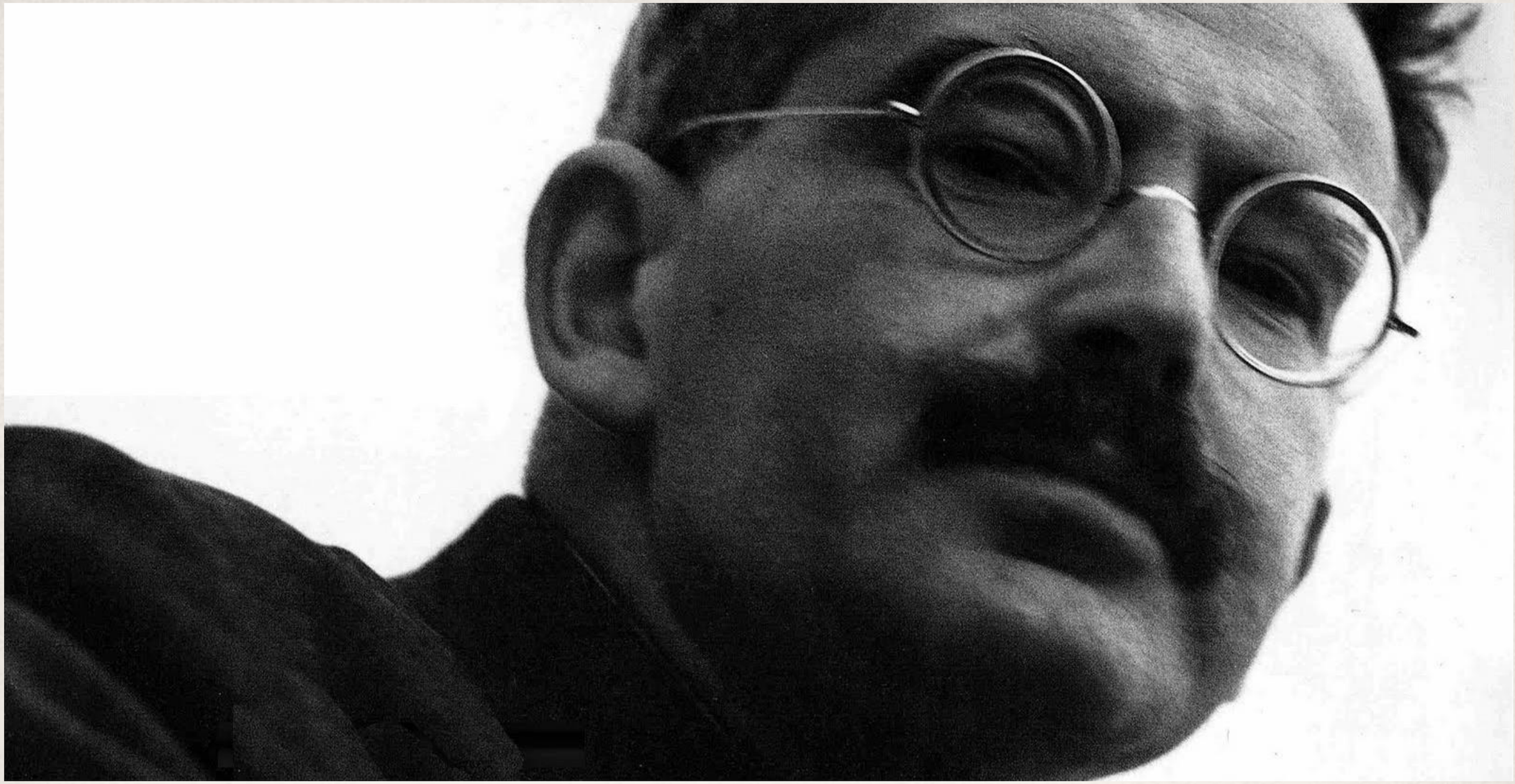
Improvisation and Reproduction

A modest plea for methodical madness

Nuno Atalaia - Royal Conservatory The Hague

Lyon 19 - 04 - 2013



Walter Benjamin (1892 - 1940)

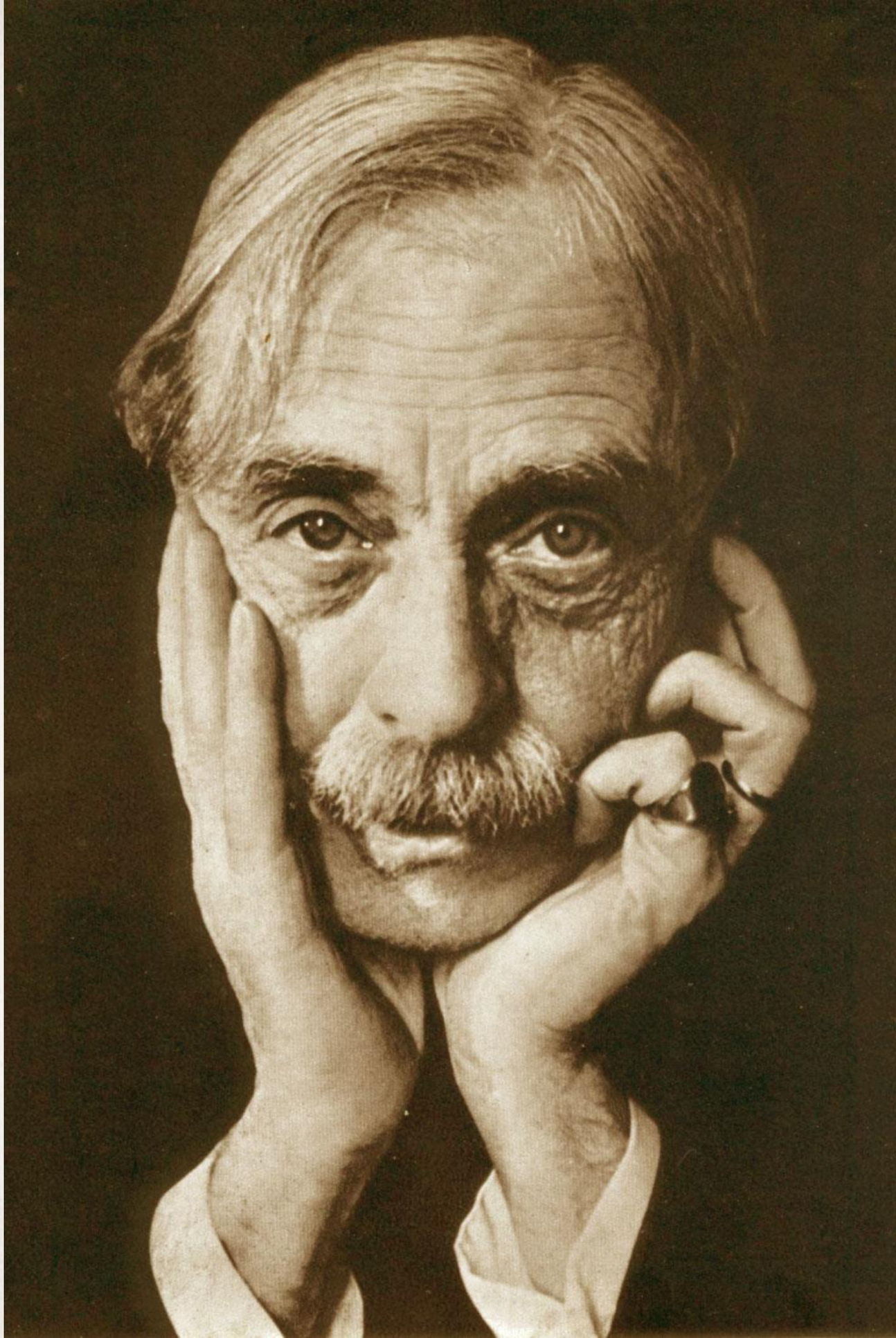
Lyon 19 - 04 - 2013

Paul Valery

(1871 - 1945)

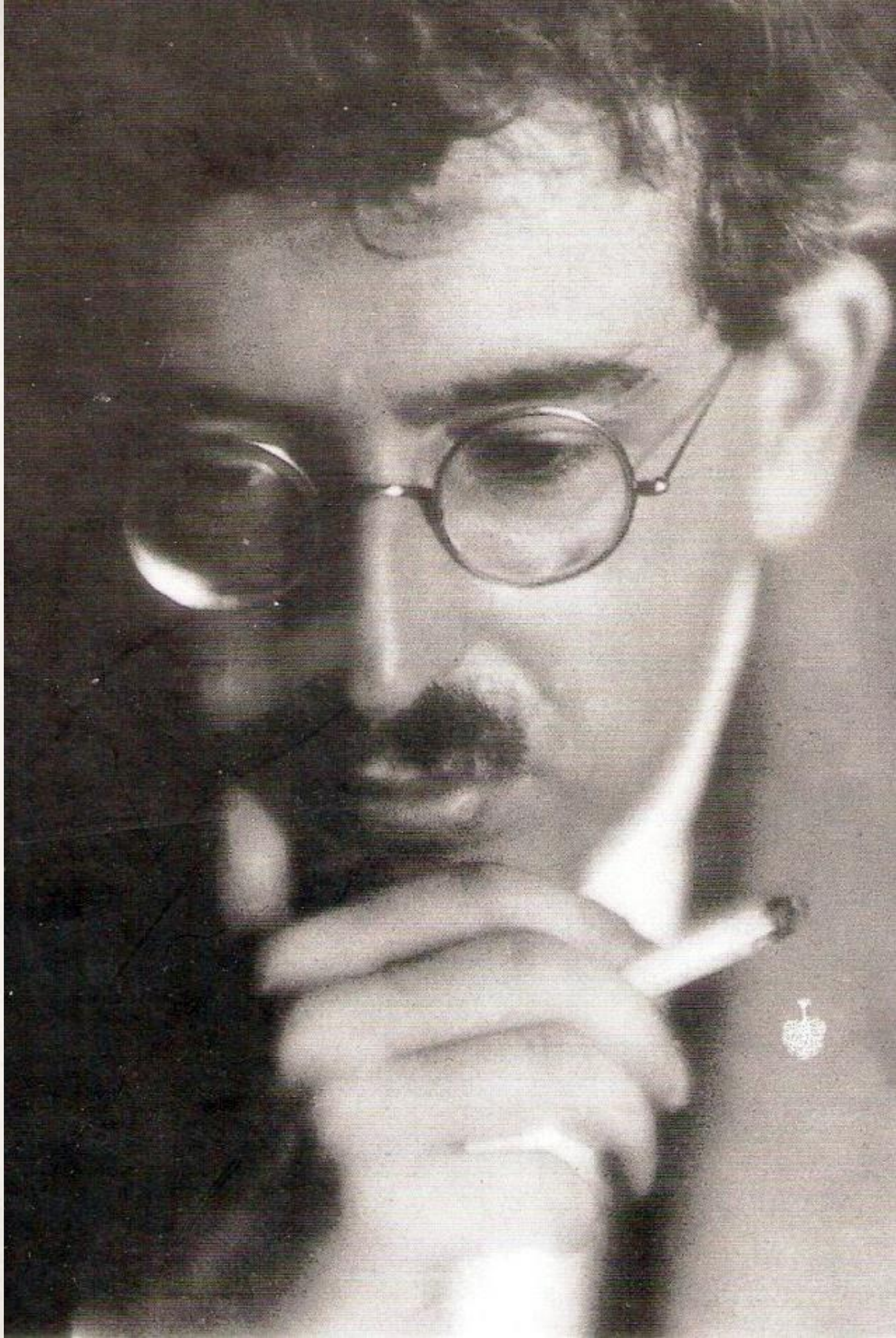
The conquest of Ubiquity

“For the last twenty years neither matter nor space nor time has been what it was from time immemorial. We must expect great innovations to transform the entire technique of the arts, thereby affecting artistic invention itself and perhaps even bringing about an amazing change in our very notion of art”



The work of Art in the Age of its Techonological Reproduction (1936)

“One of the foremost tasks (*aufgaben*) of art has always been the creation of a demand, which could be fully satisfied only later.”



- Overcoming of traditional concepts
  - Creativity, genius, mistery...
- The loss of the artwork’s aura
  - “What withers in the age of technological reproduction of the work of art is the latter’s aura”
- Detachment of the artwork from tradition
- From ritual value and practices into the political

Giovanni Bassano (1558 -1617)

Ricercate, Passagi et Cadentie

- Composer and instrumentalist
- St. Mark’s Basilica, Venice
- Pedagogical treatise
  - Ganassi, Rognone, Dalla Casa
- Diminution improvisation
- Path to tonality

RICERCATE
PASSAGGI ET
CADENTIE,

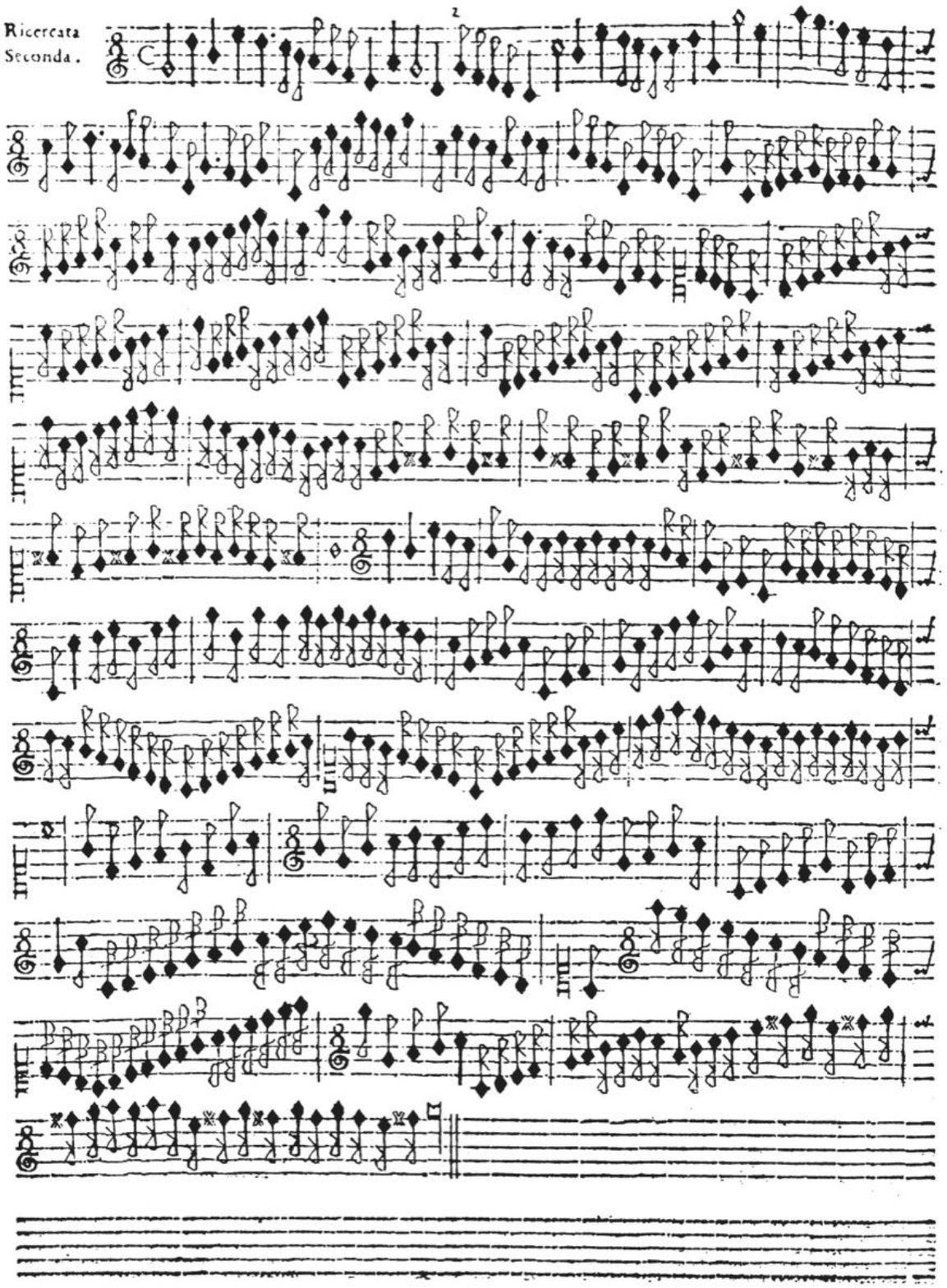
Per poterſi eſſercitar nel diminuir terminatamente con ogni ſorte
d'Iſtrumento: & anco diuerſi paſſaggi per
la ſemplice uoce.

DI GIOVANNI BASSANO
Muſico Dell'Illuſtriſſima Signoria di Venetia,
nouamente compoſte, & date in luce.

CON PRIVILEGIO.

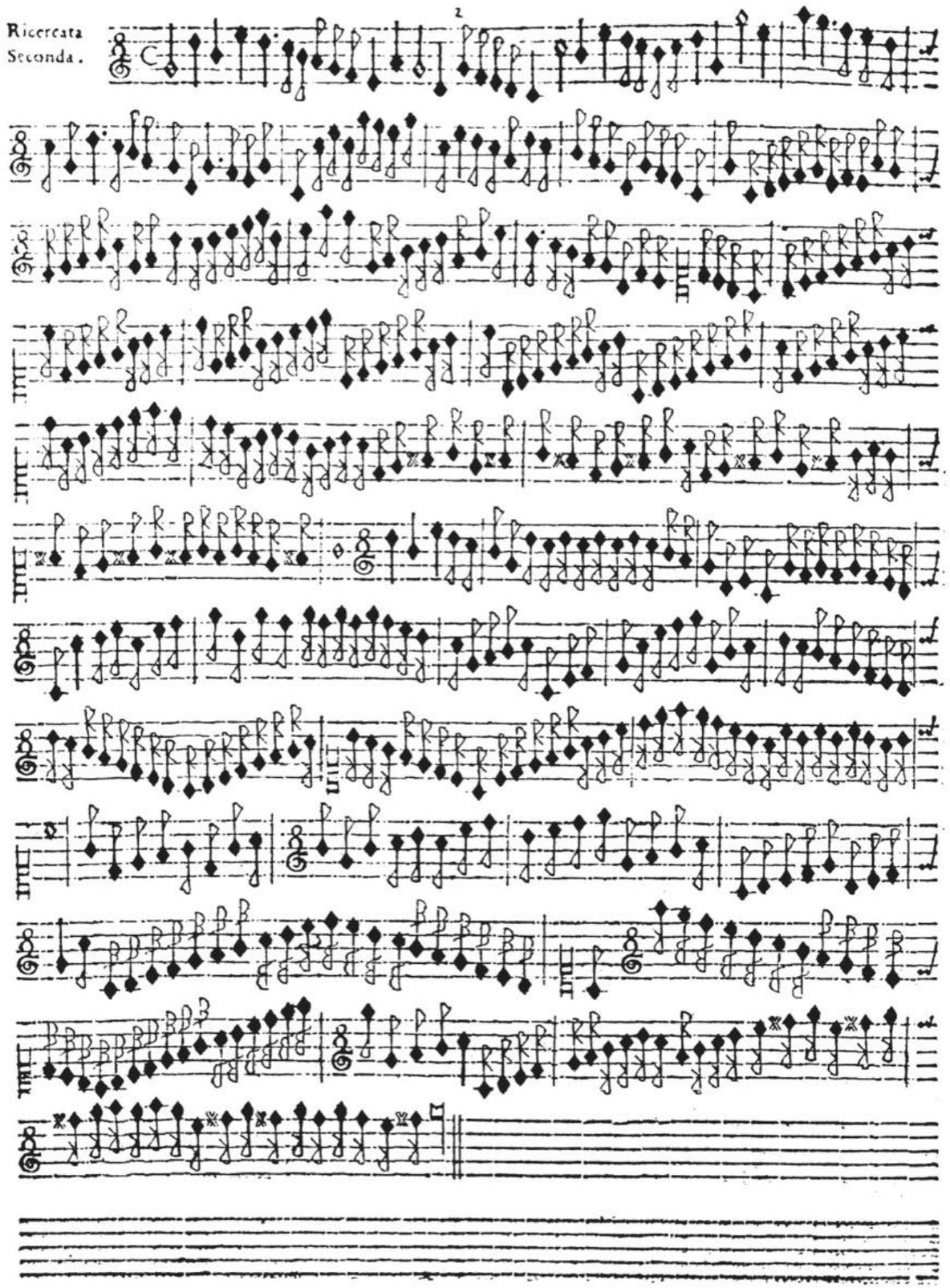
IN VENETIA
Appreſſo Giacomo Vincenzi, & Ricciardo Amadino, compagni.
M D LXXXV.

Ricercata
Seconda.



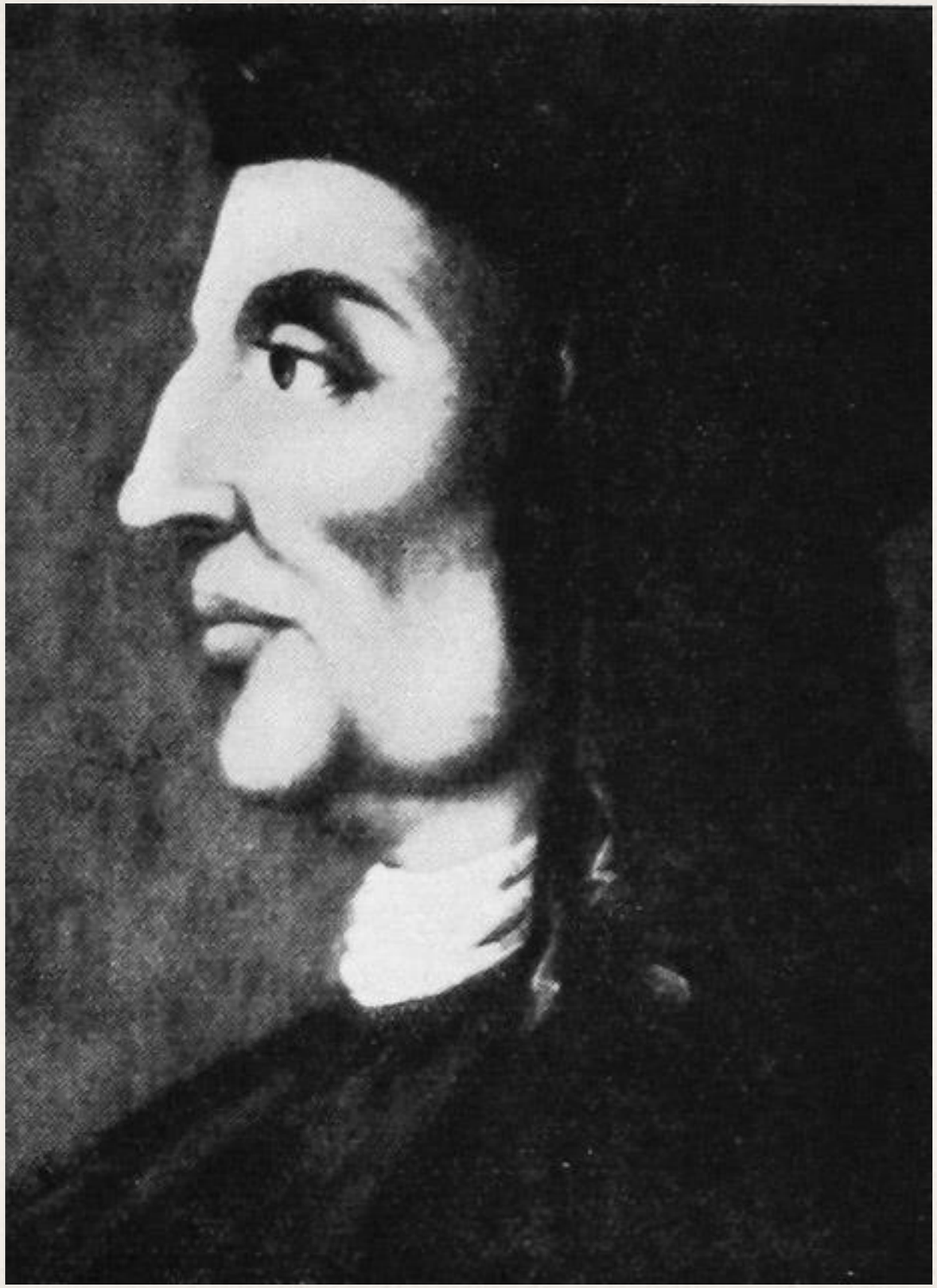
Susanna ghir. Allo modo.

Ricercata
Seconda.



Solmization and Poliphony

- Modes
  - Four numbers - Four modes
- Hexachords
  - Three letters - Natural, soft and hard hexachords
- Counterpoint
  - Three symbols - Three cadential tones



D. ADRIANO WILLAERT. MAE° DI CAP. DI S. MĀCO
IN VENEZIA
1527

Iosquin

Diu mes amours

Adiu mes amours

Tenor

RICERCATE
PASSAGGI ET
CADENTIE,

Per poterſi eſſercitar nel diminuir terminatamente con ogni ſorte
d'Iſtrumento: & anco diuerſi paſſaggi per
la ſemplice uoce.

DI GIOVANNI BASSANO
Muſico Dell'Illuſtriſſima Signoria di Venetia,
nouamente compoſte, & date in luce.

CON PRIVILEGIO.

MUSICA

IN VENETIA
Appreſſo Giacomo Vincenzi, & Ricciardo Amadino, compagni.
M D LXXXV.

“Just as the entire mode of existence of human collectives changes over long historical periods, so too does their mode of perception”