

## 23. Exsultate justi (Concerti ecclesiastici, Op. 12, 1612)

Ludovico Grossi da Viadana

(1564-1627)

arr. William Melton

### **Viadana, Lodovico Grossi da**

(born c. 1560 in Viadana; died 2 May 1627 in Gualtieri)

Born Lodovico Grossi in a small town outside of Parma, he took the name Lodovico da Viadana when he became a Franciscan friar in 1596. Possibly a music pupil of Costanzo Porta, Viadana assumed a series of maestro di cappella posts in Mantua (where he probably knew Claudio Monteverdi), Rome, Cremona, Concordia, Fano, and Venice, finally returning to Mantua. His responsibilities to his spiritual order also grew, leading him to take positions in the province of Bologna (1614), Busseto (1623), and finally the convent of Santa Andrea in Gualtieri in the province of Reggio Emilia, where he died.

Viadana was also a prolific composer, producing chiefly sacred works: numerous masses, Psalms, Magnificats, Lamentations, Responsories, motets and church concerti. His secular pieces include two books of canzonettas and a book of *sinfonia musicali* for eight voices. Viadana's musical style progressed from the polyphony of the Renaissance to concertato style with basso continuo to monodic to Venetian polychoral. He was a key figure in the transition from Renaissance to Baroque eras because of his early and consistent employment of the new figured bass, composing church concerti with skeletal melodic lines that were dependent on the harmonic reinforcement of organ continuo (*Cento concerti con il basso continuo*, Venice, 1602). Viadana's influence stretched as far as Germany, where a new generation of composers including Schütz, Scheidt, Praetorius and Schein would enthusiastically adopt the concertato style.

'Exsultate justi in Domino' ('Rejoice in the Lord, O Ye Righteous', Psalm 33:1-3) was part of the *Concerti ecclesiastici*, Op. 12, a collection of one hundred pieces finished in 1602 but first published later with two further volumes

of sacred concerti (Venice, 1609). Biographer Federico Mompellio remarked upon Viadana's 'supple, spontaneous musicality, the lucidly assured writing even within the seeming chaos of polyphony'.

*Text by William Melton*