

INTRODUCTION

Dating

Hor che graditi horrori (Hanley 514)¹ may be dated to the early 1690's on the following grounds:

1) the forms and style of the work, especially the strophic arias and the presence of consecutive arias 2 and 3, without intervening recitative. There are no da capo arias in the work, which had become well established in Scarlatti's chamber cantatas from at least 1697.

2) the dated cantatas that are found alongside *Hor che graditi horrori* in the two manuscript sources fall within the date range of 1690-5 (see nn. 2 and 3, below).

Style and structure

The key of B minor appears as the tonic of at least two other extended cantatas by Alessandro Scarlatti for soprano and basso continuo of the 1690s: *Eurilla, amata Eurilla* (termed "Serenata à voce sola" in one source), and *Su la sponda fiorita d'un rio pargoleggiante*. *Hor che graditi horrori* belongs to the category of Scarlatti's night cantatas, developing the Petrarch theme of the calm of night, and its contrast to the restlessness of the central character.

Recitatives are extensive and contain some striking harmonic shifts (e.g. Recit. 2, mm. 19-20) that reflect the intensity of Scarlatti's response to the poetry. Both the opening and concluding recitatives culminate in beautiful arioso passages built on sequential repetitions of the final eleven-syllable line of text.

The final recitative has an unusual feature: the bass part divides into two parts for the conclusion of the cantata: "[my heart] will never fear the passage of misfortune if calm is the fiercest storm". At least two possibilities for performance arise: either the two-voiced bass part is played on the keyboard, or the upper (tenor) line is performed as a cello solo. This is far from the only example of a continuo part by Scarlatti with notated tenor and bass voices. The style of the bass writing does not suggest that a cellist is essential to the cantata—in marked contrast to Scarlatti's solo/basso continuo cantatas from the early eighteenth century.

All three arias have two strophes. Within this scheme, the first aria (B minor) is set in two parts of contrasting tempo, and differing metrical schemes. The second, *Largo* part is predominantly in D major, returning to B-minor inflections only in the final two bars to reach the dominant of B minor. With this lyrical, long-phrased section, Scarlatti creates a musical parallel to the change of tone in the final long line (11 syllables) of each strophe.

Arias 2 and 3 follow each other without intervening recitative (an occasional feature of Scarlatti's works in the 1690s). The first of these is a virtuoso piece in G major for both singer and continuo, with sustained notes for the singer to illustrate "immovable faith" over the constant movement of the bass part.

Aria 3, "Amor crudele" is a typical 3/8 Scarlatti piece—a hypnotic slow dance composed of small repetitive phrase units with feminine endings. As if to accentuate the image of the wheel of fortune ("la rota di fortuna"), both of these arias are structured on circling motivic and harmonic patterns in contrasted tempi and meters.

Throughout the work, both vocal and continuo parts cover a wide range, especially in recitative. The bass part in the recitatives is occasionally notated in the lowest available octave, down to C at one point in Recitative 2, which is unusual in this repertoire. (In another of the B-minor cantatas, *Su la sponda fiorita*, even the bass BB appears in the final page of a recitative.)

Sources

Source A (MÜs 863)

Münster, Santini Collection (D-MÜs), Ms. 863, ff. 1-15.

Title page: *Hor che graditi horrori/Cantata à voce sola/ Del Sigr. Alessandro/ Scarlatti/Maestro di Cappella della Real' Cappella di/Napoli*.

Scribe: *very ornate hand*, cf. *Eurilla amata*,² Paris Bibliothèque Nationale, D.11840.

Source B (Lcm 581)

London, Royal College of Music (GB-Lcm), Ms. 581, pp.53-67.³

Heading: *Cantata a Voce Sola Del Sigr. Alessandro Scarlatti*.

Editorial Procedures

MÜs 863 has been followed as the principal text. It presents a high standard of accuracy and clarity regarding the poetic and musical text, and underlay of the text. The vocal part is notated in the soprano clef (lowest line = c) in both sources. The vocal range is d' to a''. The original key signatures (which agree in the two sources) have been retained: two sharps for B minor, no key signature for the central recitative and the G major aria.

Bass figures: MÜs 863 shows more extensive bass figuring than Lcm 581, and has been followed throughout. The placement of the figures corresponds to that of the manuscript. When several figures appear by one pitch, as with the resolution 4-3, no attempt was made to align them with metric beats. As is typical of manuscript sources of the period, the figures 4-3 appear to be drawn with one stroke of the pen, leaving it to the player to determine the timing of the resolution in different contexts. In the arias, figures that appear in one strophe but not the other have been adopted for each strophe. The figuring from MÜs 863 has been supplemented by some editorial figures, which are shown in italics.

Accidentals: The usage of accidentals by Scarlatti, and by contemporary copyists, differs from modern usage in several ways. In general, the composer uses an accidental to apply for the duration of one note only, or for consecutive notes on a repeated pitch. Modern convention regards as redundant the repetition of accidentals applied to the same pitch within a bar; but they often serve as a useful reminder for performers, especially within a highly inflected chromatic style such as Scarlatti's.

The use of the natural sign to cancel an accidental earlier in the bar thus appears rarely in these manuscripts, whereas modern usage requires it routinely. In this respect, the modern convention has been adopted. This policy may seem an uneasy compromise between two systems of notating accidentals, but the intention is to provide clear and unambiguous information to performers. When we consider together Scarlatti's use of key signatures, bass figures, and principles of using accidentals, in nearly every case his notation leaves no room for doubt. The careful transmission of this element in MÜs 863 (with the exception of three accidentals in the bass part, Aria 2, *2nda Strofa*, noted below) indicates

the work of a copyist well versed in his compositional and notational style.

Barring: MÜs 863 shows a close familiarity with Scarlatti's highly idiosyncratic barring of pieces in triple meters: the majority of measures are given as 6/8 bars, alternating with a few 3/8 bars, mainly towards cadence points. This barring has been retained in the edition, as it so closely reflects the composer's practice. Measure numbers have not been re-assigned here.

Critical Notes

Aria 1 (Se il rigor)

M. 25 (Largo), figure to note 1 (flat) appears in 2nda Strofa only.

M. 70, voice note 2 – f# in 2nda Strofa only. The inconsistency (b in bar 34) has been retained.

Aria 2 (Giri pur)

M. 38 (2nda Strofa) Bass rhythm beat 2 is 2 eighth notes, cf. eight notes/sixteenth notes in bar 5, following the rhythm of the voice part. The dotted rhythm has been retained.

Mm. 45, 47, 50: bass part in MÜs 863 does not show the accidentals (# in each case), but have been adopted from the correct readings in the first strophe, bars 11 (note 2: f#), 13 (note 9: f#), and 16 (note 8:-c#).

Acknowledgements

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Notes

¹ Hanley, Edwin, *Alessandro Scarlatti's "Cantate da Camera": a Bibliographical Study*, Yale University Ph.D. 1963. Hanley notes that the present cantata is the earlier of two settings of a text with the first line "Hor che graditi horrori"; the later setting he describes as a "renovation" of the text of the earlier cantata.

² The following is a list of manuscripts seen by me in which the distinctive ornate hand of MÜs 863 appears:

- Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, D.11840: *Eurilla, amata Eurilla*, Serenata à voce sola.

Watermark: fleur de lys in single circle.

- Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, D.11841: *All'hor che stanco il sole dal faticoso corso*, Serenata à voce sola.

- London, British Library, Add. Ms.14164. The hand appears in a number of cantatas in conjunction with the watermark, animal in single circle (associated principally with Naples): *Morirei disperato*, *Al voler del bene amato*, *Su la sponda fiorita*. The inscription inside the front cover of Add. Ms.14164 reads: "Cantate di Alessandro Scarlatti, con uno el Tommaso di Mauro, 1695". The date 1695 is also legible on the introductory page.

³ Contents of manuscript Lcm 581:

Morirei disperato (dated 1693 in Naples Biblioteca del Conservatorio, Nc.33.4.9).

Deh per merce (also included in Lbl.Add.Ms.14164 and Christ Church, Oxford, Ms. 993).

Ardea per Coridone (single extant source)

Hor che graditi horrori

E pur tenti il ritorno

Non han core (identified by Hanley as an excerpt from *La Rosaura*, 1690/92).