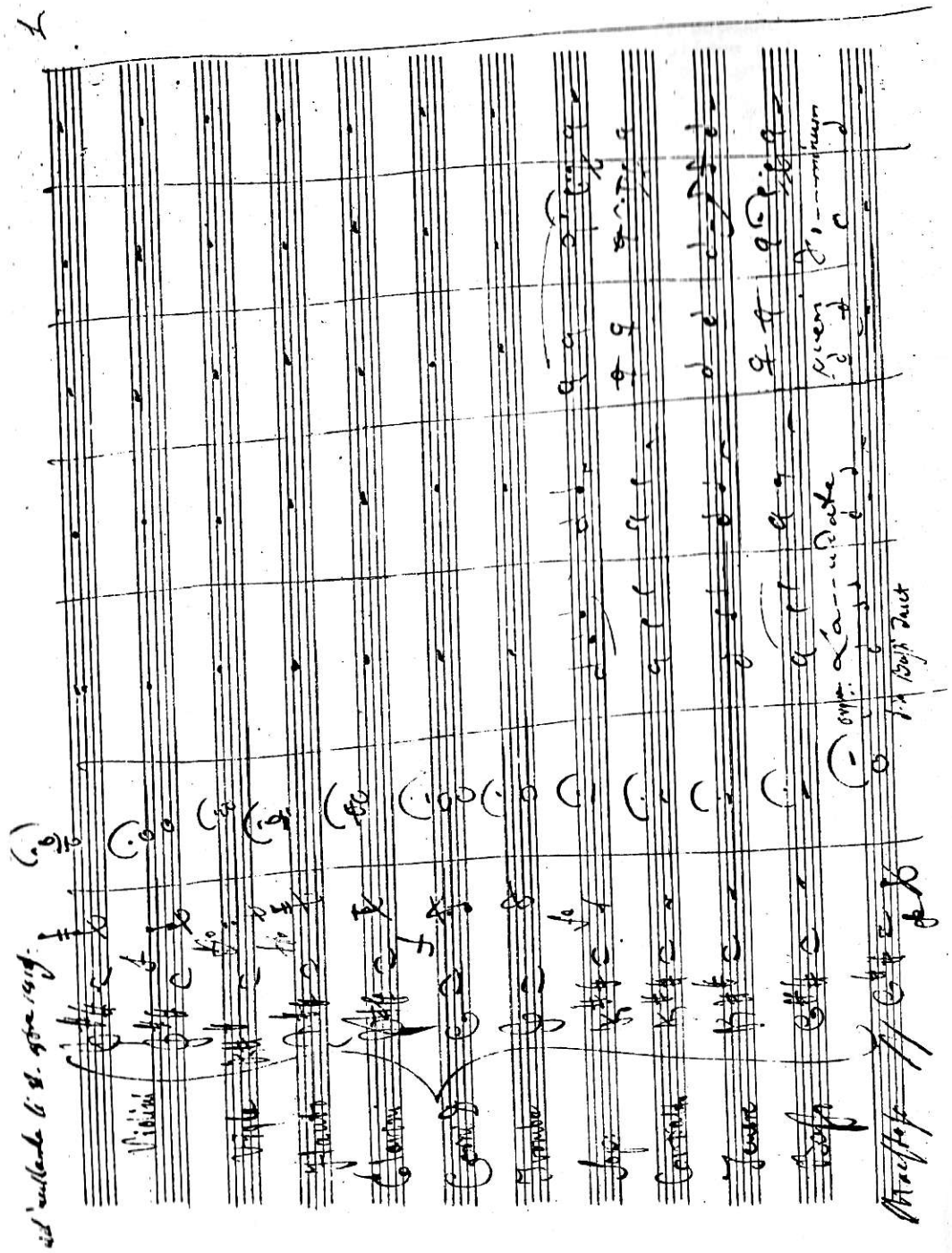


DONIZETTI'S LAUDATE PUERI

A Quattro

In the special collection of the Northwestern University (Evanston, Illinois, U.S.A.) Music Library is a little-known autograph manuscript of Gaetano Donizetti, a setting of Psalm 112 (i.e. *Vulgate* version; Psalm 113 in the Protestant Bible), "Laudate Pueri Dominum," for four soloists (*a quattro*) and a small orchestra. The manuscript contains a number of apparent errors left uncorrected (e.g. 2 measures before 13, 3 measures before 21, 25 ff.) and omissions (e.g. 2 measures after 16 ff., 20 ff., 3 measures before 23, etc.). These facts may be considered as an indication that the work was probably never performed.

The manuscript of *Laudate Pueri*, bound with an illustrated title page of floral-cherub motif, is of oblong shape of 23 X 30½ cm. The title page bears the title, the composer's name, the date (8, October, 1819) and the theme--the first of the two themes utilized in the work, all in Donizetti's own autograph:



The date of *Laudate Pueri*, therefore, falls in the middle of the composer's period of string quartet writing; for during 1817-1821 Donizetti wrote all but two of his twenty string quartets in the style of Haydn-Rossini. In this regard, it is noteworthy that Donizetti employed in this work the thematic manipulation or, more specifically, the theme and variation, as the principal compositional technique (see below).

The work may be divided into two main sections: 1) a homophonic section which is in the form of theme (cf. *facsimile*) and seven variations, each variation is followed by an eight-measure instrumental ritornello (the last ritornello, however, engages both voices and instruments); and 2) a lively contrapuntal section of some sixty measures in length, in tempo *Piu Presto*, making a fugal exploitation of the second theme:



The instrumental ritornelli--much in the character of a festival procession or a march music--which connect the vocal portions, may also be described as constituting a second, alternating series of variations; each subsequent ritornello is varied with some melodic/figurative or, to a lesser extent, harmonic ornamentations.

The work opens with a characteristically dramatic stroke by the orchestra on the tonic chord (D Major) in an equally dramatic rhythmic pattern . The quartet then intones the theme in unison, accompanied only by the organ--also in unison with voices. After the first instrumental ritornello, the soloists enter (var. 1), with the bass voice stating the theme. In the second variation, the alto and tenor voices sing as the theme is restated in the instruments (viola and clarinet). The bass solo begins the third variation, with the theme now appearing in the string instruments. During the next three variations, the theme is only hinted harmonically in the instrumental parts. Only in the final variation of this homophonic section does the theme reappear, again in the bass voice.

Concluding the homophonic section, the voices join with instruments in the ritornello. This final, *tutti* ritornello leads directly into the fugal section which concentrates on contrapuntal exposition of the second theme. In a lively contrapuntal texture, this fugal section serves as the *doxology* to the Psalm as well as the climax to the work. The work concludes with a brief, final statement of the second theme by the orchestra.

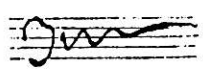
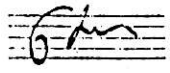
The following table serves to illustrate the structural scheme of the work, with reference to the textual division (verse) of the Psalm:

Laudate pueri Dominum: laudate nomen Domini.	quartet with organ in unison
- instrumental ritornello -	
Sit nomen Domini benedictum, ex hoc nunc, et usque in saeculum.	quartet, theme in bass voice
- instrumental ritornello -	
A solis ortu usque ad oceasum, laudabile nomen Domini	alto & tenor duet, theme in viola & clarinet pts.
- instrumental ritornello -	
Excelsus super omnel gentes Dominus, et super caelos gloria ejius.	bass solo, theme in strings
- instrumental ritornello -	
Quis sicut Dominus Deus noster, qui in altis habitat, et humilia rèspicit in caelo et in terra?	soprano solo
- instrumental ritornello -	
Suscitans a terra inopem, et de stercore erigens pauperem:	quartet
- instrumental ritornello -	
Ut collocet eum cum principibus, cum principibus populi sui.	soprano & bass duet
- instrumental ritornello -	
Qui habitare facit sterilem in domo, matrem filiorum laetantem. Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto. Sicut erat in principio, et nunc et semper.	quartet, theme in bass voice - tutti ritornello (voices & instruments) -
et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.	fugal exposition on second theme.

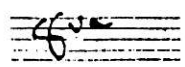
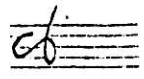
The music abounds with characteristic features of the composer: chordal-oriented melody, melodic embellishment, dotted eighth and sixteenth upbeat  , as well as the frequent use of dotted rhythm.

The order of scoring (i.e. arrangement of instrumental parts on the score) is of some interest, considering the date of composition. Donizetti's order of scoring reflects the older, "Italian-French" practice which places strings above the wind instruments (i.e. strings, woodwinds, brasses, percussion, thorough-bass), in contrast with the "German" method which places strings below the wind instruments (i.e. brasses, woodwinds, percussion, strings, thorough-bass). In both practices, the vocal parts are placed immediately above the thorough-bass.

The great speed with which Donizetti composed is evident throughout the manuscript. It is, however, nowhere more apparent than in his extensive use of musical shorthand scripts. The following are selected examples of the composer's shorthand scripts (with the transcriber's interpretations):

parallel 6ths and 3rds (e.g. between 1st and 2nd violins

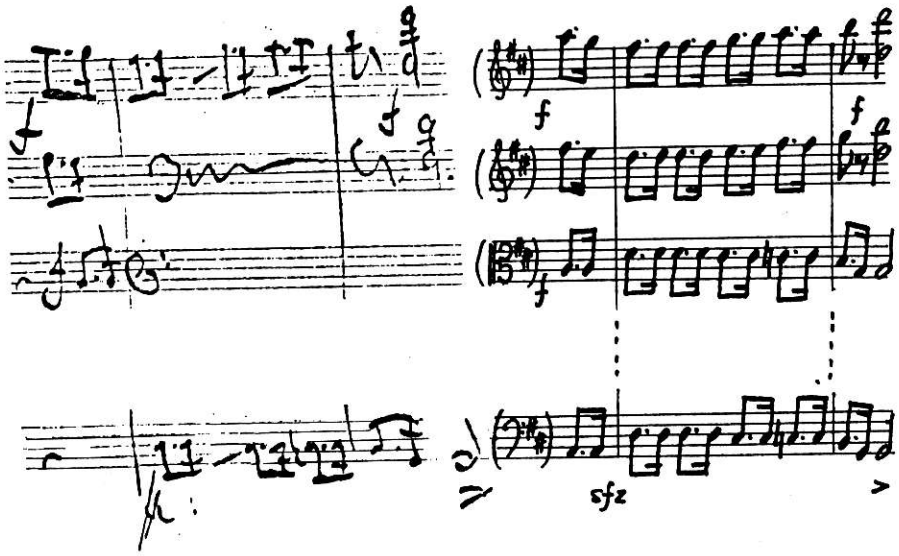



parallel octaves (e.g. as above)




col basso (?) (only appears in the viola part; when used otherwise, a more specific indication is given, such as "col prima violin")

Many peculiarities of Donizetti's notational autograph resemble that of Rossini's in more ways than one. The following is an example of his autograph and his use of shorthand scripts, along with the transcription for comparison:



The rehearsal numbers in small box are the transcriber's. The rehearsal numbers correspond with manuscript page numbers.

Gene J. Cho

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Laudate Pueri Dominum

a Quattro

Gaetano Donizetti
(8 Oct. 1819)

Violins

Violas

Flute

Clarinets* (in B♭)

Horns(F)**

Trumpet(C)

Soli

Soprano

Lau - - da - te pue - ri Do - mi - num

Alto

Tenor

Bass

Contrabass

Organ

Solo. Bassi tacet

* original score for Clarinets in C

** original score for Horns in D