

INTRODUCTION

The essays in this volume were originally conceived separately with a view toward publication in various musicological journals. However, the opportunity to bring together in one issue of RICE UNIVERSITY STUDIES a series of essays focusing on the single subject of Monteverdi's Mass and Vespers print of 1610 has obvious advantages for both the author and his readers.

Chapter V, "Some Historical Perspectives on the Monteverdi Vespers," has previously appeared in *Analecta Musicologica* 15 (1975): 29-86, and is reprinted here, revised and updated, with the kind permission of the editor of *Analecta*, Dr. Friedrich Lippmann. Chapters III, IV, and V are based upon my Ph.D. dissertation, "The Monteverdi Vespers of 1610 and their Relationship with Italian Sacred Music of the Early Seventeenth Century" (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1972). These three essays consolidate and summarize the analyses and conclusions of several chapters from that dissertation.

Chapters I and II are the result of additional research undertaken in preparation for my forthcoming critical edition of the *Missa In illo tempore* and *Vespro della Beata Vergine*, to be published by the Fondazione "Claudio Monteverdi" of Cremona, Italy, in its series, *Claudio Monteverdi: Opera Omnia*.

Each of the five chapters approaches a specific issue raised by the Mass and Vespers. Chapter I examines the two sources of these works, one a manuscript copy in the *Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana* preserving only the Mass, and the other Ricciardo Amadino's print of 1610 containing both the Mass and Vespers. An investigation of the original sources is collated with other seventeenth-century source materials and studies in an attempt to answer questions of notation and performance practice. The discussion of *chiavette* and transposition in this chapter leads to conclusions about tonal relationships somewhat different from those originally proposed in my dissertation.

Chapter II is a critical essay on the *Missa In illo tempore*. The object of this inquiry is not a detailed analysis of the Mass, but a general assessment

of the work's main characteristics, artistic merits, and significance in Monteverdi's compositional career.

Chapters III and IV are more thoroughly analytical, attempting to demonstrate in detail some of the most important compositional procedures in the Vespers. Attention is centered on parody and variation techniques throughout the Vespers and a sample case of melodic construction in the motet *Nigra sum*.

In chapter V, the Vespers are evaluated in relation to their background. A historical perspective is developed through a review of late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Italian Vesper repertoire and a comparison between Vesper and motet music of the early seventeenth century and Monteverdi's own styles and techniques. Conclusions are also drawn as to the impact of Monteverdi's *Vespro* on other Italian composers in the decade 1610-1620.

Until recently, when one spoke of the Monteverdi Vespers, it was not even clear what was meant or what compositions constituted these Vespers in the first place. The succession of pieces after the Mass in Amadino's print is as follows:

- Domine ad adiuvandum* (respond)
- Dixit Dominus* (psalm 109)
- Nigra sum* (motet)
- Laudate pueri* (psalm 112)
- Pulchra es* (motet)
- Laetatus sum* (psalm 121)
- Duo Seraphim* (motet)
- Nisi Dominus* (psalm 126)
- Audi coelum* (motet)
- Lauda Jerusalem* (psalm 147)
- Sonata sopra "Sancta Maria ora pro nobis"* (instrumental sonata with litany)
- Ave maris stella* (hymn)
- Magnificat* for seven voices and six instruments
- Magnificat* for six voices.

Monteverdi's publication has been termed by Hans Redlich "a loose collection of diverse liturgical compositions rather than . . . a single artistic unit."¹ Leo Schrade, in his biography of Monteverdi, recognized that the respond, psalms, hymn, and *Magnificats* were the standard liturgical items for Vespers on feasts of the Virgin.² Schrade also drew associations between the texts of two of the motets and antiphons for Marian Vespers.³ But others were still troubled by the fact that none of these motet texts is strictly in agreement with any liturgical antiphon for Vespers of the Virgin. These writers have therefore claimed that the motets were distinctly separate from the official liturgical items in Monteverdi's print.⁴

In the last ten years, however, it has been demonstrated by several scholars that sacred services in the seventeenth century were not limited exclusively to published liturgical texts, despite the frequent attempts of Rome to eliminate elements not officially sanctioned.⁵ Evidence of the performance of sacred compositions whose texts fall outside the official liturgy has accumulated to the point where there is now a general consensus that Monteverdi's *Vespro* can appropriately be performed as a complete artistic unit, consistent with seventeenth-century religious practices.⁶

Recognition of the artistic and liturgical integrity of the Vespers does not mean that a complete performance is the only way the music may have been presented in Monteverdi's time or should be heard today. Flexibility was characteristic not only of early seventeenth-century musical styles, but also of performance practices and performance conditions. This flexibility is announced by Monteverdi on his title page, which indicates that at least some of the music of the print is suitable for use in chapels or the chambers of princes.⁷ Flexibility in the manner of performance is explicitly stated in the music itself where instrumental *ritornelli* are designated optional in *Dixit Dominus* and the instruments are *si placet* in the respond. The *ritornelli* in the hymn, without rubrics, may also be considered optional.

The two *Magnificats* in the collection likewise suggest multiple possibilities for performance, since only one *Magnificat* is required for Vespers. As demonstrated in chapter III, the two settings of the canticle are intimately related to one another; the most prominent difference is that one employs a large number of *obbligato* instruments while the other is furnished with only an organ continuo. It seems evident from these two *Magnificats*, as well as the optional *ritornelli* and the designation of instruments *si placet*, that a grandiose, festal celebration of Vespers complete with the coloration of instruments was only one of the performance possibilities envisioned by Monteverdi. In such a solemn setting the *ritornelli* would be performed, the full respond and *Sonata sopra Sancta Maria* with their large instrumental forces would be included, and the *Magnificat* with *obbligato* instruments would be chosen. But for churches and occasions where instruments were not available or not deemed appropriate, the reduced respond, the psalms, the motets, the hymn, and the alternate *Magnificat* without instruments could still provide a lengthy and elaborate Vesper service.⁸

Still other, more limited possibilities may be considered. There is no reason to believe that the performance of polyphony for one portion of a sacred service necessitated polyphonic performances of all liturgical items.⁹ Certainly the motets could have been omitted, especially since they required virtuoso singers not readily available in most churches. A choir master might also have selected only one or several of the psalms without using them all. A service could have been mostly in plainchant with the only polyphony consisting of Monteverdi's hymn or the *Magnificat* without instru-

ments. Pieces selected from the Amadino print could well have been mixed with psalms, motets, or a Magnificat from other Vesper collections. And, as implied by Monteverdi's title page, portions of the print could have served singly or collectively as private devotional music outside the church.

Such a multiplicity of options vastly increased the usefulness of Monteverdi's collection, and this utility must be recognized as an important consideration for composers and publishers of sacred music in the seventeenth century.¹⁰ We must also recognize that an exclusive concern for scholarly precision and accuracy can at times actually distort reality in seeking definitive solutions to issues and practices where flexibility, improvisation, and continual variety were primary objectives. Many a study and edition of the Vespers has been marred by the attempt to be definitive. Style and taste can be documented generally and understood through experience, but they do not yield very successfully to efforts at establishing precise, scientifically demonstrable criteria of evaluation. In such matters informed and experienced judgment is the appropriate goal of scholarship, and it is hoped that the essays presented here will contribute to an informed understanding of the Monteverdi Mass and Vespers on the part of both scholars and practical musicians.

In the course of my studies of the Monteverdi Mass and Vespers, I have accumulated numerous debts to librarians and fellow scholars. I wish to acknowledge, first of all, a special debt to Professor Charles Hamm, who has served over the past fifteen years in many capacities: as teacher, as friend, and as advisor for two separate theses. His wise counsel and trenchant criticism were invaluable in the preparation of my dissertation. My colleague, Professor Anne Schnoebelen, has also given generously of her time and experience in reading and criticizing various chapters. Professors William Harris of Middlebury College and Kristine Wallace of Rice University have been helpful in matters of Latin grammar. Professor Wallace supplied the translation of Monteverdi's dedication in chapter I. The musical examples in chapters I-IV were painstakingly prepared by Robert Walker.

Among librarians, I owe particular thanks to Sergio Paganelli of the Civico Museo Bibliografico Musicale of Bologna, Italy, for numerous kindnesses and a constantly growing friendship. Thanks are also due to many librarians and libraries that have provided me with microfilms and otherwise assisted my research. These include Signora Bonavera and the staff of the Civico Museo Bibliografico of Bologna, William McClellan of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Emilio Maggini of the Biblioteca del Seminario in Lucca, Antonio Brasini of the Biblioteca Comunale in Cesena, Siro Cisilino of the Cini Foundation in Venice; the Biblioteca Comunale in Assisi, the Biblioteca Capitolare in Verona, the University Library in Wro-

claw, Poland, the University Library in Uppsala, Sweden, and the British Library.

My research in Italian sacred music of the early seventeenth century has brought me into contact with a number of outstanding scholars who have unselfishly shared their ideas and information with me and from whose friendship I have profited in other ways. I wish to acknowledge especially Professors James Armstrong, Denis Arnold, Stephen Bonta, George Nugent, Pierluigi Petrobelli, Jerome Roche, and Howard Smither.

Stephen Bonta, Howard Smither, and Professor Richard Butler of Rice University read the entire manuscript, offering many valuable suggestions and criticisms. I have tried to take as many of their recommendations as possible into consideration in preparation of the final copy, but must assume responsibility myself for the ultimate form of this volume, including its inevitable errors. Whatever advice I have been unable to follow does not lessen my appreciation of their efforts. Special acknowledgment must also go to Kathleen Murfin, Associate Editor of RICE UNIVERSITY STUDIES, whose editorial acumen, uncanny eye, and unflinching cheerfulness and optimism have seen this book smoothly through the press. The way has also been smoothed by a special publication grant from Rice University and from the Shepherd School of Music.

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NOTES

1. Hans F. Redlich, "Claudio Monteverdi: Some Problems of Textual Interpretation," *Musical Quarterly* 41, no. 1 (January 1955): 68.

2. Leo Schrade, *Monteverdi, Creator of Modern Music* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1950), pp. 251-254.

3. Ibid.

4. See especially Denis Stevens, "Where are the Vespers of Yesteryear?" *Musical Quarterly* 47, no. 3 (July 1961): 316-325; and Giuseppe Biella, "La 'Messa' il 'Vespro' e i 'Sacri Concerti' di Claudio Monteverdi," *Musica sacra*, serie seconda, 9 (1964): 105-115.

5. The most important articles demonstrating the flexibility of liturgical practice are Stephen Bonta, "Liturgical Problems in Monteverdi's Marian Vespers," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 20, no. 1 (Spring 1967): 87-106; Wolfgang Osthoff, "Unità liturgica e artistica nei 'Vespri' del 1610," *Rivista italiana di Musicologia* 2, no. 2 (1967): 314-327; and James Armstrong, "The 'Antiphonae, seu Sacrae Cantiones' (1613) of Giovanni Francesco Anerio: A Liturgical Study," *Analecta Musicologica* 14 (1974): 89-150. Additional supporting evidence is offered in chapter V, pp. 127-131 of this book.

6. A discussion of artistic unity in the Vespers can be found in my dissertation, "The Monteverdi Vespers of 1610 and their Relationship with Italian Sacred Music of the Early Seventeenth Century" (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1972), pp. 69-248. As mentioned above, the conclusions on tonal relationships have been modified in chapter I of this volume.

7. *Sanctissimae Virgini/Missa Senis Vocibus/ac Vesperae Pluribus/Decantandae,/cum Nonnullis Sacris Concentibus,/ad Sacella sive Principum Cubicula accommodata./Opera/a Claudio Monteverde/nuper effecta/ac Beatiss. Paulo V. Pont. Max. Consecrata./Venetijs, Apud Ricciardum Amadinum./MDCX.* The meaning of the phrase "*ad Sacella sive Principum Cubicula accommodata*" and the items to which it applies has been the subject of considerable controversy. See Redlich, "Claudio Monteverdi," Schrade, *Monteverdi*, and Stevens, "Where are the Vespers." The grammar of the title does not adhere to classical practice and is ambiguous as to the items referenced under the phrase "*ad Sacella . . . accommodata.*" Attempts to derive definitive conclusions from the title are therefore misdirected.

8. The idea of one service with instruments and one without was first suggested by Biella, "La 'Messa' il 'Vespro,'" p. 114.

9. See Frank A. D'Accone's study of polyphony in sacred services in Florence in "The Musical Chapels at the Florentine Cathedral and Baptistery During the First Half of the 16th Century," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 24, no. 1 (Spring 1971): 1-50. See especially the list of feasts and polyphonic items on pp. 4-5.

10. For a fuller discussion of multiple options in Vesper collections of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, see chapter V, pp. 124-131.