

THE

First Fifty Psalms.

Set to Music by

Benedetto Marcello.

PATRIZIO VENETO,

and adapted to the

ENGLISH VERSION,

BY

John Garth.

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P R E F A C E

TO THE

ORIGINAL WORK.

THE following Poetic and Harmonical Work is now submitted to the Judgment of the Learned, notwithstanding the Disadvantage under which it must necessarily appear, being the first of its Kind, and introduced into the World without any Precedent that might have directed the Method and Disposition of it: But as it pleased the Almighty to suggest to the Minds of its Authors, the Idea of a Design never attempted before, and indeed of too arduous a Nature with regard to their own weak Abilities, it was also the divine Will to endow them with Powers sufficient for the conducting it, in some Respect, towards a prosperous End.

The Translation is a Poetical Paraphrase of the *Psalms*, set off with some Ornaments of Poetry, and enlarged by some Expositions, which are, however, founded on the Authority of our most venerable Commentators; without which Liberty of paraphrasing, it would have been difficult to have connected the Sense, so as to have rendered them easy and intelligible to every one.

And as this Paraphrase, for the most Part, is rather literal than allegorical, we have, in the Construction of it, chiefly followed the Sentiments of those Interpreters who have explained the Sense of the Text according to the Letter.—It differs also from a close and chastified Translation in this Respect, that we have sometimes made Choice of those Terms and Expressions, which we judged not only more suitable to the Idiom of our Language, but also of greater Efficacy for enforcing the Sense: And this we have done for the Sake of Perspicuity, every Language having its natural and peculiar Phraseology, the Propriety and Freedom of which are most difficult to be preserved in Translations.

The Verse is, for the most Part, *without Rhyme*, and of various Metre; and of *such are the Psalms themselves in the Hebrew Text*. Besides, the *Variety and Sublimity* of the Subject will scarce admit of an uniform Metre confined to a determinate Number of Verses or Rhymes, as is usually practised in profane Writings. Neither will there be found in this Work any of those arbitrary and fabulous Allegories, never dictated from above to the Royal Prophet, but of which, some Translators have nevertheless thought proper to avail themselves.

On the contrary, we have rather expressly avoided those swelling poetic Terms, and superfluous Digressions, which agree but little with the Subject, and still less with the warm Devotion of the Heart addressing itself to Heaven.—Add to this, that we have written for a kind of Music, which, in its various solemn Airs, should be removed as far as possible from every trivial Expression that may vainly flatter the common Ear.

If this Paraphrase, which is chiefly formed from the Text of the *Vulgate*, should be found in some Parts to differ from it, let it be considered, that for the Sake of Clearness and Connexion, Recourse was sometimes had, both to the *Hebrews*, and to the *Septuagint Version*.

With regard to the Music, it is adapted to a Subject which requires, principally, the Expression of the Words and the Sentiments. Hence it is, for the most Part, composed for *two Voices* only, in order to produce more happily the Effect intended. It was for the same

M E M O I R S
OF THE
L I F E
OF
BENEDETTO MARCELLO, N. H.*

BENEDETTO MARCELLO, Patrician of *Venice*, was born at *Venice* on the 24th of July 1686.

His Father was *Agostino Marcello*, (a) a most worthy Senator, Son of *Alessandro Marcello*; his Mother, *Paolina*, was Daughter of *Girolamo Cappello*, (b) both of them illustrious, as well for their singular Endowments of Mind, as for the Nobility of their Birth.

Benedetto gave very early and sure Indications of his peculiar Talent, which, continually improving and displaying itself, rose, at length, to a great Excellence in Poetry and Music.

In the Year 1718, he published a little Collection of Love Sonnets, under the Title of *Drizante Sacro Pastor Arcade*; which he dedicated to the celebrated *Giovanni Mario Crescimbeni* of *Macerata*, under the Name of *Alfisebo Cario* †, one of the Founders of the Academy of *Arcadians*, into which *Benedetto*, from his great Reputation, had been some Time before elected; as appears from the Catalogue of illustrious *Arcadians* given in the History of the *Italian Poetry*, Vol. vi. P. 378. of the *Venice* Edition 1730 in 4to.

In the Year 1722, he published an elegant little Work, intitled, *Teatro alla Moda*, of which there have been a great many Editions. The Judgment which the Marquis *Scipio Maffei* has given of this excellent Performance, which is in the gay, lively, and facerious Style, may be seen in the third Volume of his *Literary Observations*, P. 308, Edition of *Verona* 1738; and that of Signior *Appostolo Zeno* in his Letters; both of them much to the Honor of the Author.

But his principal Faculty, and that in which he was chiefly employed, was Music. His natural Genius and strong Propensity to this Study was first awakened by a pleasant Incident in his own Family, which raised in his Mind a high Spirit of Emulation and Honor, and which deserves to be mentioned.

The Princes of *Brunswick* happened to be at *Venice*; and as *Alessandro Marcello*, his elder Brother, used to hold regularly, one Day in the Week at his own House, an Academy of Music, in which his own Compositions, both Vocal and Instrumental, were performed; the Princes being at one of these Assemblies, and understanding that *Benedetto*, who was present and at that Time very young, was *Alessandro's* Brother, they took Occasion to ask him in a polite Manner, in what Study He employ'd himself: Oh, says *Alessandro*, with an Air of Banter,

* The following Account of the Life of *Benedetto Marcello* was procured from the Family at *Venice*, and communicated to us by an English Lady of Distinction, now residing in that City.

(a) In the Line of these of *La Maddalena*.

(b) She was Sister to the Father of *Pietro Andrea Cappello*, Ambassador at the Courts of *Spain*, *Vienna*, *England* and *Rome*, at which last Place he is now for the second Time in the same Character.

† It is to be observed, that all the Members of the *Academia degli Arcadi* (a famous Literary Society) at *Rome* take upon themselves, as such, fictitious Names, and stile themselves *Pastori Arcadia*.

R E M A R K S

O N T H E

P S A L M S

O F

M A R C E L L O.

MARCELLO'S PSALMS, notwithstanding their Excellence, are far from being generally known in *England*; and, perhaps, there are some, even of our best Judges, who cannot at present determine what Rank of Merit they may deserve amongst musical Performances: But it is hoped they will soon be universally known, by Means of the present extensive Design of adapting them to the *English* Version. For this Purpose, the following Account and Character of the original Work is now laid before the Public, as also this Specimen in our own Language; and I hope those who are capable of judging, will impartially consider, how far some effectual Encouragement for publishing the whole Work would improve our present Music, and redound to the Honor of the *British* Virtuosi.

We may observe in the Preface of MARCELLO, but more especially in his Method of Composition, how greatly the *Melody of the Ancients* hath engaged his Attention; and how copiously he hath exerted his deep Skill in a great Variety of *unaccustomed Harmonies*.—Hence the *Simplicity* of those *grand and affecting Modulations*, which abound in this Work; and the many *uncommon Transitions* which excite, not only our Pleasure, but Admiration, that such natural and obvious Beauties should not occur to every Composer.

Inequalities, indeed, are to be found in the best Performances; and I am ready to acknowledge, that the Psalms of *Marcello* are not free from Imperfections; but these, I think, are the Imperfections of Genius; and therefore I freely leave them to the candid Censure of those whose Genius and Capacity make them Judges. Some Objections, however, have been made to this Work, which do not appear just; and the taking Notice of these will give me an Opportunity of saying something on the Character of the Author.

First, It has been alledged, that, if particular Psalms, or Parts of Psalms, had been selected for this Work, instead of proceeding regularly so far as it is carried, the Music would not only have been more useful for the Church, but even more entertaining in the Chamber.

Secondly, It has been said, that the Movements, are, in general, too short; and that often one Subject is no sooner produced than it is quitted for another.

Lastly, That many Passages in this Work have been taken from CORELLI.

To remove these OBJECTIONS I shall observe,

First, That a Succession of very different Movements, which are intended to express very different Passions, is much more likely to keep Attention awake, and to afford, on the Whole, a much greater Degree of Pleasure through a long Performance, than if it were only sustained by some continued Chain of uniform Movements.

E

Secondly,

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THE Thirty-seventh Psalm, the First of this Volume, being of a great Length, is compos'd in the Ecclesiastical Style *Da Capella*. Though it was necessary, for the same Reason, to endeavour at the utmost Brevity in the Construction of it, yet it was thought not improper to give it some Extension, according to the established Rules of Art; more especially as the Subject of it principally turns upon Sentiments of the finest Morality, preceptive Instruction in Piety, and Correction of the Vices and Passions.

This Psalm is of the second *Tone*, or *Mode*, according to the common Notion of the Moderns, tho' perhaps a different Opinion might be maintained, were we to investigate the Origin of the Tones as laid down in the Writings of the most ancient Greek Legislators in Music: But of these remote and obsolete Points of Erudition, enough has been said in the Prefaces of the First and Third Volumes. In this Psalm, however, tho' of the Second *Tone*, (with the Ecclesiastical *Intonation* of which it is clos'd) the strictly proper Chords, and precise Modulations, are not always so rigidly employ'd, but that sometimes (tho' with the greatest Propriety and according to Rule) a foreign Movement is introduced, to prevent in some Measure that Disgust and Weariness, which the Length of it might occasion in the Hearers. The Style *Ricercato* is not always repugnant to the Precepts of this Art; on the contrary, Experience evinces that a discreet Use of its Ornaments gives Room for adding Grace and Taste even to the Rigor and Confinement of Rule itself.

The four principal Parts only are printed, which are intended to be sung as Compositions of the Madrigal kind, and those Pieces of Counterpoint commonly used in the Church. Nevertheless, to sustain and reinforce these Parts in the Execution of this Psalm, Harpsicords and Ripieno Basses may be added to the Bass, according to the Directions annexed to the Beginning and other Places. When the Accompaniment of the moving Basses comes in, this is done with a particular Design to introduce some proper Variety in the Performance, and, in a more distinguished Manner, to mark the Expression of those Sentiments, the Force of which may be more effectually impress'd by such a Change in the Basses.

The same may be understood with regard to the Forty-fourth Psalm, the last in this Volume, which is likewise compos'd in the Ecclesiastical Style *Da Capella*.

PSALM XXXVII

A QUATTRO

CANTO, ALTO, TENORE, E BASSO.

Noli æmulari in malignantibus &c.

Da Capella.

Tutti sempre

because of the un-god - - ly fret

because of the un-god - - ly

because of the un - god - ly fret not thy self be -

Fret not fret not thy self because of the un - - god - - -

Violoncelli, e Contrabassi colla Parte.

not thy self be-cause of the un-god - - - ly: neither be thou envious against the evil the evil do-

fret not thy self be-cause of the un - god - - ly: neither be thou envious against the evil the

- cause of the un - - god - - - ly the un-god - - ly: neither

ly: