

Tommaso Giordani,
Gregorio Ballabene's *Messa a dodici cori con organo*
and Sacred Music in Late-Eighteenth-Century Dublin

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Liturgical music in the Roman Catholic Church under the penal laws in Ireland was, it has been generally supposed, severely limited. It is a surprise, therefore, to find in a Dublin sale-room in 1827 a manuscript copy in imperial folio of Gregorio Ballabene's Mass for forty-eight voices.¹ The auction catalogue tells us that it came from the music library of Tommaso Giordani, dispersed 'about twenty-six years ago'. This is the only clue to the context in which it was used. Giordani spent the last twenty-four years of his life in Dublin. Arriving from London he presented operas in Dublin successfully between 1764 and 1767. An oratorio *Isaac*, in English from the Italian of Pietro Metastasio, was performed in the music hall in Fishamble Street in March 1767, where Handel's *Messiah* had been first performed in 1742.² From 1767 until 1782 he was associated with the King's Theatre in London. He returned to Dublin in April 1782, and between 1783 and 1785 he again enjoyed success. His theatrical career went into decline, but he remained in Dublin until his death, which was noticed with one line in *The Freeman's Journal* on 25 February 1806. This essay will offer reasons to think that Giordani brought Italian musical enterprise into the Catholic Church in Dublin in the last fifteen years of the eighteenth century.

Newspapers that advertised productions and a quantity of printed music still surviving are the main sources of information about Giordani's career. The theatre histo-

¹ *Catalogue of the Select Library of the late Rev. Richard Kenrick, PP, of Francis Street Chapel ... which are to be sold by auction at the Chapel-House on Tuesday next, October 9, 1827 ...*, Charles Sharpe, Auctioneer, 33, Anglesea-Street, pp. 11–12 (lot 144*). There is a copy in the Royal Irish Academy, MR/17/F/8 (70), part of Sharpe's set of his catalogues, and the description is quoted in full below.

² Pietro Metastasio, *Isacco figura del Redentore* (1740); *Isaac, a type of the Messiah. An oratorio. Translated from the Italian of the Abbot Pietro Metastasio: and set to music by Signore Tomaso Giordani* (Dublin: printed by T. Ryder, 1767): copies are preserved in the British Library and Cambridge University Library.

rian W. J. Lawrence put together an account, sparingly sourced and published in 1910.³ *Faulkner's Dublin Journal* and *The Freeman's Journal* brought more colour and detail into the treatment of Giordani's productions by T. J. Walsh, founder of the Wexford Opera Festival.⁴ The music itself has been listed from copies in the British Library, but the National Library of Ireland has a considerable amount of this material.⁵ Publishing as 'Signor Giordani' has given rise to muddled attributions, with some works indeterminate between Tommaso, possibly his father Giuseppe, who worked in Dublin in the middle of the eighteenth century, and a contemporary Neapolitan composer Giuseppe Giordani (1751–98), known as Giordaniello. London or Dublin printings should exclude Giordaniello, who never left Italy. The popular arietta 'Caro mio ben' has been attributed both to the Neapolitan and to Tommaso, who were not, as is sometimes said, brothers. Its first appearance in London before 1782 points squarely to Tommaso.⁶ Encyclopaedic works have attempted to digest the known facts, but these include very little beyond a partial list of compositions.⁷

The second Dublin career of Tommaso Giordani is at least partly visible in the pages of *The Freeman's Journal*, where he first appears on 29 April 1782. From January 1783 until July 1784 he was regularly promoting concerts at the Rotunda and pro-

³ William J. Lawrence, 'Tommaso Giordani: an Italian Composer in Ireland', *The Musical Antiquary*, 2 (1910–11), 99–107.

⁴ Thomas J. Walsh, *Opera in Dublin 1705–1797. The Social Scene* (Dublin: Allen Figgis, 1973), via index.

⁵ RISM, *Einzeldrucke vor 1800* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1971–2003), iii, 246–58; *Catalogue of Printed Music in the British Library to 1980* (London: Saur, 1981–7), xxiii, 315–21.

⁶ Well known from Alessandro Parisotti's *Arie Antiche* (Milan: Ricordi, 1885–8), who attributed the piece to Giuseppe Giordani. The first printings were done in London and refer to singers, Signor (Gaspere) Pachierotti and Signor (Ferdinando) Tenducci, c1780–85, castrati performing there; John Glenn Paton, *26 Italian Songs and Arias. An Authoritative Edition Based on Authentic Sources* (Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Publishing, 1991), 128–31, reassigned the piece to Tommaso in an article published in 1981. Unaware of Paton's conclusion, Emilia Zanetti, 'Di alcuni interrogativi intorno a *Caro mio ben*', in Agostino Ziino (ed.), *Musica senza aggettivi. Studi per Fedele d'Amico*, (Florence: Olschki, 1991), i, 61–83, reproduced the earliest scores but dated them too late, c1785, a year in which neither Pachierotti nor Giordani was in London; she was swayed by a manuscript of the arietta from Verona, dated 1785, now Accademia di S. Cecilia, MS 2622, with a false ascription to 'Signor Federico Hendl' (itself a sign of the London origin). Walsh, 119, opted for the Neapolitan.

⁷ Rosella Pelagalli, 'Giordani, Tommaso', in Alberto M. Ghisalberti (ed.), *Dizionario biografico degli italiani* (Rome: Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana, from 1960), lv (2000), 228–30; Irena Cholij, 'Giordani, Tommaso', in John Tyrrell and Stanley Sadie (eds), *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, second edition (London: Macmillan, 2001), ix, 885–7; David J. Rhodes, 'Giordani, Tommaso', in Harry White and Barra Boydell (eds), *The Encyclopaedia of Music in Ireland*, 2 vols (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2013), i, 432–3.

ductions at the 'English Opera House' in Capel Street, which opened for just one season.⁸ After six months' silence his bankruptcy was announced in January 1785. On 27 January the *Journal* advertised an auction of his goods to take place on 9 February, which was to include 'a large quantity of scenery, machinery, and several other articles belonging to the Opera-House in Capel Street, and the property of Tommaso Giordani, bankrupt, together with the manuscript music of several Operas and After-pieces, composed by the said Tommaso Giordani'. Then on 7 February 1785 another announcement was published to say that the sale was deferred. I have not seen evidence that it ever took place, and he was soon back in business at Smock Alley Theatre. He promoted an opera, *Lionel and Clarissa* by Charles Dibdin, to open on 23 April 1785 and a revival of his own *The Haunted Castle* in May. Occasional advertisements appear until November 1785, and then nothing until April 1787. After that his productions appear only rarely though continuing for a decade until 1798. His last new theatrical production was his comic opera *The Cottage Festival* in 1796. On 3 June 1800 *The Freeman's Journal* advertised a benefit for him, including a new concerto on the piano composed by Giordani himself, and a performance of John O'Keeffe's *The Son-in-Law*, 'tickets to be had from Mr Giordani, 36, Golden Lane'. While theatrical careers must often have swung between good times and bad times, Giordani was not maintaining a company after 1785.

He engaged in some teaching, for John Field (1782–1837), pianist and composer, was taught by him during 1791–2. Field's father was a theatre violinist, and the family lived nearby. During Lent 1792 Giordani put on three 'spiritual concerts' in the secular setting of the Rotunda on 24 March, 4 April and 14 April, tickets from Signor Giordani at 9, Pitt Street. At these concerts John Field made his début.⁹ At the first of them, as we read on the front page of *The Freeman's Journal*, 29 March, 'Madam Krumpholtz's difficult Pedal Harp Concerto will be presented at the Grand Piano Forte, by Master Field, a child of eight years of age'. As a second act, after a violin concerto, 'Signor Giordani's new Kyrie and Gloria will conclude the concert'. The singers are not identified. At the second concert, 'the much admired Master Field' played a piano concerto composed by Signor Giordani, and he performed again at the third concert, though the advertisements provide less detail.

⁸ John C. Greene, *Theatre in Dublin. A History* (Bethlehem, PA: Lehigh University Press, 2011), i, 281–2.

⁹ Robin Langley, 'Field, John', in Tyrrell and Sadie, *The New Grove*, viii, 776–83. Patrick Piggott, *The Life and Music of John Field, 1782–1837, Creator of the Nocturne* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 6–8.

On 29 March 1798 the *Journal* advertised the regular commemoration performance of Handel's *Messiah* at the Rotunda on 4 April, directed by Mr Giordani, with highly regarded performers under the patronage of the Lord Lieutenant, the Lord Primate and a list of other dignitaries. Within the reach of accessible evidence this appears to be his swansong. The Rotunda was a secular venue where Giordani could present settings from the Latin liturgy or music to appeal to Protestant and Catholic alike. John C. Greene reports that 'he was in charge of sacred music at St Mark's church and of concerts in the Exhibition Room in William Street in 1801'.¹⁰ No evidence is cited, and it is puzzling, since St Mark's church, built in 1767 off Great Brunswick Street, was a Protestant church.

In contrast to the attention paid to his theatrical work, William Grattan Flood's short entry on Giordani in *The Catholic Encyclopaedia* made him 'organist of the pro-cathedral from 1784 until 1798', which is at best anachronistic, for there were only Catholic chapels at this date.¹¹ Flood was himself a cathedral organist, but what authority he had for this statement is not apparent. Indeed, one may wonder why Giordani has an entry in that work at all. We can, however, trace a little evidence to show that Flood was not very wide of the mark.

Giordani's role as a conductor and composer of sacred music is very little noticed in the press, though we have seen mention of his Kyrie and Gloria performed at the Rotunda in 1792. On 4 May 1789 *The Freeman's Journal* and on 7 May *Faulkner's Dublin Journal* gave detailed reports on the service of thanksgiving for King George III's recovery, held in Francis Street Chapel and presided over by Archbishop John Thomas Troy and three other bishops, with the Duke of Leinster as the first-named member of the congregation. Dáire Keogh has described this as 'the most spectacular liturgy witnessed in the city for centuries'.¹² We do not know that it was liturgically exceptional.

¹⁰ Greene, i, 283.

¹¹ Charles George Herbermann et al. (eds), *The Catholic Encyclopedia: An International Work of Reference on the Constitution, Doctrine, Discipline, and History of the Catholic Church*, 16 vols (New York: Appleton, 1907–14), vi (1909), 564.

¹² Dáire Keogh, 'The pattern of the flock: John Thomas Troy, 1786–1823', in James Kelly and Dáire Keogh (eds), *History of the Catholic Diocese of Dublin* (Dublin: Four Courts, 1999), 215–37: 227. Keogh goes beyond the evidence in saying, 'From 1779 Francis Street chapel employed a Neapolitan musical director; Tommaso Giordani's most celebrated composition was a grand *Te Deum*, first performed on the occasion of the thanksgiving for the king's recovery in May 1789'. The only large-scale study of Troy as archbishop does not concern itself with such matters: Vincent J. McNally, *Reform, Revolution and Reaction: Archbishop John Thomas Troy and the Catholic Church in Ireland 1787–1817* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1995).

What was really unusual was the connection with the government interest, which is what led to its appearing in the news. A setting of the *Te Deum* by Giordani was sung, and the Protestant *Freeman's Journal* printed the words in translation, perhaps from an order of service, since they are not the English words in Protestant use. This setting was revived at St Andrew's Chapel, Townsend Street, on 28 November 1791, unusually reported in *The Freeman's Journal*. No copy of Giordani's setting has been identified. Although the evidence is very limited, his composing such a setting attests a role in directing sacred music at Francis Street Chapel and presupposes a choir to perform the setting.

The existence of choirs in Catholic chapels is attested by a source from 1749.¹³ The author is not known, but the text was copied by William Monck Mason (1775–1859) as part of his work towards a history of Dublin.¹⁴ There were nine secular chapels in 1749, and in three of them there was space designated as choir: St Mary's Lane Chapel had 'a choir enclosed' on the Epistle side, in Francis Street Chapel 'the choir is abovestairs', and in Rosemary Lane Chapel the gallery on the Epistle side 'serves as a choir'. Six men's religious houses and four nunneries also provided chapels, and in six of these a gallery served as a choir. Indeed two of the nunneries had an organ in the gallery. So in the chapel of the Dominican nuns in Channel Row (Brunswick Street North), 'The gallery serves for a choir, and has many stalls in it, at the front of which is a very sweet organ', and in the chapel of the Poor Clares in King Street, built in 1728, 'At the end of the chapel is the choir and stalls in it, over the choir a gallery for music, at the front of which is an organ'.¹⁵ Most of these chapels date from the 1720s and 30s, as the rigour of the penal laws of William III and Queen Anne faded decades before the first relief act of 1778.¹⁶ Evidence for Catholic sacred music in this period has not been assembled, and even modern discussion is likely to assume the worst of the penal regime. The appearance of some pages of plainchant in a missal printed in Dublin in 1777 may

¹³ *Roman Catholics. State and condition of R. C. Chapels in Dublin, both secular and regular, AD 1749*, edited with an introduction by Nicholas Donnelly (Dublin: Catholic Truth Society of Ireland, 1904), 11–21.

¹⁴ His papers towards this work are now in the British Library, MS Egerton 1770–74, and the description is found in Egerton MS 1772, fol. 68.

¹⁵ *Roman Catholics. State and Condition of R. C. Chapels in Dublin*, 19, 20, with Donnelly's notes, 39. The convent in Channel Row had been established for Benedictine nuns in James II's time; the Dominican nuns came from Galway about 1715, first in Fisher's Lane and only later moving into Channel Row.

¹⁶ The early return of many elements of Catholic life to Dublin is discussed by Fr John Brady and Mgr Patrick Corish, *The Church under the Penal Code, A History of Irish Catholicism* 4, fasc. 2 (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1971).

have little significance.¹⁷ The difficulty lies in discovering any testimony to what was actually sung or played in these Catholic chapels.

Francis Street Chapel, dedicated to St Nicholas, was a modest building erected for the Franciscans in and after 1683 with its west front hidden from the street. It had continued as a secular chapel following the expulsion of the friars after 1698, making it the oldest of all the chapels in eighteenth-century Dublin. It had the largest Catholic congregation in Dublin at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and the priest was Roman Catholic dean of Dublin; he was assisted by no fewer than eight curates, all residing in the chapel house at 50 Francis Street.¹⁸ Here Archbishop Troy had been enthroned on 15 February 1788, so that this was in all but name his pro-cathedral until he took over St Mary's Chapel in Liffey Street after 1797.¹⁹ Here too was the setting for the thanksgiving service reported in 1789, and there is no reason to think that the choir that sang Giordani's *Te Deum* on that occasion was not a regular participant in the liturgy. His presenting a new Kyrie and Gloria at the Rotunda in 1792 is a further sign that he was directing sacred music in a Catholic chapel. Although Flood cited no authority, he was apparently not in error. The years he mentioned, from 1784 to 1798, remain unsupported by evidence, but it might be thought that Troy's leaving Francis Street may have been the occasion for Giordani's retirement from the music of the chapel.

During work on early-nineteenth-century auctions in Dublin, looking for Irish-language manuscripts, I came across the description, mentioned at the beginning of this article, of the manuscript of Ballabene's mass-setting for forty-eight voices. It appears in the auction of books belonging to the late Revd Richard Kenrick (1781–1827),

¹⁷ Bennett Zon, 'The revival of plainchant in the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland, 1777–1858', in Patrick F. Devine and Harry White (eds), *The Maynooth International Musicological Conference 1995: Selected Proceedings Part Two*, Irish Musical Studies 5 (Dublin: Four Courts, 1996), 251–61. The evidence from 1777 is 'several pages of chant notation' in a thick quarto *Missale Romanum*, printed by Patrick Wogan, Dublin, 1777. Copies of this missal are very rare. Fixing on Dublin printing rather than on the Catholic books actually used in Ireland, most of them no doubt printed abroad, can only limit perceptions.

¹⁸ *State and condition of R. C. Chapels in Dublin*, 13–14, with Donnelly's notes, 28–31; George Newenham Wright, *An Historical Guide to Ancient and Modern Dublin* (London: Baldwin, Cradock and Joy, 1821), 179. The old church behind Francis Street, built for Archbishop Patrick Russell, archbishop from 1683 to 1692, was replaced after Emancipation with the new and larger one begun by Fr Matthew Flanagan and dedicated in 1835.

¹⁹ In 1797 Archbishop Troy petitioned the Holy See for St Mary's, Liffey Street, as his mensal church, vacant following the death of Dr William Clarke, PP, and so moved the metropolitan church to the north side of the river (Keogh, 226).

held in Charles Sharpe's sale-room in Anglesea Street on 9 October 1827. Kenrick was ordained as a curate of Francis Street Chapel in 1806, remaining there until 1820 and returning as parish priest from 1823 until his death on 5 September 1827.²⁰ The description, transcribed below in a cartouche, says that the manuscript was 'purchased in the dispersion of Giordani's Musical Library, about twenty-six years ago in Dublin'. If precise, that would take the date of the relevant Giordani sale back to about 1801, when James Vallance was the principal auctioneer in the city. I have found no relevant sale catalogue. Giordani was at that date around seventy years old, and he may have had some need to sell his music. Kenrick was only twenty in 1801, but that is no reason to assume that he had not the interest and the means to buy the manuscript.

Gregorio Ballabene (1720–1803) was a Roman musician whose career has left little trace.²¹ The mass, or rather Kyrie and Gloria, for forty-eight voices (for which he is chiefly remembered) was composed in 1774 and dedicated to the Franciscan pope, Clement XIV, who died after several months' illness in September of that year. The work was performed and well received, probably in Bologna, and two sources are known that put this approval on record. It was revived in 1777 at the Franciscan church of the Santi Apostoli in Rome, where Clement was entombed, but, so soon after its success, 'it was ridiculed by some progressive Roman musicians, who seem to have regarded its colossal construction as outmoded'. An autograph manuscript survives in the Accademia di S. Cecilia in Rome, and there are other copies still in Bologna, Bergamo, Florence and Berlin.²²

There cannot have been many routes for a manuscript of such a work from Rome to Dublin and, in particular, into the music library of Tommaso Giordani. For whoever it was that bought it and then brought it or sent it to Dublin, this was surely an aspirational acquisition. One may wonder whether Francis Street Chapel had the musical resources to perform the mass, but without evidence we should avoid assumptions. It seems highly unlikely that Giordani himself obtained the manuscript from Italy. In 1774 he was concerned with theatrical music in London, where a Grand High Mass would

²⁰ J. Anthony Gaughan, *Archbishops, Bishops and Priests Who Served in the Archdiocese of Dublin in the Nineteenth Century* (Dublin: Kingdom Books, 2013), 102. There is a tablet to Kenrick in the church. During 1820–23 he was curate at St Michael and St John, Exchange Street. His brother Thomas Kenrick was in business as a scrivener at 6 York Street, where James Clarence Mangan was apprenticed from 1818 to 1826. Thomas's sons were Francis Patrick Kenrick (1797–1863) and Peter Richard Kenrick (1806–93), archbishops of Baltimore and St Louis.

²¹ Raoul Meloncelli, 'Ballabene, Gregorio', in Ghisalberti, *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, v (1963), 563–4.

²² Siegfried Gmeinwieser, 'Ballabene, Gregorio', in Tyrrell and Sadie, *The New Grove*, ii, 540.

MESSA PONTIFICALE; or, Grand High Mass, for Forty-eight Voices, distributed in Twelve Choirs, 1 vol. MS. in imperial folio, bound in morocco. This astonishing composition was purchased in the dispersion of Giordani's Musical Library, about twenty-six years ago in Dublin. It is the Chef d'Oeuvre of Ballabene, Maestro di Capella at Bologna, and was made by him, as an Ex-voto, or accomplishment of a vow for some certain providential deliverance, as is testified at the end.

Notwithstanding the advances made down to the present century in Vocal Music, adapted to the Orchestra, it is yet undeniable, that no corresponding improvement has taken place in the grandest of all harmony, Choral, or Church Music, of which, as the destination is incomparably the highest, so even the Origin and Pedigree are the most interesting, as connecting this genus with the inestimable relics of the ancient Greek modes. The genius of modern composition is to throw all the air into one or two upper parts, having the others merely nominal, or of sole *remplissage*; at the utmost of accompaniment, and not unfrequently of pure noise. The consequence arising from which practice is, that the ear becomes incapable of entertaining or of estimating the perception of harmony resulting as in the Grand Church Compositions, from the effect of many simultaneous impulses of sound, travelling through a progression of evaded and suspended cadences, to the final termination of a full cadence. No modern author, as no educated, would attempt to put together his parts, as is commonly done by Professors in Italy, without any other helps than his rules, and his pen. Dr Burney, I think, has related the instance of Jommelli, who, encouraged by his powerful friends, and by his well earned fame as an Operatic Composer, entered the lists against Perez, as a candidate for composing a Funeral Service on the King of Spain's Obsequies, and failed in the attempt, although F. Martini had corrected his *Requiem* for the occasion. "The Method," writes Antoniotto Adorno Dell' arte armonica, "of forming a composition with the union of all the Eight Primary Sounds, hath been found out, and is practised in Italy, in Grand and Solemn Compositions for the Church, for Eight Real Voices, doubled and tripled into two distinct Choirs WITHOUT INSTRUMENTS, and for Sixteen Parts (also doubled and tripled) into Four," (consequently into Eight and Twelve) "Choirs as used in the Great Church of Milan, called the Duomo." Elsewhere, he says, that to comprehend the effect of such Music, it must be heard.

Even in the point of execution, this genus of Music has no other difficulty than that of keeping to time, as no separate part is compelled out of the compass and centre of that given species of voice into the falsetto, or on the other hand into gaping and huskiness. There is no reasonable cause for thinking, that this stile of Church Music may not be successfully introduced into Catholic Cathedrals in Ireland, and supersede the *hyporchemata* and ballet stile. But wheresoever introduced, its effect will be portentous.

have found no audience, and from 1783 in Dublin his finances were likely to have been precarious. Nothing is known of any continuing contacts in Italy. A more likely buyer in Italy and bringer to Dublin, I suggest, would be John Thomas Troy. He went to Rome in 1755 to commence his studies with the Irish Dominicans at the church of S. Clemente. Ordained priest in 1762, he remained in Rome, where he became master of S. Clemente in 1772. Four years later he was sent to Ireland as Bishop of Ossory, where for ten years his pastoral mission was to revive the church after the worst of the penal years and to ensure that the Irish church followed Roman practice. In December 1786 he was appointed Archbishop of Dublin and effectively led the Catholic church in Ireland for more than thirty years. He had the opportunity to buy a copy of Ballabene's great mass in Rome in 1774 or soon after. Whether he had the interest, I leave to others to determine.

It was during the early part of Troy's time as archbishop that Giordani acted as master of the music at Francis Street Chapel, and, if performance were to be attempted, it would have fallen to Giordani to coach the musicians and direct the singing. In this way, perhaps, the manuscript may have come into his hands. Whether it was ever performed in Dublin I have not discovered. By the time Giordani's musical library was sold, he had ceased to serve the chapel, and one can only speculate as to whether Troy retained any interest in manuscript music that may have passed from the chapel into the hands of the musician. Troy himself had moved to Liffey Street. If the sale were in 1801, Richard Kenrick was still a student at Maynooth. We may need to allow that the dating of the sale is insecure—Giordani's death in 1806 would take Kenrick to ordination and first curacy. Father Kenrick himself seems to have bought the manuscript, with what motives we can only guess. Judging from the quantity of silver in the auction of Kenrick's possessions, he was not short of money, and in the auction room the manuscript of the mass could probably have been acquired for merely shillings.

The elaborate sale notice for the mass, transcribed above, is not so much a description of the manuscript as an argument that such large-scale polyphony is not too difficult to perform and might have a place in the Catholic cathedrals of Ireland. The writer places sacred music for choirs above all other harmony. He backs up his taste by reference to two eighteenth-century works of music criticism. The English music historian Dr Charles Burney (1726–1814) had written about the opera composer Niccolò Jommelli (1714–74) and Davide Perez (1711–78), a Neapolitan of Spanish descent, but he tells no such story of their competing to compose music for the obsequies of the

king of Spain.²³ Where the writer came upon it has eluded me. The story must, I think, refer to those performed in Rome in August 1759, subsequent to the burial of King Fernando VI in Madrid.²⁴ The person mentioned as F. Martini is Fr Giambattista Martini OFM (1706–1784), referred to by Burney as Padre Martini, who was very active in sacred music in Bologna, teaching in the Accademia filarmonica from 1758; Ballabene was a member from 1754, and the two must have had known one another well. The two corresponded about Ballabene's *Messa a dodici cori*, Martini published an appraisal of the work, and it was Martini who, in a letter in 1784 to his sometime pupil, Luigi Antonio Sabbatini, reflected on its less favourable reception in Rome than in Bologna: it 'was ridiculed by his colleagues, but was defended by me on the orders of the late Cardinal [Alessandro] Albani, and I wrote about the value, and the merits of the author'.²⁵ None of this was accessible to the writer of the sale notice, who would have found no mention of Ballabene in Burney's *History*. In favour of multiple choirs, however, he cites the older Italian musician Antoniotto d'Adurni (1680–1766), whose work on the art of harmony had been published in English translation in 1761.²⁶

This notice was certainly not drafted by Charles Sharpe, the auctioneer, but it must have been written at his behest with a view to encouraging buyers for what he regarded as a significant item in the sale. To whom could a Dublin auctioneer turn for this task? It would be interesting to investigate who, in the musical world of Dublin in 1827, could have written it and to contextualize the knowledge and musical taste that it represents. The auctioneer's copy of the 1827 sale catalogue shows that the manu-

²³ Charles Burney, *A General History of Music from the Earliest Ages to the Present Period*, 4 vols (London: for the Author, 1776–89), iv, 561–70, 570–72. The story is not mentioned in Maurizio Dottori, *The Church Music of Davide Perez and Niccolò Jommelli, With Especial Emphasis on Funeral Music* (Curitiba: DeArtes–UFPR, 2008).

²⁴ The circumstances are discussed by art-historian John E. Moore, 'Obsequies in Rome for Ferdinand VI of Spain', in Adriaan Wessel Reinink and Jeroen Stumpel (eds), *Memory & Oblivion. Proceedings of the XXIXth International Congress of the History of Art held in Amsterdam, 1–7 September 1996* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1999), 307–15.

²⁵ Meloncelli (as note 21) quotes correspondence in the Civico Museo Bibliografico Musicale in Bologna and also cites works not widely available, Giuseppe Heiberger, *Lettera ... ad una composizione musicale a 48 voci del Signor G. B. maestro di Cappella romano* (Rome: Casaletti, 1774); Giovanni Baptista Martini, *Descrizione e approvazione dei Chirie e Gloria a 48 voci* (Bologna, 1774).

²⁶ *L'Arte Armonica: or, A Treatise on the Composition of Music, in three books, with an Introduction on the History and Progress of Music, from its beginning to this time. Written in Italian, by Giorgio Antoniotto; and translated into English* (London: Johnson, 1761).

script fetched 41/- (forty-one shillings) but does not record the name of the buyer. There is no basis for matching it with any of the extant copies now recorded, and it is likely that it no longer exists. The fleeting appearance of the manuscript in the sale room, however, has invited consideration of what it was doing in Dublin in the first place.

The result has been to find the Italian musician and composer Tommaso Giordani in the role of director of music at Francis Street Chapel, at this time the main secular chapel in Dublin. He owned the manuscript of Ballabene's 'colossal' mass for forty-eight voices, though we cannot know whether he used it. It may be coincidental that his activity coincides with the years when John Thomas Troy was archbishop and used Francis Street Chapel as his metropolitan chapel. It is, however, not at all unlikely that this archbishop, who spent twenty years in Rome and sought to introduce Roman ways to the Irish church, was the patron of Giordani's music in his chapel. The manuscript of Ballabene's mass, artistically old-fashioned though it may have been, stands as evidence that they at least aspired to a very ambitious standard in sacred music in Dublin.

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