

2024
YORK
EARLY
MUSIC
FESTIVAL
6 – 13 JULY

Vox Luminis

Sacro Monteverdi

The Quire, York Minster
Thursday 11 July 7.45pm

Vox Luminis
Lionel Meunier *director*

Sacro Monteverdi

Claudio Monteverdi 1567-1743

Gloria a 7 voci, SV 258

Dixit Dominus II, SV 263

Beatus vir, SV 268

O bone Jesu o pisimi Jesu, SV 313 [instrumental]

Adoramus te Christe, SV 289

Crucifixus, SV 259

Laetaniae della Beata Vergine, SV 204

O bone Jesu o pisimi Jesu, SV 313 [vocal]

Magnificat I, SV 281

Claudio Monteverdi was born in Cremona, the son of a surgeon and apothecary. Although there is no record of him being a member of the city's cathedral choir, the young Monteverdi received his first composition lessons from its *maestro di cappella*, Marc'Antonio Ingegneri, whose teachings he acknowledged in his first publications.

Monteverdi was clearly a precocious talent. His first publication, the three-voiced *Sacrae cantiunculae* (1582), was printed when he was just 15 years old. After attempts to find employment in Verona and Milan, he was eventually appointed as a viol player at the court of Vincenzo I Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua. It was in Mantua that he first began to experiment with the contemporary forms of liturgical music and develop a novel approach that united elements of the musical past and present, while offering glimpses of the future.

This balance between tradition and innovation was epitomised in his much-loved *Vespro della Beata Vergine* of 1610. His compositional achievements undoubtedly helped him in 1613, when he advanced to the prestigious post of *maestro di cappella* at Venice's Basilica di San Marco, where he would remain until the end of his career.

The majority of the repertoire contained within this programme is drawn from three publications: the *Selva morale e spirituale* ('Moral and Spiritual Forest'),

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published in 1640, and Giulio Bianchi's two books of motets, both of which were published in 1620. The *Selva morale e spirituale* was a retrospective anthology that drew together some of his most innovative and successful music from his time in Mantua alongside his more recent Venetian work. It includes a Mass, several psalm and Marian hymn settings, as well as two separate Magnificats. Bianchi was a cornettist and composer, who was also born in Cremona and led the wind band at Mantua alongside Monteverdi.

The seven-voiced setting of the **Gloria** is thought to have originally been part of a large-scale Mass written by Monteverdi in 1631 to commemorate the end of the Italian Plague of 1629-31 (also known as the Great Plague of Milan). The plague brought great devastation to northern Italy and is thought to have killed up to 50,000 people in Venice alone. Monteverdi divides the Gloria into five distinct sections, closely following the sense of the text. Over the course of the piece, individual voices and pairs of voices emerge from the main texture with flashes of rapid coloratura, to participate in a compelling musical dialogue with the violins.

Dixit Dominus is the first psalm of the evening office of Vespers on Sundays and feast days. As part of the San Marco liturgy, Vespers services on special occasions saw the uncovering of the Pala d'Oro, the exquisite gold high altar at the far east end of the church. To accompany this, sixteenth-century Venetian composers normally produced lavish eight-voice, double-choir settings of the *Dixit Dominus*. While this second setting by Monteverdi is scored for eight voices, he does not stick to a rigid division between two ensembles. Instead, he uses the forces in a series of different combinations to depict the psalm's lucid imagery – for example, using the full ensemble to terrifying effect in the *stile concitato* ('agitated style') section at the words *Confregit in die irae suae reges* ('The Lord shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath'), but then suddenly paring back, in complete contrast, to a pair of soprano voices for the beginning of the following verse.

One of Monteverdi's best-known later sacred works, **Beatus vir** (his first of two settings of Psalm 111) was actually based on a secular canzonetta *Chiome d'oro*, which was included in his Seventh Book of Madrigals (1619). In *Beatus vir*, Monteverdi borrows the charm and *naïveté* of his earlier work, originally addressed to the beauty of a lover's physical features, to convey the blissful assurance of the faithful man that fears God and obeys his commandments.

Adoramus te, Christe was included in Bianchi's first book and is a simple but heartrending setting of a text from the Hours of the Cross in devotional Books of Hours. Its opening statement, 'We adore you, O Christ', is tinged with bittersweetness, effected by Monteverdi's unconventional use of dissonances, but

the closing statements of *Miserere nobis* ('Have mercy on us') bring comfort and solace in the ending.

In addition to the simple four-part Mass setting published in the *Selva morale*, Monteverdi also included some more modern alternative settings that could be substituted for sections of the Mass. This short **Crucifixus** setting is one such alternative. It is cast in a much more modern style, with its descending chromatic line giving it a distinctly different character to the ordinary of the Mass, which remained very consciously within the parameters of the *stile antico*.

There was a conspicuous increase in expressions of Marian devotion in Venice from 1571, after the city's victory over the Turkish navy at the Battle of Lepanto, with Pope Pius V attributing the victory to the intervention of the Virgin Mary. As part of this, musical settings of the Litany became popular. Monteverdi's setting of the Litany of Loreto, the **Laetaniae della Beata Vergine**, was printed in Bianchi's second book. Between the opening *Kyrie eleison* and the closing *Agnus Dei*, the Litany consists of a sequence of invocations addressed to the Trinity and then to Mary, as mother, virgin, saint and queen. The music is relatively simple and it is likely the piece was intended to be sung in procession.

O bone Jesu was actually first printed outside Italy, in a collection entitled *Promptuarii musici* issued by the German composer Johannes Donfrid in Strasbourg in 1622. A simple setting for two sopranos and continuo of a devotional hymn text, it is an example of the so-called 'echo motet', whereby the first voice sings a phrase that is immediately repeated by the second voice, before the pair join together to elaborate and extend the melodic materials. Growing out of a fairly sparse opening, the piece builds cumulatively in intensity, culminating in the final invocation, *Salva me* ('Save me').

Following the five psalms at Vespers, the **Magnificat** featured as the centrepiece of the liturgy, being sung as the altar was censed. This eight-voice setting is the first of two contained within the *Selva morale e spirituale*. Breaking the text down into a series of standalone sections, Monteverdi explores its vivid imagery in a number of fresh ways. The *stile concitato* is introduced once again with the words *Fecit potentiam in brachio suo* ('He hath showed strength with his arm'). In juxtaposing these modern forms of expression with elements of the musical past, in the shape of short fragments of plainsong and imitative polyphony, Monteverdi demonstrates his unique ability to make the unfamiliar seem somehow familiar. These truly immersive sound worlds must have been utterly entrancing to seventeenth-century ears – but they remain no less captivating to contemporary audiences.

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Gloria

Gloria in excelsis Deo
Et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis.
Laudamus te.
Benedicimus te.
Adoramus te.
Glorificamus te.
Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam
tuam. Domine Deus, Rex caelestis,
Deus Pater omnipotens.
Domine Fili unigenite Jesu Christe.
Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris.
Qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.
Qui tollis peccata mundi, suscipe deprecationem
nostram.
Qui sedes ad dexteram patris, miserere nobis.
Quoniam Tu solus Sanctus, Tu solus Dominus,
Tu solus Altissimus, Jesu Christe.
Cum Sancto Spiritu, in gloria Dei Patris.
Amen.

Glory to God in the highest
and peace on earth to all men of good will
we praise you
we bless you
we adore you
we glorify you
we thank you, for your great glory
Lord God, king of the heavens
God almighty Father
Lord, begotten son, Jesus Christ
Lord God, lamb of God, son of the father
take all sins from the world, have mercy
on us
take all sins from the world, receive our
invocation.
You who are seated at the right of the
father, have mercy on us
because only you are Holy, only you are
Lord, only you are Highest Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God
the Father.
Amen.

Dixit Dominus II

1 Psalmus David. Dixit Dominus
Domino meo: sede a dextris meis,
donec ponam inimicos tuos
scabellum pedum tuorum.

The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou at
my right hand, until I make thine
enemies thy footstool.

2 Virgam virtutis tuae emittet Dominus
ex Sion: dominare in medio
inimicorum tuorum.

The Lord shall send the rod of thy
strength out of Zion: rule thou in the
midst of thine enemies.

3 Tecum principium in die virtutis tuae
in splendoribus sanctorum:
ex utero, ante luciferum, genui te.

Thine shall be the dominion in the day
of thy power, amid the brightness of the
saints: from the womb, before the day
star have I begotten thee.

4 Juravit Dominus et non poenitebit
eum: tu es sacerdos in aeternum
secundum ordinem Melchisedech.

The Lord hath sworn, and will not
repent; thou art a priest for ever after
the order of Melchizedek.

5 Dominus a dextris tuis: confregit in
die irae suae reges.

The Lord at thy right hand shall strike
through kings in the day of his wrath.

6 Judicabit in nationibus, implebit ruinas:
conquassabit capita in terra multorum.

He shall judge among the nations, he shall fill them with ruin: and shake to pieces the heads of many on the earth. He shall drink of the brook in the way: therefore shall he lift up the head.

7 De torrente in via bibet: propterea exaltabit caput.

Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto. Sicut erat in principio, et nunc et semper et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen

Psalm 110 (111)

Beatus vir

Beatus vir, qui timet Dominum:
In mandatis eius rolet nimis.

Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord. That delighteth greatly in his commandments.

Potens in terra erit semen eius;
Generatio rectorum benedicetur.

His seed shall be mighty upon earth. The generation of the upright shall be blessed.

Gloria et divitiae in domo eius;
Et justitia eius manet in saeculum saeculi.
Exortum est in tenebris lumen rectis:
Misericors, et miserator et justus.

Glory and riches shall be in his house and his righteousness endureth for ever. Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness. He is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous.

Jucundus homo qui miseretur et commodat.
Disponet sermones suos in judicio:

Happy is the man that showeth favor and lendeth; he will guide his words with discretion.

Quia in aeternum non commovebitur.

Surely he shall not be moved for ever.

In memoria aeterna erit justus.
Ab auditione mala non timebit.
Paratum cor eius sperare in Domino;

The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance. He shall not be afraid of evil tidings. His heart is ready, trusting in the Lord.

Confirmatum est, cor eius:
Non commovebitur, Donec despiciat inimicos suos.

His heart is established, he shall not be afraid until he see his desire upon his enemies.

Dispensit, dedit pauperibus:
Justitia eius manet in saeculum saeculi,
Cornu eius exaltabitur in gloria.

He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor. His righteousness endureth for ever. His horn shall exalted with honour. The wicked shall see it, and be grieved; he shall gnash his teeth, and melt away. The desire of the wicked shall perish.

Peccator videbit, et irascetur;
Dentibus suis fremet et tabescet.
Desiderium peccatorum peribit.

Gloria Patri et Filio et Spiritui Sancto
sicut erat in principio et nunc et semper
et in sæcula sæculorum. Amen.

Psalm 111 (112)

Glory be to the Father...

Adoramus te Christe

Adoramus te, Christe,
et benedicimus tibi.
Quia per sanguinem
tuum pretiosum
redemisti mundum.
Miserere nobis.

We adore you, Christ
And we bless you
You whom by the Holy Cross
Have redeemed the world.
He whom has suffered on our behalf
Lord, Lord, have mercy.

Cruxifixus

Cruxifixus etiam pro nobis sub Pontio
Pilato:
Passus, et sepultus est.

He was crucified also for us under
Pontius Pilate:
He suffered and was buried.

Laetaniae della Beata Vergine

Kyrie, eleison.
Christe, eleison.
Kyrie, eleison.
Christe, audi nos

Lord, have mercy on us.
Christ, have mercy on us.
Lord, have mercy on us.
Christ, hear us.

Pater de caelis, Deus, Miserere nobis,
Fili, Redemptor mundi, Deus, Miserere
nobis,
Spiritus Sancte, Deus, Miserere nobis,
Sancta Trinitas, unus Deus, Miserere
nobis,

God the Father of heaven, *: have
mercy on us.
God the Son, Redeemer of the world,*
God the Holy Spirit, *
Holy Trinity, one God, *

Sancta Maria, Ora pro nobis,
Sancta Dei genitrix, Ora pro nobis,
Sancta Virgo virginum, Ora pro nobis,
Mater Christi, Ora pro nobis,
Mater divinae gratiae, Ora pro nobis,
Mater purissima, Ora pro nobis,
Mater castissima, Ora pro nobis,
Mater inviolata, Ora pro nobis,
Mater intemerata, Ora pro nobis,
Mater amabilis, Ora pro nobis,
Mater admirabilis, Ora pro nobis,
Mater Creatoris, Ora pro nobis,
Mater Salvatoris, Ora pro nobis,

Holy Mary, *: pray for us.
Holy Mother of God, *
Holy Virgin of virgins, *
Mother of Christ, *
Mother of divine grace, *
Mother most pure, *
Mother most chaste,*
Mother inviolate, *
Mother undefiled, *
Mother most amiable, *
Mother most admirable, *
Mother of our Creator, *
Mother of our Savior, *

Virgo prudentissima, Ora pro nobis,
Virgo veneranda, Ora pro nobis,
Virgo praedicanda, Ora pro nobis,
Virgo potens, Ora pro nobis,
Virgo clemens, Ora pro nobis,
Virgo fideli, Ora pro nobis,

Speculum iustitiae, ora pro nobis,
Sedes sapientiae, Ora pro nobis,
Causa nostrae laetitiae, Ora pro nobis,
Vas spirituale, Ora pro nobis,
Vas honorabile, Ora pro nobis,
Vas insignae devotionis, Ora pro nobis,

Rosa mystica, Ora pro nobis,
Turris Davidica, Ora pro nobis,
Turris eburnea, Ora pro nobis,
Domus aurea, Ora pro nobis,
Foederis arca, Ora pro nobis,
Ianuam caeli, Ora pro nobis,
Stella matutina, Ora pro nobis,
Salus infirmorum, Ora pro nobis,
Refugium peccatorum,
Consolatrix afflictorum,
Auxilium Christianorum, Ora pro nobis,

Regina angelorum, Ora pro nobis,
Regina patriarcharum, Ora pro nobis,
Regina prophetarum, Ora pro nobis,
Regina apostolorum, Ora pro nobis,
Regina martyrum, Ora pro nobis,
Regina confessorum, Ora pro nobis,
Regina virginum, Ora pro nobis,
Regina sanctorum omnium, Ora pro nobis,

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,
Parce nobis Domine
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,
Exaudi nos, Domine,
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,
Miserere nobis.

* responses

O bone Jesu, o piissime Jesu

O bone Jesu, O piissime Jesu,
O Jesu fili Mariæ Virginis,

Virgin most prudent, *
Virgin most venerable, *
Virgin most renowned, *
Virgin most powerful, *
Virgin most merciful, *
Virgin most faithful, *

Mirror of justice, *
Seat of wisdom, *
Cause of our joy, *
Spiritual vessel, *
Vessel of honour, *
Singular vessel of devotion, *

Mystical rose, *
Tower of David, *
Tower of ivory, *
House of gold, *
Ark of the covenant, *
Gate of heaven, *
Morning star, *
Health of the sick, *
Refuge of sinners,
Comforter of the afflicted,
Help of Christians, pray for us.

Queen of Angels, *: pray for us.
Queen of Patriarchs, *
Queen of Prophets, *
Queen of Apostles, *
Queen of Martyrs, *
Queen of Confessors, *
Queen of Virgins, *
Queen of all Saints, *

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins
of the world, spare us, O Lord.

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins
of the world, graciously hear us, O
Lord.

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins
of the world, have mercy on us.

O good Jesus, O Jesus most kind,
O Jesus, son of the Virgin Mary,

Plene misericordiæ et pietate!
Jesu nomen dulce,
Jesu nomen delectabile,
Jesu nomen confortans,
Quid est enim Jesus nisi Salvator?
Ergo Jesus nomen sanctum tuum
esto mihi Jesus et salva me.

Full of mercy and love.
Jesus, thy name is sweet,
Jesus, thy name is a delight,
Jesus, thy name bringeth comfort,
For who is Jesus if not our Saviour?
Therefore, Jesus, by virtue of thy holy
name,
Be mine, Jesus, and save me.

Magnificat I

1 Magnificat, anima mea, Dominum

1 My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord.

2 et exultavit spiritus meus in Deo,
salutari meo.

2 and my spirit has exulted in God my
saviour.

3 Quia respexit humilitatem ancillæ
suæ: ecce enim ex hoc beatam me
dicent omnes generationes.

3 because he has regarded the lowly
state of his handmaiden; for look! from
now on every generation will say that I
am blessed .

4 Quia fecit mihi magna, qui potens est,
et sanctum nomen eius,

4 because he who is mighty has done
great things for me, and holy is his name.

5 et misericordia eius a progenie in
progenies timentibus eum.

5 and his mercy [continues] from
generation to generation for those who
fear him.

6 Fecit potentiam in brachio suo,
dispersit superbos mente cordis sui.

6 He has made known the power of his
arm, scattered those who are arrogant
in the thoughts of their heart.

7 Deposuit potentes de sede
et exaltavit humiles;

7 He has put down the mighty from
their seats [of power] and raised up
those who are lowly.

8 esurientes implevit bonis
et divites dimisit inanes.

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

9 Suscepit Israel puerum suum
recordatus misericordiæ suæ,

9 He has taken under his protection
Israel his boy, and remembered his
mercy.

10 sicut locutus est ad patres nostros,
Abraham et semini eius in sæcula.

10 in accordance with what he said to
our fathers,
to Abraham and to his seed for ever.

I I Gloria Patri, et Filio,
et Spiritui Sancto:

I I Glory be to the Father, and to the
Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

I 2 Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et
semper, et in sæcula sæculorum. Amen.

I 2 As it was in the beginning, is now and
ever shall be, world without end. Amen

Vox Luminis

Perrine Devillers *soprano I*

Zsuzsi Tóth *soprano I*

Victoria Cassano *soprano II*

Tessa Roos *soprano II*

Jan Kullmann *alto*

Vojtěch Semerád *alto*

Olivier Berten *tenor*

Raffaele Giordani *tenor*

Massimo Lombardi *tenor*

João Moreira *tenor*

Lionel Meunier *bass*

Sebastian Myrus *bass*

Tuomo Suni *violin*

Johannes Frisch *violin*

Benoît Vanden Bemden *violone*

Simon Linné *theorbo*

Sarah Ridy *harp*

Anthony Romaniuk *organ*

From its very first performances in 2004, early music ensemble Vox Luminis has claimed the international spotlight with its unique sound. Founder, artistic director and bass Lionel Meunier created the ensemble in such a way that each voice can shine solo as well as merging into one luminous fabric of sound. Depending on the repertoire, this core of vocalists is joined by continuo or solo instruments, or its full orchestra. That repertoire comprises mainly English, Italian and German music from the seventeenth and early eighteenth century, from virtuoso masterpieces to untouched gems that are given full scope at 70 concerts a year and in recordings.

Vox Luminis' mission is clear: to bring vocal music to a wide audience, with excellence as its guiding principle and touchstone. Concerts, recordings, workshops with audiences around the world and a rigorous working method are the means to this end.

The magic of Vox Luminis has not escaped the international music scene and press. In 2012, the ensemble won the Baroque Vocal Award and the prestigious Recording of the Year Award at the *Gramophone* classical music awards for Schütz's *Musikalische Exequien*. Seven years later, the Choral Award from the same magazine followed for the recording *Buxtehude: Abendmusiken*. Meanwhile, the trophy cabinet filled up with awards such as Klara Ensemble of the Year 2018, a 2018 *BBC Music Magazine* Award in the Choral category, numerous Diapasons d'Or, the 2020 Caecilia Prize and several Preis der Deutschen Schallplattenkritik.

Vox Luminis is artist in residence at Concertgebouw Brugge and at the Abbaye Musicale de Malonne (Namur). In 2021, it started an ongoing partnership with the prestigious Freiburger Barockorchester and the Freiburger BarockConsort for several projects each year. The ensemble is also a welcome guest at major concert halls and festivals worldwide, including Bozar and Flagey in Brussels, De Singel Antwerp, Auditorio Nacional en Teatro Real Madrid, L'Auditori and Palau de la Musica Barcelona, Salle Gaveau and Auditorium de Radio France in Paris, Wigmore Hall London, Philharmonie Berlin and Cologne, Laeiszhalle and Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, Konzerthaus Dortmund, Lincoln Center New York, Jordan Hall Boston, Zaryadye Hall Moscow, Festival van Vlaanderen, Festival de Wallonie, Festival de Saintes, Festival Oude Muziek Utrecht, Musikfest Bremen, Bachfest Leipzig, Klangvokal Dortmund, the Salzburger Festspiele, Aldeburgh Festival and Boston Early Music Festival, amongst others.

Vox Luminis enjoys the valued support of the Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles (FWB) and Wallonie-Bruxelles International (WBI).

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Lionel Meunier

Internationally renowned as the founder and artistic director of the award-winning Belgian vocal ensemble Vox Luminis, French conductor and bass Lionel Meunier is widely regarded as one of the most dynamic and highly acclaimed artistic leaders in the fields of historical performance and choral music active today. Praised for his detailed yet spirited interpretative approach, he is now increasingly in demand as a

guest conductor and artistic director with choirs, ensembles and orchestras worldwide. Lionel's international breakthrough came in 2012 with Vox Luminis' *Gramophone* magazine's Recording of Year award for their recording of Heinrich Schütz' *Musicalische Exequien*. Under his leadership, Vox Luminis has since embarked on extensive concert tours throughout Europe, North America and Asia; established multi-season artistic residencies at Wigmore Hall, Aldeburgh Festival, Utrecht Early Music Festival and Concertgebouw Brugge, and recorded about 20 critically acclaimed albums. The recording of Buxtehude won them their second *Gramophone* Award, for 2019 Choral Recording of the Year.

As a guest conductor, Lionel has worked with Netherlands Bach Society, Danish National Vocal Ensemble, Netherlands Chamber Choir, Salzburg Bach Choir and the Boston Early Music Festival Collegium. He has led projects with Vox Luminis in collaboration with Orchestra B'Rock, Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra and L'Achéron, among many others. Lionel maintains a close relationship with the Freiburg Baroque Orchestra and Consort, returning regularly to lead collaborative projects with Vox Luminis that cover a wide repertoire.

Highlights of the 2022/2023 season included a residency at Juilliard culminating in a highly acclaimed performance of Purcell's *King Arthur* in Alice Tully Hall; and a three-week European tour with Vox Luminis and Freiburg Baroque Orchestra with Bach's *St Matthew Passion* to major venues including Berlin Philharmonie, Hamburg Elbphilharmonie, and Palau de la Musica, Barcelona. The 2023/2024 season includes performances all over Europe and North America with Vox Luminis and a residency at CNSMD Paris where Lionel will conduct performances of Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* and *St John Passion*. He is also guest conductor at Conservatorium Amsterdam for a series of concerts around Henry Purcell's *Ode to St. Cecilia*.

Born in France, Lionel was trained as a singer and recorder player and began his career as a bass in renowned ensembles such as Collegium Vocale Ghent, Amsterdam Baroque Choir, and Cappella Pratensis. In 2013, he was awarded the title of Namurois de l'Année (Namur Citizen of the Year) for culture in the Belgian town of Namur, where he lives with his family.

YORK EARLY MUSIC FESTIVAL

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