

The instrumental chansons of Frescobaldi's time, called *canzoni alla francese*, are pieces which, as M. Praetorius noted in 1619, "pass by with many black notes, freshly, gaily, and quickly and are compositions mostly full of gaiety and lightness." Frescobaldi's chansons with their vivacious nature and cheerful imitative themes stand in contrast to the weighty style of the capriccios and ricercares. The number and setting of the voice parts varies in the chansons. After the fashion of the time, the choice of instruments is left to the performers (*da sonare con ogni sorte de stromenti*). Some pieces designate violin or cornetto (a non-metal wind instrument not played with a reed). It is possible that the music was played either on stringed instruments alone (originally viols), on wind instruments alone (originally cornetti with trombones, bassoon, and flutes), or by a mixed ensemble.

The Verdehr Trio experimented with the variety of tonal colors possible for the violin, clarinet, piano combination and sought to evoke the sonorities of the instruments used in the time of Frescobaldi—lute, viols, and various wind and percussion instruments—in working out the interpretation of these chansons. Given the powerful close of *Canzon Quinta*, it seemed fitting that the interpretation suggest a return to the sonorities of the twentieth century.

Gerolamo Frescobaldi (1583–1643) was born in Ferrara, Italy. A musician with a fine sense of sound and wide-ranging imagination, he was the creator of instrumental music of unprecedented severity for his time. Master of bold and rich improvisations, he became one of the most important and famous organists of his day. His genius was by no means limited to the keyboard instruments for he also excelled as a singer and player of wind instruments.