

Boccherini – Stabat Mater; D'Astorga – Stabat Mater (Robert King) [1999]

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Luigi Boccherini (1743-1805): 01. I. *Stabat Mater dolorosa* 02. II. *Cuius animam gementem*
03. III. *Quae moerebat et dolebat* 04. IV. *Quis est homo, qui non fleret* 05. V. *Pro peccatis sua*
gentis 06. VI. *Eia Mater, fons amoris* 07. VII. *Tui nati vulnerari* 08. VIII. *Virgo virginum*
praeclara 09. IX. *Fac ut portem Christi mortem* 10. X. *Fac me plagis vulnerari* 11. XI. *Quando*
corpus morietur

Emanuele d'Astorga (1680-?1757): 12. I.
Stabat Mater dolorosa 13. II. *O quam tristis et afflicta* 14. III. *Quis est homo, qui non fleret* 15.
IV. *Eia Mater, fons amoris* 16. V. *Sancta Mater, istud agas* 17. VI. *Fac me tecum pie flere* 18.
VII. *Virgo virginum praeclara* 19. VIII. *Fac me plagis vulnerari* 20. IX. *Christe quum sit hinc*
exire

Susan Gritton, soprano Sarah Fox, soprano Susan Bickley, mezzo-soprano Paul Agnew,
tenor Peter Harvey, bass The King's Consort Conductor - Robert King

Boccherini wrote very little vocal music; however he left two settings of the Stabat mater. It was first set in 1781 for solo soprano and strings and then in 1800 for two sopranos and tenor, obviously influenced by the hugely-popular Pergolesi Stabat mater of 1736. There are many similarities in the notation and harmony—even the same key of F minor is used. The writing is of extraordinary individuality and seems to come straight from the heart. This unjustly neglected piece is surely one of the most remarkable sacred compositions of the era.

Emanuele d'Astorga was one of the most colourful figures in early eighteenth-century music and his life has often been the subject of legend rather than fact (brief details of which can be discovered in Robert King's illuminating booklet notes). During his life, Astorga was best known for his well-written and tuneful chamber cantatas (of which more than 150 survive) and his opera *Dafni* (only Act 1 now survives). But by far his most enduring work has proved to be this

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setting of the Stabat mater, his only surviving sacred composition. Throughout it we hear Astorga's gift for writing warm melodies, typical of the Neapolitan style of the time, and how he captures the melancholy of this most desolate of sacred texts. --- hyperion-records.co.uk

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