



# Claudio Monteverdi

**DRAMMA PER MUSICA** • *Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda*

**MADRIGAL of WAR** • *Ballo delle Ninfe d'Istro*

**MADRIGAL of LOVE** • *Mentre Vaga Angioletta*

Vocal Ensemble and Chamber Orchestra  
of the SCUOLA VENEZIANA

**ANGELO EPHRIKIAN, conductor**

SPL 551



LONG PLAYING RECORDS

# CLAUDIO MONTEVERDI (1567-1643)

Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda

Ballo delle Ninfe d'Istro • Mentre Vaga Angioletta

Vocal Ensemble and Chamber Orchestra of the Scuola Veneziana

under the direction of Angelo Ephrikian

## COMBATTIMENTO DI TANCREDI E CLORINDA

from Tasso's "Jerusalem Delivered", Canto XII, Stanzas 52-62 & 64-68

Testo (narrator) \_\_\_\_\_ Maria Amadini (contralto)  
Clorinda \_\_\_\_\_ Rosanna Giancola (soprano)  
Tancredi \_\_\_\_\_ Giuliano Ferrein (bass)

### TESTO

Tancredi che Clorinda un uomo stima  
Vuol nell' armi provarla al paragone.  
Va girando colui l'alpestre cima  
Ver altra porta ove d'entrar dispone.  
Segue egli impetuoso; onde, assai prima  
Che giunga, in guisa avvien che d'armi suone,  
Ch'ella si volge, e grida:

### CLORINDA

O tu che porte,  
Correndo sì?

### TESTO

Risponde:  
TANCREDI  
E guerra e morte.

### CLORINDA

Guerra e mort' avrai.

### TESTO

Disse:

### CLORINDA

Io non rifiuto  
Dàrlati, se lei cerchi e fermo attendi.

### TESTO

Ne vuol Tancredi, ch'ebbe a piè veduto  
Il suo nemico, usar cavallo, e scende.  
E impugna l'un l'altro il ferro acuto,  
E aguzza l'orgoglio, e l'ira accende:  
E vansi in contro, a passi tardi e lenti  
Qual due tori gelosi e d'ira ardenti.  
Notte, che nel profondo oscuro seno  
Chiudeste e nell' oblio fatto sì grande,  
Degno d'un chiaro Sol, degno d'un pieno  
Teatro, opre sarian sì memorande.  
Piaciati ch'indi il tragga, e'n bel sereno  
Alle future età lo spieghi e mande.  
Viva la fama loro; e tra lor gloria  
Splende dal fosco tuo l'alta memoria.  
Non schivar, non parar, non pur ritarsi  
Vogliono costor, nè qui destrezza ha parte.  
Non danno i colpi or finti, or pieni, or scarsi;  
Toglie l'ombra e'l furor l'uso dell' arte.  
Odi le spade orribilmente urtarsi  
A mezzo il ferro; e'l piè d'orma non parte:  
Sempre è il piè fermo, e la man sempre  
in moto;

Nè scende taglio invan, ne punta a voto.  
L'onta irrita lo sdegno e la vendetta,  
E la vendetta poi l'onta rinnova;  
Onde sempre al ferir, sempre alla fretta  
Stimol novo s'aggiunge e piaga nova.  
D'or in or più si mesce, e più ristretta  
Si fa la pugna; e spada opar non giova,  
Dansi con pomi, e infelloniti e crudi,  
Cozzan con gli elmi insieme e con gli scudi.  
Tre volte il cavalier la donna stringe  
Con le robuste braccia; e altrettante  
Poi da quei nodi tenaci ella si scinge,  
Nodi di fèr nemico, e non d'amante.  
Tornano al ferro, e l'uno e l'altro il tinge  
Di molto sangue: e stanco e anelante  
E questi e quegli alfin pur si ritira,  
E dopo lungo faticar respira.  
L'un l'altro guarda, e del suo corpo esangue  
Sul pomo della spada oppoggia il peso.  
Già dell' ultima stella il raggio langue  
Sul rimo albor ch'è in oriente acceso.  
Vede Tancredi in maggior copia il sangue  
Del suo nemico, e sè non tanto offeso.  
Ne gode e superbisce. Oh nostra folle  
Mente, ch'ogni aura di fortuna estolle!  
Miserò, di che godi? Oh quanto mesti  
Siano i trionfi e infelice il vanto!  
Gli occhi tuoi pagheran (s'in vita resti)  
Di quel sangue ogni stilla un mar di pianto.  
Così tacendo e rimandando questi  
Sanguinosi guerrier cessaro alquanto.  
Ruppe il silenzio alfin Tancredi e disse,  
Perchè il suo nome l'un l'altro scoprisse:

Tancred believing Clorinda to be a man  
wishes to match her power with his in  
single combat. But she, circling the shaggy  
mountain top, heads for the other gate  
which she makes ready to plunge through.  
Then, does he cast aside all fear and harry  
her closely; wherefore, ere he may come  
upon her, as befits a warrior, she accosts  
him with these words:

### CLORINDA

Oh you who follow me so boldly, what  
would you have?

### THE NARRATOR

And he makes answer:  
TANCREDI  
Mortal combat.

### CLORINDA

In mortal combat shall we meet.

### THE NARRATOR

And she spoke on:  
CLORINDA  
I shall not deny you satisfaction  
if this is what you seek and wait for.

### THE NARRATOR

Now Tancred, who saw his opponent walking  
on foot, did not wish to avail himself  
of his horse, and he forthwith dismounted.  
Then each one seized his shining blade,  
and the battle ardor flamed within and fury  
mounted. They took positions facing one  
another with careful steps and slow like  
two bulls goaded to destroy each another  
and lusting to kill.  
Oh Night, which in your black depths and  
in oblivion enshrouded their heroism  
deserving of the sun's clear rays and a mighty  
audience, these are feats that fame shall  
hail. Grant that they be bruited abroad,  
and that their glory spreading far and wide  
reach the ears of posterity. Long may they  
live in story, and may the deeds hid by  
your enveloping shade be blazoned forth  
triumphantly.

Neither avoids the other, nor parries blows,  
nor yields his ground, nor does either for  
a moment merely counterfeit attack. The  
blows they exchange are not feints nor  
courtly strokes nor niggardly. Darkness and  
the frenzied attack forbid the use of skill.  
Hearken to the hideous clash of steel on  
steel. The stance of neither one is shaken;  
their feet remain wedded firmly to the earth,  
only their arms maintain a ceaseless motion.  
Nor does any stroke go amiss, nor does  
the point ever fail to reach its mark.  
Injured pride spurs each proud heart to  
vengeful feeling, and vengeful feeling rein-  
forces injured pride; so, new incentive with-  
out end is added to their blows, and new  
goads to their zeal. Sometimes, as the fighting  
grows fiercer, the combatants are at too close  
quarters to use the blades with ease, then  
they use the pommels against one another,  
and savage and unrestrained, they butt each  
other with their casques and with their  
shields. Thrice does the knight hold the  
warrior maid in his powerful grip and thrice  
does she escape the binding toils, toils of a  
deadly foe, not like the toils of love. Their  
sword arms being free once more, each  
draws blood from the other till with weary  
limbs and breath drawn painfully, each  
draws back a space to rest after extended  
labors.

Their careful eyes watch as each relaxes  
the weight of tired bones upon his sword  
hilt. Already were the rays of the last star  
paling in the glow of dawn that was rising  
in the east. Then Tancred beheld in what  
a tide the blood was pouring from his rival,  
and he was glad. Ah, do not rejoice or be  
vainglorious! How foolish are the hearts of  
men, exalted by each stray gust of chance!  
Poor wretch, what reason have you to rejoice?  
Oh, how dark is your moment of triumph,  
how bitter your boasts of victory! Those  
eyes of yours shall make amends (if you

### TANCREDI

Nostra sventura benchè qui s'impieghi  
Tanto valor, dove silenzio il copra.  
Ma, poichè sorte ria vien che ci nieghi  
E lode e testimon degni de l'opra,  
Pregoti, (se fra l'armi han loco i prieghi)  
Che'l tuo nome e 'l tuo stato a me tu scopra,  
Accio ch'io sappia, o vinto o vincitore,  
Chi la mia morte o la mia vita onore.

### TESTO

Risponde la feroce:

### CLORINDA

Indarno chiedi  
Quel ch'ho per uso di non far palese.  
Ma chiunque io mi sia, tu innanzi vedi  
Un di quei due che la gran torre accese.

### TESTO

Arso di sdegno a quel parlar Tancredi:

### TANCREDI

E in mal punto il dicesti  
Il tuo dir e'l tacer di par m'alletta,  
Barbaro discortese, alla vendetta.

### TESTO

Torna l'ira nei cori e li trasporta,  
Benchè deboli in guerra. O fèra pugna!  
U'parte in bando u' già la forza è morta.  
Ove invece d'entrambi il furor pugna!  
Oh che sanguigna e spaziosa porta  
Fa l'una e l'altra spada ovunque giugna,  
Nell'armi e nelle carni! E se la vita  
Non esce, sdegno tienla al petto unita.  
Ma ecco omai l'ora fatal è giunta,  
Ch'el viver di Clorinda al suo fin devc.  
Spinge egli il ferro nel bel sen di punta,  
Che vi s'immerge, e'l sangue avido beve,  
E la veste, che d'or vago trapunta  
Le mammelle stringea tenerè e lieve,  
L'empie d'un caldo fiume. Ella già sente  
Morirsi, e'l piè le manca egro e languente.  
Segue egli la vittoria, e la trafitta  
Vergine minacciando incalza e preme.  
Ella, mentre cadea, la voce afflitta  
Movendo, disse le parole estreme,  
Parole ch'a lei, novo spirito ditta,  
Spirto di fè, di carità, di speme;  
Virtù che Dio l'infonde; e se rubella  
In vita fu, la vuol' in morte ancella.

### CLORINDA

Amico, hai vinto: lo ti perdon . . . perdona  
Tu ancora: al corpo no, che nulla pave,  
All' alma sì: deh! per lei prega, e dona  
Battesmo a me ch' ogni mia colpa lave.

### TESTO

In queste voci languide risuona  
Un non so che di flebile e soave  
Ch'al cor gli scende, ed ogni sdegno ammorza  
E gli occhi a lagrimar gl'invoglia e sforza.  
Poco quindi lontan nel sen d'un monte  
Scaturia mormorando un picciol rio.  
Egli v'accorse, e l'elmo empie nel fonte,  
E tornò mesto al grande ufficio e pio.  
Tremar senti la man, mentre la fronte  
Non conosciuta ancor sciolse e scoprio.  
La vide, e la conobbe; e restò senza  
E voce e moto. Ahi vista! ahi conoscenza!  
Non morì già; chè sue virtù accolse  
Tutte in quel punto, e in guardia al cor le  
mise;  
E, premendo il suo affanno, a dar si volse  
Vita con l'acqua a chi col ferro uccise.  
Mentre egli il suon de' sacri detti sciolse,  
Colei di gioia trasmutossi, e rise;  
E, in atto di morir lieta e vivace,  
Dir pareva:

### CLORINDA

S'apre, il ciel; io vado in pace.

## BALLO DELLE NINFE D'ISTRO

Rosanna Giancola, Luciana Piovesan-Bernardi, soprano; Miti Truccato-Pace,  
contralto; Emilio Cristinelli, tenor; Giuliano Ferrein, bass.

## MENTRE VAGA ANGIOLETTA

Rosanna Giancola, soprano; Emilio Cristinelli, tenor.

yourself survive) with a full sea of tears  
for every drop of this blood spilled.  
So, mutely, while their sore limbs mended,  
did these bloodstained fighters rest a while  
till Tancred broke the silence, wondering  
aloud why they might not reveal each to  
the other their names.

### TANCREDI

It is our misfortune that in darkness is  
buried all the valor we have displayed.  
But, since harsh fate chooses to deny us  
the honor and applause which should grace  
this day's achievement, I pray you, if there  
is room for prayer in battle, to let me  
learn your name and rank so that, whether  
victor or vanquished, I may know to whom  
I owe the gift of life or death.

### THE NARRATOR

Then so does the fierce maid answer:

### CLORINDA

In vain you ask what it is not my custom  
to divulge. But whoever else I may be,  
you see before you one of those two who  
set fire to the lofty military tower.

### THE NARRATOR

Consumed with rage, Tancred addressed her  
thus:

### TANCREDI

In an ill moment have you confessed this.  
Your words as well as your silence, O  
barbarian, fire me to seek redress.

### THE NARRATOR

Anger whirls in their hearts and frenzy  
to do battle shakes them though they tremble  
with fatigue. A struggle to the death! Skill  
flies to the winds and endurance is no  
more, but frenzy sustains the two in com-  
bat. O what wide and bleeding rents does  
each sword lay open wherever it can reach  
through steel to flesh! And if life still  
remains, it is but dread of defeat that  
preserves it unspent in the breast.  
Finally, there strikes the appointed hour  
when Clorinda must yield up her life. He  
plunges the point of his sword into her lovely  
bosom, and there it remains imbedded and  
greedily drains her blood till her tunic  
which was worked in tracteries of gold, that  
tunic which covered her soft, small breasts  
was filled with a smoking torrent. And now  
she knows that death is near, and her feet  
fail her, weaving strengthlessly.  
He pursues his triumph to the end, un-  
yielding, and driving home his sword he  
brings her to the ground. But as she falls,  
she raises her agonized voice to breathe  
forth her last words, words dictated to her  
by a new spirit, a spirit of faith, of love,  
of hope, a power by God infused within  
her, and if she sinned in life, in death  
does she yearn to be a handmaid of God.

### CLORINDA

My friend, the victory is yours. I can for-  
give you; do you now forgive me, too.  
Pray not for my body which knows no fear  
but for my soul; for this I'd have you pray,  
and give me baptism to wash away my  
sins.

### THE NARRATOR

In her words so feeble, there is something  
so ineffably sad and winning that it winds  
its way into his heart, soothes all his anger,  
and pricks his unwilling eyes to weep. Not  
far away on the mountain side, a tiny stream  
was bubbling and rippling. This did he hasten  
towards and filled his helmet with the flow-  
ing freshness and sadly bent his step to his  
exalted and sacred task. He feels his hand  
tremble as he undoes the visor of her who  
is still a stranger to him and sees her  
face revealed. He sees her; he recognizes her,  
and speech and strength all leave him. Ah,  
what a thing to see! Ah, what a thing to  
learn!  
She is not yet dead; he rallied all his  
strength for this purpose and set a guard  
over his feelings and suppressing his sorrow,  
he devoted himself to giving everlasting life  
with the baptismal water to her whom he  
had robbed of life with the sword. While  
he uttered the sacred words, enraptured she  
smiled; happy and strengthened even in the  
presence of death, she seemed to say:

### CLORINDA

Heaven opens wide for me. I die in peace.

ELLEN A. LEBOW