Exsultate Jubilate by W.A. Mozart

The motet **Exsultate, jubilate** was composed in Milan in January 1773 while Mozart and his father Leopold were on the last of their three visits to Italy. They had traveled to oversee the first performances of the young composer's *Lucio Silla,* K. 135, an opera seria commissioned by the ducal theater in Milan. The principal uomo (male soprano) for the premiere was Venanzio Rauzzini (1746-1810) -- one of the most famous castrati of the day, as well as a keyboard player and composer, who later pursued a successful career as a teacher and impresario in Bath, England.

Exsultate Jubilate by W.A. Mozart

Venanzio Rauzzini had sung the role of Cecillo in the opera – *"like an angel",*according to Leopold. Mozart must have enjoyed working with a musician who was not only an extraordinary singer but also an accomplished all-rounder who composed and played the piano.



Ducal Theater in Milan

That Mozart wrote a sacred piece which essentially used operatic techniques and forms would have met with little surprise: the two musical worlds, church and opera, often merged in such a manner.



W.A. Mozart, 1770

The definition of *"motet"* seems as constant as English weather. In the Italy of Mozart's day, it was *"a sacred Latin solo cantata [consisting] of two arias and two recitatives [and] an Alleluia"* (Quantz, 1752). So, Mozart was one recitative short of a motet, suggesting that he didn't quite beat his deadline. The shortfall, though, gave him an idea: soon he would "lose" that one, unconscionably brief recitative, and have in his grasp the formal model for his instrumental concertos!



Leopold Mozart, 1765

It is divided into three parts:

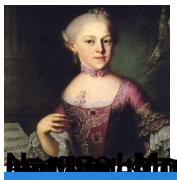
1. Allegro (Aria: *Exsultate, jubilate*) – Recitative (*Fulget amica dies*) 2. Andante (Aria: *Tu virginum corona*) 3. Allegro (*Alleluia*)

The **Alleluia** section is, by far, the most familiar to listeners, and it is often excerpted for use as a concert aria.



W.A. Mozart, 1777

It is scored simply for strings, oboe, horns, and organ. Mozart composed this music during his stay in Milan in the winter of 72/73 and in fact composed it within two weeks of his 17th birthday. The approximate date of composition and the date of the first performance are established by a characteristically playful and childish postscript to a letter to his sister **Nannerl,** dated January 16, in which Mozart stated that he had composed a motet to be performed at church the following day.











Philip Jackson - Exsultate, Jubilate