

Venice, place of creation, now and forever

Bernardino Zanetti, organist, composer and conductor, Venice, Italy

Venice is one of the most loved and visited cities in the world. It contains many historical buildings and beautiful churches, and many artists have found inspiration for their works here. The city is the birthplace of several notable composers including Andrea and Giovanni Gabrieli, Antonio Vivaldi, Tomaso Albinoni and Luigi Nono, while other artists, such as Claudio Monteverdi, spent long periods of their lives here. I have recently become aware of a real rebirth of vocal and chamber music.

Taking advantage of the unique acoustic characteristics of Venetian buildings and churches, many cultural associations and religious institutions have been promoting vocal and chamber music events such as festivals, masterclasses and concerts, thereby keeping alive Venice's ancient tradition. Particular emphasis has been given to many contemporary composers thanks to performances by amateur or professional ensembles, and it is a clear sign of the sensitivity of many young directors in contemporary music. Among them is Lorenzo Donati, professor and composer at Conservatorio Benedetto Marcello, who has been creating some interesting projects, the results of which are eagerly awaited.

The city of Venice is also visited every year by choirs from all over the world who plan their holidays to include an outstanding performance in one of the city's numerous churches or typical squares called "campielli".

A growing interest in choral music is also manifested by the "Gran Teatro La Fenice", undoubtedly a temple of opera, where

I have worked as a choir singer for almost thirty years. In fact, a big concert performed by the “King’s Singers” was scheduled for the season 2019, alongside one of my own compositions for choir with five mixed voices, organ and small instrumental ensemble.

In the context of orchestral and choral music, “Teatro La Fenice”, as mentioned above, is the major musical institution in Venice. The theatre’s choir and orchestra are a production centre of fundamental importance. In recent years, the theatre’s annual programmes have begun a deep transformation by expanding and internationalizing the repertoire, both with regard to the symphonic–chamber genre as well as opera.

Two important events, involving choir and orchestra, are worthy of mention. First, the New Year’s concert at La Fenice, broadcast live by the main Italian television channel RAI 1. Many famous conductors have taken to the podium for these concerts, including Riccardo Muti, Myung-Whun Chung, Daniel Harding, Fabio Luisi. Secondly, the summer concert that takes place in one of the most beautiful squares in the world, St Mark’s, which this year includes a performance of Beethoven’s 9th Symphony under the direction of Juraj Valcuha.

In 2007 the theatre set up the Philharmonic Orchestra, which had its debut under the direction of Riccardo Chailly. The company carries out its activity alongside the theatre’s annual production, with particular reference to the chamber music genre.

Of fundamental importance is the international festival “Biennale Musica”, which has reached its 67th edition this year. From 1930 to now, the festival has presented numerous events in the field of contemporary music, focusing on new experimental musical forms that belong to the history of music. This year, the festival is dedicated to digital sound and anticipates a wide spectrum of stylistic trends and

innovative creative research in the international music scene. There will be performative and online installation forms as well as many world premieres commissioned by the Biennale and co-produced with the most important international festivals.

Other orchestral groups active in Venice are:

- I Virtuosi di Venezia (San Marco chamber orchestra) – founded with the intention of reproducing the atmosphere and genius of Antonio Vivaldi's works.
- The Musici Veneziani and The Interpreti Veneziani who work in many of the city's deconsecrated churches, such as San Teodoro and San Vidal. These orchestral groups offer events for the many tourists who visit Venice every year and are often accompanied by solo singers. All their performances are embellished with splendid costumes and jewels made in the 18th century.
- The orchestra of the Conservatorio Benedetto Marcello – formed by young students from the Institute. It contributes to enriching the city's cultural and musical offering.



Bernardino Zanetti was born in Musile di Piave (Venice). He holds diplomas in Organ and Composition; Piano; Pre-polyphony and Gregorian chant; Choral Music and Choir Direction; Canto (singer branch); Canto (educational branch); Vocal Chamber Music. As an organist he has held concerts in Italy, Germany, France, Switzerland, Poland. He has recorded CDs as an organist and choir director, earning national awards and performing concerts throughout Europe. His vocal and instrumental compositions have won prizes and awards in various national and international composition competitions and have been published by: Ed. Europee- MI, ACP-To,

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