



BEMBO

THE SEVEN PSALMS OF DAVID, VOL. I

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■ The trail blazed in the Renaissance by female authors such as Moderata Fonte, with her *Merito delle Donne*, and the poet Vittoria Colonna paved the way for a cluster of creative women who would help to shape the art of the future. One such outstanding figure in the field of music is Barbara Strozzi, who provided a role model for the emergence of some remarkable women composers. Antonia Padoani Bembo (c. 1640-c. 1720) is an outstanding example of this phenomenon. In all probability a pupil of Cavalli, this cultured woman was the wife of Lorenzo Bembo, a descendant of the illustrious poet of the *Rime*, Pietro Bembo. Fleeing a stormy marriage, she left Venice and settled in Louis XIV's Paris. There she may met Elisabeth Jacquet de la Guerre, one of whose violin sonatas is aptly included in this album.

The CD contains four of the seven Psalms, including *Domine exaudi orationem meam* (Psalm CI and Psalm CXLII); although sometimes lacking in originality, the music is consistently refined and beautifully wrought, with an admirable sense of balance and attention to detail. The combination of a French vocal style with Italian sonority makes for a pleasant listening experience, which is enhanced still further by the flexibility of the voices and the fluency of the continuo. This CD marks a timely rediscovery that is well worth listening to. **ESTEBAN ZAMORA**