

## Chronology

- 1567 Monteverdi born in Cremona, then under Spanish control as part of the state of Milan. Baptised Claudio Zuan [Giovanni] Antonio Monteverdi on 15 May 1567 in the church of SS Nazaro e Celso, Cremona. He was the first of three children born to Baldassare Monteverdi, an apothecary, physician and surgeon, and Maddalena Zignani.
- c.1576 Monteverdi's mother dies. His father remarries in this or the following year, and two further children are born to him and Giovanna Gadio.
- 1582 Claudio's *Sacrae cantiunculae*, a volume of three-voice motets, is published by Angelo Gardano at Venice, then the major centre of music publishing in Italy. The dedication was signed from Cremona, 1 August 1582, when Monteverdi was fifteen years old. On the title-page of this, and all his publications up to the Second Book of Madrigals (1590), Monteverdi describes himself as a pupil of Marc'Antonio Ingegneri, *maestro di cappella* of Cremona Cathedral.
- 1583 *Madrigali spirituali* for four voices published in Brescia by Vincenzo Sabbio.
- after 1583 Monteverdi's father marries Francesca Como following the death of his second wife.
- 1584 Monteverdi's first publication of secular music, *Canzonette* for three voices, published at Venice by Giacomo Vincenti and Ricciardo Amadino.
- 1587 Monteverdi, still only nineteen, publishes his First Book of five-part Madrigals, dedicated to Count Marco Verità of Verona, suggesting that he may have begun looking for employment outside Cremona.
- 1590 The Second Book of Madrigals is published by Angelo Gardano at Venice. The dedication is signed from Cremona, 1 January 1590, and addressed to Giacomo Ricardi, President of the Milanese senate. In it Monteverdi refers to himself as a player of the *vivuo*la.

- 1590 Early in this year (see Chapter 4, note 1, below) Monteverdi is appointed as singer and instrumentalist (bowed strings and theorbo) to the *cappella* of Vincenzo Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua. Here he works under Giaches de Wert, one of Italy's most eminent composers, and alongside musicians such as Salamone Rossi, Benedetto Pallavicino and Giovanni Giacomo Gastoldi, who was choirmaster of Santa Barbara.
- 1592 The Third Book of Madrigals published and dedicated to the Duke of Mantua.
- 1595 June–November, travels with Vincenzo Gonzaga on a military expedition to Hungary as part of a *cappella* of eight – three priests and five singers.
- 1596 Wert dies on 6 May; succeeded as *maestro* of the duke's *cappella* by Benedetto Pallavicino.
- 1599 On 20 May marries Claudia Cattaneo, a court singer at Mantua, daughter of Giacomo Cattaneo, a string player. 7 June–15 October, travels with Duke Vincenzo to Spa in Flanders where he encounters the 'canto alla francese' (song in the French manner) which, his brother Giulio Cesare was to claim in 1607, he was the first to bring back to Italy.
- 1600 Giovanni Maria Artusi criticises works by Monteverdi in *L'Artusi, overo Delle imperfezioni della moderna musica* (The Artusi, or, On the Imperfections of Modern Music), Venice, 1600.
- 1601 His first son, Francesco Baldassare, born (baptised 27 August). 26 November, Pallavicino dies; in a letter of 28 November Monteverdi petitions the duke to appoint him *maestro* both of the chamber and of the church. He succeeds to the post of *maestro di cappella* in December.
- 1603 His daughter Leonora Camilla born (baptised 20 February). The Fourth Book of Madrigals published. On its title-page he styles himself *maestro della musica* of the duke. Artusi issues further criticism of Monteverdi's work in the *Seconda parte dell'Artusi*, Venice, 1603.
- 1604 His second son, Massimiliano Giacomo, born (baptised 10 May).
- 1605 Monteverdi's Fifth Book of Madrigals published – the first in which he includes madrigals with *basso continuo* accompaniment. It includes a statement in which Monteverdi responds to Artusi's criticisms and claims to be

- preparing a treatise entitled *Seconda pratica, overo Perfettione della moderna musica* (The Second Practice, or The Perfection of Modern Music). The treatise was never published.
- 1607 Monteverdi's first opera, *Orfeo*, performed on 24 February and repeated on 1 March. The *Scherzi musicali* for three voices, two violins and continuo published summer 1607. It includes a gloss by Giulio Cesare Monteverdi on the statement published in the Fifth Book. In this a distinction is drawn between the 'first practice . . . which turns on the perfection of the harmony' and the 'second practice . . . which makes the [words] the mistress of the harmony'. 10 September: his wife, Claudia, dies in Cremona; buried in S. Nazaro. 24 September: Monteverdi summoned back to Mantua to begin preparations for the celebrations attending the wedding of Francesco Gonzaga to Margherita of Savoy, scheduled for early 1608.
- 1608 After much delay the wedding celebrations take place in May and June. Monteverdi's contributions include the opera *Arianna*, the Prologue to *L'idropica* and the *Mascherata dell'ingrate*. By July he is seriously ill and retires to his father's house at Cremona. On 9 November his father petitions the duke either to restrict Monteverdi's work to church music or to release him from service. On 30 November, however, Monteverdi is summoned back to Mantua.
- 1610 The *Missa . . . ac Vesperae* published, perhaps with the intention of demonstrating Monteverdi's ability as a composer of church music and his fitness to be employed as a church musician. In October he travels to Rome to present the volume to its dedicatee, Pope Paul V.
- 1611 In his letter of 22 January Monteverdi mentions that his son Francesco is showing promise as a singer.
- 1612 8 February: Duke Vincenzo Gonzaga dies. He is succeeded by Duke Francesco who dismisses Claudio and Giulio Cesare from his service on 29 July. Claudio returns to Cremona.
- 1613 Auditioned for the post of *maestro di cappella* at S. Marco, Venice, 1 August 1613, performing a Mass by him which he had rehearsed at S. Giorgio Maggiore on the preceding days. 19 August: the Procurators of S. Marco approve his

- appointment, 'confirmed in this opinion . . . both by his works that are found in print and by those which . . . Their Most Illustrious Lordships have sought to hear to their complete satisfaction'. He travels to Venice to take up his position around 10 October.
- 1614 The Sixth Book of Madrigals published, preparation of which may have begun as early as 1610.
- 1616 The ballet *Tirsi e Clori* (published 1619) performed for Duke Ferdinando Gonzaga (crowned Duke of Mantua January 1616).
- 1617 His prologue to *La Maddalena* performed at Mantua for the wedding celebrations of Ferdinando Gonzaga and Caterina de' Medici (married 7 February 1617).
- 1619 His Seventh Book of Madrigals published, and dedicated to Caterina de' Medici. Monteverdi moves his son Francesco, now an able singer and, according to his father, in danger of being distracted from his study of jurisprudence, from Padua University to the University of Bologna, lodging him at the monastery of S. Maria dei Servi. Approached to return to Mantua. His reaction reflected in his letters of 8 and 13 March 1620.
- 1620 In early March the opera *Andromeda* and the ballet *Apollo* performed at Mantua. 13 June: attends a meeting of the *Accademia dei Floridi* held in his honour at S. Michele in Bosco, Bologna. 24 June: directs Vespers for the Feast of St John the Baptist, probably for the Florentine community at Venice and at SS Giovanni e Paolo (see Chapter 11, below). The occasion reported by Constantijn Huygens (see Chapter 14, below). 4 November: directs Vespers for the Feast of S. Carlo Borromeo for the Milanese community at Venice, probably at the church of S. Maria Gloriosa dei Frari. Francesco Monteverdi abandons his legal studies at Bologna to join the order of the Discalced Carmelite Fathers.
- 1621 25 May: directs music for the obsequies celebrated by the Florentine community at SS Giovanni e Paolo, Venice, for Grand Duke Cosimo II of Tuscany. His son Francesco sings the introductory "O vos omnes attendite" . . . with the rest of the Introit'.
- 1622 18 January: contributes to *intermedi* performed at Mantua for the wedding celebrations of Eleonora Gonzaga and

- Emperor Ferdinand II. In letter of 26 February 1622 confirms that his son Massimiliano has been accepted to study medicine at Cardinal Montalto's college in Bologna.
- 1623 directs music for the state visit to Venice of the Duke and Duchess of Mantua (20–30 May) and publishes the monodic version of the *Lamento d'Arianna*.
- after 1623 Denounced anonymously to the Venetian State Inquisitors for insulting the doge and the clergy and uttering treacherous support for the Holy Roman Emperor. The denunciation seems to have been ignored.
- 1624 The *Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda*, in which he introduces his new *genere concitato*, played at the Palazzo Dandolo (now the Danieli Hotel), Venice, home of Monteverdi's patron Girolamo Mocenigo.
- 1625 March: directs music for the private visit to Venice of Władysław Sigismund, heir to the throne of Poland.
- 1625–6 In a group of letters from 23 August 1625 to 28 March 1626 Monteverdi reveals his interest in alchemy. Enrolled in the Accademia dei Filomusi, Bologna.
- 1626 Early in the year Monteverdi's son Massimiliano graduates in medicine at Bologna. 15 June: a trio by Monteverdi sung at the Venetian state banquet for St Vitus' Day includes a refrain 'One cannot believe them because there is no faith there', which gives offence to the French ambassador. Late in the year Massimiliano Monteverdi imprisoned by the Inquisition for reading a prohibited book.
- 1627 May–September: Monteverdi works on the music for the comic opera *La finta pazza Licori*, to a libretto by Giulio Strozzi, for a proposed performance at Mantua. Project abandoned. 15 July: provides music for Georg Wilhelm, Elector of Brandenburg, then staying incognito at the house of the English ambassador.
- 1627–8 Commissioned to write music for the wedding celebrations at Parma in December 1628 for Duke Odoardo Farnese and Margherita de' Medici. Stays at Parma October–mid-December 1627, mid-January–March 1628 and December 1628. His work for Parma included a prologue and five *intermedi* for a performance of Torquato Tasso's *Aminta* and a tournament *Mercurio e Marte*. In a letter of 27 November 1627 to the Marquis Enzo Bentivoglio, Antonio Goretti wrote of Monteverdi: 'Signor Claudio composes only in the

- morning and the evening: during the afternoon he does not wish to do anything at all . . . It is true that the labour is great, and tedious; but still, he is a man who likes to talk things over in company at great length (and about this I make it a rule to take the opportunity away from him during working hours).' 8 April 1628: his sonnet cycle for two voices, *I cinque fratelli*, is performed at a banquet at the Arsenale, Venice, to honour the state visit of the Grand Duke of Tuscany.
- 1630 16 April: his first opera for Venice, *Proserpina rapita*, commissioned by Girolamo Mocenigo, is performed in the upper solar of Palazzo Dandolo (now the Danieli Hotel), Venice, as part of wedding festivities for Giustiniana Mocenigo and Lorenzo Giustiniani.
- 1630–1 The imperial troops who sacked Mantua in July 1630 bring an epidemic of plague which sweeps through northern Italy. The illness is brought to Venice by a diplomatic mission headed by Count Alessandro Striggio, Monteverdi's Mantuan confidant and librettist of his *Orfeo*. The plague kills nearly fifty thousand in Venice alone, and in Bergamo, Alessandro Grandi, who had been Monteverdi's assistant at S. Marco, is another victim. The Venetians vow to found a church in honour of the Blessed Virgin to seek her intercession. The foundation stone of Santa Maria della Salute (St Mary of Health) is laid on 1 April 1631, and on 21 November a solemn Mass of Thanksgiving held in S. Marco, with music by Monteverdi.
- 1631 9 March: admitted by Patriarch Giovanni Tiepolo to the clerical tonsure and the four minor orders in the chapel of the patriarchal palace at S. Pietro di Castello, Venice.
- 1632 10 April: Monteverdi ordained sub-deacon by Monsignor Sebastiano Querini at the church of S. Maurizio, Venice. 13 April: ordained deacon by Monsignor Querini at the church of Santa Maria del Giglio, and on 16 April, at the same church (which is also called S. Maria Zobenigo), ordained priest. He was, however, aggregated to the clergy of Cremona, and clearly had the intention of retiring there. The Venetian music publisher Bartolomeo Magni issues a volume of *Scherzi musicali* by Monteverdi that he has collected.

- 1635 3 and 4 November: directs music for the Feast of S. Carlo Borromeo at the church of S. Maria Gloriosa dei Frari for the Milanese community at Venice.
- 1636 May have responded to the celebrations in honour of the coronation of Ferdinand III as Holy Roman Emperor in December with the *ballo* 'Volgendo il ciel' and possibly the revised *Ballo delle ingrato*, both published in 1638.
- 1637–1638 Provides music for Giulio and Barbara Strozzi's *Accademia degli Unisoni*.
- 1638 The Eighth Book of Madrigals – *Madrigali guerrieri ed amorosi* – published, with a preface in which he explains the genesis of his *genere concitato*. The volume is dedicated to the Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand III.
- Carnival  
1639–40 *Arianna* revived at the Teatro San Moisè, Venice.
- 1640 Before 22 February: *Il ritorno d'Ulisse* premiered, probably at the Teatro SS Giovanni e Paolo, Venice.
- Carnival  
1640–1 *Le nozze d'Enea e Lavinia* premiered, probably at the Teatro SS Giovanni e Paolo, Venice.
- 1641 7 February: the ballet *Vittoria d'Amore* performed at Piacenza to celebrate the birth of the seventh child of Duke Odoardo Farnese. The *Selva morale e spirituale* published at Venice and dedicated to Eleanora Gonzaga, widow of the Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand II.
- 1643 *L'incoronazione di Poppea* performed at the Teatro SS Giovanni e Paolo. 29 November: dies in Venice and is buried in Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari in the chapel of the Milanese. His funeral is commemorated in the *Fiori poetici raccolti nel funerale del molto illustre e molto reverendo signor Claudio Monteverdi*, ed. Giovan Battista Marinoni and published at Venice in 1644.

