

Gianluca Barbaro

Zarlino's
Duets for
melodic
instruments

melodica, recorder, flute,
violin, clarinet, sax, cello, etc.

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12 *Ricercari* from the fourth part of

LE ISTITUTIONI HARMONICHE

by

Gioseffo Zarlino da Chioggia (1517 - 1590)

presented in:

Original facsimile

Modern Notation

Modern Adaptation
in C, B \flat , E \flat and Bass Clef



Foreword

In 1588, Gioseffo Zarlino from Chioggia (a small town near Venice, Italy) published the first edition of his *Le Istitutioni Harmoniche*, a theoretical textbook about music that had an immense influence not only in the theoretical field, but also in the subsequent written and played music.

After having profoundly changed, in the first three parts of the book, the way his contemporaries saw things like tuning systems, consonant and dissonant intervals, counterpoint and chords, in the fourth and last part of the *Istitutioni* Zarlino also revised the *modal* system (which had been at the base of composition for centuries) bringing the total number of modes from 8 to 12.

Each *mode* is basically a scale, but at the time it encompassed also a limited set of *cadences* (what today we would call *harmonic resolutions*) that deeply contribute in making the "sound" of each mode unique and very well identifiable.

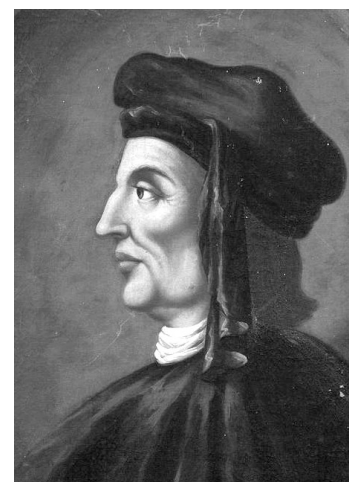
To exemplify his new modal system, Zarlino wrote 12 *Ricercari* (a free-form composition, usually with demonstration purposes), one for each mode, under the form of *bicinia* or duets.

In this book I present them to the modern player of melodic instruments: melodica, flute, recorder, violin, cello etc. Duets have always been broadly used as a potent didactic means: the student can play with the master and learn intonation, how to play in time and how to listen to others while playing. Duets can also be played between students and very often have attained the status of true artistic compositions, thanks to the genius of a few great composers.

When I first played Zarlino's *Ricercari* as a student, a few years ago, I was struck by their alien quality to my unaccustomed ears and their mysterious melodic lines so far away from our contemporary habits.

Also, I was stunned by some elements in the score that were indeed typical in the 16th century: apart from being printed by means of movable type and, of course, in renaissance music notation symbols (*mensural* notation), there is no proper score at all but only separated parts without any indication of measures (there is no bar line). In fact, musicians were supposed to take a pulse and start playing, hoping to arrive together at the next cadence.

Moreover, the original score includes almost no alteration: musicians are supposed to know where and when to add a sharp or a flat, according to well known (at the time) rules.



Gioseffo Zarlino (1517 - 1590)



Zarlino's 12 modes

Finally, to our contemporary eyes the durations of notes appear exceedingly long: due to historical reasons, there has been a very definite tendency, during the last few centuries, to think of and to write music in terms of increasingly reduced durations.

For all the above reasons, I decided to offer an adaptation of the 12 Ricercari that could be more comfortable to the modern music player. For each duet you will find:

- the definition of the mode on which the duet is based, in original and modern notation, plus its *regular* cadences;
- a brief description of the character of each mode in Zarlino's original words;
- the facsimile reproduction of the original score;
- a transcription of the score in modern notation, with the original clefs, original note-values and added alterations;
- an adaptation of the score in modern notation with halved note values, treble clefs, added alterations and breath marks.

In particular, the modern adaptation was made with the **melodica** in mind: this relatively recent but increasingly popular instrument is extremely versatile and has already proved itself very well suited for the performing of Early music too. Almost all the ranges of the 12 Ricercari are already within the limits of a standard 32-keys melodica: I had to make a very few octave transpositions when needed.

Other melodic instruments might have to sight-transpose a few duets by an octave: the required *ambitus* (range) is indicated at the beginning of each adaptation.

Recorders can refer to the following table in choosing the right sizes for each duet:

	Soprano voice	Tenor voice
I	Alto	Tenor
II	Tenor <i>Soprano</i>	Bass <i>Alto</i>
III	Soprano	Tenor
IV	Soprano <i>Tenor</i>	Alto <i>Bass</i>
V	Soprano	Tenor
VI	Alto	Tenor
VII	Soprano <i>Tenor</i>	Alto <i>Bass</i>
VIII	Alto	Tenor
IX	Alto	Bass
X	Alto	Tenor
XI	Alto	Tenor
XII	Soprano <i>Tenor</i>	Alto <i>Bass</i>

Bass clef transpositions were made with a cello in mind and could possibly require further adaptation when played with other bass clef reading instruments. In particular, the soprano parts in Ricercari II, IV, V and IX are very high e more difficult to play.

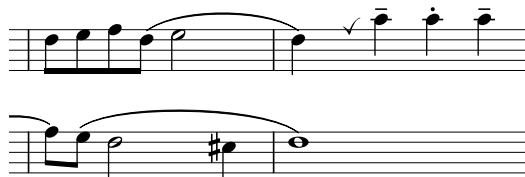
Transposing instruments will find B \flat and E \flat versions of the duets in the second and third parts of this book. B \flat transpositions should be playable without problems on a Clarinet. E \flat transpositions were made for Alto Sax: in a few cases I had to make some adjustments to the melodic lines to respect the playable range (they were added in small notation to the scores).

I have added very few **articulation** marks, for example in the cases of two typical melodic attacks:

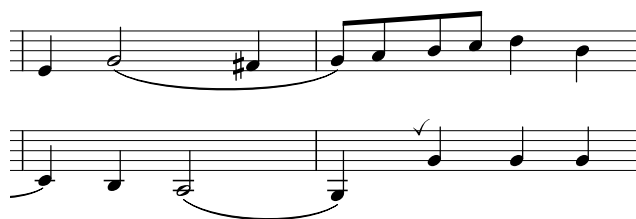


For each duet, articulation marks were added only to the first occurrence: all following occurrences should be played with the same kind of articulation.

Also, I have added a few **breath** marks and slurs almost exclusively at cadences: it is important not to breath before the tension is resolved, but only after. For example:



After the resolution of a cadence, a (brief) breath is mandatory unless the phrase is clearly melodically linked to the following notes, for example:



Finally, I have translated Zarlino's original **descriptions of modes** almost literally from Renaissance Italian to English, without paraphrasing anything, in an attempt to preserve the original tone: the result may sound "odd" to the English native speaker, hopefully as much as the original text sounds odd to a modern Italian speaker.

Many thanks to Alan Brinton, Mary Montagano and Bea Sacchi for their invaluable help in realizing this publication.

Gianluca Barbaro

April 2019

1. Modo I



Perche il Primo modo hà vn certo mezano effetto tra il mesto, et lo allegro, [...] per sua natura è alquanto mesto. Però potremo ad esso accommodare ottimamente quelle parole, le quali saranno piene di grauità, et che trattaranno di cose alte, et sententiose; accioche l' harmonia si conuenghi con la materia, che in esse si contiene.

Because the First mode has a certain middle effect between sad and happy, in its nature it is rather melancholic. But we can excellently adapt to it those words that are full of gravity and that deal with high and sententious things, so that the harmony is well combined with the contents of the words.

The image shows a musical score for two voices: Soprano and Tenor. The Soprano part is written on a soprano clef (C-clef on the first line) and the Tenor part is written on a tenor clef (C-clef on the third line). Both parts are in a key signature of one flat and common time. The score consists of two systems of staves, each with a vocal line and a lute accompaniment line. The vocal lines are marked 'SOPRANO.' and 'TENORE.' respectively. The lute accompaniment is written on a lute clef.

SAMPLE PAGE

Ricercare II - Original score - Modern Notation

The image displays a musical score for 'Ricercare II' in modern notation, featuring two vocal parts: Soprano and Tenor. The score is written in a single system with two staves. The Soprano staff is in the upper register, and the Tenor staff is in the lower register. The music is in a common time signature (C) and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The score is divided into measures, with measure numbers 5, 9, 13, 17, 21, and 25 indicated at the beginning of their respective systems. The notation includes various note values, rests, and phrasing slurs. The key signature changes to two sharps (D major) at measure 9 and remains there through the end of the piece.

SAMPLE PAGE

Ricercare III - Modern Adaptation

The musical score is presented in five systems, each with two staves. The top staff is labeled 'Soprano' and the bottom staff is labeled 'Tenore'. The music is written in treble clef with a common time signature (C). The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and slurs. Measure numbers 5, 9, 14, and 18 are indicated at the beginning of their respective systems. The piece concludes with a final double bar line at the end of the fifth system.

Ricercare VI

The image shows a musical score for 'Ricercare VI' by Zarlino, arranged for Soprano and Tenor voices. The score is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of five systems of two staves each. The Soprano part is in the upper staff of each system, and the Tenor part is in the lower staff. The first system starts with a circled 'B' above the Soprano staff. The score includes various musical notations such as rests, notes, beams, slurs, and accents. Measure numbers 5, 9, 13, and 17 are indicated at the beginning of their respective systems.

Ricercare III

②

Soprano

Tenore

5

9

14

18