



ACCADEMIA
D'ARCADIA

LÆTATUS SUM

ALESSANDRO GRANDI'S
PSALMS

Accademia d'Arcadia

Utfasol Ensemble

Alessandra Rossi Lürig



IL PROGETTO

A program by Fondazione Arcadia (2019-2022) following *Celesti fiori*, the first part of the Grandi's project. This project stage schedules:

- Sources' transcription, editing and publishing
- 2 CD *Arcana | Outthere*
- Concert tours

THE CONTEXT

Publications of church music in northern Italy in the early Seventeenth century tended to fall into three groups: those of motets (often also called concerti); those of psalms (including the Magnificat); and those of Masses. The last two groups contained music destined for specific services, and indeed psalm collections might include one setting of the Mass – as is shown by the frequency of the title *Messa e salmi*. Motet collections, on the other hand, served all sorts of purposes both within and outside the context of church services. Specific psalms are used for the office of Vespers: the increasing emphasis on Vespers music during this period is confirmed by the fact that in the stocklist of the Venetian publisher Vincenti, psalm collections multiply tenfold between 1591 and 1662, whereas those of Masses multiply only fivefold.

THE COMPOSER

Alessandro Grandi (Venice 1590 - Bergamo 1630) was one of the most important and famous composers of the first half of the Seventeenth century. Only recently, thanks to R. Baroncini's researches, some fundamental dates of his life as well as his prominent role in the musical life of his time have been rediscovered. An extremely precocious talent, Grandi was nominated

Maestro di Cappella of the Accademia della Morte of Ferrara in 1610, starting a swift career that led him to fill the position of Maestro di cappella at the Cathedral of Ferrara. In the fall of 1620 he obtained the nomination to vice Maestro di Cappella as assistant to Claudio Monteverdi in Saint Mark's basilica in Venice. In 1627 he was elected Maestro di Cappella in Bergamo, at Santa Maria Maggiore Cathedral, where the array of musical forces allowed him to compose music on a larger scale. He died at 40 during the plague of July, 1630 along with his entire family.

I BRANI

Vespro della Beata Vergine

- *Deus in adiutorium - Domine ad adiuvandum*
- *Dixit Dominus*
- *Laudate pueri*
- *Laetatus sum*
- *Nisi Dominus*
- *Lauda Jerusalem*
- *Magnificat*



THE STYLE

"Staying in Venice as the guest of old friends, I learned that the long unchanged theory of composing music had in part set aside the ancient numbers to tickle the ears of today with new titillations".

(Heinrich Schütz,
Preface to his first set of Symphoniæ Sacræ, 1629)

The musical upheaval at the beginning of the Seventeenth century brought some innovations: a new harmonic style and sense of modulation, which spread from secular to all sacred music. For the big-scale Church music, the tradition of cori spezzati led to the essential idea of using contrasts between groups of soloists and tutti, thus producing a dramatic juxtaposition of frequently unrelated harmonies. The analysis of Grandi's works shows so many of the features of the mature Monteverdi that the resemblance can hardly be accidental. It was Monteverdi who so resolutely introduced the secular manner into church music in his 1610 collection. It was he who also kept up this unity of secular and sacred in the anthologies during the second and third decades of the century. No wonder Grandi was chosen to be Monteverdi's assistant.

THE CONCERTATO PSALMS

Most of Grandi's psalms are intended for Vespers. The Vesper psalm setting was a comparatively recent phenomenon in the history of church music, appearing around 1570 and spreading rapidly: after Mass, Vesper became the most important service in Venice. Grandi only ventured in the field of psalms with large-scale writing and at the end of his life, three psalms collections were published during the last years of his life, one in 1629, two in 1630. Despite the dates of their publication, it is by no means certain that all the works in these prints were written during his last three years in Bergamo as Maestro di cappella at Santa Maria Maggiore, except for

the third one (Messa e Salmi concertati a tre voci, 1630).

In his Psalms, Grandi always provides ample variety within a short space, using instruments, a group of soloists, and capella choir for contrasts, changes of mood and variation of texture, as well as rhythmic variation. The musical setting of the Raccolta terza (two to four obbligato voices supplemented by a number of optional vocal or instrumental parts) are representative of the trend to make any sacred collectoon adaptable to as many performing situations as possible: a conditoons also well suited to the modern performer. In these Psalms, Grandi displays an originality of his own showing to be even more progressive than Monteverdi himself.

THE SOURCES

. *Salmi a otto brevi con il primo choro concertato*. Del Signor Alessandro Grandi Maestro di Capella in Santa Maria Maggiore di Bergamo. In Venetia, Appresso Alessandro Vincenti. 1629 | I-Bc, Museo internazionale e Biblioteca della musica di Bologna - AA.48

. *Messa, e Salmi concertati a tre voci* di Alessandro Grandi Maestro di Capella in Santa Maria Maggiore di Bergamo. In Venetia Appresso Alessandro Vincenti. 1630 | I-Bc, Museo internazionale e Biblioteca della musica di Bologna - AA.49

. *Raccolta Terza di Leonardo Simonetti* Musico nella Capella della Serenissima Repubblica. *De Messa et Salmi* del Sig. Alessandro Grandi et Gio. Chiozotto à 2. 3. 4. con Basso continuo. Aggiuntoui li Ripieni à beneplacito. In Venetia. 1630. Appresso Bartholomeo Magni. | I-Bc, Museo internazionale e Biblioteca della musica di Bologna - AA.50

ACCADEMIA D'ARCADIA

Cristina Fanelli, Maria Chiara Gallo

Cantus

Maximiliano Baños, Enrico Torre

Altus

Massimo Altieri, Riccardo Pisani

Tenor

Renato Cadel, Alessandro Ravasio

Bassus

Luigi Accardo

Organ

Giovanni Bellini

Theorbo

Gian Andrea Guerra

Violin

UTFASOL ENSEMBLE

Pietro Modesti

Cornetto

Susanna Defendi, Valerio Mazzuconi

Fabio de Cataldo, Andrea Angeloni

Sackbutts

Alessandra Rossi Lürig

conductor



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MEDIA

Presentation

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