Movie Report: The Full Monteverdi By: Jeffery Morse

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This is a paper on how I felt watching this film. First here is some information I found on the Film online. (Wikapedia). Though we were not to include technical info on the Film, after researching I felt it necessary, as it debunks some of my impressions.

***The Full Monteverdi*** is a 2007 British film written and directed by [John La Bouchardière](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_La_Bouchardi%C3%A8re) and based on his live production of the same name, itself based on [Claudio Monteverdi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Claudio_Monteverdi)'s fourth book of madrigals (1603) which, in turn, is a collection of settings of poems by such Italian renaissance poets as [Giovanni Battista Guarini](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giovanni_Battista_Guarini), [Ottavio Rinuccini](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ottavio_Rinuccini) and [Torquato Tasso](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Torquato_Tasso). The film features the British vocal ensemble [I Fagiolini](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/I_Fagiolini) and the original cast of actors from the live production. Six couples meet in a restaurant. Over the course of the meal and the following morning, they break up, leaving six abandoned lovers. Claudio Monteverdi's compete fourth book of madrigals are sung throughout. The plot concerning these six couples who are breaking up simultaneously in a restaurant, during the course of their meals. Revelations about the past drive the couples to separation. The apparently avant-garde structure of the film is based in the musical material, which is often of highly contrapuntal [polyphony](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polyphony), and follows the stories of the different couples in a manner similar to the vocal interchanges in the madrigals. Shot in HD on location in [Bristol](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bristol), [Cheltenham](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cheltenham), [Gloucester](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gloucester) and London, including the [London Eye](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London_Eye), the central restaurant scenes were filmed on a studio set designed by [Chloe Lamford](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Chloe_Lamford&action=edit&redlink=1). The sound was recorded with music director Robert Hollingworth in advance and lip-synched in post-production. (Wikapedia).

**Composer(s)**:[Monteverdi, Claudio](http://www.naxos.com/composerinfo/Claudio_Monteverdi/24641.htm) **Lyricist(s)**: [Arlotti, Ridolfo](http://www.naxos.com/composerinfo/Ridolfo_Arlotti/24193.htm); [Gatti, Aurelio](http://www.naxos.com/composerinfo/Aurelio_Gatti/24194.htm); [Guarini, Giovanni Battista](http://www.naxos.com/composerinfo/Giovanni_Battista_Guarini/24216.htm); [Moro, Maurizio](http://www.naxos.com/composerinfo/Maurizio_Moro/24195.htm); [Rinuccini, Ottavio](http://www.naxos.com/composerinfo/Ottavio_Rinuccini/22083.htm); [Tasso, Torquato](http://www.naxos.com/composerinfo/Torquato_Tasso/22084.htm) **Conductor(s)**:  
[Hollingworth, Robert](http://www.naxos.com/conductorinfo/Robert_Hollingworth/40342.htm) **Choir(s)**:[Fagiolini, I](http://www.naxos.com/choirinfo/Fagiolini,_I/40435.htm) **Label**: [Naxos](http://www.naxos.com/labels/naxos_dvd-dvd.htm) **Genre**: [Classical Concert](http://www.naxos.com/nwgenrelist.asp?genre=DVD&workcat=Classical%20Concert&p_id=M) **Period**: [Baroque](http://www.naxos.com/nwperiodlist.asp?p_id=M&period=Baroque)(Wikapedia).

Synopsis:

After hearing the title and having no recollection of the word “Monteverdi”, my first impression was that this movie was some spoof on the 20th century film “The Full Monty.” Having never seen ‘The Full Monty’, mainly because of the lewdness that it was advertised to have, I wasn’t sure what to expect of this film. The film began with all the normal forward comments from acclaimed people and critics adding to the notion that I was about to watch a highly acclaimed movie. I found myself curious, as for several minutes it had no dialogue at all. The scene opened in a café with the rumble of boisterous and talkative customers having various conversations in the background, none of which could be identified by auditory perception. This background noise lasted so long that I found myself questioning if there was to be any dialogue at all. To add to this impression were the expressions so expertly performed by the cast. Their body language alone seemed enough to tell the story. This magnificence in acting expressionism was unremitting by the cast for the entire film.

Just when I had decided that this was a film with no spoken dialogue, my ears began to hear the familiarity of choirs’ softy coming in. At that point I was amazed at the next sung words, **Ah, dolente partita! (**Oh sorrowful parting! Oh my life’s end!). What did this mean? What was I watching? I confess until this day I have never been too or ever planned to attend any type of Operatic performance. I continued reading the lines as they came. (Ah, dolente partita! Ah, fin de la mia vita! Da te part' e non moro? E pur i' provo la pena de la morte). **My love, this leaving leaves me wintering; what once was warmed a bitter wind now bends.** This has Italian dialogue, I surmised. Very unexpected, but yet I found myself enthralled, even though some my class mates were making fun at the seemingly incongruence between sung verse and theatrical situation. I recognized that this was an example of the type that we had been studying, but wasn’t quite sure of what type it was. However, the way that the voices were moving in quadruplet in and out of consonance, and then hearing those final consonant parallel notes, brought such a sense of majesty and safeness, I loved it! I kept watching noting the elaborate poetry that was being sung and feeling that whoever had written this must had been a master poet. Confession number 2: I am a hopeless romantic. Being as such, I found this movie so beautiful, and originally thought it to be about love. At the end of what I know now to be the first poem, there was a deafening silence. A time of wonder and amazement in which I found myself lost, and trying to cling on to the hope of Love. On the flip side, as each silent area passed I found myself getting uncomfortable. Each silent area between the poems became an area I’d rather have passed by. Just to much waning hope to bear. Being a lover of God, I instead began to relate the whole thing to Him. Remembering “God is Love”, and seeing dialogue like, “If I had a Human Soul”, and “the soul of my heart”, alone with some statement about an Idol seemed to confirm my hypothesis. I soon thought this movie all about the relationship between God and Man; all the infidelity on our part and the faithfulness on His. However, in the end, I thought it an attempt to try an explain love, what an impossible task. I felt it was attempting to answer questions such as: Where is love from? What does love do? How does love make us feel? How are we affected by it? How are we affected by others love toward us or lack of it? What is the final result of love whether bad, good, or indifferent? After almost an hour of it, I began to become despondent. It just became a story of love gone wrong, although the message delivery was very beautiful. Upon arriving at home I set out to get some more info on what I watched. First off, I was amazed to find that Monteverdi was a person, and a famous one at that. My studies on him indicate that he was a pioneer of Opera, and may be even said by some to be The pioneer of Opera. I became still more amazed at the knowledge that this was a Madrigal which was written and performed in the 16th century. The name of coarse had no connection at all with “the Full Monty” 20th century movie, I found myself a little ashamed that I had even entertained the thought. I was moved mostly by the fact that this work which had moved me to the point of research was not only written centuries ago, but was just a compiled work of so many different poets, that Monteverdi had turned in to His 4th madrigal. I am humbled by the talent portrayed by the lyricists, Monteverdi himself, as well as [John La Bouchardière](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_La_Bouchardi%C3%A8re), who wrote and produced this movie. The Performers so expertly sang the madrigals, and their expressions too well portrayed emotion; I found myself a puppet. My emotions and inner desires toyed with by the masters of an age long gone. Needless to say I will not soon forget this one.