Le Lezioni Caritatevoli

Mayr's speech, known as the Memoria, given in March 1805 to the Council of La Misericordia Maggiore for the founding of a music school to be known as Le Lezioni Caritatevoli.

The following text is important for both Mayr and Donizetti studies. We are shown the ideals with which Mayr founded his school, together with his intellectual and cultural understanding of music as a vital stone which holds together the fabric of a society and its civilization. It should be remembered that Mayr renounced a famous career in order to respond to his vocation to found a music school for paupers. We know he always remained a poor man as a result of his decision. He went through a financial crisis about 1813 and when Donizetti was in Vienna he heard to his horror of how his old teacher went about Bergamo without a coat in the winter months. He sent him the finest coat money could buy. Oral tradition say's Mayr's wife Lucrezia was mean in the finances of the household and that this is the reason why Mayr never had new clothes. More likely, Mayr gave most of his money away to his school, concerts and library.

The text should be read against the Napoleonic outrage which destroyed a civilization. Bergamo had a commune instituted and the responsibility of education taken from the Church and societies like La Misericordia Maggiore. This explains Mayr's reference to the seminary (founded by La Misericordia) as being no longer necessary. However the seminary exists to this day and was where Pope John XXIII received his training for the Priesthood.

Another important point, it will be noted how Mayr's traditional and platonic thought contrasts to his full appreciation of Italian Illuminismo (Enlightenment). He will use modern words, like 'to electrify' whilst still conceiving the universe (as did Donizetti) through the concepts of Ptolemy. His disgust of castrati is based on religious grounds as much as on enlightened thought of his period. There is no doubt that Mayr's masonic associations were inspired through his desire for reform and a reawakening of the religious spirit through a conscious insight into the mysteries

(gnosis). Like Gluck, Haydn and Mozart, he composed in the light of music being a sacred art. Harmony was to him a living and profound tradition, based on the deepest mysteries hidden in man's heart.

Mayr's footnotes to his text are given in brackets along with the text, for, no doubt, he quoted them as he spoke. The translation takes liberties on occasions for clarity's sake and question of style. It was considered that where a few words removed the necessity of a footnote, this was permitted for the sake of flow and continuity.

John Allitt.

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Cum liquida voce, et convenientissima modulazione cantantur (res divinae) magnam huius instituti utilatem agnosco. S. Augustinus. Conf. Lib 7 cap 53.

It has been over a number of years now that many sensitive thinkers and excellent writers have spoken out against the obvious decadence of music in Italy. For example, Metastasio, Arteaga, Planelli, Mattei and others.

(Desio del novo e del piacer che annoda
Al fral lo spirto il suo sperar deluso
Per vicenda fatal del gusto, ha chiuso
La retta via della verace loda.

L'ausonia par che dell'error si goda
Ammaliata dall'ignobil uso;
E plaude al falso, il vero merto escluso
Senza rossor dell'evidente froda
Mazza - Sonnet XIV - Scadimento della Musica)

In addition to the many causes suggested, one might add the recent changes in our political life. In my opinion no one need doubt the fact that the situation has become worse rather than better. Once, in times past, the Italian nation was alone with its exclusive rule over the musical world. It was due to the excellence of her lyrical singers throughout the courts of Europe from Petersburg to Lisbon. Now she has to employ persons from Germany, Spain and even further field in order to supplement the lack of musicians. It is not my intention to retrace the causes which have increased the number of theatres in Italy. The fact is that in every town more

theatres are being built, and even in small towns every effort is made to build theatres. Life and entertainment! Panem et circenses! The vogue is general. However, how are we to provide for such a hunger for musical entertainment? The immense sums spent to procure musicians of value and genuine quality result in just about to meet the needs of two of Italy's principal cities. All others have to be content with the mediocre even in the roles of principal singers which are taken by persons who have not even the most superficial understanding of their art. A voice with the promise of just a little disposition - that is, with the ease to execute like a parrot four runs of the scale - is enough to stimulate enthusiasm for a public hankering for satisfaction at any cost. In the meantime, hired journalists raise any beginner in his art above the stars. They destroy with their premature praises the chance of the growth of any beautiful seed within the singer.

(E mentre esulta da mal vezzo illusa
Dall'accorto stranier biasmo pur miete
La già Donna de' palchi itala Musa.
Mazza - Sonnet XLIV - Inversione dell'ordine musicale).

However, if this decadence is ever-increasingly evident on the stage, it is easier to accept, since the only music composed today is for the stage. Unfortunately, it is equally to be observed in music for the Divine Liturgy. For example, and this is a hard thing to say, where in the whole of Italy is there a Church which enjoys just a little reputation in the singing of its choir? No longer do we find travellers recalling an unforgettable performance of the famous miserere in Rome.[1] It has simply ceased to exist. No longer are Lotti's famous Benedictus and Miserere to be heard in Venice. They have vanished. What has happened to the beautiful sounds of Ambrosian Chant once heard in Milan? What has become of the shrines at Naples and Loreto? Where are the smaller cities once so rich in famous musicians. Which of them can now boast of, at the most, two well-known singers?

Furthermore, Haydn's famous oratorios, the Creation and the Seasons, Mozart's Requiem, all compositions admired throughout Europe as masterpieces of modern music and which have been performed with big choirs

and orchestras from Vienna to the extreme East and back again to the extreme West, have not yet been heard in Italy. (The Creation was performed in Paris with a choir of 250. The singers were so impressed by the extraordinary beauty of the work, that out of sheer enthusiasm the musicians met together after the first part and declared that a gold medal should be struck and sent to the composer as a sincere homage from all who had taken part. Over 200 were involved in the Seasons produced at Vienna, 150 for the same work at Berlin. It would be impossible to record all the performances, enough to indicate that the Requiem was performed at Breslau with 130 musicians.[2])

At last, due to the protest of thinkers and essentially to a change in political events, it would seem that Italy wishes to clear herself from the reproach of not merely permitting, but of having actively encouraged the infamous custom of mutilating men, simply for the frivolous delight of hearing a voice an octave higher than others. This sudden change of opinion which bestows honour on our times, will however, leave a considerably vacant gap in our musical life.

Harmony is the most beautiful manifestation of modern music.[3] However, due to the discovery of counterpoint harmony was used exclusively in religious music. The appealing idea of four natural vocal lines was over the years forgotten and no one thought of returning to nature from which we had so erroneously erred. The cause was simply the whim and insatiable desire to flatter the outward ear. Soon the vacant gap will become apparent, because in a few years it will become impossible to find anyone capable of artificially imitating the natural tone of a woman's or a boy's voice.[4] There will be no one left to sustain the vocal parts of the upper register which are so gracious, so penetrating and essential for the overall concept of vocal harmony.

Therefore let us return to prime sources and use boys between six and fourteen years of age. (The thought of teachers of art and medicine are in agreement. Dr. Weber wrote in a report; One should begin musical training with healthy boys already from the age of five. With the not so healthy at six, and the weakest at seven and not later. The vocal chords at that age have the greatest flexibility, the ear has not yet

been spoilt, the time of change of teeth is not so close and childhood illnesses have been left behind. As yet there are no signs of change in the voice and the characteristic unruly nature of boys which rebels against any attempt at education may be still easily moderated. One or two years later, this favourable period has been lost, the vocal chords lose their flexibility, education becomes a greater problem and there is little sign of progress to those who teach them and who become understandably frustrated through the loss of time). For an emotional nation like ours it would be too dangerous to introduce women to sing at church services. They have enough power of attraction with their natural beauty, without the additional charm of their voices!

Thus, the thickening of the voice which comes about due to unavoidable laws of nature, (which may be prevented through the privation of the virile organs), makes it requisite that boys are taught at a tender age whilst they are still capable of singing such music.

Therefore, it is necessary to return once more to those means which were of so great an influence a century ago, and which brought music to the apex of perfection.[5]

I refer to the choir and music schools. All writers, historians and thinkers agree that it would be possible to repeat once more the rapid development which music once made in Italy. We would again extend our influence through many excellent followers throughout Europe.[6] For it is without doubt that unless there was a Peli at Modena, a Paita at Genoa, a Brivio at Milan - and even more so, the great Neapolitan masters like Leo, Feo, Durante, Porpora and Scarlatti, together with their Bolognese rivals Pistocchi and Bernacchi - we would not have had a Ferri, a Farinelli, a Egiziello, a Raff, a Guadagni or a Pachiarotti. Why are we able to hear today with so much pleasure singers like Marchesi, Crescentini, Babbini and David - although they are no longer in their prime? Do we not recognize much skill and strength in their voices? Is this not due to their devotion to training made under masters now dead but which they remember, and to the fact, that they constantly return to golden precepts taught by those worthy men?

The same may be said concerning instrumental music (which should always be an imitation of vocal music). We may recognize the same delicate and expressive

quality coming from the teachings of Corelli; our fellow-bergamasque, Locatelli, Geminiani, Somis and more recently the sublime and platonic genius of Tartini[7] from whose excellent school came Pagin, Nardini, Giardini, Borghi, Lolli, Viotti etc.

Even governments have recognized the advantage to be gained by academies of music. Hence, the emergence of famous conservatories of music at Naples and Venice. They employed only the best-known and best qualified masters and composers, thus bringing fame and reputation to such schools. Their reputation spread abroad and students of both sexes completed their course travelling to Europe's many courts to return famous and rich. Many foreigners then came to study at the academies. What is more, many prosperous and famous travellers came to hear and to reward such outstanding examples of nature and of art.[8]

However, when the stimulus of imitation and competition awoke in other nations, they knew (fatefully for us) how to capture the most propitious moment and take away from Italy her decisive lead in the divine art of music. Meanwhile, the ruthless teeth of time had begun to gnaw away at the foundations of our schools. Lastly, various political upheavals have caused everything to collapse. Already all private schools have ceased to exist, even the Neapolitan academies are in a great confusion. On the other hand the Tzar has founded a school for singers; colleges are multiplying in Berlin, Dresden and Liepzig, whilst other music schools have existed now for nearly half a century. The Duke of Bavaria has invited a famous Italian singer to found a music academy based on Venetian precepts and even the French have founded an academy equal to that nation's sense of prestige - but they only accomplished this on having moved to the banks of the Seine all the leading men in the operatic field,[9] together with most of Italy's most precious monuments in this realm of study. (The Library of the Bibliotèque Nationale of Paris is very rich in musical treasures which were collected by Kreutzer in Italy. He is now the first violinist of His Majesty).[10] Now even the French are making every effort to overcome all the obstacles hindering their language, appearing to wish to contradict Rousseau who dared to negate the possibility of France ever having any good music! (Jean Jacques wrote in his

epistle on music - 'Je crois avoir fait voir qu'il n'y a ni mesure ni mélodie dans La Musique Françasie, parceque la langue n'en est point susceptible; que le chant français n'est que un aboyment continuel, insupportable à toute oreille non prevenue, que l'harmonie en est brute, sans expression, et sentant uniquement son remplissage d'ecolier; que les airs français ne sont pas des airs, que le récitatif français n'est point du récitatif; d'ou je conclus que les français n'ont point de Musique et n'en peuvent avoir; ou que si jamais ils en ont une, ce sera tant pis pour eux.')

What will Italy do? Will she quietly permit the crown to be taken away by other nations? Will she remain indifferent to the immanent decay of music? Music - the art to which she seems exclusively destined due to her climate and language, her genuine sensitivity and brilliant powers of imagination. Will she not look to repair the damage wrought by the pace of time and of fate? Will she go on begging to strangers for her musical pleasures — joys which were born from her own womb? Italy gave birth to opera and raised it to its apex. Once, it was her sons of melody who filled with wonder and astonishment all Europe's nations - thus assuring homage for years to come! Ah! no! .....

There are still in her midst men of fine intellect who have the honour and glory of their nation in their hearts. They recognize the signs of the times and understand the relationship of the fine arts to the general happiness and well-being of a people. These men are animated by the Liturgy and Offices of the Church and genuinely seek through the means of harmony and ecstasy of sound to put into practice St. Augustine's teaching: 'whenever and wheresoever music is sweetly sung, the souls of the faithful are uplifted towards a greater spirituality and earnest desire for piety. They receive the power of the Spirit in proportion to their estate, for their spiritual condition is stimulated by a certain occult force through voice and song'.

I would embarrass my audience's modesty if I took account of all the good it has done for the people and for this holy place.[11] You have increased in numbers and in revenue; you have encouraged the reform of both the Church and its Clergy; you have donated a considerable grant to the new grammar school; and now you are

considering whether to finance the re-establishment of the art which above all others is related to holy things and which has always been known to have formed men in the finest disciplines.

(Musica e Poesia figlie de'Numi
Voi coronaste la virtù di fiori
Voi gli atroci addolcite aspri costumi.
Zacchiroli).

Thanks to the inspired Ptolomey who explained why music is related to holy things, I am able to explain and present my thoughts. I would describe myself as more fortunate if you, most worthy and esteemed citizens, would honour them with your thoughts and wise contemplation.

Let it be far from me to propose to you vast projects, for such are more or less the sons of ambition and self-interest. The difficulty of realizing such projects dooms them from the outset to the sepulchre of forgotten dreams. Should they be inconsiderately forced into existence, they have but an ephemeral life of a few years. Experience has shown us by the examples left of the great masters of voice and instrument, that it is enough for one isolated man of genius to stimulate a rapid growth in his science. It is as if he electrifies those around him and that the energy communicated by his disciples stimulates thousands of other who have the talent and the will to dedicate themselves to whatever field of study is in question. (For example, Fasch, the teacher and harpsichordist of Frederick of Prussia alone taught an academy for singers which today numbers more than a hundred and fifty active members, all capable of performing the most exacting pieces of ancient or modern music. Omnium rerum principia parva-suis progressionibus usu augentur - Cicero).

A small music school - lessons in the practice of singing and instrumental playing - a few lessons in theory without which practice is always uncertain and over-mechanical - for twelve [12] selected boys of the neighbourhood. This means four sopranos, four altos who will also be taught the cembalo. The remaining four would study the violin. There would be need for four full-time teachers: one for singing and declamation: one for the violin: and one for general theory and who undertakes the direction of the school.[13]

If a student was to develop a particular talent and decisive disposition for any other string or wind instrument, then a special teacher would be appointed.

To me this seems the only practical way to prevent further decadence and to reawaken the languishing science of music to a new life. We shall combine the capacity and ease of execution with direct and indirect channels of a practical nature, promoting certain rebirth. We shall aid Italy's fame, help those in need and give glory to God.

Since prejudice has never found favour in my sight, I wish you to realize that my ideas are not altogether without foundation. I will therefore indulge myself with further thoughts for discussion. Please be forbearing and give me your indulgence for a little longer.

If there has ever been a propitious time, for reasons already given, it is the present. Furthermore, it seems to me, it has become necessary to found such a school simply to keep a church alive, especially regarding its choir.

Thanks to your social work the Misericordia has increased in revenue. Now, the ordinances and rules of the society declare in Chapter V that 'those in authority in the council of the Misericordia regarding the administration of financial help are free and absolute'.

Therefore, since you have the resources, you have ample freedom to undertake such a project without fear of prejudicing in any way whatsoever the obligations laid upon you by your office.

Indeed, you would be undertaking your task in the ideals of your saintly founders, by simply putting into practise the rules as laid down in Chapter VI, 'the Council will have particular care in conserving, protecting and defending the reasons and well-being of the Consortium by using the yearly income to honour God and for the good of the poor'.

Surely, there can be no one who has not realized that music has been used in holy temples throughout the ages and in all religions.

(Chi sa registrar li vetusti templi
Di popoli infiniti e colti e rozzi
Che consacraron la musica agli altari?

* * * * *

Così con sistri e timpani là in Menfi
Celebrarono Osiri i Sacerdoti;
I Regoli Persian coll'Arpa il sole
Ed i Bramanni Ipocriti l'aurora
E con sonora union di flauti e cetre
Genti diverse ai Numi della Grecia
I lor cantici offrian, e i loro prieghi.

E tu popolo eletto, popolo santo
Di vera Religione un dì modello
Della Musica ancora esempio desti
Di Salomone nel superbo tempio
Coll'accordato suono di Kinori,
Di Cembali, di Hazuri, di Nebeli
A cantor cento e cento insieme uniti
Sinceri omaggi a IEHOVA rendesti.
Seque di Cristo il popolo fedele
Le tue vestigia docile e devoto
E gli strumenti e voci umil consacra
Al Redentor .....

Yriarte - La Musica.[14])

Who has not learnt about the rites and reforms of St. Ambrose or St. Gregory? His Grace Hyppolitus, the Lord Bishop of Cortona wrote in one of his pastoral letters: 'The Church has never esteemed a finer way to comfort its sons than with the praise of God. Therefore, we must never abandon the understanding that God's own Spirit has consecrated the art of music. (Our Redeemer praised his Eternal Father with Hymns of thanksgiving - Hymnum patri gratias agens cantabat - see Matthew 26 v 30).

The founders of La Misericordia Maggiore understood this only too well when they wrote on page seventeen of the chapter we have already quoted from: 'Since music encourages the souls of the faithful to devotion, because it is an outward sign of the Celestial Harmony, it gives honour to the Church and brings happiness to the laity. Therefore, it will be encouraged to keep a sufficient number of musicians (sometimes more, sometimes less), according to the needs of the times and the society's means, as it seems appropriate on occasions to the honourable Council'.

Since it is your pressing duty to promote the glory of Santa Maria Maggiore by inviting various famous

foriegn musicians, you will be providing for the future through the means of the music school now under consideration. You will be following the vows of your pious ancestors. You will overcome the shortage of singers and players. You will discover within your own gates a constant flow of active persons duly prepared tc undertake such tasks. Furthermore, you will be enriching the church, for the pupils will be obliged to attend all the services, with good musicians. The choiristers will in turn celebrate the praises of God consonis vocibus et suavi modulatione as required by Innocent III in his De' Mysterio Missae, Book I, Chapter II. May I draw your attention to the fact, that you will also be helping to erradicate the abominable custom of sacrificing the seed of generation caused by the ear's intemperance? Such in itself is a sacred deed for humanity's and God's sake. You will be following the most ancient law of Deuteronomy 23, Non intrabit eunuchus rattritis vel amputatis testiculis et abscisso veretro Ecclesiam Domini. We shall, through the unity of education and methods, encourage the achieving of an ideal. We shall attain the proposed goal and glorify God with praises and psalms. According to St. Basil the Great, the highest of all goods, which is Charity, recognizes itself in the chant of psalms and becomes the channel for uniting the choir in Oneness.

The School will be a most perfect work of piety and charity. The choice of the twelve boys as I have proposed will fall only of those who have been declared after a rigourous examination to be of the very poorest in the district. Should you take boys from the various religious houses specializing in the care of the destitute in real need of charity (for example, San Martino, the Pietà, or the Convent of the Little Sisters) you would not lose, for you would be exempt from the cost of their keep, clothing and general welfare etc. Instead of educating them in manual work or in mechanics, which might be totally contrary to their natural genius, you would be lifting them up to a higher level. If they achieve the standard set by you, they will gain a better state for improving their future lot above the ordinary.

Such appears to me to be in accordance with the thought of the pious founders when they instituted a school for lay clerks which was not only for the service and betterment of the Church (see Chapter V) but for the

good of the poorer classes. Choice should be preferred from such citizens who are in the greatest need of help and who otherwise would have little chance of an education.' But through the ravages of times the school for lay clerks has ceased to exist. We are told that the Seminary is no longer necessary.[15] Since 'the present situation and property of the place' are in your favour, is there a better idea? With what else would you substitute my proposition?

It might be said that there is no lack in our district of seats of learning, be it for letters or for the sciences - indeed, the Misericordia itself contributes a considerable sum for their upkeep. For example, there are schools in the fine arts for figure and architectural drawing. They exist, it might be said, to the shame that they often substitute another art school in our city - the Accademia Carrara.[16]

However, a music school does not exist in the commune or in all the Republic. Meanwhile, the general opinion and experience of other countries, whether it be true or not, is that Italy's smiling skies bestow upon its inhabitants melody and graceful song. It is furthermore said that Italy produces exclusively the finest tenor voices. In order to convince yourselves of this assertion, it is enough to remember that most of the famous tenors now gracing the capitals of Europe are Bergamasques. David along with his rival Bianchi are the cream of the best theatres in Italy. Then there is Viganoni in London, Nozzari in Paris, Perini in Spain, Bianchi in Petersburgh and someone else in Naples. All receive the praise of nations. They are rich and constantly in demand. It would therefore seem that our proposed school is the best adapted to the natural genius of our inhabitants.

Nature, as said by the well-known writer Carli[17], imprints in a man the characteristics of a more or less marked gift in the sciences, pleasure giving and useful arts. Happy is the man who equivocates through choice and achieves a balance of the gifts bestowed on him by Nature. He must know how to develop all his faculties, insisting on practise and dedication, thus following the path which leads to honour and perfection.

It will be an easy task for the teachers appointed by yourselves to ascertain amongst those chosen the gifts best suited to this art. They will choose the finest

and nourish them in their natural gifts.

The outcome will be certain. If by accident at the age of adolescence with the sudden change of voice occurs the rare case of a sudden loss in the quality of a student's voice,[18] he could easily apply his talents to an instrument. After all, the art of singing is the finest preparation for learning an instrument. (This was the opinion of the teachers of the past - that no one can play an instrument well without first having studied the art of singing. Tanto perfectior organicus est Musicus, quanto plura in vocali confecit spatia - Jo. Lippii disupt. II de Musica). Even if the student had no talent for playing an instrument, he would have received a basic education in grammar, arithmetic, history, geography, mythology and poetry. He would then be prepared to apply himself to the art or science of his natural vocation. The Misericordia would not have suffered any notable loss since the student would have served the Church as a chorister for a number of years.

Development would be rapid, for besides a reasoned method based on clear and precise doctrines, a student would have occasion to perfect himself due to study, observation and performance of the finest compositions past and present, collected over time in a model library.[19] The student would have received such encouragement for study that he could not fail but to respond. For example, the attendance at church services under the guidance of their respective teachers; concerts given each term; the encouragement and aim set by prizes awarded to those distinguishing themselves in a field of study; the eventual prospect of having a secure job in our country and fame in the most distant lands of Europe; the possibility of living in the annals of art, music and history.

So, in this way, twelve young persons taken from the lowest class possible, will after a short time, over the years eventually procure a means of livelihood. We shall have saved from obscurity[20] a number of varying talents which otherwise would have remained buried for ever. We shall also be reviving a national industry amongst a people more destined to this art than any other. Our students will have natural gifts and have made a decisive choice. We shall live to see the day when we shall have encouraged a realistic glory, serving the upkeep of many families and contributing in

a special way towards the attraction of finance into our province. (Your own Marironi da Ponte asserts in his statistical studies that a people dependant on industry [by this word Mayr would have meant the artisan crafts] due to their land not being fertile, must endeavour to gain a living from various and many sources. No means from which a financial advantage may be gained must be overlooked. This is especially the case with that social class which finds difficulty of livelihood, for there will be less revenue and the finest minds will be lost).

I do not think that my final proposed advantage is an exaggeration. Just consider for one moment that it is owing to a lack of singers that it is always the same round of tenors who take the principal operatic roles. It is always the same singers we hear, receiving the same applause and gifts which are lavished upon them.

Let us hope we shall end the contention of the best of men, who suffer to hear Alexander, Cato or Caeser sung on our stages by deformed eunuchs with voices to make only children envious, who neglect pronuciation and expression of movement, and who are capable only of inspiring effeminacy and boredom. (See Planelli)

We shall have no reproach of ignorance, since through attendance at the music school a pupil will receive a good education. All will receive due practice in declamation. The pupils themselves will present from time to time small musical performances [21] adapted to their age. These will be composed in such a way that the young singers will have been pleased to have, as Metastasio said, 'scratched the ear with a sonatina in the throat'. We have a splendid educational stimulus in acting for the student has to find the courage to act in public. When acting out the various situations and conditions of the character they are impersonating, they will come to know the course of a distinct pronunciation enabling the word to be heard, together with the whole verse and all the changes in mood according to the various sentiments expressed. They will learn how to excite in their listeners the corresponding emotion through a dignified and effective gesture, together with the vibration and oscillation upon which sadness, happiness and ecstasy depend - just as if the human soul was being harmoniously tuned between them and their audience.

The choir will be perfected due to a right mingling of sopranos and contraltos with tenors and basses.

We shall achieve the perfect melody of harmony. We shall have removed the monotony of droning voices. (This was recognized by the Hebrews who wisely introduced harmony into the Divine Service. See Henr. Horchio diss. de igne sacro: Patribus levitis adjungebantur filii adhuc natu minores, ad comparandam musicae varietatem et gratiam majorem... Neque nablio cecinerunt, aut cithara, sed ore, ut jucundam varietatem facerent, qui vox puerorum exilis erat et clara, et variegans vocem virorum. Saintly King David was the first to found a formal song school.)

It will be the same with the instrumental music, which is always the imitator of vocal sound. No longer will it be a disordered mass of sharp and flat sequences, of embarrassing pauses and far-fetched arabesques. We shall abandon the barbaric taste of complicated false wonders. We shall play with precision, true intonation, with sobriety concerning all embellishments. We shall seek the beautiful simplicity of Nature and beauty of sound. (Musica est scientia cantus, eorumque, quae circa cantum contingunt. De musica Libro I, Aristides Quintilianus.) In this way we shall address the heart, awakening and reordering according to music's will all the turbulent passions.

There are many other advantages which arise from such a foundation. To those already mentioned we might add that a philosopher would stress the influence of music over education and the customs of a people. (Assentior Platoni, nihil tam facile in animos teneras atque molles influere quam varios canendi sonos, quorum dici vix potest, quanta sit vis in utramque partem. Namque et incitat languentes et languefacit excitatos et tum remittit animos, tum contrahit. Cicero, de legibus Lib II.) The politician would argue over its effect over society as a whole. ('All that serves to make man erudite and beautify his spirit bestows health to society and nation. It is a real blessing when a government makes available to its citizens all the necessary means of growth.' Maironi - Osservazioni sul dipartimento del serio.)[22] But these thoughts would lead me too far from my proposition: furthermore, nor would I presume to disturb you anymore.

It is enough that I have indulged myself as I have. Perhaps I have had the good fortune of having convinced you of :-

1. The necessity of this school -

a. in order to aid repair the total decadence of music.
b. to replace with boy's voices the shortages of castrati.
c. to supply for the future the necessary voices for church music.
d. thus maintaining the beauty and dignity of the Church and its Liturgy.

2. The possibility of achievement -

a. due to the prestige bestowed by places of learning.
b. due to the increase of entries under your care.
c. due to employing the same concepts as those of the testator's original ideas, that is, simply, the welfare of the poor, the honour of God and reasonable expense.

3. The ease of achievement -

a. The choice of boys from already established religious houses for the poor, this means no cost for housing or clothing. At the most, there will be the cost of the musical instruments.
b. The choice of teachers. We have already certain teachers associated with the church. For example Maestro Gonzales for the harpsichord. There is hope that the famous Capuzzi will accept the post of the first violin together with teaching responsibilities. (It should be remembered that the Professor of Singing requires special consideration. It would be appropriate to pay him a suitable salary when you recall the number of students to which a man may exclusively dedicate himself. Signor Francesco Salari is willing to undertake this appointment. He is a Bergamasque and will be prepared to make sacrifices for his town which a foreigner would not even dream of. He is truly qualified in science and in practical ability. He made his studies at the Naples Conservatorio under Piccini. Since then he has always held important teaching posts in singing in all the leading cities of Italy).

4. To have shown you the certainty of success -

a. owing to the climate which is favourable to producing good voices.
b. owing to the choice of genuine and resolved talent for training.
c. owing to the comprehensive and reasoned method for true and beautiful singing - and for instrumental playing which is equally true and expressive.[23]
d. owing to practical exercise under the supervision of teachers in church, in school and in concert.
e. owing to the encouragement provoked by prizes and praise.
f. owing to the vigilance and guidance of the Council of the Misericordia which through its presence will know how to stimulate study and reward it with prizes and distinctions.

5. The many various advantages to be gained -

A For Art :

1. Through the choice of special and particular talents.
2. Through the same doctrine in method of teaching.
3. Through the culture linking music to other necessary disciplines, especially literature and the other arts in general.
4. Through the availability of good teachers.
5. Through the perfecting of opera in respect to natural voices in pronunciation and declamation.

B For La Misericordia Maggiore :

1. Through ceasing to employ foreign teachers.
2. Through ceasing to employ various extras for special church services.
3. Through having the assurance of no longer lacking musicians in our own country.

C For individuals and families :

1. To improve the general welfare of citizens.
2. To attract foreign currency.
3. And perhaps as in Naples and Bologna etc. to attract foreign competition.
4. To improve the standard of our theatre.
5. To improve through music's influence the morals, customs and personal character.

And finally for the whole of Italy -
By giving it back its dominion in the art of music, by helping its ancient glory and superiority which other nations have at the present usurped.

And you, most honoured and illustrious citizens, you will have erected a perennial monument of gratitude and of glory.

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The translation and notes are by John Allitt.

Notes

1. Mayr is no doubt referring to Gregorio Allegri's famous Miserere.
2. Mayr was responsible for introducing these works (also Beethoven's Christ on the Mount of Olives) to Italy. Donizetti sang as a choir boy in The Creation in 1809.
3. Mayr means music as from the age of polyphony, the use of harmony as opposed to a single melodic line as in plain song.
4. The idea of women singing in a church choir would have been an anathema during this period in Italy.
5. Mayr no doubt is thinking of Palestrina and the style which lingered on after his death in Church music. He considered Palestrina to be one of the very greatest of composers in Western music. See Mayr: Osservazioni di un vecchio suonatore di viola.
6. It is interesting to note how Mayr writes as if he was an Italian.
7. Tartini was to instrumental music for Mayr what Palestrina was to vocal music. Mayr made a study of Tartini's writings which was no doubt passed on to Donizetti and his other pupils.
8. See the writings of Burney, Charles de Brosses, Rousseau, Edward Wright etc.
9. Cherubini, Spontini, etc.
10. The plunderings of Napoleon lie behing this remark. Bergamo, like Mantua, suffered at his hands. Santa Maria Maggiore was used as a ballroom by the invading troops, who took down the magnificent tapestries which hung on its walls to use as carpets.
11. Sta. Maria Maggiore, the Church of La Misericordia Maggiore.

12. The Apostolic number, it is said that this is the ideal number, permitting people to fully mature when working in a group. Over twelve mutual responsibility diminishes.
13. The staff was as follows :
    Simon Mayr - Principal and theory
    Franco Salari - singing
    Antonio Capuzzi - violin
    Antonio Gonzales - cembalo
    In 1812 Abbé G.B. Baizini was appointed as a lecturer in Liberal Studies. The School commenced on the 12th March 1805. Donizetti was amongst the first twelve students.
14. The Notebooks show that Mayr collected and wrote down poetry concerned with music.
15. Reference to the changes brought about by the Napoleonic invasion.
16. Donizetti applied for admission to the Accademia Carrara in 1810. Mayr apparently did not stand in his way. Donizetti was admitted on the 15th November 1816. If he went to art school and why he eventually left are unresolved mysteries. See Donati-Petténi - L'Istituto Musicale Gaetano Donizetti. p39 and 40.
17. Mayr copied out by hand Carli's Osservazioni sulla Musica 1782.
18. This is what happened to Donizetti. Mayr stood by his protege and saved him from being sent down by the Board of Governors.
19. Much of this library still exists and many of the scores are copied out in Mayr's own hand. See Arrigo Gazzaniga, Fondo Musicale G.S. Mayr, Bergamo 1963. p41-50.
    Also John Allitt, Donizetti and the tradition of romantic love, London 1975. p54&55.
20. Donizetti was born in a cellar without windows.
21. See Ashbrook, Donizetti, London 1965. p15-20. Also Donizetti and the tradition of romantic love p43-45.
22. The translation here does not do justice to Mayr's juxtaposition by the Filosofo and the Politico which draws an inner parallel between Plato and Aristotle.
23. 'True' relates to the Intellect, 'expressive' to the Passions. An example of Mayr's traditional thought.