



Ceruleo

Project Report – Love Restor'd

Ceruleo are most grateful to Angel Early Music for their support of our debut album, *Love Restor'd*, which was recorded in January 2022 in collaboration with Resonus Classics. The disc was released in December 2022 and has since been favourably received.

CD OVERVIEW

In the summer of 1660, London's theatres were finally able to open again after 18 long years of Puritan rule. This extraordinary time led to a theatrical revolution and a new English Baroque music exemplified by Henry Purcell, born just a year before the restoration of the monarchy. Known as the 'English Orpheus', Purcell brought together continental musical innovations with the English language, creating works capable of expressing romance, tragedy and comedy to an extent that remains unsurpassed.

The programme runs the gamut of Restoration English music, encompassing some of Purcell's most famous pieces alongside his lesser known works and those by John Blow and John Eccles. We celebrate the first female stars of the English stage, the rich instrumental textures of the period and the Italian and French influences on this incredible music, bringing to life for new audiences the joy and excitement that came from a return to live performance 350 years ago.



REVIEWS

We are delighted that that critics have enjoyed the music of Love Restor'd as much as we do:

★★★★ *"Sopranos Emily Owen and Jenni Harper are at their best in the duet from Dioclesian, 'O the sweet delights of love', where they control the waves of ecstasy with technical aplomb and conviction, and they blend impressively in the reflective 'O dive custos' on the death of Queen Mary... The instrumentalists are very good."* BBC Music Magazine

★★★★ *"The group feels more like a Baroque chamber ensemble than voices and accompaniment. Instrumental and vocal lines interweave, so that the purely instrumental numbers feel like a continuation of what has gone before. A lovely disc, and an engaging introduction to the world of Restoration song."* Robert Hugill

RECORDING SESSIONS

Love Restor'd was recorded over three days in the beautiful space and acoustic of St John's Church, Loughton. The sessions were a first for Ceruleo as an ensemble, and we really enjoyed putting our favourite pieces down on disc. The project generally ran smoothly, but we learned one extremely valuable lesson, which was that church heating noise does not mix with recording, and that unheated churches in January are rather chilly! Heater hire will definitely be on the contingency list in future...

We were grateful to Adam and Libby Binks at Resonus for their expertise and help throughout the project, and to Ed Pickering for his meticulous tuning and kind support during sessions. On the final day of recording, Sam Stadlen joined us as a videographer, and his stunning clips, which are available on our Youtube channel, give a snapshot of the excitement of the sessions.

OUTCOMES OF THE PROJECT

Recording a first CD was a crucial milestone in Ceruleo's development as an ensemble. It has enabled us to:

- Commit to disc our interpretation of selected music from the Restoration era, which is the culmination of many years of performance of this repertoire as an ensemble
- Share our music with a wider audience
- Increase the reach of the ensemble through platforms such as Spotify/Apple Music
- Provide promoters with recorded material (including CD tracks and videos from recording sessions)
- Create a tour based around the CD programme
- Build a relationship with Resonus/Inventa, with plans currently underway for our second disc for the label

CONTINUED AND FUTURE PLANS

When we released the CD, we were supported by the Continuo Foundation to put together a short tour, which included a launch event at the VOCES8 Centre and subsequent concerts in Devon and London. This was a great opportunity to showcase the programme (and also to sell some CDs hot off the press!).

This coming December, we are looking forward to bringing Love Restor'd to the York Early Music Christmas Festival. We are also in the process of creating a more wide-ranging tour during 2024, in order to share the programme with new audiences around the UK.

IMPACT ON THE ENSEMBLE

Without the grant from Angel Early Music, the recording of Love Restor'd would not have been possible. The impact of the CD project has been significant for Ceruleo, and has changed our trajectory as an ensemble. We are now able to reach more listeners and more promoters, and in so doing, are raising Ceruleo's profile at a much faster pace than would have been feasible otherwise. We are also delighted that we have been able to champion the music of the English Restoration era, and particularly to include some composers that are traditionally less well-known.

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to the trustees of Angel Early Music for their generous support, and for their help in providing a much-needed springboard at a crucial time in Ceruleo's development.

