

Domenico Scarlatti - Te Deum, Stabat Mater, Miserere, Magnificat e Laetatus sum (2009)



01. *Te Deum - I. Te Deum laudamus* 02. *Te Deum - Te ergo quaesumus* 03. *Stabat Mater - I. Stabat mater dolorosa* 04. *Stabat Mater - II. Cujus animam gementem* 05. *Stabat Mater - III. Eja mater, fons amoris* 06. *Stabat Mater - IV. Sancta mater, istud agas* 07. *Stabat Mater - V. Fac me vere tecum flere* 08. *Stabat Mater - VI. Juxta crucem tecum stare* 09. *Stabat Mater - VII. Inflammatus et accensus* 10. *Stabat Mater - VIII. Fac ut animae donetur* 11. *Stabat Mater - IX. Amen* 12. *Miserere* 13. *Magnificat - I. Magnificat anima mea Dominum* 14. *Magnificat - II. Fecit potentiam* 15. *Magnificat - III. Gloria Patri* 16. *Laetatus sum - I. Laetatus sum* 17. *Laetatus sum - II. Propter fratres meos* 18. *Laetatus sum - III. Gloria Patri* Choir of King's College, Cambridge Stephen Cleobury - conductor + Joseph Crouch – cello (1, 15) Ashley Grote – organ (1, 15) Daniel Hyde – organ (3) Richard Butler – tenor (9) Nicholas Daly – treble (9, 15) Timothy Mead – alto (15)

Domenico Scarlatti's *Stabat mater* is, and seems always to have been, among the most popular of his comparatively small number of sacred vocal pieces. He probably wrote it between the years 1708 and 1728 when he was primarily employed as a church composer in Rome and in Lisbon. His setting of the 13th-century text is in ten parts divided into four soprano strands, two alto, two tenor and two bass with continuo. The style – a blend of older techniques with more up-to-date means of expression – is curiously anonymous and fails to sustain interest throughout. But it has many attractive ideas and its craftsmanship is well sustained. Several recordings of the piece are available, some preferring one voice to a part to the more chorally inclined version favoured here by the Choir of King's College, under its director Stephen Cleobury. The singing is bright, fervent and generally secure, though there are a few uncomfortable moments especially evident in the opening section of the work. Scarlatti's sustained but never antiphonal aura of sound is greatly enhanced by the acoustic of King's College chapel, which suffuses the performance with radiance. Most other versions, though overall more vocally secure, lack this vital dimension. But one, at least, deserves mention. The French Ensemble William Byrd, directed by Graham O'Reilly, preferring one voice to a part, gives a beautifully lucid performance in the comparably effective but entirely different acoustic of the Abbey of Saint-Michel-en-Thiérache. It's well worth seeking out, and not least for its inclusion of the warmly expressive little hymn *Iste confessor*. --- Nicholas Anderson,

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Środa, 16 Marzec 2016 16:52 -

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