

# Peter Adriaansz

## No. 30 La Voce di Zarlino (2006)

For 5 voices (SSATB)

Commissioned by: Holland Festival for Old Music, with financial support from the Netherlands Fund for the Performing Arts

### Info/Program Note:

*La Voce di Zarlino - part I* - is a setting of a passage from theoretician/composer Gioseffo Zarlino's book *L'istitutione Harmoniche*. The text is taken from the sixth chapter of the first book, a passage in which Zarlino treats various relationships between 'sound' (L'Harmonia) and the universe, as well as our alleged inability to actually observe this.

As in much of my music, the material for Zarlino is derived from existing sources. In this case, Zarlino's own observation of the so-called syntonic comma: the difference between four justly tuned perfect fifths and two octaves plus a just major third (resulting in a difference of 21.51 cents). The work bases its material on these first five fifths - departing from C - to which, not entirely in the spirit of Zarlino, two tritones are added at the extremities (F#-C-G-D-A-Eb - or in its proper sequence, following the first seven prime numbers of the harmonic series: C-G-E-Bb-D-F#-A).

The text is treated as a form of recitative, with each word or phrase divided over overlapping units of six beats (6/4 or 6/2, with tempo 30 as basic unit for the half-note). In this way, the work uses up to five coinciding tempos with the part marked "R" (for 'Recitor') - with a speech tempo consistently around 90 beats per syllable - as the fastest tempo. As such, singer 'R' is the only one to actually deliver the entire text.

In the last five sections the tempo overlapping gradually ceases as the pitches are rhythmically coupled to their respective places within the harmonic series. As the work approaches its conclusion the text overlaps also cease one at a time until the voices all coincide on the word L'Harmonia.

### instrumentation:

5 voices (SSATB)

### duration:

Complete: 35'

Part I: 12'

### first performance of part I:

Compagnie Bisschoff

Vredenburg Grote zaal, Utrecht

### special features:

### Other Comments:

Parts II & III as yet unperformed; Piece also exists in a version for 5 voices and variable ensemble (No 30b).