



George Frideric HANDEL

THE COMPLETE 'AMEN, ALLELUIA' ARIAS, HWV269–77
WITH MUSIC BY CHURCH, CROFT, PITTONI AND ANON.

Robert Crowe, soprano
Il Furioso
Victor Coelho and David Dolata, directors

FIRST RECORDINGS

GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL The 'Amen, Alleluia' Arias

HANDEL

[1] *Amen* No. 1 in F major, HWV270 1:42

GIOVANNI PITTONI *Sonata Nona* in D minor (1669)

[2] II [*Andante*] 2:02

WILLIAM CROFT

[3] *A Hymn on Divine Musick* (1700) 5:01

HANDEL

[4] *Amen, Alleluja* No. 5 in G major, HWV273 1:06

[5] *Amen* No. 2 in G minor, HMV271 3:44

[6] *Amen, Alleluja* No. 6 in A minor, HWV274 1:59

PITTONI *Sonata Decima* in G major (1669) 4:28

[7] I *Grave* 1:11

[8] II *Allegro* 1:34

[9] III *Allegro* 1:43

HANDEL

[10] *Amen, Alleluja* No. 7 in F major, HWV276 1:11

ANON.

[11] *A Divine Song on the Passion of our Saviour* (1693) 6:24

HANDEL

[12] *Amen, Alleluja* No. 9 in D minor, HWV269 5:46

PITTONI *Sonata Nona*

[13] I [*Andante*] 1:29

HANDEL

- [14] ***Hallelujah! Amen* No. 8 in F major, HWV277** 2:57
Pieces from the Braamcamp Handel-Clay Clock (c. 1738)
[15] Minuet [HWV436] 1:34
[16] Variation [HWV436] 1:10

JOHN CHURCH

- [17] ***A Divine Hymn*** (1703) 7:28

HANDEL

- [18] Sixth Air (from the Braamcamp Handel-Clay Clock) 1:29
[19] ***Amen, Alleluja* No. 4 in D minor, HWV272** 2:36

PITTONI *Sonata Undecima* in A minor (1669)

- [20] III [Andante] 1:59

HANDEL

- [21] ***[Amen, Alleluja]* No. 3 in C major, HWV275** 1:49
[22] ***Amen* No. 1 in F major, HWV270** (ornamented version) 1:49

Robert Crowe, soprano [1] [3]–[6] [10]–[12] [14] [17] [19] [21] [22]

TT 57:46

Il Furioso

Victor Coelho, theorbo [1] [3]–[9] [11] [12] [19] [21] [22]

David Dolata, theorbo [1]–[6] [11]–[13] [19]–[22]

Juvenal Correa-Salas, organ

HANDEL'S 'AMEN, ALLELUIA' ARIAS, HWV269–77

by Victor Coelho, Robert Crowe and David Dolata

When George Frideric Handel arrived in London in 1710, he found an English metropolis where public, secular music was rapidly being overwhelmed by an influx of German and Italian styles. In private settings, however, and in the church, English music by English composers still vied spiritedly for supremacy. Queen Anne was the last Stuart monarch. Aging, ailing and childless, she had already designated her second cousin, the Elector of Hanover, as her legitimate Protestant successor. In doing so she cut out her nearer relative, her exiled Roman Catholic half-brother, the self-styled James III, known in British history as 'The Old Pretender'. Shortly after Anne's death in 1714, Georg Ludwig von Hanover ascended the British throne as King George.

The political, artistic and religious oppression of the Puritan Commonwealth under the 'Lord Protector' Oliver Cromwell in the 1640s and '50s, had helped stimulate a tradition of private sacred music-making, which endured throughout the much more tolerant Restoration of Charles II. In the 1660s Samuel Pepys recorded in his diary at least two evenings of private sacred-music parties, where he and his friends sang elaborate settings of the Psalms. In the 1670s and '80s Henry Purcell, John Blow and many of their lesser-known peers began to create a new style of English solo song, by combining the complicated metres of contemporary English poetry with dramatic Italianate declamation and flowing French lyricism. Though first used primarily in the theatre, this form – usually a florid recitative followed by a more song-like 'air' in duple or, more often, triple time – quickly provided fertile ground for the sacred solo song: the Divine Hymn. The first important collection of works of this kind, the *Harmonia Sacra*, was published by Henry Playford in 1688, with a second volume appearing in 1693 – the source of the oldest vocal work on this recording, the anonymously composed *A Divine Song on the Passion of our SAVIOUR* [1]. In 1700 Playford added a 'Supplement' to the *Harmonia Sacra* containing two Divine Hymns, one of which was William Croft's *A Hymn on*

Divine Musick [3]. In 1703 Playford republished the entire collection, including for the first time John Church's *A Divine Hymn* [17].

According to Playford's 1693 preface, the *Harmonia Sacra* was designed as a counterweight to the frivolous secular music he and others were already publishing for the amateur musician: 'The Youthful and Gay have already been entertain'd with [a] variety of Rare [very good] Compositions [...] made at once to gratify a Delicate Ear, and wanton Curiosity'. Instead, this collection was intended for a different, 'more Devout' audience. 'Divine Hymns', Playford wrote, are 'the most proper Entertainment for them, which, as they make the sweetest, and indeed the only, Melowdy to a Religious Ear, so are they in themselves the very Glory and Perfection of Musick'. With its everyday use limited to deeply devout homes, the *Harmonia Sacra* probably found a wider audience on Sunday afternoons and evenings, when the profane antics of Italian nymphs and shepherds would have been tolerated in only the most sophisticated households. Although there are a number of works for multiple voices that could be (and certainly were) performed as anthems in public church settings, Playford's own preface indicates that this music was intended for private, domestic celebrations of faith.

The uses (and users) of the songs in the *Harmonia Sacra* sets the background to the now anglicised and, in 1727, naturalised Briton, George Frideric Handel. His outstanding success in the 1710s was accompanied by an increasing professional closeness to the royal family, leading to his composing music for the Chapel Royal after 1723, and from the early 1720s until his death in 1759 serving as musical instructor to the many daughters of George II. Though he never derived the major part of his income from teaching, Handel was deeply involved in both private music instruction and the closely related realm of private music-making. Many of his instrumental works were intended as much for private as for professional, public performance, and he reworked several opera arias and cantatas, simplifying, transposing and realising the figured-bass harmonies for many of his mostly well-to-do, amateur, female students.¹

¹ A detailed account of Handel's private activities as a musician and teacher can be found in Ellen Harris, *George Frideric Handel: A Life with Friends*, W. W. Norton & Co., New York, 2014. We acknowledge here the generous assistance of Professor Harris in sharing her ideas with us about the composition of the nine 'Amen, Alleluia' arias by Handel.

At some point in the late 1720s or early 1730s, Handel began composing a series of nine *Amen*, *Allelujas* (or *Hallelujahs*) for solo voice and basso continuo. Stephan Blaut, the editor of the only scholarly edition of these works,² believes that they were essentially pedagogical in nature, possibly to be sung by the daughters of George II. Using watermark analysis of the music paper on which these works were copied, Blaut was able to date HWV270, 271 and 275 to between 1728 and 1740, HWV272–74 to between 1738 and 1740 and HWV276, 277 and 269 to the mid-to-late 1740s. Given the relatively long compositional span, it seems unlikely that all or even most of these pieces were written for a single singer. What they are not, despite having been described as ‘introductions to *bel canto* singing’,³ is beginner’s music, regardless of how simple they may appear on the page. Clearly, the received opinion that these pieces are ‘lessons’, combined with the ongoing difficulty in identifying their users, has contributed to their general unfamiliarity among today’s musicians and audiences.

Eighteenth-century students of Italianate singing used in all cases the wordless *solfeggio* as the foundation of their pedagogy. A *solfeggio* is a short exercise for voice written over a *basso continuo*, usually provided by the teacher to the student in order to address a specific technical problem. For example, the Neapolitan opera composer Leonardo Leo (1694–1744) wrote a new *solfeggio* for each of his students every three days, and at the end of each of these cycles expected the narrowly focused technical issue to have been resolved.⁴ From at least the beginning of the eighteenth century, these *solfeggi* were sung using some of the syllables of the gamut (that is, the solfège scale) *Do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, si*. In John Church’s 1723 training book for psalmody, he indicates that only *sol, fa* and *mi* are to be used.⁵ Later in the century, teachers like Leo’s student, the castrato Giovanni Battista Mancini (1714–1800), began to relax this rule, allowing

² Georg Friedrich Händel, *Neun Amen- und Halleluja-Sätze HWV 269–277 / Drei englische Kirchenlieder HWV 284–286*, ed. Stephan Blaut, Bärenreiter, Kassel, 2010, pp. XIII–xv.

³ By the German-born American musicologist Alfred Mann, quoted in *ibid.*, p. xv.

⁴ Giambattista Mancini, *Practical Reflections on the Figurative Art of Singing* (1774), trans. & ed. Pietro Buzzi, Gorham Press, Boston, 1912, pp. 188–89.

⁵ John Church, *An Introduction to Psalmody*, London, 1723, p. 3.

either the use of only two syllables or even a continuous open vowel. By 1800 Girolamo Crescentini was instructing students singing *solfeggi* to use merely an open ‘ah’.⁶ It was not until 1832, when Nicola Vaccai published his *Metodo pratico di canto italiano*, that short, explicitly pedagogical songs with words were used in the place of the *solfeggio*.⁷ He described them as replacements, and seemed to consider his short songs to be something completely new to singers’ training.

Most eighteenth-century *solfeggi* – Crescentini’s are notable exceptions – are of limited artistic interest.⁸ A collection of *Solfèges d’Italie*, first published in Paris around 1778, was reprinted at least four times in the remaining years of the eighteenth century, the last appearing in 1800.⁹ This collection contains 241 solo *solfeggi* and eleven extended duo *solfeggi* for two sopranos (in G clef and C clef, respectively). The 252 pedagogical exercises, all composed by Handel’s peers – most prominently Nicola Porpora, Johann Adolf Hasse, Leonardo Leo and Alessandro Scarlatti – are wordless. And even though written by master composers, the exercises are so remorselessly functional that it is difficult to imagine most of them being successfully ‘performed’.

Handel’s nine *Amen*, *Allelujas*, on the other hand, are beautifully composed, balanced arias and by no means as dryly pedantic as the *solfeggio*. They look outward to an audience, not inward to a singer’s technical shortcomings. They speak in Handel’s normal musical language of an evolving, inventive vocabulary made up of relatively modest melodic material. Although their difficulty might occasionally expose technical faults, there are no clearly identifiable vocal-technical issues being trained in any of them, with the possible exception of the short, fast trills in HWV277 [14]. Handel also furnished the arias with sometimes lengthy instrumental interludes, which are almost never encountered in a true *solfeggio*. In the light of these many departures from the

⁶ Girolamo Crescentini, *20 Recueil d’Exercices pour la Vocalisation Musicale*, Mainz, c. 1800, p. 3.

⁷ Nicola Vaccai, *Metodo pratico di canto italiano*, ed. Elio Battaglia, Ricordi, Rome, 1990.

⁸ If syncopation is to be addressed, for example, then syncopation dominates the exercise absolutely – likewise for fugal exercises, suspensions, arpeggios, leaps of a third, a fourth, etc. Each receives its own *solfeggio*.

⁹ Various composers, *Solfèges d’Italie*, Paris, c. 1778.

uniformity of the solfeggio, the *Amen*, *Allelujas* cannot be considered works of pedagogy. If they were used as such, they were almost certainly not composed with that intent.

Although the words 'Alleluia, Amen' conclude many antiphons sung or spoken outside the penitential seasons of Lent and, in Handel's time, Septuagesima or Shrovetide (the seventeen days leading to Ash Wednesday), the *Amen*, *Allelujas* seem ill-fitted to that function. Their florid, virtuosic nature is stylistically incompatible with Anglican church music (as opposed to the large-scale concert oratorio or that of the private chapel) of the eighteenth century. In addition, they seem too weighty, musically speaking, to augment spoken texts that take only a few seconds to say. In any case, newly composed antiphons were a comparative rarity in eighteenth-century Anglican music; psalms and anthems were composed in far larger numbers. Anthems in the eighteenth-century Anglican church were both textually and musically weighty affairs, qualities that exclude these works of only one or two words.

The private music-making of the devout is thus the most likely context for the performance of these pieces. Although they could certainly have been composed for Roman Catholic liturgical usage, their performance there would also have been necessarily private. Free worship for Catholics was prohibited by law in the United Kingdom and was only slowly allowed, in successive stages, from the end of the eighteenth century until the end of the nineteenth. It is a focus on private devotion that provides the logic behind our combination of two seemingly disparate musical styles on this recording. The *Harmonia Sacra* was repeatedly reprinted as least into the 1720s, if not later: the years in which Handel began composing his nine *Amen*, *Allelujas*. It is reasonable, therefore, to assume that the singing of private, devotional, English solo music could have included the archaic but powerful *Passion Song*, the more modern, though still comparatively rough-hewn *Hymn on Divine Musick* and *Divine Hymn*, as well as the elegant and newly written *Amen*, *Allelujas* by Handel, whose oratorios and anthems were already becoming monuments of musical Anglicanism.

The Music

A Divine Song on the Passion of our SAVIOUR [1] first appeared in print in the second volume of *Harmonia Sacra* in 1693. Unattributed there and in every successive edition, it was apparently first erroneously ascribed to Purcell by Vincent Novello – like most of the English Romantics, an admirer of Restoration poets and composers – in his late 1820s collection of Purcell's sacred works. The text is otherwise unpublished and there remains no hint as to the identity of the creator of this dark, dramatic, frankly gory work, in which its narrator sees, in a kind of ecstatic waking dream, a vision of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Although the text and its setting are knitted tightly together, both the declamatory recitative and the slow aria that follows are conservative in style. Text-painting, when it occurs, tends to be accomplished in broader strokes. In the aria the overarching 'affect', repeated in the descending lines in both the voice and the continuo, is the mimetic recreation of Christ's blood – infinitely precious – dripping uselessly onto the sand: 'Look how the meriting drops gush out [...] See the streams trickling down, trickling down.'

A Hymn on Divine Musick by William Croft (1677/78–1727) [3] is perhaps not entirely at home here on a recording of sacred music. Although the text does address the sacred, much of the imagery used is classical, even pagan. 'Art thou the warmth that Zephyr [Greek god of the west wind] breaths?' In interrogating music itself, the poet, identified merely as 'Mr. Gold', first asks if it is a physical thing, the wind, then a season, finally heaven itself.¹⁰ In the opening recitative Croft sets 'Musick' (the word itself appears only twice in the entire work) quite simply, but teases the singer with the long, self-referential melisma on 'sing'. The triple-time aria that follows also features vivid word-painting with the long, sprightly figure on 'smiles'. Unusually for a sacred hymn of this period, this section is followed by an even faster aria in duple metre with a rigorous counterpoint in the bass line buoying the leaping 'Hallelujahs' that 'never, never,

¹⁰ Samuel Phillips (ed.), *Miscellanea Sacra: or, A Curious Collection of Original Poems upon Divine and Moral Subjects*, 3rd edn., London, 1705, pp. 21–22. 'Mr. Gold', to whom Phillips ascribes this poem, may be a mild, intentional misspelling of the sensationally vulgar Robert Gould, whose plays in verse, explicitly detailing scandalous liaisons between titled ladies and their coachmen, delighted London's racy set in the 1680s and '90s.

never, never, never end'. Eventually they do, of course, and are followed by a short, final recitative. Here the narrator departs rather daringly from Christian orthodoxy, unable to decide whether Musick is Heaven, or Heaven is Musick (a question we pose through an elaborate, self-referential cadenza on the final 'Heav'n').

John Church (1674–1741) was a long-time employee of the Crown as both a singer and an administrator from 1697 until shortly before his death. From 1700 until Croft's death in 1727, both Church and Croft held positions at the Chapel Royal and at Westminster Abbey, Church continuing in these positions until shortly before his own death. In Church's 1723 *Introduction to Psalmody*, Croft was the only living composer other than Church whose works were included, indicating a close, probably friendly working relationship.

Church's *A Divine Hymn* [17] is a setting of a poem by 'H. W', printed in Nahum Tate's 1696 *Miscellanea Sacra, or, Poems on divine & moral subjects*. Church himself appears to have drastically altered the original poem, changing and adding words and lines, and altering the metre. Though Church is usually considered – when and if he gets any mention at all – as a relatively minor, conventional composer, his *Divine Hymn* is one of the truly under-appreciated masterpieces of late Restoration sacred song. In the opening recitative, Church sets his vocal gestures in a manner closely evocative of the text in order to wed it more perfectly to the nascent music. The triple movement is also highly responsive to textual changes. Sparkling *fiorature* brightly paint first the words 'joy' and 'glorious', and then, shifting the mood, roughly illustrate 'the raging seas'. At the end of the musical storm the voice rises soft and high on the gentle breeze that follows the tempest: 'thy gentler breath obey'. After the tempestuous middle section the final recitative grows, at first slowly, then, with increasing confidence, rises to a shining communion with the Holy Trinity. The supplicant calls repeatedly to God to 'Hear, hear' and grant his fervent prayer. The denouement, however, falls swiftly into a darkness that belies hope, ending with the quiet desperation of 'save me from the gulph of black despair'.

Although eight of Handel's nine sacred songs set only the words 'Alleluia' and 'Amen', they do not share a consistent text. HWV269 [12], probably the last to be composed, uses 'Amen, Hallelujah'. In HWV270 [1], however, Handel chose merely to set 'Amen', and

HWV271 [5] uses only 'Allelujah'. HWV272 [19], 273 [4] and 274 [6] all set 'Alleluja, Amen'. The two pieces HWV276 [10] and 277 [14], bound together in a different manuscript from the other seven, are clearly related thematically and stylistically. Handel writes 'Alleluja' in the first and in the second 'Hallelujah'. (We do not read too much into the difference between 'Alleluja' and 'Hallelujah'.) The eight textured works are joined by a single wordless one, HWV275 in C major [21] – the only possible *solfeggio*, it seems, which is sung here with alternating 'Amen's and 'Alleluja's.

All of these works were composed in the later, oratorio period of Handel's life and most of them belong to a style of soprano writing, both solo and choral, found in works like *Saul* (1738), *Israel in Egypt* (1739) and, of course, *Messiah* (1742). Their vocal lines move in a stepwise fashion separated by occasional leaps of fourths, fifths and octaves. The disjunct, highly chromatic style of earlier, Italianate vocal music is not much in evidence. Although most of the collection is devoid of any traceable borrowings from earlier works, the opening line of HWV272 [19] is nearly identical to two of Handel's very early Italian cantatas, *Poiché giuraro Amore* (HWV148) and *Aure soavi e liete* (HWV84).¹¹ Even with this possible Italian lineage, the vocal writing does not differ significantly from the others and lies firmly within Handel's late, English oratorio style. Conversely, Handel adapted parts of the F major aria, HWV277 [14], for the first movement of a sonata in C for a musical clock, HWV578.

Rather, there is a stronger degree of consanguinity internally amongst the pieces themselves. The primary theme of HWV271 [5], in both the first and second halves, is nearly identical to the secondary theme of the later HWV269 [12]. HWV276 [10], itself bearing a (probably) coincidental resemblance to the final 'Amen' in *Messiah*, is related thematically to its sibling, HWV277 [14]. These two pieces are, as already mentioned, bound together in a separate manuscript, and unlike the others, are ornamented in Handel's own hand. More than any other single factor, it is the extreme difficulty of singing Handel's ornamentation that removes this entire group from the category of pedagogical exercises. It is far easier to imagine Handel working with one of his

¹¹ Cf. Blaut, *loc. cit.*, p. XVI for the first identification; the second, that of HWV84, is by Robert Crowe.

professional singers, probably a soprano, showing minutely how to ‘grace’ these lines, than it is to imagine his placing it on the music desk in front of an overawed beginner.

The work that was most likely to have been composed last is the elegiac HWV269 in D minor [12]. Its primary theme seems to be original, but the secondary theme reveals a clear repurposing of HWV271 [5]. Even more interesting is its similarity to another alto aria in D minor, inserted into the 1750 *Messiah* and sung by the castrato Gaetano Gaudagni. Although the tempo is slower and the affect quite different, the secondary theme of HWV269 evokes the primary theme in the *furioso* section, ‘For He is like a refiner’s fire’. The leaping final runs of HWV269 also bear a striking resemblance to the final *fiorature* at the end of the *Messiah* aria. It is possible, of course, that the shared characteristics between HWV269 and ‘For He is like a refiner’s fire’ could merely be stylistic connections rather than actual borrowings, but it is tempting to see Handel returning a few years later to this wonderful, contemplative alto aria and condensing its material for the 1750 *Messiah*.

In setting a single word, ‘(H)allelujah’, Handel was nevertheless able to extract a vast amount of meaning from what is a quite simple utterance of pure jubilation. In HWV273 [4], 276 [10] and 277 [14] the simple meaning is clearly expressed and accords with Croft’s ‘Hallelujahs’ that ‘never, never end.’ But in HWV271 [5] the word receives a plaintive, pastoral treatment that, though melancholic, does not puncture its Arcadian calm. HWV272 [19] has a more insistent character, the short repetitions joining Church’s *A Divine Hymn* in fervid supplication. HWV274 [6] is dynamic and fiery, and yet the minor key seems to indicate an underlying tension that also matches Church’s darker faith. A more restrained, though no less emotionally sublime, equanimity reigns in HWV269 [12], the longest and perhaps most fully thought-out of Handel’s nine little masterpieces. They reveal his exploration of two essential exclamations of belief and also, perhaps, a good deal of his own private faith in its many facets – from mirth and joy, through angst and melancholia into quiet contemplation.

The instrumental works included on this recording by Handel and by the Italian composer Giovanni Pittoni (c. 1635–77) were selected from two collections, contemporary, respectively, with the nine *Alleluias* and the *Harmonia Sacra*. The three

organ pieces by (or attributed to) Handel on this recording – a ‘Minuet’ with its variation [15][16] and the sprightly ‘Sixth Air’ [18] – have a fascinating history. They are found in one of the most curious but revealing sources of the composer’s music, namely, the works that Handel wrote or arranged for musical clock. As part of a vogue for mechanical instruments in the eighteenth century, these often lavishly decorated clocks housed what are small barrel-organs. They contained a wooden cylinder programmed by various-sized pins that activated small organ pipes (or chimes), essentially preserving a ‘performance’ for posterity. Fortunately, two musical clocks by the London maker Charles Clay (d. 1740) containing works by Handel have survived. It is not known whether Handel had any role in programming these clocks, but as the pieces can be dated to around 1738, they represent at the very least an aural ‘snapshot’ of performance conventions that may have a line to Handel himself.

All three pieces recorded here are preserved on the cylinder of the so-called Braamcamp Handel-Clay Organ Clock, the better preserved of the two clocks by Clay, and were transcribed by Pieter Dirksen and Jan Jaap Haspels from tapes made from the clock.¹² We thus contribute to a fascinating deconstruction of music history: a piece is written in the early eighteenth century; a contemporary performance of that piece is then ‘recorded’ onto a cylinder, revived through transcription 300 years later, and finally, here, recorded once again, the transcription of the musical-clock performance, not the original score, becoming a new – some have even claimed ‘authentic’ – musical text.

Fortunately, the ‘Minuet’ and its variation from the Braamcamp Handel-Clay clock are arranged versions (in order to fit the smaller range of the clock) of an earlier Handel keyboard suite in D minor (HWV436) published in 1733, thus permitting a comparison between the clock performance (transposed to E minor) and the published work. In the ‘Minuet’ extensive ornamentation in the clock version is pervasive in almost every bar, including added Lombard rhythms (quick short–long rhythmic gestures, also called

¹² A modern edition of these transcriptions can be found in George Frideric Handel, *Twenty Pieces for a Musical Clock (ca. 1738)*, ed. Pieter Dirksen, with an introduction by Jan Jaap Haspels, Diapason Press, Utrecht, 1987. Further to Haspels’ introduction, another excellent summary of Handel’s clock music is in Charles Ditto, ‘Handel’s Musical Clock Music,’ *Fontes Artis Musicae*, Vol. 44 (1997), pp. 266–80.

'Scotch snaps') and triplet figures, with the many trills starting usually on the upper note, but occasionally on the lower. Less ornamentation is added to the first variation, but the clock version does reveal the flexibility taken by the performer in thickening the left-hand textures in several bars, and reversing the direction of certain scales, no doubt, in some cases, to conform to the narrower range. The melodious 'Sixth Air' is unattributed and does not have a corresponding version in Handel's output, but it is considered likely to be a Handel composition on stylistic grounds.

What is known of Giovanni Pittoni is almost entirely through a biographical entry in Antonio Libanori's *Ferrara d'oro* of 1674.¹³ A citizen of Ferrara, Pittoni was trained on lute and guitar, and also studied with Alfonso Paini, Antonio Draghi and Maurizio Cazzati, all of whom worked at some point in Ferrara. Eventually dedicating himself to mastering the theorbo, 'in the space of 25 years [out of a total lifespan of only 42 years]', Libanori continues, 'he practised night and day and became a celebrated, famous and esteemed player without equal.' His fame was such that he was invited to Vienna at a considerable salary to serve the Empress Leonora, the third wife of Leopold I, Holy Roman Emperor – the eventual dedicatee of the first of Pittoni's theorbo publications. But because of his love for Ferrara and a parallel dislike of German food and wine, Pittoni stayed put, continuing to serve in the court of the Duke of Mantua, as well as playing for church services and tournaments.

Two collections survive by Pittoni (there is no trace of a third one mentioned by Libanori), both published in Bologna in 1669: the *Opera prima*, containing twelve *sonate da chiesa* for theorbo with organ continuo, and the *Opera seconda*, containing twelve *sonate da camera* for theorbo but with a *basso continuo* part specified for harpsichord.¹⁴ These are the last Italian theorbo works published in the seventeenth century, and among the last surviving Italian works of any kind, in print or in manuscript, for either theorbo or lute. Unlike the continuo lines provided in earlier theorbo collections by Kapsberger

¹³ Antonio Libanori, *Ferrara d'oro Imbrunito Parte terza*, Ferrara, 1674, pp. 250–51.

¹⁴ The full titles are as follows: *Intavolatura / di tiorba / nella quale si contengono dodici Sonate da Chiesa / per Tiorba sola, col Basso per l'Organo, / di Giovanni Pittoni Ferrarese / Opera Prima*, Bologna, 1669; *Intavolatura / di tiorba / nella quale si contengono dodici Sonate da Camera, / per Tiorba sola, col Basso per il Clavicembalo / di Giovanni Pittoni Ferrarese / Opera Seconda*, Bologna, 1669.

(1626, 1640), Pittoni's continuo parts are often necessary to complete the harmony or as imitative entries, and some movements contain bars of continuo below blank tablature, as in the *Sonata Nona* [2], making the continuo part obligatory.

The theorbo pieces chosen for this recording are drawn from the *Opera prima*, whose twelve 'church' sonatas typically begin with a prelude or toccata-like *grave* followed by two or three movements sometimes poured into the rhythmic moulds of the courante (as in the *Sonata Decima* [8]), sarabande (*Sonata Nona* [13]), gigue or canzona (*Sonata Decima* [9]). As *sonate da chiesa*, these movements are devoid of any titles other than occasional tempo designations. With these sections scrubbed of any explicit dance-associations through the elimination of their giveaway binary-form repeats, this collection could certainly have been used in church, and there is much evidence of the role of the theorbo in sacred contexts during the seventeenth century, not least in concerted Mass settings by Pittoni's teacher, Maurizio Cazzati.¹⁵

Pittoni's style occasionally calls to mind Kapsberger's provocative chromaticism and theorbo 'special effects', for instance in the *Sonate Decima* [7] and *Undecima* [20]. In general, however, he clearly leans towards the more balanced textures and melodic charm of his older Ferrarese colleague Alessandro Piccinini, as well as the French-inspired Modenese style of theorbo-playing (as seen in the works of Castaldi and several manuscript sources), characterised by colourful harmonies, independent bass lines, timbral variety and use of the extreme reaches of the range of the instrument. Pittoni only rarely uses the cross-stringing scale-patterns that the theorbo, with its re-entrant tuning, can offer, so effectively exploited in works by Castaldi (1622), Piccinini (1623) and Kapsberger (1626, 1640). Consequently, Pittoni's conventional lute-style fingering often results in sudden leaps up or down an octave (as in the *Sonata Undecima* [20]), indicating that re-entrant tuning had become so ingrained in the seventeenth-century soundscape that guitar and theorbo players like Pittoni had developed a prescient sense of pitch class, where $C = c = c'$, etc.

¹⁵ Cf. Kevin Mason, *The Chitarrone and its Repertoire in Early Seventeenth-Century Italy*, Boethius Press, Aberystwyth, 1989, pp. 60–76.

In recording these almost unknown works, we have made several changes to Pittoni's written score, both in the fingering of scale-passages and, occasionally, in the musical text itself. Indeed, in his introductory remarks to *Opera prima*, Pittoni apologises for his own errors and asks the player to 'correct them carefully'. He also alludes to the player's possible unfamiliarity with his style, admitting that 'It may be that the sonatas will not completely please you at first; I beg that you run through them not once but many times for perhaps after several repetitions they will not displease you.' Finally, he acknowledges printing mistakes in the alignment of the tablature numbers with their respective rhythms and bass notes, and begs the reader's indulgence. His Bolognese printer, Giacomo Monti, was no stranger to lute or guitar music, having previously published Alessandro and Leonardo Maria Piccinini's 1639 lute book and Granata's 1646 guitar tablature, but both of these, it must be said, are replete with printing errors as well. Pittoni concludes his preface by encouraging the player to ornament at will, an instruction taken to heart throughout the *Sonata Decima* [7]–[9].

A Note on the Continuo

As was often the case during the Baroque era, Handel, Croft, Church and our Anon. did not specify the instrumentation for either the bass line or the continuo realisation. Apart from the general suggestions printed on title pages – in the *Harmonia Sacra* the 'Through-Bass' could be played by 'Theorbo-Lute, Bass-Viol, Harpsichord or Organ' – the choice was ultimately left to the performers, whose decision often depended on setting, or the availability of players or instruments. Given this flexibility, we have decided on an unconventional continuo arrangement for almost all of the vocal pieces: one theorbo performs the bass line while the other theorbo and organ each realises the figured bass in its own fashion. There is, in fact, persuasive documentary evidence that long-necked lutes such as the theorbo and archlute were acceptable alternatives to a bowed instrument for executing bass lines in the Baroque era.¹⁶ The title pages of

¹⁶ Tharald Borgir, *The Performance of the Basso Continuo in Italian Baroque Music*, UMI Research Press, Ann Arbor, 1987, pp. 91–120; Gregory Barnett, *Bolognese Instrumental Music, 1660–1710*, Ashgate, Aldershot, 2008, pp. 45–47.

numerous Italian publications of this period list long-necked lutes as interchangeable with bowed bass instruments such as the violone, violoncello or contrabass. Handel himself included melodic bass lines for theorbo in some of his operas (*Serse*, *Partenope*). Further support for using the theorbo as a melodic bass instrument is found in the cadence formulas contained in two late-seventeenth-century manuscripts: Modena, Biblioteca Estense mus. g. 239 and New York Public Library, JOC 93-2. These sources contain many examples of ornamented bass lines for theorbo in a variety of tonalities, and in the New York source most of these formulas employ cross-string fingering. Following this example, the theorbo assigned to the bass line in this recording plays the quick notes in what is referred to as a *campanella* texture, in which each successive note of the passage is plucked on a different string. The result is a colourful timbral effect akin to a series of bells ringing, in which one scale tone overlaps with the next. The other theorbo adds lower octave notes on the extended bass strings along with chords. In the end, the different approaches taken by the two theorbos converge to project a unified and focused plucked counterpoint to the sustained tones of the organ. They create a unique texture spanning the entire register of the theorbo while exploiting its idiomatic capabilities to the fullest.

Robert Crowe has worked for over 25 years as a male soprano, was a 1995 National Winner of the Metropolitan Opera Competition and has sung over 70 leading roles in operas and dramatic oratorios in the United States and across Europe. He has presented papers or lecture recitals for the American Musicological Society, the ICBM in Salzburg, the Tosc@Bologna, the Biennial Conference on Nineteenth-Century Music in Great Britain, and at the Society of Seventeenth-Century Music. His recording with the Bayerischer Rundfunk and Hänssler Profil, *The Virtuoso Soprano Motets of Giacomo Carissimi* of 2008, was named in the Year's Best List of the magazine *Crescendo*, and in 2011 *Songs to Mary: The Marian Motets of Monteverdi, Grandi and Carissimi* garnered glowing reviews in Europe and North America. Robert Crowe holds a PhD in historical musicology from Boston University, his dissertation focusing on the life and times of the last operatic castrato, Giovanni Battista Velluti. More information can be found at <http://robertcrowe.weebly.com>.



Victor Coelho, Professor of Music at Boston University and Director of the Center for Early Music Studies, is a performer and musicologist specialising in the Renaissance as well as in popular music. He is co-director of the group Il Furioso, dedicated to virtuoso music of the early seventeenth century, and has released recordings devoted to the music of Kapsberger and Castaldi on Toccata Classics. In 2000 his reconstruction of the music for the Medici wedding of 1608 received the Noah Greenberg Award given by the American Musicological Society for outstanding contributions to the performance of early music, resulting in a recording (with Alan Curtis) that won a Prelude Classical Award in 2004. His books include *Music and Science in the Age of Galileo* (Kluwer), *The Manuscript Sources of 17th-Century Italian Lute Music* (Garland), *Performance on Lute, Guitar, and Vihuela* (Cambridge), *The Cambridge Companion to the Guitar*, and (with Keith Polk) *Instrumentalists and Renaissance Culture* (Cambridge). Further information can be found at <http://people.bu.edu/blues>.



The *Bulletin de la Société Française de Luth* has referred to **David Dolata** as a ‘gentleman de la Renaissance’ for his activities as a performer and scholar. Professor of Musicology at the Florida International University School of Music in Miami, he has served as visiting research professor at Centre d’Études Supérieures de la Renaissance (CESR) in Tours, France, and maintains a long-standing affiliation with the Center for Early Music Studies of Boston University. As a lutenist he has appeared at the Glimmerglass Opera, the Florida Grand Opera, the Northwest Bach Festival, the Miami Bach Society, and on broadcasts and recordings for NPR, CBS and the BBC. He co-directs *Il Furioso* and has appeared as a lutenist on several American and European recordings. His publications include a two-volume critical edition of Bellerofonte Castaldi’s music for theorbo (A-R Editions) and the book *Meantone Temperaments on Lutes and Viols* (Indiana University Press), and he is co-editor of the forthcoming *CESR Encyclopedia of Tablature*.



Born in Santiago, Chile, **Juvenal Correa-Salas** is an organist, harpsichordist and conductor, and teaches at the Florida International University School of Music. Following studies at Indiana University, he has performed as a keyboard player and conductor at opera houses and music festivals in the USA, Chile, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Venezuela, Spain and Italy. As a composer, he has been commissioned to write works for choir, orchestra, solo piano, ballet and chamber ensemble, as well as incidental electronic music for theatre and dance. He and his wife, the ballerina Emily Ricca, are the founders of the Miami Beach-based ‘Romance Project,’ a non-profit organisation that develops international artistic/educational programmes.



Texts

☐ Samuel Phillips (ed.), *Miscellanea Sacra: or, A Curious Collection of Original Poems upon Divine and Moral Subjects*, 3rd edn., Henry Playford, London, 1705, pp. 21–22

Upon Divine Musick, by Mr. GOLD

[Robert Gould? 1660?–1708/9]

Musick what art thou? From what
Causes do'st thou Spring?
O Thou Divine Mysterious Thing!
Let me but know, and knowing give me
Voice to Sing.

Art Thou the Warmth in Spring that *Zephyrus*
breaths,
Painting the Meads, and whistling through the
Leaves;

The happy *Season* that all Grief exiles,
When God is pleas'd, and the Creation smiles?
Or art thou *Love*, that Mind to Mind imparts,
The endless Concord of agreeing Hearts?
Or art thou *Friendship*, yet a nobler Flame,
That can a dearer Way make Souls the same:
Or art Thou rather *what* does all transcend,
The Centre where at last the Blest ascend,
The seat where Hallelujahs never end?
Corporeal Eyes won't clearly let us see,
But either Thou art *Heav'n*, or *Heav'n's* Thee.

A Hymn on Divine Musick.

Set by Mr. William Crofts [sic].

What art thou? From what Causes dost
spring?
Oh Musick thou Divine Misterious thing?
Let me but Know, and knowing give me
Voice to Sing.

Art thou the warmth in Spring?, that *Zephire*
breaths?
Painting the Meads, and whistling through the
the Leaves.

The happy Season that all grief exiles,
when God is pleased and the Creation
Smiles.
Or art thou Love, that mind to mind imparts,
the endless concord of agreeing Hearts?
Or art thou Friendship, yet a nobler Flame?
that can a dearer way make Souls the same?
Or art thou rather which do all transcend,
the Centre which at last the Blest ascend,
the Seat where Hallelujah's never end;
Corporeal Eyes won't let us clearly see,
but either thou art *Heav'n*, or *Heav'n* is thee.

▣ *A Divine Song on the Passion of our SAVIOUR*

Anon.

See, my Soul, the Purple Pride,
that adorns his Thorny Crown,
see the Streams that haste to meet
another headlong bloody Tide,
from his Hands, and from his Side,
to his no less wounded Feet, trickling down;
See, see the Streams trickling down.
Look how the meriting Drops gush out
from their wide Wound,
Mysterious Drops of mighty Price,
each an offending World's sufficient Sacrifice,
Like common Gore they stain
the blushing Earth around,
from all his empti'd Veins,
they flow: Profuse and Prodigal,
as worthless Streams,
Ah see 'em how they fall!

17 Nahum Tate (ed.), *Miscellanea Sacra: or, Poems on divine & moral subjects*. Henry Playford, London, 1696, pp. 58–59. For comparison, the original and Church's version appear side by side below

Church

1. Oh God forever blest
in boundless peace & rest,
whose habitation is in light refin'd,
look from thy bright and glorious Throne
with pity and compassion, look down
behold and ease my troubled mind,
pain and distraction from my heart remove,
thou God of Consolation and of Love.

2. And Thou, who sitt'st at his Right-hand,
That do'st th'Angelick Hosts command
Thou, who on Earth didst heav'nly Pow'r
display,
Thou, whose mild Voice made Winds and Seas
obey;
The Storms, the Tempest in my Brest allay.
Chastise, Controul
The boist'ring Waves that rowl,
And Toss and Wreck, and quite o'erwhelm my
sick despairing Soul.

'H. W.'

1. Thou God for ever blest!
of uncreated Pow'r possesst,
Whose Habitation is in Light refin'd,
From thy Celestial Throne
With Pity (Lord) look down,
Behold, relieve my troubled Mind:
Anguish and Horror from my Heart remove,
Thou God of everlasting Peace and Love.

2. And thou who sets at the right hand of
Bliss,
the Spring of all true Joy and happiness,
who when thou had'st resign'd
the glorious station to redeem mankind,
didst with a word becalm the raging Sea;
and make the boistrous winds,
thy gentler breath Obey.
Oh quickly, quickly Lord allay the
storms and Tempests of my Breast, with sin
and guilt o'rladen and deprest, and by thy
pow'r controul
and check the boiling waves that rowl,
and, toss and wrack and overwhelm
my sick despairing soul.

3. And Thou most sweet and Sacred Dove,
The God of Consolation and of Love, Visit, O
 Visit ev'ry Part
Of my afflicted Heart:
That Heart for thy Reception to prepare, By
 thy most heav'nly Influence, Expell all sinful
 Thoughts from thence,
And Save me from the Gulph
of *black Despair*

3. And thou most sweet and sacred Dove,
thou God of Peace and everlasting Love, Visit,
 O visit ev'ry part
of my distressed mind, and Heart
and that I may prepare for thy
Reception and Communion, there
all Sin and sinful thoughts from thence expel,
 by thy most sov'reign influence hear, hear O
 most holy Trinity,
Center of all Divinity; Hear, hear
and graciously vouchsafe to grant my prayer,
 O condescend that mercy to extend, and save
 me from the gulph of black despair.



Recorded on 15–18 December 2016 in the Herbert and Nicole Wertheim Performing Arts Center Concert Hall, Florida International University, Miami

Producer and Editor: Brad Michel

Recording Engineer: Peter McGrath



Instrumentarium

14c Theorbo (Coelho) by Stephen Barber & Sandi Harris (London, 2004)

14c Theorbo (Dolata) by Paolo Busato (Padua, 2011)

Chamber organ by Bennett & Giuttari (Boston, 2009)

Generous financial support was provided by a Florida International University Humanities Grant, the FIU College of Communication, Architecture + The Arts, and the Office of the Provost and the Center for Early Music Studies at Boston University.

Booklet notes: Victor Coelho, Robert Crowe and David Dolata

Cover design: David M. Baker (david@notneverknow.com)

Typesetting and layout: Kerry Press, St Albans

Executive Producer: Martin Anderson

© Toccata Classics, London, 2017

© Toccata Classics, London, 2017

Toccata Classics CDs are available in the shops and can also be ordered from our distributors around the world, a list of whom can be found at www.toccataclassics.com. If we have no representation in your country, please contact:

Toccata Classics, 16 Dalkeith Court, Vincent Street, London SW1P 4HH, UK

Tel: +44/0 207 821 5020 E-mail: info@toccataclassics.com