



Ressort: Kunst, Kultur und Musik

## Fiery Triumph in Baroque Expression: Combattimento

Schloss Ambras, 22.08.2025 [ENA]

On the evening of August 20, 2025, the historic Spanischer Saal of Schloss Ambras was alight with Baroque fervor in an electrifying presentation of Claudio Monteverdi's "Il Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda", performed by the ever-virtuoso la fonte musica under the direction of Michele Pasotti. This performance, part of the prestigious Innsbrucker Festwochen der Alten Musik, was nothing short of a radiant celebration of early Baroque dramaturgy, musical daring, and emotional immediacy.

Monteverdi's Combattimento stands as one of the most dramatic madrigals in the repertoire—a vivid, heart-wrenching tale of star-crossed love and tragic heroism, as the crusader Tancredi unwittingly slays his beloved Clorinda, a Saracen warrior, in combat. This nocturnal drama unfolds with unmatched expressive potency, and la fonte musica embraced its theatrical depths with both technical precision and emotional grace—delivering a performance that felt as intimate as it was grand. Monteverdi's invention of the "stile concitato"—an agitated style characterized by rapidly repeated notes and extended trills to express excitement, anger, and tension—was brought to vivid life.

Under Pasotti's guidance, the ensemble did not simply play these effects; they embodied them. With ascending swells of tension and shimmering articulation, Combattimento became more than music—it became a living, breathing battle, pulsating in the hushed air of the Spanish Hall. Bracketing the Monteverdi focal point, the program also featured works by Salamone Rossi, Dario Castello, and Biagio Marini—composers whose inventive textures and melodic daring enriched the emotional and stylistic landscape of the evening. The seamless weaving of these voices underscored the dialectic between lyricism and drama in early 17th-century Italian music, giving the audience a rounded, deeply satisfying sonic journey.

The Spanish Hall—with its ornate grandeur and warm acoustics—felt almost designed for Monteverdi's affective world. Shadows and candlelike lighting together with architectural intimacy cast a spell: every trill, every lament, every charged silence was magnified. The ensemble seemed to draw strength from the room's heritage, echoing Monteverdi's own salons in Venice's Palazzo Mocenigo centuries ago. Preceding the concert, the introductory talk, generously offered one hour before the performance, served as a luminous portal into the unfolding drama. In candid dialogue led by Christian Moritz-Bauer, the artists offered context, insight, and welcoming humanity—bridging the gap from 17th-century invention to contemporary engagement.

### Redaktioneller Programmdienst: European News Agency

Annette-Kolb-Str. 16  
D-85055 Ingolstadt  
Telefon: +49 (0) 841-951. 99.660  
Telefax: +49 (0) 841-951. 99.661  
Email: [contact@european-news-agency.com](mailto:contact@european-news-agency.com)  
Internet: [european-news-agency.com](http://european-news-agency.com)

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By the time the instruments were raised, the audience was already fully immersed. This event epitomized the Innsbruck Festival's stature today—not just as a venue for early music, but as a crucible where historical sensitivity and vibrant artistic vision merge. Since its founding in 1976, the festival has championed historically informed performance and discovered forgotten masterpieces—now under the stewardship of artistic directors such as Ottavio Dantone and Eva-Maria Sens—inspiring generations of performers and listeners alike. *Combattimento* was a crystalline expression of that legacy.

la fonte musica's artistry was nothing short of enthralling. Their musicianship balanced dynamic contrast with interpretive daring—shaping the narrative arc with tension, release, clarity, and passion. From the initial tremors of conflict to the final, thunderous dramatic climax, the ensemble held us rapt: every rapid figure, every resonant half-chorus, confirmed their stature as masters of emotional baroque rhetoric. Audiences were visibly moved. Applause thundered not just for technical virtuosity but for the emotional catharsis that music can uniquely deliver. It wasn't merely a concert—it was a collective journey into the roots of expressive music, and an affirmation of the living power of Monteverdi's innovations.

In *Combattimento*, we encountered a rare combination: an historical masterwork renewed, performed with fervor and precision; one of the most innovative vocal-instrumental styles of the Baroque restored in all its expressive urgency; and a living tradition honored in a setting that spoke across centuries.

As a Baroque music expert, I found this evening wholly affirmative—a demonstration that early music can still thrill, ignite reflection, and move us at the deepest level. It reaffirmed why the Innsbrucker Festwochen der Alten Musik has remained a lodestar for enthusiasts and scholars alike. May this radiant rendition of *Combattimento* be remembered as one of the festival's defining triumphs.

[Bericht online lesen:](https://culture.en-a.eu/kunst_kultur_und_musik/fiery_triumph_in_baroque_expression_combattimento-92008/)

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Redaktion und Verantwortlichkeit:

V.i.S.d.P. und gem. § 6 MDSStV: Dr. Nadejda Komendantova

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Annette-Kolb-Str. 16  
D-85055 Ingolstadt  
Telefon: +49 (0) 841-951. 99.660  
Telefax: +49 (0) 841-951. 99.661  
Email: [contact@european-news-agency.com](mailto:contact@european-news-agency.com)  
Internet: [european-news-agency.com](http://european-news-agency.com)

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