

PROGRAM NOTES, TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

June 1, 2003 ~ 4:00 p.m.

Magnificat

Francesco Durante

Francesco Durante (1684-1755) distinguished himself as a composer of church music. This is unique as Durante was Neapolitan and it was the fashion among composers of the day to throw their respective hats into the ring of operatic repertoire. This was not so for Durante who chose to devote himself almost solely to liturgical music. Perhaps the most famous example of Durante's liturgical output, the Magnificat in B flat Major is also his most controversial. While the most recent and reliable research appoints Durante as the progenitor of the Magnificat, it has also been attributed to Pergolesi (who was a pupil of Durante) and thus, at least until quite recently, the work's origin has been shrouded in relative mystery.

The piece consists of six movements with the counterpoint in the first movement built around the eighth psalm tone cantus firmus. In each successive movement, overlapping, imitative polyphony is used in concordance with the opening subject and is then woven throughout the entire movement using text, tempo and vocal color to give it its own particular character. The recapitulation of the opening chorus at the end of a work was a growing practice for Neapolitan composers in the latter half of the eighteenth century. In the sixth movement we see this with an almost literal repeat of the opening material, this time using the 'Sicut erat' to complete the Magnificat. (E.G.)

Chorus

Magnificat anima mea Dominum.
Et exultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutari meo.

*My soul magnifies the Lord.
And my spirit has rejoiced in God my savior.*

Quia respexit humilitatem ancillae suae:
ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent omnes generationes.

*For he has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden:
for behold, henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.*

Quia fecit mihi magna qui potens est;
et sanctum nomen ejus.

*For he who is mighty has done great things to me;
and holy is his name.*

Et misericordia

Et misericordia ejus a progenie
in progenies timentibus eum.

*And his mercy is on them who
fear him from generation to generation.*

Fecit potentiam in bracchio suo:
dispersit superbos mente cordis sui.

*He has shown strength with his arm:
he has scattered the proud, even the arrogant of heart.*

De posuit

Deposuit potentes de sede,
et exultavit humilis.

*He has deposed the mighty from
their seats, and exalted the humble.*

Esurientes implevit bonis:
et divites dimisit inanes.

*The hungry he has filled with good things,
and the rich he has sent empty away.*

Suscepit Israel

Suscepit Israel puerum suum,
recordatus misericordiae suae.

*He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy.*

Sicut locutus est

Sicut locutus est ad patres nostros,
Abraham et semini ejus in saecula.
Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto.

*As it was spoken to our fathers,
to Abraham and his seed forever.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.*

Sicut erat in principio

Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper,
et in saecula saeculorum, Amen.

*As it was in the beginning, is now,
and ever shall be, world without end, Amen.*