

First Book of Motets for Eight Voices and Organ. Giovanni Croce.

Ed. Richard Charteris. With Michael Procter. Hillsdale: Pendragon, 2014. lxxvi + 256 pp. \$64.

By any measure, Giovanni Croce (1557–1609) must be considered one of the most significant and influential Italian composers of his generation. A pupil of Gioseffo Zarlino, Croce spent his career in Venice and was associated with the Basilica of San Marco, where he served as *maestro di cappella* from 1603 until his death. Yet despite his prolific output in both sacred and secular musical genres, Croce has received very little scholarly attention. This volume presents his first book of eight-voice motets, published in 1594 and reissued in six subsequent printings between 1596 and 1622. Intended as the fifth volume in a fourteen-volume quatercentenary edition of Croce's music with

Michael Procter as general editor, the edition was published separately after Procter's untimely death in 2012 led to the cancellation of the planned complete edition. Charteris plans to produce editions of two other collections of sacred music by Croce, and it is to be hoped that other scholars will take up the task of editing Croce's music, making this important repertory widely available for performance and study.

Charteris is a prolific editor of late sixteenth-century English and Italian music, including collected editions of the works of Bassano, Giovanni Gabrieli, and Alfonso Ferrabosco the elder. The editorial work here is characteristically meticulous in its presentation of the musical text, which is clearly laid out and printed in modern clefs with unreduced note values; the critical commentary is thorough and easy to use. The music of the edition reveals Croce's style to be harmonically conservative: he has a particular affinity for extroverted texts, which afford him the opportunity for rapid, syllabic text declamation and antiphonal effects between the two choirs.

In their commentary on the texts of the motets, Charteris and Procter note the possible roles of Croce's motets in the civic and religious ritual of early modern Venice. The editors suggest a new interpretation for two motets in the collection, *Percussit Saul mille* and *Benedictus Dominus Deus Sabaoth*, both with Old Testament texts commemorating the military victories of David and Gideon against their enemies. The texts of these works have often been linked to the annual commemorations of the Battle of Lepanto, the 1571 naval victory of the Holy League against the Ottoman Empire, but this edition cites new and unpublished research by Michael Morell, who argues that Croce's motets were written to commemorate the Battle of Sisak, a 1593 victory of the Hapsburg and Croatian armies against Turkish forces. Morell's proposal is based on his research into the dedicatee of Croce's motet collection, Raimondo Della Torre, a prominent supporter of the military campaign in Croatia. To this debate should be added a recent article by Iain Fenlon, not cited in the edition ("Old Testament Motets for the War of Cyprus [1570–71]," in *Recevez ce mien petit labeur*: *Studies in Renaissance Music in Honour of Ignace Bossuyt*, ed. Mark Delaere and Pieter Bergé [2008]: 71–82). The two interpretations, of course, are not mutually exclusive.

What makes this edition of special importance, however, is the new research it presents into issues of historical performance practice. Charteris has been able to establish that this collection is the first set of vocal partbooks to include a separate keyboard part. In so doing, he corrects errors in dating by previous scholars, notably Howard Mayer Brown. While Michael Morell has argued that this organ partbook (labeled *Spartidura*) was published in the early seventeenth century and backdated to 1594, Charteris is able to demonstrate convincingly that the printed dating is correct, making Croce's print one of the earliest printed witnesses to the practice of accompanying vocal polyphony with organ.

Among the details indicated in the *Spartidura* partbooks is the practice of transposing the music down by a fourth or fifth when it is printed using high clefs (a notational practice called *chiavette* by later theorists). Section 6 of Charteris's introduction presents new evidence for this practice, surveying later manuscript sources for Croce's motets in German organ tablature, including a hitherto-overlooked set of handwritten annotations

in a copy of Croce's organ partbook. These tablature sources represent the performance decisions made by organists of the time, indicating that exceptions to the rules were possible: popular motets like *Percussit Saul mille* exist in versions indicating performance at the original high pitch as well as the standard transposition. This wealth of new information will make this publication of interest not only for the Venetian polychoral repertoire it contains, but for its new insights into *chiavette* transposition practice and the early history of organ continuo playing.

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