



best-known masters of music in this genre. With it, our knowledge of this genre, period and style is greatly improved.

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NICOLA PORPORA (1686–1768), ED. KURT MARKSTROM
VESPERS FOR THE FEAST OF THE ASSUMPTION: A RECONSTRUCTION OF THE 1744 SERVICE AT THE OSPEDALETTO IN VENICE
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In the diaries of travellers visiting the Italian peninsula between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, there may often be found enthusiastic accounts of musical entertainment that the city of Venice offered at its four main *ospedali*: the famous Pietà, the Mendicanti, the Incurabili and the Derelitti. Neither monasteries nor pure music schools, these hospitals were certainly among the most important and dynamic institutions of the lagoon city. They were places set up for orphaned or destitute girls who were offered an education as well as musical training. To provide a music education for these girls, the so-called *putte*, these charitable institutions employed such renowned musicians as Vivaldi, Hasse, Galuppi, Traetta and Sacchini, among others. Music was in fact an essential element in enlivening daily liturgical services. Liturgies and religious feasts were the ‘feather in the cap’ of the performing and recreational activities within the hospitals, occasions on which the girls could demonstrate their vocal and instrumental skills.

Santa Maria dei Poveri Derelitti, popularly known as the Ospedaletto, was founded in 1528 at the monastery of Santi Giovanni e Paolo. In 1743 the institute was looking for a worthy successor to the opera composer Antonio Pollarolo. The position was given to the famous Neapolitan composer Nicola Antonio Porpora, who had already been *maestro di coro* of the Incurabili between 1726 and 1738, and had worked at the Pietà for a short period in 1742. The task entrusted to Porpora as *maestro di coro* was to revive the Ospedaletto’s decaying musical life, thereby making it a more prestigious educational institution. He was to direct the choir, play the organ during the solemn feast days, give singing lessons to the girls four days a week and compose a Vespers every year. Porpora’s teaching and composing activities were particularly intense: during his first year at the Ospedaletto he wrote a mass, a Credo, fifteen motets, eleven antiphons, a series of psalms and a Vespers for the Assumption. The music of the 1744 Assumption Vespers occupies a particularly important place in Porpora’s sacred works, which are still relatively unknown.

The liturgical structure of a Marian Vespers for the solemnity of the Assumption would generally include an introductory responsory, *Deus in adjutorium meum*, and five psalms – *Dixit Dominus*, *Laudate Pueri*, *Lætatus sum*, *Nisi Dominus* and *Lauda Jerusalem* – in addition to a Magnificat and a Salve Regina, interspersed, as was usual, with antiphons, motets or chants. Markstrom’s edition attempts to reconstruct the music for this 1744 service by bringing together five Marian psalms, the canticle of the Magnificat and two versions of the Marian antiphon Salve Regina. Unlike the compositions written by Vivaldi for the Pietà, Porpora’s music for the Ospedaletto was scored specifically for female voices and orchestra; thus in Markstrom’s edition, the choral music is scored for divided sopranos and altos with strings and continuo. But this is a somewhat speculative reconstruction: not all the scores belonging to the 1744 Assumption Vespers have survived. Only three psalms (*Lætatus sum*, *Nisi Dominus*, *Lauda Jerusalem*) and the two Salve Reginas are actually dated 1744. One of the two is especially noteworthy since it was written for Angiola Moro, one



of Porpora's pupils. It is a solo motet of great expressive beauty, written with the intention of showcasing the contralto voice of one of the most talented *figlie* of the Ospedaletto. All of these pieces are from Porpora's autograph manuscripts in the British Library in London. The other parts of the Vespers are missing from this important collection. As Markstrom explains in the introductory paragraphs of the edition, either the scores were lost, or Porpora reused previous materials, possibly from his years in Naples. The question of reuse is in fact mentioned in the 1745 correspondence between Porpora and the board of directors of the Ospedaletto, and is certainly a central issue in the history of these Vespers and in their reconstruction. In fact, the deputies accused Porpora of having reused music written earlier for the Ospedale della Pietà in the Vespers of August 1744. Porpora, offended by this accusation, invited the deputies to compare the scores written for the Ospedaletto with those in the library of the Pietà. Markstrom believes it likely that the deputies took him up on the offer, though there is no way to be certain. In any case, as Markstrom emphasizes, it is highly probable that Porpora had indeed recycled compositions, as those he had written in Naples would not yet have been heard in Venice. Both *Dixit Dominus* and the Magnificat could have been recycled, together with the *Laudate Pueri*: there was in fact no *Laudate Pueri* from 1744, but a setting was composed for the Pietà in 1742, and there were two other settings from 1745. According to Markstrom's investigation, the 1742 *Laudate* was probably the piece that was reused in the 1744 Vespers and that the directors of the Ospedaletto would have seen. Of the two settings from 1745, one was composed in April for the Vespers in August and the other was composed in June, conceivably written *a posteriori* for the Vespers of 1744 – Markstrom hypothesizes that the setting was meant as an apologetic gesture to the board for having been caught stealing music.

To reconstruct the Vespers service of 1744 Markstrom has therefore decided to add to the surviving scores of 1744 earlier compositions dating from the composer's Neapolitan period, such as an undated *Dixit Dominus* and the 1741 Magnificat. Both scores, preserved today in separate parts at the San Pietro a Majella Library in Naples, were probably composed for students of the Conservatorio di Santa Maria di Loreto, where Porpora had previously taught. They are indeed scores for mixed choir (SATB). For these, Markstrom has transposed the male parts so as to adapt them to the tessitura of the female choir (SSAA). This adaptation would be a permissible licence, since similar processes have been found in other autograph sources by Porpora.

However, I am unconvinced regarding the *Laudate Pueri* chosen to be included in the edition. Markstrom selected this piece according to different criteria than that which he used to select the Magnificat and *Dixit Dominus*. Porpora wrote the 1742 *Laudate Pueri* for four mixed voices, while the two versions from 1745 were written for a female choir. Since the two compositions of 1745 would not require transposition, Markstrom decided to opt for the setting of June 1745. However, this is probably not the version actually performed at the Ospedaletto in 1744.

Markstrom's detective work has certainly produced a plausible reconstruction, though some doubts remain about the reconstruction's historical completeness. If the editor's intent was to recreate the musical apparatus of the Vespers for the Feast of the Assumption as it would have sounded at the Ospedaletto on 15 August 1744, it might have made more sense to include everything that was actually performed then according to the musicological research that has been conducted: the Neapolitan sources of the *Dixit* and Magnificat, and the 1742 *Laudate Pueri*. The edition also contains an appendix showing the plainchant for the introductory responsory and the usual antiphons for Marian Vespers. However, given that the aim is to reconstruct the Vespers service, I would have found it more interesting to include the Gregorian antiphons, responses and versicles in their natural place: before (and after) the Psalms, within the same book, and not as an appendix, thereby faithfully presenting the liturgical pattern of a Marian solemnity and a musical apparatus that complies with the performance practices of the day. I consider the relationship between music and liturgy central to the 'liturgical service' edition that is specified in the volume subtitle, especially for the purposes of a performance which aims to present the full ritual of Vespers. Rather than a genuine reconstruction, it is, I think, a re-enactment. Beyond the methodologies and editorial choices made, this edition has the advantage of recreating the sound of institutions which enlivened the effervescent musical life of Venice while at the same time providing us with a valuable record of the high level of education attained



by the choirgirls thanks to Porpora's teaching. Not least, Markstrom's work also has the merit of offering the opportunity to find in one place some of the most fascinating pages of Porpora's sacred works, too often sacrificed in favour of his operatic production, but to which the Neapolitan composer dedicated a significant part of his creative activity.

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JOHANN BAPTIST WANHAL (1739–1813), ED. TOBIAS GLÖCKLER

DOUBLE BASS CONCERTO

Munich: Henle, 2015

pp. viii + 39 (+ parts), ISMN 979 0 2018 0979 3

Johann Baptist Wanhal's career in music was by all accounts a successful one. A native of Bohemia, he received special instruction at an early age from local masters, studying organ, violin and composition. By the time he left his homeland for the more cosmopolitan environment of Vienna in 1760–1761 he had composed several concertos, notably for the instruments he had studied, and had acquired a modest reputation as a virtuoso violinist. Save for a brief sojourn in Italy (from May 1769 to September 1771) and subsequent sundry excursions, Vienna served as his home and base of operations from that date until his death.

Wanhal actively cultivated the genre of the symphony upon his arrival in Vienna. However, by the 1780s he had greatly curtailed his efforts in the symphonic realm, concentrating instead on producing works that were more aligned with the evolving musical taste of contemporary Viennese society. This taste included the vogue for soloistic double-bass works that blossomed in Vienna, and in other parts of Europe as well, at this time.

Wanhal's concerto is an excellent representative of this vibrant tradition. Tobias Glöckler places the likely date of composition for this work between 1786 and 1789, though, as Paul Bryan has pointed out, dating the works of Wanhal can be 'fiendishly complex' (*Johann Wanhal, Viennese Symphonist: His Life and His Musical Environment* (New York: Pendragon, 1997), xxii). No autograph of this piece is extant; it survives only as a set of parts, in the hand of an unknown copyist, from the collection of the composer and double-bass virtuoso Johann Matthias Sperger (1750–1812). Sperger spent a good deal of his early career in Vienna and may well have encountered Wanhal during that period. In any case, Sperger assembled an impressive assortment of soloistic works for the Viennese double bass, including concertos by Carl Ditters von Dittersdorf, Franz Anton Hoffmeister, Anton Zimmermann, Sperger himself and this concerto of Wanhal's. It is on this set of parts – currently held in the Landesbibliothek Mecklenburg-Vorpommern at Schwerin, reflecting Sperger's long-standing appointment at the court of the Duke of Mecklenberg – that Glöckler's edition is based.

Glöckler's volume features a Preface in German, English and French. Indeed, all textual materials throughout the edition – including annotations in the piano-reduction score as well as in the two accompanying solo parts (partbooks 1 and 2) – are given in all three languages. This opening material expands on the background of Wanhal's concerto as mentioned above, and explains the various elements of the edition, including the basic approach used in adapting the manuscript parts, as well as various performance options aimed at making this concerto accessible to present-day double-bass soloists of all kinds.

The manuscript parts from Schwerin designate this work as *Concerto in Eb per il Contrabasso* on the title page. While the orchestral parts are indeed written in E flat major, the solo double-bass part is presented in D major. As Glöckler points out, this reflects the standard practice of the period for soloistic double-bass