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CLASSICS



Benedetto **MARCELLO**
PSALMS

VOCES 8 ♦ Les Inventiones

PSALMS
ESTRO-POETICO ARMONICO
BENEDETTO MARCELLO (1686-1739)

ADAPTED INTO ENGLISH BY CHARLES AVISON (1757)

1	Psalms 11: In the Lord my God put I my trust SATB • Soloists: Barnaby Smith <i>Countertenor</i> , Dingle Yandell <i>Bass</i>	[9.07]
2	Psalms 32: Blessed is he whose wickedness is forgiven ATB • Soloists: Barnaby Smith <i>Countertenor</i> , Charles MacDougall <i>Tenor</i> , Dingle Yandell <i>Bass</i>	[17.06]
3	Ciaccona from Sonata Nr. 12 Opus 2 <i>Instrumental</i>	[4.16]
4	Psalms 50: The Lord Jehovah, even the most mighty God, hath spoken AB • Soloists: Emily Dickens <i>Soprano</i> , Barnaby Smith <i>Countertenor</i> , Dingle Yandell <i>Bass</i>	[16.01]
5	Psalms 46: God is our refuge and our strength SATB • Soloists: Barnaby Smith <i>Countertenor</i> , Dingle Yandell <i>Bass</i>	[9.00]
6	Canon Triplex: In omnem terram exivit sonus eorum <i>SATB</i>	[4.25]
	Total timings:	[59.57]

VOCES8 / LES INVENTIONS
ARTISTIC DIRECTION BARNABY SMITH & PATRICK AYRTON

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Marcello's *Estro poetico-armonico*
A success story remembered

Had Antonio Vivaldi not shot to fame when he was rediscovered at the beginning of the 20th century, we would undoubtedly be more familiar with the name of Benedetto Marcello. For Marcello's reputation – unlike Vivaldi's – did not wane during his own lifetime, and he enjoyed an international reputation which was to last for more than 250 years. He was born in 1686 into a prominent and respected Venetian family, and pursued a career in law which led him to occupy several major positions in the government of the Republic. He did not, however, allow his public duties to keep him away from his pursuit of music, which he had studied under both Lotti and Gasparini and which he continued actively to cultivate as a *nobile dilettante*. Marcello's works, and particularly his psalm settings, were to exert a major influence on the musical culture of Italy and of other European countries throughout the whole of the 18th century and even into the 19th. The German lexicographer Ernst Ludwig Gerber wrote in 1790: 'Because of the power and justness of his expression, he was called the Michelangelo of music.'

Marcello's *magnum opus* is his *Estro poetico-armonico*. This work, which was published between 1724 and 1726, is a setting of the first fifty *Psalms of David* as paraphrased into Italian by the poet Girolamo Ascanio Giustiniani. In addition to the subtle deployment of vocal resources, and his imaginative use of musical techniques to illustrate the texts, Marcello brought to these psalms a peculiar quality of freshness and originality which unquestionably contributed to their becoming a major international success. The extent of this success is demonstrated by the work's rapid translation into many other languages including French, German, Swedish, English, and Russian, as well as by the enthusiasm with which these settings were embraced by performers of a variety of religious traditions including Anglican, Lutheran, and Jewish.

Congratulatory letters from illustrious musicians such as Telemann, Bononcini, Conti and Gasparini, poured from all sides. The music theorist Johann Mattheson wrote: 'the Experience, not of a private Academy, but of a numerous Concourse of all the Virtuosi and Lovers of Music in this populous City, gives the fullest Testimony of their Truth. In fine, Sir, I have had the Honour to represent

to the Public a Performance of Part of your exquisite Composition in our Cathedral, having adapted it to Words of the German Language; the sole Merit of which was, that the Beauty of the Original of his Excellency Signor Giustiniani was not greatly diminished.' (Hamburg, 6th October, 1725.)

In 1757, the organist, composer and music critic Charles Avison, assisted by his colleague John Garth, published in London a version of Marcello's *Estro* in English, selections of which are presented here for the first time on disc. In the preface, Avison wrote: 'In adapting Marcello's psalms to the English version, I have followed the Original ... and endeavored to preserve each particular Design on this Work, by strictly adhering to every Change of Sentiment and Passion, and by adapting the Melody and Expression of MARCELLO's Music, to the Construction and Prosody of the English Language ... I flatter myself it will appear that the Spirit of our sublime and expressive Psalms is every where preserved in these inimitable Compositions; and that therefore, they will be considered as proper Performances for the Service of our Cathedrals, for which Purpose chiefly they are adapted to the English Version: And that they will

now not only prove useful on this Account, but also give great Pleasure to Lovers of Music in general, I have been encouraged to hope from the Approbation of many Judges who have perused them in Manuscript.'

Throughout this colossal enterprise, Marcello explores all combinations of the four voices – soprano, alto, tenor and bass – deploying them in various arrangements, both as *solì* and *tutti*. Due to the fact that women had not been permitted to sing in the Temple, he favored low, mainly male, voices. The oldest Sephardic community in Italy had in fact been established in Venice during the 16th century, and it is interesting to note that some of the works, such as Ps 11 and Ps 16, incorporate sections based on quotations from Hebrew psalmody. The vocal texture is supported by a simple figured bass. This has no specific instrumentation and we have opted for diversity, using harp, theorbo, organ, cello and double-bass. Occasionally, an obligato instrument (cello or viola) is required.

Gerber (quoted above) describes Marcello's music as 'serving entirely the poetry, with theme, pace, tempo and modulation changing as often as a new idea occurs in the text'.

Throughout the work we see the deliberate use of compositional procedures which draw the listener's attention to the text, and the deployment of expressive musical gestures which underscore the varying emotions of the psalms. These range from the abundant and rapidly contrasting musical effects of Ps 11 to the sustained meditative phrases of Ps 32. Differing national values coloured the perceptions of Marcello's music: the English revered its 'harmony', and the Germans its 'melody', whilst the Italians themselves esteemed its 'counterpoint' – which has prompted us to include in this recording the 6-part infinite canon found at the end of the work.

The charming inventiveness, noble simplicity, and poetic timelessness of Marcello's psalms made them a landmark in European music, and we hope that this world première of a selection of Charles Avison's version of 1757 will serve to confirm Marcello's importance as a composer, and draw attention to his significant contribution to cultural and musical history.

Patrick Ayrton

TEXTS

1 Psalm 11

In the Lord put I my trust: how say ye to my soul, as a bird to your mountains, swiftly flee; and escape the secret snare that is laid for thy destruction? Lo, the ungodly bend their bow, they fix their arrow upon the bowstring, that they may privily shoot at them which are true of heart. When the foundations are destroyed, what will remain for the righteous man to do? The Lord Jehovah is in his holy temple, in Heaven hath Jehovah fix'd his holy seat. His eyes consider the poor and his eyelids try the children of men. He alloweth the righteous, he exploreth the wicked; but the ungodly he hateth, and him that loveth mischief his soul abhorreth. On the ungodly he raineth snares, on him that delighteth in wickedness he raineth snares. And this shall be the portion of their cup: fire and brimstone, hot burning coals, storm and tempest; this shall be the portion of their cup. Jehovah is righteous; and he will be the protector of the innocent, for he delighteth in just and upright actions.

2 Psalm 32

Blessed is he whose wickedness is forgiven and whose transgressions are covered.

Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth no sin and in whose spirit there is no guile.

For when I kept silence, my bones consumed away through my daily complaining.

For day and night thy hand is heavy upon me and my moisture is like the drought in summer.

I acknowledge my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid.

I said, I will confess my sins unto the Lord Jehovah: and thou, O Lord, didst pardon mine iniquity, thou forgavest my sin and wickedness.

For this shall ev'ry one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found.

But in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh him.

Thou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble and adversity, thou shalt encompass me about with song of deliverance.

I will inform thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: and I will guide thee with mine eye.

Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle lest they come near unto thee.

Many sorrows remain for the ungodly.

But whoso puteth his trust in the Lord Jehovah, blessings of mercy shall him encompass him on ev'ry side.

Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, O ye righteous: and be merry and joyful, ye that are true of heart.

4 Psalm 50

The Lord Jehovah, ev'n the most mighty God hath spoken, and called all the world from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof.

Out of Zion hath God hath appeared in perfect beauty.

Our God shall come and shall not keep silence: a fire shall go before him and shall devour his foes on ev'ry side. A mighty tempest shall rage around him.

He shall call the heav'n from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people.

Come, gather together my saints together unto me: those that have made a covenant with me with sacrifice.

The heavens shall declare his righteousness: for God is judge himself.

Thus said the Lord: Hear, O my people, and I will speak; I myself will testify against thee, O Israel, for I am thy God.

I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices or

thy burnt off'rings, because they were not always before me.

I will take no bullock out of thine house, nor the goats out of thy folds.

For all the beasts of the field are mine, and so are all the cattle upon a thousand hills.

I know all the fowls of the mountains, and the wild beasts of the forest are in my sight.

If I be hungry, I will not tell thee, for the world is mine, and all that is therein.

Thinkest thou that I will eat the flesh of bulls, and drink the blood of goats?

Offer praise and thanks unto Jehovah, pay thy vows unto the most High.

And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, thou shalt glorify me.

But to the wicked this saith the Lord: What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or to take my cov'nant in thy mouth?

Whereas thou hatest to be reformed and casteth my words behind thee.

When thou sawest a thief and thou consentedst with him, and thou hast been partaker with adulterers.

Thou lettest thy mouth to evil, and with thy tongue thou hast set forth deceit.

Thou art continually speaking against thy brother, thou hast slander'd thine own mother's son.

These things thou hast done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest wickedly that I am even such a one as thyself: but I will reprove thee, and set before thine eyes the things thou hast done.

O consider this, ye that forget the Lord God, lest I pluck you away and none can help you.

Whoso offereth me thanks and the sacrifice of praise he glorifieth me: and to the juts and upright in his way I will shew the salvation of God.

5 Psalm 46

God is our refuge and our strength, a very present help in trouble.

Therefore though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea, we will not be afraid.

Though the sea lift up its waves and though the mountains are shaken by the tempest of the same.

There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy pavillion of the tabernacle, the dwelling of the Highest.

God is in the midst of her; therefore she shall not be removed: God shall help her, and that right early.

The heathen raged furiously together and the kingdoms were moved: but God hath showed his voice and the earth shall be melted.

The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.

O come hither and behold the works of the Lord, what destruction he has brought upon the earth.

He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the arrows of the bow, the shield, the sword and the battle, he burns the chariots in the fire.

Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, and I will be exalted throughout the earth.

The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge forever.

**6 Canon triplex sex vocibus infinitus
sub diapente**

Infinite six voice triple canon in lower fifth

In omnem terram exivit sonus eorum; et in fines orbis terrae verba eorum!

Their sound has gone out to the entire world, and their words have gone to the ends of the circle of the earth.

VOCES8

Andrea Haines & Emily Dickens – *Soprano*
Barnaby Smith & Christopher Wardle – *Countertenor*
Charles MacDougall & Robert Mingay Smith – *Tenor*
Paul Smith & Dingle Yandell – *Bass*

The British vocal ensemble VOCES8 is now established as one of the most versatile and best-loved singing groups in the world. Touring extensively throughout Europe, North America and Asia, the ensemble performs a repertory from Renaissance polyphony to contemporary commissions and arrangements.

In recent seasons VOCES8 has performed at venues such as the Wigmore Hall, Royal Festival Hall, Cite de la Musique Paris, Tokyo Opera City, National Concert Hall Taipei, National Centre for the Performing Arts Beijing, Shanghai Concert Hall, Tel Aviv Opera House, Mariinsky Theatre Concert Hall, Bozar Brussels, Berliner Dom, Hamburg Laeiszhalle, 3 Choirs Festival, Moscow International House of Music.

Artistic collaborations have included the Philharmonia Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra, period ensemble Les Inventions, Paul McCreesh and the Gabrieli Consort, violinist

Hugo Ticciati and cellist Matthew Sharp. The group is delighted to commission renowned contemporary composers including Ola Gjeilo, Roxanna Panufnik, Alexander Levine, Eriks Esenvalds and Ben Parry, alongside Jim Clements as the ensemble's Arranger in Residence.

With an ongoing programme of recordings and live broadcast, VOCES8 is heard regularly on international television and radio, including the BBC and Classic FM. VOCES8 is a Decca Classics Artist and the debut album, 'Eventide' went straight to the top of the Classical Charts on its release and was named as an 'Album of the Year' by Classic FM. The ensemble has also recorded a series of award-winning discs for Signum Classics including 'A Purcell Collection' which received BBC Music Magazine Critics Choice.

VOCES8 is an Ambassador for Edition Peters with whom it publishes arrangements and educational material, including the 'VOCES8 Songbook' and the 'VOCES8 Method'.

As the flagship ensemble of the charitable music foundation Voces Cantabiles Music (VCM), VOCES8 has an enviable reputation for its education work. The ensemble leads an



innovative series of music education workshops reaching over 25,000 people annually around the world with the aim of inspiring creativity and excellence through music. The innovative education work of VCM has received praise from UNESCO and VCM now runs the Gresham Centre in partnership with the Diocese of London, a vocal Centre for Excellence at Sir Christopher Wren's beautiful St Anne & St Agnes Church in the City of London.

VOCES8 has received support from Arts Council England, the Musicians Benevolent Fund and the Worshipful Company of Musicians. The group is also grateful for the support of official sponsor, T.M. Lewin.

www.voces8.com

LES INVENTIONS

Reinhild Waldeck, harp and recorder

Etienne Galletier, theorbo

Mark Dupere, cello

Thomas de Pierrefeu, violone

Patrick Ayrton, organ

The early music group Les Inventions was founded in 2005 by harpsichordist, organist and conductor Patrick Ayrton. Since then, the group has been at the heart of a network of international musical collaborations featuring concerts, recordings and educational projects. Les Inventions seek to revitalize the ancient tradition of combining elements of music, poetry and dance in performance. Their aim is also to reawaken interest in forgotten composers and restore neglected works to their place in the Baroque and Classical repertoire. One particular project was the release of a world-première recording of works by the French Tartini-pupil Joseph Touchemoulin (1727-1801), rediscovered by Patrick Ayrton in 2005, and which gained much praise in the press (BBC, Diapason, Classica, etc). Based in France, the ensemble performs in major concert series such as the Dijon Opera, the Clermont-Ferrand Lyric Center,

Early Music at Souvigny, the Ravello and Early Music in Magnano festivals in Italy, the early music series in Baarn (The Netherlands), the Concerts Bach de Lutry, Switzerland. Les Inventions have been in residence since 2007 at France's leading Bach festival, Bach en Combrailles. Their discography – for labels Ramée and Signum – includes collected works by Henry Purcell (BBC Music Magazine Critics Choice, 2014) in collaboration with British vocal group VOCES8.

www.lesinventions.org



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The Gresham Centre
Phill Tarling

VOCES8 is proud to be dressed by T.M.Lewin

T.M.Lewin

Artistic Direction – Patrick Ayrton and Barnaby Smith
Recorded in Église Notre-Dame d'Herment, France from 13th to 17th August 2012.
Producer & Editor – Nicholas Parker
Recording Engineer – Andrew Mellor
Music scored from facsimile by Jim Clements

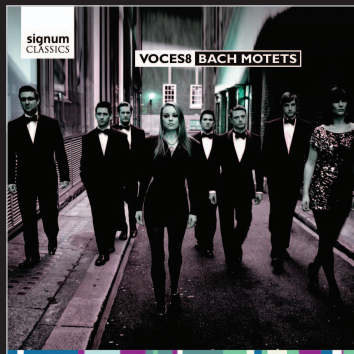
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BBC Music Magazine