J.C. Pepusch

MOTET: BEATUS VIR

Edited by David Byers
Motet: Beatus vir
John Christopher Pepusch (1667-1752)

Sources

The two extant sources for this fine stile antico Phrygian motet are both in London: one in the British Library (BL) and the other in the Royal College of Music (RCM). In both, the motet is ascribed to Pepusch. He was employed from around 1717 in the recently established ‘concert’ at Cannons of James Brydges, Earl of Carnarvon and was appointed ‘Master of the Musick’ at Cannons in 1719 when Brydges became the first Duke of Chandos. He assisted the Duke’s music-making up to c.1725, even as the Duke’s fortune declined. This motet is not listed in the extensive catalogue of the Duke’s music library, signed off by Pepusch in 1720. Nor does it fit with the ethos at Cannons suggested by the music in that listing.

In January 1726, Pepusch was one of the founding fathers of the Academy of Vocal Musick, along with other professional musicians like Greene and Galliard, soon joined by Croft, Bononcini, Geminiani and Haym. In 1731 it was renamed the Academy of Ancient Music with Pepusch effectively its ‘Director’ until his death in 1752. Despite its name, the Academy’s repertoire included a range of contemporary music, including Handel’s. However, it is the Academy’s remarkable interest (unique for its time) in music from earlier years, from Tallis, Morley and Byrd to Italian music, including Marenzio, Gesualdo, and, above all, Palestrina, which sets it apart. ‘Ancient’ was defined in the Academy’s minutes of 26 May 1731 as ‘such as lived before ye end of the Sixteenth Century’ (‘sixteenth’ was a correction for the original word ‘fifteenth’).

Beatus vir was most likely written for the weekly meetings of the Academy; it accords perfectly with Pepusch’s study of sixteenth and early seventeenth century music, the modes, solmisation and hexachordal theory. ‘The key of E’, wrote Pepusch in his 1730 Treatise on Harmony, ‘is as it were dedicated and appropriated to Church Musick … making what is composed in it the most Solemn, and therefore the Italians call it TUONO di CHIESA.’

Performances of Beatus vir are listed in three of the Academy’s surviving ‘word books’ or programmes: – for Thursdays 19 December 1734, 5 May 1757 and 30 April 1761. These were given in the Academy’s meeting place, the Crown and Anchor tavern on London’s Strand. Of course, the motet may have been performed on other occasions; it was listed in The Words of such Pieces as are most usually performed by The Academy of Ancient Music (London, 1761, and second edition, 1768).

This edition of Beatus vir takes the BL copy as its main source. It was transcribed by a close associate of Pepusch, as indeed might have been the anonymous RCM copyist, but the BL copy is arguably the more reliable in points of detail.

1. The motet is on ff.159r-162r of GB-Lbl Add. MS 5054. This quarto manuscript collection in the BL, ‘Compos’d by Several Masters’, includes ‘a secular canon, duets, a Grace, a Litany, madrigals (sacred and secular), portions of masses, motets, a Miserere, sacred choruses and part of a service’. It was transcribed by the copyist and violinist Henry Needler (1685-1760) who joined the Academy in 1727 and was leader of its orchestra.
The BL anthology, described as ‘before 1760’, is one of 27 volumes bequeathed by Needler’s widow, Hester (herself a composer of orchestral anthems – see GB-Lbl Add. MS 5053), to another Academy member, James Mathias (1710-1782), an amateur singer (a bass) and London merchant with trade links to Hamburg and Russia. Mathias, in turn, bequeathed Needler’s volumes (Add. MSS 5036-5062) to the British Museum (today the British Library) in 1782.

2. The second transcription of Beatus vir is in the RCM on ff.3r-5v of GB-Lcm MS 660, an oblong folio with the book-plate of Robert Smith. The manuscript collection of motets and madrigals includes music by Richard Dering, Orlando di Lasso, Monteverdi, Merula, de Castro and Cornysh, etc., seven of items of which (including music by William Cornysh, but not the Pepusch motets) were transcribed by John Travers (c.1703-1758), a pupil of Pepusch, a member of the Academy of Ancient Music and organist to the Chapel Royal. Beatus vir is the second item in the anthology and is followed by Pepusch’s motet Laetatus sum (f.6r-f.11v).

Robert Smith, living at 3 St Paul’s Church-yard, was a wine merchant, but also a member of the Academy of Ancient Music and a noted collector of music, including Handel manuscripts and ‘a solid core of masses, motets and madrigals, and a large quantity of catches and glees’ (A.Hyatt King). Smith was a founding member of the Glee Club in the 1780s. Following his death, aged 69 on 24 February 1810, his collection of manuscripts was sold at White’s sale in 1813 and this oblong folio reappeared as No.1746 in the 1872 edition of the Catalogue of the Library of the Sacred Harmonic Society and was thereafter deposited with the RCM.

Editorial Commentary (including significant differences between the sources)

The main difference between the two sources is in the barring:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GB-Lbl (hereafter simply BL)</th>
<th>GB-Lcm (hereafter simply RCM)</th>
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For this edition, the original alla breve or cut time signature Ċ, common to both sources, has been replaced with 4/4. The barring of the BL score has been retained, although its note values have been halved. Thus, in the listing on page iii, references to note values in the sources have been halved to correspond to those in this edition for direct comparison’s sake.

For that listing, bar numbers are in Arabic numerals; the four voice parts are in Roman numerals from top to bottom (where I is the soprano/treble part and IV is the bass part); note names are given as capital letters and a superscript number clarifies it as the first or second occurrence of that note in the bar. Abbreviations: $c = $crotchet; $m = $minim. Hence E²$c refers to the second occurrence in the bar of the note E – a crotchet.

The original scores are notated with the relevant C clefs for I, II and III. The ‘soprano’ part would have been taken by boy trebles. Some cautionary accidentals have been added in this edition without comment. Obvious errors, including word underlay misalignments, have been tacitly corrected. The editorial commas (bars 35-36 and 55-56), confirm a slight break between sections; the original sources continue directly after the double bar-line each time.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bar</th>
<th>Part</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>E¹m (as in BL) but RCM has E¹c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>E¹c omitted in RCM (hence 13 begins ‘qui’ on Ec)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>III</td>
<td>Cc from RCM (BL has Bc)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>III</td>
<td>RCM avoids the repeated word. So the initial ‘o-’ extends throughout the bar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Dc omitted in RCM (hence 25 begins ‘et’ on Dc)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>I-IV</td>
<td>RCM has different, less good, underlay.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Slur is editorial, but underlay agrees in both sources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>I-IV</td>
<td>RCM doubles the value of this note – which then corresponds to the BL!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>II-III</td>
<td>RCM underlay differs unsatisfactorily.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78</td>
<td>IV</td>
<td>RCM omits bass note completely – and also in bar 79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82</td>
<td>III</td>
<td>RCM underlay accepted here; BL omits ‘et’ of ‘et folium’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>96</td>
<td>II-III</td>
<td>Small notes (and text) from RCM. Not in BL. Editor prefers BL version!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97</td>
<td>II-III</td>
<td>- - -   ditto - - -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>109</td>
<td>I-IV</td>
<td>RCM doubles the value of this note – which then corresponds to the BL!</td>
</tr>
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**Text and translation**

Psalm 1, verses 1-3.

1 Beatus vir qui non abiit in consilio impiorum, et in via peccatorum non stetit, et in cathedra pestilentiae non sedit;  
2 sed in lege Domini voluntas eius, et in lege eius meditabitur die ac nocte.  
3 Et erit tamquam lignum quod plantatum est secus decursus aquarum, quod fructum suum dabit in tempore suo: et folium eius non defluet; et omnia quæcumque faciet prosperabuntur.  

1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.  
2 But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.  
3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.  

(King James version)

**Performance**

An unaccompanied performance would seem ideal, but it is likely that the Academy may have been happy to sing with the accompaniment of a small organ or a harpsichord and cello doubling the voice parts. A keyboard reduction has been provided for this edition.

In 1835, Thomas Oliphant writing in his history of the Madrigal Society noted that c.1816 the Society sold a harpsichord which he thought showed that it had been the practice ‘to use an instrument along with the voices in part singing; for further proof of which, I need only refer to a resolution of the 29th October 1766, when it was agreed to hire a harpsicord [sic] at 15s.
per quarter; and to a payment made in January 1753, to Mr. Veck, “for a string to his bass viol, he having lent it to the Society.” Conversely, such instruments were of course needed for the Academy’s performances of contemporary composers such as Handel.

The Madrigal Society was founded in 1741 by John Immyns (c.1700-1764) who had joined the Academy in 1728. He was a copyist for, and student of, Pepusch.

More information about the Academy of Ancient Music is at byersmusic.com/Pepusch---motets Further details about Pepusch’s life are in the feature ‘Pepusch Organ Voluntary in C’, also at byersmusic.com

Bibliography


British Library Add. Ms. 11732, Original documents relative to the first establishment of the Academy of Vocal Music, ... (also available online at https://web.stanford.edu/~ichriss/HRD/1726-31%20Academy%20of%20Vocal%20Music.htm)


Cook, Donald Frederick. The Life and Works of Johann Christoph Pepusch, 1667–1752, diss., Univ. of London, King’s College, 1982.


Oliphant, Thomas. A Brief Account of the Madrigal Society from Its Institution in 1741, up to the Present Period, London 1835.


Words of the Music Performed by the Academy of Ancient Music (1733-1791) Leeds Central Library, Stacks R 780.73 AC12

Beatus vir’s first performance in ‘modern’ times was given by the New Belmont Consort, cond. David Byers, on 19 April 1971 in the Harty Room, Queen’s University, Belfast. Subsequent performances included those in the Duke’s Hall, Royal Academy of Music, London, on 14 July 1971 with Diana Hart (sop), Ann Sladen (alto), Malcolm Pike (ten) and Stewart Haslett (bass); the Belmont Consort, cond. David Byers, at Burgh House, Hampstead on 4 November 1971; and the New Belmont Consort in the Harty Room, Queen’s University, Belfast, on 20 March 1976.

The motet’s first broadcast performance, given by the New Belmont Consort, conductor David Byers, was on BBC Radio 3 on 9 October 1972.

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Beatus vir

Psalm 1, vv 1-3

J.C. Pepusch (1667-1752)

edited by David Byers

[Verse 1]

[Organ if required]
in consilio impiorum, et in via pecit in consilio impiorum, et in via

consilio impiorum, impiorum, et in via pecatorio rum non

consilio impiorum, et in via et

pecatorio rum non

consilio impiorum, et in via et

pecatorio rum non

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pecatio
in cathedra et in cathedra pestilen-tiae
et in cathedra pestilen-tiae
et in cathedra pestilen-tiae et in cathedra pesti-

[30]

pe-sti-len-tiae non sedit: non sedit: non sedit: non sedit:

[30]

[30]

pe-sti-len-tiae non sedit: non sedit: non sedit: non sedit:

[30]

[30]

[30]

[30]
Sed in lege Domini voluntas eius, et

Sed in lege Domini voluntas eius, e-

Sed in lege Domini voluntas eius, e-

[Verse 2]

[Meno mosso]

in lege eius meditabitur meditabitur di eac noc-

et in lege eius meditabitur meditabitur

et in lege eius meditabitur meditabitur
dieac
te, meditabitur die ac nocte, die ac nocte.

tur die ac nocte, die ac nocte, die ac nocte.

die ac nocte, die ac nocte, die ac nocte.

Et erit tanquam lignum quod plan-

Et erit tanquam lignum tanquam lig-

Et erit tanquam lignum tanquam lig-

Et erit tanquam lignum quod plan-

Et erit tanquam lignum quod plan-

[Verse 3] [Tempo primo]
tum est se-cus de-cur-sus a-qua-rum a-qua-rum quod fruc-tum

in tem-po-re su-o: in tem-po-re su-o: in tem-po-re su-o: in

dae-bit in tem-po-re su-o: in tem-po-re su-o: in tem-po-re su-o: in

su-um da-bit in tem-po-re su-o, su-o: in tem-po-re
tempore su: in tempore su:

Et

tempore in tempore su:

Et folium

su: in tempore su:

Et folium eius non defluet:

Et folium

eius non defluet, et folium eius non defluet:

Et folium eius non
non de-fluet: et om-ni-a quae-cum-que faciet
de-fluet: et om-ni-a quae-cum-que faciet de-fluet: et om-ni-a quae-cum-que faciet
pro-spera-bun-tur,

pro-spera-bun-tur, et om-ni-a quae
et pro-spera-bun-tur, pro-spera-bun-tur, et om-ni-a et om-ni-a quae
bun-tur pro-spera-bun-tur, et om-ni-a et om-ni-a quae-cum-que
pro-spera-bun-tur pro-spera-bun-tur, et om-ni-a quae

[See Editorial Commentary]
cumque faciet quae-cumque faciet

cumque faciet quae-cumque faciet pro-

cumque faciet quae-cumque faciet pro-

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