# THE LATIN CHURCH MUSIC OF SAMUEL WESLEY

(THREE VOLUMES)

VOLUME ONE

by

FRANCIS JOHN MARSH

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# THE LATIN CHURCH MUSIC

# OF

# SAMUEL WESLEY

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# THE LATIN CHURCH MUSIC OF SAMUEL WESLEY

## ABSTRACT

The main part of the first volume of this study comprises a detailed discussion of Samuel Wesley's Latin church music. This discussion spans chapters four, five and six, chapter four dealing with the earlier compositions (up to 1798), and chapter six with the later ones (from 1799). Chapter five is a thorough investigation of Wesley's 'magnum opus', the Confitebor Tibi Domine of 1799. Performing editions of most of the compositions discussed in chapters four and six are presented in Volume 2, and examples from certain other pieces added in the Appendix to Volume 2. (With the exception of Exultate Deo, compositions available in printed editions have not been included). A performing edition of Confitebor Tibi Domine is presented in Volume 3. Performances of Ave Maris Stella (Vol.2, p.3) and Confitebor Tibi Domine can be heard on the two accompanying tapes.

The remainder of Volume 1 consists of an account of various relevant aspects of the life of Samuel Wesley. Chapter three traces the numerous musical influences behind his compositions, particularly his involvement with the music in the Chapel of the Portugese Embassy in London. Chapter two is an investigation of Wesley's flirtation with the Roman Catholic Church, to which he professed conversion in 1784. Chapter one is a biographical prologue, providing a brief account of the most significant events in his life. In the epilogue (chapter seven), some discussion of the reasons for Wesley's neglect over the years is provided by way of conclusion. A list of his Latin church music is given in Appendix I, and a list of manuscripts containing his compositions in Appendix II.

John Marsh

September 1975

# INTRODUCTION

The life and music of Samuel Wesley have been only spasmodically and inadequately considered over the years: only one full-length biography has ever been produced (James T. Lightwood, Samuel Wesley, Musician), and there has been no attempt to make a detailed study of his works. Recent Wesley scholarship has been minimal and, mostly, unimpressive: in 1968, for example, Erik Routley's The Musical Wesleys was published in England, but this book covers little new ground (except for a detailed discussion of hymn-tunes) and is generally both inadequate and inaccurate. A year later, in 1969, Holmes Ambrose presented his doctoral thesis at Boston University; it was entitled The Anglican Anthems and Roman Catholic Motets of Samuel Wesley (1766-1837). This, too, contains certain inaccuracies and is, even within its own limited scope, incomplete. A new and fuller biography and a comprehensive investigation of Wesley's music are long overdue; but both are beyond the scope of this present study.

It has been necessary to confine the scope of this study within carefully prescribed limits, in order to present a detailed discussion of one aspect of Wesley's work. Of all the possible areas of investigation open to the Wesley student, his Latin Church Music is debatably the most significamt: certainly, it is the most significant part of his creative work, incorporating many of his best compositions and including his 'magnum opus' (Confitebor Tibi Domine); it also makes a fascinating study in the light of the contemporary scene in England, both historically and religiously; and it is a convenient means by which to observe Wesley's creative

development and to trace those musical influences which he assimilated in forming his own distinctive style. Having decided to concentrate on this one aspect of Wesley's work, in order to present a detailed account of manageable proportions, it was also necessary to ruthlessly exclude any discussion of other aspects. Thus, except for occasional passing references, there is no mention of his sacred compositions with English texts, or of his secular vocal compositions, or of his instrumental music, of all of which there is a large quantity warranting further research. Similarly, except where it impinges directly upon the discussion of his Latin compositions, there is little reference to Wesley's important work championing the music of Bach in England, or to his outstanding ability as a keyboard executant, or to any of his other activities.

It seemed appropriate, however, to preface this investigation of Wesley's Latin Church Music with some account of his life, in order to provide a biographical background for the remainder of the study. This has been done in the Prologue, where the chief incidents of Wesley's life are briefly recounted, particularly those relevant to the ensuing discussion. In this first chapter, therefore, no new facts or conclusions are presented.

One fascinating aspect of Wesley's life which has particular relevance to this study is his spiritual pilgrimage, especially his flirtation with the Roman Catholic Church. This is fully discussed in Chapter Two: the circumstances surrounding his professed conversion to Catholicism are presented in the earlier part of the chapter, and his subsequent disenchantment with the Catholic faith in the latter part. Here, some new evidence has been included: this is contained in the Archives of Wesley's Chapel in London, and consists of a lengthy correspondence between Wesley and a Catholic priest, and other

theological material in Wesley's hand. This evidence serves to reinforce the previously accepted scholarly opinion that Wesley was never 'spiritually' converted to Catholicism, but also demonstrates that subsequently his theological outlook was much more akin to that of his father and uncle than many scholars have allowed.

Another necessary part of this study is the tracing of the musical influences surrounding Wesley (Chapter Three); the most significant of these was his involvment in the music in the Chapel of the Portugese Embassy in London. In discussing this, an attempt has been made to piece together from various available resources an impression of the kind of music that was used in the Chapel and the manner in which it was performed.

The detailed discussion of Wesley's Latin Church Music (Chapters Four, Five and Six) is as full and as comprehensive as existing source material allows - a more complete survey than has so far been attempted. The greater space has been devoted to the more significant compositions. Particularly important is the thorough investigation of Confitebor Tibi Domine (Chapter Five), examining both the circumstances of its composition, and its subsequent chequered history, and also providing a careful analytical study of the music. Ironically, this work, Wesley's 'magnum opus', has never previously been the subject of scholarly criticism.

In the concluding chapter, some attempt has been made to account for Wesley's neglect both in his own day and since. Most of the evidence concerning his neglect by his contemporaries comes from his own lectures, many of which are preserved in the library of the British Museum.

Modern performing editions of most of Wesley's Latin compositions have been prepared for this study. Holmes Ambrose prepared editions

of many of the motets for his dissertation, but these were transcriptions from the manuscripts, retaining all Wesley's archaisms. Four of these modern editions of Wesley's Latin compositions have already been accepted for publication: Ave Maris Stella (Vol.2, p.3), Constitues Eos Principes (Vol.2, p.405), Tu Es Sacerdos In Aeternum (Vol.2, p.533), and Confitebor Tibi Domine (Vol.3). Amongst the other works presented here the hitherto neglected Wesleyan orchestration of the familiar motet Exultate Deo is particularly striking.

The music critic of the Yorkshire Post, writing about the York Minster performance in June 1972 of Wesley's Confitebor Tibi Domine, complained that Wesley was no more than 'a competent technician'. One thing this study seeks to establish is that while most of the time Wesley is indeed a thoroughly competent technician, some of the time he is so much more. Of that, the best of his Latin Church Music is a clear demonstration.

# CHAPTER 1.

## PROLOGUE

The two hundred years between the premature death of Henry Purcell in 1695 and the advent of Edward Elgar in the latter part of the nineteenth century was a period in which England was dismissed as an unmusical nation - 'das Land ohne Musik'. Certainly, throughout the years of the eighteenth century and the first part of the nineteenth century, no English-born musician gained an international reputation as a composer. England could boast of no-one comparable with Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven or Mendelssohn, all of whom were universally acclaimed across Europe in their life-times. Of course, there were many English musicians, and some were prolific composers, but they were overshadowed by their more illustrious continental contemporaries.

This unfortunate state of affairs was recognised, bemoaned, and challenged by Samuel Wesley; in his reminiscences of 1836, the year before he died, he wrote:

> The generality of English Music is less valuable than German which leads many foolishly to conclude that all our music is worthless. It has however been roundly asserted that the English are not a musical nation: that our mutable climate is unfavourable to the cultivation of the vocal organs cannot be denied, and that an Italian atmosphere possesses all the potentialities conducing to their improvement and perfection is indisputable. The natural inference will be that there exists a physical cause for a more speedy and certain advancement of vocal science on the Plains of Ausonia than on the Cliffs of Albion. Nevertheless, we have long demonstrated

> to our continental neighbours our general attachment to Music which they cannot have the effrontery to deny, when their universal encouragement and the extravagant emolument they reap for the display of their talents are so palpable and so continual an evidence of the fact.[1]

These uncompromising words are typical of Wesley's frequent and determined denunciation of all kinds of prejudice in the musical world; so concerned was he, in fact, that he devoted a complete lecture to the subject of 'Musical Prejudice'. In the course of that lecture he became almost cynical in his references to the prevailing attitude to English composers and their music:

> Many productions of sterling merit are liable to be overlooked, and very frequently are, solely because the name of the Author is not enrolled in a classical list.[2]

For any who found Wesley's comments embarrassing or condemning and wanted to vindicate themselves, they could well have accused him of having both mixed motives and vested interests: for, of all the English musicians throughout this 'dark' period of England's musical history who suffered as a result of such prejudice, Samuel Wesley himself was one of the most interesting and significant, appearing right in the middle of this post-Purcellian, pre-Elgarian era.

Samuel Wesley was born in Bristol in February 1766, the third and youngest surviving child of Charles Wesley, the famous Methodist pioneer-preacher and prolific writer of hymns. That the Wesley home was religious is a well-known fact; that it was also musical is less widely known. Samuel himself, writing in his reminiscences, recalls:

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[1] BM Add. MS 27593.

[2] BM Add. MS 35016, a collection of Wesley's lectures (the second of a series, given in the Bristol Institution on Wednesday January 13th 1830).

> My father was extremely fond of music, and in the early part of his life, performed a little on the flute. He was partial to the old masters: Purcell, Corelli, Geminiani, Handel; and among English church composers, Croft, Blow, Boyce and Greene were favourite authors with him. He had a most accurate ear for time, and in every piece which had repetitions, knew exactly which part was to be played or sung twice, which, when anyone failed to do, he would immediately cry out, 'You have cheated me of a repeat'. He had not a vocal talent, but could join in a hymn of simple melody tolerably well in tune....My mother had a considerable vocal talent, played prettily upon the harpsichord and sang sweetly. In Handel's oratorios she excelled, being blessed with a voice of delightful quality, though not of very strong power or extensive compass. Always exactly in tune and in good taste, but free from the least affectation or pretension to luxuriant embellishments or rapid cadence, which are too often employed to the detriment and disfigurement of the melody, and are foreign to the nature and genius of the composition.[3]

Samuel's earliest musical experiments were largely by way of imitation of his elder brother, Charles, also an infant prodigy. (Indeed, at first, he was more obviously gifted musically than Samuel, although his early promise was never fully realised.) By the time he was six years old, Samuel was having regular lessons on the harpsichord, was already studying the violin, and was beginning to compose music. His favourite instrument, however, was the organ, and the organist of St. James' Church in Bristol not only gave him lessons, but occasionally allowed him to play for part of the service. In a letter to his brother, written when he was seven years old, he proudly announced: 'Last Sunday I played a Psalm at St. James's Church'.[4] While he progressed rapidly in music, his general education was not allowed to suffer: apparently, although his brother and sister attended local schools, Samuel was instructed entirely by his father. His 'syllabus' included not only the three R's, but also Latin, Greek and Hebrew; clearly, Samuel was an excellent pupil and his father a thorough teacher, as this comment indicates:

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[3] BM Add. MS 27593.

[4] This letter is quoted in full in Lightwood, Samuel Wesley, Musician, (London, 1937), p.21.

> Samuel.....was possessed of great intellectual power and acuteness. His mind was truly Wesleyan: quick, shrewd, and penetrating. He was mostly educated by his father, especially in Latin. His knowledge was extensive; his conversation elegant, agreeable, instructive, and varied; and he was capable of excelling in any science or profession to which he might apply himself.[5]

An event which proved to be of considerable significance in Samuel's development and recognition as a musician was the removal of the family to London. It seems that father Charles had acquired a house in the Marylebone area of London as early as the latter part of 1770 and spent an increasing amount of his time there; but he moved the family there permanently only in the autumn of 1778. This brought his two sons into contact with some of the best musicians and most fashionable musical circles of the day. The Wesley brothers quickly gained a reputation for themselves, chiefly through the series of concerts given in the Wesley home, in which they were the chief performers; these began in 1779 and were repeated each year until 1785. For Samuel, these subscription concerts had a threefold significance: they gave him early, regular, first-hand experience of the public performance of music (he was only twelve years old when the first series of concerts began); through them, he was introduced to many influential members of London society (a number of the regular subscribers to the concerts were titled people); most significantly, certain of Samuel's contacts at these concerts had considerable influence over his subsequent religious outlook.

The Wesleys' London home was situated near the Portuguese Embassy, attached to which there was a chapel where Catholic liturgy was elaborately performed; many attended the services of the Chapel,

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[5] Thomas Jackson, The Life of the Rev. Charles Wesley, (London, 1841, p.346.

including some who also came to the Wesley concerts. Their persuasion, together with Samuel's own religious instability, and his desire for musically creative openings, meant that not long after arriving in London, Samuel began attending the services in the Portugese Embassy Chapel. Immediately, he was aesthetically, if not spiritually, impressed, and by 1780 had begun to compose music for the Catholic liturgy. Thus began his long involvement as a composer of Latin church music. His spiritual involvement, however, was rather briefer: he professed conversion, probably never whole-heartedly, in 1784, but subsequently repudiated any spiritual affiliation to Roman Catholicism.[6]

An incident occurred in 1787 which was detrimentally to affect the remainder of Wesley's life to some degree or another. He was returning one evening from the home of a friend and fellow-member of the Madrigal Society; walking along Snow Hill in the dark, he missed his footing and fell into a deep excavation, the foundations for a new building. He was not rescued until the next morning. A medical inspection revealed a serious head injury and a trepanning operation was recommended to relieve pressure on the brain; unfortunately, Wesley refused this rather painful surgery and the wound healed. Subsequently, probably as a result of this accident, he was prone to recurring bouts of depressive illness, which often drove him to inactivity and despair, and, at least once, to attempted suicide. Sarah Wesley records:

> My brother Samuel precipitated himself out of the window in a fit of frenzy, pressed, as he thought, by his creditors, as writs were issued against him by his wife, and threats by his

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[6] There is a fuller discussion of Wesley's involvement with Roman Catholicism in Chapter 2.

landlord; miraculaously his life was saved.[7]

During these times of depression composition was difficult, and it is probably not without significance that there are three periods in his life when Wesley wrote no Latin church music (1786-92, 1792-98 and 1814-24). Typical of his attitude when depressed is this cry of despair in a letter to Novello dated May 30th 1817:

> Here I am in the greatest agonies of mind and body too, though the latter are the less; all forsake me; why is this? If you think you ought not to come and comfort me I must submit, but I trust this is not so. O come, my dear Novello, and leave me not utterly in distress. My prayer is unavailing, else how do I long for a release from my offended Maker! It is hardest that even my little ones are withholden from seeing me. Alas, alas, despair is ever in prospect. Will you come this evening? Do, for pity's sake.[8]

Towards the end of the year following his accident, 1788, Wesley was made a Freemason; his involvement with Masonry lasted for many years, and he subsequently became a prominent member, as this report in the Freemasons' Magazine indicates:

> He was initiated into Masonry in the Lodge of Antiquity, (then reckoned No.1), on the 17th of December, 1788, and in his declaration stated himself twenty-three years of age. He was, of course, a welcome visitor, if not a member, of other Lodges, and we know that he composed many glees, etc., particularly for the Somerset House Lodge, which, at one time, possessed the most valuable library of music of any Lodge in the Craft - but which music, we hear, has been lent, lost, and strayed, until there is but a shadow of its original possessions left. The first appearance of our Bro. Wesley's name is, on the occasion of the annual Grand Feast, held on the 13th of May, 1812, when the M.W.G.M. His Royal Highness the Duke of Sussex created the office of Grand-Organist, and appointed as the first of that series of officers, the first organist in talent that this country ever produced.[9]

One person who had considerable influence upon the young Wesley's developing ideas and attitudes was his godfather, the Rev. Martin Madan.

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[7] From a collection of miscellaneous Wesley material in Wesley's Chapel Archives, London.

[8] BM Add. MS 11729, Letters from Wesley to Novello 1811-25.

[9] Anonymous article in Freemasons' Magazine and Masonic Mirror, Vol.5, (28th July 1858), p.160.

He was a well-known and popular preacher in London and eventually became the Chaplain of the Lock Hospital, an institution which was founded 'for the benefit of penitent females, who had wandered from the paths of virtue'[10] - in other words, a hospital for venereal patients. Unfortunately, he became too closely involved with the desperate circumstances of these women:

> Commiserating their case, he endeavoured to lower the standard of Christian morality, so as to extenuate their sin, if not justify several of them in the profligate cause which they had pursued. For this purpose he published a large and elaborate work, in which he attempted to prove that Christianity, as well as Judaism, tolerates polygamy.[10]

Madan's dangerously radical views on marriage were to have unfortunate repercussions in the personal life of Samuel Wesley.

On April 5th 1793, in the Parish Church of the little village of Ridge in Hertfordshire, Wesley was married to Miss Charlotte Louisa Martin. For a time they settled in the village, but it was not long before there were signs of discord. In July 1795, Wesley wrote to his sister, Sally:

> The worst that this woman can say of me, or of those whom I love, I am well prepared for, and her open violence will have very little other effect than that of driving me more speedily to comfort than I expected.[12]

Wesley was already talking of separating from his wife; that Madan's views were partially responsible for his decision is clear from another letter he wrote to Sally:

> I shall never offer any arguments to convert, or pervert, you to the defence of polygamy, or any other system on earth. I only want you to allow to Madan what, I think, you will willingly allow to all - justice. Give his book a fair and careful reading, and then tell me whether it is possible to deny that, however erroneous in point of religion, his scheme may be, yet his chief design and

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[10] Thomas Jackson, p.369.

[10] Thomas Jackson, p.369.

[12] Wesley's Archives, London.

most sacred intention was to save your sex from ruin, and to make those honourable and happy whom the world delights to crush and destroy.[13]

The marriage survived for no more than ten years; soon after the turn of the century, Mrs. Wesley left her husband, and eventually, in 1812, a legal separation was effected, by which Samuel was required to pay the sum of one hundred pounds annually to support his wife and three children. This proved to be something of a financial embarrassment to Wesley, and on one occasion he was arrested and imprisoned in the King's Bench prison for failing to keep up his payments; he informed his friend Novello of this in a typically cynical fashion: 'My loving wife has caused me to be arrested, and tomorrow I am going to prison'.[14] Apparently, although he claimed he had a good case, he was never actually legally divorced from his wife.

Forced to live alone, Wesley employed a house-keeper, Sarah Suter; after a while, from about 1809, they began to live together as man and wife. Wesley endeavoured to explain his adulterous conduct to his bewildered family by emphasising how much more worthy to be his wife Sarah was than Charlotte had ever been. Understandably, the family were horrified by Samuel's immoral behaviour and they did not hide their animosity from him. This is apparent from a letter he wrote to his mother at the time:

My dear Mother,

Be assured that I will make any possible <u>reasonable</u> sacrifice of <u>my</u> feelings, rather than cause the least pain to yours; therefore you need not be under any apprehension of my abstaining from seeing <u>you</u>, which I shall determine to do in spite of circumstances repugnant with the

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[13] Wesley's Archives, London.

[14] BM Add. 11729. Letters from Wesley to Novello, 1811-1825.

spirit and honest character of your much abused son, S. Wesley.[14]

Thirteen children were born to Samuel and Sarah, amongst whom were Samuel's two favourite, and subsequently, most famous, offspring, Samuel Sebastian and Eliza.

These biographical details are sufficient to show that Wesley's domestic circumstances were often difficult; for much of his life he had to battle against illness and personal tragedy, and cope with fluctuating, often tortuous, personal relationships. His musical career was no easier. He was, for example, one of the best keyboard executants England had ever produced, but he never managed to secure a job worthy of his ability - presumably, he received the same treatment as his elder brother, who when he applied for the post of organist at St. Paul's Cathedral in 1796, was brusquely dismissed with 'We want no Wesleys here!'

Wesley's perennial problem was financial, making ends meet. Often he was so desperate he would write begging letters pleading for employment even as a copyist; on a number of occasions he was rescued from total bankruptcy only by the generosity of others, chiefly his mother. Denied the proper recompense for his organ playing or his compositions, he had to rely chiefly on his earnings as a teacher, which was desperately frustrating work for one with the intellect and temperament of Wesley, particularly since he mostly had to teach school-girls! Much more rewarding in every sense was his lecturing, for which he was in increasing demand in his later years, giving several series of lectures in London and Bristol, and being invited to lecture in a number of other centres too.

As an individual he was clearly a remarkable and attractive character, to which many who knew him have born testimony:

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[14] BM Add. MS 35012, a collection of miscellaneous letters.

> In society he was a universal favourite; there was a fascination in his conversation and manners that won all suffrages. His scholarship was various, his wit sparkling with classic lustre; and an intellectual superiority, to which all bowed, scarcely left him a rival in select or fashionable society. He affected no superiority; he felt his own powers, and saw them everywhere acknowledged, with conscious desert, which never obtruded in ostentatious pretension.[16]
>
> Wesley had the repose of character which distinguishes men of conscious power and unquestioned position. He never shewed any airs of superiority; his native disposition was simple and social; and to be on a good footing in any house in which he was a visitor and a friend, was a sufficient introduction to him.[17]

Ironically, after his death in 1837, Samuel Wesley was more widely and more warmly acclaimed than he had been generally during his life-time. This is typical of the many memorial articles which were written at the time:

> The musical profession has lost its brightest ornament. Since the days of Henry Purcell, no British composer has evinced so much genius and learning, developed with such variety and sensibility, or has displayed so much energy and industry in the composition of memorials as lasting as they are extraordinary. Flourishing at a period when composers met with less encouragement than at any epoch in the history of the art, he pursued his course without reference to the applause of the day, resting on the certainty that the time must come when his works would receive that justice which the then state of the art forbade. He cared nothing for the public opinion respecting his compositions: with him the art was all in all, and, like Sebastian Bach, Handel, and Mozart, he affords another instance of the remark that it is the prerogative of genius to look forward with a calm but assured expectation that posterity will award that meed of approval which must ever attend its bright and beautiful creations.[18]

It is a testimony to the genius of Samuel Wesley that, surrounded as he was by multifarious frustrations both domestic and musical, he should nevertheless be able to compose such an amazing quantity of music;

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[16] George Stevenson, The Memorials of the Wesley Family, (London, 1876), p.518.

[17] Edward Holmes, Cathedral Music and Composers', Musical Times, Vol.4, (July 1851), p.225.

[18] Quoted by George Stevenson, p.533.

it is even more commendable that much of this music is also of a high quality. Contemporary circumstances prevented his music from being properly appreciated in his day, and irrational prejudice, which has haunted it ever since, has perpetuated that neglect. Had Wesley been born at another time, or in another country, or into another family, his story would have been so different!

## CHAPTER 2

## TO ROME AND BACK!

At a very early age, it seems, Samuel Wesley was the cause of some considerable anxiety and concern on the part of his father, Charles. His astonishing abilities in music prematurely displayed meant that he was taken from place to place (often by Martin Madan, his god-father) to perform, being hailed as an infant prodigy. It was not these musical activities themselves which concerned Charles: he apparently approved of them. What was more alarming to him was the effect this was having on his son: he detected a changing attitude, he feared a growing estrangement between father and son, and he was particularly concerned about Samuel's spiritual development. On one occasion, when Samuel was seven years old and his father was away in London, Charles wrote to his son in Bristol, pleading with him to be sensible, careful, and, above all, to attend to his spiritual duties. The letter is dated 6th March 1773:

> Come now, my good friend Samuel, and let us reason together. God made you for himself; that is, to be for ever happy with Him. Ought you not, therefore, to serve and love Him? But you can do neither, unless He gives you the power....You should now begin to live by reason and religion. There should be sense, even in your play and diversions: therefore I have furnished you with maps and books and harpsichord. Every day get something by heart, whatever your mother recommends. Every day read one or more chapters in the Bible....Foolish people are too apt to praise you. If they see anything good in you, they should praise God, not you, for it. As for music, it is neither good nor bad in itself. You have a natural inclination to it: but God gave you that; therefore God only should be thanked and praised for it.[1]

However strong and frequent such paternal warnings may have been it seems they produced rather less response from Samuel than his father had hoped. Certainly, when the family eventually moved permanently to London five years later, the situation was no better

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[1] Quoted by Thomas Jackson in The Life of the Rev. Charles Wesley, (London, 1841), p.358.

(as far as Charles was concerned); indeed, any disaffection shown by Samuel towards his father was in danger of being aggravated and increased by the social environment in which the young musician now found himself. In addition, Charles had many critics among the Methodists who frequently censured him for allowing his two musical sons to pursue their music so publicly:

> The good Bristol Methodists saw with considerable jealousy the approximation to fashionable and worldly connections to which the musical talents of his sons led the family of their Pastor, and we possess some curious animadversions and anonymous warnings addressed to the Rev. C. Wesley on this delicate topic.[2]

When the subscription concerts were established in the Wesley home, John Wesley was one of many who entertained grave reservations about such a venture taking place in the home of a leading Methodist, but Charles justified his actions thus:

> I am clear, without doubt, that my sons' concert is after the will and order of Providence. It has established them as musicians, and in a safe and honourable way. The Bishop has since sent us word, that he has never heard any music he liked so well, and promises Charles five scholars next winter.[3]

In the case of Samuel, Charles' confidence was confounded and the fears of his Methodists critics vindicated; for while Samuel was indeed being recognised and established as a musician, the 'way' was not as 'safe and honourable' as Charles had supposed. Ironically, it was not so much with essentially 'worldly' men that Samuel fraternised but with those whose religious associations were anathema to Methodists. It was through his involvement with the musical circles of London, particularly with those influential people who regularly

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[2] George Stevenson, The Memorials of the Wesley Family, (London, 1876), p.501.

[3] Quoted by Thomas Jackson, p.351-2.

attended the subscription concerts, that Samuel Wesley was first brought into close contact with catholics, with the Roman church, and, more particularly, with the elaborately performed liturgy of the Catholic Chapel attached to the Portugese Embassy, which was situated not far from the Wesley's London home.

One individual who seems to figure prominently in the life of Samuel Wesley at this time is Miss Mary Freeman Shepherd, variously described as possessing 'a masculine intellect, and superior literary attainments,[4] as occupying 'a high rank amongst the literary gossips of her day',[5] and as being both 'eccentric and revengeful'.[6] She was apparently a well-known figure in her day, educated at a convent in Rome and brought up a strict Roman Catholic, and is, somewhat surprisingly therefore, referred to as a friend of the Wesley family.[7] J. T. Lightwood provides further information about this enigmatic woman:

> She possessed a strong mind, and had well-defined opinions, which she expressed on every possible occasion. Her knowledge of languages, classic and modern, was extensive, and she greatly appreciated their beauties. She had a wide acquaintance with the best literature, and was as fond of imparting knowledge as of acquiring it....Although a devotee of the Catholic faith she had a broad outlook on religious questions generally. She held John Wesley in great esteem, and Adam Clarke's biographer went so far as to assert that 'she would willingly have merged her name in his'.[8]

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4 Thomas Jackson, p.359.

5 J. T. Lightwood, Samuel Wesley, Musician, (London, 1937) p.63.

6 Thomas Jackson, p.359.

7 Thomas Jackson, p.359.

8 Samuel Wesley, Musician, p.63.

At the time when this association with Miss Shepherd was beginning, Samuel was in his mid-teens, a highly impressionable period for any youth; but for him, any adolescent insecurity must have been heightened by the tension between him and his father, by his growing disenchantment with his father's form of religion, and by his new-found attraction to the services of the nearby Catholic chapel. Bearing this in mind, it is then significant that Adam Clarke said of Miss Shepherd that 'when she chanced to entertain a partiality for any young person she possessed a remarkable power of attracting them to her.'[9] Lightwood adds that it is therefore 'not surprising that Samuel Wesley fell under her sway.'[10]

It is difficult to know precisely how far Samuel was influenced by this persuasive lady; subsequently, she tried to disclaim any involvement in his 'conversion', writing to Dr Adam Clarke:

> And I cannot help disculpating myself from the general belief spread among Mr Wesley's people of my having made young Samuel Wesley a Papist; he was made one two full years before I ever saw his face; I had not the smallest share in making him a Catholic; a Frenchman who went to his father's house was his converter;....I persuaded S.W. not to live in criminal hypocrisy and deception but to tell his father honestly the fact lest he should hear it from others; he had not the courage to do this but begged me to break it to his father. I said it would be indecorous and not treating him with the respect and regard due to a clergyman, a gentleman and a parent; but the late Duchess of Norfolk.... would best sympathise in tenderness of feeling with Mr Charles Wesley .... She went in person and showed him all respect and regard. So far and no farther was I concerned; and afterwards in endeavouring to persuade this two years old convert to live soberly, temperately, and piously; for this and only this I have done ample penance.[11]

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[9] From an undated letter in BM Add. MS 35013, a collection of miscellaneous letters.

[10] Samuel Wesley, Musician, p.63.

[11] BM Add. MS 35013.

Unfortunately, there are too many discrepancies in Miss Shepherd's account for it to carry much credibility; other contemporary correspondence clearly shows a rather closer relationship between Samuel Wesley and Miss Shepherd than she apparently wanted to admit. There are, for example, in BM Add. MS 34267, six letters written by Samuel Wesley to Miss Shepherd about the time of his 'conversion';[12] in one of these, dated Friday 26th December (presumably 1783), he wrote:

> It is my firm intention to visit France in a few years at the most, but I will tell you one reason for staying here a little time first: you may perceive that my father expresses himself violently averse to my becoming a Catholic. As I have before said, we never enter on the subject of Religion together..... If I was to consent to go abroad he would immediately conclude that I wished to profess myself a Papist openly; this I know would give him extreme uneasiness. I know his rooted prejudice against the Roman Church, and therefore should not wish to occasion him a moment's pain on that account.
>
> This objection is what I have not before disclosed to you, but the force of it you will acknowledge... I cannot act in opposition to my conscience, but I will not distress the Author of my being by taking such a step as I know would rob him of his comfort.

Miss Shepherd was apparently Samuel Wesley's confidante!

Later, by August 1785, relations between them had become somewhat strained. A document in the hand of Miss Shepherd, preserved in the Archives of Wesley's Chapel in London, refers to a letter written to her by Samuel in which his attitude to her had clearly changed: he accused her of estranging 'every part of his family from each other, making mischief between all and sowing discord in the household.' However, his true affection for Miss Shepherd was revealed at the time of her death in 1806 in two letters he wrote to his mother. The first is dated Friday November 6th 1806:

> The virtues and the beneficence of my dearest departed friend rise daily in more glowing colours before me, and

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[12] There are also copies of these letters in BM Add. MS 35013.

> the cruel contempt and injustice which she underwent, infix themselves daily deeper in my memory and excite my indignation....It would be to no purpose to prolong this letter to you upon a subject where no agreement can possibly take place, but I cordially wish you to be assured that in any way I can individually contribute to your comfort, where interference with anyone else does not happen, you can rely on the sincerity of your affectionate son, S. Wesley. [13]

Two months later, he was still mourning her loss; the second letter to his mother is dated January 15th 1807:

> My views, whilst I live, are now merely to be able to provide bread and cheese for those of whose existence I have been the unfortunate cause. All relish and real enjoyment of life were for ever withdrawn by the loss of the dearest and most accomplished of characters![14]

Sometime in the early part of 1784, under the influence of some of his musical acquaintances, particularly that of Miss Shepherd, Samuel Wesley professed conversion to the Catholic faith. That, initially, he took this seriously is demonstrated in his composing, in May 1784, an elaborate setting of the mass, Missa de Spiritu Sancto; he made a neat copy of it, had it bound, and sent it to the Pope.[15] In a letter he wrote to Miss Shepherd at this time, he reported:

> The Mass is bound up and the following words prefixed as a dedication: 'Beatissimo Patri, Pio Sexto, haec missa humilitate maxima dicatur indignissimo et obsequentissimo servo, S.Wesley.'[16]

Eventually, in May the following year, the Pope acknowledged Wesley's gift in a letter to Bishop Talbot, Vicar Apostolic of London.

The Wesley family, however shocked they may have been, nevertheless took Samuel's 'conversion' seriously too. The task of informing

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[13] BM Add. MS 35012, a collection of miscellaneous letters.

[14] BM Add. MS 35012.

[15] This copy is in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge - MS 730.

[16] BM Add. MS 34267.

his father of his Catholic affiliation was eventually given to the Duchess of Norfolk, the highest Roman Catholic Peeress in the country; she was particularly sensitive to the situation and endeavoured to soften the blow for the ageing Charles Wesley. But for one who considered the Church of Rome to be idolatrous, full of abominable superstitions and immoralities, against which Scripture levelled the severest threatenings, to learn of his son's apostasy in that direction was a great sorrow. In the few remaining years of his life, he grieved and wept and prayed much over his prodigal son, but never entirely gave up hope. Typical of his sentiments at this time are these verses from a lengthy soliloquy:

> Farewell, my all of earthly hope,
> My nature's stay, my age's prop,
> Irrevocably gone!
> Submissive to the will divine,
> I acquiesce, and make it mine;
> I offer up my son!
>
> Yet since he from my heart is torn,
> Patient, resign'd, I calmly mourn
> The darling snatch'd away:
> Father, with thee thy own I leave;
> Into thy mercy's arms receive,
> And keep him to that day.[17]

By the time Charles died in 1788, there had been a measure of reconciliation between them. Sarah Wesley has recorded how, on his deathbed, his father took Samuel by the hand and said:

> 'Omnia vanitas et vexatio spiritus; praeter amare Deum et illis servire'. Giving him his blessing, he added, 'I shall bless God to all eternity that ever you were born, I am persuaded I shall'.[18]

Uncle John was no less concerned than his brother; he wrote to his erring nephew on August 19th 1784, reminding him of the essence

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[17] Thomas Jackson, p.361.

[18] 'An account of the Death of the late Rev. Charles Wesley', The Arminian Magazine, Vol.XI, (August, 1788), p.407. (Quoted by Holmes Ambrose, The Anglican Anthems and Roman Catholic Motets of Samuel Wesley (1766-1837), unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, (Boston, 1969), p.64.)

of Christianity as he understood it:

> Whether in this Church or that, I care not. You may be saved in either, or damned in either. But I fear, you are not born again: and except you are born again, you cannot see the kingdom of God. You believe the Church of Rome is right. What then? If you are not born of God, you are of no church.[19]

In a similar vein, John wrote to Samuel's brother, Charles, on May 2nd 1786:

> I doubt not both Sarah and you are in trouble, because Samuel has 'changed his religion'. Nay, he has changed his opinion and mode of worship: but that is not religion; it is quite another thing...Earnestly and diligently use all the means which God hath put plentifully into your hands! Otherwise I should not at all wonder if God permit you also to be given up to a strong delusion. But whether you were or were not, whether you are Protestants or Papists, neither you nor he can ever enter into glory, unless you are now cleansed from all pollution of flesh and spirit, and perfect holiness in the fear of God.[20]

Samuel, in fact, had a great respect for his Uncle John, and would quickly come to his defence whenever necessary, as he did shortly after John's death in 1791. With the founder of Methodism gone, a number of pamphlets were published viciously criticising the movement and defaming its founder. Samuel wrote a reply to one of these pamphlets and had it published, his only contribution to literature; it is a somewhat enigmatic publication with the title 'Vindex to Verax'.[21] ('Verax' was the 'nom de plume' of the writer of the original pamphlet, and 'Vindex' that assumed by Wesley.) In a letter written by Miss Shepherd to Samuel on April 24th 1792, she recorded:

> Yesterday, on going by a bookseller's shop, I saw in the window a pamphlet 'Vindex to Verax'. Providence guided and fixed my eyes irresistibly to it. I could not help going in and taking

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19 Thomas Jackson, p.365-6.

20 Thomas Jackson, p.367-8.

21 Vindex to Verax or Remarks upon 'A Letter to the Rev. Thomas Coke, LL.D. and Mr Henry Moore; and an Appeal and Remonstrance to the People called Methodists', (London, 1792).

> it in my hand. Although I told the bookseller I did not intend to purchase it he good-naturedly let me turn it over. 'Pray, who wrote this?' 'Mr Samuel Wesley.' 'What, the nephew of John?' 'Yes.' 'How do you know that?' 'Why, I have his handwriting to prove it.' 'Can you show me that proof, for I know his handwriting?' 'Yes,' unlocking a scrutoire, and giving me a paper. 'Oh,' exclaimed I, 'it is, it is indeed his handwriting.'[22]

Lightwood remarks that Miss Shepherd bought the pamphlet, took it home and showed it to some of her friends, as a result of which it has been lost without trace. Fortunately, however, there is a copy of it in the Wesley's Chapel Archives in London; it makes fascinating reading, revealing not only Wesley's attitude to his uncle and the Methodist movement, but also showing something of Wesley's intellect, wit and sarcasm.

The original pamphlet had obviously contained some spiteful and unfounded attacks on the character of John Wesley, and it was to these that his nephew addressed himself primarily:

> Before I enter upon the examination of your appeal, be it known to you and to the world, that I do not undertake to defend the doctrines of Methodism, much less the irregular conduct of any of its members: my sole intention has been to vindicate the motives of the Founder, and to snatch his sacred ashes from the scourge of Insolence.[23]

'Verax' had described John Wesley as the 'first mover of this mighty machine of Hypocrisy, Fraud and Villainy';[24] 'Vindex' challenged this description of Methodism as being unproven, and dismissed his charges against John as 'swaggering impudence'.[25] As well as the content,

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[22] Quoted by Lightwood, p.70. (The title page of the pamphlet indicates that it was printed for the author by J. Moore, Drury Lane; presumably that was the bookshop to which Miss Shepherd refers.)

[23] Vindex to Verax, p.13-14.

[24] Vindex to Verax, p.21.

[25] Vindex to Verax, p.24.

Wesley was critical of the English, the grammar and the style of the pamphlet; he comments sarcastically:

> You succeed no better in attempting to be witty, than in affecting to be learned....If you had learned one short Logical Axiom,....it would have saved you the trouble of half your pamphlet.[26]

Wesley summarised his case thus:

> That man who while living was loved and honoured, whose memory is dear to the Good, and whose character is venerable among the Learned, you have attacked without Sense, without Learning, and without Provocation. And what do you wish to have considered as a very admissible apology for your defamatory Publication? No less, and no other than an audacious Forgery.[27]

> His name will be honoured, and his memory be loved as long as Praise shall be due to supreme Desert, or Gratitude to disinterested Beneficence.[28]

In this pamphlet there is no explicit statement of Wesley's personal religious outlook at this time, but his sympathies seem to be rather more Protestant than Catholic. Certainly, the following year, 1793, when he was married, the ceremony was conducted according to the rites of the Church of England. Other contemporary evidence, however, more clearly demonstrates the fact that Wesley was experiencing a growing disenchantment with the tenets of the Catholic faith.

When the Pope wrote to Bishop Talbot acknowledging the arrival of Samuel Wesley's Mass, he not only expressed his pleasure at receiving Wesley's music and its dedication, and his joy in knowing it was an expression of Wesley's thanksgiving to God upon being received into the Catholic faith, but he added that 'what pleases us most, and excites our greater affection for the young man, is his skill in

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[26] Vindex to Verax, p.33

[27] Vindex to Verax, p.38

[28] Vindex to Verax, p.54.

religious controversy, in which you say, he excels, and the very good hopes you yourself entertain of him'.[29] It was not very long before this skill of Wesley's was being exercised, but not, ironically, in defence of the Catholic faith as Bishop Talbot and the Pope had hoped, but in criticism of it.

Apparently, it was not till after his 'conversion' to Catholicism that Wesley began to examine thoroughly the doctrinal content of the faith which, presumably, he had formally affirmed at some stage. The result of this examination was, as far as Wesley was concerned, unfavourable, and he consequently became engaged in considerable correspondence with various Catholic gentlemen, amongst whom was Dr Alexander Geddes, a Scottish priest who was working at the Chapel of the Sardinian Embassy in London. Wesley, it seems, was not interested in the current, burning, political issue of Catholic emancipation, but concerned himself entirely with discussing in some detail various aspects of the Catholic faith and certain practices of the Catholic church. In so doing he not only showed 'his skill in religious controversy', but displayed a remarkable knowledge of Catholic doctrine, of Scripture, and of his father's Protestant, evangelical viewpoint.

There is preserved amongst the manuscripts in the Archives of Wesley's Chapel in London a long letter written by Wesley to a Roman Catholic priest; the date of this letter and the identity of the priest (unless it is Dr Geddes) are unknown. The tone of Wesley's writing is polite throughout although he is very forthright in his comments; it makes fascinating reading and reveals more clearly than any other existing document Wesley's attitude to Catholic doctrine subsequent to

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[29] Archives of the Roman Catholic Diocese of London; cited by Lightwood, p.68.

his 'conversion'.

Obviously, some exchanges of views had already taken place between them, for Wesley wrote:

> I must therefore venture to persist in an enquiry concerning some subjects which you conceive so dangerous to be meddled with, and which you think ought to be settled, not by reason, but by ecclesiastical decision.

Clearly, Wesley had thought through his case carefully and was able to present it in a logical manner. He continued:

> You observe, sir, in the first place, that as to those to whom the Gospel was never preached, and who obey the law of nature, the Church has never decided that they will be lost...Would not he who had dared to declare at the Tridentine Council as his opinion, that Indians, although unbaptized and unconverted might yet be saved, risqued some such canon as 'Si quis dixerit, "Indos, aliosque, ethnica caligne abductos, sine baptismale fideque Catholica servari posse", anathema sit?'

Wesley detected an implicit contradiction in this area of Catholic doctrine, particularly in the light of the Catholic view of baptism which he proceeded to outline:

> That baptism is specially insisted upon by the Catholic Church as an indispensable requisite of salvation is clear, I presume, from allowing lay-persons and women to administer it in cases of necessity, and I believe that the following text is usually urged to prove how needful it is.

(Here, he quoted, in Greek, John 3, verse 5, a reference to being born of water and the spirit.)

In a previous letter to Wesley, the priest had apparently commented on 'those persons who have not the means or opportunity of being instructed in the Catholic Religion, and are disposed to embrace the truth when made known to them'; he considered that 'they still retain the faith which was infused into them at their baptism.' This, Wesley commented, 'seems to be acknowledging the possibility of their salvation', which, he claimed, was inconsistent; to prove his point, he went on to raise the question of the validity of the baptism

of those subsequently branded as heretics.

It was the opinion of the priest, so Wesley understood, that 'there is no absolute safety in any other than the Roman Catholic Church'; he reminded him of his own words:

> You say, 'It is the duty of every person who has salvation at heart, to seek for the truth, and to embrace it: and those whom God has favoured with more knowledge or opportunities than fall to the share of several, should be peculiarly thankful, and at the same time recollect, that to whom much is given of him much is required.'

Wesley perceived the danger of such a belief: thinking it through logically, he arrived at a conclusion which is surprising, amusing, put pertinent. If the priest is right, then 'the king ought to be Roman Catholic and cannot be saved unless he embrace it'. He emphasised his point forcefully:

> With what consistency or modesty can we call him the Servant of the Most High, whom we imagine to be the supporter of heresy, and therefore the Servant of Satan?

There remained, according to Wesley, a dilemma:

> Those who have many opportunities of knowing the Catholic Faith, and who nevertheless do not ever embrace it, either can be saved or they cannot: If they cannot, the King of England cannot be saved: but if they can, other Protestants in the same circumstances may be saved as well as he.

Wesley had strong feelings about these matters and expressed them frankly; he was particularly forthright on the question of Roman Catholic principles concerning marriage, challenging his Catholic correspondent thus:

> In truth, if all marriages are null and void, and all human conjunction of sexes contrary to the divine law but such as are authorized by the Roman Church, and solemnized according to Roman Ritual, the inference will not be a pleasant one: for then all those who past the ceremony only in the Church of England are (on Roman Catholic principles) living in fornication. His Majesty is then a fornicator: his Consort is a fornicatress, and all the royal family are bastards.

They also discussed the question of authority in the church: the priest considered that 'true religion is founded upon authority', but Wesley disagreed:

> Authority and oppression have often been mistaken as synonimous [sic]. Too many have been the instances when the voice of Pontiffs and the voice of God were not in unison. How little cause of dispute would remain, were the sum of Catholic Faith made only 'quod semper, quod ab omnibus quod ubique creditum', and why should it be more? Is that only applicable to Scribes and Pharisees.

(Here, he quoted, in Greek, Matthew 7, verse 7.)

Wesley knew his correspondent and could anticipate his reaction to this: his chief complaint would be that he had opposed his 'private judgment to the authority of the Church'. Wesley justified himself thus:

> The exercise of private judgment is said to have caused all the separations from the Catholic Church. But when any man resolves to submit his judgment to that of the Church, I would humbly ask, what is the real cause of this submission? or in other words, why does he submit? I know no other answer than because he judges it best so to do. Now if this be not the exercise of private judgment, I pray, what is? I believe then that private judgment is (at least) the true spring of all that implicit faith which is asserted by ecclesiastics to be so salutary and meritorious.

He cited I Thessalonians 5, verse 21 in his defence, and added:

> It is well worthy remark that immediately before we are admonished by St. Paul to 'hold fast that which is good', we are directed to 'prove all things'. Indeed I cannot divine how we are to know what is good if we are denied the liberty to judge of it.

The priest apparently commented on Wesley's attendance at Catholic services and also made some reference to the possibility of excommunication. Wesley replied:

> In regard to frequenting the public Catholic Service I think thus: that till I shall be certified *ex cathedra whether I deserve to be dubbed heretic for mine opinions or not, it is more modest and more candid to remain in retirement than to affect the submission Devotee while I feel the fact to be otherwise: for this appears to me not humility but hypocrisy.

> If my supposed errors are not of a damning nature, let me be honourably recalled: and if they are,let me be honestly excluded.
> (*from authority)[30]

A possible clue to the date of this correspondenc is provided in this paragraph referring to excommunication: there is another reference to that ecclesiastical censure in one of Wesley's letters to Vincent Novello. It is undated, but was probably written in the latter part of 1812; there,Wesley comments that 'the crackers of the Vatican are no longer mistaken for the thunderbolts of Deity. For excommunication I care not three straws'.[31]

It is clear that although Wesley continued to be involved in the composition and performance of Latin church music for at least forty years after his 'conversion', his spiritual affiliation to Catholic doctrine was rather short-lived. Typical of his later attitude is this comment in a letter to Benjamin Jacobs on November 5th 1809:

> My services to the Scarlet W[hore] of Babylon To-Day were very gratefully and handsomely received. If the Roman Doctrines were like the Roman Music we should have Heaven upon Earth.'[32]

In a similar vein, he wrote to an unknown addressee on Thursday, November 5th 1812:

> The serviee will detain us until nearly one-half past four. I believe, on examination of the Office of that particular day, in which are to be scraps of 'pribbles and prabbles' for one lousy saint or another, will extend the time a quarter of an hour at least, I fear. However, we must hope you willforbear your wrath, even should the fish be overdone by four or five seconds, in consequence of the delay occasioned by Holy Mother Church.[33]

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30 Wesley's own footnote.

31 BM Add. MS 11729, letters from Wesley to Novello, 1811-1825.

32 Samuel Wesley's Famous Bach Letters, edited by Eliza Wesley, (London, 1957), p.36.

33 Boston Public Library M.408.2 - cited by Holmes Ambrose, p.67.

Again, in a letter to a certain Alfred Pettet of Norwich, dated July 29th 1816, he remarked:

> I will inform Novello of your honest principle upon the matter of 'Adeste Fideles'. By the way he as much merits the title of one of the 'faithful' (in the Roman Catholic sense, which always signifies a bigotted Papist) as you or I, for he believes not a word of Purgatory, Priestly Absolution, Transubstantiation, extreme Unction, nor any other extreme of such extreme absurdities.[34]

In another letter, undated, and to an unknown addressee, he wrote:

> Pray come and have breakfast with me on Sunday morning next, exactly at nine o' clock: I have undertaken Novello's whole duty for the day at the papish Mass-house, and as the morning Service is all in score for the organ, there is no getting on well without some skillful man to turn the leaves. **You know how good the music is: indeed it is just as good as the religion is bad, which is paying it the greatest of all possible compliments.**[35]

Not only was Wesley critical of the Catholic church and its doctrine, he was scathing in his criticism.

There are two other items of interest preserved amongst the manuscripts in Wesley's Chapel Archives in London which provide further illustrations of Wesley's later attitude to Catholic doctrine. 'The Romish Objection' is an enigmatic document in Wesley's hand: it is presumably a quote from an official document outlining the attitude of the Catholic Church to Protestants. It reads:

> The faith of Protestants relies upon Scripture alone: Scripture is delivered to most of them by translations: translations depend upon the skill and honesty of men, who certainly may err because their translations are contrary. It seems then the faith, and consequently the salvation of Protestants relies upon fallible and uncertain grounds.

To this, Wesley has added the reply of a certain Mr Chillingwood, which undoubtedly reflects his own attitude: the faith of the Catholic is on

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[34] BM Egerton MS 2159, a collection of miscellaneous letters.

[35] Wesley's Chapel Archives, London.

even more shaky ground because it relies upon the administering of the sacraments by priests who are human, the authority for which has been given by bishops who are human, who, in turn, were baptized, confirmed, ordained and consecrated at the hands of men!

The other relevant item preserved in the Wesley's Chapel Archives is a sermon in Wesley's hand: whether he actually wrote it or only copied it, it presumably represents his theological outlook, which is not only non-Catholic but positively 'Wesleyan' - an evangelical sermon! It is an exposition of Psalm 130, verses 3 and 4, elaborating upon the sinfulness of man and the forgiveness of God, and liberally sprinkled with quotations from scripture. Occasionally, he directly attacks some aspect of Catholic doctrine:

> Some trust to their good works, as if those would co-operate for their evil ones: others betoke themselves to the fewness or lightness of their sins, having no regard to the wrath of God because they have never committed the more atrocious crimes. But the Scripture teaches no distinction of mortal and venial sins.

Elsewhere, there are more oblique attacks:

> Either Christ hath imparted to you this divine faith, or you depend merely on a human, false, diabolical faith, and by which the Devils may be as well saved as you.

Wesley exhorts his hearers to 'examine yourselves therefore whether ye be in the true faith...That is that faith, by which alone we are justified, sanctified and saved'. The whole sermon is one to which both his father and uncle could surely say 'Amen'!

This appears to be the only existing example of Wesley's homiletical writing, which poses the question as to how far it is representative of his later theological thinking. If it could be shown to be representative, that would be significant: it would mean that Wesley's theological outlook in his later years was more akin to that of his father and uncle than some scholars have allowed. The

evidence is rather scanty but definitely positive.

Wesley's association with Benjamin Jacobs in the championing of the music of Bach meant that, from time to time, he attended the services at the Surrey Chapel in London, where Jacobs was the organist. After one such occasion, Wesley wrote a letter to Jacobs, dated December 8th 1808, in which, having discussed Bach, he commented significantly on the sermon he had heard the previous Sunday:

> I assure you that I have not felt so much affected by an Harangue from the Pulpit for many years past as I was on Sunday by the honest unstudied natural discourse Mr Hill gave us: I prefer such a sermon to all the polished rhetorical essays in the World, which (most falsely) are called Preaching: moralizing is the utmost extent of the Term suitable to such cold, dry, lifeless Compositions, and I had rather hear two pages of John Bunyan's Pilgrim than Folios of such uninteresting trash.[36]

The 'harangue' that so affected Wesley that Sunday was undoubtedly a sermon in the best 'evangelical' tradition, for Mr Hill (the Reverend Rowland Hill) was an evangelical preacher who had previously spent ten years as a curate in Kingston, Somerset, where he had preached to great crowds, often in the open-air. Coming to London, he had not only built the Surrey Chapel and exercised a powerful preaching ministry in London, but he was subsequently instrumental in founding the Religious Truth Society, the British and Foreign Bible Society, and the London Missionary Society.[37] In other words, Wesley was moved by a sermon the content and mode of delivery of which were very similar to those of his own father and uncle.

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[36] Bach Letters, p.20

[37] From the article by R. E. D. Clark in The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church, edited by J. D. Douglas, (Exeter, 1974), p.470.

Incidental theological comments also occur frequently in Wesley's lectures on music; here, his sympathies are clearly more Wesleyan than Catholic, as this example shows:

> The bad are never completely happy and at ease, although possessed of everything that this world can bestow: and... the good are never completely miserable, although deprived of everything that this world can take away - for there is one reflexion will obtrude itself, and which the best would not and the worst cannot dismiss; that the time is fast approaching to both of them, when if they have gained the favour of Heaven, it matters little else what they have gained.[38]

One difficulty in trying to describe the faith of Samuel Wesley is that he was prone to spiritual oscillation, involuntarily controlled by his own mental stability. When he was suffering one of his bouts of depressive illness, his religious outlook tended to be rather pessimistic:

> In this life, my only consolation is in the belief of fatalism, which, although a gloomy system, is as bright as I can bear, till convinced of that truth which a launch into eternity only can demonstrate.[39]

When he was enjoying good health, his spiritual thinking was much more positive, as is demonstrated in a letter written to Sarah Suter, his common-law wife, on November 17th 1829:

> I fear nothing - my trust in the mercy and protection of the Almighty is perfect and boundless, and I want yours to be too. He never yet failed to help all who sincerely confided in his fatherly care.[40]

It was in this frame of mind, spiritually confident, that he died: it is recorded that on his death-bed he cried out, 'O Lord Jesus',

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[38] BM Add. MS 35014, a collection of Wesley's lectures (the fifth lecture of a series, given in the Royal Institution, Albermarle Street, London, on April 30th, 1827).

[39] The Memorials of the Wesley Family, p.509-10.

[40] BM Add. MS 35012, a collection of miscellaneous letters.

then he suddenly raised his hands and exclaimed, 'I am coming', after which he immediately expired.[41]

Those who knew him closely were confident about his true spiritual affiliation:

> For many years it has been his constant habit to study the Bible night and morning, and as no meal was taken before he had supplicated Heaven, so he never lay down without thanksgiving. He disclaimed ever having been a convert to the Roman Catholic Church, observing that although the Gregorian music had seduced him to their chapels, the tenets of the Romanists had never obtained any influence over his mind.[42]

Spiritually, Samuel Wesley was probably never convinced by the tenets of the Catholic faith: aesthetically, however, he was more fully satisfied by the liturgical music of the Catholic services than by anything he had experienced either in the services of the Church of England, or in the meetings of the Methodists. His flirtation with the Catholic Church was the source of the inspiration behind some of his finest compositions, the fruit of his excursion 'to Rome and back'!

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41 The Memorials of the Wesley Family, p.530.

42 The Memorials of the Wesley Family, p.533.

# CHAPTER 3

## A CLOUD OF WITNESSES

Samuel Wesley was the composer of a remarkable quantity and variety of music: orchestral music, chamber music, keyboard works for organ, harpsichord and piano, solo songs with piano accompaniment, secular choral music, and sacred music to both Latin and English texts. The majority of this music is unknown, the manuscripts gathering dust on the shelves of various libraries, notably the British Museum; some is, no doubt, best left in that state, but some, is worth further investigation. In recent years a few Wesley works have been brought to public attention - the Symphony in B flat and the Overture in E have both been performed publicly - and over the years some of his organ music has been published; unfortunately, these publications have not been fully representative and much of his best organ music remains unpublished to this day. The same is true of his church music: certain works have been published, and a few have become widely known at least amongst church musicians, but some of Wesley's best sacred compositions remain unknown, notably his 'magnum opus' Confitebor Tibi Domine.

Of all Wesley's work, his Latin church music is probably the most important musically and certainly the most significant historically - a quantity of church music with Latin texts, written by an English musician (and the son of a Church of England clergyman and founder of Methodism at that!), at a time when Catholics were not allowed to worship publicly in England. In addition, it provides a useful study of Wesley's musical development, since the Latin compositions span

almost the whole of his creative life, the earliest written about 1780 and the last in 1830. However, before embarking upon a detailed examination of the music, it would be appropriate to trace some of the musical influences which helped to mould Wesley's style.

Clearly, the greatest influence upon the developing musical style of the young Wesley was the music of the Chapel services in the Portugese Embassy; he had found his way to the Chapel very soon after the family moved to London in 1778, and was immediately impressed by what he heard and saw, beginning to write music for the Catholic liturgy at least by 1780. If it seems strange that the son of a Church of England clergyman, who was also a founder-member of Methodism, should have to migrate to a private Catholic Chapel in order to find aesthetic satisfaction, an explanation is to be found in the state of, and attitude to, music in those branches of the church in which he was nurtured.

English music generally, and church music particularly, was in a state of decline throughout the life of Wesley, reaching its nadir about the time of the accession of Queen Victoria in 1837, the year which also saw the death of Wesley - years which have often been scornfully dismissed by the writers of the history of music in England. There could have been little encouragement for a young musician so naturally gifted as Wesley to pursue his musical inclinations; certainly, the services of the Established Church would have provided little incentive for a composer:

> The standards of contemporary English music were then at a low ebb, both artistically and devotionally. No standards were set, as of old, by the Royal Chapels; at Queen Victoria's coronation alone, among all Anglican crownings, the Eucharist was said, not sung. Popular taste was at its lowest in all the arts.[1]

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[1] Winifred Douglas, Church Music in History and Practice, (London, 1937), p.72.

Wesley himself, writing in his Reminiscences about his uncle John's attendance at the subscription concerts and his contribution to the improvement of Psalmody, added a shrewd and revealing reflection upon the contemporary church music scene:

> At that time Psalmody was at a low ebb. In the established churches there was the same want of feeling and Pathos which characterized indeed the whole of the service. The wretched and disagreeable tones of the Clerk who usually acted as precentor were not then often intermingled with the shrill and squally efforts of the Charity Children: and the sublime and imposing effect which is produced by a whole congregation joining simultaneously in a chorale of the true ecclesiastical style, was a circumstance unknown. The organs were also in a lamentable condition and although wondrous improvements have taken place since the time now referred to, yet much remains to be done. The improvement of the national Psalmody will be a great stride towards the improvement of the public taste for music. Who, if accustomed weekly to raise his songs of praise and adoration to the Deity in the sublime strains and harmonies which are found in the Chorales of J. S. Bach, could resist the yearnings to seek and dive into the mysteries of a science which is thus made capable of raising such high and exalted feelings of all that is pure, holy, great, full to overflowing and almost I may say unfathomable.[2]

If Anglican worship provided little scope for church musicians, the meetings of the Methodists provided even less, for music did not escape their almost puritanical strictures:

> [John Wesley] had no time for anthems because he believed wholeheartedly in congregational singing. His directions for congregational singing are still pertinent and valuable. His views were held by his successors. The Conference of 1805 laid down the rule that no musical festivals or selections of sacred music be encouraged or permitted in our chapels. The twentieth question of the Conference had reference to singing. The answer was, that no instrument of music be introduced into the singers' seats except the bass viol. No pieces in which recitatives were sung by single men, solos by single women, fuguing (or different words sung by different voices at the same time) were to be permitted. In the next year Conference placed a ban on organs. They held the view that organ and special music introduced an alien note into a Methodist service. They desired the whole burden of singing to be borne by the congregation alone. In 1813 the Wesleyan Conference further defined its views on music when it passed a ban on the singing of 'vain songs'.[3]

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[2] BM Add. MS 27593.

[3] Maldwyn Edwards, After Wesley, (London, 1935), p.130-1.

Thus it was that Samuel Wesley found an aesthetic home amongst the elaborate ritual and fine music of the services in the Portuguese Embassy Chapel. The exact nature of these services and of the music involved is unknown, there being no existing detailed records - a personal interview with a member of the present Embassy staff in London only served to confirm that there were no 'official' records of the musical establishment of the Embassy Chapel. All that is possible is to attempt to piece together the scattered fragments of information about the Chapel services in order to produce an impression of the musical environment in which many of Wesley's Latin compositions were conceived.

Samuel Webbe senior (1740-1816), renowned for his composition of glees, had become organist and choirmaster at the Chapel in 1776, and he was responsible for the Chapel music when Wesley first began to attend the services. Webbe composed a number of masses, motets and antiphons for the use of Catholic choirs and congregations, and also contributed significantly to the revival of interest in Gregorian chant among English Catholics. During this period, and continuing into the nineteenth century, following the example of the Roman Church on the Continent, there appears to have been a fondness not so much for the polyphonic masses of Palestrina and his contemporaries, but for those orchestrally-accompanied masses of the Viennese masters, such as Haydn, Mozart, Weber, Hummel and Beethoven; indeed, British Catholic composers tended to have these as their models when they began to write their own liturgical music. Very little specific information about the Chapel music under Samuel Webbe is available; obviously, Webbe's Latin compositions were amongst the music Wesley heard at the

Chapel, but the influence of Webbe upon the young Wesley otherwise seems to have been negligible - he makes only passing reference to him, for example, in his Reminiscences.

In 1797, Vincent Novello was appointed organist of the Chapel, at the age of sixteen, and it was under his directorship that the Chapel music reached a particularly high standard, attracting not only catholic worshippers, but music-lovers, both catholic and protestant. Contemporary observers reported that 'music was an outstanding note at the Chapel of the Portugese Embassy',[4] and that the Chapel services were presented in a 'very elaborate fashion';[5] under Novello, music 'reached a high note of distinction',[6] and the Chapel deservedly 'acquired a reputation for its music'.[7] Mary Clarke, Novello's daughter, provides a fuller account of the popularity of the Chapel music and of the manner of performance, in the biography of her father:

> It became a fashion to hear the service at the Portugese chapel; and South Street, on a Sunday, was thronged with carriages waiting outside, while their owners crowded to suffocation the small, taper-lighted space within. With attentive hush were oftentimes listened to, the strains of Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven or Himmel [Hummel] , in some soft offertory, breathed out by four well-disciplined voices, and sustained by Novello's smooth fingers, creeping with a certain maintained equipoise from note to note of the ivory keys, hardly whiter than his own hands.[8]

At the major church festivals the Chapel choir presented special music, as Novello's letter to Mr Leigh Hunt on 3rd March 1823 indicates:

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[4] Douglas Newton, Catholic London, (London, 1950), p.290.

[5] Bernard Ward, The Dawn of the Catholic Revival in England, 1781-1803, (London, 1887), p.25.

[6] Douglas Newton, p.290.

[7] Bernard Ward, p.25.

[8] Mary Cowden Clarke, The Life and Labours of Vincent Novello, (London, 1864), p.4.

> I hope you will attend the 'Tenebrae' etc. during Holy Week, and the High Mass on Easter Sunday - those services will enable you to form a fair estimate of what the choirs can do both in the solemn and magnificent styles - as they always bring forward their best music of the former class on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, and their grandest compositions of the gayer class on Easter Sunday.[9]

On other occasions, instrumentalists were employed so that the choir were able to present larger works with orchestral accompaniments, such as the performance of the Mozart Requiem which was given in the Chapel in 1829, in recognition of the death of Mozart's sister. Mary Clarke commented on this occasion in her father's biography:

> ....a performance of Mozart's Requiem, with a small orchestra and organ, in South Street Chapel. A few choice instruments, - Mori's violin, Mariotti's trombone, Anfossi's double-bass, and some other professional friends' assistance, sustained the organist in this refined execution of the great musician's masterpiece. Eye as well as ear was gratified upon that occasion (the last wherein South Street Chapel shone with its former glory; for, soon after, it was dismantled, and the Embassy's service no longer performed there) in the expression of Novello's countenance, while the reflection of the light from the tapers fell full upon it, beaming with intellectual rapture and enthusiasm for the great master he was illustrating, as well as for the art in which he himself so excelled. His admirably shaped head, in harmonious relief against the crimson drapery surrounding the organ-loft, formed a picture that might have been a study for Titian.[10]

The organ in the Embassy Chapel was obviously a fine instrument: the 1757 Inventory of the Catholic Record Society records that in the choir of the chapel there was 'une grande Orgue d'Eglise parfaite avec toutes ses Appartenances intérieures'.[11] Mary Clarke has provided a little more detail about the instrument and a colourful description of her father's playing of it:

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[9] BM Add. MS 38108, a collection of miscellaneous letters.

[10] Mary Clarke, p.33.

[11] Catholic Record Society, Registers I, 1757 Inventory, p.xxxi.

> The not very large, but exquisitely sweet-toned instrument that belonged to South Street chapel, had three rows of keys; over which the white, supple, yet strenuous fingers of Novello used to wander with a touch almost loving, in its caressing closeness. Now light and hovering, in some florid passage of 'Kyrie Eleison', now firm and dominant, in some assertive 'Gloria in excelsis'; now rich and majestic, in a lofty 'Hosanna'; now full of pathos, in an 'Incarnatus est'; now persuasive and consoling, in some 'Benedictus'; now steadfast, strict, peremptory, yet, withal, instinct with spirit and animation, in some concluding fugue of exhortive 'Dona nobis pacem'.[12]

Clearly, Novello's organ playing generally, and his accompaniment of services particularly, was universally esteemed; the opinion of one contemporary admirer has been recorded thus:

> Charles Butler describes his organ accompaniment as perfect, and he not only introduced religious compositions of such great masters as Haydn, Mozart and Palestrina to the general public as well as to Catholic worshippers, but he persuaded such famous visiting singers as Mme. Malibran, Garcia, Rubini, Tamburini, Leblanche and others to give their services, making the Chapel one of the most visited musical centres in London. If some were inclined to carp at its 'shilling opera', it did familiarise people with Catholic ritual music and rites.[13]

Further indication of the kind of music performed at the Chapel and the manner of its performance is provided in a series of Vincent Novello's early publications: collections of music suitable for the choirs of Catholic chapels. The first of these appeared in May 1811;[14] it is a collection of music specifically composed for the Portugese Embassy Chapel, as Novello explains in the 'Advertisement':

> Most of the following Pieces were written at different intervals for the sole use of the Portugese Chapel and without any view to future Publication; but from their having been found not ill-adapted to the Powers of a small Choir, and more particularly in consequence of the very

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[12] Mary Clarke, p.4.

[13] Douglas Newton, p.290.

[14] A copy of this volume is in the BM - Printed Books 1133i.

> great scarcity of similar productions, so many applications were made from Persons who were desirous of possessing Copies, that I at last resolved to alter my original intention and to publish them.

He proceeds to defend himself against those who might criticise his editorial work:

> In order to afford Variety (by contrast with the simplicity of my own little compositions) and at the same time to give real value to the Collection, I have selected and inserted some of the most approved Pieces from the masterly productions of Mozart, Haydn, Durante, etc. Several of these however in their original state were so very long, that it would have been impossible to have performed them, without extending the duration of the service to an unusual and inconvenient length. As the only alternative therefore was abridgement, or total omission, I preferred the former, and ventured to curtail and alter some of the movements, so as to reduce them within the customary limits.

He also declares his overall aim in making this selection, and acknowledges his gratitude to those who have encouraged him to publish:

> In forming this Collection, my principal object has been, in the first place, to render it of general utility in Catholic Choirs, by selecting those Pieces, the words of which most frequently form part of the Public service, and in the second place, by endeavouring to combine variety of style with facility of execution, to render it acceptable to those Amateurs who occasionally dedicate the Sunday Evening to the performance of Sacred Music in private. Among those of my Musical Friends who have kindly contributed some very rare and valuable MSS to this Publication, I have particularly to acknowledge my obligations to Messrs. S. Wesley, Horsley, Webbe Senr. and Junr., The Revd. W. V. Fryer, and the Revd. J. C. Latrobe.

If this first publication proved successful, Novello promised to produce another.

There were over three hundred subscribers to this publication, including the Dukes of Kent, Cambridge and Gloucester, and the Princesses Mary and Sophia; also, J. P. Salomon, the impresario, and William Shield, 'the composer and musician in ordinary to His Majesty', together with numerous organists, clergy, and members

of the nobility. It is an interesting collection of music, containing, notably, arrangements of music by Haydn, Mozart, and Pergolesi, a 'Tantum Ergo' based on a chorale of J. S. Bach, and several of Samuel Wesley's compositions. Subsequently, Novello produced a second edition of this collection.[15]

Another volume of Latin church music was published by Novello in June 1816;[16] this is a collection of Masses, specifically chosen as easy to perform, and intended to be the first of a series of similar publications to form 'a complete Library of Masses, in various styles, from the most simple to the most elaborate - and adapted to every species of Festival throughout the year.'[17] A fascinating feature of the 'Advertisement' to this volume is Novello's directions to organists:

> In order still farther to facilitate the performance, a separate Organ Part has been added, in which all the Harmonies are fully drawn out, and particular directions given for the proper management of the Stops.

In a lengthy footnote, Novello adds:

> In addition to those directions, the following General Rules may be found serviceable by Young Organists:
> The Parts marked:
> 'Pianissimo' (or 'pp') should be accompanied on - The Stop Diapason alone in the Swell - the Bass on the stop D. in the Choir Org.
> 'Piano' ('p' or Soli parts) .....Stop D. and Dulciana Choir Org: or 2 Diapasons, Swell.
> 'Tutti:Pia'.....Two Diaps., Great Org.

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15 BM Printed Books 1133b

16 BM Printed Books 1133

17 From the 'Advertisement' - BM Printed Books 1133.

'Mezzo Forte' ('mf').....Two Diaps. and Principal D.

'Forte' ('f' or Tutti parts).....Two D., Prin. and 15th (without the 12th).

'Fortissimo' ('ff').....Two D., Prin., 12th, 15th, mixture, Cornet Treble and Sesquialtra Bass.

The Trumpet may be occasionally added at the termination of the Fugues and Full Choruses which generally end the 'Gloria', 'Credo' and 'Domine'.

There are twelve Masses in this collection, including a Gregorian Mass for the Dead and a 'Tantum Ergo' by Samuel Wesley.

A third collection of Latin church music was published in November 1822;[18] it contains the Gregorian Vespers arranged and harmonized by Novello, Hymns for every principal Festival throughout the year, Compline, Tenebrae, Magnificats, Salve Reginas, Tantum Ergos, pieces for the Benediction, and motets suitable both for the Evening Service and for use at High Mass. Novello adds an illuminating account, for the benefit of inexperienced choirs, of the most effective method of accompanying the Psalms and Hymns:

> It may perhaps be serviceable to inexperienced Choirs, to mention, that the following has been found the most effective method of accompanying and performing the 5 Psalms and the Hymn.
> For the Psalms, the Chaunt should be first played through (without any ornament) on the Full Swell, or Choir Organ.
> The whole Psalm, except the last verse, the 'Gloria Patri' and the 'Sicut erat', should be accompanied with the Stopped Diapason and Principal on the Choir Organ.
> The Bass of the last verse, the 'Gloria' and 'Sicut erat' on the Full Organ, without the Trumpet.
> The first Verse should be sung by the Cantor, or a single Voice; the other Verses by the Choir in parts, or by the Choir in harmony and the Congregation in unison, alternately.
> The two introductory Notes (called the Intonation) are only used in giving out the Chaunt on the Organ, and with the First Verse of the Psalm.

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[18] BM Printed Books 1133c.

> The four first Tones appertain to the Minor Mode, the four last belong to the Major Mode; the 8th Tone, Irregular, is so called, as it partakes of both Modes, and is without any introductory intonation. This Chaunt is never used but to the Psalm, 'In Exitu Israel'.[19]
> The Hymns should be sung in a time forming the medium between quick and slow, but rather approaching the latter than the former, to prevent their having a hurried effect. The Minum should have about the same degree of movement as a Crotchet in modern Andante time.
> The different Verses may be sung louder or softer, according to the judgement of the Performers, or the expression of the Words; but, as a general Rule, when there are three Verses, the first may be 'mezzo forte' (accompanied on the Great Diapasons) the second, 'mezzo piano', (on the Choir Organ, Stop Diapason, Flute and Dulciana) and the third in 'Chorus' (on the Great Organ, two Diapasons and Principal).[20]

Novello concludes the 'Introductory Remarks' with the hope that Catholic choirs will find the publication useful.

The music contained in this volume is interestingly varied: there are arrangements of music by Haydn (including music from 'The Seasons'), Mozart (including excerpts from 'Idomeneo'), Pergolesi, Cherubini, Gluck and Hummel, and several of Samuel Wesley's compositions.

Novello published one further volume of Latin church music during his time at the Embassy Chapel: 'a collection of Motets for the Offertory, and other pieces principally adapted for the morning service'.[21] Again, the music of the same continental masters is prominent, with the addition of Beethoven and Spohr.

These publications of Novello's provide invaluable information about the music of the Embassy Chapel and about the manner of its performance; the contents of these volumes reveal the wide variety of music employed, the comprehensiveness of the musical repertoires of Catholic chapels in the early nineteenth century, and their

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[19] Wesley based his well-known setting of 'In exitu Israel' on this tone.

[20] From the 'Introductory Remarks' - BM Printed Books 1133c.

[21] BM Printed Books 1133d.

preference for the music of continental composers. In addition, Novello's comments in the front of each volume give some clear indications about the performance of liturgical music in Catholic chapels. It is also apparent that the musicians employed at the Portugese Embassy Chapel were particularly capable, since some of the music in Novello's collections demands considerable vocal ability in performance.

This, then, is the musical environment in which Wesley's musical talent blossomed and was allowed expression; from an early age, through his attendance at the services in the Portugese Embassy Chapel, he was able to hear a great variety of the best contemporary music, both English and continental, well-performed. Of all this, there was one type of music which particularly interested him: Gregorian chant. As has already been said, Samuel Webbe senior, who was organist of the Chapel when Wesley first attended, made a significant contribution to the revival of interest in England in Gregorian chant; presumably, therefore, it played a prominent part in the music of the liturgy at the Chapel. Certainly, Wesley was impressed by it, recognising not only its peculiarly simple beauty, but its inherent potential as the basis for composition; it became an absorbing interest for the rest of his life, and he championed its cause enthusiastically, not only by making it the basis of compositions, but also lecturing on the subject, boldly advocating that every young composer in learning his trade should make a careful study of its principles if his training was to be complete:

> There is certainly no music better suited to this purpose than what is termed in the Roman Church the Gregorian Chant.[22]

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[22] BM Add. MS 35015, a collection of Wesley's lectures (the third of a series given in the Bristol Institution, on Friday, January 15th 1830).

Wesley frequently refers to Gregorian music in his writings; this is typical:

> The study of such masters as these, and of the old Italian composers Palestrina, Leo, Allegri, and divers others, and the assiduous cultivation of the Gregorian melodies have jointly assisted in materially advancing my progress in what I have attained and I securely venture to recommend a similar course to all those who aspire to that excellence which diligent application to such classical patterns is alone calculated to effect.[23]

He gives advice as to how to benefit most from this study:

> The study of Gregorian melody and affixing appropriate harmonies thereto is an employment which I earnestly recommend to all who are desirous of acquiring a solid knowledge of pure counterpoint.
>
> Before a competent facility of managing Gregorian descant is likely to be firmly obtained the learner must have made himself entirely master of the several dominant and final notes which belong to each of the modes of the ecclesiastical chant. After this he will be enabled to ascertain whether his harmonizations are to be characterized by major or minor thirds and in what key each of the pieces ought to be terminated.[24]

He appeals both to history and to bitter contemporary experience for support in his claims for Gregorian chant:

> The greatest composers throughout Europe are known to have begun their study of counterpoint from Church Music alone: and I continue to believe that there is no other radical security for solid improvement in composition than the adamantine Canto Fermo - the reason of which is evident: the Ecclesiastical modes all demand fundamental basses for their general accompaniment, and it is the neglect of studying them patiently and constantly that furnishes our music shops with cart loads of contemptible and wretched material.[25]

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[23] BM Add. MS 27593, Wesley's Reminiscences.

[24] BM Add. MS 27593.

[25] BM Add. MS 35014, a collection of Wesley's lectures (the fifth lecture of a series, given in the Royal Institution, Albermarle Street, London, on March 20th 1830(?)).

Elsewhere, he talks at some length about the nature of Gregorian chant, and the way it can be employed compositionally:

> The Gregorian Modes....are unquestionably the richest and most valuable source of the best diatonic melodies: a course of numerous lectures might be advantageously furnished upon their original grand and scientific structure, and their universal utility and their sempiternal and imperishable beauty...with the addition of some of the rich and affecting harmonies which the Gregorian Cantus will at all times admit, and which it is always in the power of a scientific organist to vary with great success.[26]

One sign of his interest in Gregorian chant was his attempt, during the time he was Novello's assistant, to make a systematic collection of harmonized Gregorian melody; this venture, which is frequently alluded to in the Wesley-Novello correspondence,[27] was never completed. Some of this work has been preserved in the BM. (There are examples of it in Vol.2, p.593). Purists would be horrified at Wesley's treatment of the plainsong melodies; despite his great enthusiasm, ironically, he never really appreciated the true nature of Gregorian chant! Other results of his Gregorian infatuation are the Missa 'Pro Angelis' (Vol.2, p.235), and a number of movements where the chief motive is a plainsong melody, notably the fourth movement of Ave Maris Stella (Vol.2, p.3 ) and section 4 of Confitebor Tibi Domine (Vol.3, p.113); there are also many smaller Latin compositions where the initial theme is either a plainsong melody, or a theme reminiscent of one - Wesley was so fascinated by plainsong that he must have produced many a Gregorian-like melody unconsciously!

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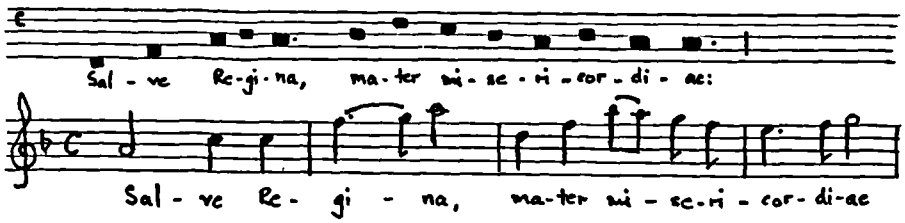
[26] BM. Add. MS 35015, a collection of Wesley's lectures (the first of a series, given in the Royal Institution, London, on March 22nd 1827.)

[27] BM. Add. MS 11729, letters from Wesley to Novello, 1811-1825.

To suggest that Wesley's themes are often unconsciously 'Gregorian-like' seems to be a more satisfactory explanation than that of Dr Holmes Ambrose who considers that, except for the two solo-voice compositions (In Te Domine and Gloria et Honore), all Wesley's Latin motets are related to a plainsong 'cantus firmus'. He explains:

> A number of works employ themes which are direct quotations of the official chant. Many have melodies which are diatonic extractions or prominent intervals from a sacred theme, and the motives of the rest are derived from or closely related to the contours of a plainsong prescribed for the official text.[28]

The problem with such a statment is that the distinction between those melodies which have 'diatonic extractions or prominent intervals from a sacred theme', and those which are simply based on 'the contours of a plainsong', must surely be a fine one. Furthermore, some of the relationships between Wesley melody and plainsong that Dr Ambrose detects are somewhat remote: for example, commenting on Salve Regina (Vol.2, p.363), Dr Ambrose simply states that 'the opening theme is related to the Antiphon';[29] his musical illustration does not demonstrate this convincingly:




Again, according to Dr Ambrose, the musical subjects in Levate Capita Vestra (Vol.2, p.477) 'are derived from the intervals and selected tones of the plainsong',[30] a statement he seeks to demonstrate thus:

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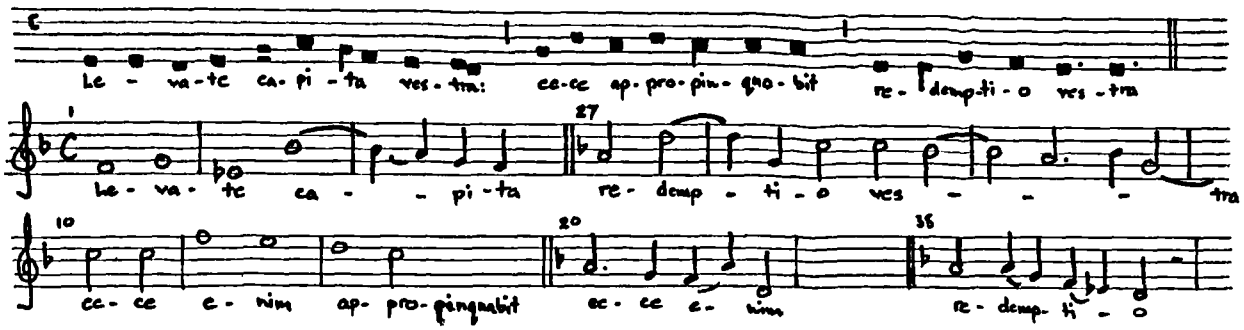
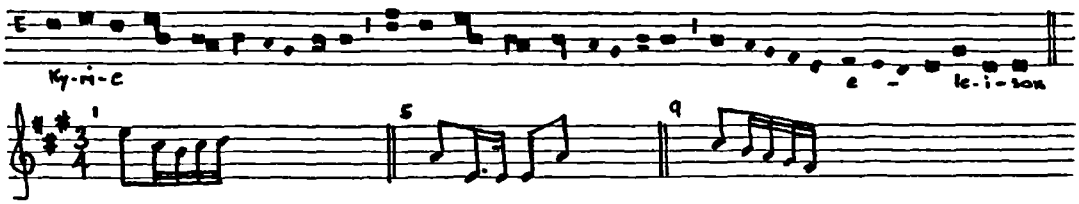
[28] Holmes Ambrose, The Anglican Anthems and Roman Catholic Motets of Samuel Wesley (1766-1837), unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, (Boston, 1969), p.198.

[29] Holmes Ambrose, p.225.

[30] Holmes Ambrose, p.246-7.




Many more of Dr Ambrose's statements concerning the relationship between Wesley's musical subjects and plainsong melodies are similarly inconclusive; the most fanciful and unnecessary attempt is in his discussion of Ave Maris Stella (Vol.2, p.3), when he claims that all the themes, including the instrumental ones, are related to a plainsong melody; he demonstrates it thus:[31]




Such claims are unnecessary: Wesley usually indicated that a composition was based on a plainsong melody, and in some instances also identifies the particular Gregorian melody. That his thesis is precarious is almost admitted by Dr Ambrose when he comments on De Profundis (Vol.2, p.423) that 'while no specific "cantus firmus" relationship has been noted' there are certain 'resemblances' between the vocal lines and 'the Antiphon which enframes the Psalm, as well as in the "tonus octavus" of the Pslam itself';[32] similarly revealing

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[31] Holmes Ambrose, p.209-210.

[32] Holmes Ambrose, p.219.

is his comment on Deus Noster Refigium (Vol.2, p.437) that 'this is the only one of Wesley's ensemble motets which is apparently not related to a plainsong source'.[33] His thesis is undermined more conclusively in his discussion of In Exitu Israel: having admitted that 'the original MS....has not been found', he proceeds to suggest that 'some imitative subjects of the motet ard drawn from the "Alleluia" and "Jubilus"', but that 'the final subject....does not seem to be related to the plainsong';[34] however, the autograph manuscript, preserved in the Royal College of Music (MS 4022), shows that the first theme is not only related to the plainsong, but is, in fact, a Gregorian melody, identified by Wesley thus: 'Thema assumptum ab octavo tono gregoriani cantus'.

It is true that Wesley was fascinated by Gregorian melody and that it was a formidable influence on his music; but to suggest that the majority of Wesley's musical subjects are derived from plainsong originals is unnecessary and a misinterpretation of the situation. Indeed, Wesley's most effective and characteristic use of a plainsong melody is in combination with a contrasting theme - In Exitu Israel is a good example of this. In working this contrasting musical material together, he was employing a technique which he originally developed at the keyboard. In his day, he was probably best known for his outstanding extemporizing ability; many who heard him were extravagant in their praise. Vincent Novello has recorded how, on one occasion when Wesley was demonstrating his extermporary powers, he took a plainsong theme as the basis of his extemporization, and gradually interweaved with it a second, more florid theme, 'producing an impromptu double fugue with marvellous skill'.[35] It was this charismatic

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[33] Holmes Ambrose, p.221.

[34] Holmes Ambrose, p.266.

[35] This incident is quoted by J. T. Lightwood, Samuel Wesley, Musician, (London, 1937), p.102.

ability, which amazed so many of his contemporaries; it overflowed into his compositions, producing music which, at times, is as remarkable as his extemporizations obviously were.

Gregorian melody and a masterly ability in combining musical themes learned originally at the keyboard are two discernible influences in the music of Samuel Wesley; but there are many more. Particularly evident in some of his Latin compositions is the sixteenth-century English motet idiom, especially that of Byrd. How prominently the motets of Byrd were featured in the music of the Embassy chapel is not known, but Wesley recognised their worth when he discovered them amongst the manuscripts in the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge. He comments on this in his Reminiscences:

> Our countryman, William Byrd, in some of the Latin Antiphons which are preserved in the Fitzwilliam Museum at Cambridge University, employs an abundance of the Gregorian style, and he may be pronounced as a perfect model of the most pure and chaste church music to be met with in the earlier English composers.[36]

Wesley demonstrates his interest in Byrd practically by transcribing eighteen of the motets from Byrd's 'Gradualia'; these are preserved, together with a few of Wesley's original Latin compositions, in BM Add. MS 35001. (When the present catalogue of BM manuscripts were compiled, these Byrd motets were attributed to Wesley!) Byrd's influence on Wesley is seen in his imitative writing and his careful use of voice-groupings: the opening of Ecce Maria Genuit Nobis (Vol.2, p.199) clearly reflects the idiom of the sixteenth century polyphonic motet, and the opening of Anima Nostra (Vol.2, p.387), with those carefully varied voice-groupings, is, without any discredit to

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[36] BM Add. MS 27593.

Wesley, strongly reminiscent of Byrd's masterly style.

Wesley was no doubt influenced to some extent, consciously or unconsciously, by most of the music he heard at the Portugese Embassy Chapel and elsewhere; the music of certain composers, however, was particularly worthy of careful study. He elaborated upon this in his Reminiscences:

> To all those who would wish to acquire a style of pure and elegant harmony, the study of all Corelli's compositions cannot be too strenuously recommended - for the grand and elevated style of writing, there is not a more exalted or sublime and perfect model than Handel. His slow and pathetic vocal pieces are also beautiful patterns of that department in the musical art, and our countryman Henry Purcell has never been surpassed in the wonderful ability he possessed of expressing whatever subject he might happen to select for the exercise of his fertile and exhaustless genius.
> Among our countrymen also, Dr Arne is an eminent pattern for the structure and formation of graceful and elegant melodies. I have derived as much musical profit in the article of melody from the attractive perusal of Purcell's and Arne's vocalities as by any of the very many others which have fallen under my observation.[37]

As well as studying the past masters, examining the music of some contemporary musicians is equally profitable:

> I beg leave to advise all who study music either professionally or merely for amusement, to study and cultivate the best authors both ancient and modern, and particularly the scores of the most classical composers, whether of early or modern date. Among the transcendent geniuses and composers nearest our own time, the names of Haydn and Mozart justly claim most indisputable superiority.[38]

The discreet influence of these two masters is apparent from time to time, and is most obvious in those works with instrumental accompaniments, particularly Confitebor Tibi Domine; there, the eighth section, a lengthy soprano aria, is clearly reminiscent of Haydn (Vol.3, p.165),

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[37] BM Add. MS 27593.

[38] BM Add. MS 27593.

and the following section, a duet for soprano and alto, is very Mozartian (Vol.3, p.219).

This superabundance of musical influences was somewhat overwhelming for the young Wesley, as his early compositions reveal; but he was gradually able to assimilate them, and integrate borrowed and original features into a coherent and individual style. Melodically, he was able to produce fully-satisfying and well-contoured tunes, and he was particularly fond of arpeggiated motives: the first subjects of Exultate Deo (Vol.2, p.87) and of the second section of Confitebor Tibi Domine (Vol.3, p.43), and the second subjects of In Exitu Israel and of Constitues Eos Principes (Vol.2, p.405) are examples of this. Harmonically, he early acquired a grasp of tonality and harmonic progression, no doubt assisted by his prowess in extemporization, and rapidly developed a rich harmonic vocabulary; he displays a predilection for excursions into the flattened submediant major key, a fondness for unexpectedly introducing the dominant minor ninth into the texture of a cadential passage, and occasionally enjoys some amazing tonal adventures, most notably in section 10 of Confitebor Tibi Domine (Vol.3, p.227). One surprising harmonic feature is the occasional appearance of 'forbidden' parallels: apparently, Wesley was of the opinion that if it suited his purposes he was at liberty to 'break the rules'. His attitude is revealed in two comments preserved amongst his manuscripts: in BM Add MS 35003 there is a tiny composition of Wesley's, a verse from 'Anacron', in which he has marked some parallel fifths; his brief comment in the margin is 'Here are two perfect fifths - and what of that?'. In BM Add. MS 31239, in a little 'Kyrie eleison', he again marks some parallel fifths; with typical Wesleyan sarcastic humour, he comments:

N.B. This chain of fifths I beg leave to present with all due respect to Wm. Horsley Esq. Mus. Bac. Oxon. Fifth and Eighth Catcher in ordinary and extaordinary to the Society of Musicians, 1825.

His personal involvement in the performance of music both at the subscription concerts and at the Embassy chapel was also a beneficial experience for Wesley in his composition, particularly in enabling him to write appropriately for both voices and instruments, which he often does with consummate skill; particularly striking are those solo vocal movements which were written especially for a contemporarily famous performer, notably 'Fidelia omnia mandata ejus' from Confitebor Tibi Domine (Vol.3, p.165), and some of his string writing, which reflects his own considerable accomplishment as a violinist. One practical difficulty which arises when performing Wesley's vocal music today is coping with his alto parts: he was writing for altos who obviously had an enormous range, far beyond that normally expected of modern altos, either male or female - his alto parts are often around tenor F, and even descend to tenor D!

Wesley acknowledged that he was surrounded by a great 'cloud of witnesses' from whom he learned his trade, yet, he was able to mould a style distinctively his own; at times, his mentors are apparent, but at its best his music is both thoroughly English and thoroughly Wesleyan.

## CHAPTER 4

## THE EARLY LATIN COMPOSITIONS

The earliest Latin church music which can be accurately dated is that contained in BM Add. MS 31222, a collection of thirteen pieces of Latin church music, together with various catches, glees and other secular vocal compositions, all in Wesley's hand; these Latin compositions were apparently written in the years 1780 and 1781, although they are not all dated. However, there is one Latin composition which must be of an earlier date than these, a setting of the Apostles' Creed (BM Add. MS 35024). That Wesley should choose to set these words is unusual since this was rarely done; this in itself, may be a symptom of its juvenility, which is further suggested by the prevalence of incomplete harmonies, by its generally static nature, and more clearly still by the handwriting. These symptoms are confirmed by Novello who, at some stage, made a copy of it (presumably because it was performed), adding the superscription: 'A very early composition by S.W. From the original MS (an unique)'.[1] Despite its juvenility there are already some tentative signs of the mature Wesley style, particularly his fondness for imitative entries (there is an example in bars 6-8) (Vol.2, p.415).

BM Add. MS 31222 contains twenty-one of Wesley's compositions, of which the first thirteen are 'Antiphona per Quattro, 3, e Due Voci composta del Samuel Wesley'. On the first page of this collection Wesley has written (upside down!) a prayer in Latin; this is the second of three prayers completing the official thanksgiving after

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[1] BM Add. MS 14341, A collection of Wesley's compositions in the hand of Vincent Novello.

the Mass, and asks that 'our every word and deed may always start from You, and may be undertaken and ended through You'.

The first antiphon is 'Kyrie Eleison a Quattro Voci - Designatum pro Missa de Sancte Cruce' (Vol.2, p.313). Holy Cross Day is September 14th; presumably, therefore, this was written for Mass on Holy Cross Day 1780. As well as the vocal parts, Wesley has provided an organ bass which mostly doubles the vocal bass. This early mass movement is simple but effective, lacking many of the weaknesses evident in the earlier Credo; again there are definite signs of mature Wesley, such as the expansive arpeggiated phrase at the beginning of the 'Christe' section (bars 9-11), the harmonic sequence (bars 12-16), suspensions creating seventh chords (bars 16-18), imitative entries (bars 21-24), and a hint of the neapolitan sixth chord (bar 30).

Sacerdos et Pontifex (Vol.2, p.507), a setting for four voices (SATB) of the antiphon to the Magnificat on the Feast of a Confessor-Bishop, is less successful. It is the second Latin piece in this collection, and was probably composed towards the end of 1780; examples of Wesleyan characteristics are plentiful - imitative entries, harmonic sequence (bars 13-19), stretto entries (bars 23-26), figurations over a pedal (bars 27-29) - but the various musical motives are not used to their full potential, nor are the sections entirely integrated into a whole, and the final cadence is particularly weak (bars 29-30). Unlike the preceding Kyrie Eleison, this piece betrays Wesley's immaturity.

The following piece is Gloria Patri for four voices (SATB) with an organ bass, designated to be sung at Mass after the versicle and response for the King (Vol.2, p.219); it is undated but was probably

also written towards the end of 1780. It is a competent enough composition but is not especially noteworthy; again, there are several Wesleyan characteristics prevalent - the opening arpeggiated figure, the interplay of tiny rhythmic figures (bars 5-10), the fleeting appearance in the texture of the dominant minor ninth (bars 23 and 37), a progression of ninth chords (bars 29-34), a hint of chromaticism (bars 42-45), and the use of pedal points (bars 52-59).

Hodie Beata Virgo Maria (Vol.2, p.285) is a setting of the antiphon on the Magnificat on the Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary, scored for three voices (SSA) and organ, and dated November 10th, 1780; it is an interesting piece although not free of juvenile weaknesses. In style it is somewhat unique amongst the early Latin compositions of Wesley in that semiquaver figurations are particularly promnent; it is also reminiscent of the music of the late Baroque composers, particularly of Handel. The promising opening is quickly frustrated through the semiquaver figurations proving to be non-progressive and to have a stagnating effect on the music; the close of the first section in the dominant is rather disappointing (bars 11-13). The central section is better: here, Wesley employs two contrasting themes (a device he often used to great effect later) to build up the interest, only to let it sag again and to degenerate into empty figurations and an almost banal cadence (bars 44-50). At one point in this section there are parallel octaves between soprano II and the organ bass (bars 19-20); this could well be juvenile carelessness, although in his maturity Wesley thought nothing of infringing the rules of harmony if it suited his purposes to do so. The final 'Alleluia' section is dull and

adds little to the effect of the whole. Undoubtedly, since at the age of fourteen he was already an accomplished organist and extempore player, Wesley would consider the organ accompaniment an integral part of the music, and certainly a tastefully realised organ bass can add considerable interest to a piece; however, in this instance, even the organ part cannot add sufficiently to the interest to render Hodie Beata Virgo Maria a successful composition.

The next antiphon in this collection is Ecce Maria Genuit Nobis (Vol.2, p.119), the antiphon on the Feast of the Circumcision of Our Lord Jesus Christ; it is scored for three voices (SSA) and organ, and is dated November 9th 1780. Wesley provides the additional instruction that it is to be sung at the Elevation of the Host in the Mass, or before the Magnificat at Vespers; in fact there is no official instruction concerning this - it was probably just the local custom at the Portuguese Embassy Chapel. The mood of the opening is reflective and clearly reveals Wesley's indebtedness to the sixteenth century motet idiom in the series of imitative entries: the first closes in the dominant (bar 9), the second in the sub-dominant (bar 14), and the third is a flowing quaver figure involving parallel movement in the sixths and thirds (bars 14-16), a device Wesley was to employ with great effect in later motets such as In Exitu Israel and Constitues Eos In Principes. This third imitative point is curtailed by the entry of the next (bar 17), which closes in the dominant in a rather uninteresting manner (bar 22). The second section begins with a brief homophonic phrase in C sharp minor which ushers in another imitative point, closing in B minor (bar 28). Imitative entries in stretto, in which the organ bass plays a part, initiates an extended 'Alleluia' section which is both interesting and

disappointing; interesting in that Wesley incorporates a hocket effect (bars 33-35) and uses a favourite device of rhythmic interplay over a pedal-point at the close (bars 38-41), but disappointing in that the promising mood and style of the opening is not entirely maintained.

Two settings of the same text follow: Domine, Salvum Fac Regem Nostrum, the versicle and response for the King. The first, for three voices (SAT) and organ (Vol.2, p.175), was written at the end of 1780, and is designated to be sung at Mass immediately after the Blessing; the second, for two voices (SA) and organ (Vol.2, p.183), dated December 24th 1780, is to be sung at Vespers: both conclude with the 'Gloria'. There is nothing of significance in either setting: Wesleyan characteristics, such as progressions of ninths and rhythmic interplay over a pedal-point, are prevalent, but his immaturity is also betrayed in the sectionalised form, both motets lacking real unity. Here, too, the many musical influences which were surrounding the impressionable young Wesley are evident, though they are not yet integrated into a personal style.

The next two items in this collection are separate settings of Gloria Patri. The first, for two voices (SA) and organ, dated December 14th 1780, is for use at Vespers on the Feast of St. Peter of Vincula (Vol.2, p.227). The opening phrase of this setting is particularly striking, a demonstration of Wesley's early ability to produce simple, but effective musical phrases - here it is the rising sixth which gives the phrase its character. Unfortunately, after this promising opening the piece degenerates into rather common-place figurations. The second Gloria Patri (Vol.2, p.213)

is similarly uninteresting throughout; it, too, is scored for two voices (SA) and organ, is dated October 27th (presumably 1780, although no year is given), and is designated to be sung at Mass on the Feast of the Transfiguration of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Ave Regina Caelorum (Vol.2, p.141) is an antiphon to be sung at Compline from the Feast of the Purification (February 2nd) until the Wednesday of Holy Week, an anthem to the Blessed Virgin Mary; it was written in 1781 and scored for two sopranos and organ. It has three sections, each repeated, and is replete with feminine cadences, smooth melodic writing, and consonant harmony occasionally disturbed by gentle dissonances carefully resolved - a style of music which was no doubt frequently heard in the services of the Portugese Embassy Chapel.

Some years later Wesley reworked this composition; in a letter to Vincent Novello dated Monday December 13th 1824, he wrote:

> There is a little Duo of mine (about 40 years old) for 2 cantos (an Ave Regina Caelorum), which I guess may suit your purpose as a matter of easy execution: when you inform me of the exact nature of any other Bagatelles you would have, I will rake among my dunghill of MSS and if I can find anything above contempt you shall have it.[2]

It was presumably some time during the next week that Wesley reworked the piece since it was on Monday December 20th 1824 that he wrote again to Novello reporting: 'I send herewith the tiny piece I wrote about in my last'.[3] This later version of Ave Regina Caelorum is now preserved in

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[2] BM Add. MS 11729, Letters from Wesley to Novello 1811-25.

[3] BM Add. MS 11729.

a collection of Wesley's later motets in BM Add. MS 14340 (Vol.2, p.147); on the first page Wesley has written: '....composed originally as a duet only, about the year 1781'. A comparison of the two versions is interesting: in reworking his material Wesley increased his resources from two to five voices (SSATB) with organ accompaniment, and transformed the straight repetitions of each section into soli-tutti contrasts. The overall effect of this is to enrich the texture and to provide greater variety, two features further enhanced by Wesley's careful scoring - he uses different combinations of voices in the 'soli' sections, and only a four-part chorus in the 'tutti' sections.[4]

Amavit Eum Dominus is the antiphon to the Magnificat at Second Vespers on the Common Feast of a Confessor-Bishop; Wesley's setting (Vol.2, p.133) is for two voices (SA) and organ. The first section, which is repeated, is in a similar smooth style to Ave Regina Caelorum, but neither this, nor the second section in triple time, although betraying certain Wesleyan characteristics, is in any way remarkable.

Emitte Lucem Tuam (Vol.2, p.207) is a setting for two sopranos and organ of Psalm 43, verses 3 and 4; this piece is significant in that it is probably the earliest of Wesley's compositions directly based on a plainsong melody. He makes this clear by writing out the Gregorian melody concerned at the beginning, and by indicating its initial appearance in each part (bar 1 - soprano I; bar 6 - soprano II; bar 16 - organ bass); it is the thematic basis of the whole piece, including the concluding 'Alleluia' section.

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[4]It is interesting to note that this reworking of Ave Regina Caelorum is unlikely to have been made for the choir of the Portugese Embassy Chapel - Novello left his employment there in April 1824.

The final Latin composition of the collection in BM Add. MS 31222 is Ave Verum Corpus, a setting for two sopranos and organ, dated May 11th 1781, and designated to be sung at Mass on the most holy Feast of Corpus Christi (Vol.2, p.158). Here again is smooth melodic writing and consonant harmony similar to that of Ave Regina Caelorum, emphasised by the prevalence of parallel movement in thirds between the two sopranos. Wesley subsequently reworked this motet, transposing it from its original key of F major into B flat major, increasing his resources from two sopranos and organ to two altos, tenor, bass and organ, and introducing some soli-tutti contrasts - all this serving to enrich and enhance the original composition (Vol.2, p.165). This later version of the motet is preserved in BM Add. MS 14340 and is dated July 6th 1812; it was this reworking to which Wesley referred when he wrote to Novello on Tuesday July 7th 1812:

> I send you a twopenny tune which mayhap you may think too dear by all the money. Should you however judge it worth half, namely one penny of lawful Copper Coin you will perhaps order it to be drilled on Sunday next post Vesperas, and I will attend to ascertain its fate.
>
> The upper part I have designated for Lanza: the Motivo is at least 32 years old, but I have put a few Furbelos to suit this jimcrack age, and I think it may please some of your half-in-half-musickers [sic] , such as call the Gregorian gothic antique humdrum, and the rest of the Polite Hepithets [sic] .[5]

These comments, as well as revealing the circumstances of Wesley's reworking of Ave Verum Corpus, also incidentally show something of his scathing criticism of the musicians of his day, a subject upon which he elaborated elsewhere (see Chapter 7).[6]

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[5] BM Add. MS 11729, Letters from Wesley to Novello 1811-25.

[6] The 1812 version of Ave Verum Corpus was published by Novello in 1842 in 'A Collection of Motets for the Offertory and other pieces principally adapted for the Morning Service' (Vol.I, p. 24). There is a copy of this volume in the BM - Printed Books 1133d.

In addition to this collection of Latin compositions written in Wesley's early teens, there are a number of other pieces which date from the same period. Qui Tollis Peccata Mundi (Vol.2, p.357) is an unusual composition in that it is a setting for soprano and organ of a prayer, a prayer appointed for the fifth day of Holy Week, Good Friday. Two autograph copies of this have been preserved which contain certain discrepancies: one is in the British Museum (Add. MS 14342) and the other in the Royal College of Music (MS 4020): the first bears a superscription added by Wesley at a later date: 'Anno 1781 vel 1782'. The music is no more than competent, in no way remarkable.

Sperati Miseri is also somewhat unusual in that the text has no recognisable source: either it is a text exclusively used at the Portugese Embassy Chapel, or the work of Wesley himself. The setting, dated October 9th 1783, is for two sopranos and organ (Vol.2, p.371). The opening betrays the influence of the Viennese school with its parallel sixths and thirds over a reiterated tonic pedal (bars 1-4), and the same influence is seen again briefly at the close (bars 40-42), but most of the remainder contains rather ordinary figurations and progressions.

Magnificat, vel Canticum Beatae Mariae Virginis is for three soprano voices with 'Organo obligato' (Vol.2, p.543); the autograph score, preserved in RCM MS 2141c, is dated December 27th 1783. The texture is partly homophonic, such as the opening bars (Example 1), and partly contrapuntal (Example 2); the most interesting section is that beginning 'Suscepit Israel' (bar 158 - Example 3), since the musical material here employed is the same as that Wesley later used more effectively, transposed down a semitone, in 'Redemptionem misit

populo suo', section 9 of Confitebor Tibi Domine (Vol.3, p. 219).

There are three other Latin compositions which, although not dated, may well be the products of this early period: another Gloria Patri for three unaccompanied voices (ATB), which is preserved in BM Add. MS 14341 (Vol.2, p. 471); Omnes Gentes Plaudite, contained in BM Add. MS 35003, a setting for three voices (SSA) and organ of Psalm 47, verse 1, which is prescribed for the Procession of Palms in the Mass for the Second Sunday of the Passion (Vol.2, p. 349); and Justus Ut Palma Florebit, the Offertory for the Common Feast of Doctors, set for three voices (SAB) and organ, and preserved in Novello's hand with an 'adapted accompaniment added by V.N.' in BM Add. MS 14341 (Vol.2, p. 305).

1784 was the year of Wesley's professed conversion to Roman Catholicism, an event which he marked by composing an elaborate setting of the Mass, the Missa de Spiritu Sancto. It is scored for four soloists (SATB), chorus, and an orchestra of two flutes, two oboes, two horns, two trumpets, timpani, strings and organ. The original manuscript is in the British Museum (BM Add. MS 35000), is dated May 22nd 1784, and extends to 464 pages; this is obviously a rough copy, some pages only containing sketches. Having completed the score Wesley made a second, neater copy, making certain alterations from the original; this copy was bound and sent as a token of his gratitude for his conversion to Catholicism to the Pope. Some fifty years later Wesley referred to this event in his Reminiscences:

> Many years before [the Confitebor] I composed a Mass for a full orchestra which was presented to the Pope Pius VI (the successor of Gannanelli) which was very graciously received and an elegant letter of acknowledgement sent to the Hon. Rev. James Talbot, the Catholic Bishop of London and Vicar Apostolic: some of the words applied to me were 'Gratum Animum quem ad acceptum minus ad ipsum gerimus

paternis verbis Nomine nostro explicabis ac si quando occasio tulerit. Re conprobabimus.[7]

The copy he sent to the Pope is now in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge (MS 730); subsequently, a collection of documents and letters relating to the Mass was bound together with it, a compilation made by Mr Ralph Griffin in 1936 which makes fascinating reading. He has prefaced the collection with a summary of the events surrounding the composition of the Mass:

> [Wesley] signalised his originality at the age of eighteen by 'verting' to Rome under the auspices of the then Duchess of Norfolk (Katherine, daughter and coheir of John Brockholes esq., wife of Charles 16th Duke. She died 21 November 1784). She was assisted by one James Talbot, a Roman Catholic Bishop at that time Vicar Apostolate of the London District. The first fruit of his 'conversion' was a mass of which he sent the completed MS as a gift to Pope Pious the VIth which the Duchess was good enough to see was elaborately bound. In it Wesley wrote a Latin dedication (the Latin as shaky as the writer's religious views) dated September 1st 1784. The Pope replied suitably on the 4th nones of May 1785 in a letter in Latin to the aforesaid Talbot which is still preserved in the archives of the Roman diocese of Westminster.

Amongst existing documents there is no indication exactly what happened to the Mass once it reached the Pope; eventually, he acknowledged it although it is unlikely that he ever had it performed - indeed, his acknowledgement betrayed the fact that he was much more interested in its spiritual significance than in its artistic merit. The manuscript was presumably placed on a shelf somewhere in the Vatican library to gather dust.

How the manuscript eventually came to leave the Vatican and arrive back in England to be preserved in the Fitzwilliam Museum is an interesting question; not all the details are known, but Mr Griffin provides some information:

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[7] BM Add. MS 27593, Wesley's Reminiscence. (Translation: You will state with fatherly words in our name, if at any time the situation shall require it, the grateful attitude which we entertain less towards the gift than towards the man himself. We shall confirm it in action.)

> It got into the possession of one Grissell who said he discovered it in Rome in 1885. It remained in his library which after his death was sold at Southeby's in 1917 where it was bough by Messrs. Quarritch from whom I acquired it on 29th November 1917. With it I had transferred to me a quantity of documents, letters, etc. referring to the Mass.

Apparently, Grissell tried to have the Mass published and performed; amongst the documents in Fitzwilliam MS 730 is a letter written by C.V. Stanford to Grissell on May 20th 1886 in which Stanford asks to see the Mass:

> I am sure the Bach Choir would be much interested in performing it, should it turn out interesting and promising; but I could not of course give them any advice on the subject until I had studied the score.

Another document, dated October 7th 1886, is an estimate from Novello's of £67·7·0 for engraving and printing fifty copies of the full score of the Mass.

Others were interested in the Mass too; a Mr W.P. Garnett wrote to Grissell in November 1886:

> I was very much interested to hear the other day from Fr. Stanton the circumstances about S.Wesley's Mass and the occasion of its composition. I have often wondered if he were a Catholic: for he wrote an 8-part Dixit Dominus, an In Exitu and another Latin work, which I think are published by Novello, and now it is most satisfactory to find out the real facts. I wonder if it is asking too much of you to ask you to tell me how you became possessed of the MS. and if the Mass is written 'alla Capella', for equal or unequal voices, with orchestra or organ. It would be a great thing to perform it in a Catholic church....[8]

It is interesting to note how apparently sketchy the knowledge of Wesley's work was just fifty years after his death!

The earlier attempt at publication and performance had obviously been abortive, but there were still those who were working to that end. On March 2nd 1887, Mr W. Barclay Squire wrote to Grissell:

> I saw Mr Wingham, the choirmaster at the Oratory, the other day, and spoke to him about the Wesley Mass. He is most anxious that it should be published and would do it at the Oratory..... As you probably know, he is one of the best

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[8] All the letters to which reference is made here are preserved in Fitzwilliam MS 730.

musicians in London and the work would be sure to be done properly.... I hope you do not think me troublesome about this, but I am really a 'fanatico' for our English composers, and am anxious that so fine a work by one of the best of them should not remain unknown.

Again, it appears, neither publication nor performance were forthcoming; it was eleven years later when Barclay Squire wrote again to Grissell (the letter is dated January 2nd 1898):

> Do you remember some years ago showing me a copy (MS) of a Mass by S.Wesley, with a Latin dedication which seemed to prove that he had been received into the Catholic Church? I should be extremely obliged if you would let me have a copy of this inscription. At the Little Oratory there is to be a performance of Sacred Music by English Composers, for which I am writing a few biographical notes, and I should like to be able to show (what has been contradicted) that Wesley was a Catholic.....[9]

Many were interested in the Mass but none were able to perform or publish it. On December 9th 1900, J. Varley Roberts wrote to Grissell:

> Thanks for the score of Wesley's Mass which I have just looked over, somewhat hastily.
>
> It is, throughout, very vocal, and would be effective when sung. There is also a very fair amount of contrapuntal writing.
>
> The instrumentation is limited as to instruments but were this supplemented by a judicious organ part, the whole Mass would be really effective.

For this proposed performance Mr Varley Roberts was apparently co-operating with Mr C.T.Gatty, for Mr Gatty wrote to Grissell on December 14th 1900:

> Varley Roberts' report is very satisfactory.
>
> I cannot get a definite settlement about the Cathedral performance before you leave, but there is plenty of time,

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[9] The concert for which Barclay Squire was writing biographical notes was 'Oratorio'; it was on Sunday February 5th 1899 and consisted of works by English composers: Justorum Animae (William Byrd), Jehova Quam Multi (Henry Purcell), In Exitu Israel (Samuel Wesley), In Dulci Jubilo (Robert Lucas de Pearsall), and the hymn Pangamus Neri Debita Cantica (Thomas Wingham). Of Samuel Wesley he wrote: '... when he was about 17, he became deeply interested in ecclesiastical music, and there can be little doubt that about this time, though in later life he denied it, he was received into the Catholic Church....'

> for I fancy the Cathedral will not be opened til June 1902.
> I am only too glad to think that you contemplate publishing so great a work.[10]

Considerable interest, favourable criticism, high prospects, but none was sufficient to make Wesley's Missa de Spiritu Sancto available to the public. Or was it? There is a brief and enigmatic comment in an issue of Notes and Queries in 1881 in which a certain Everard Green F.S.A. asked:

> Can any of your readers tell me if Samuel Wesley became a Roman Catholic? In 1784 he published a mass with the following dedication: 'Beatissimo Patri nostro Pio Sexto haec Hissa humilitate maxima dicatur (primitiae Ecclesiae), suo indignissimo Filio et obsequentissimo servo, Samuel Wesley.' It is dated Sept. 1, 1784, and at the end of the mass are the words 'Soli Deo gloria'. The copy before me is on English paper, and on the title-page is I.H.S., with the three nails in pile surrounded by a glory, which is the usual badge of the Society of Jesus. The music is printed by J.Whetman and J.Buttenshaw.[11]

Whatever it was that Mr Everard Green had before him as he wrote, there is no other existing evidence to substantiate his comments; to this day, the Missa de Spiritu Sancto has remained unpublished and probably unperformed.

It is in this mass-setting, written when Wesley was eighteen, that there are the clearest signs so far amongst his early compositions of the mature Wesley, of the masterly composer which he was to be at his best; unfortunately, it is inconsistent and there is much which is common-place and dull - indeed the mundane

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10 The cathedral referred to was the new Catholic Cathedral at Westminster.

11 Notes and Queries, 6th series, Vol.4, (August 20th 1881, p.147.

outweighs the masterly, and the overall impression is not entirely satisfactory. However, this longest of Wesley's compositions contains much of interest, and some remarkable passages (Vol.2, p.549).

The opening 'Kyrie' movement in C major is scored for oboes, trumpets, timpani, strings and chorus; it is in two sections, the first 'Grave' and the second, with a fugue-like opening, 'Allegro'. Its potential impressiveness is greatly hindered by the stagnant harmony, scarcely venturing beyond the tonic, dominant and sub-dominant chords.

The 'Christe eleison' (Andante) is one of the best movements; it is scored for soprano, tenor, bass and strings (Ex.1, p.551). Here is an early demonstration of Wesley's ability to write appropriately for both strings and voices, to give the voices considerable independence from the strings, and to incorporate them into the orchestral texture rather than the strings merely accompanying the voices. Here, too, is an example of an unexpected quiet ending, which was to become a Wesleyan characteristic (Ex.2, p.555). The 'Christe' is followed by an extended repetition of the 'Kyrie'.

'Gloria in excelsis Deo' (Allegro moderato) is scored for oboes, trumpets, timpani, strings and chorus; a 52-bar orchestral

introduction begins on timpani alone before adding trumpets, then oboes, then strings. At the close of this section there is an interesting harmonic feature: a momentary repose on the submediant major chord, a key for which Wesley developed a fascination (Ex.3, p. 555). This prepares the way for 'Et in terra pax', in the minor tonality, scored for strings and chorus.

'Laudamus te' (Andantino), in E flat major, is a duet for soprano and alto accompanied by horns and strings; Wesley demands considerable vocal dexterity and creates an interesting interplay between voices and instruments. The following section, 'Domine Deus' (Largo), is for oboes, strings and chorus, and is remarkable harmonically (Ex.4, p. 556). The C minor tonality is firmly established at the outset, becomes C major (bar 3), and then a diminished seventh chord which, by enharmonic change, is transformed into the dominant seventh of D minor onto which chord (second inversion) it is resolved (bar 5). The D minor chord is altered into another diminished seventh chord which is not resolved in the normal way but shifts to a different diminished seventh (bar 6); this becomes the dominant seventh of B minor onto which chord it is resolved. The next diminished seventh (bar 7) becomes the dominant seventh of A minor and it is on the dominant of that key that the music comes to rest (bar 9). In the next seven bars a return to the original key is achieved: from A minor, via the dominant seventh of D and through D minor, to D major (bar 13), by a similar progression to G major (bar 15), and so to C minor (bar 16). There are other instances in Wesley's music of similar tonal adventures, the most remarkable of all being in the chorus 'Mandavit in aeternum', section 10 of Confitebor Tibi Domine (Vol.3, p. 227); but this is the earliest.

The next section, 'Domine Deus, Agnus Dei' (Andantino), is in G major and 6/8 time; scored for soprano solo with flute and strings (including a solo violin part), it has a pastoral atmosphere throughout, and a Wesleyan quiet ending. 'Quoniam' is a contrast: it is scored for trumpets, timpani, oboes, strings and chorus. A 37-bar orchestral introduction initiates a lengthy fugue-like section (Ex.6, p.559); it is not an orthodox fugue but is based firmly upon the subject and counter-subject throughout, and employs several fugual devices such as stretto (Ex.6, p.561).

The opening section of the 'Credo' (Allegro ma non troppo) is in C major and scored for oboes, strings and chorus; at the words 'factorem coeli et terra' Wesley introduces 'Fugha sic doppia. Primo Sogetto in Canto Fermo, Tono 6' - that favourite device of his of combining two contrasting themes (here, one of them a plainsong melody) into a contrapuntal texture (Ex.7, p.561). Subsequently he realises to the full the potential inherent in the descending figure of the counter-subject (Ex.8, p.562), and displays his skill in combining various thematic snippets (Ex.9, p.563).

'Et in unum Deum' (Andantino) is in F major, scored for two sopranos, horns and strings, and reveals certain Viennese influences. The soprano parts are demanding on the soloists, displaying Wesley's early awareness of vocal potential (Ex.10, p.564) - this was no doubt the result of his first-hand experience in the subscription concerts. The following section, 'Deum de Deo' (Allegretto), is scored for five-part strings (two violas) and chorus. 'Qui propter' (Andante) is for four solo voices (SSAB), accompanied by flutes, horns and strings; here Wesley uses his contrapuntal skill to create interesting

harmonies through the simple device of dissonance and resolution (Ex.11, p.566). The 'Crucifixus' (Poco andante) is in the minor tonality and scored for soprano solo accompanied by strings in constant triplet figurations

After the subdued mood of the 'Crucifixus', the 'Et resurrexit' (Presto) is a contrast; at the outset all parts (strings and chorus) have rising figures to depict the resurrection, an interesting, though not entirely successful experiment (Ex.12, p.566). Trumpets, oboes and timpani join the strings and chorus and progress into a spirited 'Et ascendit' section in 3/8 time, a fugato movement based on a rhythmical, angular theme (Ex.13, p.567); there is a particularly striking treatment of 'non erit', where Wesley introduces a hocket effect (Ex.14, p.568) - there was an earlier example of his use of hocket in Ecce Maria Genuit Nobis. 'Et in spiritum' (Allegro) is in G major and is for solo alto and strings; 'Et in unam sanctam' is a chorus accompanied by oboes, trumpets, timpani and strings, mostly in triplet figurations, and this leads straight into 'Et vitam venturi' (Alla capella), a lengthy fugato section, based on another Wesleyan, angular theme (Ex.15, p.568).

The 'Sanctus' begins in C major (Grave) with the chorus accompanied by oboes, trumpets, timpani and strings; a dotted-note accompanying figure is introduced for the 'Hosanna'. The 'Benedictus' (Andantino) is a 3/8 movement in A minor for two sopranos and bass with a flowing, interweaving accompaniment on strings. The 'Hosanna' briefly reappears ushering in a contrapuntal section based on a bold, angular theme which is stated initially in stretto (Ex.16, p.569), and allows further tonal adventures.

The 'Agnus Dei' (Expressivo) begins with a peaceful introduction on strings (Ex.17, p.570), continuing in a similar vein, scored for two sopranos, two altos, horns, oboes and strings. This leads directly into the final 'Dona nobis pacem' section in C major, scored for oboes, trumpets, timpani, strings and chorus; the main theme is that of the second 'Kyrie' (Ex.18, p.570), and the 'Et vitam venturi' theme (Ex.15, p.568) is also reintroduced.

Here, then, is Wesley's longest single work, a great achievement for an eighteen-year-old, but so clearly the work of one not yet fully matured, unable to maintain a consistently high standard of composition for so long. With fifteen years more experience he was able to write on this scale much more successfully, as is demonstrated in Confitebor Tibi Domine of 1799. However, despite its weaknesses, this mass-setting is a significant composition for historical reasons: during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the number of settings of the Latin text of the Mass by English composers were very few, and those scored for full orchestra even rarer.

Sometime during 1786, Wesley composed a setting of Ave Maris Stella, a hymn to the Blessed Virgin Mary, scored for two sopranos and strings with organ continuo (Vol.2, p.3). It is an interesting composition; divided into four distinct movements and lasting about twenty minutes in performance, it is the most successful of Wesley's works so far considered. It has never been published, but two copies of it have been preserved, both in the British Museum: the original autograph score is contained in BM Add. MS 35001, and a copy in the hand of Vincent Novello, presumably made at a later date when he mounted a performance of it, in BM Add. MS 14342. Throughout the work Wesley shows his

ability in writing appropriately for both voices and strings - he was an accomplished violinist by this time.

The first movement (Andante) opens with a 17-bar introduction on the strings, clearly showing the influence of the Viennese school with its smooth melodies, diatonic harmonies and feminine cadences. Particularly significant is the two-bar figure with an initial 'sforzando' which is repeated sequentially twice (bars 9-14). The initial vocal phrase is four and a half bars long and is repeated after a brief interlude on the strings (bars 18-28). Imitative entries in the sopranos initiate a passage in which they have thematic snippets over material from the opening string section (bars 29-54); an extended cadential passage follows which is again strongly reminiscent of the Viennese school (bars 54-66). A close in the dominant and a brief instrumental interlude (bars 66-70) heralds a new theme in thirds in the sopranos which modulates to F sharp minor (bars 71-82). In that key the thrice-repeated 'sforzando' figures appear, beginning the transition back to the tonic key and a repetition of the original vocal material (bars 83-104). This is extended into another brief episode, involving thematic material, and culminating in the reappearance of the thrice-repeated 'sforzando' figure and a strong close in the tonic key (bars 104-123). An eighteen-bar, thematically-based codetta section brings the movement to a close (bars 123-140).

The instrumental introduction to the second movement (Allegretto) is a fine, spacious, Wesleyan melody, replete with many of the Viennese-type traits already detected in the first movement (bars 1-14); particularly effective is the fleeting modulation to F sharp minor (bars 7-8). This opening theme is repeated with the voices (bars 14-27).

After a brief interlude on the strings, a lengthy episode follows which contains both old and new thematic material; it begins in C sharp minor and modulates to F sharp minor (bars 29-62). A two-bar figure from the first theme is repeated twice (bars 63-68), and initiates a repetition of the theme complete (bars 69-82). At this point, the relaxed atmosphere of the movement is momentarily disturbed by some unexpected, rather more dramatic figurations, more English than Viennese: this is the beginning of an extended codetta section (bars 82-107). The final instrumental passage has a characteristically Wesleyan 'pianissimo' tailpiece.

For the third movement (Poco largo) in A minor, Wesley reduces his resources, employing just one soprano and no viola. The instrumental introduction begins with a unison figure followed by a movement in sixths closing sequentially first in C major and then in A minor; further thematic motives lead to a climax on the Neapolitan sixth, and a close in the tonic (bars 1-13). The voice enters, and the initial material is repeated with a different extension (bars 14-22). After a pause, an episode begins, introducing new thematic motives; this closes in C minor with another pause (bars 23-47). A transitional passage leads into the reappearance of the initial thematic motives closing in D minor (bars 48-66), in which key the soprano begins a florid passage returning to A minor (bars 66-74); thematic interplay between soprano and violin I, and development and repetition of motives, brings a close in A minor and another pause (bars 74-93). An eight-bar cadential passage and a seven-bar instrumental epilogue completes the movement (bars 94-107).

The final movement (Animoso)[12], is the best of the four; it is

[12]Wesley actually wrote 'Animosé'.

based on a Gregorian melody which Wesley identifies as 'Cantus figuratus super Tono Octavo'. Soprano I has an accompanied statement of the plainsong theme answered with a counter-subject in soprano II; the first section is wholly based on these two themes and is completed by an extended instrumental statement of the plainsong melody (bars 1-72). A new theme appears in soprano I, clearly derived from the original plainsong melody which appears with it, together with the original counter-subject (bars 72-98). Immediately, this new theme reappears in soprano II effectively, though unprepared, in F sharp minor, and initiates a lengthy episode into which all three themes are integrated, both complete and fragmented (bars 99-197) - this section is more like a development than anything so far in Wesley's compositions. This prepares the way for a unison-fortissimo restatement of the plainsong melody, accompanied by semiquaver figurations on the strings (bar 198); the movement progresses in this manner unabated to the end, just momentarily arrested by a more peaceful statement of two of the themes (bars 226-237). Wesley frequently based a complete composition or movement on a plainsong melody: this early example must be counted amongst his best.

In his Ave Maris Stella the mature Wesley emerges more clearly: various styles are incorporated, numerous influences both continental and English are evident, but the process of integrating these diverse elements into a coherent and individual style is in an advanced state.[13]

Whatever the reasons, whether his fall in London in 1787 and its detrimental effect on his mental stability, or his growing disenchantment with the tenets of the Catholic faith, there appears to be a six-year lull in Wesley's creative output for the Catholic liturgy. The

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[13] Ave Maris Stella is shortly to be published by Oxford University Press.

next piece of Latin church music which can be definitively dated is his setting of Miserere Mei (Psalm 51) for two voices (AB) and organ; this bears the date April 7th 1792 (Vol.2, p.321). A lengthy piece, incorporating the whole of the text of the Psalm plus the 'Gloria', it is based upon a Gregorian melody which occurs three times in the course of the work, creating a rondo-like form - the formal shape is A-B-A-C-D-A-B-Gloria. The other sections, which vary considerably in length (C being the longest), are freely composed, employing a variety of musical material with some particularly effective passages - such as the excursion into the key of D flat major (bars 250-259). Overall, however, the piece is not fully convincing: it is too long, or rather, there is insufficient musical interest and coherence to compensate for its length. This is, undoubtedly, one of those compositions in which Wesley, highly accomplished organist as he was, would consider the organ to have an integral part to play; certainly, considerable effectiveness is brought to the piece by a careful realisation of Wesley's organ bass, but there has to be inherent weaknesses in a composition which needs to rely on the organ accompaniment for its effect.

Another motet written during the same year (1792) is a largely homophonic setting for three voices (ATB) of Pro Peccatis Suae Gentis (Vol.2, p.493), the sequence at Mass on the Feast of the Seven Dolours of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This feast falls on September 15th, which suggests a date earlier that month for its composition. Three autograph scores of this piece exist: one in BM Add. MS 14340, and two in RCM MS 4025. The text is set to a twenty-bar musical sentence with the form A-A-B, which is repeated virtually unaltered, but with a two-bar extension at the end (bars 38-40).

The next item of Wesley's Latin church music which can be accurately dated is Levate Capita Vestra, which bears the date February 16th 1798; thus, there appears to be another six-year 'silent' period. Again, the reasons for this silence can only be guessed at: those silencing factors already suggested would still be applicable here, with the additional fact of Wesley's marriage in 1793 and the considerable tensions that change of state brought into his life.

The original autograph score of Levate Capita Vestra is preserved in BM Add. MS 14340, and there is a second copy in Wesley's hand in RCM MS 4020; in addition there are two other copies, one in the hand of J.P.Street in BM Egerton MS 2571, and the other, in an unknown hand, in RCM MS 4028. The text is the Antiphon to Psalm 116, from the first Vespers of Christmas, and it is set for four voices (AATB). An interesting archaism is that although the piece is in B flat major, Wesley has only one flat in his key signature - no doubt the result of his study of the music of earlier periods. Certainly, the influence of Byrd is apparent, both in his imitative writing and in his effective use of varying voice-groupings (Vol.2, p.477).

The opening motive in the bass is a noble one, moving slowly initially and then more rapidly; the tenor statement is a real answer and therefore tends to take the music flatwards, a trend which is reversed with the third entry of the motive in alto II, which closes in the dominant key (bars 1-10). As this first section ends, the next motive is imitatively introduced in alto I and tenor; this second section, which eventually closes in D minor at bar 20, is a particularly good demonstration of Wesley's constantly varying voice-groupings, each

tending to overlap the next: alto I and bass (bars 10-14), alto II, tenor and bass (bars 13-17), two altos and bass (bars 18-20). Into this texture the tenor introduces the next motive which is treated effectively, and in a thoroughly Wesleyan manner, in close imitation - the brief motive appears eight times in the space of four bars (20-24). This section, which closes in F major (bar 25), is the first in which Wesley involves all four voices; it is effectively extended by an unexpected, modulating repetition of the final phrase in the lower voices (bars 25-27). The next motive is introduced in the tenor accompanied in the bass (bar 27); it is extended imitatively and combined with a restatement of the initial motive in the tenor (bars 33-36). The final section begins homophonically, although anticipated in the bass (bar 36), but a brief descending figure in alto I (bars 38-39), reminiscent of the latter part of the initial motive, initiates a tiny imitative section, and a gently decorated cadence.

The original autograph score of this fine motet (in BM Add. MS 14340) is alongside another equally impressive Wesley motet, Anima Nostra, a setting for five voices (SSATB), with or without organ, of Psalm 123, verses 6-8 (Vol.2, p.387). This is the first item in a collection of twenty-nine of Wesley's works, of which sixteen are Latin compositions; the collection was made by Vincent Novello and presented by him to the British Museum in 1843. Novello has recorded this presentation inside the front cover of the manuscript:

> I consider this collection of Sam. Wesley's compositions an invaluable one, as of several of the pieces there is no other copy existing: and I therefore have the greater pleasure in presenting the volume for preservation amongst the other rare MSS in the musical library of the British Museum, as a tribute of respect to the memory of my illustrious friend, and for the gratification of all those who have the sterling taste

and sound judgment to appreciate properly these specimens of the genius of one of the very greatest musicians that England has ever produced.

Vincent Novello, July 14th 1843.

Two other copies of Anima Nostra have been preserved: there is a second autograph score in RCM MS 4020, and a copy in the hand of J.P.Street in BM Egerton MS 2571. Although it is undated in any of its sources, the similarity of style between this motet and Levate Capita Vestra, particularly with the prevalence of imitative entries and contrasting voice-groupings, would suggest a contemporary dating, that is, about 1798.[14]

The opening motive appears first in soprano and tenor I and is immediately repeated in tenor II and bass (bars 1-7). As this repetition closes, the second motive is presented in tenor I; the third statement of this motive modulates to A minor (bars 11-15), and the fifth statement is combined with a restatement of the first motive (bars 18-21). A brief transitional figure (bars 21-24) prepares for the next motive in thirds in tenor I and bass, repeated immediately in soprano and alto with an accompanying figure in tenor II (bars 24-32). Superimposed upon the close of this section is a fanfare-like, 'forte' entry in tenor I and bass, heralding a homophonic passage which modulates through B flat major to C major; this is the first use of all five voices together (bars 31-38). The fourth motive is stated three times: in soprano, alto and tenor II closing in F major, in alto, tenor I and bass closing in D minor, and in soprano, alto and tenor I closing in A minor (bars 38-48). Incorporated into this last cadence is a new 'forte' entry in tenor II, heralding another brief homophonic passage; a restatement of the fourth motive in

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[14]Wesley's original scoring was for two sopranos, alto, tenor and bass, but it is more convenient to rescore it for soprano, alto, two tenors and bass (see Vol.2, p.391).

soprano accompanied by tenor I (bars 53-57) is overlapped by a third homophonic passage, which disintegrates again into a contrapuntal texture, in which the fourth motive is again prominent, together with a descending D minor scale appearing fragmentally in all five parts, and eventually being transformed into D major, the tonic major chord on which the motet closes (bars 57-67).

Two further items of Latin church music date from 1798, and one other was probably written during this period of Wesley's life. In Te Domine is a composition for soprano and organ, a setting of a text compiled mostly from the Psalms, possibly by Wesley; it is dated July 20th 1798. The original score is in BM Add. MS 14340, and another copy in Wesley's hand is in RCM MS 4020 (Vol.2, p.295). In form, it is a rondo (A-B-A-C-A-D-A-E-A-F-A); the contrasting sections show considerable variety, with certain Purcellian traits occasionally apparent, but the rondo is scarcely good enough musically to warrant six-fold repetition. Even when the figured bass provided by Wesley is suitably realised, this piece cannot be counted amongst Wesley's best; nevertheless, its dismissal at the hands of Dr Holmes Ambrose, and certainly the conclusion he derived there-from, must be challenged:

> This solo motet is the poorest composition to be found among the mature works of Wesley. The weakness of the piece and the existence of but one other solo motet indicate that the composer was not greatly interested in writing for the solo voice.[15]

Te Decet Hymnus Deus is a setting for four voices of Psalm 65, verses 1 and 2, dated September 19th 1798; two copies of it exist, both in the Royal College of Music: an autograph manuscript (MS 4020) and a copy in short score (MS 4028) (Vol.2, p.521). Although written in 1798, it was apparently not performed publicly for some years; on Monday March 8th 1824, Wesley wrote to Mr Alfred Pettet of Norwich thus:

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[15] Holmes Ambrose, The Anglican Anthems and Roman Catholic Motets of Samuel Wesley (1766-1837), unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, (Boston 1969), p.202.

> There is a little anthem of mine in 4 parts, composed originally to the two first verses of the 65th Psalm, with Latin words, but which are transferable into English with equal good effect in the music: the anthem has never been heard but among select friends, and therefore (though written years ago) will in public appear as a novelty. I mean to adopt the English words without delay, and flatter myself that it will suit your purpose at least as well as a Collect: you have already three of this sort, and..... it strikes me that a short full anthem will not be only equivalent, but as welcome to the eye by its title.[16]

It was in this English version, Thou O God art praised in Sion, that it was published after Wesley's death.[17]

The opening, bold motive, spanning an octave, is presented in the bass alone and repeated in the tenor, accompanied by soprano and alto (bars 1-11). A brief, contrasting, secondary motive is introduced in alto and tenor (bars 11-14), followed by two further statements of the original motive, one in the bass, the other in the tenor - the first is inverted, and both are accompanied by soprano and alto (bars 15-25). Two brief homophonic passages, the first closing in D minor, the second, marked 'piano' and for alto, tenor and bass only, closing in A minor, lead into the next double statement of the main theme, first in the tenor, then inverted in the bass, again both accompanied by soprano and alto (bars 25-44). A brief reappearance of the secondary motive in tenor and bass initiates a modulation, via a diminished seventh, to G minor, and a subsequent episode in E flat major (bars 44-57). This closes in C minor (bar 60) and there is another brief statement of the secondary motive before the final double statement of the main motive, inverted in the bass, then in the tenor, both accompanied by soprano and alto (bars 60-74). A quieter episode, not

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[16] BM Egerton MS 2159, a collection of letters.

[17] Novello's Collection of Anthems by Modern Composers, Samuel Sebastian Wesley, ed., (London: Novello, 1843).

directly related to previous thematic material, leads into the final, mainly homophonic, passage incorporating an effective excursion into E flat major, and a typically Wesleyan cadence - figurations over a pedal (bars 74-92).

In many ways this is a disappointing composition: some harmonic features may be consistent with Wesley's development thus far, but others seem rather immature; certainly, the skilled imitative treatment of motives and the effective varying of voice-groupings, so prevalent in other contemporary motets, are lacking here.

De Profundis, a setting of Psalm 130, verses 1-3, is the undated Latin composition which was probably written during this period of Wesley's life. It is contained in BM Add. MS 14341, a collection of twenty-three Wesley compositions, ten of which have Latin texts; it is another of the collections made by Novello and bequeathed by him to the British Museum, as he has recorded inside the front cover:

> This volume contains some of Sam. Wesley's finest productions, and as a tribute of respect to the memory of my friend and a just homage to his extraordinary musical genius, I present the whole of the manuscript for preservation in the musical library of the BM, for the gratification of all those who are competent to appreciate the superior beauty and rare excellence of these compositions.
>
> Vincent Novello, July 14th 1843.

In addition, on the title page he has added:

> A collection of Church Music Latin and English composed by S[amuel] W[esley]. N.B. The whole of this collection is from MSS never before published.

The De Profundis is in three sections, the first and third scored for alto, tenor and bass, and the second for tenor and bass (Vol.2, p.423). The first section, in C minor, is based on two main themes: the first appears initially in bars 1-10 and is mostly treated homophonically, while the second, contrasting theme, is presented at bar 26 in the bass, and provides more scope for imitative treatment; much of

the time Wesley combines them. The second section, in E flat major, is partly homophonic, partly contrapuntal, with a rich texture throughout (the form is A-B-A-C). The third section is in G major and is largely homophonic; one striking feature is the isolation of the word 'si' each time it occurs.[18]

Most of these early Latin compositions were presumably written for the Chapel of the Portugese Embassy, since it was there that Wesley first heard Latin church music, there where he first observed catholic liturgy, and was thus inspired to compose music for their services. How far he was involved in the performance of the Chapel music in these early years is unknown, but his involvement was considerably increased as a result of the appointment in 1797 of Vincent Novello as the Chapel organist; clearly, Novello was quick to recognise Wesley's talent and to employ him as his assistant.

In most of his compositions Wesley is now displaying his maturity; his influences are still apparent, but they are now an integrated part of a coherent and individual style. He has a considerable harmonic vocabulary at his disposal, an effective control of harmonic progression, and is already revealing his predeliction for tonal adventure: he has thoroughly mastered the technique of imitative, contrapuntal writing, and is able to build the simplest motives into complex textures; his fondness for plainsong is obvious, as is his ability to construct a fine movement upon a Gregorian melody.

Nevertheless, there are also signs of inconsistency, not so much within a composition, but amongst pieces composed about the same time; this element of inconsistency was, unfortunately, to remain, indeed, to become more evident. How far this was the result of his unhappy

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[18]The third section was published in Anthems for Men's Voices, Vol.2, p.90, (Oxford University Press, 1965).

personal circumstances may never be known: certainly, by this time, 1798, all the major events of his adult life which were to influence his creative activity had taken place - his professed conversion to Catholicism, his accident in London, his unfortunate marriage and his subsequent separation from his wife and family. Clearly, Wesley's professional maturity was to some extent at the mercy of his personal stability, and his personal stability was to be repeatedly challenged through his recurring bouts of depressive illness.

## CHAPTER 5

## 'MY GREATEST WORK'

> Church Music, by which I mean certain musical sounds applied to the sacred words, having always a reference to the adoration of the supreme being, to his attributes, to religious truths, or to our future state of existence; its construction and manner of introduction into public performances will be considered by a reflecting mind as no trifling subject of discussion.[1]

It is evident from the writings of Samuel Wesley that he considered sacred music to be the ultimate form of musical expression; it was his opinion that such music stemmed from the noblest motives, contained the finest sentiments, and offered the greatest reward to composer, performer, and listener alike. As if to call a higher authority to his support he quoted from Scripture (2 Chronicles v. 13,14):

> It came to pass as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of musick, and praised the Lord, saying, For He is good: for His mercy endureth for ever: that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord; so that the priests could not minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God.

He commented that 'we have the highest authority for pronouncing that an universal chorus [instruments and voices] is the "ne plus ultra" of sublimity'.[2]

It was perhaps because he had such a high opinion of church music that he found it difficult to define it adequately; yet he had a very clear conception of the musical principles he considered

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[1] BM Add. MS 35014, a collection of Wesley's lectures (the fifth lecture of a series, given in the Royal Institution, Albermarle Street, London on April 30th 1827).

[2] BM Add. MS 35015, a collection of Wesley's lectures (the last of a series given in the Royal Institution in 1828).

suitable to its composition, and was quick to criticise whenever he found those principles lacking.

> It is not an easy matter to frame an exact, precise and unexceptionable definition of Church Music. To term it such music as is commonly introduced in churches will be found a most vague and indeterminate definition since we find continually music in churches better calculated to excite derision than devotion: a definition nearer the truth would be - a series of musical sounds so disposed according to art as to impress upon the mind of the hearers sentiments of gratitude, of exultation, of humility or of penitence according to the nature of Sacred Words which demand an appropriate expression. That there is but little thought bestowed upon these points (which must appear to considerate and reflecting persons of no slender importance) is but too apparent: for nothing can be more evident than that in much of what is denominated Church Music not only a secular, but a theatrical style predominates. True it is that this observation applies more to the modern music encouraged in the Roman than that of the English Church, but still there is a palpable defect of dignity and solemnity in the intervals constituting the usual melodies employed in our modern Psalmody.[3]

To adhere strictly to Wesley's principles would place severe restrictions on any composer seeking to give musical expression to sacred words, were it not for the rider which he added:

> Although secular and particularly theatrical music is on the whole unfit for divine service yet numerous instances can be easily brought forward demonstrative of a possibility that melodies primarily destined to the theatre are nevertheless convertible to the nobler purpose of piety and devotion.[4]

Precisely which musical examples Wesley would have cited must remain a matter for speculation. He was of course familiar with the music of Haydn and Mozart and they would have undoubtedly been represented; however, there was one work which could not have been far from his mind as he wrote, a work which clearly demonstrates a legitimate use of secular and theatrical musical styles in sacred

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[3] BM Add. MS 35015.

[4] BM Add. MS 35015.

music, a work which had been performed in London only two years previously and composed by Wesley himself nearly thirty years before - the Confitebor Tibi Domine.

'My father considered the Confitebor his greatest work' Eliza Wesley informs us;[5] judging by contemporary criticism he was not alone in his high estimation of it. On August 1st 1825 he was in Cambridge and wrote from there to his son Samuel Sebastian: 'Novello and I have played over the Confitebor at Trinity Chapel, which has pleased so much that they are all urging me to publish it by subscription'.[6] Some years later in a letter to Wesley (undated but most likely written in 1834), Novello encouraged him: 'I hope you intend to have your Confitebor performed at the Hereford Festival either under your own direction or that of your son [S.S. was then organist at Hereford Cathedral] , who will, without doubt, be delighted with the opportunity of bringing forward a composition which does such great honour to his father's musical genius'.[7] Much earlier, a year after its composition, Dr Charles Burney had also praised the Confitebor when Wesley had submitted the score to the critical examination of that eminent musician, an event referred to in the front of the autograph manuscript in the British Museum where it is recorded:

> Doctor Burney, in the year 1800, honoured the author of the following composition with very valuable criticisms upon divers passages therein and was pleased to pronounce his final judgement concerning it thus: 'If S.W. may be said to have a model in this composition, it was, perhaps, Pergolesi, but without adapting his passages, and probably "sans y penser". Pergolesi was more remarkable for grace and elegance than depth or force, two particulars in which S.W. has surpassed him. Upon the whole, it is an admirable composition, in the best style of Church Music, in florid counterpoint'.[8]

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[5] A letter to the Musical News, Musical News, 18th March 1892, p.268.

[6] BM Add.MS 35012, a collection of Wesley's letters.

[7] BM Add.MS 35027, a collection of miscellaneous Wesley material.

[8] BM Add.MS 35002

Sadly, however, the praise of numerous eminent contemporary musicians and scholars was insufficient to establish the Confitebor either in print or in performance.

'In the year 1799', Wesley recorded in his reminiscences, 'I composed a Confitebor (which is the hundred and eleventh Psalm) for a full orchestra of voices and instruments'.[9] The autograph manuscript provides the precise dating, August 14th 1799, but that is the only detail concerning the composition of the Confitebor that is known: the reason for, and the purpose of its composition remain a mystery. There is no evidence that Wesley was commissioned to write the work by any individual or society, despite the fact that he was, for example, a friend of the impresario Salamon, often playing the harpsichord at his concerts where commissioned works were performed, notably those of Haydn - but apparently never those of Wesley! It would seem that when Wesley composed the Confitebor he had no guarantee even that it would be performed: indeed it had to wait twenty seven years for its first public hearing. One other possibility is that it was composed for the Chapel of the Portuguese Embassy where Novello had been the organist for two years (he was appointed in 1797), and where Wesley was presumably already acting as his assistant; however, this would seem rather unlikely since although the Chapel music was of a very high standard there was little chance of there being sufficient musicians available to mount a performance of a work on this scale, and there would certainly be no liturgical scope for a psalm-setting lasting over an hour in performance.

The existing evidence therefore suggests that there was no commission, no scheduled performance, no outside incentive of any kind,

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[9] BM Add.MS 27593.

but that Wesley composed the Confitebor simply because he wanted to: and that is entirely consistent with the Wesley character - independent, somewhat unorthodox, unwilling necessarily to accommodate popular demand, often acting upon personal whims. Thus, the Confitebor was entirely the creation of Samuel Wesley.

The history of the Confitebor is strange and sad, a record of neglect and frustration: the piece was neglected by performer and publisher, the composer frustrated as he sought, mostly in vain, to have his 'magnum opus' performed and published. To add to Wesley's frustration he apparently mislaid the score for a while, as he revealed to his friend and confidant Novello in a letter dated Tuesday 9th October 1821:

> I am sorry I cannot trace the whereabouts of my poor Confitebor, because it is (altogether) the least incorrect of musical scrolls, and might have had a chance of becoming profitable (if published) to some of my unfortunate progeny, when my carcase shall be in the Churchyard.[10]

Clearly, Wesley had great affection as well as high regard for his Confitebor; as he wrote to Novello he was in dire straits, suffering the effects of one of his lengthy bouts of depressive illness and facing financial embarrassment. In those trying circumstances he thought of his 'magnum opus', seeing there a glimmer of hope, a possible source of relief from his predicament: and yet he hoped in vain, for if he had been dependent for his welfare and that of his offspring upon the economic success of Confitebor, they would all have died in poverty.

' The Confitebor was performed at a Concert for my benefit at the Argylle Rooms in Regent Street...and was universally approved', Wesley reported in his Reminiscences.[11] The date of this performance,

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10 BM Add.MS 11729, Letters from Wesley to Novello 1811-25.

11 BM Add.MS 27593.

the only one in Wesley's lifetime, was Thursday May 4th 1826, but very little further information about this concert has survived. Apparently Wesley was closely involved with the arrangements; he wrote to Novello on Thursday 22nd September 1825:

> Robertson has invited me to meet you tomorrow to see the organ intended for the theatre: I have promised to come and will bring the Confitebor with me, as it will not be amiss to prepare him for my intention of bringing it forward.[12]

In the same month he wrote again to Novello:

> I have seen Phillips the bass singer and initiated him in the Confitebor air 'Confessio et Magnificentia' - he is hugely delighted with it, and will drain the marrow of his bones to give it effect. Robertson thinks that that song and Paton's 'Fidelia' would form a Jachin and Boaz in the Job: it is however much to be lamented that Griffin says I cannot write and Horsley pisses upon what I have written, otherwise I do think that even one of the choruses might be heard with patience and that after the hunting chorus in Der Freichutz [Wesley's spelling!] [13]

Leaving aside the coarse language and Wesley's amusing comparison of two movements of the Confitebor with the two brazen pillars of Solomon's Temple (1 Kings vii.21), this letter reveals the difference of opinion over the Confitebor: some shared Wesley's enthusiasm, others were scathing and critical. Apparently, opposition to the proposed performance increased and on Wednesday 23rd November 1825 Wesley wrote to Novello:

> I were, I own, somewhat vexatious after copying one hundred pages of manuscript and waived engagements of importance during the time, to be denied all advantages resulting from the labour; and I certainly shall be much gratified if through the interposition of your friend Mr Dampier, the original intention may be carried into effect.[14]

It would seem that at this stage the plans for the performance were

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[12] BM Add. MS 11729.

[13] BM Add. MS 11729.

[14] BM Add. MS 11729.

being seriously frustrated; but either through the efforts of Mr Dampier or by other means, the situation improved and the concert preparations went ahead.

Further correspondence between Wesley and Novello during December 1825 suggests that Wesley intended to employ for the performance the choir which Novello conducted (not the Portugese Embassy Chapel choir since Novello had left the Chapel in April 1824). On 12th December Wesley wrote: 'I am preparing for your next Evening parts for the chorus "Magna Opera Domine", which I will further to you in due time';[15] and on Thursday 24th December he reported: 'I presume that you intend to muster on Thursday next....and I have therefore provided parts for the chorus "Magna Opera"'.[16] Whichever choir it was Novello now conducted it is clear from numerous references in Wesley's writings that he had a very high opinion of his friend's choir-training abilities.

Although these are the only existing details specifically relating to the 1826 performance of the Confitebor, a clear impression of the care with which Wesley would have gathered together the musicians for such a concert can be gleaned from the lecture he gave in London in April 1827, in which he considered in some detail the principles behind the operation.[17] He declared:

> It is self-evident, that in order to impress and affect an audience by musical vocality, fine singers are the primary requisites; therefore whoever has the paramount authority in the appointment of singers on such public

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[15] BM Add. MS 11729.

[16] BM Add. MS 11729.

[17] BM Add. MS 35014, A collection of Wesley's lectures (given in the Royal Institution, Albermarle Street, London).

> occasions, should make it his especial care to secure the services of able and accomplished vocal performers, and also to select such as shall not be opiniative, but will listen to good advice and follow it.

Obviously Wesley was very well aware of the behaviour often displayed by musicians: unwilling to co-operate, difficult to control, full of themselves and their own ideas; he knew too that often their chief aim in performance was to demonstrate their own versatility. Thus he added:

> They should not be intent on displaying their own facility of executing rapid divisions, swelling upon high notes, interspersing long florid cadences and (in a word) frequently so disguising their author that all the characteristic excellence is obscured, often wholly suffocated and annihilated.

In selecting his musicians Wesley took the greatest care over those who exercised key roles:

> Next to the necessity of good, and (if possible) national vocalists....ought to be the selection of a steady, judicious leader on the violin without which there can be little hope of general precision or regularity.

The appointment of the leader was, in Wesley's opinion, of primary importance, an opinion he proceeded to explain at some length in his lecture.

> Next in importance to the leading violin among stringed instruments in a powerful band is the leading violoncello performer, who ought to be endued with a similar talent of steadfast inflexibility in time: for if the base go wrong nothing else can go right: just as no harmony in conduct can be expected without correct fundamental principle.

This interesting comment reflects the importance in Wesley's mind of the bass in performance, and, by implication, in composition - the figured bass was still a prominent feature of much contemporary English music. Equally interesting is the following observation:

> The double bass...is also a prominent and powerful engine of effect in sacred music, where stringed instruments are

> employed - for its profundity of pitch and scale renders it a sure anchor, a magnificent and mighty fulcrum upon which the vocal basses may securely depend when in conjunction with the violoncello.

Wesley's attitude towards the use of wind instruments was in comparison slightly reserved and cautious, although it may have been no more than the caution of one who was both a brilliant keyboard performer and an accomplished violinist. He did acknowledge however their specific contribution to the overall effect:

> The smooth and rich tones of wind instruments are in sacred performances happily co-operative to general good effect, and when employed with judicious caution and with rather a sparing hand, materially contribute to the grandeur and solemnity of both concert and Church Music.

It is no surprise to find that the organ had a significant role in Wesley's scheme, for reasons which he carefully explained:

> The grand choral regulator is unquestionably the organ: and this is the sole instrument among all others equally capable of blending with the stringed instruments, with wind instruments and with human voices combined with both; and to which latter its universal and felicitous power of tonic prolongation is so peculiarly well adapted. In all grand vocal performances of sacred music, either with or without an instrumental band, this magazine of harmonic sound is indispensable, and it is proper to add that its strength of sound ought to be always directly proportioned to the choral prevalence of voices.

This last comment reveals Wesley's awareness of the correct balance between voices and instruments, and it is clear that he also fully realised the need to consider the size and acoustic of the building - one further sphere in which he was an expert. He commented:

> The magnitude of the band both vocal and instrumental ought to be determined by the nature and extent of the building, and by its powers and degrees of resonance when the whole strength of the organ is put forth.

The result of all these careful preparations would be a first-class performance; that, at least, was Wesley's opinion:

> There can be no question that a powerful and overwhelming effect on the mind is sure to be felt from the efforts of numerous voices combined, whether unaccompanied by any instrument, by the best of all instruments (the organ) or by this in conjunction with the wind and stringed instruments - in which last case, the extent of earthly music may be truly affirmed to have reached its ultimate boundary.

If Wesley was involved at all in the assembling of the musicians for the concert in the Argylle Rooms in Regent Street on Thursday 4th May 1826 at which his Confitebor was first performed, we may be sure that both the singing and the orchestral playing were of a high standard; certainly they did justice to Wesley's 'magnum opus' for it was (in his own words) 'universally approved'.[18]

Universal approval or none, this performance of the Confitebor apparently did little to establish it permanently: certainly Wesley never heard it again. Novello had encouraged him to have it performed under his son Samuel Sebastian at the Hereford Festival of 1834, but that, together with every other attempt to secure further performances, proved abortive. Just occasionally isolated movements of the work were performed; Wesley referred to one such incident in his lecture on the proper performance of sacred music,[19] where he mentioned the Birmingham Festival 'many years ago' (presumably 1811 when he was the conductor) at which 'a chorus of my own composition' was performed.

This repeated encounter with lack of enthusiasm from all but a few for his greatest work must have been a great disappointment; and this was increased when his other hope for the work, that publication would follow performance, was also never realised - and not through want of trying! In the early part of 1835 Wesley was busily engaged in negotiations for its publication, only to be confronted with further

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[18] BM Add. MS 27593, Wesley's Reminiscences.

[19] BM Add. MS 35014.

frustration; strangely, even his friend Novello appeared to be unwilling or unable to help here. This situation is revealed in the correspondence Wesley had with a certain Mr G. Emett;[20] in a letter to him dated 27th February 1835, and written in a rather shaky hand, Wesley reported:

> I received the enclosed today - from Sam. [S.S.Wesley] . I do not think with him about the Confitebor, but that I ought to have £200 for it. All the parts are copied... Mention to Novello what Sam. says about the performance and see him tomorrow if you can.

Here is reference also to another proposed performance which clearly never took place. Wesley's frustration is further highlighted in a second letter to Mr Emett dated 3rd March 1835:

> I really think the Confitebor with all the parts worth £200 - if Novello will not give more than £150 I must say that is the least I ought to take. It may be advisable to try Birchall, Chappell and Cramer: but I think Novello knows the value of it most, and the parts are all ready, which cost a great deal of money to copy. Perhaps you mentioned that Sam. would have it performed if that would be of any advantage.

Of these parts there is today no trace, unless the copy of the score which is in the Royal College of Music was made at this time.[21] Sadly, when Wesley died two and a half years later the Confitebor was still unpublished and has remained so ever since, despite the efforts of two of his children, Samuel Sebastian and Eliza.

It was in 1869-70 that these two, Samuel Wesley's favourite children, collaborated in an attempt to have the Confitebor published, as contemporary correspondence reveals.[22] On 3rd September 1869 Samuel Sebastian wrote to Eliza: 'I have sent off the Confitebor to you'; later the same month he wrote again: 'As to the paper for the Confitebor I do gather from your letter that you have ordered what

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[20] BM Add. MS 35013, a collection of letters and other Wesley material.

[21] RCM MS 4016.

[22] BM Add. MS 35019.

I wished'; in a third letter dated 17th September he reported: 'I had written to town about the paper for the Confitebor'. Presumably during the next few months Eliza was busy copying for the next reference to the work is in a letter from Samuel Sebastian to Eliza dated 16th January 1870 in which he inquired: 'I write just a line to ask if the Confitebor is done'. Eliza's answer has not survived but clearly was in the negative, for there is preserved amongst this correspondence a tiny memo in her hand which reads: 'Finished copying Confitebor 20 to 7 p.m. March 5th 1870'. She dispatched the completed copy immediately to her brother who replied on Monday 14th March 1870:

> Your 'labour of love' was delivered here this evening and looks as well as could be expected. I really don't like depriving you of the copy but I chiefly need it myself in case we can perform it. I can say nothing definite on that head now.

Six days later, Sunday 20th March 1870, he wrote again concerned with the need to check the two copies of the Confitebor against each other since 'the work might again be performed and the trouble which might attend a mistake might be terrible'.

Here then is reference not only to possible publication but also to another performance; sadly, neither happened, and all that remains of this affair, besides the correspondence, is the copy of the score made by Eliza in her immaculate hand, preserved in the library of the Royal Academy of Music, London.[23] In the front of the score Eliza has recorded the dates of two public performances of the Confitebor; surprisingly, both dates are wrong: May 4th 1827 should have been 1826, and the Three Choirs Festival performance which she dates 1871 was, in fact, in 1868. Obviously she added these details some time later.

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[23] RAM MS 106.

This second performance of the Confitebor to which Eliza referred was not complete; on Tuesday 8th September 1868 a selection from the work was given at Gloucester as part of a concert of the Three Choirs Festival. Clearly this was largely the inspiration of Samuel Sebastian Wesley who was then organist of Gloucester Cathedral and therefore director of the Festival for that year; he conducted this performance of his father's work.

Fortunately, this performance is rather better documented than the 1826 performance, and the contemporary criticisms of the Gloucester concert make interesting reading. Generally the performance was warmly welcomed and there was praise both for the one who originally created the work and for his son who resurrected it. The musical critic of The Times wrote:

> Of quite another order of music [compared with 'The Creation'] was the selection from the late S. Wesley's setting of the 111th Psalm (Confitebor Tibi), which ended the first part of the day's performance. It was a just tribute to the worth of his father on the part of Dr Wesley to present some specimens from so remarkable and so little known a work on such an occasion. He might safely, indeed, have gone a step further, and introduced the entire psalm, instead of only a part of it. If not absolutely a man of genius, Wesley the elder was a musician of the right stamp; and there is a vigour in his writing, a marked individuality, that place it far apart from the smooth commonplace which is the characteristic of so much of our English church music. Moreover, Wesley was a skilful contrapuntist, and had, therefore, plain right to venture upon ground too often trodden by those whose courage and self-complacency are by no means borne out by the means at their disposal.[24]

This high praise for both father and son was echoed by others; another who was present reported:

> A selection then followed from 'Confitebor Tibi Domine', a superb setting of the 111th Psalm by Samuel Wesley. In bringing forward with such loving care, veneration, and enthusiasm, this noble work by his father, a work which seems to have accidentally lain 'perdu' for some forty years, Dr Wesley merits the thanks of all lovers of the highest style of church music, namely, that founded on, though considerably in advance of, the grand old Italian masters, such as Palestrina, Orlando di Lasso, Carissimi, Allegri, etc., a style which reached its highest excellence in some of the

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[24] The Times, Wednesday 9th September 1868.

> choral music of Bach and Handel, and (more recently) of Cherubini, and which has been very feebly imitated by certain of our composers of 'services' and anthems in daily use in English cathedrals. Very rarely indeed in this country, has this sublime style been attained. A few names might be mentioned, among which that of Samuel Wesley could not be placed second to any other. Some of his choral music has been heard of late in London, and we trust that more will soon be introduced there, and also at the provincial music festivals. Masterly specimens of his compositions, in the great school to which allusion has just been made, might be produced, which are worthy to be ranked with those of the greatest writers of ecclesiastical music.[25]

The Gloucester performance was, apparently, good; at least that was the opinion of Henry C. Lunn of the Musical Times:

> The execution of this work was in every respect excellent. Madlle. Tietjens in the soprano, and Mr Santley in the bass, solos already mentioned, appeared thoroughly at home in the midst of a shower of passages which would have frightened less experienced singers; Miss Edith Wynne and Madame Sainton-Dolby gave the duet with much truthful expression; the trio was effectively sung by Madame Sainton-Dolby, Mr Vernon Rigby, and Mr Lewis Thomas; and the choruses were remarkable for precision and vigor throughout.[26]

Mr Lunn's opinion was not entirely shared by the critic of The Times; he agreed that the soloists acquitted themselves well - 'all in such a manner as must have gratified the composer's son, as they would surely have gratified, if not absolutely contented, the composer himself' - but considered that 'the execution of the choruses left very much to wish for'. In their defence he added, however, that 'music so difficult and at the same time so unfamiliar is not to be mastered in a day'.[27]

There was one aspect of Wesley's music which seemed to concern all the critics: that was whether the style of some of the movements, the arias in particular, was acceptable as 'sacred' music. Mr Lunn stated his concern thus:

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[25] Quoted by Eliza Wesley, Musical News, 18th March 1892, p.268.

[26] Henry C. Lunn, 'The Gloucester Musical Festival', Musical Times, 1st October, 1868, p.335.

[27] The Times, Wednesday 9th September 1868.

> The air, 'Fidelia omnia mandata Ejus', is a mere florid display for a soprano voice, without a particle of religious feeling throughout; and the bass solo (although somewhat countenanced by a few of Handel's misplaced show songs in his Oratorios) is by no means a commendable specimen of sacred writing.[28]

The Times' critic was similarly concerned:

> The aria for bass, 'Confessio et magnificentia opus ejus', has some striking points, but on the whole is laboriously dull: that for soprano, 'Fidelia omnia mandata ejus', written, it is understood, purposely for the famous Mrs Billington, simple and clear as is its design, sounds like an incoherent jumble of florid passages. Neither is it at all in keeping with the words, or, in fact, bears the slightest resemblance to what the world has been used to accept as 'sacred' music.[29]

The critics were agreed: Wesley's arias were in a style 'which is not appreciated, especially in a sacred work, by audiences of the present day.'[30]

Nevertheless, the concensus of contemporary opinion was that the Confitebor was worth performing and ought to be heard again:

> We trust that this Psalm (which, with all its defects, contains so many real beauties) will now be more frequently heard.[31]

> We repeat our hope that this composition will ere long be reproduced in London, without the omission of any chorus, and that other of Samuel Wesley's works will be introduced at the next Gloucester Festival, if not before.[32]

Sadly, the hopes of Wesley, of his children, of his friends, and of his critics for the future success of the Confitebor were to remain

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[28] Musical Times, 1st October 1868, p.335.

[29] The Times, Wednesday 9th September 1868.

[30] Musical News, 18th March 1892, p.268.

[31] Musical Times, 1st October 1868, p.335

[32] Musical News, 18th March 1892, p.268.

unfulfilled for a hundred years; following the Gloucester performance of 1868, as far as existing records show, nothing was heard of the Confitebor in public until 1972, when, on Saturday 10th June, a complete performance was given in York Minster.[33] This long overdue resurrection was applauded rather patronisingly by the critics, but more genuinely by the audience. Seven months later, on Monday 15th January 1973, another complete performance was given in the Queen Elizabeth Hall, London, the first London performance since 1826.[34] Again, the critics hesitated to praise, but the audience by its applause and the performers by their comments gave the Confitebor a warm reception. (This London performance was recorded by the B.B.C. and on Friday 28th September 1973 the Confitebor received its first broadcast performance.)[35]

This is the chequered history of Wesley's greatest work: a work which is remarkable for its wealth of musical inventiveness, for its often unexpected harmonic progressions, for its variety of thematic material, and for its imaginative orchestration.

Throughout the work Wesley displays an interesting and varied use of his instrumental resources, giving considerable scope to the wind players and providing 'real' string parts - no surprise from an accomplished violinist. It is a little surprising however that one

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[33] The performers were: Honor Sheppard (soprano), Barbara Robotham (contralto), Philip Langridge (tenor), John Noble (bass), the combined choirs of York, Lincoln, Durham and Ripon Cathedrals, and the Northern Sinfonia Orchestra; the conductor was Francis Jackson.

[34] The performers were: Jennifer Vyvyan (soprano), Janet Stickland (contralto), Philip Langridge (tenor), John Barrow (bass), the BBC Chorus, and the London Mozart Players; the conductor was Peter Gellhorn.

[35] To complete the story it should be added that during the course of writing 'Musica Britannica' have announced their intention to publish the Confitebor.

who could write so imaginatively for the orchestra should also write this:

> It appears to me that one principal cause of the degeneracy of real Church Music (which I maintain to be such as is so framed as to excite all the purest sensations of which our frail nature is susceptible) - one principal cause is the addition of stringed and wind instruments. Voices are rarely required to execute florid passages in chorus and indeed the attempt (with very few exceptions) ought to be branded as a demonstration of bad taste: but violins and violoncellos love to be kept moving and all the sustaining power of which they are capable is so infinitely overbalanced by that of the organ, that unless the harmony be broken into passages..... little or no effect remains for them to attempt.[36]

Wesley did not leave the matter there but proceeded to suggest a solution:

> What then is to be done? Why to set the stringed instruments hard at work upon his own account, not as assistants to the voices, of which they are incapable...but as producing examples of independent importance of the power of string versus lungs: that is of the power of one genus of sound exerting its force against another, 'toto caelo' differing - the consequence is that the solemnity of the vocal matter is always interrupted and often destroyed by the irrelative accompaniments of the instruments. Hence it follows that in modern Church Music like Haydn's and Mozart's masses, beautiful and masterly compositions as they are, we have often a distressing counterpoise to counterpoint - The broadcloth however substantial is nevertheless not only overspread but often obscurred by the fringe.[37]

Wesley was fully aware of the problems of orchestration, especially concerning church music, and he took great care over it; something of his method can be gleaned from the lecture he gave on the subject of the use of wind instruments:[38]

> I would assert as a general position, that in florid lively movements where the violins and other stringed instruments are actively engaged, wind instruments will always produce good effect, if the composer makes the choice of slow chords, which shall support all the prominent and strongly accentuated harmonies: the best beauties in wind instruments being their power of gradual swell and diminution of sound.

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[36] BM Add. MS 35015, A collection of Wesley's lectures (the last of a series given in the Royal Institution, Albermarle Street, London in 1828).

[37] BM Add. MS 35015.

[38] BM Add. MS 35014, A collection of Wesley's lectures (the fourth lecture of a series given in the Royal Institution, London in Spring, 1827).

Certain combinations should be avoided:

> The addition of wind instruments to voices alone, unassisted by stringed instruments is seldom if ever of good effect - for either these instruments are to sound the same intervals with the voices, or different ones. If they sound the same intervals they produce a confused mass of tone, where neither the voice nor the instrument can give its genuine effect. And if they sound different intervals, the strong mechanical powers of such instruments as French Horns, Clarionetts and bassoons are so complete an overmatch for the physical potentialities of the human voice that the whole is certain to prove an unpleasant and heterogeneous amalgam.

Nevertheless, there is a place for wind instruments:

> But a similar objection cannot be justly urged against wind instruments when united with stringed instruments and without human voices: for here they produce the most delightful and touching effects in slow movements, even when they sound only unisons with the said stringed instruments: they are found not only to strengthen the tones, but greatly to dulcify their quality, and the skilful composer will always contrive to insert some phrases for the wind instruments independent of the others, and where their captivating smoothness and mellifluence of quality prove an interesting contrast to the piercing tones of violins and basses.

Wesley was not only aware of the varying qualities and capabilities of different instruments but also had a keen sense of orchestral balance and pleaded that attention be paid to this detail:

> Whenever [wind instruments] are requisite merely to assist they ought never to overpower: whenever they are found useful and expedient auxiliaries in the augmentation of grand or general effect, there should be no attempt at a monopoly of sound.

It was insufficient attention to this particular which ruined, in Wesley's view, many contemporary concerts, even the Philharmonic concerts: often the wind instruments made 'too much noise', and 'instead of being an estimable improvement', they became 'nothing better and nothing else than a vile annoyance, an insufferable nuisance'.

(At this point in his lecture, Wesley interpolates an interesting aside which reflects his attitude: he refers to Mozart's addition of wind parts to Handel's 'Messiah'; while applauding Mozart for the brilliant way he did it, he remained unconvinced of the necessity for it).

Generally, Wesley's concern was that wind instruments should be correctly and carefully used; then they could have a significant and impressive role, but their injudicious use could so readily spoil otherwise good music:

> There is no person more willing than I to admit the rich and brilliant advantage resulting from the aid of wind instruments, whenever they are discreetly introduced, but a constant or even too general recourse to them I cannot but consider as oppressive and tiresome to the ear. I have before noticed that in most cases they are to be employed rather as auxiliaries to the harmony than as principal pillars in the structure of it: therefore the common practice of inflating them with stormy violence absolutely massacres the vitality of the composition.

Here again, in passing, Wesley censured the musical performances of his day; to his critical ears they left a lot to be desired.

To demonstrate the principles he had been describing Wesley introduced a musical example at this juncture, a movement from his Confitebor (the bass aria 'Confessio et magnificentia opus ejus'). He instructed his audience to listen specifically to the orchestration:

> In the following solo from a 'Confitebor' performed last season hautboys are employed among the instruments with good effect, but had there been French Horns, Clarinetts or Bassoons beside, the whole effect would have been coarse and noisy.

He summarises his opinions on the subject thus:

> The powerful effect of wind instruments when judiciously managed is decidedly a part of the musical sublime, but when hawled into any subject where expression of a different kind is required, they become burlesque, and lose all their dignity when too frequently employed.

So Wesley, in this lecture given in the Royal Institution, London in 1827, elaborated upon the principles of orchestration; it was these principles undoubtedly which guided him in scoring the Confitebor. Certainly he took great care choosing the instrumentation for each movement, accurately assessing the quantity and quality of instrumental accompaniment suitable to the vocal resources concerned and the mood of the movement. The strings are used consistently throughout,

occasionally alone, but mostly in combination with varying groups of other instruments. His careful scoring is particularly apparent in his sparing use of the trumpets and timpani, employed in only two sections, and in his never using the full complement of instruments.

His writing for the different instruments is always appropriate: naturally his own versatility as a violinist is reflected in his string writing, while the woodwind, although having a supporting role at times, also have much greater prominence in several sections of his work; in comparison, the horn and trumpet parts are tame, no doubt the result of the underdeveloped state of those instruments in England in the late eighteenth century. Probably the most striking instrumentation in the Confitebor is section 13 (a trio for alto, tenor and bass - 'Laudatio ejus manet in saeculum saeculi'), where the opening four-bar phrase is announced by a group of wind instruments alone (two flutes, two oboes, two bassoons and two horns) and answered by the strings; this pattern recurs throughout the movement, providing, together with other passages for wind and strings combined, an accompaniment for the three solo voices.

Imaginative orchestration is only one commendable feature of the Confitebor; considerable interest is also created by the remarkable variety of musical expression Wesley has incorporated into the piece: each section has its own distinct themes, none repeating previous material - a testimony to the rich resources and lively inventiveness of this musical genius. Too great a variety could easily tend towards fragmentation and incoherence, but Wesley has controlled it, an achievement enhanced by his careful choice of tonalities.

Wesley's harmonic vocabulary in Confitebor is rich, his progressions fluent, enhanced by a discerning use of chromaticism, interjected with little harmonic surprises, unusual progressions,

strangely effective digressions into unexpected tonalities - a favourite of Wesley's was the flattened submediant major (Schubert was not the first to be fascinated by that key!). His vocal writing was similarly impressive, revealing a fluency in a contrapuntal idiom, betraying the influence of the imitative style of the English Tudor composers (although this particular influence is more clearly seen in his motets), and demonstrating his ability to produce effortlessly flowing melodies such as the virtuoso soprano aria 'Fidelia omnia mandata ejus' (Section 8).

Abundance of melody, ingenuity in harmony, imaginative orchestration, impressive vocal writing combine to make the Confitebor the remarkable work it is, full of interest, the work of one who was so much more than a 'competent technician'!

> In the year 1799 I composed a 'Confitebor' (which is the hundredth and eleventh Psalm) for a full orchestra of voices and instruments; the Psalm consists of 10 verses, which are distributed into a quartetto, next a chorus, then a bass solo, then another quartetto, next a tenor recitative and air, then a chorus, then a recitative and bravura solo for a soprano voice, then a duetto for two sopranos, then a chorus, next a tenor solo, then a short recitative followed by a trio for an alto, tenor and bass voice, and lastly a concluding chorus on the Gloria Patri.[39]

The work is divided into fifteen musical sections varying considerably in length and scope from full-scale choruses and lengthy arias to brief recitatives. It is scored for four- and five-part chorus, four solo voices (soprano, alto, tenor, bass), and an orchestra of strings, two flutes, two oboes, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, and timpani. There are no precise instructions about the use of organ continuo but Wesley obviously intended it: an occasional figured bass in the score indicates it, certain passages necessitate it, Wesley's writing on the subject of musical performance recommends it, and contemporary practice confirms it.

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[39] BM Add. MS 27593, Wesley's Reminiscences.

The opening section (Vol.3, p.1.), a quartet for the four solo voices accompanied by flutes, bassoons and strings, is a graceful movement, its gently flowing triplet figurations reminiscent of that particular style of Bach's music familiar in 'Jesu, joy of man's desiring'. Of course, this similarity of style must be coincidental: although Wesley was to become an important, public champion of the music of Bach, it is unlikely that his study of the German master's music had begun as early as 1799. Bachian or not, these triplet figurations pervade the whole movement, only occasionally being entirely absent, and therefore tending to add poignancy to those moments by their absence.

Wesley's tasteful orchestration is apparent from the beginning; the simple device of using two pairs of instruments alternately over a pedal point is particularly effective - violins and flutes with the pedal in the bassoons (bars 8-12), bassoons and flutes with the pedal in the violins (bars 16-20), and similar recurring passages with different combinations of instruments and voices. The opening vocal phrase (bars 26-32) is a simple, elegantly shaped melody with a striking initial rising seventh, a Wesleyan characteristic; this first appearance is particularly effective, rising imperceptibly out of the triplet figurations. This melody with its briefer answering phrase (bars 35-36) and the triplet figurations is the chief thematic material for the movement. The harmony throughout is straightforward, even predictable, and yet appropriate for the reflective mood, a mood threatened just once (bars 87-91): the voices sing in unison a strangely angular phrase incorporating four consecutive descending sevenths, the first accompanied by a strongly dissonant suspension ( bar 89 - 1st violin). In the closing bars there is a hint of Wesley's favourite

flattened submediant major key (bar 144), and on the penultimate note of the vocal parts (bar 150) there is a pause, indicating Wesley's intention that the soloists should decorate the final cadence appropriately according to the custom of the day. As the voices close the orchestra has a 17-bar coda in which the ever-inventive Wesley briefly presents snippets of his thematic material in new guises (bars 155, 161-162); the orchestral texture of the last seven bars is particularly rich, and the movement dies away over a tonic pedal.

After the reflective mood of the opening quartet, the second movement is a contrast (Vol.3, p.43): this spirited chorus ('Moderato, ma con spirito') is scored for oboes, bassoons and strings with a four-part chorus (five-part for a few bars - 12-17). A brief orchestral flourish, a reiteration of the tonic chord C major, heralds the presentation of the chief motive by the bass voices and instruments (bars 1-3); it is doubly Wesleyan with its rising arpeggio spanning a seventh - unexpectedly the flattened seventh. This two-bar motive with its two-bar answer (bars 3-5) provides most of the thematic material for the movement. It is almost a study in pertual motion: the arpeggiated motive, prominent throughout, is cheerfully thrown from one voice to another at a variety of pitches. At bar 60 Wesley introduces one of his harmonic 'surprises': the sopranos, altos and tenors have a unison statement of the arpeggiated motive apparently firmly based upon the dominant of C minor (the key of the previous bars); but he changes the harmonic function of the final G - instead of being the dominant of C minor it becomes the leading-note of A flat major. It is in that key that the movement proceeds with an accompanied statement of the arpeggiated motive in the bass (bars 62-64) - the flattened submediant major key again!

Passing through the keys of E flat major, F minor and D minor, the dominant of the home key is re-established (bar 77) and there follows a series of entries of the arpeggiated figure piled on top of each other (bars 78-84) - another Wesleyan characteristic. This stretto leads to the climax of the movement, clearly marked by Wesley with chords in the string parts and a rare 'fortissimo' (bar 90), and on without let-up to the end, the last four bars for strings alone, surprising after such a movement but typical of Wesley.

The third section (Vol.3, p.71) is the bass aria 'Confessio et magnificentia opus ejus' which was censured by the critics of the 1868 performance (see p.98 ) but used by Wesley in his lecturing as an example of careful orchestration (see p.102). The solo part demands considerable versatility and a singer with a wide range (bottom F sharp to top F); the accompanying instruments are flutes and bassoons with strings. Certainly there are signs of careful scoring producing some rich textures, notably in bars 23-31 and 158-163, the significant factor here being the use of bassoons as tenor rather than bass instruments. The key is G minor and the harmonic progressions are workmanlike, with episodes in B flat major (bars 44-59) and E flat major (bars 101-122). Two harmonic features are worthy of special comment: first, Wesley's use of the arpeggiated dominant minor ninth chord under reiterated dominant seventh chords, the ninth marked 'sforzando' each time (bars 8-14, 72-78, 135-141) - the harmonic and melodic use of the minor ninth is another recurring Wesleyan characteristic. Second, the unexpected chord at the beginning of the orchestral epilogue (bar 174): the expected chord is G minor but the resolution is onto G major seventh, the dominant seventh of C minor - a simple but effective harmonic nuance.

The fourth section (Vol.3, p.113), designated by Wesley 'quartetto' but equally effective as a chorus, is a fine example of Wesley's use of a plainsong melody as the basis of a movement. The particular melody is identified thus: 'Super Tono Sexto Cantus Gregoriani', and is written at the foot of the first page in the manuscript. It is the basis of the vocal parts throughout and almost exclusive to them - the final vocal phrase is doubled in the orchestra (bars 65-68) and the melody is prominent in the orchestral epilogue (bars 72-79). It appears first as a harmonised slow-moving melody (bars 19-30), later becoming the basis of more imitative and melismatic writing (bars 44-54). Around these plainsong-based vocal parts Wesley has woven more florid instrumental figurations, the instruments involved being flutes and bassoons with the strings; especially effective is the alternation of wind and strings in semiquaver figurations (for example bars 1-12). The key of this charming movement is the tonic, G major.

A brief tenor solo accompanied by strings alone (Vol.3, p.133) is followed by a powerful chorus section in the key of D minor (Vol.3, p.137). The peaceful opening bars are deceptive: semiquaver figurations appear in the strings at bar 4 and remain consistently and relentlessly to the end of the movement, much of the time in unison; oboes and, briefly (bars 78-85), trumpets and timpani, are also involved. A strong rhythmic motive is announced by the chorus over the semiquaver figurations, beginning in the tonic and moving to the relative major (bars 17-37); the repeat of this motive in the key of C minor is altered and extended, returning to the tonic key (bars 38-59). A brief, more imitative passage (bars 63-71) leads to a homophonic choral declamation over the continuing semiquavers (bars 72-78); the homophonic texture disintegrates over a drum roll

(bars 78-81) which heralds the reappearance of the initial choral motive now punctuated with trumpets and timpani (bars 82-85). The final choral phrase ends powerfully in unison (bars 89-91), the semiquavers continuing for a further five bars, the last two marked 'piano' - unexpected after such a vigorous movement but a characteristically Wesleyan ending.

The seventh section is a brief recitative for soprano accompanied by the strings (Vol.3, p.163); it is followed immediately by one of the most remarkable sections of the Confitebor: a lengthy soprano aria in the key of B flat major, accompanied by strings, flutes, oboes, and horns (Vol.3, p.165).

This aria is of comparable proportions to the concert arias of Mozart and certainly demands a soloist of similar virtuosity to cope with Wesley's extraordinarily difficult vocal line. Wesley made no secret of the fact that he composed this aria with the contemporarily famous Mrs Billington in mind; that her vocal range and virtuoisity were exceptional is evident from the vocal line and confirmed by Wesley in his Reminiscences where he commented:

> I have already made mention of my Confitebor (111th Psalm) for a full vocal and instrumental orchestra in which a bravura verse beginning 'Fidelia omnia mandata ejus' for a soprano voice, a copy of which I carried to that delightful vocalist Mrs Billington who had never before seen it. The song abounds in passages of rapid execution, every one of which she gave with just and unerring Truth and Exactness, that I have never witnessed a musical performance which caused me such astonishment.[40]

Wesley's friend Novello was also impressed with this aria and especially interested in it since his daughter Clara was a fine singer; he wrote to Wesley about it (the letter is undated but was probably written in 1834):

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[40] BM Add. MS 27593.

> If you will send a copy of the beautiful solo 'Fidelia', Clara shall study it very attentively, and endeavour, to the utmost of her power, to do justice to it. What say you to publishing the solo, so as to have the copies ready by the time of the Hereford Festival. Its performance there would probably promote the sale of a sufficient number of copies to render its publication rather advantageous to you.[41]

The opening orchestral passage is 42 bars long and has the appearance of the exposition of a sonata-form movement, particularly that of the first movement of a classical concerto, with two chief themes, subsidiary thematic material and a new theme in the solo when it enters. The first subject is a bold Wesleyan arpeggiated motive, just seven bars long, presented on strings and horns (bars 1-7); a transitional passage leads to a close onto the dominant (bars 7-15). The second subject betrays a different, lighter mood and is particularly appealing in its delicate scoring: a reiterated tonic pedal bass, oscillating semiquaver figurations, sustained wind chords, the theme shared between the two violins, and a hiatus in the middle where the oboes have a 'cheeky' interpolation (bars 16-24). The whole is strongly reminiscent of Haydn, an influence which gently permeates the whole movement - this is no surprise since at the time of writing Wesley was the harpsichordist at the Salamon concerts where many of Haydn's works were performed. A lengthy codetta section follows (bars 24-42) in which another new theme is introduced (bars 29-37), and the orchestral exposition closes in the tonic key (bar 42). Here the soprano soloist enters with a new expansive theme accompanied by the strings (bars 42-50). The ensuing episode (bars 62-126) begins to be more demanding for the soloist with large leaps (for example, bars 66-69) and passages involving rapid scales and arpeggios, notably in bars 103-115; it is thematically based throughout and closes firmly in the dominant

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[41] BM Add. MS 35027, A collection of miscellaneous Wesley material.

key (bar 126). A brief link establishes the relative minor tonality and initiates a new soprano theme, another expansive melody (bars 132-138); the original key and soprano theme soon return (bars 156-164) and lead into another brief episode, incorporating some new material and a brief digression into C minor (bars 170-180). The second subject from the orchestral exposition reappears, again in the tonic key, similarly scored but with the soprano now an integral part of the texture (bars 181-190). There remains some further working of thematic material (bars 191-233), a final vocal phrase with opportunity for cadential decoration (bars 235-237), and an orchestral coda, 34 bars long and based on the opening orchestral exposition.

Section 9 (Vol.3, p.219), a duet for soprano and alto, is a tiny musical gem, tiny because it is so short, just 39 bars. The previous section was reminiscent of Haydn, but here there is a distinct Mozartian flavour, sensed most clearly in the feminine cadences and in the rich orchestration, a distinctive feature of which is the use again of bassoons as tenor rather than as bass instruments. Another intriguing comparison between this movement and the music of Mozart is that it is written in E flat major, Mozart's 'Masonic' key - Wesley was also a Freemason. The music consists of one eight-bar theme played on the orchestra alone and extended to twelve bars (bars 1-12), which is repeated with the voices and extended differently to twelve bars (bars 13-24); a further eleven bars in which fragments of theme are apparent (bars 25-35), and a brief orchestral epilogue (bars 35-39) completes this delightful little movement.

The chorus 'Mandavit in aeternum' (Section 10 - Vol.3, p.227) is the only chorus consistently in five parts. Wesley has marked it 'Alla Capella', which has misled some into thinking it is an

unaccompanied chorus; Ernest Walker, for example, writing about the Confitebor commented upon 'the fine unaccompanied chorus 'Mandavit in Aeternum', with its noble closing pages'.[42] Sadly such comments merely reflect the rather cursory nature of previous scholarly investigations of the Confitebor, for there is orchestral accompaniment throughout, doubling the chorus parts much of the time but also having an important independent role at times - the orchestra consists of strings with bassoons, horns and timpani. In fact, Wesley uses the term 'Alla Capella' here and elsewhere in his compositions in its rarer meaning, as a synonym for 'Alla Breve'.

Whether or not there are traces of Italian influence in this movement, or reminiscences of Handel, its most striking features are thoroughly Wesleyan. First, there is a remarkable economy of musical material: the opening repeated-note motive (bars 1-4), together with its more angular answering phrase (bars 4-6), is the sole basis of the section, material which Wesley builds into an impressive choral movement. Second, there is some daring harmonic progression through the movement: indeed, there is a display of tonal freedom rarely equalled by any English composer of the period. Wesley begins in G minor and returns very firmly to that key, but meanwhile he ventures tonally just about as far as possible - to the remotely related key of F sharp minor. A tonal analysis of the movement is fascinating: having established the tonic key (bars 1-35), with a brief digression to the dominant minor (bars 12-16), Wesley moves quite normally through F major (bar 39) to B flat major (bar 46), and then, more unusually, through D minor (bar 57), C minor (bar 65) and F minor (bar 77) to A flat major (bar 85) - not the most direct route

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[42] Ernest Walker, A History of Music in England, (London, 1907), p.276.

from G minor to F sharp minor! From A flat major he moves predictably to E flat major (bar 96) and B flat major (bar 118), and then, touching D minor (bar 128) and passing through A minor (bar 136), to C major (bar 144); here the journey sharpwards really begins. From C major he modulates naturally to G major (bar 157), to D major (bar 168) and then to B minor (bar 180), from where it is only a step to F sharp minor, reached at bar 192. The journey back is curtailed: from F sharp minor Wesley slips, via a C major chord and slightly precipitously, to E minor (bar 208), and then through F major (bar 228) to B flat major (bar 232), settling onto a dominant pedal in the home key at bar 249. The chorus parts come together on a descending chromatic scale and the movement pauses on a dominant seventh chord (bars 272-278); a drum roll initiates a unison choral and orchestral entry which pauses again on a diminished seventh chord (bar 284), before embarking upon the final phrase (bars 285-295) - a noble end to an impressive choral movement.

The movement which follows is a complete contrast: a lively 6/8 section for tenor solo, flutes, oboes, bassoons and strings, in the key of C major (Vol.3, p.253). The orchestral prologue displays more imaginative Wesley scoring, with the wind instruments having particularly prominent roles (bars 1-40). The tenor entry is a new theme with a significant central bar's rest (bars 40-47); after its second statement an episode ensues, thematically based and harmonically predictable (bars 59-89). The reappearance of part of the tenor theme and of the orchestral theme (bars 90-98) begins a second episode (bars 99-126). After a final statement of the tenor theme with the usual provision for cadential decoration (bars 126-133), there is an orchestral epilogue similar to the opening (bars 133-160); the

final cadence however is interrupted and a quiet 'Wesleyan' ending added (bars 161-164) - marked 'pianissimo' by Wesley.

A brief bass recitative and a peaceful orchestral interlude (Vol.3, p.279) prepare the way for the trio for alto, tenor and bass ('Laudatio ejus manet in saeculum saeculi') in the key of D major (Section 13 - Vol.3, p.281). Comment has already been made upon the imaginative orchestration of this movement (p.103), a feature immediately apparent in the opening orchestral passage (bars 1-32). The thematic material presented here is used less elaborately in the vocal parts when they join the orchestra (bars 32-64); a new motive is the basis of the central section (bars 70-110), initially in the relative B minor, but returning to the home key for the restatement of the original motives (bars 111-158). An orchestral epilogue similar to the opening and the same length (bars 159-190) close this ternary movement, except for another 'pianissimo' Wesleyan ending (bars 190-194).

The first part of the Gloria (Section 14 - Vol.3, p.307), is presented in a rather restrained, almost wistful atmosphere, in G minor, with staccato arpeggiated figurations in the strings, brief weeping figures on the flutes and oboes, and the chorus, supported by the bassoons, singing a harmonised, slow-moving Gregorian melody - 'In Tono Tertio Cantus Gregoriani'. The last three bars are marked 'legato' with the further instruction 'Segue subito'.

The final chorus section is a lively movement in G major, scored for oboes, bassoons, trumpets, timpani and strings (Vol.3, p.315). The first twenty bars contain most of the thematic material for the movement: the chief motive on orchestra and chorus (bars 1-9), the brief 'tailpiece' (bars 10-13), and the orchestral interlude (bars 13-20),

another display of Wesleyan thematic economy; the rhythmic drive instigated at the outset is maintained throughout. Although there are passages of rapidly changing tonalities, much of the movement remains in or around the tonic key; there is, however, a digression to Wesley's favourite flattened submediant major key: a brief orchestral interlude ushers in a unisonal descent of the G minor scale (bars 282-290), which turns into E flat major. In the ensuing bars of constantly modulating figures, he briefly touches that key again (bars 307-310) before returning to the tonic key (bar 314). Very little else in this long final movement (390 bars) demands special comment; the whole is an impressive and fitting finale to the Confitebor, a movement which has enjoyed the praise even of those who have harshly criticised other movements.

It was not without reason that Wesley considered the Confitebor to be 'my greatest work', for that it certainly is; here, in one work, and that generally of a remarkably high and consistent quality, there is a display of all Wesley's technical skills at their best. But it is more than that: for this is not the work of a mere 'competent technician', but of a musician, an artist, one who is able to use his skill to create beauty. It is lamentable, therefore, that history has condemned this fine work to obscurity and silence, a state from which it is only now beginning to emerge.

# CHAPTER 6

## THE LATER LATIN COMPOSITIONS

The central period of Wesley's life - a period of about sixteen years from 1798, when he was thirty-two years old, to 1814 - was his most prolific; not only did it produce his greatest work, Confitebor Tibi Domine, but also most of his best smaller Latin compositions. (During this period too, he composed a considerable amount of keyboard and instrumental music, including the largest and most successful of his symphonies, the Symphony in B flat major - 1802). The music of this period often displays that mature, characteristic style of Wesley's which developed through the music of his earlier years, and a number of the motets are masterly compositions; however, that inconsistency which was already apparent amongst the earlier works, is still all-too-prevalent. Twenty-seven items of Latin church music have been preserved from this central period (including five motets already discussed at the end of Chapter 4, and Confitebor Tibi Domine, which was discussed in Chapter 5); of these, no more than half are representative of Wesley at his best: the remainder are mostly pleasant but unremarkable compositions, a few are disappointingly weak.

Salve Regina (Vol.2, p.363) is a short motet for three voices (ATB) and organ, a setting of a Hymn to the Blessed Virgin Mary, which bears the date September 10th 1799. Three autograph scores of this piece have been preserved: one in BM Add. MS 33240, and two in RCM MS 4020. The BM manuscript, which is probably the original, has the following superscription in the hand of Vincent Novello:

> This rare MS was formerly in the possession of my friend Mr Webbe Snr., the excellent Glee Composer, at the sale of whose music after his death, I purchased it.

The opening section is an expansive Wesleyan melody with the characteristic arpeggiated initial phrase; it is accompanied in an essentially homophonic manner, with a gently ornamented cadence (bars 1-8), and repeated. The next section begins imitatively, but relapses into homophony; the minor tonality is introduced, with Neapolitan and augmented sixth chords occurring in the progression (bars 9-13). A Wesleyan stretto entry begins the next section, which again relapses into homophony (bars 14-30), as does the following section in which a brief dotted-note figure is prominent (bars 30-40). In the course of the final section (bars 40-66), the first part of the initial theme reappears (bars 50-53); it is interrupted with new motives for 'O clemens, O pia, O dulcis Virgo Maria', with which the motet closes.

This miniature motet is a pleasant piece and yet, in comparison with other contemporary compositions, somewhat disappointing: in this short motet (66 bars), there are eight distinct musical sections, but none overlaps the other; there are a number of imitative entries, but none is prolonged for more than a few bars; in addition, the harmonic vocabulary here displayed is rather limited.

The autograph score of Deus Majestatis has found its way into the Library of Congress in Washington (MS 27138), but a copy in the hand of Vincent Novello, giving the date of composition as September 26th 1799, is preserved in RCM MS 1040; there is also an incomplete set of separate parts in Wesley's hand in BM Add. MS 35001. The text is Psalm 29, verse 3, and the setting, one of Wesley's most elaborate motet scores, is for double choir (SATB SATB) and strings with organ continuo (Vol.2, p.49).

The two themes which are the basis of the whole motet are presented together in sopranos and violins (bars 1-5); a tonal version of the first theme in bass II together with the second theme in altos is accompanied by semiquaver figurations in the strings, and moves to the dominant key (bars 5-9). The two themes appear again in tenors and sopranos at the original pitch, thereby restoring the tonic tonality and initiating a move to the sub-dominant (bars 9-17); through further statements of the themes and other thematically based material, the tonal progressions continue, through G major (bar 19) to D minor (bar 20), and again through G major back to the tonic key (bar 27). The appearance of the first theme at a new pitch in soprano II (bar 28) initiates a modulation through A minor to E minor (bar 30), and a passage of more rapidly moving tonalities; this consists of a series of chordal thematic statements alternating between choirs I and II, on the dominant and tonic of A minor (bars 37-38), unexpectedly moving to B flat major (bars 39-42), and closing in G minor (bars 43-46). All this is supported with semiquaver figurations in the violins mostly in thirds, and with quaver movement in the lower strings. The following section is marked 'piano' and begins with a statement of the first theme in alto II and tenor II, initially in G minor, but moving to C minor for a second statement of the same theme in sopranos (bars 46-50); with the reappearance of the second theme the 'forte' marking is restored (bar 50), and in the ensuing passage, in which there are digressions into D minor (bar 52) and G minor (bars 53-54) before a prolonged dominant pedal (bars 58-63) and a close onto the tonic (bar 64), the initial rhythmic motive from the second theme appears eighteen times at various pitches and in various guises. Unisonal figurations in

C minor on the strings accompany further chordal alternations between the two choirs, combining at bar 69 for another cadence in the tonic key. Immediately, the minor tonality is re-established in the strings (bar 72), this time heralding the final contrapuntal choral passage in which the rhythmic figure from the second theme is again particularly prominent (bars 74-83); a twenty-bar, thematically-based instrumental epilogue completes the motet (bars 83-103).

Here is a demonstration of Wesley's maturity, a display of many of those characteristics already apparent in his earlier compositions: economy of resources, employing just two themes, contrast of homophonic and contrapuntal textures, tiny musical motives built up into complex contrapuntal textures; here, too, is the added interest of the mostly independent string accompaniment. It is unfortunate that this fine example of Wesley's creative musical abilities should have remained for so long unpublished, unperformed, and therefore unknown.

From this period also comes one of Wesley's better known motets, better known because it is one of the few that have been published: the double-choir setting of Dixit Dominus, Psalm 110, verse 1. The autograph score, in RCM MS 639, is dated January 13th 1800; there is also a copy in the hand of Vincent Novello in BM Add. MS 14341.[1] It is the longest of Wesley's motets, being almost a hundred bars longer than In Exitu Israel. Its appearance on the page is impressive, and its effect in performance can be similar; some interesting contrasts are achieved through the juxtaposition of elaborate contrapuntal textures with more homophonic passages; it is also remarkable for its economy of musical material, the whole being built upon just

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[1] Dixit Dominus was published by Novello, Ewer & Co., London, 1876.

three themes. However, despite all this, it is not Wesley at his best: elsewhere he has created equally impressive effects with even smaller resources, he has achieved greater contrasts of texture, and certainly he has written with equal musical economy. Most disappointing of all is the tonal poverty of Dixit Dominus: throughout 331 bars, there is very little harmonic variety - Routley's comment about In Exitu Israel is that 'here are twenty pages of B flat major';[2] here are twenty-two more pages of the same key!

The first theme is given initially in alto II (bars 1-17); after a silent bar, a harmonised form of it is presented in soprano I, alto I and tenor I (bars 18-35). As this closes, the second theme appears in choir II (bars 35-46), closely followed by the third theme in choir I (bars 46-53). The remainder of the motet is based upon these three themes, either complete or fragmented. The whole of this lengthy opening section is firmly grounded in B flat major, and the first real move away is at bar 115, where there is a close in G minor; this is short-lived, and after a passing reference to D minor, the tonic is re-established (bar 152). Another modulation is effected at bar 180, this time to C minor; this moves to F minor (bar 184) and through E flat major (bar 188) back to C minor. This proves to be the longest excursion into another key, but the original tonality is restored again, initially through a dominant pedal (bar 217): in the remaining 110 bars, tonal departures from the home key are few and brief. One striking feature in the closing bars is the descending scale which appears first in alto I (bars 286-290), is repeated in soprano II (bars 290-293), and extended in tenor II and bass II,

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[2]Erik Routley, The Musical Wesleys, (London, 1968), p.81

resulting in a scale spanning two and a half octaves; in these bars also there are a number of characteristic Wesleyan harmonic features - such as the introduction of the minor tonality and the chord of the Neapolitan sixth (bars 305-310).

Requiem Aeternam is a setting of the Introit at a Solemn Mass for the Dead. It has been preserved in two forms: a version for two voices (SA) and organ, of which there is an autograph copy in RCM MS 4020, dated May 18th 1800, and another copy in BM Add. MS 14342; and a version for four unaccompanied voices (SATB), of which there is an autograph score in BM Add. MS 14342. This manuscript is a collection of Wesley's works, some autograph, some in Novello's hand, including nine Latin compositions, bequeathed to the British Museum by Vincent Novello. He has written in the front of it:

> I present this collection of very rare manuscripts for preservation in the musical library of the BM, as a tribute of respect to the memory of my illustrious friend, the composer of them.
> Vincent Novello, July 14th 1843, Craven Hill, Bayswater.

This brief motet (Vol.2, p.499) is a pleasant but in no way outstanding work; it is largely homophonic throughout, beginning slightly unusually, though effectively, with a first inversion tonic chord. It is ternary in form, the first fifteen bars repeated at the end; some variety is achieved in the middle section through twice reducing the scoring to three voices (bars 16-22, 30-36).

Exultate Deo, a setting of Psalm 81, verses 1 and 2, is one of Wesley's 'favoured' motets: it has been published, it is still in print today, and it is not infrequently performed; it has, nevertheless, been overshadowed by the greater popularity of In Exitu Israel. Ernest Walker's comment is typical of the scholarly

criticism which has caused this:

> The gorgeously powerful and impressive eight-part In Exitu Israel is a masterpiece that places its composer on a lofty pedestal; and the more or less familiar Exultate Deo and Dixit Dominus fall only a little below in grand dignity of manner.[3]

Of these three motets Exultate Deo has, in fact, stood the test of time the best: Dixit Dominus, as has already been shown, might be the largest of Wesley's motets, but is not his best: In Exitu Israel, as will be demonstrated, is not entirely worthy of the high acclaim in which it has been held - a fine piece, but not Wesley's greatest work. Exultate Deo, however, has never been fully appreciated, never sufficiently praised: it is a composition of a consistently high quality, full of rhythmic vitality, adventurous harmony, and considerable dramatic effect; in addition, there is amongst the manuscripts in the British Museum a fully-orchestrated version of this motet in Wesley's own hand, which seems to have been entirely neglected, even by Dr Holmes Ambrose[4] - Wesley's orchestration dramatically enhances this already effective motet.

There are, in fact, three autograph scores of this motet: in BM Add. MS 17731 there is a vocal score with an organ bass, dated June 28th 1800;[5] on the first page of this manuscript, Novello, who bequeathed it to the British Museum, has written:

> Composed by my dear friend Sam. Wesley - 1800. It is a most masterly piece of vocal counterpoint and this fine copy of it is more valuable in my estimation from being in the composer's own hand-writing.

There is a second autograph copy in short score in BM Add. MS 35001; it is in this manuscript that there is also a complete set of

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[3] Ernest Walker, A History of Music in England, (London, 1907), p.276.

[4] Holmes Ambrose, The Anglican Anthems and Roman Catholic Motets of Samuel Wesley (1766-1837), unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, (Boston, 1969).

[5] Lightwood gives the date as 'the same period as the Confitebor' J.T.Lightwood, Samuel Wesley, Musician, (London, 1937), p.108 - and Routley quotes Lightwood The Musical Wesleys, p.70.

orchestral parts in Wesley's hand: five vocal parts (SSATB), two horns, two oboes, bassoon, two trumpets, three trombones (two tenor, one bass), timpani, and five-part strings (two violas) - the existence of these orchestral parts serves to justify the performance of this motet with organ throughout, since the strings are employed constantly, mostly doubling the vocal parts. There is also a copy of the vocal score with an organ part in the hand of Vincent Novello in BM Add. MS 14341.[6] (Vol.2, p.87).

The motet begins with one of Wesley's bold, arpeggiated themes, here based on the chord of D major (the tonic), immediately instigating the strong, driving pulse which permeates the whole piece. It is followed by a lively little counter-subject (bar 7); these two themes appear repeatedly both in juxtaposition and in combination, a favourite thematic procedure of Wesley's - there is another example of this in 'Magna opera Domini', section 2 of Confitebor Tibi Domine (Vol.3, p.43), where the first theme is also arpeggiated. Throughout these opening bars (1-42), the music remains in or around the home tonality, and at bar 42, still in the tonic key, there is a dramatic restatement of the first theme with all voices and instruments in unison, a dramatic device Wesley often employs. Here, the drama is heightened by the orchestration: until this point the voices have been accompanied only by strings and bassoon, but now they are joined by the oboes playing the tune an octave higher; still more striking is the appearance of the three trombones, also playing the theme in unison.

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[6] An edition for voices and organ was published twice: first by J.Surman, (London, 1830), then in Novello's Collection of Anthems, Vol.XII, No.250.

This restatement of the first theme initiates a lengthy middle section (bars 42-169), a constantly modulating section in which the two themes already heard are combined with a new theme (its first appearance is in tenor, bass, and trombones at bar 83), and a certain amount of free material. Beginning in the tonic, a modulation to the relative minor is very soon effected (bar 53) in which key there is a statement of the first subject in soprano I and alto (bars 53-59); a running quaver figure, derived from the second subject, in the bass (bars 59-62), modulates to E minor with the first subject stated in that key in soprano II (bars 62-68); a five-bar bridge passage (bars 68-72), based on the latter part of the first subject, modulates to F sharp minor, with another statement of the first subject in the tenor (bars 72-78), repeated in a harmonised form, 'piano' (bars 78-84). It is as this repeat closes that the new theme appears in tenor and bass, in F sharp minor, strikingly highlighted by the three trombones, and coupled with a new phrase of the text, 'Sumite psalmum et date tympanum' (bar 83). The succession of modulations continues, through B minor and E minor, to the home dominant (bar 111), the whole passage clearly based upon the three subjects already stated; at bar 111, there is a restatement of the third theme in the tonic key, again accompanied by the trombones. At bar 125, Wesley introduces one of his favourite harmonic 'surprises': a sudden digression into the minor mode; in the tonic minor key, the bass has the third subject while the sopranos have the first. The subjects are exchanged and repeated in G minor, and the modulations continue into C major and F major, with a statement of the first subject in each key (bars 140-151). A fresh statement of the third subject begins in the alto in D minor (bar 157), is repeated and

extended in G minor, and closes on the home dominant (bar 168). There follows a bar's rest and a pause - the pause is omitted from the printed edition.

This lengthy central section of Exultate Deo is the nearest Wesley comes to writing a 'development section' in any of his Latin motets; just once prior to this, in the last movement of Ave Maris Stella, there were some similar developmental signs. It is initiated by a statement of the main theme, and built up into an elaborate, frequently modulating passage in which existing thematic material is combined with freer material and new themes; it begins in the tonic key, incorporates numerous modulations, and in closing prepares for the re-establishing of the tonic key at the beginning of the final section. This third section is not a strict 'recapitulation', nor is the motet in sonata form; nevertheless, it is interesting to note these definite developmental techniques. (In fact, Wesley is sufficiently original to make it difficult often to categorise his compositions into the normally accepted musical forms!)

The third section of the motet, beginning after the pause, in the tonic major key, is ushered in peacefully with a new rippling theme in the alto. This is, however, dramatically interrupted at bar 175 by the appearance of yet another new theme in tenor and bass, more noble than any of the previous themes, together with the simultaneous addition to the orchestra of horns, trumpets, trombones, and timpani. The whole of this section is tonally centred around the tonic, and the various thematic statements are punctuated by the orchestral brass. After a repeat of the new, noble theme, there is a striking homophonic passage (bars 228-235) in which the hemiola-like rhythmn just hinted at in the first theme is now boldy emphasised, the five chords concerned

each being marked 'sforzando'. (These 'sforzandi' are omitted from the printed edition). The ensuing bars contain typically Wesleyan perorations over dominant pedals and harmonically sequential figures, all thematically derived; bars 263-266 are particularly striking, being accompanied by the brass, the trombones in three-part close harmony. The strong driving pulse continues relentlessly to bar 274 where a dominant seventh chord is cut off, temporarily unresolved because of a dramatically inserted five-beat rest, lengthened by a pause. The cadential chords eventually effecting the resolution (bars 276-285) are accompanied by the full orchestra, the strings arpeggiating the chords and the trombones again in three-part close harmony.

The final ten bars of this motet, as they appear in the printed edition, have caused something of an interpretative problem for conductors, and there has been considerable discussion as to what Wesley's precise intentions were; as Routley accurately observes:

> Nowadays it is usually sung unacoompanied, although a confident choir-master will bring in the organ on the very last phrase, and its effect is certainly distorted if the organ postlude is omitted.[7]

The result of this practice is to make the organ postlude the climax of the whole piece, but this never seems to be entirely convincing, at least, not when the organ part given in the printed edition is used. This is clearly intended to be an editorial, chordal realization of the figured organ bass in Wesley's autograph score (BM Add. MS 17731), but, in fact, does not adhere strictly to the harmony indicated by Wesley's figured bass. Fortunately, a more accurate impression of

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[7] The Musical Wesleys, p.83.

what Wesley intended is provided by his orchestrated version: these bars certainly do form a brief instrumental postlude, but they are not the dynamic climax of the motet as the printed edition implies. After the final choral cadence accompanied by the full orchestra, this postlude is scored for strings alone, and is thoroughly thematic, based entirely upon the first subject - it has always seemed a little incongruous that the printed organ postlude is totally unrelated to Wesley's thematic material! This in no way creates an anti-climax, but is rather a typically Wesleyan, and recurring feature of his music: his fondness for concluding a lively movement with a slightly relaxed postlude; the result is thoroughly satisfactory.

Here, indeed, is a fine example of Wesley's polyphonic writing; as Dr Holmes Ambrose has commented: 'The affective exuberance and aggressive coherence of Exultate Deo mark a high point in Wesley's polyphonic composition.'[8] Elsewhere, perhaps, he has produced more complex polyphonic textures, but he has rarely surpassed the consistently high standard of writing here displayed. Here, too, is a demonstration of his remarkably fertile musical inventiveness, incorporating into this motet no fewer than five distinct themes; to the whole he gives a coherent form harmonically, the first and third sections being based around the tonic, while the middle section (and longest) is constantly modulating - a kind of harmonic ternary form. The range of modulations in the central section is extensive, involving at least nine keys with only the briefest reference to the tonic. Certainly, as has already been shown, Wesley revelled in tonal adventure both in his extemporizations and compositions; in

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[8] Holmes Ambrose, p.283.

his later motets, such as Omnia Vanitas and Tu Es Sacerdos In Aeternum (1827), he was to extend his harmonic vocabulary still further, but among those written in his middle years, Exultate Deo can scarcely be surpassed. Even in In Exitu Israel, written ten years later, the range of keys is considerably smaller, being confined to the nearest related keys, and the longest tonal excursion out of the home tonality is only eighteen bars long. The infectious exuberance of Exultate Deo is another striking feature, with its irresistible, strong rhythmic pulse carrying the music relentlessly on throughout - a feature which is prevalent elsewhere in Wesley's music (for example, in 'Virtutem operum suorum', section 6 of Confitebor Tibi Domine - Vol.3, p.137).

Writing about music under the late Georges, Ernest Walker has commented:

> Over the music of this period one artistic figure towers, that of Samuel Wesley. It is true, indeed.... that he wrote a considerable mass of purely common-place work; but after all a composer must be judged at his best, and it is in virtue of the finest of his religious productions that he takes place, beyond all possible question, among the great English musicians.[9]

If a composer must be judged at his best, then let Exultate Deo be one of the compositions upon which the reputation of Samuel Wesley is assessed.

Sit Nomen Domini (Vol.2, p.515) is a short motet for three voices (SSB); the score, which is preserved in BM Add. MS 14341, is not autographed but indicates that it was written on June 12th 1801. The text is Psalm 113, verse 2, and is the versicle before the Bishop gives his blessing at the end of a Pontifical Mass. The opening, essentially homophonic, phrase is somewhat awkward

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[9] A History of Music in England, p.274.

rhythmically and reappears twice in the course of this brief motet (bars 11-14, 22-23). The remainder is largely imitative, contrpuntal writing, but is not entirely effective because of the economy in the scoring and the conservatism in the harmony.

Ecce Sic Benedicetur (Vol.2, p.461) is a setting for three voices (ATB) of Psalm 128, verse 5; a copy of it, not in Wesley's hand, in BM Add. MS 14341, indicates that it was written on August 19th 1801. Here is another example of Wesley building a largely contrapuntal texture from limited resources: the opening theme, presented first in the tenor (bars 1-4), provides the majority of the musical material for the piece; a second figure, appearing first in the bass at bar 22, and clearly growing out of the first, also has considerable prominence; another secondary figure, with an arpeggiated opening, is introduced in the soprano at bar 48. There are two particular features worth noting: first, the series of entries beginning at bar 30, each one a step higher than the previous one, alternating between tenor and alto, and accompanied by a rising scale in the bass - imitative writing typical of Wesley; and secondly, the final section (bars 103-120), marked by Wesley to be repeated, in which a new musical figure appears - a codetta theme.

Nocte Surgentes (Vol.2, p.571) is a setting for three voices (ATB) of an Office Hymn for Matins; a copy of the score is in BM Add. MS 14341 and it is dated September 10th 1801. Wesley sets all three verses of the hymn to the same music, a fourteen-bar, unremarkable, homophonic phrase.

Almost seven years after his double-choir setting of Dixit

Dominus, Wesley composed another setting, considerably smaller in scope, for alto, tenor and bass. The autograph manuscript is in BM Add. MS 14340, and there is a set of individual parts in Wesley's hand in BM Add. MS 35001; there is also a copy in the hand of J.P.Street in BM Egerton MS 2571. The autograph score records the occasion of its composition and first performance; Wesley has written: 'Presented and performed at the Society of Concentores, December 27th 1806'. Later, he provided further details about the performance and the society in a letter to his brother Charles, written on January 15th 1807:

> I thought you would be pleased in my adding a copy of a new 'Dixit Dominus' for 3 voices which was performed lately at what is called the Concentores Society of which you may have heard and which consists solely of 12 select musical professors each of whom is expected to produce a new canon and a new glee on whatever day he happens to be chosen president.[10]

He went on to give his comments on the performance.

This setting of Dixit Dominus (Vol.2, p.445) is based on a plainsong melody which Wesley identifies at the outset as the fifth tone: he combines this with a contrasting theme and, in a characteristically Wesleyan fashion, interweaves them into an interesting, essentially contrapuntal texture. At the end of the piece, after a pause (bar 107), there is a slow, quiet statement of the plainsong melody in a harmonized form. One interesting feature is that in the manuscript there are rather more dynamic markings than in most of Wesley's scores; he no doubt took greater care because of the occasion of its first performance!

Deus Noster Refugium (Vol.2, p.437) is a setting of some verses from Psalm 46 for three voices (SSB); a copy of the score, not in

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[10] BM Add. MS 35013, a collection of letters and other Wesley material.

Wesley's hand, is contained in BM Add. MS 14341, and indicates that it was composed on September 7th 1807. But for this information, the scoring and the style of this motet might have suggested an earlier date, since there are signs of certain weaknesses, particularly in the opening section, which are not apparent in many of the other compositions of this period. One feature, however, which tends to confirm the later date, is the harmonic vocabulary, especially the progression of chords in bars 40-46 and 65-69.

Ecce Iam Noctis Tenuatur Umbra (Vol.2, p.191) is a setting of an Office Hymn at Lauds on a Sunday. Two versions of this piece have survived: there is a version for alto, tenor and bass in the hand of J.P.Street in BM Egerton MS 2571, but the surviving autograph score, in BM Add. MS 14340, is a version for five voices (SSATB) and organ, dated 1808. It is hymn-like in form, the three verses having the same music with different scoring; between the verses Wesley has provided two brief organ interludes.

In Exitu Israel is undoubtedly the best known of Wesley's compositions; it has enjoyed regular public performances ever since it first appeared in a printed edition (originally in 1885). More has been written about this motet than any other Wesley piece; it has often been highly acclaimed, designated a masterpiece, and put forward as representing the highest and best in Wesley's creative work. Ernest Walker's enthusiastic comments on the piece are quoted elsewhere (p.122); others have been no less eulogistic:

> Here is music, florid and splendid, with immense phrases that come to us, so to speak, with the stamp of genius on them, straight from the mint of that clear mind. And how such pure music survives and penetrates through the murk of modern styles! It is not a question of idiom, or fashion, or date, but the very simple proposition of direct

musical expression, allied to a superbly finished technique.[11]

The date and purpose of its composition can be accurately determined: the autograph manuscript is dated May 3rd 1810, and the motet received its first public performance just sixteen days later (May 19th 1810) at a 'Musical Morning Party' given by Wesley at the New Rooms in Hanover Square.[12] An advertisement for the event appeared in an issue of the Morning Chronicle, and included a list of works to be performed:

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| March from Overture to 'Deidamia' | Handel |
| Invocation to the Deity | S.Wesley |
| Organ Trio | S.Bach |
| Hymn 'Tantum Ergo' | V.Novello |
| Selection from Sacred Motets (performed last season) | Seb.Bach |
| Solo (violin) | Seb.Bach |
| Sonata (pianoforte and violin) | Seb.Bach |
| Full antiphona 'In Exitu Israel' for a double choir (composed expressly for this occasion) | S.Wesley[13] |

Wesley's championing of the music of J.S.Bach was in full flight, and this programme alone shows that his interest in the master's work was not limited to any one genre but embraced all. Apparently, too, he had little hesitation in concluding such a progremme with his own new composition.

A detailed analysis of this work is unnecessary, since to do that would only be to repeat what other scholars have adequately done; a far more useful study is to comment on the piece in the light of Wesley's other Latin church music, most of which has not been available before to make such a study possible.

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[11] Writer not known: quoted in Lightwood, Samuel Wesley, Musician, p.156-7, and attributed to 'a modern critic of repute'.

[12] Although this information is readily available and quoted correctly in Lightwood (p.156), Routley states that In Exitu Israel and Exultate Deo 'happen to be works which can be reasonably accurately dated. In Exitu Israel is from his brief period of Roman Catholic enthusiasm - somewhere about 1784.' This error is the more difficult to understand since in dating Exultate Deo, Routley quotes Lightwood (Routley, The Musical Wesleys, p.70; Lightwood, pp.104-8).

[13] Quoted by Lightwood, p.156.

The thematic material employed is the first recognisably Wesleyan feature of this motet: his first subject is noble, moving chiefly in long notes; the second, by way of contrast, is brighter, more cheerful, rhythmically more interesting, moving in quicker notes - this use of contrasting thematic material is, as has already been seen, often prevalent in Wesley's compositions. The character of these two themes is significant, too: in the autograph manuscript (RCM MS 4022),[14] Wesley has written the superscription 'Thema assumptum ab octavo tono gregoriani cantus', thereby indicating that his first subject is a Gregorian melody. The significant characteristic of the second theme, besides its increased vitality compared with the first, is that its initial phrase consists of the notes of a simple chord, B flat major in this instance (bars 12-13) - this simplest of thematic formulae is a favourite with Wesley, occurring frequently in his Latin compositions.

These two contrasting themes are skilfully combined by Wesley into a polyphonic texture - they first appear together at bar 22; but he is not content with these and proceeds to introduce several other musical figures which play important roles in the overall out-working of the piece. The most striking of these additional themes is the rather angular one which first appears at bar 65; Wesley apparently had something of a predilection for introducing little angular figures, often involving awkward intervals which were not always immediately easy to sing, and there are a number of instances of this in his Latin compositions - for example, the last movement of Ave Maris Stella (bars 110-122), and the first section of Confitebor Tibi Domine (bars 87-92). In In Exitu Israel there is a highly

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[14] Dr Holmes Ambrose states: 'The original MS...has not been found', p.266.

dramatic statement of the angular theme, elaborately extended, at bar 154, where all eight parts are in unison: this simple, dramatic device, of relapsing into a unisonal texture, is characteristically Wesleyan, and used by him with great effect in several of his compositions.

The harmonic vocabulary of this motet is rather conservative compared with others, particularly the later ones; only in the coda section is there any real richness in the harmony. The tonality is similarly tame, never venturing very far from home, and never remaining in a foreign key for long; there are no really effective progressions or modulations, no poignantly dramatic chords, harmonic features which are all prevalent, for example, in Constitues Eos Principes, written only four years later. The coda, following a rest and introducing a new theme, is a feature of several motets, as is the deflexion to the minor tonality. Wesley's favourite cadential nuance of introducing the dominant minor ninth is here disguised both by the minor tonality and its appearance over a tonic pedal (bars 225-226 and 234-235).

Here, in Wesley's best known composition, is a fine example of his craftmanship as a composer; yet, there is nothing new, nothing unique, nothing of special note. It is full of typically Wesleyan vitality, with some impressive polyphonic textures, supported by thoroughly sound, coherent harmonic progressions, achieving a measure of dramatic effectiveness. However, in all these aspects, Wesley surpassed himself elsewhere: he has constructed more elaborate polyphonic textures, for example, in Constitues Eos Principes, more effective harmonic progressions in Tu Es Sacerdos In Aeternam, (1827), and greater dramatic effectiveness in Omnia Vanitas. Seen in the light of his other Latin compositions, Wesley's In Exitu Israel

appears in its true colours: it is certainly impressive, but not unique, a fine composition, but not his best.

From this period there has survived an isolated Christe Eleison; the autograph score, preserved in BM Add. MS 14342, is dated September 10th 1810 (Vol. 2, p.397). It was obviously intended to be part of a longer work since the final cadence is imperfect; the remainder has not been traced, an unfortunate fact since this is a fine example of Wesley's contrapuntal writing. The one theme is given first in the soprano and is joined by a tonal version of the theme in the alto (bar 3); under the continuation of these two voices there are two more identical entries of the theme in the tenor (bar 7) and the bass (bar 9). The bass statement of the theme is interrupted when it reaches the dominant and becomes a brief pedal (bars 12-13), ushering in fresh statements of the theme in the tenor (bar 14) and the alto (bar 16). A modulation to C minor heralds two more statements of the theme, high on G in the soprano (bar 20) with a tonal answer in the tenor (bar 22); a third entry in the bass (bar 24) re-establishes the tonic key. There is a brief thematically-based episode (bars 27-31), before the final statement of the theme in the tenor (bar 32) over a dominant pedal; this is extended contrapuntally into an elaborate codetta section (bars 34-50).

Ut Queant Laxis (Vol.2, p.575) is a brief, but fascinating piece; although there is no date given on the existing manuscript (RCM MS 4025 - a non-autograph copy), the date of its composition is provided in a letter, dated Monday June 22nd 1812, which Wesley wrote to Novello:

> I have written the annexed for Wednesday, which is St. John Baptist's Day you know, and if you can get another copy of it made out, we can roar it in style as well as a jolly song. It appeared to me an appropriate idea to cobble up something of the sort for the occasion, and you will best know how to

> choose such workmen as will be likely to hit it off smoothest among the choir - I of course will lend my bellows (such as it is) in aid of the cause.[15]

The text is the first two verses of the Hymn at Vespers on the Feast of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist, and the setting is for three voices (ATB). It is not remarkable musically with its hymn-like style; as many predecessors had done, Wesley recognised the fact that each of the first six phrases of the text had as its first syllable the sounds of the tonic sol-fa scale:

> UT queant laxis REsonare fibris
> MIra gestorum FAmuli tuorum,
> SOLve polluti LAbii reatum,
> Sancte Johannes.

This unusual feature he emphasised in the music by beginning each phrase of the music on the corresponding note.

Tota Pulchra Es (Vol.2, p.377) is a setting for two voices (SB) and organ of a Prose of the Blessed Virgin Mary; two copies have been preserved, both in Wesley's hand, and both in BM Add. MS 14240. The first has the two vocal parts with the full text and bears the date October 24th 1812; the second has the vocal parts with only a hint of the text, but with a figured bass. This pleasant but unremarkable composition displays certain Wesleyan traits, such as the opening arpeggiated motive, soli-tutti contrasts, and a mixture of homophonic and contrapuntal textures.

Throughout this central period of his life, Wesley's interest in Gregorian chant was unabated and it was during this time that he produced most of his harmonizations of plainsong melodies. One product of this Gregorian infatuation is rather more significant than the rest: the Gregorian Mass 'Pro Angelis'. Wesley refers to this mass-setting in a letter he wrote to Novello on Saturday

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[15] BM Add. MS 11729, Letters from Wesley to Novello 1811-25.

5th December 1812, in which he talks generally of his labours with Gregorian chant and shows real concern that, because of the prevailing attitude of church musicians to Gregorian music, his labours may well be in vain. He wrote:

> I shall hawk about the Mass in D when concluded, which I will rather suffer to moulder in a chest than sell for a Song; but have very little expectation of an adequate price offered for the copyright. As the Gregorian is beginning to be proscribed by the clergy themselves, it is plainly an unfavourable epoch to reckon upon its encouragement, even when presented with florid advantages, and had I been aware of the sudden and silly revolution taking place in your choir, I should certainly have employed much of my time otherwise, which I now consider as imprudently and incautiously sacrificed.[16]

Here is clear indication that Wesley originally intended this Mass to be used in the Portugese Embassy Chapel; the fact that at some stage Novello made a copy of the score suggests that, in spite of its initial cool reception, it may well have been performed by the Chapel choir.

The autogrph score of the Mass is preserved, together with a copy of Exultate Deo, in BM Add. MS 17731; it is dated December 21st 1812. This manuscript bears the name of Vincent Novello and his address, Craven Hill Cottage, Bayswater, and records:

> Presented by him, for preservation in the musical library of the British Museum, as a tribute of respect and a token of his veneration for the memory of his beloved friend, Samuel Wesley, who, in the donor's estimation, was one of the greatest musical geniuses that England has ever produced.

This superscription of Novello's is dated May morning 1849; it continues:

> Both these autograph compositions, neither of which has yet been published, (as they ought long since to have been, for the gratification of all those of his brother musicians who are competent to judge of the superior skill displayed by the composer in their mode of construction) are masterpieces of counterpoint.

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[16] BM Add. MS 11729.

In addition to these comments in the front of the manuscript, Novello wrote on the first page of the Mass:

> Presented to the musical library of the British Museum to be carefully preserved for Sam. Wesley's sake, after the MS has been engraved and published, to do honour to the memory of the composer. V.N., July 14th 1848.

Preserved it was, engraved and published it was not! Further interesting information about the Mass is provided by Novello's final comment, also on the first page of the score:

> This MS contains the whole Gregorian Mass (except the Kyrie, which is already published in Novello's 'Sacred Music' dedicated to the Rev. Wm. V.Fryer). It is arranged and harmonized by S.W., and this copy is in his own hand-writing. I prize this MS the more highly for its having been kindly presented to me by the widow of my beloved friend Charles Stokes, after his death in 1839. V.N., 69 Dean Street, Soho Square.[17]

In addition to the autograph manuscript there is the copy made by Novello which is in BM Add. MS 14342, and another copy in an unknown hand in RCM MS 4028, both without the 'Kyrie'; there is also a separate autograph copy of the 'Agnus Dei' in BM Add. MS 35001 and an incomplete copy of the 'Kyrie' in RCM MS 679.

In this setting (Vol.2, p.235), for soloists (SATB), chorus and organ, Wesley has set severe limits on himself, unashamedly basing each portion of the text upon the appropriate plainsong melodic phrase, most of the time keeping that melody in the soprano part. Within these limits he has achieved a remarkable degree of variety through soli-tutti contrasts, constantly changing textures, and varying tempi and time signatures.

The 'Kyrie' has the usual three sections and a basically homophonic texture, although this is relieved a number of times with more contrapuntal writing, particularly at the cadences.

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[17] The publication referred to is: A Collection of Sacred Music as Performed at the Royal Portugese Chapel in London, (May 1811) - BM Printed Books 1133i.

The 'Gloria' is a multi-sectional composition, the sections varying in length from six bars (28-33) to thirty-one bars (177-207). Again, the texture at the outset is largely homophonic, variety being achieved through soli-tutti contrasts, the first change of time occurring at bar 49. There are some more contrapuntal passages, but the first recognisable, consistent counter-subject is in the 'Qui tollis' section (bars 74-101); the following section which begins in B minor, is significant in that the organ briefly has an independent, accompanimental role to play (bars 102-108). Variety of movement is enhanced with the introduction of a 3/8 section (bars 126-148), into the cadence of which Wesley slips his favourite minor ninth (bar 146). The final section (bars 177-207), having begun thoroughly homophonically, ends with a rhythmical drive which is typically Wesleyan.

The 'Credo' is also multi-sectional and, at first, largely homophonic; the first significant contrast occurs at bar 51 where soprano and alto soloists are supported by a flowing organ accompaniment - some interesting chromaticisms are incorporated into the cadence (bar 59). In the following 'Et incarnatus' section, there is a striking bass figure with a falling seventh (bars 67-68) and an extremely simple, but nonetheless effective, setting of 'et homo factus est' (bars 72-80). The 'Crucifixus' (bars 81-95) is marked 'Grave', has some gently chromatic harmony, and a quasi-hocket effect at 'et sepultus est'. The contrast between this and the ensuing 'Et resurrexit' (bars 96-114) is strong, with a 3/8 time signature and almost consistent semiquaver movement. Strangely, though effectively, the initial accompanying figures for the 'et ascendit' are descending scales, though becoming ascending eventually (bars 115-138); an elaborate bass figure at 'judicare', a change of time

at the next bar, and a tiny counter-subject at 'cujus regni', are the significant features of 'Et iterum' (bars 139-164). The following section again has a prominent, independent organ part (bars 165-175), some chromatic harmony appears briefly in 'Qui cum Patre' (bars 176-197), and a counter-subject is treated imitatively in 'Et unam' (bars 198-214). Again, the final section (bars 231-258) has considerable rhythmical drive, but this vitality is relaxed slightly for the cadential bars.

The opening motives of the 'Et expecto' section are significant in that they are reminiscent of the opening bars of that section of the 'Credo' in the Mass in B minor of Bach. That Bach's masterpiece may have been an unconscious influence upon Wesley as he wrote is possible, since by this time (1812) his championing of the music of Bach was at its height, and the 'Credo' was to be amongst the earliest examples of Bach's music which Wesley endeavoured to have published in England. He wrote concerning this particular publication to Benjamin Jacob on Thursday 15th February 1816:

> My object in publishing it is not emolument, which indeed is seldom to be expected in this Town from any masterly musical Productions; but my chief view has been to manifest to English real Judges of the Art, how mistaken and false was the Report of those who have Impudently pretended to prove that the great Sebastian Bach could not Compose truly Vocal Music. I mean also that the present Work be regarded as a Study for Masters in orchestral Composition, and such indeed it will be found.... I need not add much as Panegyric upon any grand Production of the Matchless Man, but I will only just observe that even you, who have been familiar with sundry of his compositions, will be surprised at some of the gigantic Features of the admirable CREDO in question.[18]

It seems reasonable to suggest that by December 1812, when Wesley was writing his Mass, he was already familiar with Bach's; certainly, the influence of Bach, however remote or unconscious, is unmistakeable in bars 223-225 when compared with this:

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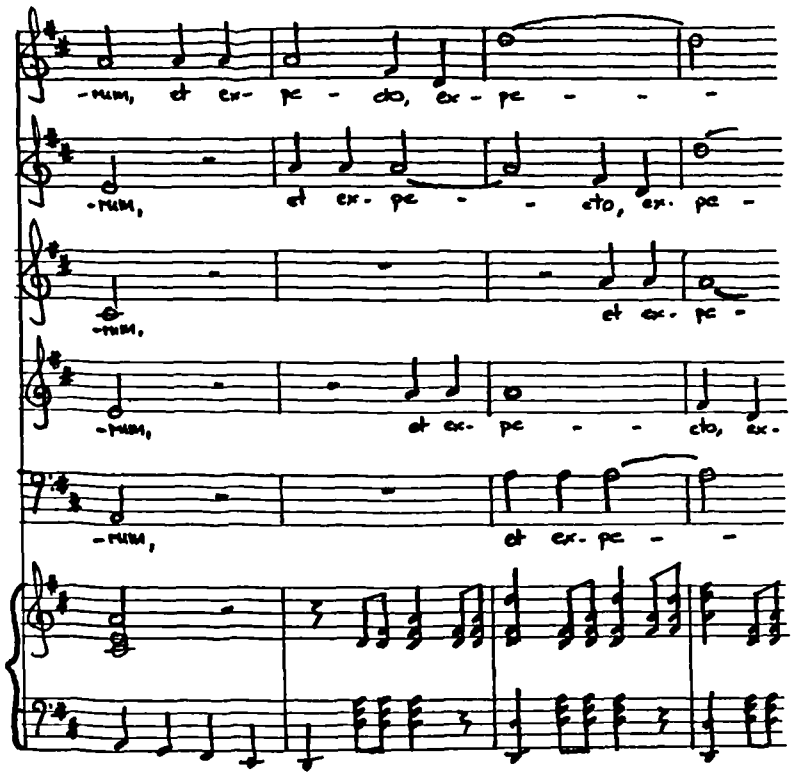
[18] Letters of Samuel Wesley to Mr Jacobs, edited by Eliza Wesley, (London, 1957), pp.49-50.

Bach - Credo (bars 146-149)




The 'Sanctus' is generally more contrapuntal in texture, particularly at 'Pleni sunt coeli' where two other distinct themes are combined with the plainsong melody and woven into an interesting passage. The 'Benedictus' is initially for solo soprano with an elaborate organ accompaniment, but is joined by the other voices in a contrapuntal texture for the 'Osanna'.

The first part of the 'Agnus Dei', which is repeated, is in 6/8 time and is scored for soprano and alto soloists with an organ accompaniment; in the final section (bars 17-53), which is largely contrapuntal in texture, the 'cantus firmus' is in the tenor part throughout.

Ecce Panis Angelorum (Vol.2, p.453), a setting of a Transubstantiatorial Hymn with a text taken from a Sequence of Thomas Aquinas,

is the finest of Wesley's miniature Latin compositions, and debatably the best of all his hymn-tunes. The autograph score, dated March 31st 1813, is preserved in BM Add. MS 14340; there is also a separate treble part in Wesley's hand in BM Add. MS 35001. In a letter to Novello on Wednesday March 31st 1813, Wesley referred to 'a tune, put together in sorrow of heart',[19] which was undoubtedly a reference to Ecce Panis Angelorum, written by Wesley that day - apparently he was suffering one of his depressive attacks. Judging by a comment of Wesley's in his letter to Novello on Friday 3rd April, Novello liked his new 'tune', but there is no further mention of it until, on Monday December 20th 1824, Wesley wrote a letter to Novello enclosing a copy of his revised Ave Regina Caelorum:

> I send herewith the tiny piece I wrote about in my last. You are right welcome to the others you enumerated. If I remember truly, 'Ecce Panis' is in D minor, and I also recollect that I omitted one line in the Hymn itself, which must be supplied to render it all orthodox, a term for which I know you have the most profound Veneration.[20]

A month later, on Thursday January 20th 1825, Wesley wrote again to Novello reporting: 'I discover.....that the line I imagined I had omitted is never-the-less inserted in my tune, so that there is no chasm needing areplenish'(!).[21]
In fact, Wesley has omitted one line of the hymn-text.

Throughout this hymn-setting there is a consistent sense of progression, achieved through the combination of a carefully contoured melody with simple but powerfully effective harmony. The opening four-bar phrase begins in the tonic key, D minor, and

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19 BM Add. MS 11729, Letters from Wesley to Novello 1811-25.
20 BM Add. MS 11729.
21 BM Add. MS 11729.

after its initial descending figure, rises to a momentary close in the relative major (bar 4); the second phrase begins rising a fourth to high F and closes in A minor (bar 8). Unexpectedly, but effectively, the harmony at the beginning of the third phrase is F major which moves quickly, through G minor, back to the tonic (bar 16). Another similar harmonic 'surprise' - a B flat major chord - initiates the next phrase which moves to G minor and, via a sequential passage, a close in that key (bar 24). The final phrase is extended to ten bars with a momentary close in the relative major (bar 28), and a passage of seventh chords (bars 31-32), somewhat reminiscent of those similar, rather overworked passages in later nineteenth century English church music. In this context, however, sparingly used, it provides a fitting close to this fine hymn-setting, an exquisite musical miniature.

Another product of this central, and creatively most significant, period of Wesley's life, a further example of his mastery of the motet idiom, is a setting for four voices (SATB) of Tu Es Sacerdos Aeternum (Vol.2, p.533), part of the Gradual at Mass for a Bishop-Confessor (Psalm 110, verse 4). The autograph score is in BM. Add. MS 14340 and is dated January 5th 1814.

This motet is a demonstration of Wesley's craftsmanship in organizing musical material into complex polyphonic textures; as he does so he creates incidental rich harmonies and acute dissonances. It begins with a stretto entry of the first subject: the tenor has the subject in the tonic key, followed two beats later by the bass on the dominant - a real answer (bars 1-3). The significant features of this subject are the initial rising third and the subsequent falling semiquavers, and the falling and rising fifth figure. It has further

developmental potential in that it is basically a melodic sequence - the first four-beat phrase repeated a tone higher slightly altered. As the tenor and bass close onto the dominant, a second stretto entry begins in soprano and alto (bar 3): the soprano has the subject on the dominant, followed by the alto on the supertonic - a tonal answer in so far as the initial interval is minor instead of major. The introduction of F sharp (end of bar 4) effects a modulation to the dominant (bar 5). At the beginning of bar 4, there is a characteristically Wesleyan passing dissonance (F, G and A sound simultaneously), arising incidentally out of the linear insistence of the individual melodic strands.

As the soprano and alto close in the dominant, the bass introduces the second subject, beginning on the dominant and accompanied by a tenor figure related to the first subject (bar 5). The significant features of this second subject are the oscillating third and rising octave at the beginning, and the dotted-rhythmn of the last three notes. This also has additional developmental possibilities in that the last note is a minor seventh above the first. In bar 6, there is a stretto entry of the second subject on the supertonic (the dominant tonality has been counteracted by the F naturals in the bass - bars 5 and 6): the soprano has a tonal version (the initial interval is minor), while the bass has an altered version (the rising octave has become a rising fifth) which is extended sequentially. Together with this stretto entry is a restatement of the first subject also on the supertonic in the alto, again modulating to the dominant, but again immediately counteracted by F naturals. The soprano part of bars 6-10 is interesting: the statement of the second subject (bars 6-7) is followed immediately by the first subject slightly altered on B (bars 7-9), the end of which elides with the

beginning of a restatement of the second subject (bars 9-10).

The dominant chord is firmly established at the beginning of bar 9 but is quickly counteracted by the bass which has a statement of the first subject on G with the flattened third. The tonic minor mode is confirmed by the B flat of the alto (bar 9), but immediately contradicted in bar 10 by the re-assertion of the B natural (bass and soprano), and the introduction chromatically of a G sharp (alto). This proves to be the dominant of A minor, into which key the music settles in bar 11 - this is the relative minor, but reached by a rather devious route, through G minor! At the beginning of bar 10 there is another Wesleyan dissonance, particularly acute, where F, G, A and B flat sound simultaneously.

Two statements of the second subject in alto and tenor (bars 11-13) tentatively exploit the harmonically progressive element inherent in its span of a minor seventh - the alto begins in A minor and modulates to E minor, the tenor continues in E minor and moves to D minor. The A minor tonality is restored in bar 14 and a stretto entry of the first subject is given in soprano and alto. The texture of the stretto on the second subject which begins in bar 16 is thickened by the two entries being in thirds - tenor and bass in A minor, soprano and alto a tenth higher in C major. The tenor has the first subject on D eliding with the previous phrase (bars 17-18), answered in the soprano with an altered and extended version modulating to D minor (bars 18-20). The second subject in the bass on D moving to C (bars 20-21) is followed immediately by the same subject on A moving to G in the soprano (bars 21-22). Thus the dominant of the home key is re-established, and over a dominant pedal in the bass there are three entries of the first subject in stretto, the tenor

on G, the alto on D, the soprano on C (bars 22-24). At bar 24, all four parts coincide on reiterated dominant chords: the texture, which has been consistently contrapuntal, now becomes homophonic, the change being made all the more dramatic by the appearance of two unexpected chords, F minor and C minor.

The three bars that follow (25-27), marked 'piano', consist of two similar semi-sequential phrases, entirely homophonic in texture, but retaining a rhythmn similar to that of the second subject, thus not seriously impeding the constant rhythmic drive of the previous bars. Incorporated into these bars are some interesting harmonic progressions: the first phrase begins on the Neapolitan sixth chord and moves to a perfect cadence in A flat major, the major key on the flattened submediant, which was a favourite of Wesley's for brief tonal excursions. In the second phrase, the alto rises chromatically, gradually transforming the A flat major chord, first into an augmented chord, then into F minor (first inversion), and finally into a German augmented sixth chord, which resolves onto the dominant of the home key.

The polyphonic texture is temporarily restored at bar 28 as soprano and alto have imitative entries on the dominant, accompanied by thematically-based material in tenor and bass; through these bars there is a rapid succession of modulations, to F major (bars 28-29), to C major (bar 29), to A minor (bars 29-30), to F major (bar 30), to close on a definite V-I cadence in C major (bar 31). These modulations also contain a number of passing dissonances: particularly acute are those at the beginning of bar 30 (C, B and A sounding together), and one beat later (G, A, B flat and C sounding together).

The final six bars of this motet seem to serve as a codetta. Both subjects are prominent at first: the first subject appears in

the soprano on C (bars 32-33), answered in the alto on F (bars 33-34); the second subject appears on C in the bass (bars 32-33). At the end of bar 34 the soprano begins a new theme (a codetta theme!) which occurs one bar later in the tenor. This codetta section begins in the tonic key and makes passing reference to G minor (bar 33), D minor (bar 33), and A minor (bar 34), before settling onto a dominant pedal in the home key in bar 35. The final cadence is interesting: Wesley uses pause marks at four points in the last two bars - this may simply be his rather quaint way of indicating 'rallentando', although elsewhere in his writing he uses the orthodox marking. Also interesting is the last chord of all, a unison C - an unexpectedly bare sound after the elaborate texture of the motet, and yet strangely effective!

Here, then, is a fine piece of polyphonic writing which must be counted amongst Wesley's best works, and ought to be one of those compositions by which his stature as a composer is assessed. It is sad that works as good as this should remain unpublished and therefore unknown for so long; it is such neglect as this which has contributed to the diminishing of Wesley's reputation.[22]

Constitues Eos Principes (Vol.2, p.405) is also one of Wesley's finest pieces of Latin church music. Here, in this comparatively short motet (85 bars), is an admirable demonstration of his great ability to manipulate musical ideas into complex polyphonic textures; here, too, he displays a harmonic vocabulary considerably richer and more advanced than that of the majority of his predecessors or contemporaries. The autograph manuscript is in BM Add. MS 14340, and

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[22] During the course of writing this, Novellos have published this motet together with Constitues Eos Principes - Novello Early Church Music, NECM 28, (London, 1974).

is dated November 9th 1814; the text is the Responsory for Feasts of Apostles and Evangelists.

There is an air of expectancy right from the outset, inspired particularly by the striking dissonances which feature prominently in the opening bars, maintained consistently throughout by means of a sense of progression towards a climax, and in the finish thoroughly satisfied. These dissonances in the opening bars arise naturally out of Wesley's first-subject material, which comprises two similar musical phrases superimposed upon each other, differing from each other chiefly in the size of the initial interval - the first rises a perfect fifth, the second rises a minor sixth.

The motet is scored for five voices (SSATB), which enter individually at one bar intervals, giving alternately the two forms of the first-subject material. All the entries are anacrusic, the tenor beginning on the second beat of bar 1 with the first form of the subject, rising the fifth from the tonic, G, to the dominant, which is held for three full beats. On the second beat of bar 2, the alto has the second form of the subject, beginning below the tenor on G, and rising up the minor sixth to E flat. At this point (beginning of bar 3), the first of the dissonances occurs, a semi-tonal clash between the E flat of the alto and the held D of the tenor, which resolves onto C on the next beat. Here, soprano II enters with the rising fifth motive, followed one bar later by soprano I with the rising sixth motive, both from the tonic. This inetivably leads to a second semitonal clash between the two soprano parts at the beginning of bar 5, the dissonance being heightened this time by the presence of a C in the tenor - thus, C, D and E flat are sounded simultaneously. The dissonance is resolved as before and at the point of resolution the bass enters with the rising fifth motive

this time from C, thus forming a IV-I cadence in the tonic key. Although this is only a passing cadence, it is the onlytonic-closing cadence in the piece, except for the end.

The continuation of the initial motive in the bass is a descending scale, reaching B flat in bar 9; the beginning of bar 8 is the well-judged climax of this opening sentence, with soprano I rising up a fourth to high G and falling a major sixth to B flat, while the E flat major chord supporting the high G proves to be a pivot between the tonic key and its relative major, B flat, in which key there is a V-I cadence at bars 10-11. Here, there is a typically Wesleyan cadential feature: the dominant chord is held for a complete bar and decorated in one part - in this instance, soprano II. This perfect cadence in B flat major is only a temporary resting-place (one beat); the music is soon moving on and modulating again - E natural, B natural and C sharp appear, establishing the new key of D minor, which is confirmed with a V-I cadence (bars 15-16). The texture of these bars is rich, achieved through contrary motion (soprano I and II and bass ascending, alto and tenor descending), and the predominantly stepwise progression of all parts. Another notable feature is the ascending scale, beginning on B flat in the bass (bar 12), rising up the scale of F major as far as A (bar 13), where it is taken over by the tenor, transformed into the scale of D minor, and continued up to G (bar 15). There are numerous passing dissonances too, the most acute being in bar 12, where a held F in soprano II clashes with a passing C major chord - the dissonance is made the more acute by the doubled E natural. The cadence and its approach (bars 13-16) are also remarkable: the bass reaches the new dominant (A) in bar 13, over

which tonic and dominant harmonies alternate, rises to B flat (bar 14), and returns to the dominant for bar 15. However, the expected dominant chord is delayed one beat: the D tied from the previous bar in soprano I (the dominant 11th), the B flat in the alto, (the dominant minor 9th) together with the tied-over F in soprano II create a rich dissonance (at the beginning of bar 15) which is resolved onto the consonant dominant seventh chord, and closed onto the tonic, D minor (bar 16).

This last modulation proves to be, if not redundant, certainly deceptive, for when the imitative entries appear again, they are not in D minor as expected but in B flat major. The tenor has the rising fifth motive, followed one bar later by the rising sixth motive in the alto; a dissonance occurs again, but less acute this time since the rising sixth is now major (bars 16-18). At bar 19, the second main subject of the motet appears in soprano I, high on F, to be repeated two bars later at the same pitch in soprano II (bar 21), a seventh lower on G in the alto (bar 22), a fifth lower on C in the tenor (bar 23), and a fifth lower again on F in the bass (bar 24). This new theme is reminiscent of the second theme of In Exitu Israel, and is in the same key. It is significant that the mood of this theme is very different from the first; it is bright and rhythmical while the first was subdued - the use of contrasting musical material again! Also in this section (bars 16-28), another new musical figure is introduced which is to play a prominent role in the remainder of the motet: a running figure in quavers. It is in predominantly quaver motion that the music is carried forward to its next cadence point in C minor (bar 27-28), the new key having been initially hinted at in bar 25 with the appearance of an A flat in the alto. The cadence itself is

reminiscent of those of Bach - the significant features are the flattened sixth (bar 27), followed closely by the sharpened seventh (bar 27), and closing onto the tonic chord with 'tierce de Picardie' (bar 28).

Simultaneously with the sounding of this C major chord, the alto begins the next series of imitative entries with the second subject on G, followed just one beat later by the tenor on C, and three beats later by soprano II on G. The beginning of bar 31 is an inspired moment, one of those moments which reveal that at his best Wesley is so much more than a 'competent technician'. It is not so much the choice of chord (in context A major is not too unusual) as its disposition, particularly the statement of the second subject on E natural in soprano I, and the presence of the seventh in the alto - this makes it the dominant seventh of D minor, onto which chord it resolves, via a diminished seventh chord (bars 31-32), a remarkably effective progression! The prepared double suspension across the bar-line is made all the more striking by the appearance in the bass at bar 32 of the second subject on D - the result being the simultaneous sounding of the dominant chord on the tonic bass. From here to the next cadence point (bar 36), the texture becomes semi-homophonic, decorated by the quaver figurations of the inner parts which culminate in an ascending scale of G minor, shared by tenor and alto (bar 35). The early appearance of an E flat (bar 33) signifies a return to the home key; after numerous incidental dissonances the music comes to rest on the dominant of G minor, a I-V cadence (bars 35-36). Here is the first real respite in the piece: a minim's rest follows this cadence.

The two first-subject motives reappear in alto and tenor (bar 37);

at the point of dissonance (beginning of bar 39) the bass has the second subject on G, answered on D in soprano I (bar 41) while soprano II has the rising sixth motive (bar 41). The second subject reappears several times at various pitches and in various guises beneath the running quavers of the soprano parts, which lead the music on to another Bach-like cadence, a close in C minor (bar 48). At the cadence point, the bass begins a new series of imitative entries which are telescoped together this time, all five voices entering within the space of four bars, and based on the opening rising motive, although the interval is now a fourth (except the bass which retains the fifth). Once all the voices have entered, the texture again becomes semi-homophonic, decorated with quaver figurations in the inner parts. The close of this section is remarkable; Wesley employs an extended cadence (bars 59-62) where, under an inverted pedal on A in soprano I, he delays the resolution of the G in soprano II for three bars, harmonizing the resulting 'frustrated' suspension simply but effectively thus: IV - Ic - IIc, resolving onto the dominant at bar 62, basically an imperfect cadence in the tonic key.

Alto and tenor begin the next section with the second subject on D in unison, separating as the two soprano parts join them in thirds (bar 63). The ensuing section contains some of the most complex polyphonic textures in all Wesley's motets, while the richness of the resulting harmonies is also powerful. All the thematic material is employed: the quaver figurations and the second subject are constantly in prominence, and the rising motive appears twice in soprano I (bars 70-71 and 72-73). The elaborate texture is built up essentially polyphonically, the rich harmony being largely incidental:

for example, the sensuous, parallel second inversion chords in the upper parts at bar 67, the striking E flat major seventh chord at bar 68 (beat 2), the dissonant augmented chord at the end of bar 74 which is a pivotal chord between C and G minors - all these arise out of the polyphony, as do the numerous passing dissonances. The two references to the rising motive are, in fact, a harmonic sequence, although somewhat disguised in the polyphony, the first closing momentarily on B flat major (bar 72), the second, equally briefly, on C minor (bar 74). The final close of this section is a I-V cadence in the tonic kay (bars 75-76) - for one crotchet, the third is missing from this final chord.

The tonal ambiguity at the beginning of the final section, the D and B flat in alto and tenor suggesting either G minor or B flat major (bar 76), is cleared when the other parts enter a bar later, reiterating a B flat chord in second inversion, which resolves, slightly unexpectedly, onto an F minor chord, and passes through C minor, F minor seventh, a diminished seventh chord on B natural, to the final IV-I cadence (bars 79-82) - both the sub-dominant and tonic chords are major. A tonic pedal is held in the bass for four bars, above which sub-dominant, dominant and tonic harmonies alternate, together with ascending and descending scales. In the last bar there is an interesting Wesleyan device, in which the first chord carries a pause, after which the chord is repeated twice, soprano I dropping an octave, with another pause on the last chord of all.

Constitues Eos Principes is unquestionably a fine composition, possibly the best of all Wesley's Latin motets: nowhere in his writing for the Catholic liturgy does he equal the complexity and richness of

the polyphonic textures he achieves here, and rarely has he exceeded the extraordinarily rich harmonic vocabulary here displayed - the only possible exceptions being Omnia Vanitas and Tu Es Sacerdos (1827. As has already been shown, Wesley's well-known motet In Exitu Israel has often been highly praised as a fine example of his writing, but in at least two respects, polyphonically and harmonically, it has been surpassed by the little-known Constitues Eos Principes. How unfortunate, therefore, that this piece has remained unpublished for so long.[23]

Two other items of Latin church music were apparently written during this central, creatively fruitful, period of Wesley's life. Gloria et Honore is a composition for tenor with organ accompaniment, a setting of two of the Responsories for the Feast of the Transfiguration. The autograph manuscript of this work has found its way to the Library of Congress, Washington (MS 27138).[24] It was published, with an elaborate realisation of the organ bass presumably by Novello, in 'A Collection of Motets for the Offertory, and other pieces principally adapted for the Morning Service', one of Novello's publications.[25] No manuscript source has been found of Domine Salvam Fac Reginam Nostram Mariam, an elaborate setting of a prayer for the Queen, Mary (presumably, Maria I, 'the mad queen of Portugal', who reigned 1777-1816, which suggests it was composed during the Peninsular War when Portugal and Britain were allies).[26] Novello also published this, again with an

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[23] During the course of writing this, Novellos have published this motet together with Tu Es Sacerdos - Novello Early Church Music, NECM 28, (London, 1974).

[24] Holmes Ambrose, p.199.

[25] Vol.2, p.19 - there is a copy of this volume in the BM - Printed Books 1133d.

[26] From information provided by Dr Nicholas Temperley in a private letter.

elaborate realisation of the organ bass, in 'A Collection of Sacred Music as performed at the Royal Portugese Chapel in London.'[27] The chief interest of these two undated works lies in the organ realisations, which provide some indication both about the way in which this was done in those days, and also of the manner in which music was performed at the Portugese Embassy Chapel.

Twice, earlier in Wesley's life, there were 'silent' periods when, as far as existing records show, he composed no music for the Catholic liturgy (1786-1792 and 1792-1798); now, after having composed Constitues Eos Principes *towards the end of 1814, there appears to be* a third, longer 'silent' period, lasting almost ten years. Again, the reasons for this can only be guessed at: his domestic situation was reasonably settled, for, by this time, he had decided to make Sara Suter his housekeeper, his common-law wife; there were, no doubt, certain religious tensions, since he was very much involved with the music of the Embassy Chapel, but thoroughly disenchanted with Catholic doctrine. However, the most likely cause of this latest silence was his health: whether or not it was the result of his fall in 1787, there is some evidence to suggest that during the years 1814-1824 he suffered a serious bout of his depressive illness. It is in the correspondence between Wesley and Novello that this evidence chiefly appears: firstly, no letters exist from the period June 1816 to August 1820; then, when Wesley next writes, on Tuesday August 29th 1820, he is clearly rather ill and has absented himself from the Chapel services because 'the music at the Chapel is too overwhelming for me to stand'.[28] His depressed state apparently destroyed any inclination to write music:

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[27] Vol.2, p.47, published in London, May 1811 - there is a copy of this volume in the BM - Printed Books 1133i.

[28] BM Add. MS 11729.

on Tuesday November 27th 1812 he wrote to Novello that 'as a composer I am a Cripple'.[29] Happily, however ill he had been, however long it had lingered, and however completely this illness had silenced his creative output, in June 1824 the silence was broken.

The motet with which Wesley broke this ten-year silence is one of his finest compositions for the Catholic liturgy, a piece which 'deserves to be recognised as one of the small choral masterpieces of the era';[30] this is Omnia Vanitas, a motet which Wesley entitled 'Carmen Funebre'. There is, in fact, some discrepancy concerning the date of its composition: the existing autograph manuscript bears the date 1827 (RCM MS 4022), but amongst the Wesley-Novello correspondence, there is a letter dated Monday 14th June, which suggests an earlier date. Wesley wrote to Novello:

> The words of the vocal ditty herewith were nearly the last that my excellent father uttered to me very shortly before his death, and I have for some time wished to give them sounds a little congenial with the sentiment. Your opinion of this tune and all other musical matters is nearly the only one I consider worth a thought, so I leave it with you in the rough state, not having yet made any other copy.
> Should you outlive me, which I hope and trust you will by many years, I can now please myself with the notions of your regarding this scrap as what I have entitled it, Carmen Funebre, as applied to myself, and a testimony of my veneration for the dictates of a parent whose value was utterly unknown to me till he was translated to Society alone worthy of him...[31]

This letter incidentally reveals the high esteem in which Wesley held Novello, and also the veneration he had for his father. As far as the dating of Omnia Vanitas is concerned, it is clear that it was originally composed in 1824, and that the autograph manuscript dated 1827 was the other copy Wesley later completed. Apparently, neither

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29 BM Add. MS 11729.

30 Holmes Ambrose, p.237.

31 BM Add. MS 11729.

Dr Holmes Ambrose nor Dr Erik Routley were aware of the existance of the dated manuscript, or of the letter which provides the more accurate dating: Ambrose states that the piece is undated,[32] while Routley suggests it was written about the time of the death of Samuel's father in 1788.[33] In addition to the autograph manuscript in the RCM, there are two other copies of the piece, one in BM Add. MS 35003, and the other in the library of St. Michael's College, Tenbury Wells (MS 874); there is also an incomplete set of parts in Wesley's hand in BM Add. MS 35003.

The majority of Wesley's motets were written for the Chapel of the Portugese Embassy; Stainton de B. Taylor assumed that Omnia Vanitas was similarly intended, commenting that it was 'presumably performed in the Chapel of the Portugese Embassy in London'.[34] However, this seems unlikely since by the time Wesley composed this motet, Novello was no longer organist at the Chapel, and presumably when Novello left, Wesley's connection was also severed. That Novello had terminated his employment at the Embassy earlier in the year is apparent from the Wesley-Novello correspondence. In a letter to Novello on Monday 8th March 1824, Wesley mentions the rumour that Novello was leaving the Chapel, referring to his friend's work there as 'the South Street drudgery'. Again, on Monday 19th April 1824, Wesley wrote: 'If the report be correct you were to play your last High Mass at South Street (professionally) yesterday....'[35] Thus, Novello left his job as organist of the Portugese Embassy Chapel after services on Sunday 18th April 1824.

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32 Holmes Ambrose, p.234.

33 The Musical Wesleys, p.80.

34 The Editor's note to Omnia Vanitas, edited by Stainton de B. Taylor, Hinrichsen Edition No.230, (London, 1952).

35 BM Add. MS 11729.

All this leaves the question as to whom Wesley wrote Omnia Vanitas for unanswered. Dr Holmes Ambrose suggests 'it may have been composed for one of Wesley's confraternities'.[36] However, the Wesley-Novello correspondence again reveals the correct answer; Wesley wrote to Novello on Sunday August 1st 1824:

> Herewith is a score of the Carmen Funebre which I promised, and also the parts in case you choose to give it a second trial with your choir....[37]

Apparently, although he had left the Embassy, Novello was still the conductor of a choir about which Wesley gives a limited amount of additional information in another letter, undated, but apparently written about the same time:

> Herewith are the separate parts of the Carmen Funebre, and I think that as the exalted motet 'Exultate Deo' is quite familiar of old to our friend Street, and the present tune somewhat of a novelty (never having been sung at all) it will be as well to put it into the hands of your well-trained corps, to be produced on the evening when you wish me to join your vocal party.[38]

Clearly, Wesley had a high opinion of Novello as a choir-trainer: he was the one most likely to give a new piece of Wesley's a fair hearing, his choir the most competent to perform it. (The Street referred to by Wesley is certain to be the J.P.Street who copied several of Wesley's motets - BM Egerton MS 2571). It seems doubtful whether this trial performance ever materialized; in a letter to Novello dated October 18th 1824, Wesley asked, in a footnote, almost despairingly: 'What has become of my Carmen Funebre?'[39]

The text of this motet is based on a recurring phrase in the Book of Ecclesiastes; the words are some of the last his father,

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[36] Holmes Ambrose, p.235.

[37] BM Add. MS 11729.

[38] BM Add. MS 11729.

[39] BM Add. MS 11729.

Charles, spoke to him as he lay on his death bed, holding his son's hand.[40] After such an experience, it is not surprising that these words lingered in Samuel's mind for years, and it is no wonder that he eventually set them to music, albeit thirty-six years later. They had such intimate associations for him that he would surely take more care than usual in their setting, endeavouring to capture in his music the atmosphere inherent in the words. In this he certainly succeeded, for in this motet it is possible to talk about 'mood' more legitimately than in any other - how well the opening bars reflect a mood of sadness and near-despair.

This quality alone would serve to categorise this piece as one of Wesley's 'modern' motets, a quasi-romantic composition; but additionally, the harmonic vocabulary of the piece is perhaps his most modern - the variety of chords, expressive progressions, effective juxtapositions playing an important role in achieving the required effect. Underlying this rich harmony, and inspiring the overall mood of the piece, is Wesley's surprising choice of tonality: there are very few pieces of English choral music of this period in the key of C sharp minor![41] The final musical ingredient of the piece is a limited use of imitative entries: Wesley skilfully combines the resulting quasi-polyphonic texture with the homophonic texture of the first subject.

The C sharp minor tonality, the re-iterated dotted-rhythmn, the entirely homophonic texture, the use of alto, tenor and bass voices only, all serve to enhance the atmosphere of sadness at the outset.

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[40] This incident is quoted in Chapter 2, p.18.

[41] It is interesting to note, in passing, that if Wesley intended this motet to be accompanied on the organ, the instrument would need to be tuned to equal temperament - an ideal championed by Wesley as a result of his Bach studies, but by no means universally accepted in England at that time.

In this setting, the simplest harmonic touch seems to assume a greater effectiveness: the introduction of a C sharp major (dominant seventh) chord (bar 3) and its resolution onto D major, with a poignant feminine cadence (bar 4); the expansion of an A major chord (bar 7) into an augmented chord whose further expansion into F sharp minor (first inversion) is temporarily delayed (bars 7-8); the use of, and momentary hesitation on, a diminished chord (bars 10-11); the unexpected, though effective, harmonic regression to G sharp minor (bar 13) after a close in E major (bar 12), and the sudden flattening to return to E major (bars 15-16); the extended, cadential use of the augmented sixth chord (Italian form), eventually resolving onto the dominant chord with a feminine cadence (bars 19-22). All these are perfectly ordinary harmonic gestures, none could in any way be called an innovation; yet, in the context of these opening bars, all are peculiarly effective.

As this opening section closes, the first imitative entries begin with the second theme (bar 22). Its character is different from the first, providing musical contrast - that recurring feature in Wesley's compositions. It is, in fact, a typical Wesleyan second subject, rhythmically and melodically similar to the second subjects of Constitues Eos Principes and In Exitu Israel. In this instance, such a contrast is particularly suitable for the text: having admirably captured the desperate sentiment of 'Omnia vanitas et vexatio spiritus' (All is vanity and vexation of spirit), Wesley now suggests the more hopeful sentiment of the remainder of the text. However, despite the more sprightly nature of the second subject, it is held in check, a subdued atmosphere prevails: the imitative entries (there are only two) are accompanied by hints of the first

subject. A second pair of imitative entries occur at bar 28, still fettered by the presence of the first subject. The two soprano parts have first-subject material (bar 34) which modulates to E major, through G sharp minor. At bar 38 is the first appearance of the dotted-note figure in diminution, which assumes a dramatic role later.

A series of four imitative entries begins in the relative major tonality at bar 39, still in the constant company of first-subject fugures. At bar 44 occurs the first statement of a first-subject figure in all five parts, beginning on the Neapolitan sixth chord and resolving onto an interrupted cadence in A major, soprano I falling a minor seventh (bars 44-45). This is answered sequentially, a third lower, the harmony moving from B minor to close onto F sharp minor, via a dramatically effective B minor added sixth chord with soprano I falling a diminished seventh (bars 46-47). The F sharp minor tonality is not maintained, but reverts to C sharp minor at bar 48. Here, a new theme appears, an expansive melodic phrase, rising up the scale to high G sharp (the highest note so far). As this closes (bar 50), a fresh series of imitative entries begin in bass, tenor and alto, with the first-subject figures in the sopranos. Bars 56-61 have entries of the second subject, and references to the expansive theme, and incorporate a modulation from C sharp minor to B major; a three-bar subdued interlude in alto, tenor and bass, closes in G sharp minor at bar 64 - the significant feature of bars 58-63 is the absence of any reference to the first subject. However, at bar 64 it makes a dramatic reappearance, in all five voices, in its rhythmically diminutive form, beginning in the tonic key and moving to the relative major through the Neapolitan sixth chord. A melodic tailpiece in alto, tenor and bass (bar 67) effects a modulation to F sharp minor, via an augmented sixth chord.

The imitative entries begin in F sharp minor at bar 68 and close onto the tonic at bar 75, the cadence incorporating one of Wesley's favourite cadential formulae - the false relation between the sharpened and flattened sixth degree (bar 74). Throughout these bars, there is just one brief appearance of a first-subject figure (bar 71 - alto and tenor). The mood of the opening is tentatively re-instated at bar 75, where sopranos, alto and tenor have first-subject figures in the original form. This is soon dispelled again as first the diminutive rhythmic form appears, then the expansive melodic phrase, closing onto the dominant through an augmented sixth chord (bars 80-81).

The following section (bars 81-93) is the fulfilment of the previous bars: the second subject, together with the expansive melodic phrase, emerge free of the first subject, to which there is no reference now. The result is a gently flowing section in almost constant quaver movement, in which the soprano reaches the highest note in the piece (bar 84), and the harmony gently fluctuates, never venturing very far from home, and eventually closing in the relative major key. There immediately follows another dramatic appearance of the first-subject diminutive figure in all five voices, the harmonies moving a little more rapidly now (bars 93-97). A brief imitative section incorporating a statement of the second subject complete in soprano I, closes on an imperfect cadence in the tonic key (bar 105). A dramatic, four-beat rest precedes the coda, a new theme, conveying a mood of quiet contentment, stated first tentatively ('piano') in A major, closing on an interrupted cadence, then affirmatively ('fortissimo') in the tonic key, sequentially a third higher; this is extended for three bars with cadential figurations. For the final corporate statement of 'soli servire' (him only to serve), the soprano rises up an octave to high G sharp and descends the notes of the tonic chord,

the motet finishing with a 'tierce de picardie' cadence - it could end no other way! Strangely, Dr Routley states that 'at its end, the piece dies away in the conventional form of cadence....', but this is far from what Wesley clearly intended.[42]

This is dramatic music, a 'Romantic' composition, the work of a composer, not a mere technician, however competent! A battle is fought and won in this motet, an emotional struggle expressed in musical terms. The protagonists are 'desperation', as seen in the cry 'Omnia vanitas et vexatio spiritus' and expressed in the sombre mood of the first subject, and 'hope', stated in the text 'praeter amare Deum, et illi soli servire' and expressed in the happier mood of the second subjects. Desperation reigns supreme in the opening twenty-one bars, and is never entirely absent in the ensuing thirty-six bars, frustrating hope's attempts to gain the upper hand. It begins to lose its grip from there onwards, despite a concentration of attack (the diminution of the first-subject figure); hope escapes and blossoms (bars 81-93), and the battle is won, as is suggested by the four-beat rest and the mood of the coda theme.

In Wesley's letter to Novello on Monday 14th June 1824, he wrote: 'I can now please myself with the notions of your regarding this scrap as what I have entitled it, Carmen Funebre, applied to myself....'.[43] In view of this comment, it is not unreasonable to suggest that 'Carmen Funebre' is somewhat autobiographical in conception. With his bouts of depressive illness, his financial struggles and his many musical frustrations, Wesley must often have been tempted to cry in desperation 'All is vanity'; yet he never wholly lost his faith in God, in whom he saw real hope. Such a situation is evident in an undated letter

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42 The Musical Wesleys, p.84.

43 BM Add. MS 11729.

he wrote to Sarah, his 'adopted wife':

> I am much 'wounded in spirit', and 'the sorrows of my heart are enlarged', but yet I have always believed that there is one and only one, who can bring me out of my troubles.[44]

This aside, Omnia Vanitas, one of the very few late Latin compositions of Wesley, is certainly one of his best; it is worthy to stand alongside other miniature masterpieces of English choral music. It is, therefore a great pity that this motet is not amongst those regularly performed today; that it is not is all the more surprising since a new edition of it was published as recently as 1952![45] It was the opinion of Ernest Walker that In Exitu Israel 'places its composer on a lofty pedestal';[46] if that is true, then a loftier pedestal must be built for the composer of Omnia Vanitas.

There is one other Latin motet of Wesley's, dating from this late period in his life, which fully merits a place amongst the best of his compositions for the Catholic liturgy: a second setting, for six voices (SAATTB), of Tu Es Sacerdos In Aeternum. There are two autograph manuscripts of this piece, both in the RCM (MSS 4022 and 2141b), and both dated July 6th 1827; it has enjoyed a slightly happier history than the majority of Wesley's motets, being one of the 'favoured few' which have been published.[47] (It is still available in print in S.S. Wesley's 'A Few Words on Cathedral Music', reprinted by Hinrichsen.)

Simply because it is a rare, late Latin composition, it affords interesting study, and this interest is increased when it is compared with the earlier setting of the same text. The pre-eminent compositional

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[44] From a collection of autograph Wesley documents in the Methodist Archives, London.

[45] Hinrichsen Edition No.230.

[46] A History of Music in England, p.276.

[47] Novello's Collection of Anthems 828 (London, 1905).

technique in the first setting was polyphonic - imitative entries built up into complex polyphonic textures in which harmonic progression was, in the main, of secondary importance. In this, it is perhaps true to say, considering its historical context, that it is slightly archaic in conception, although to say this is not to denigrate it, for it is still a very good piece. The second setting, however, is considerably more modern in conception: polyphony is not entirely absent but it is much less prevalent. There is, instead, a much greater sense of harmonic progression, and Wesley's harmonic language in this motet is perhaps the most advanced of any of his writing; there are relatively few 'ordinary' chords, that is, chords without added notes. The result is a piece in which there prevails an almost romantic spirit.

There is just one main theme which recurs at different pitches throughout the piece, a rising scale through a sixth culminating in a drop of a seventh, the starting-note determining whether the intervals shall be major or minor. This is a theme pregnant with sequential harmonic possibilities, a quality Wesley employs to the full. It is interesting to note that in the earlier setting the second subject contained harmonic potential, inherent in its span of a seventh, which Wesley exploited only very tentatively - which serves to highlight the different basic approach to the composition of the two settings, the first basically polyphonic, the second basically harmonic.

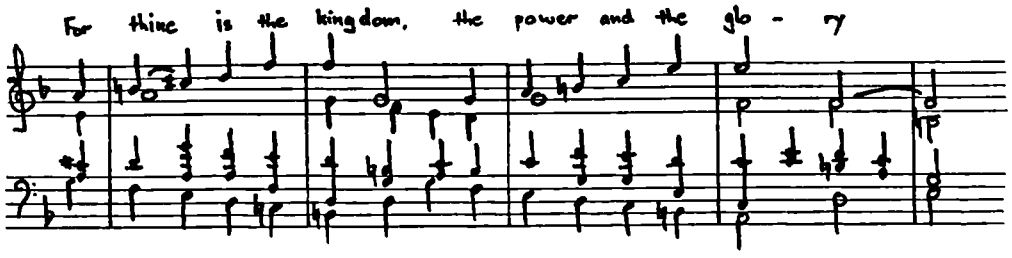
The five lower voices begin in unison on A (the dominant), dividing at bar 4; the shape of the bass part, descending the D major chord and rising a fourth (bars 3-5), becomes a secondary motive with some significance. At this point (bar 5), the progressions of 'added note' chords begin: G major with major seventh and major ninth (bar 5),

to a C sharp diminished chord with seventh (bar 6), to F sharp minor with minor ninth (bar 7). Above this, the soprano has the first statement of the main theme starting on B (bars 5-7), just overlapped by the second statement in the tenor a ninth lower (bars 5-7), followed by a third a tone lower than the first in the soprano (bars 9-11). Meanwhile, the progression of chords continues, the F sharp minor harmony moving to B minor seventh (bar 8), to E minor seventh (bar 9), to a C sharp minor diminished chord with the seventh added in the bass (bar 10), to a first inversion F sharp major seventh chord (bar 11), which is the dominant seventh chord of B minor, onto which chord it is resolved (bar 12).

These opening bars thus comprise the first threefold statement of the main theme, and a modulation from the tonic major to the relative minor tonality. Stainton de B. Taylor makes an interesting observation here; quoting bars 5-11, he comments:

> [This is] one of those sequential passages that became only too frequent in later English choral writing, but must have sounded fresh enough in Wesley's time, with a theme whose dropping sevenths are particularly and engagingly Wesleyan.[48]

To further illustrate his point he quotes, for comparison, some bars from Samuel Sebastian Wesley's anthem Thou Wilt Keep Him In Perfect Peace:

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[48] Stainton de B. Taylor, The Curious Case of Samuel Wesley, unpublished article, p.12.

Certainly, the harmonic and melodic vocabulary of Tu Es Sacerdos was to become the all-too frequent substance of nineteenth century English church music; in the end, it was over-employed and so lost any of the appeal or effect it originally had. This motet by the elder Wesley, written in 1827, must be one of the earliest pieces of English church music to employ such musical vocabulary so consistently and effectively.

The secondary motive, originally in the bass (bars 3-5), now descending a B minor triad and rising a minor sixth, appears in the tenor (bars 11-13), initiating the second threefold statement of the main theme: first in the bass starting on E (bars 13-15), just overlapped in the soprano a major ninth higher (bars 15-17), followed by the third in the bass a minor third lower than the first (bars 17-19). These statements are supported, as before, by the constantly progressing harmonies: the B minor harmony (bar 12) moves to E minor (bar 13), to A minor seventh, with the major ninth suspended from the previous bar (bar 14), to D major (bar 15), to G major (bar 16), to C major, with the major ninth at first (bar 17), to A minor with major sixth (bar 18), to B major seventh (bar 19), the dominant seventh of E minor, onto which chord it is resolved (bar 20). This completes the second threefold statement of the main theme; this section (bars 12-20) has also effected a modulation from B minor to E minor.

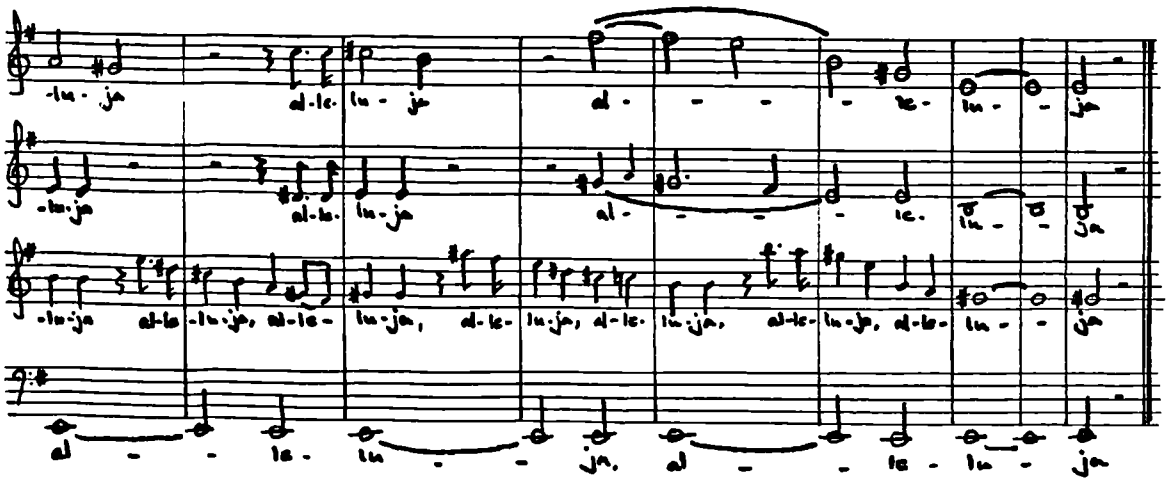
The appearance of the secondary motive in the soprano (bars 19-21), now descending an E minor triad and rising, strikingly, a minor tenth, heralds another series of thematic statements, five in number this time, just over-lapping each other as before, and still supported harmonically. The texture of this section is enriched by each statement of the theme

being in thirds: the two altos beginning on C sharp and A (bars 21-23), the two tenors a tone lower (bars 23-25), the altos another tone lower (bars 25-27), the tenors another tone lower (bars 27-29), the altos a tone higher (bars 29-31). The E minor harmony (bar 20) moves to A major seventh (bar 21), to D major (bar 22), to G major seventh (bar 23), to a C sharp diminished chord (bar 24), to F sharp minor seventh (bar 25), to B minor (bar 26), to E minor (bar 27), to A major seventh (bar 28), to D major, with the seventh added in the bass (bar 29), to B minor, with the seventh added in the bass (bar 30). The secondary motive is incorporated into the texture twice, in the tenor in bars 21-22, and in the bass in bars 23-25.

The fifth statement of the theme is curtailed in bar 31, and, over a poignant chord of G major seventh, the soprano has the secondary motive high on G. The harmony moves conventionally through E minor (bar 32) to A major seventh (bar 33), at which point begins a final statement of the main theme in alto II and tenor II. At bar 34 there occurs one of Wesley's harmonic twists: F naturals are introduced, transforming the expected D major tonality into D minor, and initiating a typically Wesleyan harmonic excursion. The harmonic pivot point is the Neapolitan sixth chord (bar 35), made all the more striking by the presence of the major seventh, suspended from the previous bar. The dominant seventh chord on F (bar 36) confirms the new tonality of B flat major, reached at bar 37 and retained for three bars - the presence of the major seventh, again suspended from the previous bar, gives added poignancy. Wesley has, in fact, effected one of his favourite modulations: to the submediant major key.

The neutral chord through which the tonic key is re-established is D minor (bar 40), after which there is a dominant pedal for six bars, before the resolution onto a D major chord (bar 47). Over this

pedal point, there are melismatic, quasi-polyphonic figurations, which are vaguely thematic, and serve to firmly fix the music in the home tonality, enhancing the eventual cadence. Commenting on these final bars, Dr Holmes Ambrose makes the interesting, if surprising, comparison with the style of Bruckner, detecting in Wesley's cadential elaborations a mystical quality similar to that of the German Romanticist.[49] This superficially surprising comparison is not entirely without foundation when this Wesley motet is placed alongside those of Bruckner: for example comparing Wesley's figurations over a dominant pedal here with the figurations over a tonic pedal at the close of Bruckner's motet Virga Jesse Floruit:



Stainton de B. Taylor comments on Wesley's predeliction for introducing the unexpected chord, particularly at cadences, which 'lends expressive power to his music.[50] Undoubtedly, the chord in question here is the diminished-sounding chord incorporating the dominant minor ninth inserted at the cadence point (bars 45-46). This unexpected insertion of the dominant minor ninth is a favourite and effective device of Wesley's;

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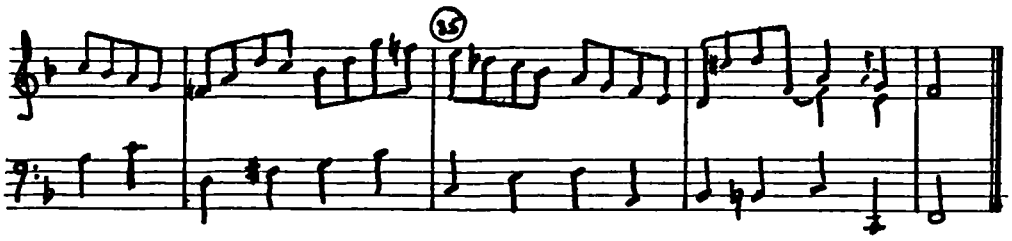
[49] Holmes Ambrose, p.264.

[50] Stainton de B. Taylor, p.11.

the most familiar example of this occurs in No.9 of Twelve Short Pieces, usually called 'Gavotte', at bar 35:



This second setting of Tu Es Sacerdos In Aeternum reflects only the faintest influence of earlier traditions of English choral music, so prevalent in many of the other motets: there is a lack of imitative entries, the back-bone of many of the earlier motets, and there are no real polyphonic textures, the almost persistent texture of some. Instead, there is a very definite forward-looking spirit prevailing: the harmonic language Wesley employs, with its expressive use of 'added-note' chords, and continual harmonic progression, endue this piece with a 'modern' quality which is unique amongst his Latin compositions - Wesley here uses this simplest of compositional techniques more consistently and effectively than anywhere else in his music for the Catholic liturgy. Apparently, in his declining years, when he was composing less, Wesley was nevertheless still possessed of an acute musical perceptiveness, which enabled him to assimilate the 'romantic' ideals of his continental contemporaries, and to express himself according to them when he wanted, yet still maintaining a distinctive Wesleyan style.

There appear to be just two other pieces of Latin church music written by Wesley in this late period; but for the existence of autograph manuscripts of both, it would be difficult to believe that they were written by the same man, and at roughly the same time, as

Tu Es Sacerdos. The better of the two is Ostende Nobis Domine (Vol.2, p.485), a setting of two Alleluia verses for two sopranos, alto and bass; the autograph score is in RCM MS 2141b, and is dated September 10th 1827. The scoring, which although often used by Wesley in his earlier works, is somewhat unusual, tends to impoverish the texture, in which contrapuntal writing, of a type used by Wesley forty years earlier, is prevalent. Thus, while this is a pleasant enough piece, it is disappointing in comparison with the motet he composed just two months earlier; that had been a demonstration of Wesley's consummate skill as a composer, this is manifestly not.

The one remaining Latin composition must be an illustration of Wesley's failing powers; it was written on March 27th 1830 and is (as far as existing records show) his last composition with a sacred Latin text. It is Collaudate Dominum (Vol.2, p.579), a canon 'in quinto et octavo'; the autograph score is in RCM MS 4022, and it is scored for three voices (ATB). As music it is poor, and as an excercise in canon-writing it is not without fault: a sad end to Wesley's fascinating career as a composer of Latin church music.

Just a few of Wesley's Latin compositions are known today, familiar through publication and performance; the rest have been sadly forgotten. The majority of musicians and scholars seem to have remained in ignorance of the fact that Wesley composed so much music for the Catholic liturgy. Even Erik Routley, in his recently published book, The Musical Wesleys, comments in detail only on those Latin compositions which are in print, thereby perpetuating the neglect of the others. Understandably, therefore, in his subsequent criticism of the book, Nicholas Temperley asked this question:

> What we should like to know is how these small masterpieces stand beside the rest of Wesley's Latin church music, of which a large quantity is ready for inspection in the BM manuscript department.[51]

This present study provides an answer to that question. Those 'small masterpieces' are part of a remarkably large corpus of Latin church music: many are ordinary, although competent, compositions, and some are disappointing; but there are others which should also be designated 'small masterpieces'. Of these, there are a few which seriously challenge the long-established pre-eminence among Wesley's compositions of In Exitu Israel. Henceforth, Wesley must be acclaimed not only as the author of Exultate Deo and In Exitu Israel, but as the composer of Ave Maris Stella, Constitues Eos Principes, Omnia Vanitas, Tu Es Sacerdos, and other similarly fine Latin compositions; supremely, he should be acknowledged as the creator of Confitebor Tibi Domine, his 'magnum opus'.

[51] Nicholas Temperley, 'The Wesleys at Sea', Musical Times, Vol.110, (July 1969), pp.744-5.

# CHAPTER 7

## EPILOGUE

Samuel Wesley was a fascinating character and a remarkable musician - composer, organist, extemporizer 'extraordinaire', conductor, teacher, lecturer, adviser, critic -, and yet he has been relatively little recognised either by his contemporaries or since. William Kingston regretfully acknowledged this in a letter to Vincent Novello dated 17th February 1849:

> Justice to the musical powers and genius of our poor friend was neither done during his lifetime, nor has been since his death; and I am sorely afraid, never will be. He really seems to have been pursued by what, for want of a better word, is called fatality; or an inextricable web, and intervolved confusion of circumstances, which crushed him living, and still stand in the way of either himself, or his works being duly appreciated. This is to me a very painful subject, and I must not dwell upon it.[1]

The causes of this unfortunate neglect can be traced right back to his birth: as far as the history of music in England was concerned, the timing of his birth was unpropitious, and as far as the ecclesiastical temperature of the country was concerned, the family into which he was born was out of favour. The character which subsequently evolved was not always amiable, and often unpredictable, as this rather exaggerated description indicates (in a letter from Mary Novello to Henry Phillips):

> I knew him, unfortunately, all too well. Pious Catholic, raving atheist, mad, reasonable, drunk and sober. The dread of all wives and regular families. A warm friend, a bitter foe. Satirical talker, flatterer at times of those he cynically traduced at others, a blasphemer at times, a puking Methodist at others.[2]

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[1] BM Add. MS 17731, a collection of miscellaneous letters.

[2] BM Add. MS 35013, a collection of miscellaneous letters.

Certainly, Wesley was something of an individualist: while most English musicians were writing music which pandered to the poor taste of contemporary audiences, he wrote what he wanted, regardless of its immediate appeal; many were still content to submit to patronage in order to make a living in music, but Wesley endeavoured to make his own way, not entirely successfully; when Handel was universally regarded in high esteem, Wesley championed the music of Bach, successfully challenging Dr Burney's ill-informed dismissal of the German master.

But Wesley's individualism was only one of many factors which contributed to his neglect. There was, for example, the general lamentable state of music in England, which Wesley was quick to censure; of course, most contemporary music was written to please the public, but that, Wesley maintained, was no excuse for producing music of inferior quality:

> If we aspire to be justly characterized as a musical nation, we must constantly and strenuously resist and expose every introduction of paltry, flimsy composition as although admired and applauded by an untaught multitude are nevertheless deserving the total reprobation of real Judges, they being in their very nature wholly deficient in every fine feature constituting and adorning real music; such as a sequence of melodious intervals, a course of pure harmony, a strict observation of true rhythms, and last though not least, a constant and inflexible attention to just vocal expression and correct accentuation. Without all these we remain in truth mere contemptible sciolists, dabbling and floundering in the mud of ignorance.[3]

It was not only his fellow-composers who were to blame; the promoters of concerts were equally responsible, their attitude to the already established works of the masters similarly reprehensible:

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[3] BM Add. MS 35014, a collection of Wesley's lectures (the last of a series given in the Bristol Institution in 1827).

> It appears to me no proof of the present state of good musical taste here that not one of the oratorios of Handel, with the single exception of the Messiah, is ever performed at one time in public throughout, but merely in pieces and patches, a song here, and a duet or chorus there, mixed and hashed up with trash of any sort, a common ballad, and heterogeneous stuff, no matter what, raked together and issued forth in form of a bill pretending to announce a sacred performance, chequered perhaps by 'Robin Adair', 'the Bay of Biscay', or 'Old Fowler'.[4]

Composers and concert-promoters alike, complained Wesley, were pandering too much to the aesthetically uneducated public, thereby reinforcing their poor musical taste instead of endeavouring to improve it. Just how poor public taste was Wesley demonstrated in his lecture on prejudice, in which he cited this striking incident from his own experience:

> I well remember being present some years ago at a Grand Concert where that admirable quartet in B flat of Mozart was performed - 'Benedictus qui venit in Nomine Domini' which occurs in his noble Requiem. The room was a crowded one and the piece was executed in the most correct and finished manner! Nevertheless not more than twenty or thirty persons at most condescended to applaud it. Some trumpery strain in form of a glee immediately followed characterized for the most part by harmless common chords (and I believe one solitary seventh for the penultimate). The auditory were in transports and encore resounded from every quarter.[5]

The music publishers of the day also contributed to this state of affairs and Wesley was often highly critical of them, complaining that music-shops were filled with 'cart loads of contemptible and wretched material.'[6] Here, his friend Novello was particularly scathing in his criticism too: to the autograph manuscript of Wesley's variations for pianoforte on the air 'Happy were the days', Novello has appended this comment:

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[4] BM Add. MS 27593, Wesley's Reminiscences.

[5] BM Add. MS 35016, a collection of Wesley's lectures (the second of a series, given in the Bristol Institution on 13th January 1830).

[6] BM Add. MS 35014. (The fifth lecture of a series given in the Royal Institution, Albermarle Street, London, on March 20th 1830).

> It is a great shame that [these masterly variations] have been left unpublished, while so many despicable waltzes, un-meaning flourishes, vapid frivolous quadrilles and other contemptible stuff and trashy pieces are being daily brought forward and thrust upon the public by impudent, pretentious, musical Charlatans and their catch-penny publishers.[7]

Wesley's fiercest criticism was reserved for the music critics of his day, many of whom were insufficiently educated in music to fulfil their function properly:

> In musical questions every man considers himself sui juris: each individual, reckoning from him who ventures a calculation of Hummel's Inimitabilities, down to him who has just heard that there is among musicians something they call a gamut; all these sit in judgement at the Theatre or in the Concert Room, affecting to distinguish what ought to pass for good, or the contrary: to ascertain what is original, and what must be Plagiarism; in short, every auditor assumes the dignity of an Aereopagite: a Judge invested with lawful authority and full power of determining equitably upon the several merits of every composition and of every performer.
> There are those, who in describing a chorus of Handel or a symphony of Haydn pronounce either to be very pretty Musick - and the same Wiseacres will talk of the Hunting Chorus in Der Freischutz, or the unrivalled song of 'Sweet Home' as sublime compositions.[8]

He was devastating in his criticism, dismissing them as 'cluckers' about music:

> There are those persons affecting critical skill in music and who far from being able to make nice distinctions between one style and another, are not even competent to judge of the elementary principles which lead to the practical division of the art. I have met some musical talkers who scarcely know the rule of the octave, the mode of ascending the major and minor scales or the difference between common and triple...much less the first principles of true melody and harmony and the right distribution of rhythms and accent, who nevertheless took upon themselves to decide in a dogmatical and supercilious manner upon the merit of musical compositions in general; pretending to discriminate concerning their comparative excellence or defects; and even venturing to declaim boldly and authoritatively against such movements as happened not to hit their

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[7] BM Add. MS 14343.

[8] BM Add. MS 35014. (The sixth lecture of a series, given in the Bristol Institution on May 19th 1826.)

> taste or rather which (truly speaking) were beyond the narrow bounds of their comprehension; and the modest part of the story is, that these soi-disant Doctors persevered in asserting that only such measures as they were pleased to call melody and which generally consisted of old, trite, vulgar intervals of sound deserved the name of real music, maintaining the grandest and most scientific productions of the first masters to be at the best only ingenious and uninteresting pedantry. A late singular and partially ingenious character, who assumed the dignity of a complete musical critic, and the name of a composer beside, said in my hearing: 'Fugues deserve no better name than rumble-tumble musick; the two most brilliant musical geniuses that ever appeared in England were Dr Arne and Charles Dibdin the melodist'.[9]

Such a blatantly ill-informed comment would not have been received too warmly from one who was both the editor of the music of Bach and a renowned extemporizer of elaborate fugues!

More basically, Wesley maintained, there was a misunderstanding of the true nature of music, and a frequent mis-application of the term 'musician'. He elaborated on this in his lecture entitled 'The Advancement of Musical Knowledge and Taste':

> I would conceive the term Knowledge of Musick to be very generally mistaken for skill in performance. Nothing is more common even among Professors of the Art, than to denominate a person who can play or sing with tolerable readiness at first sight, a good Musician: but this is jumping to a Conclusion:.... the real Musician is the Composer of the piece, the Performer of it (unless he may have been also its author) is only the Vehicle of the Composer's Ideas....
> I would not be mistaken as supposing that before we allow any one to be a Musician he must be Master of the Varieties and Intricacies of Florid Counterpoint: in short that he must be a good Composer - to form this, Nature must have previously bestowed the rare gift of fertile imagination united with a just judgment.
> I therefore do think that the title Musician is in numerous instances too hastily conferred upon such Performers as having studied and exercised only the part allotted to their own individual instrument.[10]

Even in the realm of Church Music, for which England had been

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[9] BM Add. MS 35015, a collection of Wesley's lectures (the second of a series given in the Royal Institution, London, in 1827).

[10] BM Add. MS 35014. (The sixth lecture of a series, given in the Bristol Institution on 19th May 1826).

renowned in the past, Wesley detected signs of deterioration:

> In Church Music I fear that we must be allowed upon the whole to have retrograded since the days of Greene and Boyce, those two adamantine pillars of true ecclesiastical style: and certainly in the performance of church music at several of our Cathedrals the slovenly neglect is often remarked by foreigners who visit them, and it is surely not a little disgraceful to our nation.[11]

> We universally find that the services in most frequent use, are not such as are likely to inspire much respect for our Church Music among foreigners who visit us....Henry Purcell's immortal Service in B flat is very rarely performed at St. Paul's, at the Abbey, or at the Chapel Royal: but the harmless chords of Messrs. King and Kent are in constant request all over England in our Cathedrals.[12]

All this is, incidentally, a demonstration of Wesley's own sagacity as a musical critic, and his amazing frankness in expressing his opinions publicly. Indeed, this in itself could well be an additional contributory factor to the neglect he suffered at the hands of his contemporaries: in his time he must have embittered composers, performers, critics, concert-promoters, concert-goers, those attending his courses of lectures, and even, at times, his friends.

There were formidable forces, social, musical and personal, ranged against Wesley: his ill-timed birth, his distrusted name, his radical individualism, his association with an unauthorized form of religion, his unfortunate accident and the bouts of depressive illness resulting in antisocial behaviour, his questionable domestic life, his championing of unpopular musical causes, his frequent clashes with other musicians in opinion or attitude, his unwillingness to compromise his own inclinations in order to accomodate the desires of others.

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[11] BM Add. MS 35015.

[12] BM Add. MS 35015.

Thus, the music of Samuel Wesley was not widely acclaimed during his life-time: there was some demand for his services as an organist or as adviser in the building of a new instrument, a number of requests for him to teach and lecture, and a few occasions when he was publicly acclaimed as one of the leading musicians of his day. But rarely was he sought after as a composer, rarely was he commissioned to write music, rarely was his distinctive creative ability recognised. Vincent Novello was almost the only contemporary musician to appreciate Wesley's potential as a composer, and it was he who complained most bitterly when others failed to do so. On the back of one of Wesley's letters to him, dated Monday 20th November 1820, in which he was in desperate financial straits, earnestly requesting some copying work, Novello has written this appeal:

> I wish to place this affecting note on record, as an eternal disgrace to the pretended Patrons of good music in England, who could have the contemptible bad taste to undervalue and neglect the masterly productions of such an extraordinary musician as Sam Wesley, and who had the paltry meanness of spirit to allow such a real Genius (who, like Purcell, was an honour to the country where he was born) to sink into such poverty, decay and undeserved neglect, as to be under the necessity of seeking employment as a mere drudging copyist, to prevent himself from starvation!
> The behaviour of the rich Patrons of Wesley, in England, reminds me of the equally despicable behaviour of the self-styled nobility amongst the cold-blooded, selfish and beggarly-proud Scotch, towards their really illustrious countryman, Burns.
> May such unfeeling brutes meet their just reward.
> Vincent Novello.[13]

This unfortunate neglect suffered by Wesley during his life-time has sadly persisted to the present-day. History has not been kind to him: indeed, in many of the histories of music, even in those which refer to this 'dark' period of English music, Wesley is either only mentioned in passing or forgotten altogether. When he is remembered

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[13] BM Add. MS 11729, Letters from Wesley to Novello 1811-1825.

it is often those unfavourable incidents in his life which are prevalent; and when his music is discussed, he is often assessed by those compositions which are known but are not necessarily representative of his best work. This latter situation, as has been demonstrated, is particularly true of his Latin church music: so many fine compositions, so few published, and even fewer regularly performed. One of his best motets, Omnia Vanitas, re-appeared in a new edition as recently as 1952, but it is rarely, if ever, heard in public. Recent scholarship is little better, as Erik Routley's book, The Musical Wesleys, demonstrates: it is grossly inadequate and full of inaccuracies.

The result of all this is inevitable: misrepresentation, ill-informed dismissal, undeserved neglect. An unreasonable prejudice against Wesley has grown up over the years, manifested in an unwillingness to accept that he might deserve the title 'composer' rather than 'competent technician', a reluctance even to investigate his case too closely, and a prevailing attitude to him which is best expressed thus: "Can any good thing come out of Wesley?" The answer to that question must be an unequivocal 'Yes'.

> Samuel Wesley may not be a great composer - at times he may not always be a good composer - but his great virtue is that he is always an interesting one. What he does may have its faults; it may err in what is called bad taste; it may be clumsy or formless; but it is always music, and a little of it is even great music. To quote out of context: Wesley's music is distinguished by a curious mixture of beauty and strangeness; like its creator, it is often odd, but never cold or dull.[14]

Plenty that is good has come out of Wesley: an investigation of his Latin church music alone provides sufficient evidence of that.

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[14] Peter Holman, 'The Instrumental and Orchestral Music of Samuel Wesley', Consort, No.23, (1966), pp.175-9.

His 'magnum opus', Confitebor Tibi Domine, is the outstanding example of this, while some of his motets, such as Constitues Eos Principes and Omnia Vanitas, are equally 'great', and a number of his other Latin compositions are unquestionably good. Certainly, Samuel Wesley the composer, as he is revealed through his Latin church music, demands greater attention, his music warrants more frequent performance, and his reputation requires re-assessment.

Here, then, is a remarkable corpus of music, the product of a truly English and thoroughly competent composer, an oasis in the midst of the desert which was English music between Purcell and Elgar. Maybe there are others of Wesley's contemporaries who have suffered a similar and equally undeserved neglect, together with their music, remembered only through a few unrepresentative compositions! Perhaps the whole of this 'dark' period in the history of music in England deserves further investigation!

## Appendix One

### A List of Latin church music

Works for voices and orchestra:-

1. Ave Maris Stella.

Text: A Hymn to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Scoring: 2 sopranos, strings, and organ continuo.

Date: 1786.

Sources: (i) Additional Manuscript 35001 (British Museum). Autograph score, signed and dated.

(ii) Additional Manuscript 14342 (British Museum). A score in the hand of Vincent Novello.

2. Confitebor Tibi Domine.

Text: Psalm 111 (Psalm 110 - Latin).

Scoring: 4 soloists (soprano, alto, tenor, bass), 4 & 5-part chorus and orchestra (2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, tympani, strings and organ continuo).

Date: August 14th 1799.

Sources: (i) Additional Manuscript 35002 (British Museum). Autograph score, signed and dated.

(ii) Manuscript 4016 (Royal College of Music). A copy of the score - not autograph.

(iii) Manuscript 106 (Royal Academy of Music) A copy of the score in the hand of Eliza Wesley

3. Deus Majestatis.

Text: Psalm 29:v.3. (Psalm 28 - Latin).

Scoring: 8-part chorus (double choir - SATB SATB), and orchestra (strings and organ).

Date: September 26th 1799.

Sources: (i) Manuscript 27138 (Library of Congress, Washington). Autograph score.

(ii) Manuscript 1040 (Royal College of Music). A copy of the full score in the hand of Vincent Novello.

(iii) Additional Manuscript 35001 (British Museum). Separate parts for Alto Primo, Alto Secondo, Tenore Seconde, Violino Primo. All in Wesley's hand.

4. Exultate Deo.

Text: Psalm 81:vv.1 & 2. (Psalm 80 - Latin).

Scoring: 5-part chorus (SSATB), and orchestra (2 oboes, bassoon, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tympani, 5-part strings (2 viola parts), and organ).

Date: June 28th 1800.

Sources: (i) Additional Manuscript 35001 (British Museum). Separate parts for Canto Primo, Canto Secondo, Alto, Tenore, Basso, Corno Primo, Corno Secohdo, Oboe Primo, Oboe Secondo, Fagotto, Tromba Primo, Tromba Secondo, Trombone Primo, Trombone Secondo, Trombone Basso, Violino Primo, Violino Secondo, Viola Primo, Viola Secondo, Violoncello &

Contrabasso, Tympano, and organ.

All are in Wesley's hand.

In the same manuscript there is a short score of the vocal parts.

(ii) Additional Manuscript 17731 (British Museum). Autograph vocal score with organ part indicated - signed and dated.

(iii) Additional Manuscript 14341 (British Museum). Vocal score with organ part in the hand of Vincent Novello.

Published: (i) J.Surman, London 1830.

(ii) Novello's Collection of Anthems, Vol.XII No.250.

*(Both these editions were for voices and organ).*

5. Missa de Spiritu Sancto.

Text: The Ordinary of the Mass - Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, Benedictus, Agnus Dei.

Scoring: 4 soloists (soprano, alto, tenor bass), chorus and orchestra (2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, tympani, strings and organ).

Date: May 22nd 1784.

Sources: (i) Additional Manuscript 35000 (British Museum). Autograph score, signed and dated.

(ii) Manuscript 730 (Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge). The autograph manuscript Wesley sent to the Pope.

6. Salve Regina.

Text: A Hymn to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Scoring: 2 sopranos, 2 violins, 'cello & bass, and organ.

Date: No date.

Source: Additional Manuscript 35003 (British Museum). Autograph score - incomplete (1st mvt.:Andante - incomplete).

Works for voices with organ:-

7. Amavit Eum Dominus.

Text: The Antiphon to the Magnificat at Second Vespers on the Common Feast of a Confessor-Bishop.

Scoring: 2 voices and organ. (S & A).

Date: No date given, but written c.1780-1781.

Source: Additional Manuscript 31222 (British Museum). Autograph score.

8. Ave Regina Caelorum.

Text: The Anthem to Our Lady at Compline from February 2nd (Purification) until the Wednesday in Holy Week.

Scoring: 2 voices and organ. (S & A).

Date: 1781 (The original of 9 below).

Source: Additional Manuscript 31222 (British Museum). Autograph score, signed and dated.

9. Ave Regina Caelorum.

Text: The Anthem to Our Lady at Compline from February 2nd (Purification) until the Wednesday in Holy Week.

Scoring: 5-part chorus and organ - with solo sections. (SSATB).

Date: No date. (A later version of 8 above).

Source: Additional Manuscript 14340 (British Museum).

A score in Wesley's hand, dated.

10. Ave Verum Corpus.

Text: Anonymous, fourteenth century. Often sung at Mass as a motet after the consecration.

Scoring: 2 voices and organ. (S & A).

Date: May 11th 1781. (The original of 11 below).

Source: Additional Manuscript 31222 (British Museum).

Autograph scores, signed and dated.

11. Ave Verum Corpus.

Text: Anonymous, fourteenth century. Often sung at Mass as a motet after the consecration.

Scoring: 4 voices and organ. (AATB).

Date: July 6th 1812 (A later version of 10 above).

Source: Additional Manuscript 14340 (British Museum).

Autograph score, signed and dated.

Published: It was published by Vincent Novello with an organ part in "A Collection of Motets for the Offertory and other pieces principally adapted for the Morning Service". (Vol.I: p.24).

12. Dixit Dominus.

Text: Psalm 110:v.1. (Psalm 109 - Latin).

Scoring: 8-part chorus and organ(?). (Double choir - SATB SATB).

Date: January 13th 1800.

Sources: (i) Manuscript 639 (Royal College of Music).

Autograph score, signed and dated.

(ii) Additional Manuscript 14341 (British Museum).
Vocal score with organ part in the hand of
Vincent Novello.

Published: Novello, Ewer & Co., London 1876.

13. Domine, Salvum Fac Regum Nostrum.

Text: The Versicle and Response for the King. (To be sung at Mass immediately after the Blessing).

Scoring: 2 voices and organ. (S & A).

Date: December 24th 1780.

Source: Additional Manuscript 31222 (British Museum). Autograph score, signed and dated.

14. Domine, Salvum Fac Regum Nostrum.

Text: The Versicle and Response for the King. (To be sung at Mass immediately after the Blessing).

Scoring: 3 voices and organ. (SAT).

Date: c. November/December 1780. (There is no actual date).

Source: Additional Manuscript (British Museum). Autograph score.

15. Domine Salvum Fac Reginam Nostrum Mariam.

Text: Domine salvum fac Reginam nostram Mariam et exaudinos in Die qua invocaverimus Te. Gloria Patri et Filio et Spiritui Sancto; sicut erat in principio et nunc et semper et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.
(A Prayer for the (King or) Queen.)

Scoring: 4 voices and organ. (SATB).

Date: No date.

Source: No sources discovered.

Published: It was published by Vincent Novello in "A Collection of Sacred Music as performed at the Royal Portugese Chapel in London". May 1811. (Vol.II: p.47).

16. Ecce Iam Noctis Tenuatur Umbra.

Text: One of the Office Hymns for Lauds on a Sunday.

Scoring: 5 voices and organ. (SSATB).

Date: 1808.

Sources: (i) Additional Manuscript 14340 (British Museum). Autograph score, signed and dated.

(ii) Egerton Manuscript 2571 (British Museum). A version of the same motet for ATB only, in the hand of J.P. Street.

17. Ecce Maria.

Text: The Antiphon to the fifth Psalm at the Second Vespers of the Feast of the Circumcision of Our Lord Jesus Christ: "Lauda, Jerusalem" - Psalm 147:vv.12ff. (Psalm 147:vv.1ff. - Latin).

Scoring: 3 voices and organ. (SSA).

Date: November 9th 1780.

Source: Additional Manuscript 31222 (British Museum). Autograph score.

18. Emitte Lucem Tuam.

Text: Psalm 43:vv.3,4. (Psalm 42 - Latin).

Scoring: 2 voices and organ. (SS).

Date: No date given, but written c.1780-1781.

Source: Additional Manuscript 31222 (British Museum). Autograph score.

19. Gloria et Honore.

Text: (a) The Responsory at Sext on the Feast of the Transfiguration. (Also on the Common Feast of a Martyr).

(b) The Responsory at Terce on the Feast of the Transfiguration.

Scoring: Tenor solo and organ.

Date: No date

Source: Manuscript 27138 (Library of Congress). Autograph score.

Published: It was published by Vincent Novello in "A Collection of Motets for the Offertory, and other pieces principally adapted for the Morning Service". (Book 2:p.19).

20. Gloria Patri.

Text: The Gloria.

Scoring: 2 voices and organ. (A & A).

Date: October 27th. (No year given - probably 1780).

Source: Additional Manuscript 31222 (British Museum). Autograph score, dated.

21. Gloria Patri.

Text: The Gloria.

Scoring: 4 voices and organ. (SATB).

Date: c. November 1780. (There is no actual date given).

Source: Additional Manuscript 31222 (British Museum). Autograph score.

22. Gloria Patri.

Text: The Gloria.

Scoring: 2 voices and organ (S & A).

Date: December 14th 1780.

Source: Additional Manuscript 31222 (British Museum).
Autograph score.

23. Gregorian Mass "Pro Angelis".

Text: The Ordinary of the Mass - Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, Benedictus, Agnus Dei.

Scoring: 4-part chorus with solo sections and organ (SATB).

Date: December 21st 1812.

Sources: (i) Additional Manuscript 17731 (British Museum). Autograph score of Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, Benedictus and Agnus Dei, signed and dated.

(ii) Additional Manuscript 14342 (British Museum). A copy of the score (without the Kyrie) in the hand of Vincent Novello.

(iii) Manuscript 4028 (Royal College of Music). A copy of the score (without the Kyrie).

(iv) Additional Manuscript 35001 (British Museum). Autograph copy of the Agnus Dei.

(v) Manuscript 679 (Royal College of Music). An incomplete copy of the Kyrie.

Published: The Kyrie was published by Vincent Novello in "A Collection of Sacred Music as performed at the Royal Portugese Chapel in London". May 1811. (Vol.1:p.78).

24. Hodie Beata Virgo Maria.

Text: The Antiphon on the Magnificat on the Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Scoring: 3 voices and organ. (SSA).

Date: November 10th 1780.

Source: Additional Manuscript 31222 (British Museum). Autograph score.

25. In Exitu Israel.

Text: Psalm 114:vv. 1-3. (Psalm 113 - Latin).

Scoring: 8-part chorus and organ (?). (Double choir - SATB SATB).

Date: May 3rd 1810.

Source: Manuscript 4022 (Royal College of Music). Autograph score, signed and dated.

Published: (i) Novello, Ewer and Co., London, 1885 (?) - Edited: J.Barnby. (Novello's Octavo Series 348).

(ii) Office of "The Organist", London, 1898 - Edited: A.H.Mann. (Anglican Choir Series 123).

(iii) Novello and Co., London 1904 (Tonic sol-fa 1909). Edited: G.J.Bennett (with English words and organ accompaniment).

(iv) Novello and Co., London, 1914 - Edited: J.Barnby.

26. In Te Domine.

Text: In te, Domine, speravi, non confundar in aeternum.
In quacunque die invocavero, velociter exaudi me.
Non secundum peccata mea facias mihi, neque secundum iniquitates meas retribuas mihi.
Delicta juventutis meae et ignorantias meas ne memineris, Domine.
Desiderium animae meae tribuas mihi et voluntatem labiorum meorum ne deneges mihi.

Tunc gaudebo cum iis quos amavi et qui amaverunt saecula per infinita saeculorum.

(Apparently, a Wesley compilation, mostly from the Psalms).

Scoring: Solo soprano and organ.

Date: July 28th 1798.

Sources: (i) Additional Manuscript 14340 (British Museum). Autograph score (vocal part and figured bass) signed and dated.

(ii) Manuscript 4020 (Royal College of Music). Autograph score (vocal part and figured bass).

27. Justus Ut Palma Florebit.

Text: The Offertory for the Common Feast of Doctors.

Scoring: 3 voices (SAB), with "adapted accompaniment added by V.N.".

Date: No date.

Source: Additional Manuscript 14341 (British Museum). A copy of the score in the hand of Vincent Novello.

28. Kyrie Eleison.

Text: The Kyrie.

Scoring: 4 voices and organ. (SATB).

Date: c.November 1780.

Source: Additional Manuscript 31222 (British Museum ). Autograph score.

29. Magnificat, Vel Canticum Beata Mariae Virginis.

Text: The Magnificat.

Scoring: 3 voices and organ. (SSS).

Date: December 27th 1783.

Source: Manuscript 2141[c] (Royal College of Music).

Autograph score, signed and dated.

30. Miserere Mei, Deus.

Text: Psalm 51. (Psalm 50 - Latin).

Scoring: 2 voices and organ. (A & B).

Date: April 7th 1792.

Sources: (i) Additional Manuscript 14342 (British Museum).

Autograph score, signed and dated.

(ii) Egerton Manuscript 2571 (British Museum).

A copy in the hand of J.P.Street.

31. Omnes Gentes Plaudite.

Text: Psalm 47:v.1. (Psalm 46 - Latin), prescribed for the Procession of Palms in the Mass for the Second Sunday of the Passion.

Scoring: 3 voices and organ. (SSA).

Date: No date.

Source: Additional Manuscript 35003 (British Museum).

Autograph score.

32. Qui Tollis Peccata Mundi.

Text: Prayer on the Fifth Day of Holy Week.

Scoring: Solo soprano and organ.

Date: "Anno 1781 vel 1782".

Sources: (i) Additional Manuscript 14342 (British Museum).

Autograph score (vocal part with figured bass, partially realized).

(ii) Manuscript 4020 (Royal College of Music).
Autograph score (vocal part with figured bass, partially realized). Several variations from Add. MS. 14342 in vocal line and organ part.

33. Salve Regina.

Text: A Hymn to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Scoring: 3 voices and organ. (ATB).

Date: September 10th 1799.

Sources: (i) Additional Manuscript 33240 (British Museum). Autograph score, signed and dated.

(ii) Egerton Manuscript 2571 (British Museum). A copy in the hand of J.P.Street.

(iii) Manuscript 4020 (Royal College of Music). Autograph score, dated, not signed.

(iv) Manuscript 4020 (Royal College of Music). Autograph score, dated, not signed.

34. Sperate Miseri.

Text: Sperate miseri, cavete felices.

Scoring: 2 voices and organ. (SS).

Date: October 9th 1783

Source: Additional Manuscript 35025 (British Museum). Autograph score, signed and dated.

35. Tota Pulchra Es, Maria.

Text: Prose of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Scoring: 2 voices and organ. (S & B or T & B).

Date: October 24th 1812.

Sources: (i) Additional Manuscript 14340 (British Museum). Autograph score of vocal parts with complete text, signed and dated.

(ii) Additional Manuscript 14340 (British Museum). Autograph score of vocal parts with the bass figured; the text only hinted at.

Works for unaccompanied voices:-

36. Anima Nostra.

Text: Psalm 123:vv.6-8 (Psalm 122 - Latin).

Scoring: 5 voices (SSATB).

Date: No date.

Sources: (i) Additional Manuscript 14340 (British Museum). Autograph score, signed but not dated.

(ii) Egerton Manuscript 2571 (British Museum). A copy in the hand of J.P. Street.

(iii) Manuscript 4020 (Royal College of Music). Autograph score, not signed or dated.

37. Benedicamus and Deo Gratias.

Text: Benedicamus Domino; Deo Gratias.

Scoring: Benedicamus Domino: 3 voices. (ATB).

Deo Gratias: 4 voices. (SATB).

Date: September 30th (No year indicated).

Sources: (i) Manuscript 1062 (Royal College of Music). Copy of score in the hand of Grove.

(ii) Additional Manuscript 14340 (British Museum). Autograph score of Benedicamus Domino only.

Published: Both were published by Novello in "A Collection of Sacred Music as performed at the Royal Portugese Chapel in London". May 1811. (Vol.I:p.87).

38. Carmen Funebre - Omnia Vanitas.

Text: Omnia vanitas et vexatio spiritus; praeter amare Deum et illi soli servire.

Scoring: 5 voices. (SSATB).

Date: 1827.

Sources: (i) Manuscript 4022 (Royal College of Music). Autograph score, not signed but dated.

(ii) Additional Manuscript 35003 (British Museum). Vocal score with organ part - not autograph.

(iii) Additional Manuscript 35003 (British Museum). Separate parts for Soprano II, Alto and Tenor - in Wesley's hand.

(iv) Tenbury Manuscript 874. A copy - not autograph.

Published: (i) London, 1885.

(ii) Adapted W.H. Gladstone (London, 1870?)

(iii) Edited: Stainton de B. Taylor, Hinrichsen, London, 1952.

39. Christe Eleison.

Text: Christe Eleison.

Scoring: 4 voices (SATB).

Date: September 10th 1810.

Source: Additional Manuscript 14342 (British Museum). Autograph short score, signed and dated.

40. Collaudate Dominum. (Canon in quinto et octavo).

Text: Collaudate Dominum Deum, omnes populi, quia in aeternum misericordia.

Scoring: 3 voices. (ATB).

Date: March 27th 1830.

Source: Manuscript 4022 (Royal College of Music). Autograph score, dated.

41. Constitues Eos Principes.

Text: The Responsory for Feasts of Apostles and Evangelists.

Scoring: 5 voices. (SSATB).

Date: November 9th 1814.

Source: Additional Manuscript 14340 (British Museum). Autograph score, signed and dated.

Published: Novello Early Church Music (NECM 28), edited by John Marsh, 1974.

42. Credo In Deum.

Text: The Apostle's Creed.

Scoring: 3 voices. (SAB).

Date: No date - an early piece.

Sources: (i) Additional Manuscript 35024 (British Museum). Autograph score.

(ii) Additional Manuscript 14341 (British Museum). A copy in the hand of Vincent Novello.

43. De Profundis.

Text: Psalm 130:vv.1-3. (Psalm 129 - Latin).

Scoring: 3 voices. (ATB). (Middle section: only T & B).

Date: No date.

Source: Additional Manuscript 14341 (British Museum). A copy of the score, possibly autograph.

Published: The third section - "Si iniquitates" - was published in "Anthems for Men's Voices". Vol.II:p.90. (Oxford University Press - 1965).

44. Deus Noster Refugium.

Text: Psalm 46:vv.1,2, & 7. (Psalm 45 - Latin).

Scoring: 3 voices (SSB).

Date: September 7th 1807.

Source: Additional Manuscript 14341 (British Museum). A copy of the score, not autograph.

45. Dixit Dominus.

Text: Psalm 110: v.1. (Psalm 109 - Latin).

Scoring: 4 voices (SATB).

Date: October 14th 1782.

Source: Tenbury Manuscript 1246. Autograph score, signed and dated.

46. Dixit Dominus.

Text: Psalm 110:v.1. (Psalm 109 - Latin).

Scoring: 3 voices (ATB).

Date: "Presented and performed at the Society of Concentores: December 27th 1806."

Sources: (i) Additional Manuscript 14340 (British Museum) Autograph score.

(ii) Additional Manuscript 35001 (British Museum). A set of separate parts in Wesley's hand.

(iii) Egerton Manuscript 2571 (British Museum). A copy of the score in the hand of J.P.Street.

47. Ecce Panis Angelorum.

Text: The last four verses (vv.21-24) of the Sequence "Lauda, Sion, Salvatorem", by St. Thomas Aquinas.

Scoring: 4 voices. (SATB).

Date: March 31st 1813.

Sources: (i) Additional Manuscript 14340 (British Museum). Autograph score, signed and dated.

(ii) Additional Manuscript 35001 (British Manuscript). A separate part for treble in Wesley's hand.

48. Ecce Sic Benedicetur.

Text: Psalm 128:v.5. (Psalm 127 - Latin).

Scoring: 3 voices (ATB)

Date: August 19th 1801.

Source: Additional Manuscript 14341 (British Museum). A copy of the score, not autograph.

49. Gloria Patri.

Text: The Gloria.

Scoring: 3 voices. (ATB).

Date: No date.

Source: Additional Manuscript 14341 (British Museum). A copy of the score, not autograph.

50. Levate Capita Vestra.

Text: The Antiphon to Psalm 116 (Psalm 115 - Latin) from the First Vespers of Christmas.

Scoring: 4 voices (AATB).

Date: February 16th 1798.

Sources: (i) Additional Manuscript 14340 (British Museum). Autograph score, signed and dated.

(ii) Egerton Manuscript 2571 (British Museum). A copy in the hand of J.P.Street.

(iii) Manuscript 4020 (Royal College of Music). An autograph copy, not signed or dated.

(iv) Manuscript 4028 (Royal College of Music). Another copy, not autograph.

51. Missa De Sanctissimo Trinitate. (Tono Quinto).

Text: Kyrie, Gloria, Credo (incomplete).

Scoring: 4 voices. (SATB).

Date: No date.

Source: Additional Manuscript 35001 (British Museum). Autograph score - the Credo is incomplete.

52. Nocte Surgentes.

Text: All 3 verses of an Office Hymn for Matins (Hymnus e Breviario Romano).

Scoring: 3 voices (ATB).

Date: September 10th 1801.

Source: Additional Manuscript 14341 (British Museum). A copy of the score, not autograph.

53. Ostende Nobis Domine.

Text: (a) The Alleluia verse for the first Sunday in Advent.

(b) The Alleluia verse for the seventeenth Sunday after Trinity.

Scoring: 4 voices. (SSAB).

Date: September 8th 1827.

Source: Manuscript 2141[b] (Royal College of Music). Autograph score, signed and dated.

54. Pro Peccatis Suae Gentis.

Text: Verses 7-10 of the "Stabat Mater Dolorosa" - the Sequence at Mass on September 15th. (The Feast of the Seven Dolours of the Blessed Virgin Mary).

Scoring: 3 voices. (ATB).

Date: 1792.

Sources: (i) Additional Manuscript 14340 (British Museum). Autograph score, signed.

(ii) Manuscript 4025 (Royal College of Music). Autograph score, signed and dated.

(iii) Manuscript 4025 (Royal College of Music). Autograph score, not signed or dated.

55. Requiem Aeternam.

Text: The Introit at a Solemn Mass for the Dead - Psalm 65:vv.1 & 2. (Psalm 64 - Latin).

Scoring: 4 voices. (SATB).

Date: May 18th 1800.

Sources: (i) Additional Manuscript 14342 (British Museum). Autograph score, signed.

(ii) Additional Manuscript 14342 (British Museum).
Another version for soprano and alto with figured bass - not autograph.

(iii) Manuscript 4020 (Royal College of Music.)
Autograph score (2 voices and organ), dated.

56. Sacerdos et Pontifex.

Text: The Antiphon on the Magnificat on the Feast of a Confessor and Bishop.

Scoring: 4 voices. (SATB).

Date: c.November 1780.

Source: Additional Manuscript 31222 (British Museum).
Autograph score, signed.

57. Salve Regina.

Text: A Hymn to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Scoring: Uncertain - insufficient source material.

Date: No date.

Sources: (i) Additional Manuscript 35003 (British Museum).
Parts for Canto Secondo, Alto Principale, Basso Principale, in Wesley's hand.

(ii) Additional Manuscript 35001 (British Museum).
Parts for Canto Primo Principale, Tenore Coro, in Wesley's hand.

58. Sit Nomen Domini.

Text: The Versicle before the Bishop gives his blessing at the end of a Pontifical Mass - Psalm 113:v.2.
(Psalm 112 - Latin).

Scoring: 3 voices. (SSB).

Date: June 12th 1801.

Source: Additional Manuscript 14341 (British Museum). A copy of the score, not autograph.

59. Te Decet Hymnus In Sion.

Text: Psalm 65:vv. 1 & 2. (Psalm 64 - Latin).

Scoring: 4 voices. (SATB).

Date: September 19th 1798.

Sources: (i) Manuscript 4020 (Royal College of Music). Autograph score, dated but not signed.

(ii) Manuscript 4028 (Royal College of Music). A copy in short score.

60. Tu Es Sacerdos.

Text: Part of the Gradual at a Mass for a Bishop and Confessor: Psalm 110: v.4 (Psalm 109 - Latin).

Scoring: 4 voices. (SATB).

Date: January 5th 1814.

Source: Additional Manuscript 14340 (British Museum). Autograph score, signed and dated.

Published: Novello Early Church Music (NECM 28), edited by John Marsh, 1974.

61. Tu Es Sacerdos.

Text: Part of the Gradual at a Mass for a Bishop and Confessor: Psalm 110:v.4. (Psalm 109 - Latin).

Scoring: 6 voices. (SAATTB).

Date: July 6th 1827.

Sources: (i) Manuscript 4022 (Royal College of Music). Autograph score, dated not signed.

(ii) Manuscript 2141[b] (Royal College of Music). Autograph score (short score without words), dated.

Published: Edited: J.V. Roberts, Novello, London, 1905. (Novello's Collection of Anthems: 828).

62. Ut Queant Laxis.

Text: The first 2 verses of the Hymn at Vespers on the Feast of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist.

Scoring: 3 voices. (ATB).

Date: No date given, but it was written on 22nd June 1812.

Source: Manuscript 4025 (Royal College of Music). A copy of the score, not autograph.

There is also a considerable quantity of Plainsong harmonizations - the plainsong melody together with a figured bass for organ. The chief of these collections are:-

1) Missa Defunctorum.

Additional Manuscript 14342 (British Museum). Autograph.

2) Gregorian Antiphons "ad Magnificat". (First and second Vespers).

Additional Manuscript 14342 (British Museum). Not autograph.

3) Missa In Duplicibus.

Additional Manuscript 34007 (British Museum). Autograph. November 20th 1789).

4) Antiphonae communes ad Magnificat in utriusque Vesperis.

Additional Manuscript 35003 (British Museum). Autograph.

5) Introitus, atque Alleluia, ad tertiam Missam, in Die Nativitatis Domini.

Additional Manuscript 35003. (British Museum). Autograph. (December 21st 1811).

## Appendix Two

### A List of manuscripts containing Wesley compositions.

| | |
|---|---|
| BM Egerton MSS: | 2512, 2571. |
| BM Add. MSS: | 14339, 14340, 14341, 14342, 14343, 14344, 17731, 31120, 31217, 31222, 31239, 31763, 31764, 31806, 33240, 33819, 34007, 34089, 34996, 34997, 34998, 34999, 35000, 35001, 35002, 35003, 35004, 35005, 35006, 35007, 35008, 35009, 35010, 35011, 35023, 35024, 35025, 35028, 35038, 35039, 35040. |
| RCM MSS: | 639, 679, 1040, 1062, 2141b, 2141c, 4020, 4022, 4025, 4028. |
| RAM MS: | 106. |
| Tenbury MSS: | 874, 1246. |
| Fitzwilliam MS: | 730. |
| Library of Congress, Washington MS: | 27138. |

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