

Spiritato and Elizabeth Kenny – Report on *Music to her Majestie*; St Giles’ Cripplegate, London, September 2023

Undoubtedly, *Music to her Majestie* has been a huge step forward for our group, collaborating with multiple artists to create a performance that is now opening new opportunities and promises long-term impact. Support from Angel Early Music early in the development of the project, was critical in enabling us to proceed on an ambitious scale. For this we are extremely grateful.

We have wanted to produce this project for several years. To have been able to carry it out with such integrity of artistic vision has been incredibly satisfying and we feel, resulted in a very cohesive project that more than justified the work involved.

The combination of soloists, Elizabeth Kenny and an open, collaborative approach allowed us to explore the repertoire in great depth. We had always wished to perform the three works chronologically, so as to identify as best we could, differences in style and highlight this in the music. This was particularly key for the ode by John Eccles, which had not been performed since 1703. We specially commissioned an edition of this work, using sources in the Royal Collection of the British Library.



As an ensemble, we aim to create projects that offer opportunities for exploration of rare repertoire. In this instance, the whole group seemed genuinely intrigued and engaged by the unknown work, and how it fed into our interpretation of the odes by Purcell and Handel. It is not always the case that this comes through so much in a performance, or indeed that the work itself merits such attention! Here though,

we have brought back to life a work that is truly deserving of future performances. We were also pleased to be able to commission programme notes from Dr Estelle Murphy, a leading expert on Court Odes from the period.

We set out to create a project that would highlight our work as innovative programmers and champions of rare music. We wished to produce something that would draw attention to our work and give us maximum reach through the further development of our digital profile. When the film is released in Summer 2024, we hope the combination of high-profile soloists and well-loved composers in an impactful setting, should grab the attention of online audiences.

This is the first time we have worked with Elizabeth Kenny and the team of soloists (Nardus Williams, Zoe Brookshaw, Ciara Hendrick, Charles Daniels, Jimmy Holliday) led by Nicholas Mulroy. The enthusiasm and interest these artists showed throughout, and the manner in which they embraced collaborating with us, was astonishing. It resulted in a rehearsal period that was relaxed, informed and exploratory. We are already planning to work with these artists again, and we are pleased to note that all our soloists, only one of whom had worked with us before, have expressed a wish to perform with us again.

'Just a quick note to say thanks so much for having me along last week. I thought the spirit (pardon the pun) in which the music was made was spot on - open, enabling and expressive - and the environment you created and the work you did to conceive the whole thing and get us all there was terrific. Thank you so much. I'd be thrilled to do more with you guys if the opportunity arises - just let me know!' Nicholas Mulroy

When we approached the VOCES8 Centre as a venue, we were pleasantly surprised to be invited to make the film of our performance part of their Live in London digital series. We have recently received a draft of the film and are delighted with how it looks (and sounds). The film will eventually be added to our YouTube channel (around September 2024).



Ultimately, and at the suggestion of the Voces8 Studio team, we chose St Giles' Cripplegate, offering more space than the Voces8 Centre itself (we had connections there from our Inspiring Bach (Oct 2021) performance). We had an enthusiastic audience of just under 100 people and we hope to extend the impact of the project once it launches online.

By partnering with more established artists, our own reputation as inventive producers and dynamic performers spreads. We can now look to foster new relationships with artists and promoters using this project as a wonderful example of our work at the highest level.

Programme:

H Purcell – *From Hardy Climes and Dangerous Toils of War*
J Eccles – *Inspire Us Genius of the Day*
GF Handel – *Eternal Source of Light Divine*

