core di questo core from <i>Raccolta di arie a voce sola, e madrigali a più voci</i>	S. Caccini
*Canario from <i>Libro quarto d'intavolatura di chitarrone</i> (1640)	G. G. Kapsberger
Io parto, amati lumi from <i>Le nuove musiche</i>	G. Caccini
Chi desia di saper from <i>Il libro primo</i>	F. Caccini
*Ricercar No. 3 in D from <i>Ricercari, canone e sonata per violoncello</i>	D. Gabrielli
Alme, luci beate from <i>Nuove musiche e nuova maniera di scriverle</i> (1614)	G. Caccini
Due luci ridenti from <i>Raccolta di arie a voce sola, e madrigali a più voci</i>	S. Caccini
* Works for solo instrument	

## Program Notes

Nothing screams “Baroque” to me more than the early forms of Baroque Italian song. This entire program is an exploration of exactly that: early Italian baroque vocal music written by its first composers. Our program has an even more special significance because it features three composers from the same family.

Working in the Medici Court for a good share of their lives, the Caccini family is one of music history’s most important and also most forgotten contributors. While Giulio Caccini and his collection *Le nuove musiche* are remembered well, his daughters, Francesca and Settimia, are not.

The program featured in Episode 9 of our season@HOME series works to illustrate their importance, not only in Florence, but throughout Europe in the seventeenth century. Giulio, along with other influential Florentines, would help create the beginnings of the Baroque style of music.

### *Giulio Caccini*

Giulio, sometimes called “Giulio Romano” was born in Rome in 1551. He was trained as a singer in the choir at St. Peter’s Basilica—not to be confused with the choir in the Sistine Chapel (the Pope’s personal choir). On a visit to Rome in the Florentine Ambassador took notice of Giulio’s talents and took him to Florence.

While in Florence Giulio continued his musical training for voice, learning how to do vocal ornamentations, as well as composition. He most likely made his solo debut in 1565 for the wedding entertainments of Prince Francesco de’ Medici and Joanna of Austria.

In the mid-1570s, Count Giovanni de Bardi, a Florentine aristocrat, began what was to be called the Florentine Camerata. The goal of the Camerata was to move away from polyphony—music with multiple, independent voices or parts—toward a style which emphasized the sung text.

The new style emphasized the use of rhetorical gestures to highlight the importance of sung text, a concept called the Doctrine of Affections. While the Doctrine itself doesn’t solely focus on sung music, it’s aim in all genres was to move the soul of the listener. In the Camerata’s view, the new style would do just that.

The first operas to use this new style (Italian, “seconda pratica”) were by Jacopo Peri, *Dafne* (1597) and by Peri and Caccini, *Euridice* (1600). A collection of solo vocal works with accompaniment by Caccini followed in 1602 (*Le nuove musiche*).

### *Le Nuove Musiche*

Caccini’s collection has held a prominent place in musicological and pedagogical texts for decades. Although Caccini was not the first to publish such a collection—Domenico Melli published a similar collection in Venice in 1601—his collection has long been the touchstone of Baroque era’s naissance.

The prominence of Caccini’s collection is two-fold: first, Caccini was a servant of the Medici court who had great influence in cultural pursuits of the era. Their influence and power would have allowed them to promote their servants work over another’s.

Second, Caccini's collection includes an important preface where he talks about how one sings. This preface gives great insight into the ways Caccini approached the mechanics of the voice. The preface also helps us understand his tastes in regard to ornamentation and expressing the text.

The selections by Giulio Caccini we're performing on **Episode 9** are all shining examples of the new style the Camerata developed over 30 years of research and debate.

Caccini's division between the "madrigal" and "aria" in *Le nuove musiche* illustrates which pieces are through-composed—think "without form"—and which are strophic—that is, those with the same music for multiple verses. Only one aria by Giulio, "Io parto amati lumi," is performed in the episode.

### *Francesca Caccini*

From that very first performance, Francesca was a member of the Medici's musical establishment. She made her probable debut in 1600 as a chorus singer in *Euridice*, singing amongst her father's students. All sources discussing Francesca's early life mention her wit, intelligence, and grasp of the poetic art—characteristics that come across through her music as well. Francesca was also known as an exceptional singer, taking after her father in that regard.

The Caccini family's trip to Paris in 1604 almost provided her with a permanent position in the French court's musical establishment. Henry IV and Marie de' Medici, king and queen of France, were so taken by Francesca's talents that they offered her a position at court. Her father had different plans for her, and Francesca was destined to return to Italy.

In 1607, Francesca married fellow singer Giovanni Battista Signorini. Her marriage then opened the door for her to become a paid, permanent member of the Medici's musical establishment.

According to scholar Suzanne Cusick, Francesca most often performed for and with the women of the Medici court, what Cusick refers to as the "women's court." This court consisted of the women under Christine de Lorraine's control and supervision—including, for example, the butlers, laundresses, stableboys, and the lady's maids for the four princesses. It is certain that this group of the Medici court heard and participated in Francesca's performances.

Like her father, Francesca also taught singing. Her students included children of the Medici family, other aristocratic children in Florence, and nuns in Florence's convents.

### *Primo libro*

Francesca's 1618 publication *Il Primo Libro delle musiche* ("the first book of musics") is probably one of the most important collections of the era. The collection attests to her pedagogical activities, her deft skills as a singer and composer, and her through understanding of the *second pratica*.

Francesca's collection is divided into two parts in the table of contents. One part for secular pieces and the other for sacred pieces. In the book itself, the pieces are mixed together. The increasing level of complexity and technical demands leads Cusick to believe the book was used as a teaching aid. I agree with this assumption.

The four selections for this episode illustrate not only Francesca's virtuosity but also her complete understanding of the poetry that she sets. Two texts are by anonymous poets (perhaps they were

written by Francesca herself) and two were written by Michelangelo Buonarroti. Only one, “Chi desia di saper” comes from a dramatic work (*Il passatempo*).

One piece, “Io mi disgruggo,” is written for two voices: one soprano and one bass. In the absence of another singer, Maryne plays the bass voice’s part. It’s my belief that Francesca wrote this piece for her and her husband to sing.

### *Settimia Caccini*

Frustratingly little is known about Settimia’s life, likely overshadowed by her father and older sister. What we do know is that Settimia most likely made her debut with her sister in *Euridice*.

In 1604, she travelled to Paris with the rest of the family where her talents also impressed the French court. She was offered positions at various aristocratic households in France, but Giulio had different plans for her.

Settimia and Francesca were supposed to be employed in two Roman households after their 1604 trip. However, those appointments fell through after deaths in both Roman households.

By 1609, Settimia married fellow singer Alessandro Ghivizzani. In arrangement of the marriage, the Medici were supposed to pay her dowry on behalf of Giulio. However, after not paying, the Ghivizzani family kidnapped and ransomed Settimia for the dowry. The stunt likely resulted in Alessandro’s banishment from Tuscany in 1611.

After her husband’s banishment, Settimia and Alessandro moved to Lucca, the family’s city. Settimia returned only occasionally for guest performances until her husband’s death in 1636. In that year she became a member of the Medici’s permanent musical establishment.

### *Raccolta di arie*

The three selections by Settimia come from a manuscript dated to the 1620s. Now held in the music library at Bologna’s conservatory, the manuscript contains the four extant pieces by Settimia. The manuscript is dedicated to a Florentine aristocrat, Filippo del Nero, which provides evidence the manuscript possibly originated in Florence.

The character of the Settimia’s three pieces are in contrast to those of her sister and father. For me, Settimia’s pieces bring a sense of joy and levity that Francesca’s—and most certainly Giulio’s—do not. I’m incredibly fond of these three selections, and I’m thankful to Alyssa for bringing them to my attention.

### *Giovanni Girolamo Kapsberger*

Kapsberger was born in Venice. His father was of German descent who bequeathed Giovanni his Germanic surname. By 1605, Kapsberger was living in Rome and moved in and amongst some of Rome’s most powerful families, such as the Barberini family which spawned a Pope and countless patrons of the arts.

Kapsberger is perhaps best known as a composer for the lute and theorbo (Italian, “chitarone”). The two pieces that TJ is performing on this episode were written at opposite ends of Kapsberger’s life. The first piece, “toccata arpeggiata” (Italian, literally “touched [played] like a harp”) was published in Kapsberger’s first book of pieces for theorbo in Venice in 1604. The second piece, “canario,” was published in Rome in 1640.

The toccata genre is used to warm up the players’ hands before beginning the larger pieces on the program or performance. Toccatas are popular pieces for harpsichords and organs as well.

The canario is a dance from the Canary Islands which was brought to Europe sometime in the early-1500s. By the time of Kapsberger published the piece, like the Sarabande before it, the liveliness of the original canario developed into a slower piece.

#### *Domenico Gabrielli*

Born in Gologna in 1659, Domenico Gabrielli is known today for his virtuosity on the violoncello. Gabrielli composed some of the earliest music for the cello which was just becoming popular in the late seventeenth century.

The cello, like the one Maryne is playing on this episode, developed over some 100 years. The “real” bass violin, of which the cello is a descendent, were slightly larger and tuned slightly differently. By the end of the seventeenth century, the cello overtook the viola da gamba in popularity.

The pieces by Gabrielli on this program come from a 1689 manuscript held in the Biblioteca Estense in Modena. It is rare for us to be able to hear some of the first pieces written for an instrument. I’m grateful to Maryne for agreeing to play these two selections on this episode.

Program notes by MTA.

## About La Grande Bande

With performances called “warm and sensitive” by the Minneapolis Star Tribune, La Grande Bande strives to present innovative, unique, and inspiring musical programs played on the instruments that premiere audiences might have heard. LGB is composed of musicians from across the United States and from around the world who are specialists in the field of Early Music—music written between c. 1600-1800—and who play on historical instruments and sing in an historical manner.

We aim to present “masterworks” alongside lesser-known compositions, illustrating the extensive musical production during the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. Education is crucial to our mission, be it through program notes, through directed-educational events, open rehearsal sessions, or another method. We see incredible value in resurrecting the music written by the great masters of our past; it's a historical, cultural, and musical lesson rolled into one.

To learn more about our musicians, or about our programming, visit [www.lagrandebande.org/about](http://www.lagrandebande.org/about).

## About the Musicians

**Dr. Alyssa Anderson** (mezzo-soprano) is an active performer and arts administrator based in Minneapolis. She received her B.M. in performance from the State University of New York, College at Fredonia, and her M.M. and D.M.A. from the University of Minnesota.

As Artistic Director and vocalist of The Dream Songs Project, a classical voice and guitar duo based in Minneapolis, Alyssa has commissioned twelve major works for the ensemble and premiered numerous pieces by local and national composers in concerts across the US. She is a founding member and current Artistic Director of the experimental chamber group, RenegadeEnsemble, and also performs as The Poem Is Done with saxophonist Dr. Jeffery Kyle Hutchins.

A core member of The Rose Ensemble since 2015, Alyssa has also performed as a soloist with numerous other ensembles and presenting organizations in the Twin Cities, such as Zeitgeist, Mirandola Ensemble, LOFTRecital, 113 Composer Collective, Metamorphosis Opera Theater, Consortium Carissimi, Minnesota Bach Ensemble, Oratorio Society of Minnesota, Kenwood Symphony Orchestra, Twin Cities Lyric Theater, and Bloomington Symphony Orchestra. More information can be found at [AlyssaAnderson.org](http://AlyssaAnderson.org).



Timothy (TJ) Dalton is a native of Long Island, who began his musical career on guitar. He completed his Undergraduate and Masters of Music degrees at Stony Brook University in classical guitar performance under the study of Jerry Willard.

He began playing early music during his time at Stony Brook University. Starting with baroque guitar, he soon progressed to theorbo, archlute, and other historical plucked instruments. He has played with the Stony Brook Baroque Players, Three Village Chamber Players (3VCP), as well as other small ensembles, baroque orchestras, and baroque opera productions.

He has performed across New York, Boston, and Toronto. TJ continues to perform on historical plucked instruments as well as classical guitar in solo and ensemble settings.



Hailed by the Minneapolis Star Tribune as “nimble expressive” and possessing “warmth and sensitivity”, Baroque cellist and violist da gamba, **Maryne Mossey**, is an active performer and teacher based in the Twin Cities. She has performed regularly at venues ranging from Carnegie Hall and Merkin Concert Hall in New York, to the Baroque Room and Sundin Music Hall in Minnesota, with such ensembles as Ensemble 212, the New York Youth Symphony, and the South Dakota Symphony Orchestra. On Baroque cello and viola da gamba, she currently plays with La Grande Bande, and Lyra Baroque Orchestra, as well as other collaborative early music projects around the upper midwest.

Maryne was selected as violist da gamba for the 2019 American Bach Soloists Academy. She has also performed at workshops for the Amherst Early Music Festival and International Baroque Institute at Longy. Maryne’s teachers have included cellists Jerome Carrington (Juilliard Pre-College), Clive Greensmith (Tokyo String Quartet), and Marcy Rosen (Queens College). Her studies in early music have been with Julie Elhard, Sarah Cunningham (Juilliard), and Phoebe Carrai (Juilliard). She holds a Bachelor of Music degree from Queens College and a Masters from the University of Minnesota. Maryne plays on an 1806 Thomas Dodd cello and a 1991 François Bodart viola da gamba. Maryne resides in St. Paul with her two Italian greyhounds.





Harpichordist & Conductor, **Michael Thomas Asmus**, is currently studying at Stony Brook University for a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Harpsichord Performance with Arthur Haas. As a conductor, he has been praised as a “conscientious [conductor]” with “a natural talent” and “a bright future” by audiences and ensembles alike. He has been lauded as a “versatile” continuo player (CNVC.org) with “judicious, rhythmically supple harpsichord playing” (Star Tribune). He is consistently lauded by his colleagues as a great musical collaborator.

Since June 2011, Michael has acted as the Music and Artistic Director of La Grande Bande, a non-profit, period instrument orchestra and chorus he founded in the same year. La Grande Bande will produce its first full concert series for the 2019–2020 season.

## Texts & Translations

Texts and translations for the songs included in this episode are credited to the following authors and translators. All translations have had further revisions by Michael Thomas Asmus in preparation for this episode.

- **Giulio Caccini:** “Alme, luci beate” anonymous author & translation by ; “Amarilli mia bella” Alessandro Guarini, author & H.W. Hitchcock, translator; “Io parto, amati lumi” Ottavio Rinuccini, author & H.W. Hitchcock translator; “Movetevi à pietà” Giovan Battista Strozzi, author & H.W. Hitchcock, translator.
- **Francesca Caccini:** “Chi desia di saper” from *Il passatempo* Michelangelo Buonarotti, author & Ars Lyric Houston, translator; “Io mi distruggo” anonymous author & Nancy Dersoff, translator; “Lasciatemi qui solo” anonymous author & Michael Thomas Asmus, translator; “Non so se quel sorriso” Michelangelo Buonarotti, author, Jordyn Elizabeth Beranek, translator.
- **Settimia Caccini:** all songs with anonymous authors & translations by Michael Thomas Asmus.

## Acknowledgements

The *season@HOME* would not be possible without the help and support of our volunteers, including Brian & Diana Asmus, Adam Asmus, and the musicians who helped with venue set-up and clean-up as we made these recordings. We also need to thank Big A Productions for graciously donating your time for preparing, recording, and editing all of the videos in this series. If you want to become a volunteer, fill out the questionnaire at [www.lagrandebande.org/volunteer](http://www.lagrandebande.org/volunteer).

Lastly, we want to thank all of you for tuning in! Producing a series like this has not been without challenges. Regardless, we passionately believe that our programming is something which our communities should have access to for years to come. Tell your friends! Tell your family! Tell your neighbors! We cannot thank you all enough for the support that you have shown us. We hope you will continue to support us in the years to come.

We look forward to seeing you, once again in-person whenever it is safe enough to do so.

Warmest wishes,

*La Grande Bande*

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# LA GRANDE BANDE

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Spring 2021

## **Episode 9: Splendors of Baroque Italy**

Pre-concert talk | Friday 5 February 2021

Episode Early Access Release | Friday 5 February 2021

Episode Regular Access Release | Friday 12 February 2021

## **Episode 10: Holy Week in France**

Pre-concert talk | Saturday 27 March 2021

Episode Early Access Release | Saturday 27 March 2021

Episode Regular Access Release | Saturday 3 April 2021

## **Episode 11: Musick of England**

Pre-concert talk | Friday 14 May 2021

Episode Early Access Release | Friday 14 May 2021

Episode Regular Access Release | Friday 21 May 2021