

Monteverdi – Magnificat primo
*a 8 voci & due violini & quattro viole overo quattro
tromboni quale in accidente si ponno lasciare*

Source: *Selva morale e spirituale di Claudio Monteverdi*, Venice, 1640

This is the first of two settings of the Magnificat contained in Monteverdi's second great anthology of church music. This volume was intended to provide choirmasters with a range of compositions for different services, but the majority of the works are psalm settings for Vespers, for which service the Magnificat forms the final item.

Throughout the collection, Monteverdi provided different settings for different combinations of voices and instruments, or provided alternative ways of performing the same piece. This is particularly true of this setting of the Magnificat: the title tells us that it is for eight voices, two violins and four violas (meaning members of the violin family) or four trombones 'which may be omitted at will'. The number of parts is therefore either 10 or 14 (not including the continuo).

Unfortunately, the Alto and Bass partbooks for the second choir are missing, as are the 2nd and 3rd trombones/violas. They have therefore been reconstructed for this edition.

In addition to the full score, the following are provided:

- vocal score (with continuo)
- Violin I
- Violin II
- Trombone I/Viola I – alto clef
- Trombone II - tenor clef
- Viola II (instead of Trombone II) – alto clef
- Trombone III – tenor clef
- Cello I (instead of Trombone III) – bass clef
- Trombone IV/Cello II – bass clef
- Basso continuo with figured bass (editorial)

A fully satisfactory performance can be achieved using voices, two violins and continuo. (For the very fortunate, the two violins could be replaced by *cornetti*.) If other instruments are available, they can be used in any combination e.g. 4 trombones (or sackbuts), or 2 violas and 2 cellos, or 1 viola and 3 trombones etc. The basso continuo should generally be played by cello and organ, with the addition of a lute or theorbo if available.

The work has been transposed up a full tone; note values in the triple-time sections have been quartered, while those in the 4/4 sections have been left unaltered, so that the time relationship should generally be ♩ = ♩. However, for the section from bar 156 to 170 (and its subsequent repeats), ♩ = ♩ would seem more appropriate.

If using this edition for a performance, an acknowledgement would be appreciated.

Diana Thompson
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NB This edition is not compatible with the Novello edition edited by Denis Stevens, as the reconstruction of the voice parts is different. However, the instrumental parts **are** compatible (bar numbering is identical) despite the differences in reconstruction. Note, however, that this edition uses a key signature of two sharps as opposed to Stevens' one sharp with accidentals for the frequently sharpened Cs.