



No. 578b

SECOND CONSORT SERIES

General Editor: Watson Forbes

Original music for Viols, Viola d'amore, Viola da gamba (or modern Strings), by Ariosti, Bull, Byrd, Coperario, Ferrabosco, Geminiani, Ives, Jenkins, Locke, Morley, Playford, Purcell, Sibly, Tomkins and others, with historical notes. Most of the scores are unedited; the parts have expression and bowing marks to facilitate performance.

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Consort Music, discovered and the parts edited by Nathalie Dolmetsch and Layton Ring, based on Arnold Dolmetsch's interpretation:

— **No. 1 Fantasy 'Chi Pue Mirarvi' (5¹), by Giovanni Coperario [1511-1626],** for 5 Viols or 2 Violins, Viola, 2 Violoncellos, with or without Keyboard (Organ, Harpsichord, Piano). F/S and Parts. H.E. No. 578a

— **No. 2 Fantasy 'Vias Tuas' (3½¹), by Master Alfonso Ferrabosco I [1543-1588],** for 5 Viols or 1 (or 2) Violins, 1 (or 2) Violas, 2 Violoncellos. H.E. No. 578b

EDITION PETERS & HINRICHSEN EDITION
NEW YORK FRANKFURT LONDON

ALFONSO FERRABOSCO I

'Master Alfonso'

(1543-1588)

FANTASY 'VIAS TUAS' FOR FIVE VIOLS

or 1 (or 2) Violins, 1 (or 2) Violas, 2 Violoncellos

discovered and parts edited by Nathalie Dolmetsch and Layton Ring
based on Arnold Dolmetsch's interpretation

Duration : 3½ Minutes.

Alfonso Ferrabosco I was the son of Domenico Maria Ferrabosco, Maestro di Cappella of San Petronio at Bologna, and composer of many fine madrigals. The father of eight sons and several daughters, he succeeded in finding a post for one of his sons, Alfonso, at the court of Elizabeth I, and in 1562, at the age of nineteen, 'Master Alfonso', as he was called, was in receipt of a pension of 100 marks a year, and appears to have been already some while established. That his services were political as well as musical seems clear from his having been permitted to go to Rome, in 1564, and enter, for a short period, the service of Cardinal Farnese, and also from some remarks made by the Papal Nuncio in 1578, in a letter to the Papal Secretary of State: '*I understand that this is a most evil-spirited and evil-minded man, and very knowing and excellently informed of the affairs of those countries: that the Queen of England makes much use of him as a spy and plotter...*'

In 1572, whilst visiting France, no doubt for political reasons masked by musical ones, he married a Flemish girl, from Antwerp, Domina Susanna; though he had already a son (Alfonso II) and daughter at Greenwich, whom we must suppose to have been illegitimate. Domina Susanna also bore him a son and daughter, but there is no evidence of their having inherited his musical gifts to any marked extent. His 'English' descendants, however, beginning with Alfonso II, proved to be another of the great musical families which England was so fortunate as to produce during the 16th and 17th centuries.

In 1578, Ferrabosco finally left England, and though Elizabeth tried to obtain his return in 1580, through the intercession of her ambassador Sir Henry Cobham with the French Queen Mother, she was unsuccessful and he finished his days in Bologna, where he was born.

Most of Ferrabosco's compositions were in parts for voices, both secular and religious; there have, however, also survived some pieces for the lute.

This fantasy 'Vias Tuas' [B.M. MS. R.M. 24.d.2] is an outstanding example of Ferrabosco's work which appears to have escaped the notice of musical historians. No doubt originally intended for voices or viols, we have it here in the latter form, as noted down by a famous transcriber and composer of music of the late 16th century, John Baldwin. In its vocal form it would probably have been accompanied by viols or organ. At this period, when the consort of viols was still emerging from the part-song, it had not yet become the custom to accompany it with an organ continuo.

There is a richness of colour and depth of expression in this fantasy which makes us understand the high esteem in which Ferrabosco was held by his contemporaries. Thomas Morley makes many references to him in his 'Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practicall Musicke' (1597). He tells us of a '*Vertuous contention in love*' between 'M. Bird and M. Alfonso' in compositions upon the plain-song Miserere, '*but a contention, as I saide, in love: which caused them strive everie one to surmount another, without malice, envie, or backbiting: but by great labour, studie and paines, ech making other censure of that which they had done,*' which caused them both to '*winne such a name, and gaine such credite, as will never perish so long as Musicke endureth.*'

John Baldwin, writing in rhyme of all the great musicians of his time, refers to Ferrabosco as follows:

*'yet must I speake of moe: even of straingers also:
and firste I must bringe in: alfonso ferrabosco:
a strainger borne he was: in italie as I heere:
italians saie of hime: in skill he had no peere.'*

In fact the contemporary eulogies of Ferrabosco are so numerous that it would be excessive to quote them all. It is interesting, however, to know that the poet Campion called him '*rich Musik's Father*', and John Dowland '*the most Artificiall and famous Alfonso Ferrabosco of Bologna*'.

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