

WIGMORE HALL

Wednesday 21 February 2024
7.30pm

Stabat Mater

Vox Luminis

Lionel Meunier artistic director,
bass
Zsuzsi Tóth soprano
Caroline Weynants soprano
Perrine Devillers soprano
Victoria Cassano soprano

Barnabás Hegyi alto
Jan Kullmann alto
Raffaele Giordani tenor
Olivier Berten tenor
Massimo Lombardi tenor
Guglielmo Buonsanti bass

Simon Linné theorbo
Sarah Ridy harp
James Munro basse de violon,
violone
Anthony Romaniuk organ

Anon

Lamentation de la Vierge au Croix

Antonio Lotti (1666-1740)

Crucifixus a8

Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643)

Adoramus te Christe SV289 (1620)

Domenico Mazzocchi (1592-1665)

Piangete occhi, piangete (pub. 1640)

Alessandro Della Ciaia (c.1605-1670)

Lamentatio Virginis in depositione Filii de cruce (pub. 1666)

Interval

Domenico Scarlatti (1685-1757)

Stabat Mater (?1715)

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This evening's programme compiles a variety of vocal works disparate in style but all centered around a similar theme: The Lamentation of Christ, a frequent subject of religious art from the Middle Ages to the Baroque. While the Lamentation deals primarily with the removal of Christ's body from the cross and the mourning of his friends, it often focuses in particular on his mother, the Virgin Mary. The works on this programme cover this range of stylistic periods and lament Christ's death, in some cases looking closely at Mary's suffering and the intense pain of the loss of a child.

The first work on the programme reaches back to the 13th Century with an anonymous song in Old French. It represents an example of a song form called the *lai*. In contrast to medieval strophic song forms, the *lai* has an unusual poetic structure with irregular rhymes and inconsistent poetic meter. Since poetic structure typically determined musical structure, the *lai* often sets text in a way that is more musically free and unpredictable. While the choice of a secular song genre may seem unusual for a sacred topic, the irregularity of form allows for a more intense expression of emotion befitting the subject.

Antonio Lotti's *Crucifixus* is a motet for eight voices and continuo that forms a section of a larger *Credo* in F, itself a setting of one section of the Catholic Mass Ordinary. While full settings of the Mass Ordinary were common since the Renaissance, many composers also wrote settings of individual sections which could then be compiled together like a pastiche. Lotti's *Credo* survives in a manuscript found in Dresden where Lotti served as a court composer to Friedrich Augustus I, Elector of Saxony, from 1717-9. However, it is possible that the work was composed earlier, during his employment in Venice. Although not published in his lifetime, the work gained wider popularity after its publication in an 1838 collection of sacred works compiled by Johann Friedrich Rochlitz, an early musicologist and music critic. The *Crucifixus* section of the *Credo* deals with the crucifixion, death and burial of Jesus. Musical settings of the Mass often reserve the most pathos-filled music for this section.

Lotti's motet is followed by another motet from a century earlier by **Claudio Monteverdi**. *Adoramus te Christe* SV289 dates from his time as *maestro di capella* of St Mark's Basilica in Venice. After contributing to the birth of opera during his time in Mantua, Monteverdi moved to Venice and composed a number of sacred works as part of his duties at the Basilica. This motet takes as its text a fairly innocuous supplication to Christ expressing adoration as well as asking for mercy. Monteverdi sets this text mostly homophonically, such that all the voices align in singing the same text at the same time. This creates a clear communal effect as the entire choir expresses the same ideas in unison.

Like the anonymous *lai* with which the programme began, **Domenico Mazzocchi's** *Piangete occhi, piangete* blends the sacred and secular. It is an example of a genre known as the spiritual madrigal, which takes similar musical conventions of vocal writing from the secular madrigal and puts them in service of a sacred topic. Yet where a motet might do the same thing in Latin, the spiritual madrigal uses the vernacular Italian. Mazzocchi's madrigal here comes from a larger collection of his works, *Musiche sacre e morali*, published in 1640 in Rome. *Piangete* is composed for two sopranos and continuo. Like the other works on this programme, the text laments Christ's death. At the beginning of the piece in the 1640 publication there is an inscription which reads *Douemo piangere la Passione di N.S. [Nostro Signore]* which translates to 'We must mourn the passion of Our Lord.'

The last work before the interval returns to the Virgin Mary's lament. Composed by an aristocratic amateur rather than a professional composer, **Alessandro Della Ciaia's** *Lamentatio Virginis in depositione Filii de cruce* comes from a 1666 published collection of his sacred compositions, *Sacri modulatus*. The piece begins with a duet that narrates the deposition (removal) of Christ's body from the cross which is followed by Mary's lament sung as a solo for soprano. A chorus of angels alternates with Mary's lament, singing sections of the *Stabat Mater* text. By the end of the piece, the angel chorus and Mary sing the lamentation together.

Although primarily known for his more than 500 keyboard sonatas and idiosyncratic musical style, **Domenico Scarlatti** began his career by following in the footsteps of his father, Alessandro. Before his eventual move to the Spanish court, the young Domenico worked in both court and church posts in Italy, composing operas, cantatas, Masses and motets. One such post was the *maestro* of the Capella Giulia, the choir of St Peter's Basilica in Rome, a job which he held from about 1713-9. His choral setting of the *Stabat Mater* likely dates from this period and may have been performed by the Capella Giulia.

The *Stabat Mater* text — already heard in part in Della Ciaia's lament — focuses on the Virgin Mary's grief over her son's death and dates to the 13th Century when it was chanted as part of the liturgy of Lent, bringing this programme back to where it began. Scarlatti's setting is for ten voices and continuo, dividing the ten voices into two separate choirs and featuring them as soloists throughout. Stylistically, Scarlatti's setting combines starkly contrasting musical styles, at the time considered respectively old fashioned and cutting edge. At times he writes in Renaissance choral polyphony, and in others Baroque monody with soloists singing florid coloratura accompanied by continuo, occasionally evoking instrumental dance music.

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Anon

Lamentation de la Vierge au Croix

Anonymous

Lasse! Que deviendrai je,
Quant ces Juifs enragés
Ont mon fils tant
outragé
Qu'en un mort me l'ont
changé,
Et sans nul forfait
M'ont si grand tort
fait?

Alas! What will I become
when these outraged Jews
have humiliated my son
so badly,
when one death has
changed me,
and without any crime,
am made to suffer so
much?

Jamais ne pensai
savoir
Ce qu'est deuil: or le saurai!
Maintes joies devais
avoir,
Ne sais si plus en
aurai!

I thought I would never
know
what grief is: I will know!
I should have had many
joys,
now I do not know if I will
have more!

Biens dit l'Écriture vrai,
Et je m'en apercevrai,
Que j'avais a
recevoir
Un glave: or le recevrai!

The Scripture writes it truly
and I accepted it
that I would have to
receive sword:
I will receive it!

Toute chose fut réjouie
Quand mon ventre t'enfanta,
Et la belle compagnie
Des cieux en rit et
chanta!

All things were happy
when I gave birth to you,
and the beautiful company
of the heavens laughed
and sang!

Quant la mort vint sur ta
vie,
Le ciel s'en épouvanta.
Bien devrait être
guérie
Dame qui tel enfanta!

As death came over your
life,
Heaven trembled.
She should have been
restored
the lady who gave birth.

Mais n'y vois pas ma
guérieson
Car je ne suis plus
mère:
Et l'on m'a pris par
trahison
Mon cher fils et mon
père!

But I am no longer
restored
because I am no longer a
mother:
and they have taken by
betrayal
my beloved son and my
father!

Voici que l'a mis en
prison
La mort dure et amère.
Les philosophes que
lisons
Y prirent leur matière.

See what has imprisoned
him
this cruel and bitter death,
and the philosophers who
are read,
take it as their subject.

Beau fils, je vous
allaitai;
O douleur, mort vous vici!
Maintes fois vous arrangeai
Tout petit dans votre lit;

Beautiful son, I cared for
you;
O pain, I foresaw your death!
Many times as I arranged
you in your bed.

Contre Hérode vous
gardai
Et jusqu'en Egypte fuis.
De tristesse n'eus jamais
Aucun temps comme
aujourd'hui!

Against Herod I guarded
you,
and fled to Egypt,
but the sadness was never
like that of
today!

Antonio Lotti (1666-1740)

Crucifixus a8

Liturgical text

Crucifixus etiam pro nobis.
Sub Pontio Pilato,
Passus et sepultus est.

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

Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643)

Adoramus te Christe SV289 (1620)

Liturgical text

Adoramus te, Christe,
Et benedicimus tibi.
Quia per sanguinem tuum
pretiosum
Redemisti
mundum.
Miserere nobis.

We adore thee, O Christ

We adore thee, O Christ,
and we bless thee.
Because through thy
precious blood
thou hast redeemed the
world.
Have mercy on us.

Domenico Mazzocchi (1592-1665)

Piangete occhi, Weep, eyes, weep

piangete (pub. 1640)

Girolamo Preti

Dovremo piangere la passione di Nostro Signore Let us weep for the passion of Our Lord

Piangete occhi, piangete,
Non più gli altrui rigori,
O dolor mio,
Ma il dolor del mio Dio,
Che del mio pianto ha sete.
Piangete occhi, piangete.

Weep, eyes, weep,
no longer for the suffering of others,
or for my own pain,
but for the pain of my God,
who is thirsty for my tears.
Weep, eyes, weep.

Deh, non piangete più la feritate
Di terrene beltate,
Piangete la pietà,
L'amor di lui che langue,
(Oh Dio) per cui?
Langue perché di mia salute ha sete.
Piangete occhi, piangete.

Oh, weep no more for the wounds
of earthly beauty;
weep for mercy,
and for the love of him who languishes,
(oh God) for what:
He languishes because he is thirsty for my health.
Weep, eyes, weep.

Non piangete d'Amor l'arco mortale,
Ma quell'arco vitale
Di quelle braccia aperte,
Arco pietoso, e forte,
Che saettò la morte
Con ferità, onde voi salute avrete.
Piangete occhi, piangete.

Do not weep for the mortal bow of love,
but for that life-giving bow of those open arms,
a merciful and strong bow which death shot with cruelty, so that you might have health.
Weep, eyes, weep.

Non piangete gli strali,
Ond'empio amor terreno
Già, mi trafisse il seno.
Questi piangete, ohimè,
chiodi pungenti
Delle piante innocenti.
Avventar questi strali
Vostre colpe mortale
Voi, voi gli Arcieri siete,
Piangete occhi, piangete.

Do not weep for the arrows with which earthly love has pierced my breast.
Weep, alas for these sharp nails from innocent plants.
You are the archers, who will hurl these arrows, your mortal blows.
Weep, eyes, weep.

Occhi mieie, che spargeste
Di lagrime l torrenti,
Per due begli occhi ardenti,
Spargete hor caldi fiumi
Per quell Fattor celeste,
Che creò qiei bei lumi.

O my eyes, you who have shed torrents of tears,
for two beautiful, burning eyes.
pour forth now hot rivers for that heavenly Maker, who created those beautiful eyes.

Voi, che del pianto haveste nulla,
O poca mercede,
Da chi non cure, ocrede,
Deh, sporgete di lagrime una piena,
Per quell Fattor, che rende Vero amor per amor, gioia per pianto;
Voi, che piangeste tanto,
Hor come occhi miei, lassi aridi siete?
Piangete occhi, piangete.

You, who have had little or no pity for the weeping of those who do not care or believe,
ah, pour out now a flood of tears for that Maker who turns love into true love, grief into joy;
you, my eyes, who have wept so much,
Why are you now tired and dry?
Weep, eyes, weep.

Mentre chi mi die vita,
Per me fatto mortale, a morte langue,
Si prodigo sangue,
Occhi miei, voi due lagrimette avari sete?
Piangete occhi, piangete.

While he who gave me life, and was made mortal for me, now languishes in death, so covered with blood,
my eyes, are you now too miserly to shed two little tears?
Weep, eyes, weep.

Alessandro Della Ciaia (c.1605-1670)

Lamentatio Virginis in depositione Filii de cruce (pub. 1666)

Anonymous

Historicus

Dum Angeli pacis amare flebant,
Virgo Sanctissima,
Depositum e Cruce Filium amplexa, the Cross,
Cum plorantibus exclamavit:

Narrator

While the angels of peace wept bitterly, the holiest Virgin, embracing her son taken down from the Cross, exclaimed with tears:

Virgo

Quis, quis dabit capiti meo aquam,
Et oculis meis fontem lacrimarum?
Et plorabo te Deum meum,
Filium unicum meum,
Dulcissimum amorem meum.
Quis dabit fontem lacrimarum,
Quis dabit?

Virgin

Who, who will give my head water, and my eyes a fountain of tears?
And I will weep over you, my God, my only son, my sweetest love, who will give me a fountain of tears, who will?

Angeli

O quam tristis et afflicta,
Lacrimatur benedicta Mater unigeniti.

Angels

O how sad and grieving, is the Mother of the only-begotten crying.

<i>Virgo</i>	<i>Virgin</i>
lesu, lesu fili mi, fili mi lesu!	Jesus, Jesus my son, my son Jesus!
Quis, quis mihi tribuat ego, Ut ego moriar pro te,	Who, who would allow me, that I might die in your place,
lesu fili mi, fili mi lesu, Si tu unica vita mea, iam periisti.	Jesus my son, my son Jesus, if you, my only life, have already died,
Quomodo vivam?	how will I live?
Vivere sine te, sine te vera mors est,	To live without you, without you, is real death Jesus,
lesu, lesu fili mi, fili mi lesu.	Jesus my son, my son Jesus.

<i>Angeli</i>	<i>Angels</i>
Quis est homo, quis, quis est homo,	Who is a man, who, who is a man,
Qui non fleret,	who would not cry,
Christi Matrem si videret in tanto supplicio.	if he saw the Mother of Christ in such torment?

<i>Virgo</i>	<i>Virgin</i>
Ubi, ubi est dilectus ille meus,	Where, where is that beloved of mine?
Candidus et rubicundus electus ex millibus?	Bright and red, chosen among thousands?
Ubi dulces oculi,	Where are the sweet eyes?
Ubi manus tornatiles plenae hyacintis?	Where are the shapely hands full of lilies?
Ubi guttur suavissimum?	Where is the sweetest throat?
Ubi dilectus ille, meus totus amabilis,	Where is the beloved, my all-lovely one,
Totus desiderabilis?	all-desirable one?
Me miseram!	How miserable I am!
Obscuratum est aurum, Mutatus est color optimus.	The gold is darkened, the excellent colour is changed,
Vidimus eum, et non erat, non, non erat spectus.	we saw him, and it was not, no, it was not a sight.

<i>Angeli</i>	<i>Angels</i>
Quis non posset contristari Piam Matrem contemplari	Who could not be saddened at the sight of the tender Mother
Dolentem cum Filio?	in pain over her Son?

<i>Virgo</i>	<i>Virgin</i>
Ingrati filii Iuda, ingrati impii crudeles!	Ungrateful sons of Juda, ungrateful impious cruel ones!
Dicite, quando vos offendit Filius meus,	Tell me, when did my Son offend you,
In quo vos contristavit?	in what did he sadden you?
Quid ultra facere vobis debuit et non fecit?	What more did he have to do for you, and did he not do?

Pro vobis flagellavit Aegyptum.	For you he lashed at Egypt.
Vos illum flagellatum tradidistis.	You lashed him and betrayed him.
Aperuit vobis mare!	He opened the sea for you!
Vos lancea aperuistis, aperuistis latus eius!	You opened with a lance, you opened his flank!

Exaltavit vos magna virtute.	He uplifted you with great virtue.
Vos illum in patibulo suspendistis!	You hanged him from the pillory!
Plange Caelum, plange terra.	Weep, O Heaven, weep, O earth.
Occisum omnia plangite, Plangite Salvatorem.	Weep for the dead one, all things, weep for the Saviour.

<i>Virgo, Angeli</i>	<i>Virgin, Angels</i>
Plange, plange Caelum, Plange, plange terra, Occisum omnia plangite Salvatorem, Plangite Salvatorem.	Weep, weep, O Heaven, weep, weep, O earth, weep, all things, for the dead Saviour, weep for the Saviour.

Interval

Domenico Scarlatti (1685-1757)

Stabat Mater (?1715)

Anonymous

Stabat mater dolorosa
Juxta crucem lacrimosa
Dum pendebat Filius.

Cuius animam gementem,
Contristantem et
dolentem,
Per tansivit gladius.
O quam tristis et afflicta
Fuit illa benedicta

Mater
Unigeniti!
Quae moerebat et dolebat
Et tremebat cum
videbat

Nati poenas
incltyi.
Quis est homo, qui non
fleret
Quis Christi Matrem si
videret
In tanto supplicio?

Quis non posset
contristari
Christi Matrem
contemplari
Dolentem cum Filio?
Pro peccatis suae gentis
Vidit Jesum in tormentis
Et flagellis
subditum.
Vidit suum dulcem Natum
Morientem desolatum
Dum emisit spiritum.

Eia Mater fons amoris,
Me sentire vim
doloris,
Fac ut tecum lugeam.
Fac ut ardeat cor
meum
In amando Christum Deum,
Ut sibi
complaceam.

Sancta mater, istud agas,
Crucifixi fige plagas
Cordi meo valide.
Tui nati vulnerati,
Tam dignati pro me
pati,
Poenas mecum divide.

The Mother stood

The grieving Mother stood
beside the cross weeping
where her Son was hanging.

Through her weeping soul
compassionate and
grieving,
a sword passed.
O how sad and afflicted
was that blessed
Mother of the Only-
begotten!

Who mourned and grieved,
the pious Mother, with
seeing
the torment of her
glorious Son.
Who is the man who
would not weep
if seeing the Mother of
Christ
in such agony?

Who would not have
compassion
on beholding the devout
mother
suffering with her Son?
For the sins of his people
she saw Jesus in torment,
and subjected to the
scourge.
She saw her sweet Son
dying, forsaken,
as he gave up his spirit.

O Mother, fount of love,
make me feel the power
of sorrow,
that I may grieve with you.
Grant that my heart may
burn
in the love of the Lord Christ
that I may greatly please
Him.

Holy Mother, do this for me,
fix the pains of the Crucified
firmly in my heart.
Your wounded Son,
who deigned to suffer so
for my sake,
share his pains with me.

Fac me vere tecum
flere,
Crucifixo con dolore
Donec ego vixero.
Juxta crucem tecum
stare,
Et me tibi
sociare
In planctu
desidero.

Virgo virginum praeclara,
Mihī jam non sis amara:
Fac me tecum plangere.
Fac, ut portem Christi
mortem,
Passionis fac
consortem
Et plagas
recolere.
Fac me plagis
vulnerati
Cruce hac
inebriari
Ob amorem Filii.

Inflammatum et
accensus
Per te, Virgo, sim
defensus
In die iudicii.
Fac me cruce
custodire,
Morte Christi
praemuniri,
Confoveri gratia.
Quando corpus morietur

Fac ut animae donetur
Paradisi gloria.

Amen.

Let me sincerely weep
with you,
and suffer with the Crucified
as long as I shall live.
To stand by the cross
with you
and to keep company
with you
in your tears, this is my
desire.

Chosen Virgin of virgins,
to me, now, be not bitter;
let me mourn with you.
Let me bear the death of
Christ,
make me a companion in
his passion
and the remembrance of
His wounds.
Let me be wounded with
the same blows,
make me ecstatic
through this cross
for the love of your Son.

Thus inflamed and
burning with love,
may I enjoy your
protection, O Virgin,
on the day of judgement.
Let me be kept safe by
the Cross,
defended by the death of
Christ
and enfolded in his grace.
When my body dies,

Then let my soul be granted
the glory of Paradise.

Amen.