

## WHERE ARE THE VESPERS OF YESTERYEAR?

By DENIS STEVENS

MUSICAL connoisseurs of the 20th century have every reason, generally speaking, to be grateful for the conscientious disinterring of forgotten masterpieces, for the taxidermic skills necessary to decent presentation, and for the live performances and zoetropic recordings that abound in civilized society throughout the world. Their credulous curiosity is now and again taken advantage of, but they are rarely deceived to such an extent that even the élite among them will accept and applaud as one single masterpiece a monstrous concatenation of smaller, and for the most part unrelated, items. Were they to hear the Brahms Requiem farced with the same composer's *Marienleben*, or the Bach Mass in B minor troped with a generous handful of his church cantatas, their protestations would lack neither vigor nor immediacy. When however a similar fate befalls the work of an early 17th-century composer, hardly an eyebrow is raised, or an eyelid batted.

Monteverdi's *Vespers*, like Beethoven's Ninth, has in musical circles become something of a semantic unity: other composers have written nine symphonies, and others have written settings of the Vespers. One such setting is by a composer named Vespa.<sup>1</sup> But it may take a long time to convince the connoisseurs that Monteverdi's *Vespers* are not so very unusual, even within his own list of works, and that editions and recordings bearing this title are for the most part grossly misleading. To trace back to its source the musicological dry-rot responsible for this state of affairs would take more time and space than is justified, since the history of the matter can be summarized by calling attention to

<sup>1</sup> Girolamo Vespa, *Psalmi Vespertini*, Venice, Amadino, 1589. Among the composers who set single Vesper psalms or complete sets in the first decade of the 17th century are Viadana (1602), Radino (1607), Funghetto (1609), Bianco (1610), and Mortaro (1610). The only complete set of partbooks of Monteverdi's 1610-publication is in the Biblioteca del Conservatorio. Bologna.

the dangers inherent in copying unquestioningly statements of supposed fact which scrutiny will reveal as patent fiction.

Part of the musicologist's task in resurrecting music of former times is the close scrutiny of all musical and documentary evidence available. Very often the sheer bulk of material to be collated and compared tends to confuse the issue as well as the brain, and the pseudo-cabbalistic appearance of much critical apparatus has undoubtedly done at least as much harm as good. Nevertheless it is sometimes a good principle to begin at the beginning, and Monteverdi's publication of 1610 conforms to the general rule by starting with a title page. Two separate layouts were used by the Venetian printer Amadino: one for the *Bassus Generalis* partbook, and another (slightly less elaborate, and omitting "ad ecclesiarum choros") for the other seven books containing both vocal and instrumental parts: Cantus, Altus, Tenor, Bassus, Quintus, Sextus, and Septimus. The following facsimile is taken from the *Bassus Generalis*, larger in format than the other books.

**BASSVS GENERALIS.**

**SANCTISSIMÆ**  
**VIRGINI**  
**MISSA SENIS VOCIBVS**  
**AD ECCLESIA RV M CHVROS**  
*Ac Vespere pluribus decantanda*

**CVM NONNVLLIS SACRIS CONCENTI V S,**  
*ad Sacella sive Principum Cabbalis accommodata.*

**O P E R A**  
**A CLAVDIO MONTEVERDE**  
*nuper effecta*

**AC BEATISS. PAVLO V. PONT. MAX. CONSECRATA.**

It is perfectly clear that Monteverdi wanted his six-part Mass to occupy the most important position on the title page after the inscription to Our Lady. The music for Vespers is then briefly mentioned in small type and in one line. Unfortunately the phrase "Vespere pluribus decantandae" has been understood by the majority of Monteverdi's glossators and editors to refer to the entire contents of the publication, apart from the Mass, of course.

Nobody has taken the trouble to explain correctly what is meant by the next few lines in the title, obviously equal if not superior in

importance to the phrase about Vespers: "with some sacred pieces, works recently composed by Claudio Monteverdi and intended for princely chapels and apartments." There would be no point in referring in bold type to music that did not exist, and since both Monteverdi and Amadino were honorable men and the publication as a whole had been accepted by Pope Paul V, it must be conceded that there really were "a few sacred pieces" quite apart from the Mass and Vespers. Yet these have never been properly identified, and as a result the significance and purpose of the fourteen separate items following the Mass have been either ignored or misinterpreted from the time of Winterfeld onwards.

In his edition of the *Vespers* published in 1949 (Universal, Vienna) Hans Redlich suggests not only that "The Original comprises two, liturgically independent, works: the Mass 'In illo tempore' and the Vespers proper" but also, on the first music page, that the Magnificat was a kind of appendage to the service:

VESPER VON 1610  
(Vespro della Beata Vergine)  
und  
I. MAGNIFICAT

All this is by way of confirmation of an opinion voiced a year or so before: "Evidently the 'Vespers' form only the second part of an ambivalent publication, the front-piece of which is taken up by the six-part Mass 'In illo tempore'."<sup>2</sup> In both the German and English editions of his book,<sup>3</sup> Redlich stressed the fact that there are fourteen items in the *Vespers*, and that their formal and instrumental elements are the most variegated imaginable. Yet he did not feel that these items constituted an artistic whole, for he omitted two psalms (*Nisi Dominus* and *Lauda Jerusalem*) as well as the shorter of the two Magnificat settings in his 1949 edition, justifying this course of action by stating that "Monteverdi's artistic aims would be served better by a selective presentation than by strict adherence to the contents of the first print."<sup>4</sup> There is a glimmer of truth in this remark, but Redlich's edition was already available, and he had done very nearly the right thing for almost the wrong reason. Had he included all the psalms, and omitted certain

<sup>2</sup> Redlich, *Monteverdi's 'Vespers'*, in *The Listener*, No. 943 (1947), 260.

<sup>3</sup> *Claudio Monteverdi*, Olten, 1949; London, 1952.

<sup>4</sup> *Claudio Monteverdi: Some Problems of Textual Interpretation*, in *The Musical Quarterly*, XLI (1955), 68.

other compositions, his edition of the *Vespers*, whatever its faults,<sup>5</sup> would at least have been on the right liturgical lines.

Leo Schrade's study of Monteverdi appeared at a point in time roughly midway between the German and English editions of Redlich's book. The opinions expressed about the *Vespers* are clearly opposed to those of Redlich, yet his conclusions are equally wide of the mark. Schrade does indeed notice the reference on the title page to sacred compositions for use in chapels or palaces, but he endeavors to force these into the liturgy of Vespers: "If these compositions had only a general religious character, and were not committed to a specific liturgy, we could understand their use in church and palace alike. But the compositions are liturgical in the strictest sense and definitely related to specific services which could never take place in profane surroundings."<sup>6</sup> Having made this statement, Schrade works ahead on the *quod scripsi, scripsi* principle and inevitably sinks deeper and deeper into a liturgico-musical quagmire. Thrice on one page he denies the principle of "selective presentation" advanced by Redlich:

All but two of the fourteen works can be assigned their proper liturgical place.

Were it not for *Duo Seraphim*, the only composition that disturbs the order of the specific liturgy, all the works could be taken as making up one liturgical entity.

The order Monteverdi gave to his compositions is that of the liturgy.<sup>7</sup>

Having briefly described the liturgy of Vespers, Schrade begins to discuss the four items that precede, in Monteverdi's publication, the last four psalms. He accepts the fact that the five psalms enjoy a certain stylistic unity, and that the four intervening items (*Nigra sum*, *Pulchra es*, *Duo Seraphim*, and *Audi coelum*) are also related in style — a quite different style, however, from that of the psalms. One important distinction is that Monteverdi uses a psalm tone as *cantus firmus* in the five psalm settings, but there is no trace of a *cantus firmus* in the other items. Doubts begin to arise: "Are they all antiphons? Only *Nigra sum sed formosa* is the proper antiphon for the third psalm."<sup>8</sup> But Monteverdi, maddeningly (or Amadino, awkwardly), has put *Nigra*

<sup>5</sup> A four-page folder containing a list of misprints was issued by the publishers. H. Robbins Landon and Anton Heiller, preparing a performance in Vienna in the summer of 1952, claimed to have found 2,976 errors, excluding 678 parallel octaves and fifths and 352 mistakes in the harpsichord realization.

<sup>6</sup> Schrade, *Monteverdi, Creator of Modern Music*, New York, 1950, p. 251.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 251.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 253.

*sum* in front of the second psalm, not the third. Moreover, since an antiphon is just as much plainchant as a psalm tone, why did Monteverdi not use the correct *cantus firmus* in his so-called antiphons? Are they all antiphons? In the left-hand column below are the musical items of Vespers; in the right-hand column are the fourteen works that, with the Mass, make up Monteverdi's publication.

<i>Vespers of the B.V.M.</i>	Tone	Tone	<i>Monteverdi 1610</i>
V. <i>Deus in adjutorium</i>			
R. <i>Domine ad adjuvandum</i>			R. <i>Domine ad adjuvandum</i>
A. <i>Dum esset rex</i>	3a		
Ps. <i>Dixit Dominus</i>	3a	4A	Ps. <i>Dixit Dominus</i>
A. <i>Laeva ejus</i>	4A		<i>Nigra sum</i>
Ps. <i>Laudate pueri</i>	4A	8G	Ps. <i>Laudate pueri</i>
A. <i>Nigra sum</i>	3b		<i>Pulchra es</i>
Ps. <i>Laetatus sum</i>	3b	2D	Ps. <i>Laetatus sum</i>
A. <i>Jam hiems transiit</i>	8G		<i>Duo Seraphim</i>
Ps. <i>Nisi Dominus</i>	8G	6F	Ps. <i>Nisi Dominus</i>
A. <i>Speciosa facta es</i>	4A		<i>Audi coelum</i>
Ps. <i>Lauda Jerusalem</i>	4A	3a	Ps. <i>Lauda Jerusalem</i> <i>Sancta Maria, ora pro nobis</i>
<i>Ave maris stella</i>	1	1	<i>Ave maris stella</i>
A. <i>Sancta Maria, succurre</i> } Magnificat	} 1st 4E 4E	1D	Magnificat a 6
A. <i>Beatam me dicent</i> } Magnificat	} 2nd 8G 8G	1D	Magnificat a 7

This schematic arrangement demonstrates various points of considerable importance, both positive and negative. Although nine titles may be seen to correspond (the response, five psalms, hymn, and two settings of Magnificat) the tones of psalms and canticles do not agree at all. It is one of the prime principles of psalmody that the psalm or canticle should be sung in the same tone as the antiphon specified, and accordingly the tones of antiphons and psalms agree throughout the left-hand column. In Monteverdi's collection there is no such agreement, for *Nigra sum*, *Pulchra es*, and the rest have no *cantus firmus* or tone. They are, it is true, in definite keys, and at first it seems as if Monteverdi might have had a key-scheme in mind, for *Nigra sum* and *Laudate pueri* are in G, so too are *Pulchra es* and *Laetatus sum*. But then things begin to go wrong: *Duo Seraphim* is in G, and is imme-

diately followed by *Nisi Dominus* in F. *Audi coelum* is in D, and *Lauda Jerusalem* begins in C.

Is it possible that these "antiphons" of Monteverdi have been misplaced? Most writers have assumed that an antiphon would be printed before its psalm, but in liturgical practice it is sung complete only *after* the psalm. As a general rule, only the first phrase of the antiphon is sung before the psalm, although an exception is sometimes made for the first of the five.<sup>9</sup> Re-grouping Monteverdi's various items does not help very much since there is still no agreement of key, tone, or mode. It must therefore be admitted that Monteverdi (according to the comparative table above) declined to provide *Dixit Dominus* with an antiphon, but brought in instead a Litany (*Sancta Maria, ora pro nobis*) at a point in the sequence of items that has no parallel in any Vespers service, whether Roman, Ambrosian, medieval, modern, parochial, or monastic.

Schrade's general thesis is that Monteverdi is capable of artistic additions made on his own initiative, but "that Monteverdi intended the four compositions to function in place of the proper antiphons we have no doubt, for the liturgy of the day is observed in the rest of the collection."<sup>10</sup> Jack Westrup, sensing that something is wrong, makes out a stronger case suggesting that the composer tampered freely with the liturgy, though for no apparent reason: "In Monteverdi's setting this scheme is considerably modified. The antiphon to *Dixit Dominus* is omitted, and the antiphon *Nigra sum* is assigned to the second psalm, *Laudate pueri*. The last three psalms have new antiphons."<sup>11</sup> It is indeed unfortunate that one of Monteverdi's texts begins with the words *Nigra sum*, which is a legitimate antiphon; the confusion is understandable but not impenetrable, as a glance at the two texts will prove:

*Vespers Antiphon*

*Nigra sum sed formosa, filiae Jerusalem: ideo dilexit me rex, et introduxit me in cubiculum suum.*

*Monteverdi*

*Nigra sum sed formosa, filia Jerusalem; ideo dilexit me Rex et introduxit in cubiculum suum, et dixit mihi: surge amica mea et veni, iam hiems transiit imber abiit et recessit, flores apparuerunt in terra nostra. Tempus putationis advenit.*

<sup>9</sup> In greater feasts, the antiphon may be sung complete both before and after the psalm.

<sup>10</sup> Schrade, *op. cit.*, p. 253. Edward Lippman, reviewing the recording of Schrade's unpublished edition (*The Musical Quarterly*, XLI [1955], 404) was one of the first to cast doubts on these spurious antiphons.

<sup>11</sup> Westrup, *The Monteverdi Vespers*, in *The Listener*, No. 1543 (1958).

Schrade quotes Monteverdi's text (with three errors) but persists in the use of the word antiphon, tracing *Pulchra es* to Lauds of the Assumption of the B.V.M. This antiphon is also sung at Second Vespers of the same feast, but its text is much shorter than that used by Monteverdi:

*Vespers Antiphon*

Pulchra es et decora, filia Jerusalem:  
terribilis ut castrorum acies ordinata.

*Monteverdi*

Pulchra es amica mea suavis et decora,  
filia Jerusalem: sicut Jerusalem terri-  
bilis ut castrorum acies ordinata.  
Averte oculos tuos a me quia ipsi me  
avolare fecerunt.

Having gone to Lauds for *Pulchra es*, Schrade turns to Matins for *Duo Seraphim*, which is said to be a responsory.<sup>12</sup> It may be a responsory text, but Monteverdi's music is not in the form of a responsory, nor did the court chapel of Santa Barbara at Mantua conform to the monastic custom of singing Matins. Monteverdi had enough trouble keeping his singers in order without having to turn them out of bed in the middle of the night. His text is a mixture of Isaiah 6:3, and I John 5:7:

Duo Seraphim clamabant alter ad alterum: Sanctus Dominus Deus Sabaoth, plena est omnis terra gloria ejus.

Tres sunt qui testimonium dant in coelo: Pater, Verbum, et Spiritus Sanctus, et hi tres unum sunt. Sanctus Dominus Deus Sabaoth, plena est omnis terra gloria ejus.

The Litany *Sancta Maria, ora pro nobis*, with its oft-repeated invocation and its kaleidoscopic scoring, has been famous ever since it was reprinted by Torchi (*L'Arte musicale in Italia*, IV, 51) some sixty years ago. Its text is the same as its title, repeated eleven times as a unison chant. Denis Arnold has shown how Monteverdi may have taken the idea of an instrumental sonata, as a framework for the litany, from Crotti<sup>13</sup> or from the elder Gabrieli.<sup>14</sup> To this information may be added a composition by Amante Franzoni, who succeeded Monteverdi at Santa Barbara. Franzoni's composition is described as a "Concerto a cinque da suonarsi con quattro Tromboni cioè Tre Bassi, un Tenore,

<sup>12</sup> Schrade, *op. cit.*, p. 251, note. Actually *Duo Seraphim* was a very popular motet text of the time. Contemporary settings include those of Balbi (1606), Banchieri (1607), Assandra (1609), and Franzoni (1611).

<sup>13</sup> Arnold, *Notes on Two Movements of the Monteverdi 'Vespers'*, in *The Monthly Musical Record*, 84 (1954), 59.

<sup>14</sup> Arnold, *Monteverdi's Church Music: Some Venetian Traits*, in *The Monthly Musical Record*, 88 (1958), 83.

& il Soprano sempre canta (Sancta Maria)."<sup>15</sup> Quite obviously this manner of setting a litany was well known and well liked in the early 17th century, but in spite of the fact that Monteverdi's ingenious setting has enjoyed an entirely new lease of life, its purpose (like other items in the 1610 part-books) has not been completely understood.

Since a litany forms no part of Vespers, the presence of *Sancta Maria, ora pro nobis* in Monteverdi's collection has given rise to certain qualms of conscience: "Although a proper liturgical place cannot be assigned to this work, its religious connotation fits the general content of the collection, so that even liturgically it does not disturb the unity as much as, for instance, *Duo Seraphim*."<sup>16</sup> Émile Martin, in his poetic prose, provides a useful clue without however following it up: "We might perhaps come closer to history by finding in this brilliant vesperal *hors d'oeuvre* an echo of the ancient procession that used to wend its way beneath the cathedral vaults during vigils of greater feasts."<sup>17</sup> It is in fact not difficult to assign a proper liturgical place to this item, for the tune that Monteverdi uses is closely related to that used in the best-known of all litanies, the Litany of Loreto:

*Litaniae Lauretanae**Monteverdi*

Although this Litany now has a fixed form, there were other ways of singing it in earlier times, and it is very probable that Monteverdi intended his eleven invocations to follow upon different petitions spoken (not sung) by those in procession. As it stands, it is no more than a set of identical responses deprived of their versicles, making no liturgical sense whatever. Traditionally the Litany of Loreto is sung during the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament during Benediction, and since Benediction follows Vespers Monteverdi should have placed *Sancta Maria, ora pro nobis* right at the end of his collection, after the second Magnificat.

This item, then, is clearly out of order, and in any case it is not a

<sup>15</sup> Franzoni, *Apparato musicale*, Venice, Amadino, 1613. Settings of the Litany of Loreto are found in collections by Moro (1604), Assandra (1609), and others.

<sup>16</sup> Schrade, *op. cit.*, p. 253.

<sup>17</sup> Martin, *Mais où sont les Vêpres d'antan? . . .*, Beauceville, P.Q., c. 1955, p. 10.



part of Vespers. Three of the other texts, called antiphons, have already been discussed; there remains one more, *Audi coelum*, which Schrade likens to an early kind of cantata. The essence of an antiphon text is its brevity, while the words of a cantata can be as discursive as desired:

Audi coelum verba mea plena desiderio et perfusa gaudio. Dic quaeso mihi: quae est ista quae consurgens ut aurora rutilat et benedicam? Dic nam ista pulchra ut luna electa ut sol replet laetitia terras coelos maria. Maria Virgo, illa dulcis predicata a Prophetis Ezechiel porta Orientalis, illa sacra et felix porta per quam mors fuit expulsa, introduxit autem vita quae semper tutum est medium inter homines et Deum pro culpis remedium.

Omnes hanc ergo sequamur quae cum gratia mereamur vitam eternam consequamur. Praestet nobis Deus Pater hoc et Filius et Mater, cuius nomen invocamus, dulce miseris solamen. Benedicta es Virgo Maria in seculorum secula.

Although tropes had officially been abolished long before Monteverdi lived, he used this text in an "echo" setting of *Salve regina* for two tenors, two violins, and continuo (*Selva morale e spirituale*, 1641). The verses of this Compline antiphon are padded out, indeed troped, with the text of *Audi coelum*, and at least one commentator has found the work barely acceptable.<sup>18</sup> It might however be argued that *Audi coelum* could have been used as a Compline antiphon, the word "antiphon" here meaning a hymn of some length, an anthem, and not a brief preface or postlude to a psalm.

*Audi coelum*, then, is a cantata; *Sancta Maria, ora pro nobis* is part of the Litany of Loreto; *Nigra sum, Pulchra es*, and *Duo Seraphim* all have texts that are too long to be ordinary psalm-antiphons. A great deal of confusion regarding the "antiphons" could have been avoided by looking at Monteverdi's *Bassus Generalis* partbook, where he describes *Nigra sum* unequivocally as "motetto." Motet texts, as every student of the 16th century knows, were frequently compilations of biblical verses made for the purpose of edification or praise, and Monteverdi simply took four such compilations and a litany fragment to make up his "sacred pieces . . . intended for princely chapels and apartments." The Gonzaga family were great patrons of music, and some years before Monteverdi's arrival in Mantua a number of Masses had been commissioned from Palestrina by Duke Guglielmo, who personally selected the plainsongs.<sup>19</sup> It is certainly not beyond the bounds of pos-

<sup>18</sup> Bettina Lupo, *Sacre monodie Monteverdiane*, in *Musica II*, Florence, 1943, p. 51.

<sup>19</sup> Strunk, *Guglielmo Gonzaga and Palestrina's Missa Dominicalis*, in *The Musical Quarterly*, XXXIII (1947), 228.

sibility that pious (although non-liturgical) works such as *Nigra sum* were performed in the Duke's private apartments rather than in his chapel. If they were sung in chapel, they would be regarded as motets, never as a liturgical part of Vespers.

One final point, emerging from the comparative table of Vespers and Monteverdi's collection, is the mysterious matter of the two settings of the Magnificat. One is grandiose and splendidly orchestrated, the other calls only for six voices and organ; although both are written in the same mode (1D, transposed to the upper fourth) they were clearly meant for two different occasions. Schrade, strongly maintaining the unity of the 1610 publication, says: "The collection concludes with two compositions of the Magnificat, both using the customary psalm tone. The antiphon to the Magnificat has been omitted, and no composition has been put in its place. We are unable to give any reason for the inclusion of two renderings of the Magnificat, one more elaborate than the other."<sup>20</sup> Redlich, strongly denying the unity of the collection, uses the second Magnificat as a battering-ram, by stating that its very presence "knocks the bottom out of the 'unity theory.' The two alternate versions of the Magnificat as well as the non-liturgical character of certain portions of the Vespers clearly indicate that the publication of 1610 was meant as a loose collection of diverse liturgical compositions rather than as a single artistic unit."<sup>21</sup> The solution, as demonstrated by the comparative table, is a perfectly straightforward and simple one. There are two kinds of Vespers, First and Second, and of these the Second is the more important. Monteverdi wrote his small-scale Magnificat for First Vespers, and his large-scale one for Second Vespers. Since both services otherwise share the same psalms, antiphons to psalms, and hymn, there was no need for more. All that the choirmaster had to do was to choose antiphons to match the tones in which psalms and Magnificat were set,<sup>22</sup> alternatively he could make use of the five accepted antiphons and ignore the occasional clashes of tone and key.

<sup>20</sup> Schrade, *op. cit.*, p. 253.

<sup>21</sup> Redlich, *Claudio Monteverdi: Some Problems of Textual Interpretation*, in *The Musical Quarterly*, XLI (1955), 68.

<sup>22</sup> The present writer has chosen the following five antiphons for the psalms in his recently published edition of the *Vespers* (Novello, 1961): *Laeva ejus, Jam hiems transiit, Intravit Maria, Regali ex progenie, and Dum esset rex*. The suggested antiphon for the Magnificat is *Gloriosae Virginis*. An excellent edition of the smaller Magnificat is published by Bärenreiter. In Monteverdi's day, it was quite common to include two different settings of Magnificat in a publication, for use at First or Second Vespers: see, for example, Moro (1604), Radino (1607), Funghetto (1609), Cima (1610), and Mortaro (1610).

To sum up, it may be stated with a reasonable degree of certainty that Monteverdi's publication of 1610 never made the slightest pretense to any kind of unity, either stylistic or liturgical. Its contents was intended for use in at least four different services (Mass, First Vespers, Second Vespers, Benediction) as well as for Sunday evening music-making in the Duke's private apartments. Those who perform extracts from the collection in modern times will hardly expect to incorporate them in the liturgy,<sup>23</sup> although a great deal of the music can sound as it should only in a church with suitable gallery accommodation for certain soloists and their ancillary continuo instruments.

Regarding the performance of those items proper to Vespers, much will depend on the vocal and instrumental forces available. Contrary to what listeners have been led to believe, a comparatively small group of less than fifty performers could do full justice to the music. Editions by Redlich, Ghedini, Schrade, and Goehr<sup>24</sup> have in their various ways overstressed the theatrical element, and Émile Martin points out that even musicologists have found it difficult to believe that such a work could have been written in 1609.<sup>25</sup> The same writer finds the music "indeed Venetian," and in this opinion he is not alone. It cannot be assumed that all music published in Venice is Venetian in style, however, and since Monteverdi wrote all fifteen items when he was at Mantua it is possible that he was influenced as much by Viadana (who was in charge of the music at Mantua Cathedral from 1590 until 1596) as by Giovanni Gabrieli. Another powerful influence on Monteverdi was the music of Giaches de Wert, which was regularly performed in the Chapel of Santa Barbara when Monteverdi first came to Mantua in 1589/90. Gastoldi then had temporary charge of the music because de Wert was a sick man, but there is no doubt that Monteverdi and de Wert knew each other, and every likelihood that the older composer taught the younger, if only informally.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Martin, *op. cit.*, p. 6. Denis Arnold comments on the operatic spirit in the *Vespers*, but presumably means the motets, not the psalms (*Ceremonial Music in Venice at the Time of the Gabrielis*, in *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association*, 82 [1955/6], 47).

<sup>24</sup> The editions of both Redlich and Goehr are published by Universal. Wolfgang Osthoff ended his review of the latter (*Die Musikforschung*, IX [1958], 380) with the words "Cui bono?"

<sup>25</sup> Martin, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

<sup>26</sup> Anne-Marie Bautier-Régnier, *Jacques de Wert (1535-1596) à la cour de Mantoue*, in *Revue Belge de Musicologie*, IV (1950). 40.

A letter from the singer Bernardo Casola<sup>27</sup> mentions the hard work that Monteverdi put into his Mass, which he had decided to write in a worthy but obsolete style in order to please the proposed dedicatee, Pope Paul V. There are also hints in other letters of Monteverdi's preoccupation with church music: his delay in supplying a work to a priest whose name is not known<sup>28</sup> (November 26, 1608), and his concern over the flamboyant style of Galeazzo Sirena, suggested by Striggio as a likely member of the Mantuan musical staff (September 10, 1609).<sup>29</sup> On the other hand, it is difficult to believe, as Redlich apparently does, that Monteverdi's letter to the Duke (March 21, 1611)<sup>30</sup> mentions a possible performance of sections from the publication of 1610: "It accompanied copies of 'un motettino a due voci da essere cantato nella levatione di N.S. et un altro a cinque della Beata Vergine . . .' This sentence may refer to *Pulchra es (a due voci)* and perhaps to one of the psalms."<sup>31</sup> Now *Pulchra es* is indeed for two voices, and it might conceivably be described as a "motettino" although "motetto" without the diminutive would be more appropriate; the flaw in Redlich's thesis is the fact that the text of *Pulchra es* refers to Our Lady, and not to "la levatione di N.S.," which surely signifies the Ascension of Our Lord. Nor is it possible to believe that "un altro [motettino] a cinque della Beata Vergine" implies a psalm for Vespers. None of Monteverdi's Vesper psalms are for five voices, nor is there a single example of a Marian motet for five voices in the almost complete edition by Malipiero. But there has recently come to light a motet *Exultent coeli (a 5)* composed by Monteverdi for the Feast of the Immaculate Conception,<sup>32</sup> and this may well be the work that the Duke received.

Redlich, piling Pelion upon Ossa, cannot resist a third attempt at identification, for there is a third composition with that letter, "a 'Dixiat [*sic*] a 5' which might refer to the psalm *Dixit Dominus*. This letter with its unmistakable reference to the Vespers clearly shows that Monteverdi was willing to perform isolated motets and psalms from

<sup>27</sup> Stefano Davari, *Notizie biografiche del distinto maestro di musica Claudio Monteverdi*, in *Atti e memorie della Real Accademia Virgiliana di Mantova*, 1884/5, p. 99.

<sup>28</sup> Malipiero, *Claudio Monteverdi*, Milan, 1930, p. 134.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 142.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 150.

<sup>31</sup> Redlich, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

<sup>32</sup> Arnold, *Monteverdi's Church Music: Some Venetian Traits*, in *The Monthly Musical Record*, 88 (1958), 89. This motet is published in Osthoff's edition of twelve sacred and secular vocal works by Monteverdi (Ricordi, 1958).

this work, taken out of their liturgical context and used for the musical accompaniment of certain liturgical functions within Holy Week."<sup>33</sup> It so happens that the *Dixit Dominus* (1610) is for six voices, not five; and although there are four more settings of the same psalm in Monteverdi's later collections of 1640 and 1651 they are all for eight voices. Thus of the three works sent to the Duke, no trace remains of an Ascension motet or a five-part *Dixit Dominus*, and it is hardly necessary to add that the good Duke would not have had them performed in Holy Week, even though they were sent with the composer's best wishes for Easter. Neither does any trace remain of a performance of works that are genuinely part of the 1610 collection. Compared with the many descriptions of operas, ballets, and other musical entertainments at court, the amount of material reporting on performances of music in court chapels is very slender indeed.

Much useful information of a general nature may be found in prefaces to published editions and in contemporary treatises. There are in addition valuable clues to the strength and standard of Monteverdi's vocal and instrumental resources in the classic writings of Canal, Davari, and Bertolotti.<sup>34</sup> It is however a mistake to attach too much importance to the suggestions for scoring advanced by Praetorius,<sup>35</sup> who never went to Italy at all, though he did his best to make up for this gap in his musical education by giving free rein to his inventive and imaginative mind. Nevertheless it was a German mind, and when recklessly superimposed on Italian music the result is sometimes odd, to say the least. It would be quite possible to perform the *Vespers* and motets in the German, French, Spanish, or English styles current in 1610, but the results would not necessarily throw any light on what actually happened in Italy, or more specifically Mantua. There, Monteverdi's musical resources were modest in size but excellent in quality, and he had at his beck and call some of the finest soloists in the country. That is why

<sup>33</sup> Redlich, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

<sup>34</sup> The title of Davari's study is given in footnote 27 of the present article. Pietro Canal's book, *Della Musica in Mantova*, Venice, 1881, was based on the then available documents of the Gonzaga family. Using, but often mistranscribing, these same sources, Bertolotti published a book in Milan ten years later — *Musica alla corte dei Gonzaga in Mantova dal secolo XV al XVIII* — but this should not be used without consulting the review by Vogel in *Vierteljahrsschrift für Musikwissenschaft*, VII (1891), 278.

<sup>35</sup> *Syntagma Musicum* (facsimile ed., Bärenreiter) III, 128-29. Redlich leans heavily on these references in *The Editing of Monteverdi*, in *Renaissance News*, VII (1954).

the first three psalms, the hymn, the motets, and the two settings of Magnificat contain such a vast proportion of music for soloists.

The pattern of color and form displayed by the genuine items of Second Vespers is not without interest.

<i>Domine ad adjuvandum</i>		Choir	Instruments/Organ
<i>Dixit Dominus</i>	Soloists	Choir	Instruments/Organ
<i>Laudate pueri</i>	Soloists	Double Choir	Organ
<i>Laetatus sum</i>	Soloists	Choir	Organ
<i>Nisi Dominus</i>		Double Choir	Organ
<i>Lauda Jerusalem</i>		Double Choir	Organ
<i>Ave maris stella</i>	Soloists	Double Choir	Instruments/Organ
Magnificat	Soloists	Choir	Instruments/Organ

Internal structural features prove to be helpful not only in understanding Monteverdi's style but also in discovering how he wished to divide the verses of psalms and Magnificat between soloists and chorus. They even assist in eliminating some of the misprints in Amadino's partbooks, which have been faithfully incorporated in nearly all modern editions to the confusion of those who attempt to perform this music.

*Domine ad adjuvandum* is a kind of sacred contrafactum of the prelude to *Orfeo*, a simple but striking piece of music which has nevertheless been misjudged both in its original and later form. As a prelude, Parry found it "cacophonous" in its fanfare motifs,<sup>36</sup> although they do little more than outline the chord of D major. In the choral arrangement, the voice-parts (according to Redlich) revolve around "selected motives from the traditional plainchant,"<sup>37</sup> but since the plainchant consists of only two different notes and Monteverdi condescends to use only one of them, the piece might well be grouped with Purcell's *Fantasia on One Note* as the *reductio ad absurdum* of *cantus firmus* technique. *Orfeo* was performed in February of 1607 before the Accademia degli Invaighiti, and it is tempting to think of the members attending Santa Barbara a day or two after the performance and hearing, to their amazement and joy, the prelude to *Orfeo* refurbished as the preface to Vespers.

The sonorous architecture of *Dixit Dominus* exhibits a happy blend of baroque and classical features. Odd-numbered verses are for soloists, and the psalm-tone is always present as *cantus firmus*. Even-numbered verses use choral falso-bordone flowering into polyphonic melismata on the stressed syllable of each half-verse; the chordal pattern remains

<sup>36</sup> *Oxford History of Music*, Vol. 3, Oxford, 1902, p. 51.

<sup>37</sup> Redlich, *Monteverdi's 'Vespers'*, in *The Listener*, No. 943 (1947), 260.

consistent throughout the psalm: A minor for the first falso-bordone, G major for the second. Amadino's sharp to the soprano C in "Dominus a dextris" spoils the A minor continuity, and is almost certainly wrong. Between each pair of verses comes a ritornel, which according to Monteverdi is expendable. He draws consistently upon Tone 4A, transposed to the lower fourth, except in the doxology: "Gloria Patri" begins in G minor immediately after a chord of A major, and at "Sicut erat" the *untransposed* Tone 4A is used. This is to avoid having the "Amen" finish on a chord of B major. What an eminently practical man Monteverdi was! No wonder he was regarded as a valuable consultant by the Chapter of Milan Cathedral.<sup>38</sup>

Whereas this first psalm is divided verse by verse between soloists and chorus, the second psalm (*Laudate pueri*) enjoys a species of lengthwise division. Verses 1-5 are for soloists (introduced by a brief chorus), and verses 6-10 are for chorus (concluded by a brief duet). In the first half, the psalm-tone is exposed, in the second it is cunningly camouflaged.

*Laetatus sum*, based on Tone 2D at the upper fourth, returns to an alternatim-verse pattern similar to that in *Dixit Dominus* but much more subtle. This time the odd-numbered verses, mostly for soloists, unfold to the busy accompaniment of a ground bass, due relief being provided in the even-numbered verses which call for the choir in all its sonorous splendor. There is a harmonic relationship between verses 2 and 6, also between 4 and 8. Many editions unfortunately give the impression that Monteverdi wrote a string of consecutive octaves between Tenor I and Bass at "Propter fratres," but the real cause of the trouble was one of Amadino's typesetters, who started the Tenor I entry a half-note too soon.

In *Nisi Dominus*, one voice-part in each chorus-sings the psalm-tone as a *cantus firmus*, so the tutti sections are really in nine, not ten parts; at "Gloria patri" the two choirs momentarily coalesce. Monteverdi uses his *cori spezzati* effects mainly to emphasize and confirm textual statements, although verse division is also pointed up to some extent. The last psalm, *Lauda Jerusalem*, is also for two choirs with *cantus firmus* in each tenor part: the texture is therefore seven-part in the tutti sections. Yet the imitative writing is often highly complex. At the words "et judicia" chords of F major and A minor are rapidly superimposed, rather after the manner of Giovanni Gabrieli in his magnificent *Buccinate in neomenia*.

<sup>38</sup> Sartori, *Monteverdiana*, in *The Musical Quarterly*, XXXVIII (1952), 412.

Monteverdi's alternatim pattern for *Ave maris stella* skillfully plays off three tonal elements, the first choir, second choir, and the instrumental group responsible for the ritornels. Once again the result suggests an asymmetric symmetry:

<i>Ave maris stella</i>		Double Choir
<i>Sumens illud</i>		Choir I
Ritornel		
<i>Solve vincla</i>		Choir II
Ritornel		
<i>Monstra te</i>		Choir I (Cantus)
Ritornel		
<i>Virgo singularis</i>		Choir II (Sextus)
Ritornel		
<i>Vitam praesta</i>		Choir I (Tenor)
<i>Sit laus Deo</i>		Double Choir

The Magnificat, although naturally on a larger scale than the hymn, shows similar characteristics of structure, subtle to a remarkable degree by reason of the integration of ritornels within the various verses. Especially notable are the composer's carefully marked tempo indications and instructions to the organist as to what stops he should draw. The variations of tempo call to mind a significant sentence in a letter written by Monteverdi's Milanese friend, Aquilino Coppini, to Hendrik van der Putten in July 1609. Describing the manner of performing choral works by Monteverdi, Coppini emphasizes the necessity for "resting occasionally, allowing retardation, and at times even pressing on."<sup>39</sup> The scheme of the Magnificat is as follows:

<i>Magnificat</i>		Choir
<i>Et exsultavit</i>		3 soloists
<i>Quia respexit</i>		1 soloist
<i>Quia fecit</i>		3 soloists
<i>Et misericordia</i>		2 groups of 3 soloists ("in dialogo")
<i>Fecit potentiam</i>		1 soloist
<i>Deposuit</i>		1 soloist
<i>Esurientes</i>		2 soloists
<i>Suscepit Israel</i>		3 soloists
<i>Sicut locutus est</i>		1 soloist
<i>Gloria Patri</i>		3 soloists
<i>Sicut erat</i>		Choir

These, then, are the Vespers of yesteryear: may they continue to be heard, but in a context and a spirit befitting the genius of the man who wrote them.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 406.