

„Schütz and the young Italians at the Dresden court“ revisited:

Roman influences in „O bone Jesu, fili Mariae virginis“ (SWV 471)*

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For Wolfram Steude

Schütz's connections with Italy and the Italian musical scene are well-known aspects of his biography. His formative study with Gabrieli produced a book of Italian madrigals, and led to the composition of his grand *Psalmen Davids*, which reflect his fascination with – and mastery of – Venetian polychorality. During his return visit to Venice in 1628–1629, his encounter with the new small-scale motet of Grandi resulted in the publication of his own set of masterful essays in the genre, the *Symphoniae sacrae prima pars* of 1629. Equally well known is Schütz's admiration for the superb technical abilities of Italian musicians, as attested by his hiring of the composer and violinist Carlo Farina and the Mantuan violinist Francesco Castelli, his unsuccessful attempt, in which he was supported by Prince Johann Georg, to bring Agostino Fontana to the court as vice-Kapellmeister and instructor in the Italian „manier“ of singing, and his willingness to have Bontempi substitute for him in the chapel in 1651¹. As Schütz so clearly followed Italian musical developments with great interest throughout his lifetime, it would be surprising to find that he had shown no interest in the new, Roman-influenced approach to the sacred concerto cultivated in Dresden by his Italian successors. Yet to date there has been no evidence that the musical developments introduced in Dresden by the Roman-schooled Vincenzo Albrici (1631–1690/96) and Marco Giuseppe Peranda (ca. 1625–1675) resonated in Schütz's later works. Certainly some works from his later period, such as the Gospel Passions and the *Schwanengesang*, the set of double-choir motets on Psalm 119, do not betray any such interest on his part. The text of a lesser-known composition, however, his *O bone Jesu, fili Mariae virginis* (SWV 471), displays a number of characteristics far more typical of the works of Albrici and Peranda than of those of the pensioned „Oberhofkapellmeister“, and thus presents an opportunity for a speculative exploration of the question of Roman musical influence upon the elder composer. This composition, which remained unpublished in the seventeenth century, survives only in a manuscript set of parts in the Düben collection in Uppsala, where it is undated²; in 1964, Bruno Grusnick proposed a copying date

* The title is intended to recall that of a recent article by Wolfram Steude, „vndt obngeschickt werde, in die junge Welt vnd Neueste Manir der Music mich einzurichten.“ *Heinrich Schütz und die jungen Italiener am Dresdner Hof*, in: *SJb* 21 (1999), pp. 63–76. The author dedicates this article to Prof. Dr. Steude in deep gratitude for the friendly scholarly help and advice he has extended to her over many years, and in recognition of his enduring interest in these fascinating „young Italians“.

1 On the former, see the present author's *Allies in the Cause of Italian Music: Schütz, Prince Johann Georg II and Musical Politics in Dresden*, in: *JRMA* 125 (2000), pp. 1–40. On the latter, see Schütz's letter to Johann Georg I of 14 January 1651 (Schütz GBr, p. 215). In 1653, of course, when Prince Johann Georg proposed that Schütz's Hofkapelle alternate in the chapel with the prince's ensemble under Bontempi, Schütz took great umbrage, and protested to various court officials (Schütz GBr, pp. 237–245).

2 S-Uu VMHS 34:5. The parts are in Düben's hand. The source manuscript may have found its way to Stockholm together with works of Albrici and Peranda, which Düben was actively collecting in the 1660s.