

**ALESSANDRO  
SCARLATTI: HIS  
LIFE AND WORKS**

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Alessandro Scarlatti: His Life and Works by Edward J. Dent

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**EDWARD J. DENT**

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SCARLATTI:  
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BY

EDWARD J. DENT  
FELLOW OF KING'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

WITH PORTRAIT

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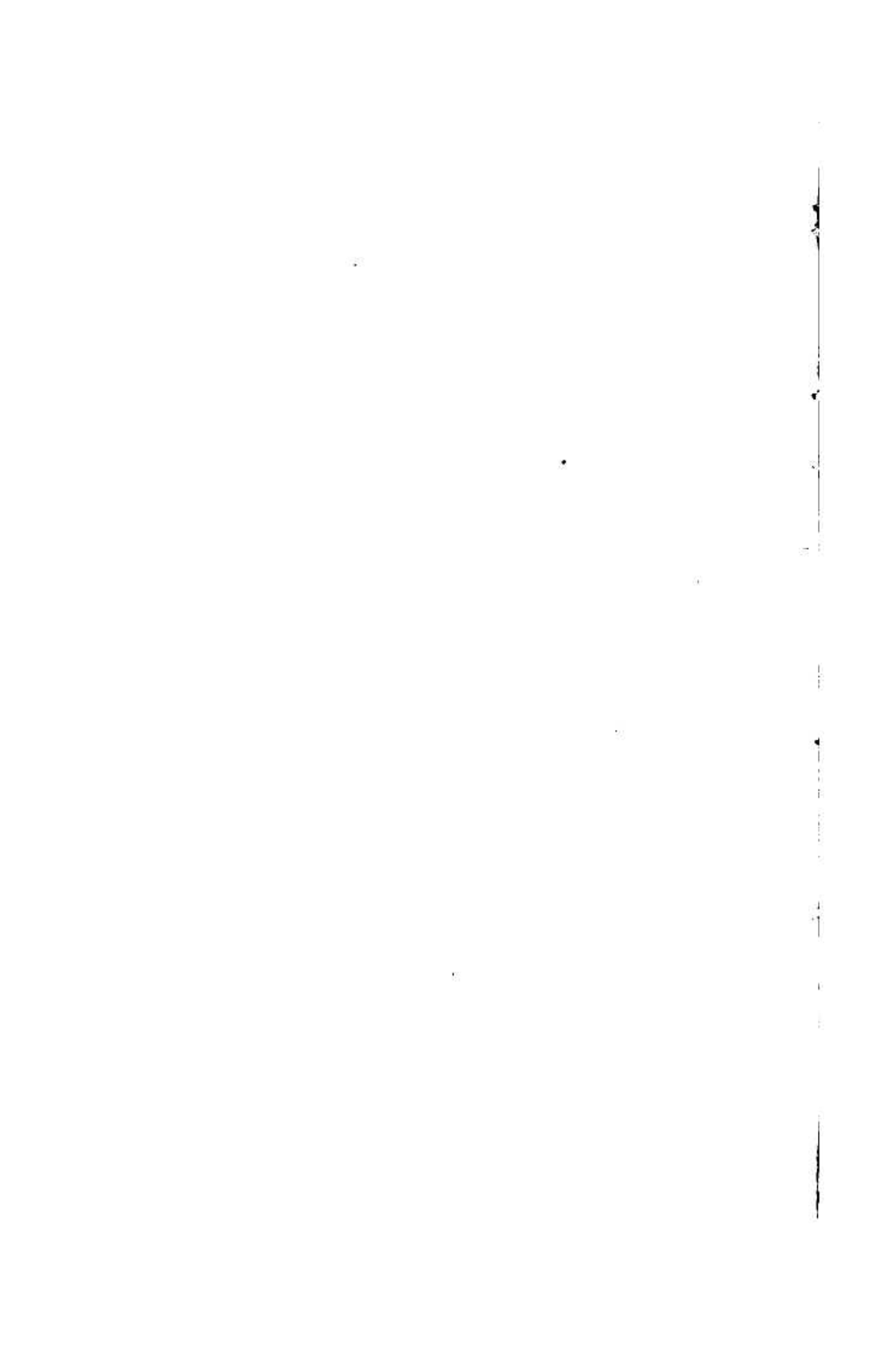
*THIS BOOK*

IS GRATEFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY

DEDICATED

BY ONE OF HIS EARLIEST  
ETON PUPILS





## P R E F A C E

CONSIDERING the celebrity which Alessandro Scarlatti enjoyed during his lifetime, and the important position which he occupies in the history of music, it is strange that so little attention has been paid to him. This is partly due to the fact that the modern period of careful research in matters of musical history which produced Spitta's Bach, Chrysander's Handel, Jahn's Mozart, and Thayer's Beethoven, was also marked by a decided reaction against that enthusiasm for Italian music which flourished in the days of Santini, Kiesewetter, Winterfeld, and Fétis. There are, however, signs of a revival of interest at the present day; the labours of Dr. Emil Vogel, Dr. Hugo Goldschmidt, M. Romain Rolland, Professor Kretschmar, and Sir Hubert Parry have done much for the history of the Italian music of the seventeenth century.

But Alessandro Scarlatti, though he has by no means been forgotten by them, has not been treated in any great detail; and I hope that this biography, if it does not succeed in explaining more fully his relation to the music that preceded and followed him, may at least serve as a useful foundation for future workers in the same field.

To give a list of books consulted seems superfluous; for the general history of Italian music in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries several bibliographies have recently been printed, and for Alessandro Scarlatti there are no special authorities. Grove's *Dictionary of Music and Musicians* gives practically all the information that previous biographers have recorded. The difficulty of collecting and sifting the large mass of scattered biographical material no doubt goes far to account for the incompleteness not only of Florimo, Villarosa, and Gennaro Grossi, but also of

Burney and Hawkins; but it has been greatly lightened by modern Italian historians of the musical drama, such as Signor A. Ademollo (*I teatri di Roma nel secolo xvii.*, Rome, 1888), Professor Benedetto Croce (*I teatri di Napoli nei secoli xv.-xviii.*, Naples, 1891), Professor Corrado Ricci (*I teatri di Bologna nei secoli xvii. e xviii.*, Bologna, 1888), and Cav. Taddeo Wiel (*I teatri veneziani nel secolo xviii.*, Venice, 1892), to whose labours I am much indebted. Wherever possible, however, I have consulted original documents, and have given exact references to them throughout the book. I have also derived valuable assistance (though less directly) from Vernon Lee's *Studies of the Eighteenth Century in Italy*, and Professor Corrado Ricci's *Vita Barocca* (Milan, 1904).

The catalogue will give some idea of the large number of Scarlatti's compositions that exist in manuscript. Autographs are comparatively rare; but contemporary copies are very numerous, made for the most part by three or four copyists who seem to have been regularly employed by Scarlatti, and whose work is extremely accurate. Of modern copies the most numerous and the most important are those made by Fortunato Santini. The originals of many of these, either autographs or contemporary copies, are still accessible, but for much of the church music we are obliged to accept Santini's copies for want of anything better, until it becomes less difficult for the foreigner and the heretic to obtain admission to Italian ecclesiastical libraries.<sup>1</sup> They are not very accurate, either in the notes themselves or in the headings and titles, which are sometimes of great value in determining the date of a composition. Moreover, Santini, like other librarians of his time, has a tendency to ascribe to Scarlatti any anonymous composition of his period, and to give the title of *cantata* to almost any secular vocal composition. Other

<sup>1</sup> This does not apply to the Vatican or to Montecassino, where every facility is offered for research.