ORALITY, LITERACY, AND THE LEARNING OF INSTRUMENTS:

PROFESSIONAL INSTRUMENTALISTS AND THEIR MUSIC

IN EARLY MODERN ITALY

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Orality, Literacy, and the Learning of Instruments:
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The literacy of instrumentalists underwent a revolution in the sixteenth century.

Previously, musicians who specialized in instrumental performance were often excluded

from literate musical cultures: they were artisans operating within oral traditions of

improvisation and formulaic playing. As a result, relatively few written compositions

survive from instrumentalists prior to 1500. By the end of the sixteenth century,

instrumentalists were benefitting in many regions from a vast growth in general literacy,

and were frequently intersecting with the educated cultures of churches and courts—as a

result, they could notate with precision the music that they played and created.

This trend contributed to the pedagogical methods used to train instrumentalists.

As instrumentalists transitioned from a largely artisanal and oral culture into a musically

literate mainstream, new printed repertoires and pedagogical materials offered a

complement to traditional teaching methods, necessitating the acquisition of new skills

and vastly broadening the musical experiences of student instrumentalists. Although

existing studies have probed in detail the emergence of print culture in the early modern

period, there remain important issues to be considered about the intersections between

printed objects and literacy, the relationships between writing, printing, and oral cultures,

and the ways in which these developments shaped the ways musicians thought about and created music.

In this dissertation, I argue that the emergence of a literate musical culture among instrumentalists in sixteenth-century Italy had far-reaching implications. The acquisition of literacy coincided with instrumentalists' entries into and participation in the literate musical milieus of churches and courts, and newly literate instrumentalists provided a bridge between earlier oral practices and an expanding written culture. Through writing down or codifying previously oral practices and taking advantage of the new possibilities of writing and print, instrumentalists began to open new pedagogical possibilities for students, and reshape instrumentalists' thought processes and musical understanding. I propose that instrumentalists trained in late sixteenth-century Italy developed a new compositional consciousness as a result of this, and tensions between the oral and written cultures of these musicians are responsible for some key characteristics of progressive instrumental compositions in the early baroque period.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF MUSICAL EXAMPLES

<u>Note on editoral principles</u>

Musical examples have been prepared from the primary sources and modern editions cited in the bibliography and list of scores. Where appropriate, they have been edited, standardized, and modernized in some respects to improve readability and facilitate comparison between examples. Aspects of the musical text that have been adjusted for consistency or adherence to modern editorial practices include clefs, measure lines, beaming and stemming, accidentals, and inconsistent spellings.

Introduction

Baldassare Castiglione, in his famous *Libro del Cortegiano*, relied on the medium of

writing to disseminate to his readers the erudite, witty, and wide-ranging imaginary

conversations of the courtiers around the Duke of Urbino in the early sixteenth century.

Occasionally, Castiglione's interest turned to the act of writing itself, as in the following

excerpt, where Count Lodovico da Canossa meanders away from the topic of the

moment—regional dialects in speech:

> It is my belief that writing is nothing other than a kind of speech which remains in being after it has been uttered, the representation, as it were, or rather the very life of our words. And so in speech, which ceases to exist as soon as it is uttered, some things are perhaps tolerable which are not so in writing; because writing preserves the words and submits them to the judgment of the reader, who has the time to give them his considered attention. Therefore it is right that greater pains should be taken to make what is written more polished and correct; not however, that the written words should be different from those which are spoken, but they should be chosen from the most beautiful of those employed in speech.[1]

Although the count proclaims a certain equivalency between speech and writing, he also

realizes that writing enables a very different reception and understanding of ideas, since

the message is removed from the temporal ephemerality of speech. Because the reader

can contemplate written text at greater length, the author should likewise devote more

care to its creation.

> The count's interlocutor Federico Fregoso, responding to this statement, says:

> If the spoken word is at all obscure, what is said will fail to penetrate the mind of the listener and, since it will not be understood, will be useless. And this is not the case with writing, for if the words used by the writer carry with them a certain, I will not say difficulty but veiled subtlety, and are not so familiar as those commonly used in speech, they give what is written greater authority and cause

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[1] Baldassare Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, trans. George Bull (London: Penguin, 1967), 71–72.

the reader to be more attentive and aware, and so reflect more deeply and enjoy the skill and message of the author.[2]

Federico realizes that the written text can convey much more complex ideas than the spoken word, and can heighten the reader's interest and increase the status of both author and text as authoritative and worthy of study. Further on in his statement, Federico recognizes that the writer needs authorities too, proclaiming with humanist zeal that the best way to achieve skill in writing is to imitate the worthiest models of ancient literature.

While Castiglione's imaginary courtiers were acting within the privileged confines of a wealthy north-Italian court, the observations they make about the act of writing and the perceptions of readers have many broader resonances across sixteenth-century culture and society. Reading and writing—although intrinsically connected to the natural and easy expression of the spoken word—involved technologies and physical objects that required (or produced) different modes of thinking and behavior in their users. Elsewhere in the *Cortegiano*, when the conversations of the courtiers touch upon music, Castiglione makes little mention of musical texts or the writing of musical notation. However, around the time that the *Cortegiano* was published, Italy was beginning to see a vast blossoming of the music publishing industry that would transform access to printed music over the course of the sixteenth century, and portions of the musical community who had previously seen little need for texts started to cultivate skills in musical literacy.

In particular, the literacy levels of instrumentalists underwent a revolution in the sixteenth century. In previous centuries, musicians who specialized in instrumental performance were usually excluded from literate musical cultures. They were often more

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[2] Ibid., 72.

akin to artisans, operating within a wide array of oral traditions that spanned multiple types of improvisation and formulaic playing; as a result, relatively few written compositions survive from instrumentalists prior to 1500. By the end of the sixteenth century, instrumentalists were benefitting in many regions from a vast growth in general literacy, and were frequently intersecting with the educated cultures of churches and courts; as a result, they could notate with precision the music that they performed and created, and begin to grapple with similar ideas to Castiglione's characters: How did the music they were writing down relate to the music that they played? Were there musical ideas that could be expressed in writing that could not be executed in improvised performances? And on a more fundamental level, did the act of composition through writing change the way that instrumentalists conceptualized music?

Associated with these questions are others related to pedagogy: How did instrumentalists learn to be musically literate? As instrumentalists transitioned from a largely artisanal and oral subculture into a musically literate mainstream, new printed repertoires and notated pedagogical materials offered a complement to interpersonal teaching methods, necessitating the acquisition of new skills and vastly broadening the musical experiences of student instrumentalists. Although existing studies have probed in detail the emergence of print culture in the early modern period, there remain important issues to be considered about the intersections between printed objects and literacy, the relationships between writing, printing, and oral cultures, and the ways in which these developments shaped how musicians thought about and created music.

In this dissertation, I argue that the emergence of a literate musical culture among instrumentalists in sixteenth-century Italy had far-reaching implications. The acquisition

of literacy coincided with instrumentalists' entries into and participation in the literate musical milieus of churches and courts, and newly literate instrumentalists provided a bridge between earlier oral practices and their expanding written culture. Through writing down or codifying previously oral practices and taking advantage of innovative applications of writing and print, new pedagogical possibilities began to emerge for students learning instruments, and there is evidence that instrumentalists' thought processes and musical understanding evolved in response to new stimuli. I propose that instrumentalists trained in late sixteenth-century Italy developed a new compositional consciousness as a result of their turn to literacy. As I will show, tensions between the oral and written cultures of these musicians are responsible for some key characteristics of sixteenth-century instrumental repertoires. The impact of negotiating the oral-literate divide, furthermore, may be discerned clearly in the progressive instrumental compositions of the early baroque period, particularly the sonatas and other pieces that can be considered representative of the so-called *stile moderno* in instrumental music.

In tracing these developments, I will consider primarily professional instrumentalists of the period c. 1530–1630, and focus on sources, repertoires, and accounts from northern Italy in order to give a coherent consideration of the experiences of a particular cohort of individuals. There are many other avenues that, although closely related, will remain largely unexplored here. Such a narrow temporal and geographic scope naturally invites broadening: the rich yet imperfectly documented instrumental cultures of the Spanish peninsula likely demonstrate many similar developments, and the numerous connections between Italian-speaking and German-speaking performers in the sixteenth century invite comparisons. The intersections between other groups of

musicians—singers, composers, amateurs—and literate cultures could also add to this discussion. A very different expansion of the topic would be a study of the professional musicians in the present-day music industry who specialize in this repertoire and have taught themselves the techniques of sixteenth-century improvisation from surviving printed materials. Such topics will remain largely peripheral to the current dissertation, but may inform future research in this area.

Existing studies of the intersections between orality and literacy in sixteenth-century music have largely neglected the impact upon instrumentalists within the musical culture. An ambitious recent essay collection, *Interactions between Orality and Writing in Early Modern Italian Culture*, is largely representative of the topics that have previously occupied scholars: the essays on music all concern some aspect of vocality, and none focus on instrumentalists.[3] Semi-improvised traditions such as the *commedia dell'arte* and the *cantastorie* who improvised songs based on epic poetry provide popular topics for study, demonstrating an interest that is as much about (written/spoken/sung) language as it is about (notated/sounded) music.[4] Although some studies by scholars including Keith Polk and Ross Duffin have engaged with the activities of instrumentalists within oral cultures, only Polk continued his conclusions forward to the point where literacy begins to interact with these traditions, and his brief study on this topic did not

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[3] Luca Degl'Innocenti, Brian Richardson, and Chiara Sbordoni, eds., *Interactions between Orality and Writing in Early Modern Italian Culture* (London: Routledge, 2016).

[4] For further studies on the *commedia dell'arte*, see Anne MacNeil, *Music and Women of the Commedia dell'Arte in the Late Sixteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Emily Wilbourne, *Seventeenth-Century Opera and the Sound of the Commedia dell'Arte* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016). On the *cantastorie* tradition, see James Haar, "Arie per cantar stanze ariostesche," in *L'Ariosto, la musica, i musicisti*, ed. Maria A. Balsano (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1981), 31–46; Timothy J. McGee, "*Cantare all'improvviso*: Improvising to Poetry in Late Medieval Italy," in *Improvisation in the Arts of the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. Timothy J. McGee (Kalmazoo, MI: Western Michigan University Press, 2003), 31–70; Margaret Murata, "*Cantar ottave, cantar storie*," in *Word, Image, and Song, Vol. 1: Essays on Early Modern Italy*, ed. Rebecca Cypess *et al*. (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2013), 287–317.

explore the further implications that I seek to tease out here.[5] Polk's recent book, co-authored by Victor Coehlo, similarly touches on these topics without going into detail.[6]

Studies in musical education have also tended to work around the issue of professional instrumentalists. The last major essay collection, *Music Education in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, contained many valuable perspectives on amateur instrumentalists, professional singers, composers, and theorists.[7] Likewise, studies of compositional process have tended to focus almost exclusively on the evidence from treatises and surviving manuscripts. Jessie Ann Owens's influential monograph *Composers at Work*, while being a ground-breaking study of compositional processes, pedagogy, and autograph sketch materials, remained focused on material evidence and did not explore broader connections to musical practices.[8]

Music printing has been the focus of much significant scholarship, and archival research has generated a vast amount of literature on the activities of Italian printers, particularly the market-leading firms in Venice.[9] Some recent studies have attempted to

[5] Keith Polk, "From Oral to Written: Change in Transmission of Instrumental Music in Fifteenth-Century Europe," in *Songs of the Dove and the Nightingale: Sacred and Secular Music c.900–c.1600*, ed. Greta Mary Hair and Robyn E. Smith (Basel: Gordon and Breach Science Publishers SA, 1995), 160–75; Ross W. Duffin, "Ensemble Improvisation in 15th-Century Mensural Dance," in *Instruments, Ensembles, and Repertory, 1300–1600: Essays in Honour of Keith Polk*, ed. Timothy J. McGee and Stewart Carter (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), 195–233.

[6] Victor Coehlo and Keith Polk, *Instrumentalists and Renaissance Culture, 1420–1600: Players of Function and Fantasy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

[7] Russell E. Murray, Susan Forscher Weiss, and Cynthia J. Cyrus, eds., *Music Education in the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2010).

[8] Jessie Ann Owens, *Composers at Work: The Craft of Musical Composition, 1450–1600* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

[9] Major studies include: Mary S. Lewis, *Antonio Gardano, Venetian Music Printer, 1538–1569: A Descriptive Bibliography and Historical Study* (New York: Garland, 1988); Richard J. Agee, *The Gardano Music Printing Firms, 1569–1611* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 1998); Jane A. Bernstein, *Music Printing in Renaissance Venice: The Scotto Press* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); Tim Carter, *Music, Patronage and Printing in Late Renaissance Florence* (Aldershot: Ashgate,

move into discussion of the usage and thinking that these publications promoted: an interesting monograph to do this was Kate van Orden's *Materialities: Books, Readers, and the Chanson in Sixteenth-Century Europe*, which probed the intersections between musical texts, reading, and education in France.[10] Similar studies on the situation in Italy remain largely unwritten at the moment.

In terms of musical repertoire, studies of sixteenth-century instrumental music have often struggled to draw connections with broader issues, and most have remained focused on a single genre, repertoire, or place. The idiomatic solo repertoire of the early seventeenth century, which could be referred to as the *stile moderno*, has received increased attention in recent years. New biographical studies have partially lifted the veil of secrecy from some significant historical figures.[11] Andrew Dell'Antonio's study demonstrated compositional logic and formal cohesion in a repertoire that had been largely dismissed as being "a patchwork formula of unconnected sections, obsessively punctuated by cadences."[12] Subsequent scholarship has shown many varied and sometimes interdisciplinary approaches, ranging from the study by Susan McClary on the role of desire in instrumental music,[13] to the recent monograph by Rebecca Cypess,

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2000); Bernstein, *Print Culture and Music in Sixteenth-Century Venice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

[10] Kate van Orden, *Materialities: Books, Readers, and the Chanson in Sixteenth-Century Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).

[11] See, for example, Don Harrán, *Salamone Rossi: Jewish Musician in Late Renaissance Mantua* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998); Peter Allsop, *Cavalier Giovanni Battista Buonamente: Franciscan Violinist* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005).

[12] Andrew Dell'Antonio, *Syntax, Form, and Genre in Sonatas and Canzonas, 1621–1635* (Lucca: Libreria Musicale Italiana, 1997), 12.

[13] Susan McClary, *Desire and Pleasure in Seventeenth-Century Music* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2012).

which explored connections between the *stile moderno* repertoire and early modern conceptions of instrumental technologies as vehicles of discovery.[14]

Connections between this repertoire and the instrumental practices of the previous century have rarely been explored in particular detail. Many years ago, various articles by Imogene Horsley proposed interesting points of connection, but she never developed her theories into a wide-ranging study.[15] More recently, Peter Allsop characterized the *stile moderno* repertoire as "a judicious blend of strict linear counterpoint with the florid embellishment of the late sixteenth-century divisionist practices," clearly recognizing a continuation of practices yet not reaching back into the previous century to explore it further.[16] Such a tendency to delineate clearly between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (or between the Renaissance and the baroque periods) in musicological literature may be due to the common conception of a radical break symbolized by the Artusi-Monteverdi controversy, but this approach neglects many continuities of practice and pedagogy between the centuries.

My study builds on this literature by bringing together the instrumental repertoires of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century using the continuity of educational methods and the gradual emergence of literacy among those who made instrumental playing their profession. The opening chapter serves as an introduction to issues of literacy and pedagogy. Drawing upon theoretical formulations by Walter Ong and Jack

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[14] Rebecca Cypess, *Curious and Modern Inventions: Instrumental Music as Discovery in Galileo's Italy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016).

[15] See, for example, Imogene Horsley, "The Sixteenth-Century Variation and Baroque Counterpoint," *Musica Disciplina* 14 (1960): 159–65; Horsley, "The Diminutions in Composition and Theory of Composition," *Acta Musicologica* 35, no. 2 (1963): 124–53.

[16] Peter Allsop, *The Italian "Trio" Sonata: From Its Origins Until Corelli* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

Goody, I discuss the oral heritage of instrumentalists and the evidence for their growing intersections with literate musical society. This development of literacy relates to musical education in different situations, and I assess what constituted teaching and learning for different types of musicians. An overview of the general educational scene traces the historiography and main studies of this field to show some overriding pedagogical principles of the age.

In the second chapter, I explore in much more detail the education of professional instrumentalists in northern Italy, avoiding courtly environments to focus on the musicians working in centers of civic and sacred power. I begin with consideration of Italian artisanal cultures, and discuss recent research on the performative aspects of artisanship; the association of musicians with this class of society introduces an array of pedagogical techniques that find support in historical situations. Following instrumentalists from civic employment into occasional then formal church employment, I demonstrate the widespread adoption of artisanal pedagogical practices by many sixteenth-century instrumentalists, with examples from the city of Brescia showing civic ensembles replicating the behavior and attitudes of an artisanal guild. I then investigate the movement of instrumentalists between civic and sacred settings, assessing how instrumentalists came into contact with musical literacy within the church.

The third chapter considers the central role that counterpoint played in the compositional technique of the sixteenth century. This chapter seeks to clarify what contrapuntal traditions were available to young instrumentalists, ranging from improvised polyphony through to the scholarly treatise of Zarlino and didactic contrapuntal pieces. I consider how Zarlino's teachings were mediated by the writings of students and

followers, and propose that many compositions—duets, ricercari, contrapuntal variations on a cantus firmus, and canzonas—relate firmly to traditions of instrumental pedagogy.

From the fundamental musical structures of counterpoint, I turn in the fourth chapter to the surface ornamentations that instrumentalists used to decorate melody lines. After a discussion of oral and improvisatory practices as they may have applied to the *piffari* of Venice and diminution composer Sylvestro di Ganassi, I look to the proliferation of diminution manuals in the 1580s–90s. I read publications by Girolamo Dalla Casa and Giovanni Bassano in Venice, and Riccardo Rognoni in Milan as pedagogical texts that were aimed primarily at those instrumentalists within the artisanal cultures discussed earlier. Discussing how the manuals could be used by musicians seeking to learn the art of diminution, I return to some methods used in literacy education to connect the diminutions method to the learning of understanding and improvising in language. Through examples from these diminution manuals, I show how they promoted concepts of methodical practice, structured thinking, and stylistic awareness in instrumentalists.

The final chapter assesses a range of pieces by Giovanni Gabrieli, Giovanni Paolo Cima, Salamone Rossi, Giovanni Battista Buonamente, Dario Castello, and Biagio Marini for their connections to these trends of literacy and education. My analyses suggest that important features of the *stile moderno* repertoire may be traced back to the composers' educations and experiences in late sixteenth-century Italy, and that this remarkable flowering of imaginative compositions owed much to both the innovative oral traditions of earlier instrumentalists, and to the new thought processes that acts of reading and writing brought out in their compositional activities.

My study demonstrates the importance of bridging the divide between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and suggests that interdisciplinary engagement with studies on literacy and pedagogy can bring new insights into this pivotal moment in the development of instrumental music. By reading sources and repertoires as the products of literate instrumentalists, I consider afresh the complex relationships between generations of musicians, and the ways in which pedagogical methods for music shaped this turning point in music history.

Chapter 1

Education and Literacy as Agents of Cultural Change in the Sixteenth Century

Observing a profusion of professional musicians working in Italy, Lodovico Zacconi attempted in 1592 to group them into four classes.[1] His categorization does not make a straightforward division between composer, theorist, and performer, as might be expected. Zacconi instead weighs musicians according to their relative abilities in the fields of composing, writing, and performing. The relationship between compositional creativity and performance is not always straightforward in Zacconi's formulation, with both of these skills relying on the mediation of writing ability.

A *theorico*, although previously referring to a person limited to the field of speculative theory, was instead considered by Zacconi to be someone skilled in composition. *Theorici* did not necessarily perform their own music, but relied on writing to transmit their mastery of composition to performers. Zacconi categorized as a *musico* a composer who could also sing—that is, a musician who was capable of creating music both on paper and in performance. A *cantore* could sing, but did not have the skills needed to write music down or compose; such a musician could presumably sing after oral traditions, and perform the written music they were given. The creative powers of the *cantori* rested purely in ephemeral sound; they could not participate fully in the literate tradition and preserve their own creations. Finally, a *prattico* could arrange music so that it could be performed, and presumably write it out, but did not have full creative autonomy and the ability to compose. Instead, *prattici* used their skills to adapt the

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[1] Lodovico Zacconi, *Prattica di musica* (2 vols, Venice: Carmpello, 1592 and Vincenti, 1622; facsimile: Bologna: Forni, [1967]), 1: ff. 3v–4v.

compositions of others for practical purposes and, if they were talented in performance, they might be able to ascend to the higher category of a *musico*.[2]

Of the intersecting skill sets that inform Zacconi's categories, the musician's ability to read and write—what we would today call "literacy"—plays an important role. "Literacy" has, of course, many different nuances and is an overarching term for a range of skills. For Zacconi, the musician who lacks the ability to write music out—who only has the most basic level of musical literacy, the ability to read—is consigned to the level of the *cantore*, and has no possibility of ascending through the hierarchy without learning to write in music notation. All of Zacconi's other categories stress the importance of being able to write music, whether as part of a creative process (composing) or as a more practical skill (arranging, adapting, and copying). The *theorico* and *musico* are able to transmit their compositions by writing them down, and the *musico* who can create music both physically and sonically is the most highly skilled. Even the *prattico*, who by Zacconi's description cannot compose or sing to any significant extent, can ascend in the ranking through demonstration of performing abilities.

The rest of this first volume of Zacconi's treatise reflects his preoccupation with the writing of music. He was not particularly interested in the traditional speculative theory, showing only an imperfect understanding of Zarlino's treatises (despite his studies in Venice); nor was he especially effusive about composition and counterpoint. Instead, most of the first volume deals with the intersections between the musical text and performance: a broad discussion of notational issues is connected with some comments

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[2] There were of course other possible classifications, and Zacconi's scheme is just one of many that were proposed in treatises. For another example, see the discussion by Vincenzo Galilei in the *Dialogo della musica antica, e della moderna* (1581), where the knowledgeable yet unengaging composer is contrasted with the entertaining performer who cannot write as well as they can play or speak; see the translated excerpts in Cypess, *Curious and Modern Inventions*, 16.

about interpretation. Zacconi's title, *Prattica di musica*, gestures to this concern: his treatise is not really a book about theory, but rather about the practicalities of being a performing musician, many of which were inextricably linked with notions of literacy and education in understanding and writing musical texts. This treatise is symbolic of the wider importance that musical texts were gaining in the sixteenth century: the music printing industry in Venice reached a zenith in the period 1580–1620, with greater number of prints devoted to the sacred and instrumental music used by professional musicians rather than the madrigal and villanesca genres that had previously sold well among amateurs.[3]

Like many authors, Zacconi does not mention instrumentalists in his classification; indeed they are only discussed in the appendix to volume one of his treatise, while advice for singers occupies the most space.[4] This appendix is, however, an acknowledgement that instrumentalists were working in Zacconi's environment, even if he did not necessarily expect them to read his treatise. He carefully described the ranges and capabilities of the common instruments, so that instrumentalists could decide how they are to participate in vocal music and in the written musical culture of the time, or composers would know how to write parts that instrumentalists could perform.

For many instrumentalists, this level of involvement in the mainstream professional musical world was a relatively new development, and indicates that the

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[3] Tim Carter argued that earlier assumptions that the output of Italian music printers declined after c. 1580 are mistaken, and that output remained high through the last quarter of the sixteenth century and into the following century, sustained mainly by a huge growth in the publication of sacred music. See Tim Carter, "Music Publishing in Italy, c. 1580–c. 1625: Some Preliminary Observations," *RMA Research Chronicle* 20 (1986–7): 19–21.

[4] This appendix is translated in Gerhard Singer, "Lodovico Zacconi's Treatment of the 'Suitability and Classification of all Musical Instruments' in the *Prattica di musica* of 1592" (PhD diss., University of Southern California, 1968).

relationships instrumentalists had with oral and literate cultures were changing during this time. The instrumentalists of the sixteenth century were coming from a largely oral culture, where most were illiterate or did not use the skills of writing and reading in their professional activities. They were beginning to move into the mainstream musical establishment, where functional literacy in both language and music were increasingly expected, and these skills controlled musical activities.

This drastic transformation of capabilities among instrumentalists has received very little attention within scholarly discussion thus far. My aim throughout this dissertation is to understand how the shift from an oral to a literate culture may relate to the equally drastic developments in the performance and composition of instrumental music around the turn of the seventeenth century. In this chapter, I lay the groundwork for this broad purpose, considering some interdisciplinary theories of oral and literate cultures that will inform my thinking about instrumental music during this pivotal period. Of particular significance are the studies of Walter Ong and Jack Goody, who have shown the broader power of literacy to act as an agent of cultural change. They demonstrate how learning and literacy have the potential to restructure thought processes—a notion that has far-reaching implications for the emergence of literacy among musicians.

Following an exposition of these theories and their general relevance to the music of this period, I assess the heritage of instrumentalists within oral cultures, in which the writing down of instrumental music was not necessarily an important aspect of their careers; I then present the evidence for their greater involvement in written cultures and their emergent literacy in the later sixteenth century. Clarification of the different arenas

for the education of musicians, and the broader pedagogical trends in general schooling

gives a bigger picture of practices and principles in the sixteenth century. Overall, I seek

to frame the discussion of instrumental music during this critical period as substantially

affected by the intersections of orality and literacy.

Literacy as an agent of broader cultural change

A number of scholars have studied the transitions between oral and literate cultures in the

field of language, and in this study I find particular support from scholars who have

proposed that education or literacy acquisition can power large-scale cultural changes.

Walter Ong, in his groundbreaking study *Orality and Literacy*, proposed that the

importance of a literate society did not lie merely in the acquisition of skills. Rather, he

suggested that literacy restructures the consciousness and thought process, transforming

how individuals understand the world around them and react to its stimuli.[5] His view of

writing is as a technology, an artificial construction that causes "interior transformations

of consciousness."[6] While other studies have considered musical instruments as

technologies that can shape creative acts,[7] Ong considered writing to be "an even more

deeply interiorized technology than instrumental musical performance."[8]

Ong was primarily concerned with literacy in human languages in his study; he

did not consider other semiotic systems such as the notation of musical sounds. His

arguments about written and spoken language contain strong implications for an

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[5] Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London: Routledge, 1982), 75.

[6] Ibid., 80.

[7] For a recent study, see Cypess, *Curious and Modern Inventions*.

[8] Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 82.

understanding of the effects of musical literacy. Spoken language, in Ong's formulation, relies on the sense of hearing and—despite having a fundamentally evanescent nature—it is dynamic and extraordinarily powerful;[9] when converted into written text, language takes on a very different set of characteristics. Music can function in a similar way, being an evanescent sonic phenomenon that can be transformed into a written language (but is not directly equivalent to it). The ideas of Walter Ong have been largely neglected in musicological scholarship, despite the close relationships between language and music.

There have been some explorations of how these issues may be applicable to music in the medieval period, when the transformation from oral to literate culture was occurring for a majority of musicians. Anna Maria Busse Berger considered aspects of an oral legacy that can be perceived in Notre Dame polyphony, in particular discussing the role that memory may have played in the development of this repertoire.[10] For a methodological basis she drew more upon the works of Jack Goody, who followed Ong's work by discussing the distinction between purely oral cultures and those in which orality continues to persist even while written/printed culture is ascendant; his research draws upon ethnographic studies of a range of cultures where orality has persisted further into the modern age.[11] A recent study into medieval troping suggested conclusions that could be productively interpreted using Ong's theories, since it found that the act of writing down previously orally created and transmitted tropes fundamentally changed the troping tradition and, indeed, ultimately hastened its demise, since notated tropes could no longer

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[9] Ibid., 32.

[10] Anna Maria Busse Berger, "Mnemotechnics and Notre Dame Polyphony," *Journal of Musicology* 14, no. 3 (1996): 263–98; Busse Berger, *Medieval Music and the Art of Memory* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

[11] Jack Goody, *The Interface Between the Written and the Oral* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

adapt flexibly to the needs of the liturgy.[12] However, an element of caution has been proposed by Leo Treitler, who warned of the difficulty inherent in relating concepts such as improvisation or memorization to the sparse and often confusing evidence of medieval musical cultures that survives today, and discussed some potentially problematic assumptions that have been made.[13]

Explorations of the orality-literacy transition have been most fruitful with respect to music of the medieval era, and there has been little exploration of such concepts after these early medieval examples. I propose, however, that the case of instrumentalists who stood outside the mainstream literate musical traditions until a relatively late stage may show further instances of Ong and Goody's theories. Instrumentalists in the fifteenth century operated within what Ong would classify as a "primary oral culture," where they were generally removed from written exemplars of the music they played, and often illiterate in language too. By the end of the sixteenth century, many instrumentalists were literate in both language and music: they were participating in both the chirographic (writing) and typographic (printing) cultures of the time. It is to the evidence for this transformation that I now turn.

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[12] Henry Parkes, "Remembering or Dismembering? The Implications of Written Collections for Early Medieval Chant Performance" (unpublished conference paper, American Musicological Society annual meeting, Vancouver, November 3, 2016).

[13] Leo Treitler, "Written Music and Oral Music: Improvisation in Medieval Performance," in *El Códice Calixtino y la música de su tiempo*, ed. José López-Calo and Carlos Villanueva (La Coruña: Fundación Pedro Barrie de Maza, 2001); reprinted in Treiter, *With Voice and Pen: Coming to Know Medieval Song and How It Was Made* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 29–31.

<u>The emergence of literacy in sixteenth-century instrumental cultures</u>

Relatively little information survives from before the sixteenth century about how instrumentalists participated in musical cultures. Much of the surviving evidence is iconographic: the profusion of illustrations and paintings from the medieval era depicting instrumentalists suggests that they must have been numerous and highly audible in society. What these instrumentalists were actually playing, however, remains unclear for most performance contexts. The quantity of surviving instrumental music from the Middle Ages is minute compared to the corpus of vocal music, and the vast majority of what survives is dance music, which surely took on another level of life in performance: these brief and skeletal notations were likely only a monochrome reflection of a pluralistic tradition.[14] If instrumentalists did participate in the musical culture of churches and courts that is so richly preserved through vocal compositions, they left little evidence of their presence. The instrumentalists who acted independently of this tradition were also removed from the main sites of notation and transmission that have preserved compositions to the present day. Keith Polk notes that "incredibly the repertory of what were literally thousands of performances has almost totally vanished."[15]

With a general paucity of written records, the work of scholars such as Polk is often based around the minutest of evidence: a single payment record may be all that has survived of instrumental performance in a given situation. Frequently the methodology for the study of medieval instrumental music will consist of comparing these sparse

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[14] Timothy J. McGee, ed., *Instruments and their Music in the Middle Ages* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009). In his introduction to the volume, McGee gives an overview of the state of research: "The surviving repertory from prior to 1450 consists of fewer than 100 pieces, most of which are monophonic dances…instead of playing from score, the largest share of what instrumentalists performed was either improvised or learned by rote memory" (xix).

[15] Keith Polk, *German Instrumental Music of the Late Middle Ages: Players, Patrons, and Performance Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 29.

records with surviving iconographic evidence to deduce what instruments were being played, or what the performance context was.[16] Only rarely are there remnants of a notated repertoire, making it extremely difficult to discover what the instrumentalists were actually playing. Much of the iconographic evidence shows musicians performing from memory—a small dance band with violins (see Fig. 1.1); wind and brass players marching in a procession or playing to a crowd (Fig. 1.2)—suggesting that this lack of notated music is not merely a historical loss, but something that was never intrinsic to the instrumental culture.[17]

It seems extremely likely that most instrumental traditions prior to the sixteenth century relied on a mixture of materials passed orally between instrumentalists, and improvisation guided by formulas and conventions. Some instrumental traditions were shaped by these practices—for example, the pairs of string players consisting of a *tenorista* holding down a cantus firmus while a better player improvised above it.[18] Polk has documented such ensembles throughout German lands and sometimes elsewhere, through some sparse written records and admiring accounts of their playing.[19]

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[16] For an example of this methodology, see Keith Polk, "Vedel and Geige-Fiddle and Viol: German String Traditions in the Fifteenth Century," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 42 (1989): 504–46.

[17] For a recent study of iconography of instrumentalists, see Coehlo and Polk, *Instrumentalists and Renaissance Culture, 1420–1600*, 232–89.

[18] See the translation of Tinctoris's descriptions of various instrumental practices in Anthony Baines, "Fifteenth-Century Instruments in Tinctoris's *De Inventione et Usu Musicae*," *Galpin Society Journal* 3 (1950): 24.

[19] Polk, *German Instrumental Music of the Late Middle Ages*, 26–30.

Figure 1.1: Marguerite de Valois dancing *La Volta* at the Valois Court, Anonymous, late sixteenth century (Rennes, Musée des Beaux-Arts).

In a couple of cases, it emerges from the documentary evidence that the players were blind, which constitutes additional proof that they were not operating within a written tradition.[20] Instrumentalists who were employed within the various municipal musical establishments during these centuries (in Italy, usually called *piffari*) also seemed to follow similar practices, and so lacked written music in their work.

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[20] Francesco Landini is of course one example who serves as evidence that a blind musician could still have his works preserved through the writing of others, but his playing of the organ and situation in a churchly milieu set him apart from instrumentalists such as the German string-playing duos. Likewise, Antonio de Cabezón was blind from childhood and was a famed organist; his compositions were largely limited to the instrumental genres that he could create through his skills as a performer (although the works he left are high quality and original).

Figure 1.2: *Piffari* at the coronation of Pope Pius III, Bernardino Pinturicchio, c. 1504 (Siena, Libreria Piccolomini).

Some other duties of the *piffari*—playing in processions, serenading outside private homes—also suggest that their repertoire was an orally transmitted one, passed in person between the members of the group or from student to teacher, and subject to the traditions of the area. As I will discuss further in the next chapter, even once some written music was used, instrumentalists in the *piffaro* tradition appeared to pass knowledge of repertoire and technique in a closely guarded line of succession, with family members forming dynasties and change happening only slowly.

During the medieval and early Renaissance eras instrumentalists existed only on the edge of the literate musical tradition, with limited use for written music and a body of oral repertoire and traditional skills in improvisation that they could use to recall or generate music for any occasion. There is no substantial body of evidence to suggest that instrumentalists regularly used or relied on written music, and the small quantity of surviving music that could be instrumental points to the inability of most instrumentalists to write out their music and save it for posterity. The lack of written accounts and records from instrumentalists raises the question of how much they were educated: it is highly likely that most lacked the skills to notate music or, indeed, read or write their vernacular or Latin, and even those who did seemed to have little use for it within their musical activities. Most instrumentalists seemed to have little professional contact with the Christian church, which was the main site for much education and writing activity, and whether in church, court, or town, the act of writing was often restricted due to the scarcity and expense of materials and the greater complexity of the task and multiple skills required. A rare example of an instrumentalist demonstrating literacy is discussed by John Haines, who suggested that an illumination of an apparently sight-reading vielle

player may represent Gautier de Coincy, a musician possessing a rare level of accomplishment.[21] This instance, however, seems to be the exception that proves the rule, for string players at least.

There are two other exceptions to this general trend. Firstly, it is important to acknowledge deep-rooted differences between types of instruments, in particular between organists and players of other instruments. As players of the only instrument to be openly encouraged in the church, the organists moved in different circles to *piffari* and municipal or itinerant musicians. As such, they were the first substantial group of instrumentalists to show signs of a higher educational level and to use written notation as a means of transmission in their craft. Their interactions with singers and the written repertoire of the church necessitated their education and literacy, and types of organ tablature were in use throughout much of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. That this was common long before the notation of other substantial and idiomatic instrumental repertoires is an indicator of the organist's status as an instrumentalist within the singer's literate realm. As such, I will consider organists separately from other instrumentalists in this dissertation, especially from wind and string players—their relationship with literacy was fundamentally different. There has been some evidence presented to suggest that the lute and possibly the harp could also occupy this position, and were often played by organists as a more portable and flexible alternative.[22]

A second exception consists of the amateur performers who, inspired by the tenets of Renaissance humanism, preempted or followed Castiglione's advice to cultivate a little

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[21] John Haines, "A Sight-Reading Vielle Player from the Thirteenth Century," in *The Sounds and Sights of Performance in Early Music: Essays in Honour of Timothy J. McGee*, ed. Maureen Epp and Brian E. Power (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 13–26.

[22] Timothy J. McGee, "Instruments and the Faenza Codex," *Early Music* 14 (1986): 484.

skill on a musical instrument. The study of an instrument such as lute or viol as part of a

humanist educational regime had very different aims and values to the playing of an

instrument professionally and, again, the situation for amateur instrumentalists who may

be in the privileged situation of inclusion in the well-educated minority is likely to be

rather different to that of professional instrumentalists.[23]

In each of these cases, the unusual status of the musician gave them a particular

insight into an area of literate culture—the church for organists and courtly humanism for

amateurs. For most other musicians, in particular professional players of wind and

stringed instruments, their experience of and participation within the literate musical

culture occurred only gradually throughout the Renaissance. Indications of their

participation survive with increasing frequency in the sixteenth century, particularly

within the rich instrumental cultures of the Italian peninsula. Polk proposed a

"fundamental change" in German instrumental music at the year 1490, when a boundary

between improvisation over a cantus firmus and polyphony in imitative counterpoint

signaled the increasing need for musical notation by instrumentalists; it seems likely that

this observation may apply to Italy as well, perhaps on a slightly later time scale.[24] A

gradual increase in the amount of instrumental repertoire surviving suggests the growing

use of notated music by instrumentalists. Initially a substantial proportion of this

repertoire was written by organists, providing music for the other types of

instrumentalists affiliated with their churches, suggesting the increasingly wide-spread

reading of music by instrumentalists. The canzona repertoire had its roots in

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[23] On the musical education of the noble classes, see Stefano Lorenzetti, *Musica e identità nobiliare nell'Italia del Rinascimento: Educazione, mentalità, immaginario* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 2003).

[24] Keith Polk, "From Oral to Written: Change in Transmission of Instrumental Music in Fifteenth-Century Europe," in *Songs of the Dove and the Nightingale: Sacred and Secular Music, c.900–c.1600*, ed. Greta Mary Hair and Robyn E. Smith (Basel: Gordon and Breach Science Publishers SA, 1995), 171.

arrangements and adaptations of vocal music, before evolving into original compositions by organists and then by other instrumentalists; the ricercare followed a similar route, growing from the contrapuntal demonstrations of highly trained theorist-composers to influence compositions by instrumentalists. I will discuss these contrapuntal genres further in chapter 3.

In the sixteenth century, we start to see the first attempts by instrumentalists to teach others their skills through writing rather than experience. Treatises by Sylvestro di Ganassi and Diego Ortiz in the 1530s–50s attempted to put into words and music a key practice of many instrumentalists, the practice of *passaggi* or ornamental diminutions. Later publications from the 1580s onwards see a profusion of professional instrumentalists putting this practice into print—a flowering of musical literacy that, as I will argue in chapter 4, follows shortly after the full participation of these instrumentalists in the literate portion of musical society.

The early seventeenth century sees instrumentalists reaching the higher levels of Zacconi's classification with compositions set out in writing by highly regarded performers. The publications of Dario Castello, Biagio Marini, Giovanni Battista Buonamente, Salamone Rossi and others heralded a new age of instrumental music, and suggested the full integration of these musicians with the singers, organists, and composers. As some instrumentalists attained a certain level of literacy and earned a new reputation through composition, the instruments they played were legitimized, first as a worthy activity for professionals, and eventually for amateurs too. Their publications begin to include prefaces and written material of some eloquence, such as a brief paragraph on the values and challenges of the modern instrumental style in the case of

Dario Castello, or selected poems by other authors for Biagio Marini's Op. 1; some of these composers also started to cross into vocal genres too. What appeared to be the first substantial treatise on the violin, the *Aggiunta del scolare di violino* (1614) by Francesco Rognoni Taeggio, has regrettably not survived, but the very implications of its existence are telling.[25] In Germany, Michael Praetorius was inspired to fill a volume of his *Syntagma Musicum* with detailed woodcuts of all the different instruments. These examples offer just a brief glimpse into the growing education and literacy of instrumentalists, and hint at connections between this trend and the new innovations in instrumental music.

Some educational contexts for Renaissance musicians

As the above account implies, the various types of musician during the sixteenth century could have a range of different skill sets. I have already drawn brief attention to some distinctions between organists, amateur instrumentalists, and professional performers on strings and winds. Social class and professional background could drastically alter the nature of education, providing different sets of skills for the musician and changing their body of knowledge and relationship with literacy and broader educated society. In order to better identify the distinctive aspects of the instrumentalists' education, I here discuss the differences between musical education for the noble amateur, the choirboy, and the professional instrumentalist, and consider some of the barriers to research.

For many in the rich or noble classes, music was an important aspect of their education and their participation in an elite humanist society. As is so vividly depicted in

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[25] Stewart Carter, "Francesco Rognoni's *Selva de varii passaggi* (1620): Fresh Details Concerning Early-Baroque Vocal Ornamentation," *Performance Practice Review* 2, no. 1 (1989): 6.

Castiglione's *Cortegiano*, music was one among a vast number of skills that the individual was expected to master in order to interact elegantly and comfortably with the courtly milieu.[26] The expectations for this musical education were however limited in several respects. A high standard of performing ability was not necessarily expected—or even desirable. Excessive virtuosity brought the danger of being lowered to the status of a professional musician, as is illustrated by the case of the courtier Giulio Cesare Brancaccio at the Ferrarese court. Although his exceptional singing voice brought him the honor of participation in the music-making of the famed *concerto delle dame*, he was often frustrated and demeaned at being considered a mere musician rather than a warrior.[27] Generally speaking, these amateur musical performers were ideally of sufficient standard to bring pleasure when performing alone or for a small company, and to participate effectively in the social performance of ensemble pieces. Comfortable mastery was expected rather than originality or virtuosity, and so there seemed to be limited need for particular training in details of technique; indeed, focus seemed to be on learning repertoire and style, while the fundamentals of technique emerged naturally from there.[28]

In addition to the voice, certain instruments were preferred by noble households. Instruments like the lute were favored for their quiet, refined, and flexible nature, and

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[26] Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, 94–96.

[27] Richard Wistreich, *Warrior, Courtier, Singer: Giulio Cesare Brancaccio and the Performance of Identity in the Late Renaissance* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2013), 239–51.

[28] See John Griffiths, "Juan Bermudo, Self-Instruction, and the Amateur Instrumentalist," in *Music Education in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. Russell E. Murray, Susan Forscher Weiss, and Cynthia J. Cyrus (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2010), 129.

printed music and instruction manuals speak to their popularity among amateurs.[29]

Castiglione, for similar reasons, spoke of "the playing of a quartet, with the viols

producing music of great skill and suavity;" such delights took their place in court

entertainment alongside the "harmonious" keyboard instruments and the voice, which

"contains all the purity of music."[30] Besides the viol, stringed instruments were the

preserve of the professional musician only, as were most wind instruments, which were

perceived as rustic in origin, and unsightly or difficult to play.[31] In addition, the noble

amateur would probably not have learned practicalities of instrument maintenance and

making that were the preserve of the professional musician.

Given the increasing ubiquity of printed music during the sixteenth century, the

musical noble or courtesan had to be able to read music, or at the very least, tablature;

this market was a significant force behind the trade in partbooks and other printed music.

In addition, it is questionable whether the wealthy amateur would have had the

educational experience necessary for mastery of a complex oral tradition: as will be

discussed in subsequent chapters, performance practices that depended on improvisation

and oral engagement with other players required deep immersion in a community that

practiced the tradition. Although their musical education was rooted in literacy, amateurs

did not really need to know older notational conventions, or the modern aspects of music

theory required for composing. Any academic study of music theory was likely pursued

under the lingering influence of quadrivial study, and developments in *musica*

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[29] Lute music was among the earliest to be commercially printed, with Ottaviano Petrucci publishing six volumes of music in lute tablature in 1507–11; see Stanley Boorman, *Ottaviano Petrucci: Catalogue Raisonne* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 294–97

[30] Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, 120–21.

[31] See, for example, the discussion in Zacconi, *Prattica di musica*, 1:76r.

speculativa remained remote from most practical purposes until well into the seventeenth century.[32] Likewise, rigorous study in composition was neither practical nor necessary for most.[33] In conclusion, music was an embellishment for the upper classes that could be studied rigorously, yet remained constrained in many respects by the expectations and limitations of their social contexts; it was intrinsically linked with the aims of humanism and complemented their education in other fields.[34]

Outside the courtly environment, among lower classes, musical education was generally undertaken in adolescence, with the intention that it would lead to a career as a professional musician. While the church ceased to be the leading provider of general education during the Renaissance, it remained the only substantial institution to provide organized musical education during this period.[35] Obviously, the most basic provision of musical education in the church was directed towards the musical necessities of the liturgy, with choirboys destined for the priesthood. Various types of chant and the fundamental liturgical songs were clearly first priorities; primers for the early education of ecclesiastical singers generally included the Guidonian hand, basic discussions of

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[32] For a discussion of the continued relevance of the speculative tradition and interest in music of classical antiquity in the seventeenth century, see Eric Bianchi, "Prodigious Sounds: Music and Learning in the World of Athanasius Kircher" (PhD diss., Yale University, 2011), 45–49 and 155–71.

[33] Carlo Gesualdo was the most notable exception to this, as a composer who was both capable and innovative. Another example is Duke Guglielmo Gonzaga (1538–87), who composed some madrigals and sacred music in a rather conservative style, and had them published anonymously; see Richard Sherr, "The Publications of Guglielmo Gonzaga," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 31, no. 1 (1987): 118–25.

[34] The slightly later trends that saw elite amateur performance gradually spreading to an upwardly mobile class of merchants and professionals will not be explicitly considered here.

[35] The most extensive offering of church education, usually consisting of Latin and singing, was offered in the wake of Pope Eugenius IV's mid-fifteenth-century attempts to train diocesan priests in the cathedral schools. Some areas (Venice, Verona, Treviso) were able to continue such schooling into the sixteenth century, but most dioceses lacked institutional education of this kind by the sixteenth century. See Paul F. Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy: Literacy and Learning, 1300–1600* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 9–10.

notation, solmization, and mutation, and the most important chants.[36] It has been

suggested that the most basic forms of pedagogical chant manuals were used by teachers

in much the same way as a Latin primer, that is, they were read and sung out loud or

copied on a board, and repeated by the students until memorized.[37] Such a pedagogical

method enabled students to build upon skills and methodologies that they had honed in

their more general education.

This level of education was sufficient for clerics merely needing to chant in the

course of church duties, but our interest here is in those who were trained in the church to

a higher musical standard. Churches employing one or more competent and dedicated

musicians in their establishment could provide more advanced training, with the most

fundamental extension to a basic chant education being the training of a group of singers

to execute the more complex forms of liturgical vocal music written by composers. The

singing of composed polyphony, or *canto figurato*, demanded—even for simpler

pieces—ensemble skills, refined vocal techniques, and confidence in reading notation.

In addition to singing composed polyphony, there were also various traditions of

improvised, semi-improvised, and decorated forms of liturgical singing that appear to

have been prevalent through the sixteenth century and may have prevailed through the

Tridentine reforms to a reasonable extent. There are considerable difficulties for scholars

attempting to trace these practices, but it appears that improvised counterpoint was taught

reasonably widely, and through early and prolonged practice, high levels of ability could

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[36] See David Crawford, "A Chant Manual in Sixteenth-Century Italy," *Musica Disciplina* 36 (1982): 182–86 for a comparison of the anonymous *Compendium musicale* with chant manuals by Bonaventura da Brescia and Francesco de Brugis.

[37] Ibid., 176–77; 188.

be attained by choirboys and professional singers.[38] The practice of *falsobordone* also flourished during these years, becoming a genre where the most recent developments in ornamentation and improvisation could flourish in a short piece of liturgical singing.[39]

Closely related to the singing and improvisation of counterpoint was the learning of theory and contrapuntal composition. There is evidence from a numbers of churches that choirboys received training in contrapuntal writing. Zarlino's duties at S Marco in Venice included the teaching of *contrappunto* to the choirboys, and proceedings against the Bergamo *maestro di cappella* Pietro Pontio state that he neglected his duties to correct the counterpoint exercises of the young clerics.[40] Certainly youths of sufficient talent went on to more advanced studies in composition with the *maestro di cappella*, as in the various *discepoli* of Willaert and Zarlino in Venice, or indeed Claudio Monteverdi with Marc'Antonio Ingegneri in Cremona.

It remains unclear what level of music theory was taught in support of this training in *contrappunto*. It has been suggested that Gioseffo Zarlino's scholarly and theoretical background helped secure him the position of *maestro di cappella* at S Marco, Venice, and some other noted theorists held church positions around Italy;[41] Lodovico Zacconi's apparent inability to master the finer nuances of theory prompted Zarlino to suggest that he might benefit from some additional study before he could achieve an

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[38] See chapter 3 for a more detailed discussion of improvised counterpoint.

[39] A fine example is Giovanni Luca Conforti, *Salmi passaggiati* (3 vols, Rome: Heirs of Nicoló Mutii, 1601, 1602, 1603), discussed in Murray C. Bradshaw, "Giovanni Luca Conforti and Vocal Embellishment: From Formula to Artful Improvisation," *Performance Practice Review* 8 (1995): 5–27.

[40] Rebecca A. Edwards, "Setting the Tone at San Marco: Gioseffo Zarlino amidst Doge, Procuratori and Cappella Personnel," in *La cappella musicale di San Marco nell'età moderna*, ed. Francesco Passadore and Franco Rossi (Venice: Edizioni Fondazione Levi, 1998), 393; Russell E. Murray, "On the Teaching Duties of the Maestro di Cappella in Sixteenth-Century Italy: The *Processo* against Pietro Pontio," *Explorations in Renaissance Culture* 14 (1988), 115–28.

[41] Edwards, "Setting the Tone at San Marco," 392–93.

appointment as a singer at the prestigious S Marco in Venice.[42] The extent to which the more speculative and technical aspects of music theory were taught on a wider scale remains very unclear, but it seems likely that some of the more practical aspects of theory would have been taught to choirboys who were trained in polyphonic singing.

Besides the study of singing and theory, the church was evidently the primary site for learning the organ. Most prominent organists of the time had close connections with the church during their formative years, and organ pedagogy at the end of the sixteenth century is related with unusual detail in *Il Transilvano* by Girolamo Diruta.[43] Besides the formal training of accomplished organists, it seems that many singers would have acquired basic keyboard skills through the church.[44] The teaching of other instruments in the church is a less clear area. It seems likely that many instrumentalists employed by or affiliated with the church would have perpetuated these skills through teaching, whether formally through the institution of the church or informally through the people involved with the church community; there are multiple examples of individuals who received a largely church-based education who also could play instruments beside the organ, such as Monteverdi and Maschera. In the seventeenth century there were increasing numbers of church musicians who were variously listed as singers or instrumentalists on different records, suggesting that it was increasingly common to have some instrumental skills

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[42] Singer, "Lodovico Zacconi's Treatment of the 'Suitability and Classification of all Musical Instruments,'" viii.

[43] Girolamo Diruta, *Il Transilvano* (2 vols, Venice: Vincenti, 1593 and 1609); translated by Edward J. Soehnlein, "Diruta on the Art of Keyboard-Playing: An Annotated Translation and Transcription of *Il Transilvano*, Parts I (1593) and II (1609)" (2 vols, PhD diss., University of Michigan, 1975).

[44] On the keyboard teaching of Agostino Agazzari at Siena Cathedral, see Colleen Reardon, *Agostino Agazzari and the Music at Siena Cathedral, 1597–1641* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 45, 184. She notes that the cathedral library owned volumes of ricercares that were "consumati per insegnare" and "worn out from heavy teaching use."

alongside training in church singing.[45] I shall explore the connections between instrumentalists in the church and their possible involvement in teaching activities further in chapter 2.

The other main opportunity for musical education in the non-noble portions of society came from private study—often in the form of apprenticeship—with a professional musician.[46] Within the field of musical education evidence for this context remains elusive, due to its necessarily small-scale nature. Such teaching methods are based on the actions of individuals rather than institutions, with a corresponding tendency towards the loss of private documents and the lack of documentation that ephemeral orality causes; given a widespread paucity of clear evidence, discussion of these practices will necessarily lack nuance. Nevertheless, this is probably the method by which many professional musicians (in particular instrumentalists besides organists) were trained. As noted above, often such education took place within familial relationships, promulgating a number of musical dynasties during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Such an education would have focused almost entirely on the skills needed to work in the musical profession. The demands placed on a professional performer, who could be expected to perform reliably in a diverse range of styles and contexts on a number of different instruments,[47] imply that their education may have been focused on

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[45] An early example is Giovanni Bassano, who appeared to be a choirboy at S Marco, Venice, and was later appointed singing teacher to the seminary of S Marco, yet was largely known as one of the most talented performers on wind instruments of the day. (David Lasocki, *et al*, "Bassano," *Grove Music Online*, accessed 9/13/2015. <www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/53233pg4>)

[46] This intersected in some respects with learning in courts and churches, in that most musicians were employed by one of these institutions, but the arrangement and execution of lessons remained fundamentally separate from the larger establishment.

[47] For an example, see the description of *piffaro* Giovanni Pietro Rizeffo and his ensemble, in David Lasocki, "Professional Recorder Players in England, 1540–1740" (PhD diss., University of Iowa, 1983), 1:51.

developing their technique; indeed, the earliest comments on proper instrumental techniques—tonguing for wind players, bowing for strings, fingering and action for keyboard players—came from professional musicians such as Sylvestro di Ganassi, Girolamo Dalla Casa, Girolamo Diruta, and Francesco Rognoni Taeggio.[48] A common theme in the writings of the aforementioned musicians is a desire to offer advice relevant to a number of different or related instruments, rather than limit discussion to the instrument on which the author excelled most; clearly these musicians were all multi-instrumentalists seeking to offer pedagogical advice on technique to other learners of multiple instruments, and a wide selection of people who may be learning one appropriate instrument.

There is also evidence that many instrumentalists were able to construct or maintain their own instruments. Some dynasties of professional performers doubled as makers and suppliers of instrumentalists, notably the Bassano/Bassani wind specialists employed in London and Venice.[49] Professional string players were expected to made their own strings and rosin. Organists were often highly regarded for their knowledge of the instrument, such as the Antegnati dynasty who supplied organs to many churches in the Brescia region, and Claudio Merulo, who supplemented his career as an organist and publisher with collaborations and consultations with organ makers.[50]

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[48] This is in contrast to the apparent case for noble amateurs, who did not show any particular focus on technique; see note 29 above.

[49] David Lasocki and Roger Prior, *The Bassanos: Venetian Musicians and Instrument Makers in England, 1531–1665* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1995). The Venetian branch of the family was responsible for inventing the "bassanello," a small, sweet-toned bassoon; see Giulio M. Ongaro, "New Documents on the Bassano Family," *Early Music* 20, no. 3 (1992): 412.

[50] Rebecca A. Edwards, "Claudio Merulo: Servant of the State and Musical Entrepreneur in Later Sixteenth-Century Venice" (PhD diss., Princeton University, 1990), 233–38.

Someone training as a performer in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries needed to be capable in all the methods by which they could be expected to make music in the profession. Central to this was learning to read notation (including, perhaps, some familiarity with older styles of notation that may have been prevalent in older prints and manuscripts); in light of the apparent lack of rehearsal in those times, strong reading abilities would have been a necessity for all situations involving written music. Along with the reading of musical notation often went its writing.[51] The writing of musical notation was not merely a skill for composers: as Zacconi acknowledged with his description of the *prattico*, transcription and arrangement were vital skills, necessary to convert pieces of music for the musicians available. I would suggest that these skills were particularly important for instrumentalists in an age when most printed music was initially composed for voices, and could have needed adaptation to suit the instruments available.

In addition to being able to understand any composed and notated music, professional musicians could also be expected to be fluent in the main traditions of improvisation and ornamentation. The long tradition of improvisation in performance would have been passed between players as an oral tradition. As I will explore in chapter 4, even in this most oral of fields, the influence of writing and printing could be seen on pedagogical techniques by the end of the sixteenth century. Ornamentation was also becoming an increasingly important skill, used to adapt music, show technique and originality, and heighten the aesthetic qualities of a piece. The sudden influx of diminution tutors at the end of the sixteenth century, together with the steady flow of

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[51] As with the act of writing language, this often also incorporated the selection and preparation of paper and writing implements.

evidence for such ornamental methods earlier, confirms a general interest in ornamented playing towards the end of the sixteenth century. Along with these skills of improvisation and ornamentation went the development of aural skills, since it was generally accepted that musicians should try to follow the most fundamental rules of contrapuntal motion when improvising.[52]

A prevailing problem in researching musical teaching and learning during the early modern period is connecting the known educational contexts to specific musicians. There is a frequent lack of biographical and archival material on almost all musicians, particularly for their early, formative years. While this issue is not as acute as that facing scholars of medieval music, who may have little more than a name to attach to their music, large lacunae remain for even key figures in this period, and many minor participants seem mostly lost to history. This lack of information has particularly hampered research on instrumental music.

The most problematic example in this respect remains Dario Castello. Composer of two volumes of *Sonate concertate*, he appears from the music and prefaces of his publications to have been a fine and original composer, a performer of considerable virtuosity on wind instruments, and a respected holder of professional posts in Venetian musical establishments, including S Marco. Extensive research in Venetian archives by Eleanor Selfridge-Field has however only produced a list of sources where no record of him can be found: S Marco contracts of hire, pay ledgers, extant census data, and

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[52] See the rules for diminution by Aurelio Virgiliano, discussed at greater length in chapter 4. Translated in Bruce Dickey, "Ornamentation in Early Seventeenth-Century Italian Music," in *A Performer's Guide to Seventeenth-Century Music*, ed. Stewart Carter and Jeffrey T. Kite-Powell (rev. ed., Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012), 296.

necrologies.[53] She could only speculate on possible connections with other musicians named "Castello" in Venice, in particular the violinist and bassoonist Giovanni Battista Castello, who had connections to Monteverdi and Rovetta. Given this state of affairs, nothing can be surmised of Dario Castello's education or connections to older musicians. Over four decades since Selfridge-Field's research, no new biographical information has emerged on Dario Castello; all the same questions remain.

For many other instrumentalists there remain similar lacunae for their formative years. Biagio Marini is a typical example. While many details of his long career across Northern Italy and the German-speaking lands have emerged, practically all details of his childhood remain unavailable; his professional biography suddenly comes into focus with his appointment as an instrumentalist at S Marco, Venice, in 1615. As research on him currently stands, there is no indication of how he was trained in music, what teachers contributed to the development of his talents, or in what institution he learned his craft. Baptized in Brescia in 1594, Marini was the son of a theorbo player who had previously been employed in Poland; his origin within a musical family in such a key geographic region suggests many tantalizing possibilities for his education, none of which can be proven.[54] It seems likely that these questions may never be answered for Marini, or indeed for many other instrumentalists of the time.

Even for those musicians for whom some modicum of biographical and educational detail remains from their early years, specific details of their educations

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[53] Eleanor Selfridge-Field, "Dario Castello: A Non-Existent Biography," *Music and Letters* 53, no. 2 (1972): 179–90.

[54] For a summary of the most recent biographical research on Marini's early years, see Biagio Marini, *Madrigali et symfonie, Op. 2 (selections)*, ed. Thomas D. Dunn, Web Library of Seventeenth Century Music No. 3, 2nd edition, 2005, <www.sscm-wlscm.org>, Introduction, i–ii; see also Franco Piperno, "Marini, Biagio," in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* vol. 70 (2008), <www.treccani.it>, accessed 3/3/2017.

remain scant. This is the case for composers from Adriano Banchieri (known to have studied with Gioseffo Guami) to Claudio Monteverdi (who studied with Marc'Antonio Ingegneri in Cremona). In each of these cases, although their teacher was a well-known musician, no precise record of what they were taught survives, making it sometimes difficult to establish how their formative years influenced their careers and mature styles.[55]

Implied behind some of these absent records is the shadowy nature of teaching itself. Even once printed books became more readily available and used, much education remained ephemeral, relying on oral transmission. There is an additional layer of obfuscation from the perception of teaching as a private transferal of skills, to pass on the secrets and closely guarded technique of a specialized profession to those who would perpetuate it. This was not so obvious among the instruments favored by the wealthy musical amateur, with the secrets of lute playing and other such socially acceptable instruments increasingly available through treatises and tutor books. Descriptions of skills needed by professional musicians were however sparse, suggesting that these were only available within personal circles of transmission. In this respect, methods of knowledge transmission between students and the professional musician were akin to those of artisans, an idea I shall explore further in the next chapter. These professionals kept the secrets of their practical skills closely guarded, and passed them on largely through personal relationships, to family members and apprentices without leaving accounts of their tutoring.

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[55] In chapter 3, I discuss what can be gleaned of the education Banchieri from his theoretical and pedagogical works. For further detail about Monteverdi and Ingegneri, see Laurie Paget, "Monteverdi as *discepolo*: Harmony, Rhetoric and Psalm-Tone Hierarchies in the Works of Ingegneri and Monteverdi," *Journal of Musicological Research* 15 (1995): 149–75.

The problems of finding relevant information on the formation of artistic personalities and intellects continued in most cases into adulthood. A major source of information on Monteverdi's career and musical aesthetic is his letters, a very considerable number of which have survived to the present day.[56] This correspondence is a valuable resource for Monteverdi studies, yet unfortunately few letters by the other string and wind players of the early seventeenth century have come to light, and there are none that discuss artistic matters of great interest.[57] With the exceptions of dedications and prefatory statements in published music, there are few first-hand accounts from professional musicians about their lives, careers, music, or aesthetics. The writing in published editions tends towards the formulaic, and only infrequently contains personal expressions from the composers themselves.

One of the most frustrating of lacunae on adult intellectual activities is in the records of academies. It is known that a number of talented professional musicians participated in intellectual academies, including Adriano Banchieri (known as "Il Dissonante" in the Bolognese Accademia dei Floridi and the Accademia de' Filomusi) and Biagio Marini (musical director of the Brescian Accademia degli Erranti).[58] Like the majority of academies, these particular organizations left little direct record of their

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[56] Denis Stevens, ed. and trans., *The Letters of Claudio Monteverdi* (London: Faber and Faber, 1980, 2/1995).

[57] The example of Giovanni Battista Buonamente demonstrates the problem of lost materials for instrumentalists. Several letters in his hand survived into the early twentieth century, when they were reported upon by the musicologist Paul Nettl, but their present whereabouts are unknown, as are their exact contents. See Allsop, *Cavalier Giovanni Battista Buonamente*, 4. Likewise, the few surviving letters by Biagio Marini were written to patrons (or potential patrons) and mainly address practicalities of employment in a formulaic manner. These were mostly transcribed or described in Willene B. Clark, "The Vocal Music of Biagio Marini (c. 1598–1665)" (PhD diss., Yale University, 1966).

[58] The main reference volume for the academies of Italy remains Michele Maylender, *Storia delle accademie d'Italia* (5 vols, Bologna: Cappelli, 1926–30). For the Accademia dei Floridi, see 3:29–31; for the Accademia de' Filomusi, see 2:435–36; for the Accademia degli Erranti, see 2:305–6.

activities, and so remain little-studied in any specific sense. It remains unclear what the intellectual environment of these academies may have been, and how these musicians may have contributed to and engaged with the ideas and artistic endeavours of the academies. It is clear that membership in an academy was a prestigious attribute—Banchieri and Marini both proudly advertised it on their title pages—and these memberships may have implications for the educations that these musicians had previously received, and for the attitudes they had picked up towards knowledge and learning. For Banchieri, who also published scholarship on the Bolognese dialect and other topics,[59] academy membership may have reflected his religious and humanist education received within the church.

Given the difficulties in assessing the finer details of music education, it is worth considering the educational field more widely since, as I have already noted in places, there are intersections between musical teaching and some more pedagogical practices and principles of the time outside of music.

Schooling, education, and pedagogy in early modern Italy

Similar to musical scholarship in the field, general educational studies for early modern Italy are not particularly extensive, and are fraught with numerous changes in direction from historiographical trends and biases. In the early years of the twentieth century historiographical positivism reigned in this field. Primary sources and archival or biographical studies were published in large numbers, but there was little attempt to collate or analyze primary sources with the aim of finding any larger narrative of

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[59] For example, Adriano Banchieri, *Discorso della lingua bolognese* (Bologna: Forni, 1629).

educational practices in Italy's past.[60] Synthesis and analysis of these sources was first attempted in the scholarship of Eugenio Garin, who developed a narrative of Renaissance humanist triumphs vanquishing medieval scholasticism.[61] His compelling work raised the importance of humanism in intellectual history, and focused attention on some great minds and high-profile figures of the Renaissance, in the service of a coherent narrative. It was only with effort that subsequent historians could progress from his substantial contribution, which was both perceptive and problematic.[62]

The 1980s saw a number of publications confronting Garin's legacy. Paul Grendler largely supported Garin's conclusions in the most thorough English-language study of its time; for its coverage of different educational contexts and approaches during the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries it remains the core text for fundamental details on Italian education during this period.[63] Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine, by contrast, strongly objected to Garin's narrative, attaching far less importance to the spread of humanism by arguing that there was a fundamental continuity with earlier practices of education during the Renaissance, and that the educational philosophy of medieval

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[60] An important study of these years was William H. Woodward, *Studies in Education during the Age of the Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1906), which focused mainly on leading personalities including Guarino da Verona, Erasmus, Melanchthon, and similar figures.

[61] Foremost among these are Eugenio Garin, *L'educazione in Europa (1400–1600)* (Bari: Laterza, 1957); Garin, ed., *L'educazione umanistica in Italia* (Bari: Laterza, 1949).

[62] Robert Black has drawn attention to Garin's connections with post-war educational reformers who remade the contemporary Italian education system using a Latinate humanist curriculum; Black perceives an ulterior motive in Garin's defense of humanist values against critics of the contemporary educational reforms. See Robert Black, *Humanism and Education in Medieval and Renaissance Italy: Tradition and Innovation in Latin Schools from the Twelfth to the Fifteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 13–16.

[63] Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy: Literacy and Learning 1300–1600*.

scholasticism was far more rigorous and effective than previously acknowledged.[64] Humanism's value was to rulers, they argued, because of the "obedience and docility" that such a curriculum could inculcate in students; the passivity demanded of students by Guarino of Verona and other great Renaissance pedagogues put laymen in the right mindset for high office and obedience to the ruler.[65]

By far the most substantial contributions to recent scholarship have come from Robert Black, who returned to primary sources (in particular, previously neglected manuscripts) to attempt a more nuanced account of educational history on the Italian peninsula. Through his focus on primary and grammar Latin education he discovered much continuity between medieval and Renaissance educations; ultimately he concluded that the perception of contrast between the scholasticism of medieval universities and Renaissance humanism is misplaced, as they relate to different aspects of education. When focusing on Latin within the pre-university educational curriculum, he observed a continuation of fundamental educational values despite changes in the texts used. He contended that the most important development in education on the Italian peninsula during this period was not teaching style, but rather the vast increase in the reach and perceived value of education.[66] Given that most of the manuscript sources Black discusses cannot be traced to a particular geographic region, his study aimed to discuss Latin education in a general sense across the peninsula; his subsequent studies, however,

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[64] Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine, *From Humanism to the Humanities: Education and the Liberal Arts in Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986).

[65] Ibid., 24.

[66] Ibid., 32.

began to define regional and local variants, increasingly recognizing the localized nature of education in the early modern age.[67]

Common to all these studies on the existence, organization, and curriculum of schooling in fundamental literacy and numeracy is a focus on the mainstream institutions of education in Italy, and the intellectual trends formed by these. At times musical education coincided neatly with these institutions of learning; at times it took place in contexts far removed. Nevertheless, a brief overview of general educational practices in fifteenth and sixteenth century Italy will provide a context for resulting discussions of pedagogical methods in music.[68]

The huge increase in basic literacy and numeracy, particularly among men, could be attributed in many communities to an increasing availability and accessibility of individual teachers.[69] Increasingly towns and villages funded or partially subsidized one or more teachers to educate pupils from the area; schooling moved out of the sole purview of the church, and elementary education became an accepted norm for a wider portion of Italian society. As teachers became more numerous, two tiers of general education emerged: elementary tutors taught the fundamentals of reading, writing, and numeracy, and secondary education was taught by trained Latin grammarians, who

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[67] For example, Robert Black, *Education and Society in Florentine Tuscany: Teachers, Pupils and Schools, c. 1250–1500* (Leiden: Brill, 2007).

[68] In the following summary, I draw much from Grendler's *Schooling in Renaissance Italy* as the most detailed general study of recent years. A concise and contextualized account of Robert Black's research can be found in his chapter "Education and the Emergence of a Literate Society," in *Italy in the Age of the Renaissance, 1300–1550* (The Short Oxford History of Italy, Vol. 3), ed. John M. Najemy (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 18–36.

[69] Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy*, 13–22.

focused on sentence construction and syntax.[70] The universities comprised a third tier above this, but catered only for a select few.

Any particular standardization of educational practices was precluded by the importance of the independent teacher—standards and methods varied, with great regional differences in educational demand, provision, and uptake. Certain texts were however widely used, many of which were relics of the Middle Ages, in particular the Latin grammar known as the *Donatus* or *Ianua*.[71] This was an education based almost entirely in Latin, thought in the Middle Ages to be an artificial, unchanging language suitable for teaching (unlike the fluid and uncodified regional vernaculars).[72]

With the wider provision of education came the use of literacy and numeracy skills in working life and therefore, in some areas, the idea grew that education was only useful in the service of work, commerce, and trade. Particularly in the mercantile Florentine society, study of the vernacular, the language of commerce, was encouraged, and "abacus" schools specialized in accounting and mercantile skills.[73] The humanist revival, originating in fifteenth-century Florence, reacted against the commercial vernacular by promoting the Latin classics as essential aspects of gentility and civilized existence. Florentine humanism was initially pursued only among the amateur elites; only gradually did it reverse a decline in Latin study in Florentine schools, where the increasingly stable vernacular was still used for grammars and explanatory texts. Other large cities that had maintained a strong tradition of Latin teaching throughout, including

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[70] Black, "Education and the Emergence of a Literate Society," 19–22.

[71] This was not actually Aelius Donatus's original *Ars minor*, but rather a medieval imitation often known by its first word "Ianua." See Black, *Humanism and Education in Medieval and Renaissance Italy*, 45.

[72] Black, *Humanism and Education in Medieval and Renaissance Italy*, 42.

[73] On abacus schools, see Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy*, 22–23 and 306–19.

Venice and Rome, only gradually abandoned Medieval Latin for the more subtle and elegant Roman classics.[74]

While recent historiography has contributed towards the assembly of a bigger picture, many facets of education in early modern Italy remain unclear. Given the fragmentary sources and the loss of unwritten traditions of teaching and learning, a full understanding of pedagogy during this time will never be reached. The focus on Latin teaching, widely used texts, and Florentine humanism has however obscured some other potential areas of study.

One issue that remains relatively neglected is the actual activities of pedagogy in the period; that is to say, not so much where or what students studied, but rather how they were taught, how they learned, how they received or retained education, and how their education shaped their lives and careers.[75] A second understudied area is education outside the teachings of literacy, numeracy, and Latin. Important though the provision of basic skills and more advanced Latin are in the study of education, for many they represented only a portion of the skills needed to pursue a particular career or livelihood. The study of education and pedagogy in many professions (including that of professional musician) remains largely lacking. Given the historical distance and insufficiency of sources, the difficulties in such studies are great, but nevertheless there remains much work still to be done on these more specific contexts for education. Related to this second point is an absence of studies on education outside formal educational settings. While individual tutors and grammarians remained the most recognized conveyers of literacy

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[74] Black, "Education and the Emergence of a Literate Society," 31.

[75] A recent study moving in this direction is Lynn Enterline, *Shakespeare's Schoolroom: Rhetoric, Discipline, Emotion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), which attempted to assess how aspects of Shakespeare's education may have resounded in his plays.

and numeracy in the period, much learning was carried out in alternate situations, with courts, books, professional individuals, the church, and social interactions playing a role in the formation of intellects and skills. Teaching activities in the private home are also little-studied, although in this case solid documentary evidence is sparse.[76]

Running throughout the studies discussed above are a number of themes that could be construed as representing pedagogical principles common to most educational settings of the period. Foremost among these is the indebtedness to tradition and trusted pedagogies. While modern scholarship places much emphasis on innovation in the intellectual tradition (particularly the trends we recognize as belonging to the Renaissance) and figures who contributed unusual or progressive ideas, the fact that change was gradual and inconsistent, and tradition strong, can be easily overlooked. Medieval Latin grammars (particularly the *Donatus*/*Ianua*) continued to circulate well into the era of print and were widely used by Latin beginners even when the students might later go on to study the new texts of humanist reform. Many of the most fundamental methods of basic literacy education, in particular rote learning and memorization, had been in use for hundreds of years, and remained constant even while the materials and content of the teaching evolved.[77] The major medieval grammars were composed in verse, which appeared to be memorized over a number of months; mnemonic devices were common in writings throughout the age. It has been suggested

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[76] The only specific study is a scant few pages in length: Alasdair A. MacDonald, "The Renaissance Household as Centre of Learning," in *Centres of Learning and Location in Pre-Modern Europe and the Near East*, ed. Jan Drijvers and Alasdair A. MacDonald (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995), 289–98. There is also some more general discussion in Marta Ajmar-Wollheim and Flora Dennis, eds., *At Home in Renaissance Italy: Art and Life in the Italian House, 1400–1600* (London: V & A, 2006).

[77] The definitive study on the role of memory in medieval intellectual life is Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990). An example of the continuing role of memory in the fifteenth-century study of Latin can be found in Black, *Humanism and Education in Medieval and Renaissance Italy*, 135.

that, as the printing of schoolbooks became economically viable, a higher level of book

ownership lessened reliance on memorization.[78] This, however, is not to downplay the

role of memorization in education: book ownership was still limited, and memorization

continued to be advocated in a general sense. Related to this was the role of repetition, or

rote learning, which enabled the interiorization of key tenets and their swift recall.

Another area of continuity from medieval practices was the teaching methods for

the most fundamental level of literacy, which remained relatively consistent for hundreds

of years.[79] The stability and consistency of Latin orthography[80]—increasingly a feature of

the Italian vernacular too—perpetuated a system of learning to read through sounding out

letters, syllables, and then words of increasing length.[81] Various materials were used to

aid the process. The most basic was a *tavola*, a sheet of parchment with the alphabet and

some syllables listed.[82] Hornbooks, consisting of a sheet covered with a very thin layer of

transparent horn, were a more durable version of this.[83] Manuscripts gave way to small

printed books containing a progression of letters, syllables, and fundamental religious

texts.[84] This method of teaching to read through basic units was prevalent across Europe

during this age. It is worth noting that this system was not necessarily intended to enable

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[78] Black, "Education and the Emergence of a Literate Society," 21.

[79] Paul Grendler credited the initial impetus for his study to his son's elementary studies in a 1970s
Florentine school, in which he perceived the continuation of teaching methods dating back hundreds of
years; see Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy*, xvii and 160n47–48.

[80] See Black, "Education and the Emergence of a Literate Society," 20. He points out the perception of
Latin as an "artificial, created, unchanging language" that was an "*ars*…suitable for teaching."

[81] For a detailed description of the process, see Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy*, 156–61.

[82] See Black, "Education and the Emergence of a Literate Society," 20, and Grendler, *Schooling in
Renaissance Italy*, 142–43.

[83] Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy*, 143.

[84] For a broader geographical survey of these printed materials, see Houston, *Literacy in Early Modern
Europe*, 58–59.

proper understanding of Latin at this early point—little actual Latin grammar or syntax was learned at this stage, and some students did not study far beyond the ability to accurately sound out the words.[85] The concept of "literacy" during this time was not necessarily straightforward, with a range of different skills and capabilities that show a clear separation between reading and writing, and a range of levels of understanding and capability in using the language.[86] Ultimately, the range between being able to approximate a signature and writing at length was immense and, to some, only the acquisition of Latin fluency counted as literacy.

The reforms of humanist educators were rooted in historicist views, as they based their pedagogical reforms on the most interesting and important of the recently rediscovered classical texts. These texts took their place in the intermediate curriculum, after the use of traditional texts for learning the basics of Latin, and merely supplanted or added to Latin texts of considerable age that had long been used in education by authors including Aesop, Ovid, Virgil, and Horace.[87] Through a rationale that understanding selected classical writings would boost morality and wisdom in the present, pedagogical reformers of the Renaissance sought to make stronger connections with a still older age. They retained the method of using recognized key texts of this earlier age, although it remains a point of contention whether the imitation promulgated in Renaissance pedagogy was merely stylistic (relating to grammar and syntax) or whether it extended to

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[85] Black, "Education and the Emergence of a Literate Society," 22.

[86] On the various levels of literacy that can be differentiated, see Houston, *Literacy in Early Modern Europe*, 3–4. He points out that there is a "spectrum or hierarchy of skills" that can fall under the term "literacy."

[87] See Black, *Humanism and Education in Medieval and Renaissance Italy*, Chapter 4, "Latin Authors in Medieval and Renaissance Italian schools: The Story of a Canon," 173–274, and Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy*, 111–14.

content and therefore amounted to a moral education. A stated hope of many Renaissance

pedagogues was that the copying and imitation of great personalities from the Classical

age would bring a new morality to educated society, who would relive a civilizational

golden age through their writings, but it has been suggested that the actual method of

study continued to prioritize grammatical parsing above any moralistic analysis of

ideas.[88] A key pedagogical tenet of the humanist movement was the honing of style

through the imitation of recognized masters. As the rediscovery and publishing of the

classics progressed, imitation of their grammatical constructions began to change Latin

writing skills, transforming writing from inelegant (and frequently inconsistent and

illogical) Medieval Latin into Ciceronian Latin. The general principle looked back to

imitatio as it was discussed by the Roman writers: the choosing of an esteemed model

and conscious assimilation of its style.

Closely related to *imitatio* was learning through the collection and variation of

figures. A rhetorical skill, this consisted of varying a statement or sentiment; exemplars

by prominent minds could run to dozens or hundreds of variations in place of a simple

sentence. Practice of this skill taught the awareness of different styles, honed the

imagination in finding different phrasings and vocabulary, and trained the judgment in

assessing the suitability of different options. It also enabled students to find variations for

the exemplars they imitated, encouraging individuality through the creation, formulation

and judgment of variants, thereby adding a level of choice and ingenuity to a skill that

could otherwise be considered formulaic or derivative. This technique was present from

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[88] Although early Renaissance pedagogues such as Guarino had the intention that humanist education was "intrinsically morally regenerative and conducive to the formation of a true Christian spirit," the sixteenth century saw a rise of more practical aspects of humanism that tended to neglect the moral apparatus; see Grafton and Jardine, *From Humanism to the Humanities*, 88 and 168–70.

the early years of humanism, when Guarino described the benefit to the student of having a notebook of interesting material that acted "like a diligent and attentive servant to provide what you need."[89]

These educational settings for musicians and for students of literacy in the broader society have many implications for the ways in which a route from primary orality to various degrees of literacy could have been negotiated by instrumentalists. Some of the obscurity that surrounds the education of these obscure figures can be mitigated through understanding of general pedagogical principles, and from the patterns of thought that could result from learning to read and write music. This account also emphasizes the importance of broader social practices and institutions that could have shaped the cultivation of literacy in instrumentalists, and provided a conduit through which they could interact with the portions of musical society who placed a high importance on the use of notation in their work. In the following chapter, I build upon this by considering the intersections between instrumentalists and cultures that were built upon particular models of educational thought, particularly artisanal cultures and the Catholic Church.

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[89] For a translation of Guarino's letter, see ibid., 16–17.

Chapter 2

Artisanal Instrumentalists and Their Development of Musical Literacy

in Cities and Churches

Education in the sixteenth century was drastically stratified and shaped by matters of

class and status. It is not unusual to find that more fundamental and widespread historical

trends can be obscured by tales of the rich, powerful, unusual, or eccentric. Much

discussion of sixteenth-century music has shown such a bias: for example, the colorful

personalities and innovative music of sophisticated courtly milieus such as the Florentine

Camerata have occupied many musicologists seeking to discuss compositional style in

the early modern period. Certainly the developments from composers and theorists in

these refined secular repertoires were groundbreaking in many respects (such as in the

development of monody), but on a broader scale, this causes a tendency to exclude from

historiographical discussion the professional musicians in civic employment and the

church. Sources for their activities and mere existence may be far sparser, yet churches

and civic settings constituted an important part of sixteenth-century musical life.

Professional instrumentalists, in particular, are often absent from such histories, making

their emergence as a powerful creative force in the early seventeenth century all the more

unexplained.

In this chapter, I assess the sites in which professional instrumentalists operated,

in particular the cities where they had a long heritage of civic employment, and the

churches that were beginning to open their musical establishments an increasing amount

of instrumental participation. Given that direct educational data about instrumentalists in

these situations has been largely lost, I set out the case for incorporating many of these professional players within an artisanal culture. By acknowledging a performative aspect that supplements traditional definitions of artisanship, I read sources on the activities of civic instrumentalists through the lens of artisanal pedagogical tenets.

The interrelationships of oral and literate learning that are opened up by this discussion intensify once these instrumentalists circulated in churches in the middle of the sixteenth century. I review evidence for the intersections between these civic professional musicians and those first documented to play in the church, and consider how the skills and traditions of the artisanal instrumentalist may have intersected with strongly literate musical traditions within the church.

Drawing together studies on the considerable numbers of such players in churches by the end of the sixteenth century, I consider the legacy of artisanal pedagogical practices, and identify the implications of these traditions for the development of compositional style, in particular in the areas of counterpoint and improvisation. I argue that, although courts and intellectual circles may have exerted influence on some developments in musical style, professional instrumentalists within the context of the church and city likely had a widespread and profound impact on the development of new generations of performers and their compositions. The positioning of instrumentalists at a mid-point of the oral-literate continuum also helped them to find their place in the Tridentine church, and shaped the meaning and ontology of the non-vocal work.

Civic instrumentalists as artisans in sixteenth-century Italy

For much of their early history, instrumentalists occupied an ambiguous place in music historiography: they were illustrated, described, listed in records—clearly they were prominent in social life—yet it is practically impossible to discern what they might have sounded like, given a lack of clearly notated performance material. Centuries of evidence point to the professional instrumentalist as a promulgator of oral, improvisatory cultures, a creator of musical activities rather than of (what posterity may problematically recognize as) "musical works." In the case of the *piffari*, this is particularly true. As groups of civic instrumentalists, their duties included many activities that involved playing whilst in motion and in the open air, such as playing in the many civic and sacred processions that frequently enlivened city life, and serenading from civic buildings or (perhaps unsolicited) outside private homes of the wealthier citizens.[1] The groups of trumpeters and kettledrums likely played their own repertoire of fanfares, wind groups may have deployed semi-improvised polyphony and orally learned, memorized repertoires, and string players likely accompanied dancing using standard formulas with improvisation and variation. Since we have little idea exactly *what* they played, we also have little idea *how* they came to learn or create their repertoires.

I argue that it may be fruitful to consider the possible resonances between professional instrumentalists and the broad artisanal culture present in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. There has been a general avoidance in scholarship of this potential connection. Prominent studies of artisanal cultures have focused primarily on product-driven crafts such as tailoring, carpentry, and baking, but performative crafts that do not

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[1] On the role of instrumentalists in processions, see Coehlo and Polk, *Instrumentalists and Renaissance Culture, 1420–1600*, 171–73.

leave lasting material products—such as music-making—have not generally been admitted to the range of artisanal professions.[2] Derived from such cultural studies, theoretical formulations of artisanship have depended on some aspect of physical production. Some more recent studies, however, have started to probe a less materialistic artisanal culture in which intangibles such as knowledge, experience, and social practices can legitimately take their place alongside some form of manufacture or production, thereby establishing a more inclusive concept of artisanship.[3] Such a broader definition could include producers of the ephemeral and practitioners of performance, and some studies have started to include the oral and performative as examples of artisanal cultures in medieval societies with a high incidence of illiteracy.[4] In addition, recent scholarship on artisans has developed the idea that the artisanal class was defined not just by the cultivation of some mode of production, but rather by the interaction between material production and social practices.[5] Group and work organization, relationships between artisans, and the transmission of knowledge could all become fundamental signifiers of the artisanal experience.

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[2] See for example the leading general study by James R. Farr, *Artisans in Europe, 1300–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), and Pamela O. Long's exploration of the intersections between intellectual history and artisanal cultures, *Openness, Secrecy, Authorship: Technical Arts and the Culture of Knowledge from Antiquity to the Renaissance* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001).

[3] One of the earliest expressions of this view was in the scholarship of Clifford Geertz who, from the standpoint of cultural anthropology, drew attention to "thick" cultures in which the material and the experiential are inextricably linked; see Clifford Geertz, "Thick Description: Towards an Interpretative Theory of Culture," in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 3–30.

[4] A recent study of the York Mystery Plays as an artisanal activity is an example of this trend; see Nicole R. Rice and Margaret A. Pappano, *The Civic Cycles: Artisan Drama and Identity in Premodern England* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2015).

[5] Farr, *Artisans in Europe*, 3–5; Gervase Rosser, "Crafts, Guilds and the Negotiation of Work in the Medieval Town," *Past and Present* 154 (1997): 8–9; Margaret A. Pappano and Nicole R. Rice, "Medieval and Early Modern Artisan Culture," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 43, no. 4 (2013): 474.

Studies of medieval and Renaissance music have tacitly acknowledged a kinship between musicians (particularly instrumentalists or civic musicians) and artisans,[6] but have avoided engaging fully with the question of whether a musician could be akin to an artisan, and have not attempted to use artisanal cultures explicitly as an attempt to clarify and connect the disparate evidence about early instrumental playing. Throughout studies of early instrumentalists, though, indications of an artisanal culture show through. These include the passing of skills within families and the intrinsic importance of the household unit. Apprenticeship-style training was used to inculcate mastery of a range of skills and musical instruments needed in their professions. There was frequently a connection between performers and the making of instruments, which I discussed briefly in chapter 1. The practice and transmission of oral cultures were an important part of artisanal culture, and this was aided by formations of professional networks and the recreation of guild dynamics within instrumental ensembles.

The artisanal nature of some Renaissance instrumentalists is clearly revealed through Timothy McGee's work on the late fifteenth-century Florentine *piffaro* Giovanni Cellini.[7] Matching narrative from the autobiography of Giovanni's son, the artist Benvenuto Cellini, to documentary records, McGee is able to reveal a far more nuanced account of Giovanni Cellini's life and career than is usually possible for such figures. Despite stating in his introduction that "employment as a civic musician…held an ideal

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[6] See the reference to a "secretive craft tradition" in Keith Polk, "Vedel and Geige-Fiddle and Viol: German String Traditions in the Fifteenth Century," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 42, no. 3 (1989): 505.

[7] Timothy J. McGee, "Giovanni Cellini, *Piffero* of Florence," *Historical Brass Society Journal* 12 (2000): 210–25.

combination of advantages for someone in the artisan class,"[8] McGee's study found practically all of the above signs of artisanal culture, yet avoided discussing Giovanni Cellini in direct relationship to that culture.

A rare glimpse into the professional musician's household emerges: Benvenuto describes his father playing the viol and singing before the fire,[9] and it appears from this account that Giovanni could play practically every important instrument of the time. Benvenuto's autobiography also claims that his father sometimes made musical instruments in the home—wood organs, harpsichords, lutes, and harps—alongside other construction projects. Giovanni taught his son musical instruments, passing his skills to a family member as to an apprentice, and Benvenuto made early appearances with the Florentine *piffari*, suggesting the interaction of apprentices with the professional activities of the group. Benvenuto also took advantage of his father's connections to a network of professional instrumentalists, going to study for some months with a highly regarded *piffaro* in Bologna. Giovanni Cellini believed that his son would become the finest instrumentalist of the time—Benvenuto Cellini, of course, rebelled against his father's ambitions for him and studied to realize his other artistic aspirations, much to his father's disappointment.

In this and other studies, it is clear that the civic instrumental ensembles had social cohesion and common standards that were closely related to other artisanal cultures. Although the Florentine instrumentalists did not have a guild of their own, McGee considered evidence that the musicians of Giovanni Cellini's generation belonged

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[8] Ibid., 210.

[9] Benvenuto Cellini, *The Autobiography of Benvenuto Cellini*, trans. John A. Symonds (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1927), 10.

to different guilds (e.g., silk or wool), and that their job in the *piffari* was only part-time,

allowing for time to spend on a second (artisanal) occupation that tied them more

securely into the social stratum of the artisan.[10] Although there were very few proper

guilds for instrumentalists in the sixteenth century, it was not uncommon for the *piffaro*

ensemble or a similarly cohesive group of musicians to act in accordance with some

aspects of the guild system.[11]

McGee also explored briefly the intersections between notated music and the

traditional, (semi-)improvised repertoires held by the *piffari* in their oral and memorized

culture.[12] This ties in with the artisanal culture of passing knowledge directly within

personal relationships, and is emphasized by the tendency of family members and

apprentices who had received the oral tradition to take up places in the *piffari*.

The identification of these central tenets of artisanal culture within the particularly

well-documented career of Giovanni Cellini suggests that civic instrumentalists as a class

could be taken as representatives of an artisanal musical culture. The specific attitudes to

pedagogy and knowledge characteristic of this culture may be considered in relation to

much subsequent activity by instrumentalists, and may help to explain and work around

the dearth of specific evidence for instrumentalists' training and education from the

following century.

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[10] McGee, "Giovanni Cellini, *Piffero* of Florence," 219.

[11] Jonathan Glixon's study of Venetian musicians revealed that they organized themselves to take advantage of the employment opportunities of the major churches and confraternities; see Jonathan Glixon, "A Musician's Union in Sixteenth-Century Venice," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 36, no. 3 (1983): 392–421. On the limited reach of instrumentalists' guilds, see Coehlo and Polk, *Instrumentalists and Renaissance Culture, 1420–1600*, 139–41.

[12] McGee, "Giovanni Cellini, *Piffero* of Florence," 218.

Instrumentalists intersecting the civic and the sacred

In the decades between the clearly artisanal life of *piffaro* Giovanni Cellini and the

seventeenth century, when professional musicians and instrumentalists published

idiomatic instrumental music, considerable changes occurred in the careers and lives of

instrumentalists. Prioritizing settings for musical activity outside of the courts and major

intellectual circles, I will trace the continuation of artisanal cultures through the careers of

instrumentalists in the north of Italy (particularly those within or adjoining Venetian

lands), contextualizing some of the geographic areas and institutions that will return in

my subsequent chapters, and tracing links between civic and church employment.

The city of Brescia, towards the western tip of the sixteenth-century Venetian

territories, provides a starting point for the discussion of instrumentalists in the sixteenth

century. Not an independent city-state, and long devoid of any major ruling families,

Brescia was instead a model of civic and church power, with the roles that were held

elsewhere by great families like the Medici, Gonzaga, or Este incorporated instead into

civic structures.[13] This naturally focused musicians around opportunities for civic and

church employment, in the absence of a wealthy court, and so provides an opportunity to

study instrumentalists in a city without so much aristocratic patronage.

Documents from the minutes of the Consiglio General of Brescia, revealed in a

1996 study by John Walter Hill, demonstrated that Brescia was a principal center of early

violin playing.[14] Hill's evidence conclusively showed the presence of string players in the

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[13] On the history of Brescia, and the organization of its civic power structures, see Stephen D. Bowd, *Venice's Most Loyal City: Civic Identity in Renaissance Brescia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 65–79.

[14] John Walter Hill, "The Emergence of Violin Playing into the Sphere of Art Music in Italy: *Compagnie di suonatori* in Brescia during the Sixteenth Century," in *Musica Franca: Essays in Honor of Frank A.*

small ensembles of civic musicians (*piffari*), and noted the continuing presence of

coppie—improvising pairs of instrumentalists, consisting of a soloist and a *tenorista*, who

followed the German tradition explicated by Polk and discussed briefly in the previous

chapter.[15] The string players from the *piffari*, likely violinists, were performing in the

Brescian churches on special occasions by the mid-sixteenth century.

A recurring concern in these sources is the use of civic instrumental ensembles for

serenading and processions; many of the petitions presented by instrumentalists were

seeking to curb the usurping of their duties by unapproved instrumental ensembles, and

they requested that the registered (or petitioning) instrumental ensemble could hold a

monopoly on such performance opportunities. It is evident from these documents that the

civic ensembles had strong cohesion and unity, acting as distinct groups even in the

absence of guild membership, and petitioning the council to legally enshrine tenets about

practices and quality control that a guild system would have enforced.[16] The petitioning

musicians were quick to judge rival instrumentalists with "crude and disordered

instruments" as "vile and inexpert in the art of playing."[17] They suggested that such

incompetent instrumentalists may bring disrepute onto the city, begging the councilors to

consider "the disorder introduced by an infinite number of vile and crude instrumentalists

who play morning serenades…which circumstance not only works to the detriment but

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D'Accone, ed. Irene Alm, Alyson McLamore, and Colleen Reardon, 333–66 (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon Press, 1996).

[15] Keith Polk, "Vedel and Geige-Fiddle and Viol: German String Traditions in the Fifteenth Century," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 42, no. 3 (1989): 504–46.

[16] Studies of artisanship identify the artisan as "someone who possessed a skill but also someone with authority [endowed through membership of a guild] to exercise that skill;" see Pappano and Rice, "Medieval and Early Modern Artisan Culture," 478.

[17] Hill, "The Emergence of Violin Playing into the Sphere of Art Music in Italy," 348. (Document 3, from 1508.)

also to their great shame as well as that of this magnificent city."[18] While the instrumentalists were probably shamelessly slandering their rivals in this petition, their language points also towards a tendency observed in other artisanal cultures to inflate the importance of their products through reference to the largest local unit of power, in this case the "magnificent city" of Brescia.[19]

A primary conclusion that Hill drew from these documents was that violin music was being elevated to the status of art music, making this an important moment in the history of professional instrumentalists.[20] The documents frame the musicians as having achieved "some worthy and eminent accomplishment;" these instrumentalists, "with sweat and effort, have spent their time learning that art," and they are capable of executing it with "the greatest degree of perfection."[21] This petition encompasses the contradictions that beset the musicians' self-assessments during this period: the physicality of the artisan's labor is encapsulated within the "sweat and effort" they devoted to the process of mastery, and yet the final achievement is not a physical object, but rather a sense of intellectual grandeur, in which knowledge is as important as ability. Such a tension between material or physical effort and intellectual or rational knowledge became increasingly common in the early modern age, with some activities we now call "art" beginning to define themselves through intellectual activity and individuality rather than material products. Shayne Legassie discussed an equivalent point to this in the visual arts of the fourteenth century, in which hard (artisanal) labor is still part of an artist's life,

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[18] Ibid., 365. (Document 22, from 1562; an almost identical objection occurs also in the earlier Document 3.)

[19] Pappano and Rice, "Medieval and Early Modern Artisan Culture," 476.

[20] Hill, "The Emergence of Violin Playing into the Sphere of Art Music in Italy," 336.

[21] Ibid., 348. (Document 3, from 1508.)

yet the finished product has an intellectual value and carefully designed nature.[22] The

groups of instrumentalists making these petitions recognized their learning as

symbolizing their higher standing than other, (supposedly) less highly trained musicians,

leading to the argument that the best or perhaps most intelligent instrumentalists—the

most highly educated—should be given the prestigious privileges of performing

serenades and participating in progressions. This too suggests a desire to raise their status

above the artisanal level, since "artisan knowledge and identity remained as an 'other'

against which 'advancing' forms of knowledge and their practitioners defined

themselves;"[23] the benefits of stronger musical educations are already being contemplated

by these ambitious *piffari* of the early sixteenth century.

Like Giovanni Cellini, these instrumentalists were not illiterate entertainers, but

rather appear to have been moderately educated, even near the beginning of the sixteenth

century. In 1504, the Brescian council expelled all of its *piffari* for being "completely

ignorant of the science of music," and presumably went to some effort to hire more

capable replacements.[24] Some of the subsequent instrumentalists acknowledged, directly

or indirectly, that they could improvise upon a chant book, and were also able to read

music and play from mensural notation and polyphony, thereby beginning the move away

from a totally oral culture to one informed (in some respects, at least) by literacy.[25] It

appears that such musicians guarded their skills closely, encouraging the passing of

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[22] Shayne Aaron Legassie, "The Lies of the Painters: Artisan Trickery and the Labor of Painting in Boccaccio's *Decameron* and Sacchetti's *Trecentonovelle*," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 43, no. 4 (2013): 487–519.

[23] Pappano and Rice, "Medieval and Early Modern Artisan Culture," 481.

[24] Hill, "The Emergence of Violin Playing into the Sphere of Art Music in Italy," 347. (Document 1, from 1504.)

[25] Ibid., 359. (Document 16, from 1546.)

education along familial lines and within private settings (as seen in the case of

Benvenuto Cellini and the *piffari* of Florence). They did not publish tutor books or codify

their teachings in any way, making direct contact the only true and reliable way to

continue the tradition;[26] it remains unclear whether they possessed the skills to write

music down, and whether they could be considered "composers." As a result of these

limited lines of teaching between instrumentalists, the preeminence of Brescia as a

supplier of fine players of stringed instruments was ensured for much of the sixteenth

century. However, despite the instrumentalists' evident abilities, the town council still

considered them of limited status within the city: when the council chose three citizens

"expert in musical learning" to help regulate the *piffari*, they chose doctors and nobles

who, presumably, were thought to have better taste and judgment than the professional

musicians of the region.[27]

Through the course of the sixteenth century, it becomes apparent that the

violinists of Brescia were increasingly invited to perform in the local churches. The first

explicit mention of performing in church as a duty of the civic musicians came in a

petition of 1549, which singled out the church of S Maria dei Miracoli as a site where

civic musicians may have to play "in concerti et nell'organo, come all'improviso"—that

is, in the church as a consort and with the organ (presumably from modern notation), and

in improvisational forms—while still on the payroll of the central civic administration.[28]

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[26] The publishing of tutor books has been theorized to be aimed primarily at the courtly audience or patron, promoting the technical knowledge of the artisan and giving their knowledge—although not the artisan as an individual—the opportunity to be elevated socially; see Pappano and Rice, "Medieval and Early Modern Artisan Culture," 481.

[27] Hill, "The Emergence of Violin Playing into the Sphere of Art Music in Italy," 350. (Document 4, from 1507–8.)

[28] Ibid., 364. (Document 20, from 1549.)

This petition dates from some years after the earliest mention of violinists playing in church, from the diary of Pandolfo Nassino; his entries from 1530 and 1538 say that violinists foreign to the area (perhaps German, Hill speculates) had performed in church for two special occasions, an Easter Mass and a wedding.[29] If native Brescian string-players drawn from the *piffari* were performing regularly in churches by 1550 at the very latest, this indicates that musicians must have been developing the skills necessary to play "in concerti et nell'organo, come all'improviso" by the 1530s–40s.

In addition to their performing activities, there are also indications that the *piffari* of Brescia may have had connections to the making of musical instruments. The triangle formed by the cities of Brescia, Cremona, and Verona has long been recognized as an early center of musical instrument (and specifically violin) making. A large number of luthiers made a steady supply of instruments to performers possible, and personal connections between performers and luthiers are highly likely. While many of the violins surviving today are known to have been made for use in courts, such as the superb set of violins made by Andrea Amati of Cremona with beautiful hand-painted decorations for the French court in 1560, it is generally acknowledged that violins made from the finest materials, with decoration or royal connections, are far more likely to survive than those made for local players. Luthiers surely supplied instruments to local professional performers as well, maintaining close connections between the musicians and artisanal instrument makers.

Hill's assessment of early string playing in Brescia clearly established that the violin family, and not the viol family, was the dominant stringed instrument group played

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[29] Paolo Guerrini, "Il Santuario delle Grazie," *Brixia sacra* 2 (1911): 263–64; discussed in Hill, "The Emergence of Violin Playing into the Sphere of Art Music in Italy," 343, 345.

by professional musicians in this area.[30] The earliest known survival of the word

"violino" comes in Brescian sources (in the aforementioned diary of Pandolfo Nassino,

1530),[31] and the violins were probably present at earlier dates, under the name "violetta."

This assessment confirms and contributes to an important assumption about the relative

status and usage of violin and viol family instruments in the sixteenth century discussed

in chapter 1.[32] The viol, learned by amateurs and cultivated in courtly environments, does

not figure highly in accounts of professional civic and church musicians past the early

sixteenth century, nor does it seem to have been played professionally in the Brescian

region. The only significant use of viols in a public or institutional setting in this area of

northern Italy was by the Accademia Filarmonica of Verona, who owned *una coppia de*

viole within their instrument collection; presumably these viols were played by keen

amateurs in madrigals and other adaptations from vocal music.[33] The soft sound of the

viol, with its convenient frets and convivial performance experience, made it an

archetypal instrument for amateur music-making. The violin, conversely, was associated

with the civic musicians who gradually moved into the church, supporting its association

with professional players and apprenticeship-style lines of teaching, while adding another

dimension and repertoire to the widespread use of the violin in dance music during the

sixteenth century. It could be difficult to manage and manipulate, sometimes prone to a

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[30] For extensive discussion on the early history of the violin, see David D. Boyden, *The History of Violin Playing from Its Origins to 1761 and Its Relationship to the Violin and Violin Music* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965).

[31] Hill "The Emergence of Violin Playing into the Sphere of Art Music in Italy," 343 and Guerrini, "Il Santuario delle Grazie," 263.

[32] The *piffaro* Giovanni Cellini's playing of a viol in his home, in distant Florence in the late fifteenth century, reflects back to a time before the invention of the violin, in an area not particularly well-known for its construction of stringed instruments.

[33] Howard Mayer Brown, "The Instrumentalist's Repertory in the Sixteenth Century," in *Le concert des voix et des instruments à la Renaissance*, ed. Jean Michel Vaccaro (Paris: CNRS, 1995), 31.

rough harsh sound and requiring much greater skill to play in tune. As modern learners of the Suzuki method can attest, the instruments of the violin family are highly suited to learning in a group situation, where the learner can develop oral skills while copying the techniques of others. Stephen Bonta supported this use of the violin rather than the viol in church with an assessment of sacred prints, noting that a *da gamba* instrument is only specified once (and, even then, in the context of a "contrabasso da gamba"); in every other instance where a type of *viola* is specified by a sacred print, they are of the *da braccio* or *da brazzo* type.[34]

Other cities showed a preference for different instruments, demonstrating the importance of location and the specialization created in limited geographical areas by the guarding of skills and passing of knowledge within lines of personal connections. Nearby Bologna, with its huge church of S Petronio, was home to significant numbers of wind players, particularly of the cornetto and sackbut. These instrumentalists had cultivated their skills across generations through a long history of civic wind ensembles in Bologna, in particular the much-loved Concerto Palatino; a prominent dynasty to hold multiple positions in the ensemble was the Ganassi family. By the mid-sixteenth century, the Concerto Palatino had 19 instrumentalists, and maintained a strong reputation for high-quality civic music; wind players from this ensemble also played with the *cappella musicale* of S Petronio on regular occasions.[35]

A similar concentration of wind players could be found in Udine, north-east of Venice. Like Bologna, Udine had a particularly strong tradition of civic wind ensembles,

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[34] Stephen Bonta, "The Use of Instruments in Sacred Music in Italy, 1560–1700," *Early Music* 18, no. 4 (1990): 524.

[35] The main source for information about the Concerto Palatino is Osvaldo Gambassi, *Il Concerto Palatino della Signoria di Bologna: Cinque secoli di vita musicale a corte (1250–1797)* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1989).

which fostered a number of families specializing in performance on wind instruments,

again confirming artisanal trends of educating within the family unit. By the middle of

the sixteenth century these civic wind players were gaining experience playing in the

church: in 1560 five of them were "obligato venire a servire le feste in Coro" in the

Duomo.[36] Wind players from Udine subsequently took a leading role in the introduction

of instruments to S Marco in Venice, with Girolamo Dalla Casa of Udine and his two

brothers heading the instrumental ensemble of S Marco for decades.[37] The situation of the

instrumental ensemble at S Marco itself during these early decades (and in many other

Venetian churches too) was not entirely removed from the *piffari* ensemble: Venetian

church instrumentalists could also be expected to carry out duties akin to their civic

counterparts, such as performing in processions and ceremonial events. S Marco also

absorbed members of the Venetian *piffari*, such as Giovanni Bassano, who will be

discussed at greater length below, and provided a melting pot where musicians of

predominately oral backgrounds could be immersed in the literate church culture.

Artisanal pedagogies of instrumentalists within sacred establishments

There are increasing indications that conventional church employees had knowledge of

instrumental playing. The growing presence of civic instrumentalists in Brescian

churches has already been noted, and their involvement coincides with evidence that

employees and students in Brescian churches were learning about stringed instruments

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[36] Giuseppe Vale, "La Cappella musicale dal Duomo di Udine," *Note d'archivio per la storia musicale* 7 (1935): 112, 178.

[37] For more on instrumentalists at S Marco, see Giulio M. Ongaro, "Gli inizi della musica strumentale a San Marco," in *Atto del convegno internazionale "Giovanni Legrenzi e la cappella ducale di San Marco,"* ed. Francesco Passadore and Franco Rossi (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1990), 215–26; Eleanor Selfridge-Field, *Venetian Instrumental Music from Gabrieli to Vivaldi* (London: Blackwell, 1975; 3rd rev. ed., New York: Dover, 1994).

such as the violin. Early evidence of this comes from the *Scintille di musica* of Giovanni Maria Lanfranco, a treatise published in 1533 when he was the *maestro di cappella* of Brescia Cathedral.[38] The majority of the four parts are taken up with theoretical discussions that complemented the practical education of choirboys: Lanfranco covered the fundamentals of music and notation, mensuration, the modes in plainchant, and improvised counterpoint. The final pages of the book, however, turned to a discussion of instruments (in particular, the distinctive tunings of each stringed instrument), which Lanfranco incorporated "in order to satisfy some of my friends."[39]

In Lanfranco's section on instruments, a three-string *violetta da braccio* (presumably akin to the violins played by the civic musicians of Brescia that were sometimes heard within Lanfranco's church) and seven-string *lira* [*da braccio*] are described alongside the viol and lute, instruments more likely to be familiar to a professional church employee of Lanfranco's standing. The *violetta da braccio* conspicuously lacks the classical connections afforded to some of the instruments, for example the lute, of which he wrote,

> The lute, which (according to my belief) is that properly and greatly celebrated lyre or kithara said to have been first discovered by Mercury and developed by his successors, is the most perfect instrument of all the others, since on it every tone and sound are found. Whence one can find on this instrument that at every position of the hand is whatever singing syllable one wants.[40]

Lanfranco's final sentence raises the possibility that he saw the lute as a pedagogical aid, which could show his choirboys every pitch to sing. He explains briefly

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[38] Giovanni Maria Lanfranco, *Scintille di musica* (Brescia: Britannicus, 1533); translated in Barbara Lee, "Giovanni Maria Lanfranco's 'Scintille di musica' and its Relation to 16th-Century Music Theory" (PhD diss., Cornell University, 1961).

[39] Ibid., 250.

[40] Ibid., 256.

the basics of playing notes on the lute according to the frets, thereby giving the reader the knowledge required to use a lute for this purpose. The *violetta* and *lira*, being unfretted and considerably more difficult to describe, do not receive such explanations; for these instruments he gives only the tunings of their open strings. The lack of additional information suggests Lanfranco stood outside the tradition through which a musician could learn the techniques of these instruments, or he realized that there was no value in describing skills that could only come from in-person teaching; he may also have been considering the class stratification that existed between the clergy and the instrumentalists who played such instruments. The choirboys who may have used the treatise were being made aware of their existence and basic features, so they would have understood the *piffari* when they came across them in the church—but Lanfranco's students did not need to know how to use them in the course of their sacred duties.

The dedicatees of Lanfranco's treatise are also of some significance. Unlike many works by his contemporaries, seeking to achieve some ulterior motive through dedication to a high-ranking figure, the four parts of Lanfranco's treatise give a glimpse into his social circle as *maestro di cappella* of Brescia Cathedral—perhaps the "friends" for whom he added his section on instruments. The third and fourth parts are dedicated to singers at the Cathedral, Martino Balsich, Bartolomeo Bertusso, and Valerio Durante;[41] from Lanfranco's language it appears that these named individuals were seasoned singers who served reliably in the church, and it may be that they received the dedication for this pedagogical material on account of some involvement with the training of choirboys.[42]

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[41] Ibid., 195, 215.

The second part about mensural notation bears a nepotistic dedication to his nephew, Genesio Lanfranco ("as to one who learned them from me in olden times"),[43] showing that even within the more formal atmosphere of church training, family ties remained strong.

It is the dedication of the first part that holds wider resonances for the familial relationships connecting Brescia's church musicians. This longest and most effusive of the dedications went to Bartolomeo Maschera, Lanfranco's close colleague at the cathedral, who was master of Latin to the choirboys; Maschera is given the chance to respond in kind, contributing a brief and conventional Latin reply.[44] Both made a considerable effort to connect this musical enterprise to the humanist project and important figures of Classical heritage, but they admitted that this first treatise by Lanfranco is primarily aimed towards the practical education of choirboys. (No trace survives of the frequently mentioned second, more theoretical treatise, to be titled *Terentiana.*)

Bartolomeo Maschera's son, Florentio Maschera, was probably born within ten years of the publication of Lanfranco's treatise, and went on to train as a choirboy at Brescia Cathedral; after briefly serving as an organist in Venice, he returned to Brescia in 1557, remaining there for the rest of his career. He was also an accomplished string

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[42] There is evidence, from the case of Pietro Pontio, that in some churches teaching responsibilities could be shared among a number of capable singers; see Murray, "On the Teaching Duties of the Maestro di Cappella in Sixteenth-Century Italy," 118–20.

[43] Lee, "Giovanni Maria Lanfranco's 'Scintille di musica,'" 113.

[44] Ibid., 52–62.

player, according to the accounts later collected and published by Leonardo Cozzando.[45]

Although Lanfranco had moved elsewhere by the time of Florentio's education, it is

highly likely that the *Scintille di musica* featured in Florentio's studies, either through

copies left at the cathedral, or through his father. Furthermore, this indicates an entry

point to the profession for those not born into a musical family: having a father who was

a well-respected intellectual or teacher with strong church connections, Florentio

Maschera was able to receive from the church not just a clerical education of essential

literacy and religious dogma, but a thorough education in music theory, singing, and

playing musical instruments. Maschera appears to have benefitted from the regular

presence in the church of civic players of stringed instruments, apparently developing a

high level of proficiency on the violin while bringing his skills as an organist to a

professional level, perhaps alongside members of the organ-building Antegnati dynasty—

his close contemporary Costanzo Antegnati took the post of Brescian organist after

Maschera died. In the example of Florentio Maschera we see the blending of Brescia's

string-playing tradition with the education of a traditional church musician; he was an

educated churchman and a member of the literate elite who could also play the stringed

instruments of the professional musicians.

Similar figures can be found in nearby Verona and Cremona. To consider one

example, Marc'Antonio Ingegneri—born and educated in Verona—was a competent

player of stringed instruments, in addition to his career as the organist and *maestro di*

cappella of Cremona Cathedral. While definite evidence of widespread string playing in

Verona is elusive, it is suggestive that one of the earliest names connected to the making

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[45] Leonardo Cozzando, *Libraria bresciana* (Brescia: Rizzardi, 1685), 1:113–14; Johann Gottfried Walther drew heavily on Cozzando for his biographical entry in the *Musicalisches Lexicon* (Leipzig: Deer, 1732), 332.

of stringed instruments is Maestro Sebastian da Verona, who was employed in 1511 to make and maintain stringed instruments for the court of Ferrara, and the earliest known record of an instrumentalist's formal appointment to a church position is Giuseppe Maccacaro, appointed violinist to the Duomo of Verona in 1566. It is enticing to consider Maccacaro and Ingegneri as possibly members of the same generation, who were employed as violinists in the 1550s and 1560s, and learned to play during their childhood in Verona. Although Maccacaro's origins are obscure, it is known that Ingegneri studied as a choirboy in the Duomo of Verona. Once installed in Cremona, Ingegneri proceeded to pass on his skills with stringed instruments to his students, including Claudio Monteverdi, whose first professional appointment was as a *suonatore di vivuola* to Vincenzo I Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua.

In the cases of both Florentio Maschera and Marc'Antonio Ingegneri, a conventional choirboy education led to employment as a prominent organist or *maestro di cappella*. The learning of stringed instruments seems to have taken place alongside this, raising the possibility of study with the instrumentalists who were associated with the church, and performance on stringed instruments subsequently played an important, but ultimately peripheral part of their successful later careers. The case of Giovanni Bassano of Venice extends this discussion further, providing an example of a choirboy who went on to make instrumental performance his primary career.

Giulio Ongaro has convincingly argued Giovanni Bassano (?1560/61–1617) was a choirboy at S Marco, Venice, in 1571, under the diminutive name "Zanetto."[46] However, as the son of a prolific dynasty of *piffari* and instrument makers (with branches in both Venice and London), Bassano apparently also received extensive training as an

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[46] Ongaro, "Gli inizi della musica strumentale a San Marco," 224n27.

instrumentalist within the confines of his family; Ongaro, in one of his many studies of

the Bassano family, described him as "a *figlio d'arte*, born into an outstanding musical

family."[47] Later employed as a *piffaro* at the Confraternity of S Rocco,[48] and a valued

member of the instrumental ensemble at S Marco (later the *maestro de' concerti* after

Girolamo Dalla Casa's death), Bassano is remembered by history as an excellent

cornettist and instrumentalist;[49] his most original publication was his diminutions manual

on instrumental ornamentation, *Ricercate, passaggi et cadentie* of 1585, which will be

discussed further in chapter 4.[50]

    Alongside this career as an instrumentalist, Bassano appeared to retain skills from

his probable choirboy training, composing motets in skillful counterpoint,[51] and taking up

a post of *maestro di canto* at the Seminary of S Marco, where he taught counterpoint,

solfeggio, and *cantus firmus* to the boys and young clerics.[52] For Giovanni Bassano, a

combination of the traditional instrumentalist's training with some more formal musical

education within the church allowed him to build a particularly successful career around

the churches, seminaries, and confraternities of Venice, and to blend the improvisational

skills of his *piffaro* training with his abilities as a literate church musician. His son,

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[47] Giulio M. Ongaro, "New Documents on the Bassano Family," *Early Music* 20, no. 3 (1992): 412.

[48] On Bassano's confraternity activities, see Jonathan Glixon, *Honoring God and the City: Music at the Venetian Confraternities, 1260–1807* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 158–59.

[49] On Bassano's career, see in particular Eleanor Selfridge-Field, "Bassano and the Orchestra of St. Mark's," *Early Music* 4 (1976): 152–58 and Ongaro, "New Documents on the Bassano Family," 409–13.

[50] Giovanni Bassano, *Ricercate, passaggi et cadentie, per potersi essercitar nel diminuir terminatamente con ogni sorte d'istrumento* (Venice: Vincenti and Amadino, 1585, 2/1598).

[51] In particular the *Motetti per concerti ecclesiastici* (Venice: Vincenti, 1598).

[52] Selfridge-Field, "Bassano and the Orchestra of St. Mark's," 154.

Santino Bassano, later followed him into the S Marco instrumental ensemble, thereby

perpetuating the dynastic and educational line.[53]

These examples of Maschera, Ingegneri, and Bassano begin to suggest how the

artisanal techniques of instrumental study may have moved from the civic sphere into the

church. The teaching and learning of instruments began to prioritize some of the

techniques, practices, and repertoires required for church employment, and connected to

the skills musicians were learning as choirboys in churches. Moreover, connections start

to be drawn between the predominately literate culture of the churches and the various

oral traditions of instrumentalists. It is possible that players such as Maschera and

Ingegneri, who were both string players and organist-composers, were not fully

immersed in these oral traditions, since they did not appear to come from traditional

instrumentalists' backgrounds; the influence of literacy may have weighed more heavily

on their work. For many instrumentalists though, elements of church education could

complement the oral skills picked up from family members and acquaintances.

A subsequent trend of the seventeenth century, which may also indicate an

increasing overlap between choirboy training and instrumental teaching, is a growing

number of musicians recorded as both singers and instrumentalists. To consider just some

brief examples, the instrumentalist rosters of S Marco, Venice, contain in the seventeenth

century a number of individuals who are known to have been singers as well, being either

listed in the singers' rosters too, or noted as a singer in the instrumentalists' records.[54]

The earliest musicians at S Marco to fall into this category were singers who also played

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[53] Ibid., 153.

[54] For lists of instrumentalists at S Marco, see Selfridge-Field, *Venetian Instrumental Music from Gabrieli to Vivaldi*, 335–46.

the theorbo, such as Gerardo Biancosi (hired 1614), Flaminio Corradi (hired 1615) and Francesco Barbarino (hired 1617)—this was an unsurprising confluence of skills, and not really indicative of a new trend. By the next generation of musicians, however, a number of other instrumentalists were listed as singers too, including Marco Pellegrini (violinist, cornettist, and singer, hired 1634), Carlo Ruggiero (violinist and singer, hired 1641), and Giacomo Maccabrissa (*sonador* and singer, hired 1642). There were also employees who started out as instrumentalists and then become singers, such as Matteo Caracca, hired as a trombonist in 1624 then named as a singer in 1625, and vice versa, for example Marco Corradini, originally a singer, then hired as a cornettist in 1640.

While all these singer/instrumentalists listed above are of relatively little historical significance, some more well-known musicians also showed the same skill sets. Giovanni Rovetta (c. 1595–1668) was the son of the violinist Giacomo Rovetta (c. 1566–1641), who was employed at S Marco between 1614 (perhaps earlier) and his death. Nineteenth-century historian Francesco Caffi claimed that Giovanni had been a choirboy at S Marco, a claim that has never been conclusively proven yet seems likely to be accurate.[55] His earliest known association with S Marco was as an instrumentalist, joining his father in the instrumental ensemble in 1614 (what instrument(s) he played remains unclear). Clearly talented and ambitious, he competed for the post of *capo dei concerti* after the death of Giovanni Bassano, and was appointed a bass singer in 1623. From there he was able to rise to assistant then full *maestro di cappella*, in 1627 and 1644 respectively. His career (like that of Giovanni Bassano) demonstrated the ease to which the talented son of an instrumentalist could use both their instrumentalist training and their place as a

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[55] Francesco Caffi, *Storia della musica sacra nella già cappella ducale di San Marco in Venezia dal 1318 al 1797* (Venice: Antonelli, 1854–55/R), 1:265.

choirboy to advance in this elite church. By this point, artisanal instrumental cultures

were being clearly subsumed and perpetuated within the church establishment, and

literate instrumentalists could acquire multiple skills that would make them more

valuable as a church employee. The considerable number of instrumentalists entering the

church resulted in the gradual increase of music that called for instrumental participation,

and many composers took advantage of printing firms to cater to this need.

Print cultures and repertoires in the church

As a result of his study on the bass violin in Italy, Stephen Bonta realized that, even in the

most general sense, very little was known at that time about the repertoires for

instrumentalists in the sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century church.[56] Bonta made an

initial attempt to fill this lacuna with an assessment of 320 printed editions from 1560 to

1700, drawing from these a number of initial conclusions about suggested uses of

instruments in the church during this period.[57] His study, although in many respects

preliminary and lacking specific details, confirms the larger picture suggested by the

examples discussed above.

Bonta established beyond any doubt the widespread use of instruments in the

sixteenth-century church, listing over 50 Venetian prints from the 1560s to 1597 that

gave the option of instrumental performance (usually with a rubric such as *con ogni sorte*

di strumenti), and connecting this large number of prints with growing quantities of

evidence that instrumentalists were appointed formally to church positions, received

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[56] Bonta, "The Use of Instruments in Sacred Music in Italy, 1560–1700."

[57] He estimated that these 320 prints represented approximately half of the surviving prints to allude to instrumental participation in some form, and therefore considered them a representative example (ibid., 522).

salary raises towards the end of the century, and were increasingly accommodated in practical matters such as organ tuning.[58] In his analysis of data from title pages and contents of prints, he concluded that the period 1601 to 1620 was the most productive period for inclusion of instruments in church music, and identified the motet as the most common vocal genre (from the Roman Rite) to give the option of instrumental performance, pointing to the possibility of featuring a small instrumental ensemble for a small portion of the service that stands outside the core liturgy.

Bonta's foregrounding of these vocal prints that offer the option of instrumental performance adds to the argument made in Howard Mayer Brown's 1991 exploration of sixteenth-century instrumental repertoires. Through a study of five different circumstances for instrumental music in the sixteenth century, he aimed to show that,

> there was a much more unitary musical world in the sixteenth century than the circumstances I have cited would seem to suggest.… I wish to claim that the repertory of sixteenth-century instrumentalists—certainly players of soft instruments but also possibly members of loud wind bands—consisted for the most part of music we now think of as vocal, although instrumentalists certainly also included a few ricercares, fantasies and other abstract instrumental genres as well as dances among the Mass movements, motets, chansons, madrigals, Lieder and other secular genres that formed the central core of what they played.[59]

The large number of prints identified by Bonta offer confirmation that the inclusion of instruments was a valid option for many churches with permanently employed or temporarily affiliated instrumentalists, and that sacred vocal works formed a considerable portion of a professional instrumentalist's repertoire in the sixteenth century. Instrumentalists of non-courtly employment were potentially participating in or adapting some of the most sophisticated music of their age within the church. In order to

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[58] Ibid., 520.

[59] Brown, "The Instrumentalist's Repertory in the Sixteenth Century," 22.

play from such printed music, these instrumentalists must have had reasonably well-developed literacy, been educated in mensural notation and the most modern conventions, able to adapt vocal music to suit the ranges and capabilities of their instruments, and well-practiced at playing in small groups.

The other genres that instrumentalists may have been playing within the church also enter into this discussion. The publications of some of the above-mentioned musicians begin to demonstrate some of the repertoires and their relationships to the musical cultures of the time. The instrumental canzona, continuing the tradition started by Florentio Maschera's *Libro primo de canzoni da sonare*, showed the form of counterpoint instrumentalists were used to playing on their own—derived from the French chanson, it followed many of the same rules as did modern church counterpoint, but varied in some other respects (I will return to the canzonas of Maschera in chapter 3).

The manuals of diminution published by church employees Girolamo Dalla Casa and Giovanni Bassano from S Marco, and by Riccardo Rognoni in Milan suggested another relationship with the French chanson though, with a culture of ornamentation that made its way from performance to print. These manuals will be considered properly in chapter 4 of this dissertation, but it is relevant to note here their possible connection to artisanal pedagogical practices. As rare examples of pedagogical instrumental methods from the sixteenth century, they appear to preserve a widespread technique of ornamentation (as is shown earlier in the treatises by Diego Ortiz and Venetian *piffaro* Sylvestro di Ganassi). To some extent, the diminutions technique looked back at the improvising soloist accompanied by a *tenorista*, with a freedom being granted to the instrumentalist to ornament as seems appropriate, to use their virtuosity in the service of

the church, and to continue the practice and transmission of traditional forms of ornamentation, albeit with the aid of professionally printed pedagogical materials.

A second important point to come from Bonta's analysis is the identification of the 1600–20 period as that of the highest level of instrumental participation suggested in prints. He points out that this coincides with the specific naming of instruments on title pages (rather than just writing *ogni sorte di stromenti*). Probing further the implications of this discovery, I would point out that this does not directly correlate with an increase in musicians in this precise period, but rather recognition by composers and publishers that many churches will already have the instrumental forces in place to perform such pieces, and are increasingly able to supply the specific named instruments. This speaks of the increasing availability and employment of instrumentalists in the church during the late sixteenth century, when many of these pieces would have been composed for local performance, before the composers sought publication in a major city such as Venice. It is worth reflecting on the fact that this increase in instrumentalists available to the church must necessarily have its roots earlier in the sixteenth century, as it indicates that instrumentalists entering the profession in the 1580s to 1600s had the awareness that many churches could provide employment and suitable repertoires for their skill level.

Behind this discussion of instrumentalists in the church is the specter of Tridentine reforms, and a broader debate about the suitability of music in the church and the relationship between the secular and the sacred in music. The proclamation of the Council of Trent in 1562 stated that "They shall also banish from churches all those kinds of music, in which, whether by the organ, or in the singing, there is mixed up any thing

lascivious or impure."[60] As with other statements offered by the council on musical practice, this proclamation is unclear, and was interpreted differently in various areas. In the more austere Siena, closer geographically to the seat of the Papacy, instrumental performance remained a rarity until well into the seventeenth century.[61] Other places showed less consistency: Milan, for example, quickly relaxed its practices after the death of the charismatic reformer Carlo Borromeo; within a decade, an instrumentalist from Milan was publishing a volume of diminutions, and a volume for voice soon followed from a *musico* of Milan Cathedral.[62] However, the music most closely associated with the Counter-Reformation—that of Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina—remained clearly aloof from instrumental performances, at least in its accepted published forms and performances in Rome.

One angle from which the Council of Trent's proclamation can be studied is through the relationship of words and music. If the meaning of the music was in the words, then "lascivious or unpure" words would carry over to the music. The popularity of sacred contrafacta—which flourished particularly in post-Borromean Milan—give support to this proposal; the substitution of profane texts with accepted religious tracts was apparently sufficient to turn a secular work into a sacred one.[63] It has been suggested by Margaret Rorke that Carlo Borromeo's cousin, Federico, encouraged the creation of

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[60] Council of Trent, 22nd Session, September 17, 1562: "Decree concerning the things to be observed, and to be avoided, in the celebration of Mass."

[61] Reardon, *Agostino Agazzari*, 52–57.

[62] Riccardo Rognioni, *Passaggi per potersi essercitare nel diminuire terminatamente* (Venice: Vincenti, 1592); Giovanni Bovicelli, *Regole, passaggi di musica, madrigali, e motetti passeggiati* (Venice: Vincenti, 1594).

[63] On the popularity of contrafacta in Milan, for Palestrina, see Jerome Roche, "'The Praise of It Endureth for Ever:' The Posthumous Publication of Palestrina's Music," *Early Music* 22, no. 4 (1994): 631–39; for Monteverdi, see Margaret A. Rorke, "Sacred Contrafacta of Monteverdi's Madrigals and Cardinal Borromeo's Milan," *Music and Letters* 65, no. 2 (1984): 168–75.

spiritual madrigals through the contrafactum technique—the fine contrafacta by Aquilino Coppini on madrigals by Monteverdi and other composers can be connected to his patronage.[64] Likewise, contrafacta of the most popular Palestrina madrigals, such as "Vestiva i colli" and "Io son ferito ahi lasso" appeared in Milanese publications.[65] It seems that, with the disguise of a sacred text, originally secular music could be readily accepted in churches, convents, and private devotions.

An additional layer of disguise to the original secular pieces can be seen in the diminutions manual of Giovanni Battista Bovicelli, *Regole, passaggi di musica, madrigali, e motetti passeggiati* (1594). This contains the original "Io son ferito ahi lasso" by Palestrina and also a sacred contrafactum, "Ave verum corpus," both with the florid diminutions and ornamentation the manual seeks to teach.[66] Cipriano de Rore's popular "Ancor che co'l partire" receives the same treatment, being included both as an ornamented version and as an ornamented contrafactum, "Angelus ad Pastores" (see Ex. 2.1).[67]

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[64] Rorke, "Sacred Contrafacta of Monteverdi's Madrigals and Cardinal Borromeo's Milan," 172.

[65] Roche, "'The Praise of It Endureth for Ever,'" 633.

[66] Bovicelli, *Regole*, 38–45.

[67] Ibid., 46–52.

Example 2.1: Giovanni Battista Bovicelli, diminutions (version a) and diminutions on the contrafactum "Angelus ad pastores" (version b), on Cipriano de Rore's, "Ancor che co'l partire" (*Regole, passaggi di musica, madrigali, e motetti passeggiati*), mm. 1–12.[68]

A later ornamented version of "Io son ferito ahi lasso" by Francesco Rognoni Taeggio is headed with the text "Io son ferito ahi lasso Madrigali del Palestrina ridotto in mottetto passeggiato per il soprano," suggesting that he equated a highly ornamented madrigal with a motet (see Ex. 2.2).[69] This close connection between contrafactum technique and virtuosic ornamentation raises the possibility that ornamentation in a style frequently heard in church could be sufficient to disguise secular origins and make performance acceptable in sacred contexts.

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[68] Musical examples of diminutions will include the original melody line in a smaller bottom stave, where appropriate.

[69] Francesco Rognoni Taeggio, *Selva de varii passaggi secondo l'uso modern, per cantare, e sonare con ogni sorte de stromenti* (Milan: Lomazzo, 1620), 1:48.

Example 2.2: Francesco Rognoni Taeggio, diminutions of contrafactum "Quanti mercenarii" for voice (version a) and for instrument (version b) on Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina's "Io son ferito ahi lasso" (*Selva de varii passaggi secondo l'uso moderno*), mm. 5–17.

It may be that the very nature of instrumental music allowed repertoire that would otherwise have been considered inappropriate to continue being performed in church. In a time when the meaning of music was carefully scrutinized, the instrumentalists had greater freedom with their textless playing of secular pieces, and their ability to cloak familiar melodies in counterpoint or in the brilliant virtuosity of the diminutions technique. Their artisanal heritage of improvising and ornamenting, of adapting the music they found to suit their instruments and their situations, allowed instrumentalists from previously secular environments to proliferate within the church. Performances of music without words—as suggested by the courtiers of Castiglione—could not be scrutinized to the same extent as music that was written down, and improvisational idioms made it unlikely that the music would be notated. Moreover, the cultivation of literacy and growth of compositional skills among instrumentalists enabled them to create pieces of greater complexity that removed the need for a text and cultivated an abstract aesthetic

that would not be problematic in the Tridentine church. The abstraction of their compositions and performances, driven by rising levels of literacy and increasing independence from vocal idioms, may be a factor in the growth and popularity of instrumental music in and around the churches of this era.

Chapter 3

Sixteenth-Century Contrapuntal Study between Texts and Instrumental Practices

The boundary between theory and practical pedagogy can often be fine, particularly so in the case of counterpoint. The contrapuntal practices of sixteenth-century composers consume much space in theoretical writings, providing a considerable body of material from which modern scholars can create analytical approaches to the music, yet it is not always remembered that theoretical writing did not necessarily relate directly to pedagogical practices at the time.

In a recent survey of contrapuntal pedagogy, having asked the question "How did Renaissance composers learn their craft?" Peter Schubert suggested that "they could have learned much of their technique from treatises, especially from those portions devoted to counterpoint."[1] Accordingly, his thorough overview of sixteenth-century contrapuntal "pedagogy" drew for its primary evidence upon an array of theoretical treatises, ranging from the masterly Gioseffo Zarlino to obscure yet illuminating Spanish sources. Margaret Bent, promulgating a new philosophy for the analysis of early music, considered the surviving treatises "a necessary premise" on which analyses can be built, while recognizing that a theoretical grounding built on treatises must be expanded in modern scholarship to form a practical basis for analysis.[2] Such a method has been adopted by

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[1] Peter Schubert, "Counterpoint Pedagogy in the Renaissance," in *The Cambridge History of Western Music Theory*, ed. Thomas Christensen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 503. Within the same volume, Robert Wason argued that "it can by no means be presumed that extant treatises on music composition provide a perfectly faithful picture of contemporaneous music practice," citing quickly changing practices and geographic discrepancies as reasons to be cautious; see Robert W. Wason, "*Musica pratica*: Music Theory as Pedagogy," in *The Cambridge History of Western Music Theory*, 51.

[2] Margaret Bent, "The Grammar of Early Music: Preconditions for Analysis," in *Tonal Structures in Early Music*, ed. Cristle Collins Judd (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998), 35.

many other scholars seeking analytical tools for polyphony, with derivations from a prominent treatise being a way to avoid anachronistic grounds for analysis.[3]

While recognizing the value in such approaches, I argue that these do not necessarily reflect the practices of contrapuntal pedagogy in the Renaissance: such a wide array of sources, originating from a broad geographical area and a considerable temporal span, could not possibly reflect the education or experience of any individual musician from the sixteenth century. Moreover, I suggest that discussion of contrapuntal pedagogy should not be limited to surviving treatises. These show the theoretical formulations that sixteenth-century thinkers constructed around contrapuntal practices, and may contain some common pedagogical methods, but it is unlikely that theoretical or speculative treatises—even the most widely disseminated ones—reflect how the majority of musicians actually learned counterpoint at any specific place or time.

The question of counterpoint teaching becomes particularly problematic around the turn of the seventeenth century, when changes in compositional style have the potential to mask deeper continuities and persistent teaching practices. Schubert acknowledged that the contrapuntal theory of the sixteenth century maintained its relevance after 1600, writing that the general principles he identified could equally apply to "a seventeenth-century Italian composer writing a trio on a dance bass."[4] Nevertheless, Schubert—like other writers on Renaissance counterpoint—has not explored the implications of such a continuation of practices.

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[3] See, for example, Bonnie J. Blackburn, "On Compositional Process in the Fifteenth Century," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 40, no. 2 (1987): 210–84, and Cristle Collins Judd, "Learning to Compose in the 1540s: Gioseffo Zarlino's *Si bona suscepimus*," in *Citation and Authority in Medieval and Renaissance Musical Culture: Learning from the Learned*, ed. Suzannah Clark and Elizabeth Eva Leach (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2005), 184–205.

[4] Schubert, "Counterpoint Pedagogy in the Renaissance," 504.

In this chapter, I argue that esteemed treatises such as Gioseffo Zarlino's *Le istitutioni harmoniche* may have played only a relatively small role in educational practices and broader musical cultures. Despite the obvious inaccessibility of the most pervasive pedagogical methods—those transmitted orally—other surviving materials aside from contrapuntal treatises may show a more nuanced view of contrapuntal pedagogy. I follow the example of Thomas Christensen, who posited the pervasiveness of what he called "hidden theory"—the shadowed traces of theoretical work.[5] His study proposed that the complex and unreliable transmission of Boethius, a narrowly regional example of contrapuntal teaching in fifteenth-century central Europe, and the *partimenti* educational system of eighteenth-century Neapolitan conservatoires could all be considered examples of such "hidden theory." Christensen acknowledged the close connections between theoretical formulations and pedagogical practices, writing, "the history of theory is full of currents of oral teaching that amount to a subterranean world of 'hidden' theory that can easily elude our historical accounts."[6] Following his proposal that "music theory is not just a discipline of ideas, but a discipline with social functions," it is possible to extrapolate those social functions and their associated repertoires and documentation to focus on the pedagogical transmission and educational usage of music-theoretical ideas. As Christensen suggested, many of these historical social functions will always remain "hidden" to the present-day scholar, but my intention here is to bring some of them to prominence, discuss how they intersected with the contemporaneous musical and pedagogical culture, and trace some connections with the generation of

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[5] Thomas Christensen, "Fragile Texts, Hidden Theory," in *The Work of Music Theory: Selected Essays* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2014), 62.

[6] Ibid., 63.

instrumentalist-composers publishing in the early seventeenth century. Perhaps for the purposes of this discussion, "hidden pedagogy" is a more suitable term.

I will limit my discussion of connections between theory and pedagogy largely to sources of north-Italian provenance, to assess as accurately as possible the pedagogical materials relevant to the repertoire under discussion. The most sparsely preserved contrapuntal tradition of this time is the practices of improvised counterpoint, which were apparently very widespread but have left little surviving evidence given their primarily oral nature. Engaging with recent research by Rob Wegman and Philippe Canguilhem, I seek the place of improvised counterpoint within a wider pedagogical backdrop, and posit some links it may hold to instrumental practices. My discussion of the written contrapuntal tradition takes as its starting point Zarlino's *Le istitutioni harmoniche* and the Venetian theoretical works that continued his thinking. In contrast to studies that limit themselves to this key text, however, I argue that Zarlino's treatise opens routes to works of "hidden theory" that formed a bridge between the master and practical pedagogy. As I will show, the writings of Giovanni Maria Artusi, Girolamo Diruta, and Adriano Banchieri suggest different ways in which the theories and teachings of Zarlino intersected with practices of pedagogy passed down by students and followers through the subsequent decades.

From this network of theoretical and pedagogical texts, I branch outward to consider the musical texts evoked by these writings. Examples from genres with connections to these pedagogical practices, including the *bicinium* (didactic duo), ricercare, canzona, and cantus firmus with contrapuntal variations, show how lessons from the theoretical tradition may have been passed on through practical work. These

demonstrate some performative conventions, repertoires, and experiences that could constitute a "hidden pedagogy" for those removed from the dedicated speculative–theoretical intellectual tradition during their education.

Hidden pedagogy in the oral realm: the improvised counterpoint tradition

An early survey of sources for improvised polyphony by Ernest Ferand revealed many references in theoretical treatises to such a practice, but, understandably, relatively few concrete examples in musical notation.[7] The practice of *contrappunto alla mente*, as it was commonly called,[8] was mentioned by many theorists, although most gave only very incomplete instructions or maintained considerable secrecy around its execution.[9] Within this sparse evidence, Ferand observed a "trend towards a systematic instruction in improvised counterpoint…and with it a growing tendency of mechanization in the practice" in the late sixteenth century[10]—a trend that may have had ramifications for how learners related their lessons in improvised counterpoint to their experiences in composition.

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[7] Ernest T. Ferand, "Improvised Vocal Counterpoint in the Late Renaissance and Early Baroque," *Annales Musicologiques* 4 (1956): 129–74. More recent surveys of these sources include Edoardo Bellotti, "Counterpoint and Improvisation in Italian Sources from Gabrieli to Pasquini," *Philomusica on-line* 11 (2012): 49–61, and Valerio Morucci, "Improvisation in Vocal Counterpoint Pedagogy: An Appraisal of Italian Theoretical Treatises of the Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries," *Performance Practice Review* 18, no. 1 (2003): Article 3.

[8] There were of course many variant terms for the practice of improvised counterpoint: *contrappunto alla mente* and the Latin *contrapunctus ex mente* refer to counterpoint devised in the mind; *cantare super librum* (singing upon the book) refers specifically to improvising around a cantus firmus read from a chant manual; other terms such as *contraponto all'improvviso* are also common. For a thorough survey, see Ferand, "Improvised Vocal Counterpoint," 139–40.

[9] Ferand, "Improvised Vocal Counterpoint," 144–45.

[10] Ibid., 160.

One of the most valuable sources to show early indications of this systematic instruction is the manuscript treatise by Vicente Lusitano, written in Spanish while he was in Italy in the mid-sixteenth century.[11] Lusitano's detailed examples use techniques similar to species counterpoint to give singers a number of set procedures that can reliably be used in extemporization against a cantus firmus, and he also gives numerous examples of canons and other imitative genres that singers could be expected to improvise (Ex. 3.1).[12]

Example 3.1: Vicente Lusitano, counterpoint upon a cantus firmus (*Del arte de contrapunto*, ff. 28v–29).

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[11] Lusitano's short printed *Introduttione facilissima* (Rome, 1553) and extended manuscript *Tratado de canto de organo* (F-Pn) have been edited in French translation in Philippe Canguilhem, dir., *Chanter sur le livre à la Renaissance: Les traités de contrepoint de Vicente Lusitano* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013); see also Canguilhem, "Singing Upon the Book According to Vicente Lusitano," *Early Music History* 30 (2011): 55–103.

[12] For examples of improvised polyphony requirements for *maestri da cappella*, see Canguilhem, "Singing Upon the Book," 57–58 and 90–91; for more on the possibilities of using the Guidonian Hand to generate improvised polyphony, see Philippe Canguilhem, "Main mémorielle et invention musicale à la Renaissance," in *Memory and Invention: Medieval and Renaissance Literature, Art, and Music*, ed. Anna Maria Busse Berger and Massimiliano Rossi (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 2009), 89–90.

However, Lusitano's published work on this topic represented just a modest introduction, and his larger treatise seems to have remained in manuscript during his lifetime, serving more as an example of what an individual teacher may have devised than a model that was disseminated for others to follow.

Recent research on improvised counterpoint has suggested that it was far more widespread than the limited surviving evidence suggests. In a far-reaching study, Rob Wegman traced the tradition and characteristics of oral, improvised counterpoint across several centuries, discussing its development in relation to newly formal types of written counterpoint in the fourteenth century.[13] He assessed some possible notated examples of improvised counterpoint to identify characteristics of a tradition where a plainchant remains in neumes and is sung at a steady rate, while other parts are improvised or composed around it. His discussion of Hippolito Chamaterò di Negri's *Li introiti fondati sopra il canto fermo del basso* (1574) as (possibly cleaned-up) transcriptions of improvised counterpoint raises the possibility that improvised counterpoint could look remarkably similar to composed counterpoint, when executed by those skilled in the art. Chamaterò claimed that his choirboys in Udine improvised these introits, a claim that can be supported by the presence of a cantus firmus in neumes and a similarity in style to other purported examples of improvised polyphony (see Ex. 3.2).[14]

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[13] Rob C. Wegman, "What is Counterpoint?" in *Improvising Early Music: The History of Musical Improvisation from the Late Middle Ages to the Early Baroque*, Collected Writings of the Orpheus Institute, No. 11, ed. Dirk Moelants (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2014), 9–68.

[14] Ibid., 53.

Example 3.2: Hippolito Chamaterò di Negri, "Natus est nobis" (*Li introiti fondati sopra il canto fermo del basso*), mm. 1–10.

Philippe Canguilhem drew many similar conclusions in his recent book, concurring that improvised counterpoint was common across a wide time-span, and *cantare super librum* ("singing upon the book," i.e., improvised polyphonic singing upon a chant) was a necessary skill for large numbers of church singers. From a theoretical standpoint, Canguilhem suggested that an opposition of composition and improvisation is unhelpful in Renaissance contexts; he proposed a threefold and non-hierarchical conception of Renaissance creativity, in which unpremeditated improvisation, planned improvisation, and composition are merely points on a spectrum of interconnected practices.[15]

The seventeenth century seemed to provide new intersections between improvised counterpoint and the written tradition.[16] Tim Carter proposed that portions of Claudio Monteverdi's *Vespro della Beata Vergine* may have been intended to demonstrate (in writing) the composer's ability to make the S Marco choir sound like they were

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[15] Philippe Canguilhem, *L'Improvisation polyphonique à la Renaissance* (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2015).

[16] Since at least the time of Tinctoris, there had been a reasonably clear distinction between the *res facta* and improvised polyphony; see Margaret Bent, "'Resfacta' and 'Cantare super librum,'" in *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 36, no. 3 (1983): 372–73.

producing good improvised polyphony, in particular drawing attention to the ten-part

"Nisi Dominus" with its sustained cantus firmus and busy counterpoint of short canons,

triads, scales, and dotted notes.[17] Adriano Banchieri made a strong distinction between

contrapunti osservati and *contrapunti alla mente*, and provided (what he claims) to be a

"new invention…with strict rules" that allowed the composer to quickly and easily write

something that sounded like well-executed improvised counterpoint. Banchieri's

particular formula assigned each voice a limitation—the soprano always executes

ascending gestures, the tenor is always descending, and the alto is in half notes or

syncopated whole notes—to create "a most beautiful entrance piece and a diversion for

the listeners."[18] Some similar formulations appeared in the work of Lusitano, under the

name *contrapunto concertado*.[19] While some writers insisted that improvised polyphony

obey all the same rules as written counterpoint (essentially requiring the executors to be

composing swiftly in their minds, checking for problems such as parallel fifths and

octaves), others recognized a distinct difference; while Zarlino derided those whose

improvised polyphony resulted in the bending and breaking of rules, Banchieri saw a

(perhaps inevitable) sprinkling of unconventional intervals and voice-leading motions as

merely an ornament to the overall effect.[20]

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[17] Tim Carter, "'Improvised' Counterpoint in Monteverdi's 1610 Vespers," in *Uno gentile et subtile ingenio: Studies in Renaissance Music in Honour of Bonnie J. Blackburn*, ed. Gioia Filocamo and M. Jennifer Bloxam (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2009), 29–35.

[18] Clifford A. Cranna, "Adriano Banchieri's *Cartella musicale* (1614): Translation and Commentary" (PhD diss., Stanford University, 1981), 429–33.

[19] Canguilhem, "Singing Upon the Book," 80–83.

[20] Zarlino, *The Art of Counterpoint*, 221–22. He complained of "presumptuous persons…who were arrogant enough to add an extra part…solely to impress the audience with a skill they did not possess…. If these improvisations were to be written down, they would be found to contain a thousand errors against common rules and to be full of innumerable dissonances."

Evidence for instrumental participation in these traditions is obviously sparse, but the improvised traditions of *basse danse* may have used similar techniques.[21] Ross Duffin identified a number of sources that feature tenor melodies in long notes alongside mensural dance melodies, suggesting that such tenors were used for improvisation.[22] The fundamental importance of a *tenorista* in fifteenth-century instrumental duos also points to the essential role a cantus firmus played in directing an improvisation, and provides a methodological connection with church practices.[23] Some instrumentalists who acquired church connections in the later sixteenth century may have encountered the practice there. Returning to Chamaterò's print of transcribed improvisation from the Duomo of Udine, it is tantalizing to recall that Udine was also home to significant dynasties of wind players, some of whom were working in the Duomo by 1560: had the Dalla Casa brothers, later prominently employed at S Marco, Venice, experienced improvised polyphony in Udine during their youth? Their fellow instrumentalist Giovanni Bassano was a choirboy at S Marco a decade after the tenure of Adrian Willaert, who was described by Zarlino as highly experienced in improvised vocal polyphony,[24] and Bassano's later position as *maestro di canto* at the seminary of S Marco raises the question of whether his teaching activities there included training the choirboys in improvised counterpoint. This limited evidence about the practice of improvised

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[21] Jonathan Banks, *The Instrumental Consort Repertory of the Late Fifteenth Century* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 60–64

[22] Ross W. Duffin, "Ensemble Improvisation in 15th-Century Mensural Dance," in *Instruments, Ensembles, and Repertory, 1300–1600: Essays in Honour of Keith Polk*, ed. Timothy J. McGee and Stewart Carter (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), 201–6.

[23] Canguilhem drew an important parallel between the tenors used for improvisation by instrumentalists and the cantus firmus chants of improvised church polyphony, citing the works of Diego Ortiz, who would base his ornamentations on a *cantus llanos* (plainchant) that the Italians would call a tenor; see Canguilhem, *L'Improvisation polyphonique à la Renaissance*, 76–77.

[24] A comment ascribed to Zarlino in Lodovico Zacconi, *Prattica di musica*, 3:153–54.

counterpoint precludes a more detailed discussion of the topic, but the written tradition of

the theorists shows some very different concerns and another conception of counterpoint

that could be put into practice.

Theoretical texts and pedagogical texts, from Zarlino to practical pedagogy

The scholarly writings of Gioseffo Zarlino (1517–90) have long dominated discourse on

sixteenth-century contrapuntal theory: *Le istitutioni harmoniche* (1558),[25] described by

Claude Palisca as "a landmark in the history of music theory,"[26] has long been considered

the primary theoretical codification of sixteenth-century compositional techniques, and

remained an influential text until it was supplanted by the theoretical texts of Jean-

Philippe Rameau in the eighteenth century. Much recent scholarship on Zarlino has

focused on his relationship with earlier theorists, writings, and compositions, while his

position in sixteenth-century musical life and the immediate reception of his theoretical

writings among fellow musicians of northern Italy have been largely neglected.[27] Since

he held one of the most esteemed musical posts in northern Italy—*maestro di cappella* of

S Marco, Venice, from 1565—and had direct or indirect contact with many of the

instrumentalists considered in this dissertation, Zarlino provides an entry point to the

discussion of exchanges between theoretical writing and practical pedagogy.

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[25] Gioseffo Zarlino, *Le istitutioni harmoniche* (Venice: [Da Fino], 1558; facsimile: New York: Broude Brothers, 1965). Part three translated by Guy A. Marco, *The Art of Counterpoint; Part Three of "Le Istitutioni Harmoniche, 1558"* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1968); Part four translated by Vered Cohen, *On the Modes; Part Four of "Le Istitutioni Harmoniche, 1558"* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1983).

[26] Claude V. Palisca, "Zarlino, Gioseffo," *Grove Music Online*, <www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/ grove/music/30858>, accessed 1/25/2015.

[27] One of the few recent studies to place Zarlino within historical and social contexts is Rebecca A. Edwards, "Setting the Tone at San Marco: Gioseffo Zarlino Amidst Doge, Procuratori and Cappella Personnel," in *La cappella musicale di San Marco nell'età moderna*, ed. Francesco Passadore and Franco Rossi (Venice: Edizioni Fondazione Levi, 1998), 389–400.

Cristle Collins Judd has analyzed the intertextual relationships between eminent theorists leading up to Zarlino, to build a network of citations and quotations supporting a nuanced account of Zarlino's intellectual heritage.[28] Given that archival research has revealed Zarlino to have been a consummate bibliophile—he owned over one thousand volumes at his death[29]—it is unsurprising that Judd found within *Le istitutioni harmoniche* a web of references and refutations demonstrating Zarlino's dialogue with other writers on Venetian modal theory and his entrenchment within the most scholastically literate musical tradition; she noted, in particular, the debts that Zarlino owed to Pietro Aaron and Heinrich Glarean.[30] Judd traced Zarlino's musical examples and citations to a small but distinctive selection of Venetian prints, principally the anthology *Liber selectarum cantionum* (1520) for examples from Josquin's generation and Adrian Willaert's *Musica nova* (published 1559, but circulating earlier in Venetian circles) for contemporary examples. Looking more broadly to Zarlino's scholarly education, she noted clear reflections of his Greek and Latin studies in his motet collection *Musici quinque vocum* of 1549.[31] Judd's is a groundbreaking study that is, however, representative of wider trends: Zarlino's writings are often perceived as a natural culmination of Renaissance music theory and discussed primarily through intertextual relationships with earlier canonical texts, with the result that both study of his

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[28] Cristle Collins Judd, *Reading Renaissance Music Theory: Hearing with the Eyes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); see Part IV, "Gioseffo Zarlino's *Le istitutioni harmoniche* (1558)," 179–261.

[29] Zarlino's inventory is detailed in Isabella Palumbo-Fossati, "La casa veneziana di Gioseffo Zarlino nel testamento e nell'inventario dei beni del grande teorico musicale," *Nuova rivista musicale italiana* 20 (1986): 639–40.

[30] In addition, Martha Feldman suggested that Zarlino's allusions to Quintilian's *Istitutio oratoria* are indicative of an influence from Pietro Bembo; see Martha Feldman, *City Culture and the Madrigal at Venice* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995), 172.

[31] Judd, *Reading Renaissance Music Theory*, 208.

reception and the theoretical writings of the following decades have been largely neglected in scholarship.

A contrasting approach to Zarlino's work is to consider its connections with practical music-making during his lifetime. The validity of such a standpoint was established by Benito V. Rivera, whose research revealed that Zarlino's work was inextricably grounded in the practices of the time.[32] "Zarlino's writings, properly read, can still inform us about the way sixteenth-century musicians actually practiced their craft," wrote Rivera, concluding that Zarlino's deductive reasoning in speculative theory was carefully crafted to deliver conclusions already reached through practical experience.[33] Rivera's study convincingly legitimized Zarlino's instincts and knowledge as a practical musician, and argued that even the most speculative parts of *Le istitutioni harmoniche* were not disengaged from contemporary musical experiences.

Implicit in these studies is the difficulty of balancing the influence of Zarlino's published writings with his teaching activities at S Marco and elsewhere. Zarlino was probably teaching at S Marco even before his appointment as *maestro di cappella*, given the infirmity of Adrian Willaert (d. 1562) and the organizational ineptitude of Willaert's successor, Cipriano de Rore (*maestro di cappella* 1563–64). Many musicians with Venetian connections later claimed Zarlino as a teacher, yet direct accounts of his teaching are non-existent, and relationships between practical pedagogy and his theoretical writings are frequently oblique.

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[32] Benito V. Rivera, "Theory Ruled by Practice: Zarlino's Reversal of the Classical System of Proportions," *Indiana Theory Review* 16 (1995): 145–70.

[33] Ibid., 147, 165.

Le istitutioni harmoniche was typical of Zarlino's theoretical writings in being neither explicitly practical nor necessarily intended for widespread dissemination. Attention has been drawn by Judd to the timing of its publication, through which she raises questions about Zarlino's intentions in producing the volume.[34] Dating from the time when the elderly Willaert was increasingly ailing and unable to carry out his duties, the work seemed to advance Zarlino's eminence as a theorist, scholar, and pedagogue to the *procuratori* of S Marco, to promote his candidacy for the position of *maestro di cappella*. After its first appearance in 1558, it was reissued under the imprint of Francesco Franceschi in 1561 and again in 1562, dates that coincided with the onset of Willaert's final illness and his death.[35] Although Zarlino was passed over for the position immediately after Willaert's death, Rebecca Edwards has suggested that his eventual appointment in 1565 was due to his administrative skills and knowledge (proven through his publications) rather than any outstanding talent as a performer or composer; the musical establishment of S Marco needed firm admistrative direction after a lapse of discipline during Willaert's illnesses and Rore's chronic mismanagement.[36]

If one readership of *Le istitutioni harmoniche* was the *procuratori* of S Marco, a second was the small circle of Venetian musicians and intellectuals who could access the expensive Venetian music prints that are cited extensively throughout, and who perhaps had pre-publication access to Willaert's *Musica nova*.[37] *Le istitutioni harmoniche* itself was published in a large folio edition, and it appears that there were still a considerable

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[34] Judd, *Reading Renaissance Music Theory*, 194–96.

[35] Ibid., 196. Zarlino was also named as an executor of Willaert's estate, alongside his former teacher Marco Antonio Cavazzoni.

[36] Edwards, "Setting the Tone at San Marco," 393.

[37] Judd, *Reading Renaissance Music Theory*, 234.

number of copies left in 1561 and 1562, when it was reissued with the new title pages.[38]

It was later republished in 1573, slightly revised but still in expensive folio, and it was

included in Zarlino's complete works two years before his death.[39] The prestige and high

cost of these reprints would have created limited accessibility for the ordinary practicing

musician, and—given the fairly small circle of musicians who may have engaged fully

with the treatise—it also seems unlikely that many students would have encountered it

directly at this time. As a descriptor of musical practice, codifier of compositional

thinking, and speculator on higher-level concepts, Zarlino's treatise was unparalleled, but

its actual pedagogical impact may have been limited. Indeed, Zarlino himself

acknowledged in *Le istitutioni harmoniche* that his volume was not intended to be a

pedagogical method in isolation, writing,

> the musician cannot perfect himself solely by reading and rereading books;
> ultimately to understand the things I have been demonstrating and others to be
> shown, he must consult with a person skilled in counterpoint who will help him
> get rid of any misunderstandings and bad habits that may have developed, before
> such habits become too strong to eradicate.[40]

The case of *Le istitutioni harmoniche* may be representative of usage for other

advanced theoretical treatises from the sixteenth century. Many of these other volumes

had severely limited circles of dissemination and were little-used for direct teaching, and

they may have been published with motives other than practical pedagogy. Whatever the

analytical tools they may help scholars develop today, their direct influence on practical

musicians should be questioned. For the average musician, theoretical understanding was

more likely to come through contact with a teacher or a volume with a less speculative

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[38] See ibid., 191–92 for further details of the 1561 and 1562 reissues.

[39] *De tutte l'opere del r.m. G. Zarlino*, Volume 1 (Venice: Francesco Franceschi Senese, 1588).

[40] Zarlino, *The Art of Counterpoint*, 226.

outlook. Indeed, a number of musicians from subsequent generations explored ways to mediate between the speculative–theoretical tradition and the practicing musician. Of the many students with pedagogical connections with Zarlino, the endeavors of Artusi, Diruta, and Banchieri show them questioning how to transmit practical information to different types of students.

A relatively straightforward attempt to bring Zarlino's treatise to a broader audience can be found in the work of his most devoted student, Giovanni Maria Artusi (c. 1540–1613). In an act of homage to Zarlino, Artusi started his publishing career with *L'arte del contraponto*, a summary of concepts and theories from *Le istitutioni harmoniche*.[41] Quite aside from defining Artusi as a close *discepolo* of Zarlino, this publication carries the implication that Artusi saw *Le istitutioni harmoniche* as inaccessible to many regular musicians, both practically and intellectually. *L'arte del contraponto* was intended to bring the work of his esteemed teacher (whom he described as the "molto Reverendo M. Gioseffo Zarlino tanto meraviglioso")[42] to a broader audience.

L'arte del contraponto is a masterful compendium of practical knowledge from *Le istitutioni harmoniche*, compiled into tables and charts. Artusi reduced the lengthy and complex speculative theory and historical background of Zarlino's first two volumes to a few pages of simplified tables, explaining in single sentences the keywords such as

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[41] Giovanni Maria Artusi, *L'arte del contraponto ridotta in tavole* (Venice: Vincenti and Amadino, 1586); rev. ed., *L'arte del contraponto… Novamente ristampata, e di molte nuove aggiunte, dall' Autore arrichita* (Venice: Vincenti, 1598); facsimile of revised edition (Hildesheim and New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 1969). Artusi was not the only writer to perceive a demand for a simpler version of Zarlino's counterpoint writings; Orazio Tigrini did much the same in his *Il compendio della musica* of 1588, 2/1602, 3/1638; see Claude V. Palisca, "The Revision of Counterpoint and the Embellished Style," in *Studies in the History of Italian Music and Music Theory* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 11.

[42] Artusi, *L'arte del contraponto ridotta in tavole*, *Ai lettori*.

theoretica, *pratica*, *mondana*, *humana*, and *speculativa* that are dealt with extensively in Zarlino's treatise but have only passing relevance to the regular practicing musician. Artusi believed the best theorist-musicians should hold a wide range of knowledge: his ideal "theorico è pratico insieme" or "musico perfetto" should be fluent in arithmetic, geometry, proportions, playing and tuning the harpsichord, lute, and harp, singing, composing, Greek and Latin grammar, metrics, history, dialectic, rhetoric, and philosophy.[43] Alongside this, though, he acknowledged the existence of the "pratico" who can master composing, singing, or instrumental playing through long practice. Artusi focuses on the tools needed to accomplish these statuses: in the case of the composer, only one who has mastered the use of the pen can earn the name, showing Artusi's strong connecting of mastery with the literate tradition. Given the lengthy study needed to be a "musico perfetto," it is clearly to the "pratico" that Artusi aims this publication. Most of the volume is occupied by information from Zarlino's third and fourth books, with even difficult concepts that engaged Zarlino for multiple chapters reduced by Artusi to one or two pages; for example, a neat listing of the modes is furnished with helpful summaries of the affects they may convey (and therefore the use to which they may be put by the practical musician).[44]

The summary or distillation of key texts was a fundamental way of learning and understanding scholarly written works, being commonplace in many disciplines throughout a long period of history. Jessie Ann Owens drew attention to the use of such reductive methods in surviving notes of composition lessons, and discussed at length the

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[43] Ibid., 2. The "musico perfetto" is a clear description of the many talents of Zarlino, and perhaps Artusi himself.

[44] Ibid., 44.

use of chord tables in finding consonances when composing.[45] Such methods suggest

that, for many musicians, theory was transmitted through practice, short charts, and

simple explanations. Artusi's publication may also reflect the understanding he came to

of Zarlino's text after studying many aspects with him personally, providing a level of

understanding above that of the treatise in the practical matters that could be passed onto

less experienced musicians.

Artusi was also aware that the most esteemed theory texts of the day did not

necessarily reflect modern practice. Zarlino himself gestured towards the changing

practices of the age with his 1573 revision of *Le istitutioni harmoniche* and his later

reconceptualization of the modal system that responded to the growing importance of the

Ionian mode. Despite his evident debt to Zarlino and continued defense of his teacher's

theories, Artusi became increasingly confident in modifying his teacher's legacy to

reflect certain modern practices. Although he may have started among those theorists

characterized by Palisca as "compilers of rules and guardians of traditions [who] passed

on the wisdom of their revered masters,"[46] Artusi's subsequent publications cite modern

composers such as Cipriano de Rore and Andrea Gabrieli while developing a

sophisticated theory of dissonances and suspensions to acknowledge their greater use in

contemporary music. These ideas were first conveyed in the second volume of *L'arte del

contraponto* rather than in an extended prose treatise, signaling their immediate relevance

and accessibility to the practicing musician of his own day.[47] Artusi's theoretical

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[45] Owens, *Composers at Work*, 13–14, 25–27.

[46] Claude V. Palisca, "Vincenzo Galilei's Counterpoint Treatise: A Code for the 'Seconda Pratica,'" *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 9, no. 2 (1956): 96.

[47] Giovanni Maria Artusi, *Seconda parte dell'arte del contraponto: Nella quale si tratta dell'utile et uso delle dissonanze* (Venice: Vincenti, 1589).

formulations existed as much in practice and everyday teaching as they did in careful written prose.

Artusi was one among a considerable number of musicians who claimed to have studied with Zarlino, or who studied within Zarlino's Venetian circle and may have absorbed ideas from those close to him; the notion of a Venetian theoretical school existed not only in the publications, but also in practical teaching from these authors and their colleagues. In the post of *maestro di cappella*, Zarlino was obliged not only to execute his administrative and musical duties, but also to teach in group settings; in addition, some pupils were probably taught privately, or learned from close colleagues who passed on Zarlino's ideas. The students of these Venetian teachers went on to professional employment across the north of Italy and further afield and—taking students themselves—disseminated and distilled the teachings of the Venetian theoretical school as they understood them through practical music-making. The writings of two later musicians descended from this Venetian lineage—Girolamo Diruta, who studied with Claudio Merulo, and Adriano Banchieri, who studied with Gioseffo Guami—may provide an insight into how Zarlino's theoretical ideas were transmitted through teaching within the Venetian organ tradition and reincorporated into pedagogical materials, appearing to traverse a path from writing to oral practice before being recodified in new theoretical works.

Claudio Merulo (1533–1604) studied in Venice, most likely with Zarlino (although he certainly knew the elderly Adrian Willaert too). Appointed organist at S Marco in 1557, he received great acclaim for his playing there over 27 years. Merulo appeared as a character in Zarlino's *Dimostrationi harmoniche* (1571); this fact places

him within Zarlino's circle and implies his understanding of (and possible participation within) contemporary theoretical discourse.[48] Merulo's teachings were transmitted further by his student Girolamo Diruta (c. 1554–1610), whose treatise, *Il Transilvano* (1593/1609), is the earliest extant source for much important keyboard technique and pedagogy.[49] Contributing a recommendation to the front of Diruta's treatise, Merulo wrote that since Diruta's work "bought both of us that unique distinction one expects of a person of great talent, I take boundless pride in the fact that he was my protégé."[50] The contents of *Il Transilvano* reveal some exclusive and secretive teachings of the Venetian organ school, joining the local theoretical tradition with practical organ study.

Diruta referred to Zarlino or *Le istitutioni harmoniche* at numerous points in *Il Transilvano*. In his section on counterpoint he wrote, "This has been my aim precisely, to make known the truth of the matter and to uphold the good rules given by so many outstanding men, particularly by the very excellent Gioseffo Zarlino of Chioggia who has written learnedly on the theory and practice of this noble science."[51] Diruta focused on only those facts that are vital to the creation of counterpoint on the organ; consider, for example, his approach to the interval of a fourth. This was a controversial subject, with major theorists disagreeing as to whether the interval was consonant or dissonant. Upon first being asked about the fourth by his interlocutor, the Transylvanian, Diruta delayed

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[48] For more detailed discussion of Zarlino's *Dimostrationi harmoniche* see Stefano Mengozzi, *The Renaissance Reform of Medieval Music Theory: Guido of Arezzo between Myth and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 231–32.

[49] Girolamo Diruta, *Il Transilvano* (Venice: Vincenti, 1593); *Seconda parte del Transilvano* (Venice: Vincenti, 1609); translated by Edward J. Soehnlein, "Diruta on the Art of Keyboard-Playing: An Annotated Translation and Transcription of *Il Transilvano*, Parts I (1593) and II (1609)" (2 vols, PhD diss., University of Michigan, 1975).

[50] Soehnlein, "Diruta on the Art of Keyboard-Playing," 96.

[51] Ibid., 323.

discussion of the subject, explaining that this was less important than the understanding

of the fundamental consonances of unison, third, fifth, and sixth (and their octave

equivalents).[52] Even when Diruta finally returned to deal with the fourth, he did not

engage in lengthy discussions of classical authority and reason as Zarlino had done;

rather he limited himself to "speak only of those [reasons] more suited to our

purpose"[53]—that is, more practical ones. Instead of classifying it definitively as

consonant or dissonant, Diruta simply related the various situations in which it was used.

Through discussion of practical music-making, he demonstrated that the fourth could in

fact hold either quality, depending on the context.[54] Diruta acknowledged after his

discussion that "My ways are founded on practice and not on theory. Nevertheless, every

discerning ear should experience it [the fourth in its different contexts] and pass

judgment."[55] Although Zarlino too appealed to the ear, in his third proof deploying a

stringed instrument tuned in fourths that shows the "marvelous harmony produced by the

[open strings'] diatessaron or fourth," Zarlino was supporting his previous speculative

arguments, and not considering the fourth in any practical context relevant to

counterpoint.[56]

It is worth discussing briefly Diruta's intended readership. His treatise was aimed

primarily towards the aspiring professional church organist. Most previous tutor books—

for the lute, keyboard, or voice—can be identified with the rise of amateur playing among

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[52] Ibid., 274–75.

[53] Zarlino, *The Art of Counterpoint*, 12–15; Soehnlein, "Diruta on the Art of Keyboard-Playing," 299.

[54] Soehnlein, "Diruta on the Art of Keyboard-Playing,"299–305.

[55] Ibid., 305.

[56] Zarlino, *The Art of Counterpoint*, 13–14. Perhaps however this is another situation where Benito V. Rivera would argue for a reversal between practice and theory.

the aristocracy and classes of upwards mobility: they could seek to learn music from books, much as they could learn history, classics, diplomacy, or courtly etiquette.[57] Such books, while potentially containing much interesting detail about musical practice, cannot be presumed to reveal many secrets of professional training. Volumes such as Diruta's that were published towards the end of the sixteenth century show a very different focus though, illuminating the church education of the practical musician and setting forth a new model of education for the literate student who was intended for a professional career.[58]

The slightly younger organist Adriano Banchieri (1568–1634) shows some similar preoccupations in his pedagogical works. He was a student of Gioseffo Guami (1542–1611), a highly respected organist who studied with Willaert in Venice, certainly knew Zarlino well, and was educated within the same Venetian circles as Merulo. Banchieri did not focus solely on organ playing in his many pedagogical publications: only *L'organo suonarino* (1605) and the *Conclusioni nel suono dell'organo* (1609) deal primarily with the organ. Some of his other publications give us a rounded idea about musical education within church circles, drawing on his own education with Guami and others.

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[57] For an extended discussion of the relationship between Spanish tutor books and amateur players, see John Griffiths, "Juan Bermudo, Self-Instruction, and the Amateur Instrumentalist," in *Music Education in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. Russell E. Murray, Susan Forscher Weiss, and Cynthia J. Cyrus (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2010), 126–37.

[58] Diruta's interlocutor, the Transylvanian, does appear to be a knowledgeable amateur, with the preamble implying that he is an ambassador sent from a prince in Transylvania to learn more about Italian music. (Soehnlein, "Diruta on the Art of Keyboard-Playing," 100.) The contents of Diruta's lessons, however, are clearly aimed at the church musician, with lessons in modes, counterpoint, liturgical practice, and only occasional comments about secular playing of the harpsichord.

Of particular prominence was Banchieri's *Cartella musicale*, which was frequently reprinted and expanded over the period 1601–23.[59] This large pedagogical compendium—divided into numerous small sections with individual title pages, although concurrently numbered—gives an extensive and reasonably well-organized method for musical education, running through the Guidonian Hand, solmization and mutation, musical notation, different types of counterpoint, and modern music. Some of the earlier sections are in dialogue form, with a young student learning the basics from Banchieri, while the later parts rely on extensive musical examples with commentary.

Although the *Cartella musicale* was primarily for pupils of singing, there are indications further on in the treatise that students may also have been able to play melodic instruments later in their training. Banchieri did not explicitly teach any instrumental skills in this treatise, but included examples showing "how to transpose the modes for voices and for both high and low instruments" as well as some contrapuntal *bicinia* (duos) marked specifically for instruments.[60] This implies that some facility on instruments was unremarkable for an average student learning in connection with the church tradition, and that they could interweave their instrumental playing into the general musical education to progress further. Additionally, many instrumentalists may have studied voice, general musicianship, and counterpoint using methods such as this, alongside their instrumental training.

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[59] References and musical examples are based upon the third edition, generally considered the most lengthy and authoritative of the five revised editions: Adriano Banchieri, *Cartella musicale* (Venice: Vincenti, 1614); trans. Clifford A. Cranna, "Adriano Banchieri's *Cartella musicale* (1614): Translation and Commentary" (PhD diss., Stanford University, 1981). See Cranna, "Adriano Banchieri's *Cartella musicale*," 14, for details of the editions/revisions.

[60] Ibid., 271.

These publications by Artusi, Diruta, and Banchieri show three instances of how the Venetian theoretical tradition may have spread and adapted through pedagogical practices. Some aspects from the writings of theorists such as Zarlino found their way into teaching; other ideas (particularly from the speculative tradition) were passed over, with gaps filled using more practical teaching materials.

Sophisticated theoretical treatises such as Zarlino's were intended more for the advanced student or adult musician with a certain level of accomplishment. As Banchieri wrote in his *Conclusioni nel suono dell'organo*, publication in the vernacular was for "general knowledge"—for the "authority and practice of musicians, organists, and other illustrious writers"—and that if they wished to advance further, "every virtuoso can enlighten himself from the books and authors cited sparely throughout the work."[61] Although any accomplished musician was welcome to return to the treatises of Gaffurius or Zarlino (both of whom Banchieri mentions or cites frequently), the *Conclusioni* itself distills much practical information for the church organist, perhaps—as Lee Garrett has suggested—to serve as a complement to Diruta's *Il Transilvano*.[62]

The treatises discussed here used a variety of methods to make their contents accessible and useful in teaching. Dialogue was used by some authors to simulate explanations to a minor or to an inexperienced but interested player. The dialogue format demonstrated the author's mastery and superior position without needing to display

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[61] Adriano Banchieri, *Conclusioni nel suono dell'organo* (Bologna: heirs of Giovanni Rossi, 1609), trans. Lee R. Garrett (Colorado Springs: Colorado College Music Press, 1982), 34–35. Zarlino's use of the vernacular for his theoretical works has been viewed as a reflection of specifically Venetian intellectual initiatives to establish the vernacular as a legitimate scholarly language; see Judd, *Reading Renaissance Music Theory*, 188n22.

[62] Ibid., 21.

intellectual speculation or scholastic learning.[63] These volumes are all clearly organized,

with short sections and subtitles in a logical order. Key practical skills are taught through

detailed instructions and methods using a series of discrete techniques to be practiced and

mastered. Evidence from this age suggests that learners could expect short amounts of

lesson time on a regular and frequent, perhaps daily basis—a volume such as Banchieri's

Cartella musicale, with its multiple short lessons that each deal with one topic, hints at

the clear organization that could be achieved in such an arrangement.[64]

Species counterpoint and musical examples

I will demonstrate further the distinction between theoretical and pedagogical texts

through discussion of two emerging trends: species counterpoint and the appearance of

musical examples in pedagogical texts. By contrasting Diruta and Banchieri with Zarlino,

the developments in these teaching techniques by the late sixteenth century invoke their

increasing use by musicians in practical teaching.

The treatises of Zarlino and his colleagues do not mention species in counterpoint.

Zarlino discussed note-against-note counterpoint at length, acknowledging that it is more

difficult than "diminished" counterpoint,[65] but then progressed quickly to composition of

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[63] The dialogue format also allowed for writers to focus on content at the expense of literarization and formal conventions, making it ideal for didactic purposes. See Jon R. Snyder, *Writing the Scene of Speaking: Theories of Dialogue in the Late Italian Renaissance* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989), 8–9.

[64] Legal proceedings against the *maestro di cappella* Pietro Pontio reveal him neglecting his duties to teach his students every day; the constant contact between master and pupil was taken very seriously. See Murray, "On the Teaching Duties of the Maestro di Cappella in Sixteenth-Century Italy," 115–28.
[65] Zarlino, *The Art of Counterpoint*, 88.

free diminished counterpoint in two voices without any intermediary between these stages.[66] Zarlino acknowledged that his rules may be incomplete in practice, writing:

> I give here general rather than particular rules for writing a counterpoint upon a subject. The composer must arrive at the contrapuntal part by means of the previously given rules by exercising his own intellect and judgment. Unless nature has given him these, rules and precepts will avail him little.[67]

Despite Zarlino's apparent focus on rules for composition in his third book, this statement implies that his codification is as much a rationalization or justification for compositional practice as it is a prescriptive rule book. He resorts to generalities about natural talent rather than try to provide a method that could help any musician to compose counterpoint.[68]

Given evidence from Vicente Lusitano, however, counterpoint species—in the Fuxian sense—seemed to be in use in some practical settings from at least the middle of the sixteenth century, if not earlier.[69] Lusitano repeatedly used the techniques of species counterpoint in his pedagogical writings on improvised counterpoint, counterpoint over a cantus firmus, and basic composition. The use of these techniques in his writings is likely indicative of a reasonably long-standing application in the many practical, improvisatory, and/or oral traditions; their appearance—relatively fully formed and lacking any claims of novelty—in Venetian and north-Italian pedagogical literature around the turn of the seventeenth century seems to root these techniques within the published literate tradition.

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[66] Ibid., 92–102.

[67] Ibid., 87.

[68] It is perhaps relevant here to recall Adriano Petit Coclico's account of Josquin's teaching, that he "never gave a lecture on music or wrote a theoretical work, and yet he was able in a short time to form complete musicians […] If he discovered, however, pupils with an ingenious mind and promising disposition, then he would teach these in a few words the rules of three-part and later of four-, five-, six-part, etc. writing, always providing them with examples to imitate." Quoted in Owens, *Composers at Work*, 11.

[69] See note 11.

Diruta was among the first Italian writers to order the teaching of counterpoint within species, discussing note-against-note, two halves against a whole (separate or tied as in suspensions), and mixtures of dissonances, and thus breaking down counterpoint into discrete activities that can be practiced by the organist (see Ex. 3.3).[70]

Example 3.3: Girolamo Diruta, species counterpoint (*Il secondo libro del Transilvano*, 2:10–11), excerpts.

Contrapunto di nota contra nota

Contrapunto di minime osservato, con tutti le sorti di consonanze, e dissonanze
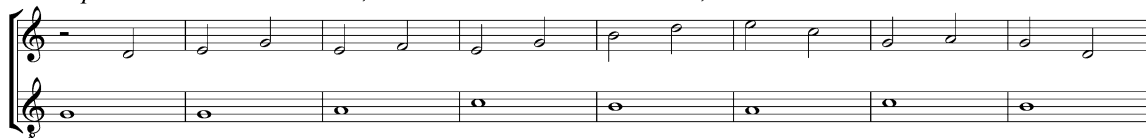
Contrapunto di note ligate con le consonanze

Contrapunto ligato di dissonanze
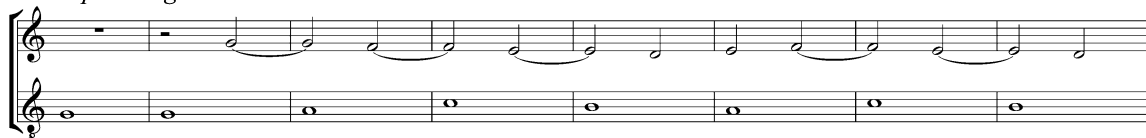
Contrapunto di note negre

Only once his interlocutor had "understood and practiced note-against-note counterpoint and also counterpoint based on separate and tied half notes," did Diruta discuss the quicker notes and acceptable patterns of "good" and "bad" notes that were

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[70] See Soehnlein, "Diruta on the Art of Keyboard-Playing," 314.

necessary for freely diminished counterpoint.[71] Diruta considered it appropriate to lay out these methods that were conducive to practice and progress in counterpoint creation, assuming that the pupil would work through them practically and so did not necessarily need an abundance of natural talent to learn effective counterpoint.

Banchieri also used species counterpoint in his *Cartella musicale*, perhaps drawing from the example of Diruta. Although Banchieri only devoted limited space to this, his range of species is much thorough than Diruta: Banchieri shows a cantus firmus with added lines in whole notes, half notes, quarter notes, suspensions, mixed values, "fugato" (using a specific motif), "ostinato" (repeating a series of pitches with altered rhythms), invertible counterpoints in mixed note values, fugato, and one that could be turned into a canon (see Ex. 3.4).[72] It is possible that systematic thinking like this emerged among singers and organists, but clearly it was being taught to choirboys and other beginners, and was entering the pedagogical methodology of the time.

Example 3.4: Adriano Banchieri, "Sei contrapunti variati sopra il canto fermo" and "Altri dui variati contrapunti…" (*Cartella musicale*, 106–9).

Primo contrapunto: Nota contro nota
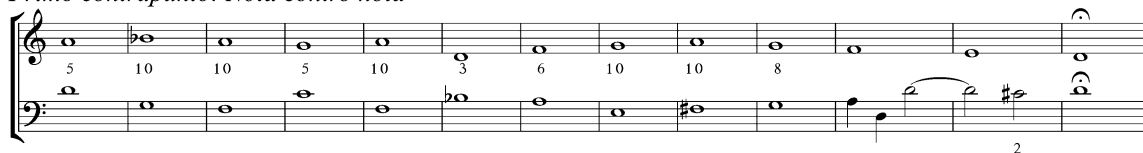
Secondo contrapunto: Dui minime contro una semibreve

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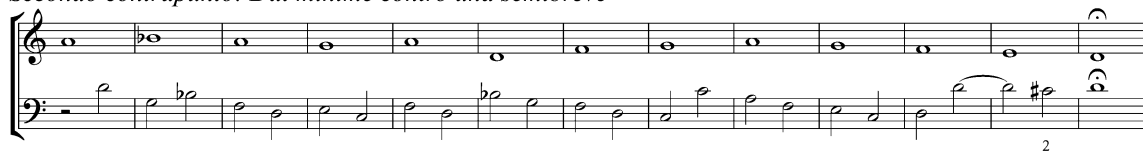
[71] Ibid., 315.

[72] Ibid., 261–70.

Example 3.4: cont.

Terza contrapunto: Quatro semiminime contro una semibreve

Quarto contrapunto: Sincopato

Quinto contrapunto: Fugato

Sesto contrapunto: Ostinato

Primo contrapunto accorda con il canto fermo [also invertible counterpoint at the octave]

Terzo contrapunto accorda con il canto fermo [also invertible counterpoint at the twelfth]

The provision of extended musical examples in a format useful to the learner was also fully visible by the time of the writings of Diruta and Banchieri. By way of comparison, Gaffurius only included one musical example in his *Angelicum* (1508), an accessible theoretical compendium in the Italian vernacular. The majority of Zarlino's examples in *Le istitutioni harmoniche* were short *bicinia* (didactic duos) in score (see

Ex. 3.5), with some more extended counterpoints printed in separate parts.[73] Examples

from proper works by named composers were not shown in the text; Zarlino instead

referred the reader to their appearance in contemporary Venetian prints.

Example 3.5: Gioseffo Zarlino, "Secondo essempio tutto di fantasia" (*Le istitutioni harmoniche*, Terza parte, 201), mm. 1–41.

In the provision of musical examples, Diruta took a very different approach to

Zarlino. Diruta included numerous and lengthy complete pieces from the repertoire for

practice, scoring them into either *partitura* (open score) or *intavolatura* (keyboard

tablature)—or sometimes both (see Ex. 3.6). Through these musical examples, Diruta

provided all the material needed by the average learner, who likely would not have the

financial resources or personal connections to obtain numerous prints and manuscripts.

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[73] *Le istitutioni harmoniche* was "the first treatise to build all its commentary on counterpoint and modal theory on two-part examples," according to the thorough survey of Andrea Bornstein, "Two-Part Didactic Music in Printed Italian Collections of the Renaissance and Baroque (1521–1744)" (PhD diss., University of Birmingham, 2001), 11. The role of two-part compositions in teaching was first recognized by Einstein, who wrote, "the duo of the sixteenth century is one of the most striking examples of the ambiguity of a musical species wavering between vocal and instrumental use and between instructive and purely artistic intentions;" see Alfred Einstein, "Vincenzo Galilei and the Instructive Duo," *Music and Letters* 18 (1937): 360–68.

Moreover, barely any of the compositions in *Il Transilvano* were readily available at the time; most were not published at all, and presumably were copied from manuscripts acquired by Diruta.[74]

Example 3.6: Diruta, "Ricercare á 4" (*Il secondo libro del Transilvano*, 1:5), mm. 1–15.

Throughout his treatise, Diruta used different genres for carefully defined purposes. *Bicinia* demonstrated only the modes and counterpoint fundamentals and species, but ricercares in four voices offered models for the more complex polyphony that an organist may need to play, intabulate, or compose. In his second volume, Diruta found

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[74] Surviving manuscripts showing concordances seem largely to have been copied from *Il Transilvano*; it does not seem that any of these pieces were widely disseminated before Diruta included them in his treatise. See the lists of concordances in Soehnlein, "Diruta on the Art of Keyboard-Playing," 49–65.

examples of good contrapuntal practice in twelve ricercares by himself and his contemporaries Luzzasco Luzzaschi, Giovanni Picchi, Adriano Banchieri, and Gabriele Fattorini. This move away from strict *bicinia* suggests that an organist learned advanced counterpoint through the emulation of genres specific to the instrument. Diruta chose his ricercares carefully, printing entire pieces representing a progression from simple to complex, and providing a spectrum from older, more conservative practices to newer ones. Ricercares by Luzzaschi and Fattorini show less contrapuntal rigor, often modifying the *soggetto* as demanded by the contrapuntal working. Some of the others by Banchieri and Diruta himself are considerably more modern in style: these ricercares are motivically more like instrumental canzonas than vocal counterpoint, using *soggetti* more strictly and showing a more clearly pedagogical aim in their contrapuntal precision.

Toccatas composed by prominent organists of his time offered a means to learn the technical aspects of organ playing. Diruta was the first to give a detailed description of technical aspects of organ playing, and most of the toccatas in *Il Transilvano* were at that time unpublished; his inclusion of these pieces thus offers a glimpse into the previously secretive world of Venetian organ teaching. The levels of secrecy that had pervaded much instrumental teaching until that point were now starting to lift, and Diruta's volume shows clearly how theory and practical instrumental pedagogy were uniting in practice.

Banchieri provided multiple examples in his pedagogical publications, ranging from *bicinia* to extended counterpoints in score in the *Cartella musicale*, and *bicinia* on famous vocal works in both the *Cartella musicale* and in *Il principiante fanciullo*

(1625).[75] Andrea Bornstein has described Banchieri's approach as "an exhaustive picture of the didactic function of the duo [*bicinium*] as composition exercise."[76] The *bicinia* of Banchieri would easily have been performed by student and teacher together. His simpler examples made the top voice very easy—a cantus firmus in equal note values to practice solmization—while the teacher added a more complex counterpoint (see Ex. 3.7).

Example 3.7: Banchieri, cantus firmus with solmization and added counterpoint (*Cartella musicale*, 12).
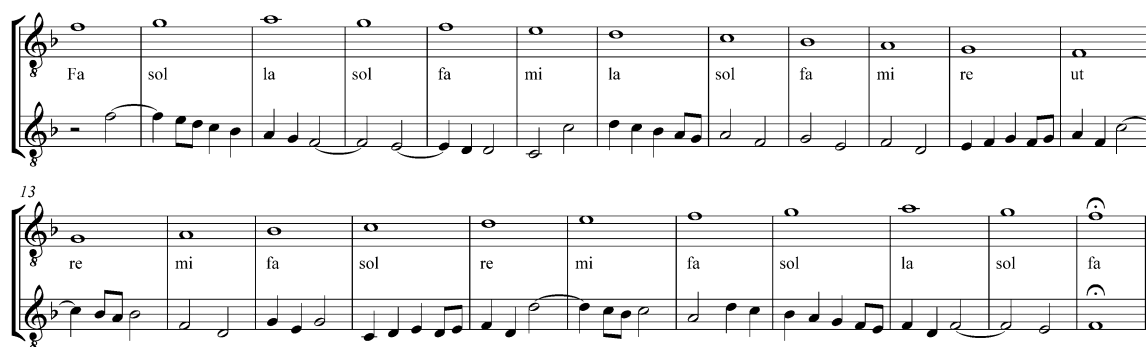
More difficult *bicinia* used a line from a well-known madrigal as a cantus firmus and added a contrapuntal line against it, a method recommended by many writers throughout the sixteenth century (see Ex. 3.8).

Once Banchieri reached his most complex examples, it is noticeable that his counterpoints do not match the style of the cantus firmus (borrowed material that may be up to half a century old); rather, the counterpoints are composed in a consciously modern style, with Banchieri labeling their most salient features (see Ex. 3.9). Banchieri seems to provide a new level of organization in pedagogical practice, where individual techniques—thirds, sixths, suspensions, fugues, etc.—are variegated within a single added line that still follows conventions of consonance and dissonance.

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[75] Adriano Banchieri, *Il principiante fanciullo*, Op. 46 (Venice: Gardano, 1625).

[76] Bornstein, "Two-Part Didactic Music," 11.

Example 3.8: Banchieri, *bicinium* based on the soprano line from Jacques Arcadelt's "Il bianco e dolce cigno" (*Il principiante fanciullo*), mm. 1–29.

Example 3.9: Banchieri, "Secondo duo…con sedici osservationi buone" (*Cartella musicale*, 142–43).

Example 3.9: cont.

Hidden pedagogy in composition, arrangement, and practice

Diruta's use of musical examples in *Il Transilvano* gives an indication as to how teachers used specific genres of compositions to teach aspects of performance, composition, or theory. Thanks to his treatise, the evidence for how organists learned to play and understand music is considerably stronger than for any other professional instrumentalists, but the conclusions that can be drawn for organists may carry over to other categories of players. The genres found in treatises—*bicinia*, ricercares, cantus firmi with counterpoints—also had applications for other instrumentalists; such genres with these pedagogical connections may be considered manifestations of hidden pedagogy, used by teachers and learners who did not have access to formal treatises, as was probably the case for the artisanal instrumentalists.

The ricercare in particular seemed to have a connection to pedagogical practice, as a highly abstract contrapuntal structure with no single evident performance context or purpose. Being textless, it could be executed by singers practicing *solfeggio*—but also lent itself to performance on any instrument.[77] The canzona, as an arrangement,

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[77] There is considerable debate over what instrument the early ricercares were written for, and what their purpose was. For a summary of existing arguments, and a proposal that they are organ pieces presented in

adaptation, or imitation of the Franco-Flemish chanson, was only performed by instruments.[78] Early canzonas and ricercares with close connections to Zarlino's Venetian theoretical circles show relationships with vocal music, yet began to model a conception of counterpoint that diverges from mainstream vocal practices.

The connection between voices and instruments in early sixteenth-century counterpoint is suggested in the published compositions of Zarlino's early teacher, Marco Antonio Cavazzoni. His *Recerchari, motetti, canzoni…libro primo* (1523), a volume of two ricercares, two motets, and four canzonas for organ, has the distinction of containing the earliest surviving ricercares and canzonas for keyboard.[79] These additionally offer insight into how Cavazzoni may have used counterpoint from Josquin's generation in his career as a performer and teacher.

The ricercares were presumably original compositions by Cavazzoni, while the other pieces appear to be based on existing vocal works. Cavazzoni's fourth canzona, which he names "Plus ne regres," takes the opening contrapuntal point from Josquin's popular five-voice chanson "Plusieurs regretz" and uses it as the inspiration for a new contrapuntal piece.[80] The publication of these compositional reworkings by Cavazzoni

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open score and stripped of their characteristic keyboard figuration, see Richard Sherr, "Questions Concerning Instrumental Ensemble Music in Sacred Contexts in the Early Sixteenth Century," in *Le concert des voix et des instruments à la Renaissance*, ed. Jean Michel Vaccaro (Paris: CNRS, 1995), 152–53.

[78] The name "paraphrase canzona" has been coined for a canzona based on pre-existing material, although it has never gained widespread usage; see Floyd G. Sumner, "The Instrumental Canzone prior to 1600" (2 vols, PhD diss., Rutgers University, 1973), 91–94.

[79] Marco Antonio Cavazzoni, *Recerchari, motetti, canzoni. Libro primo*, in *Monuments of Music and Music Literature in Facsimile*, V. 12 (New York: Broude Brothers, 1974); ed. Knud Jeppesen, *Die Italienische Orgelmusik am Anfang des Cenquecento* (Copenhagen: Einar Munksgaard, 1943).

[80] Martin Picker, "A Josquin Parody by Marco Antonio Cavazzoni," *Tijdschrift van de Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis* 22 (1972): 157–59. See *Die Italienische Orgelmusik*, 72–75 and Josquin des Prez, *Secular Works for Five Voices*, New Josquin Edition, vol. 29, ed. Patrick Macey (Utrecht:

based on ideas or *soggetti* from existing works indicates that he was engaging creatively with counterpoint in his solo organ re-compositions.

A comparison of the counterpoint of Cavazzoni's "Plus ne regres" and Josquin's "Plusieurs regretz" reveals points of both continuity and divergence between the contrapuntal writing of these two composers. One feature evident in both compositions is the use of two-voice contrapuntal combinations: it was the opening two-voice module of Josquin's chanson that Cavazzoni borrowed to start his piece (see Ex. 3.10).[81] The two composers treat the module differently, however: Josquin reuses it three times at two-measure intervals, with the first repetition an octave lower, the second repetition a fourth lower; Cavazzoni does not subsequently repeat the combination until a varied repeat of the opening in m. 45. While the two-voice unit plays a structural role in Josquin's counterpoint, for Cavazzoni it is the initiator of a freer contrapuntal texture. Similar two-voice modules occur at the start of other works in the Cavazzoni volume though, suggesting that—although the units may not play a structural role in the construction of counterpoint throughout a piece—the two-voice texture was a fundamental part of Cavazzoni's compositional technique, just as it was for Josquin.

Koninklijke Veteniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis, 2016). This is the only model that has been identified so far, but it seems probable that the other Cavazzoni canzonas relate to lost or unrecognized pieces.

[81] The presence of two-voice modules has been observed in numerous analyses of sixteenth-century counterpoint, with recent studies by Peter Schubert suggesting that they were a primary compositional tool in polyphonic textures. See Peter Schubert, "Hidden Forms in Palestrina's First Book of Four-Voice Motets," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 60, no. 3 (2007): 483–556.

Example 3.10a: Josquin des Prez, "Plusieurs regretz," mm. 1–24.

Example 3.10b: Marco Antonio Cavazzoni, "Plus ne regres" (*Recerchare, motetti, canzoni…libro primo*), mm. 1–24.

Two other textures prevalent in Cavazzoni's compositions have little parallel in Josquin's chanson, and represent a departure from most Franco-Flemish vocal counterpoint practices. The first is a single line with ornamental or decorative note values within a texture of longer notes; such a line may occur at any depth in the texture, and may move freely between different tessituras of the instrument. While Josquin may sometimes emphasize one voice in an otherwise slow-moving texture through quicker movement (as in tenor, mm. 31–2 and mm. 49–50 of "Plusieurs regretz") such brief moments will generally involve an element of melodic or motivic interest. Cavazzoni's quicker notes are generally decorative in nature, being scalar or patterned in a recognizable ornament. In reference to the later and more explicit practices discussed in the following chapter, I shall refer to such a texture as a diminution texture.

Between such passages in Cavazzoni's "Plus ne regres" it is common to find measures of homophonic chords, with up to three notes in each hand. While such textures are sometimes seen in Josquin's chansons (although they are not particularly evident in "Plusieurs regretz"), these generally have syllabic text-setting, and adhere to strict

principles of horizontal voice-leading between the distinct parts. In Cavazzoni's organ

compositions, such chords appear to be built on a vertical conceptualization of harmony

rather than prioritizing the voice-leading of horizontal textures.

Cavazzoni's adaptation of Josquin's work displays a distinct polyphonic style for

the organ, drawing in part on the counterpoint of the previous generation, but also adding

some features that could be characterized as instrumental. Other compositions in

Cavazzoni's publication show this to be a coherent and distinct compositional style, with

some genres favoring one texture more than the others. "Recercare primo" contains some

homophonic moments, but the majority of the piece is occupied by diminution textures;

there is no imitation here, no use of a distinctive motif or *soggetto*, and there are usually

more than two voices present in the texture.[82] The hymns, however, show extensive use

of duo textures: "O Stella maris" begins with a long section just for two voices.[83] This

opening duet has two distinct subjects; the lower of the two is then extended with a new

line added above, and then the passage is repeated almost verbatim, an octave lower.

Only after this contrapuntal opening does Cavazzoni gradually move into diminution

textures, and extensive use of homophonic textures does not occur until a triple-time

passage near the end. Although the more polyphonic sections are typical of most

composed vocal music of the time, the contrasting passages do not have clear parallels in

Franco-Flemish polyphony. This mixture of counterpoint, decoration, and homophony

stood in opposition to the vocal counterpoint typified in works by Willaert and Gombert;

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[82] This is perhaps what Sherr was envisaging when he discussed ricercares as originally organ pieces; see note 79 above.

[83] Cavazzoni's composition bears no resemblance to the hymn *Ave maris stella* (the closest liturgical item to his title), nor to polyphonic settings of that text, nor to the sequence *O Maria stella maris*. It remains unclear if Cavazzoni was arranging an unknown vocal composition for organ, and what purpose this composition could have served in a liturgical service.

although this early exemplar by Cavazzoni is unusual for its time, the reappearance of these characteristics in later instrumental compositions indicates their historical importance.

As the organist at Chioggia Cathedral in 1539–40, Zarlino must have put his lessons from Cavazzoni to practical use, and—given that a number of significant organists claim to have studied with Zarlino—he seems to have retained a role as a keyboard pedagogue despite the fact that he was not particularly noted for any exceptional personal talent on the organ.[84] Characteristics similar to those found in Cavazzoni's compositions recur later in the works of Zarlino's organist students, who passed them down to the generation of Diruta and Banchieri.

Zarlino's published compositions—a small body of motets and madrigals traditionally overshadowed by his theoretical writings—were written in a faithful imitation of Willaert's vocal-contrapuntal idiom. Although well-known for the perfection of his flowing counterpoint, it should be remembered that Willaert too was an experienced educator who seemed to have some interest in pedagogical music during the 1540s, when he wrote a number of untexted polyphonic ricercares that were published in various anthologies.

Willaert's initial set of four ricercares on the solmization syllables *re*, *mi*, *fa*, and *sol* were published in 1543;[85] another seven were published in 1549,[86] and those seven

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[84] Sherr discussed briefly the experience of Cavazzoni's son, Girolamo, who went on to become an organist and composer of some influence. See Sherr, "Questions Concerning Instrumental Ensemble Music," 153.

[85] Various composers, *Motetta trium vocum* (Venice: Gardano, 1543).

[86] Giuliano Tiburtino *et al*., *Fantasie et Recerchari a tre voci* (Venice: Scotto, 1549).

plus two more were collected in the *Fantasie recercari contrapunti a tre voci* (1551).[87]

All of these three-voice ricercares show Willaert's dedication to the strict contrapuntal style. Each begins with a passage in *fuga* or imitation for two of the three voices; in some cases, as in "Recercar quarto," the opening duo is very long, with the bassus joining the counterpoint only after ten breves of rest (see Ex. 3.11). The duos show clear contrapuntal relationships, such as imitation at the upper and lower fifth, and an inverted answer in "Recercar sesto."

Example 3.11: Willaert, "Recercar quarto" (*Fantasie recercari contrapunti a tre voci*), mm. 1–25.

This small but substantial repertoire of ricercares from Willaert suggests his interest in pedagogy—relevant, of course, given his position as *maestro di cappella* of S Marco from 1527, where they could have served many purposes in his duties of

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[87] Adrian Willaert *et al.*, *Fantasie recercari contrapunti a tre voci* (Venice: Gardano, 1551); ed. Robert Judd, *Italian Instrumental Music of the Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries*, vol. 2 (New York: Garland Publishing, 1994). Numbering of pieces refers to this edition.

teaching singing and counterpoint. On his 1551 title page Willaert wrote broadly of their use, stating that they were "appropriati per cantare e sonare d'ogni sorte di stromenti." Zarlino, as a Willaert *discepolo* and later a skilled administrator, theorist, pedagogue, and incumbent of the same *maestro di cappella* post, was surely aware of these works and their pedagogical value.

There is a distinctive difference between this clear and precise contrapuntal style, and the varied, looser compositions of Cavazzoni, which were more idiomatic for the organ. However, all these pieces clearly suggest that textless few-voiced imitative and contrapuntal pieces were important as pedagogical tools to Zarlino's teachers. Such pieces instilled the importance of the contrapuntal relationship between two voices, imitative duo techniques for starting pieces, voice-leading in thin textures, and set structures of cadences in two or three voices.

A third set of pieces from this mid-century period demonstrates further how counterpoint may have been used pedagogically, and holds some additional connections to instrumental practices. The collection of *basse* by Costanzo Festa—a substantial set of 125 contrapuntal variations on a *basse danse* (in Italian, *bassadanza*) theme, sometimes called "La Spagna"[88]—had an explicitly pedagogical purpose, which the composer acknowledged in a letter to his patron, Filippo Strozzi: "The *basse* are good for learning to sing in counterpoint, to compose and to play all instruments."[89] A later letter by him mentioned both *basse* and *contraponti*, among his other works.[90] Moreover, these works were known and sometimes referred to in a pedagogical context by other musicians.

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[88] Constazo Festa, *Counterpoints on a Cantus Firmus*, Recent Researches in the Music of the Renaissance, Vol. 107, ed. Richard J. Agee (Madison, WI: A-R Editions, 1997).

[89] Trans. Richard J. Agee, "Costanzo Festa's 'Gradus ad Parnassum,'" *Early Music History* 15 (1996): 1.

[90] Ibid., 2.

Many decades later, Lodovico Zacconi wrote in 1622 that "if students were able to get hold of them, it would be very useful to put them into score to learn about many beautiful things that must be contained and hidden therein."[91] Zacconi had not seen Festa's pieces personally, but knew them through their pedagogical reputation. "La Spagna" was later taken up as a theme by Giovanni Trabaci and Ascanio Mayone in their own compositions, where they incorrectly attributed the theme itself to Festa. An entry listed in the personal library of vocal teacher Francesco Scudieri for "il basso d'Archadet" raises the possibility that other composers such as Arcadelt had written similar pedagogical sets.[92]

It is significant that Festa chose a *basse danse* for his theme. Multiple scholars have suggested that the *basse danse* was a vehicle for instrumental improvisation in the fifteenth century, given its survival in many sources as just a cantus firmus tenor of long notes.[93] This was a theme with strong connections to oral and popular instrumental traditions, being used by Festa just as a chant or line from a polyphonic vocal work might. While certainly Festa's counterpoints could be sung with *solfeggio* or scored to study their counterpoint, they were also well-suited to use by instrumentalists, with varied cleffing and an unidiomatic melodic language easily adaptable to any combination of instruments. For the organists such as Trabaci and Mayone who may have known Festa's work, this collection provided a valuable compendium of the contrapuntal procedures and

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[91] Lodovico Zacconi, *Prattica di musica: seconda parte* (Venice, Vincenti, 1622), 199; trans. Agee, "Costanzo Festa's 'Gradus ad Parnassum,'" 2.

[92] Giulio M. Ongaro, "The Library of a Sixteenth-Century Music Teacher," *Journal of Musicology* 12, no. 3 (1994): 371–72.

[93] Willi Apel, "A Remark about the Basse Danse," *Journal of Renaissance and Baroque Music* 1, no. 2 (1946): 139–43; Daniel Heartz, "Hoftanz and Basse Dance," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 19, no. 1 (1966): 13–36; Banks, "The Instrumental Consort Repertory," 62–63.

textures that may be encountered in the church during the course of executing such duties as accompanying, improvising, and composing.

Other instrumentalists would have been able to play through the counterpoints in a small group, experiencing the contrapuntal devices aurally. It is worth noting that Festa used the verb "sonar[e]" in mentioning their use by instrumentalists, thus referring to musicians who "sounded" their instruments—the *sonadori*, the players of strings and winds, rather than the keyboardists who touch (*toccare*) their instruments. Even while the actual *basse danse* and *bassadanza* were gradually dying out in the sixteenth century, instrumentalists may have been playing the theme still with contrapuntal exercises as a means of absorbing the sophisticated contrapuntal style they were now being expected to play as members of literate musical culture. If suggestions that the *basse danse* was earlier a vehicle for instrumental improvisation are correct, practice, assimilation, and perhaps memorization of Festa's collection by instrumentalists would have given them the skills to translate their earlier improvisational styles into the language of counterpoint, showing the figures and procedures that could fit over and around a familiar theme. The examples of improvised counterpoint discussed above also raise the possibility that some trained in this skill could have produced counterpoints similar to Festa's through improvisation.

The connections to Spanish repertoires and practices here should not be passed over. The theme of "La Spagna" presumably had some connections with Spain, where the *basse danse* tradition was strong. The presence of this theme, and its appropriation as a cantus firmus, could be related to the possible Spanish origins of some Italian

instrumentalists and instruments, particularly string players.[94] Festa's counterpoints have

some resonances with Ortiz's *Trattado de Glosas sobre Clausulas* (1553)[95]—which

included six *recercadas* on "La Spagna"—in that each presented a theme with

connections to Spanish instrumental music and showed a series of ways in which this

theme could be turned into a complex improvisation or composition: Ortiz did this

through ornamentation; Festa through counterpoint. Although from an analytical or

theoretical standpoint in the present day, we may consider ornamentation and

counterpoint to be very different—one ephemeral, improvised, perhaps idiosyncratic; the

other structural, composed, and regulated—to the sixteenth-century musician they both

constituted ways of elaborating a musical framework.

By the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, the *basse* of Festa were

probably not widely known or used, being several decades old and only ever available in

manuscript. However, they represent a method of pedagogical thinking that incorporated

a cantus firmus of oral or instrumental origin into the creation of sophisticated

counterpoint, showing a surprising confluence of these traditions. The composition of

counterpoints above a cantus firmus was of course a recognized pedagogical technique. It

was often mentioned in treatises, where the author would recommend choosing a line

from a polyphonic work—a Josquin mass, motet, or chanson, for example—and then

composing counterpoints above and below it. Most fundamental counterpoint exercises

were executed in two voices—a feature that shows them assimilating them with the genre

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[94] A number of authors have proposed Spanish origins for sixteenth-century instrumentalists. Peter Holman, for example, found a number of connections between instrumentalists and Jews driven from Spanish territories; his *Four and Twenty Fiddlers* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993) traces the journeys of these instrumentalists to England amid ongoing connections to extended families in northern Italy. There were also strong connections with Spanish musicians in the south of Italy, given the continuing Spanish rule of the Kingdom of Naples (Ortiz was one Spaniard to reach Italy through this route).

[95] Diego Ortiz, *Trattado de Glosas sobre Clausulas* (Rome: Dorico, 1553).

of the pedagogical *bicinium*. Most of Festa's counterpoints use three or more voices, thus showing more advanced and complex contrapuntal conceptions, although the general principles remain the same (see Ex. 3.12).

Example 3.12: Costanzo Festa, counterpoint no. 14 on "La Spagna," mm. 1–9.

These compositions by Cavazzoni, Willaert, and Festa had clearly pedagogical purposes; further examples can be found in the ricercares and canzonas of the following decades. Indications of pedagogical thinking may also be found in the musical practices used by instrumentalists, practices that—although not explicitly pedagogical—contained lessons and cultivated particular ways of thinking in the instrumentalists who used them. This is particularly relevant when considering how instrumentalists used the vocal music of the time, and what they learned by engaging with this repertoire.

As discussed in the previous chapter, instrumentalists were increasingly required to engage with contemporary vocal music and polyphony as they moved into the church during the sixteenth century. While sometimes instrumentalists must have been merely participants in performance, it was common to find vocal music being arranged, adapted, or intabulated for instrumental use. Engagement with a contrapuntal texture through

copying and arranging brought instrumentalists a much deeper understanding than performance, with multiple lessons to be learned from these activities.

Organists show the clearest instance of this tendency, since they had the deepest involvement with sacred vocal music through their duties, and generally had a high level of musical literacy and contrapuntal facility. When an organist was expected to perform most or all of the parts of a vocal polyphonic piece, they could play from some version of the vocal music—a rough score or partbooks—or they could produce a reduction of the parts in keyboard tablature. While singers working from partbooks were only really engaged with their line of the music, the organist alone saw and performed the full texture and could appreciate the details of the counterpoint. As has been shown by Jessie Ann Owens, the use of score in composing cannot be assumed in this period: composing in the mind (*alla mente*), in parts, or in an approximate score remained common techniques. She gives as an example the translation of Luzzasco Luzzaschi's account of the compositional methods of Cipriano de Rore, who worked out compositions in his mind before writing them down on a *cartella* (erasable tablet)[96]—such compositional methods were intrinsically related to the ability to improvise counterpoint.[97] Some musicians did however acknowledge the value of score for understanding vocal polyphony; this is suggested in a letter by Palestrina, where he discussed putting some compositions by a less experienced composer into score so that he could assess their counterpoint and see places requiring correction.[98] In any kind of *partitura* reduction, the full texture is revealed and the direct relationships between the parts become evident.

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[96] Owens, *Composers at Work*, 65; for more of her research on the *cartella*, see ch. 5 "Erasable Tablets."

[97] Ibid., 68.

[98] Ibid., 292.

Even if organists were skilled in improvised counterpoint and did not require a score format to aid their compositional process, however, the frequency with which they had to engage with multiple notated parts in the course of their duties will have influenced their perceptions of polyphonic textures.

In the seventeenth century, these kinds of organ participation were gradually lost with the growth of *basso seguente*, in which figured bass abbreviated the inner parts. Although Banchieri acknowledged that *basso seguente* was "useful and easy," he derided the organists who could only play from this and had not learned a proper understanding of counterpoint through playing all the parts, thus acknowledging that the traditional practice developed their musical knowledge more.[99] It could also be considered, though, that the newer practice encouraged a different type of understanding in organists, as the conception of the inner parts changed from contrapuntal to harmonic. Although the skill of reading multiple parts was no longer so necessary, greater importance was placed on the distillation of harmonic content into chordal identities, a practice that threw greater focus onto the relationship between the outer parts, or between the bass and a principal melody line.

The skills that organists learned through the performance and arrangement of vocal polyphony in many parts were put to use in the development of the canzona repertoire during the 1570s to early 1600s.[100] By adding the "sonar/sonare" to form the phrase "canzona da sonar,"[101] organists acknowledged (like Festa, in his *basse*) that such

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[99] Banchieri, *Conclusioni*, 61–62.

[100] Scholars have noted the frequent cultivation of the canzona genre by organists; see Eleanor Selfridge-Field, "Canzona and Sonata: Some Differences in Social Identity,*" International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 9, no. 1 (1978): 112–13.

counterpoint could be "sounded" on other instruments, thereby transferring the organist's understanding of counterpoint to wind and string players.[102] The composition of a canzona required organists to practice the lessons learned through intabulating and arranging, combining their understanding of counterpoint, knowledge of vocal polyphonic textures, and understanding of the ranges and capabilities of instruments. As seen from the example of Cavazzoni, earlier canzonas could be based on a chanson, whereas those from the generation working in the 1580s–1600s used similar compositional techniques with an original theme or idea; the persistent appearance of the descriptor "alla francese" (as in Banchieri's 1596 set) asserts a continued stylistic association.

This was in distinct opposition to the prevailing polyphonic aesthetic of the Tridentine age: whereas vocal polyphony of the time received its validation through the sensitive setting of text, composers of instrumental polyphonic music continued to cultivate a contrapuntal idiom that possessed an interest and validity as pure music. This is not to say that the contrapuntal techniques used here are not similar to those found in Palestrina, rather that canzona composers found meaning in the grammar of contrapuntal thinking and attractive conversational part-writing. A number of features run through much of the canzona repertoire, including a conformance with the ranges and characteristics of the modes, a strict treatment of consonance and dissonance, equality of parts, modest technical demands on the players, and strict or formulaic development of

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[101] The first surviving piece to show this designation is Nicolò Vicentino's *La bella: canzone da sonare*, which ends his *Madrigali a cinque voci… Libro quinto* (Milan: Da Ponte, 1572).

[102] Having studied the clefs in canzonas, Stephen Bonta believes that a violin consort would have been the most common instrumental ensemble to perform them. There are also many that exist in versions for single keyboard (organ) and for lute. See Stephen Bonta, "The Use of Instruments in the Ensemble Canzona and Sonata in Italy, 1580–1650," *Recercare* 4 (1992): 38.

imitative entries, often using two-voice units. The homophonic or syllabic style cultivated in portions of Palestrina's polyphony has little parallel here, with the contrasting sections in canzonas appearing to draw largely from a triple-time homophonic dance idiom rather than contemporary vocal music.

Florentio Maschera was the first significant composer of ensemble canzonas, with his *Libro primo da canzone da sonare* (c. 1582, 2/1584) being a highly successful volume that was reprinted many times.[103] This publication marked a significant development in the composition of textless contrapuntal canzonas, sparking many further canzonas for instruments and establishing the canzona as a prominent contrapuntal genre for instrumentalists. Maschera's *soggetti* tend to be in a very characteristic style, often beginning with a repeated note and a long–short–short rhythm; these are often employed in a closely spaced canon at the fifth (see Ex. 3.13).

Example 3.13: Florentio Maschera, "Canzon undecima 'L'Averolda'" (*Libro primo de canzoni*), mm. 1–9.

Occasionally, as in the "Canzon quinta 'La Maggia,'" they break with the formal contrapuntal idiom completely to present a four-voiced chordal texture at the beginning, relying on the characteristic canzona rhythm as a subject rather than presenting a proper

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[103] Florentio Maschera, *Libro primo de canzoni…a quattro voci (Brescia, 1584)*, ed. Robert Judd, *Italian Instrumental Music of the Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries*, vol. 9 (New York: Garland Publishing, 1995).

soggetto for discussion (see Ex. 3.14). They often show a greater awareness of rhythmic profile than Zarlinian counterpoint, which has an ideal of constant variety.

Example 3.14: Maschera, "Canzon quinta 'La Maggia'" (*Libro primo de canzoni*), mm. 1–16.

Passages using a single note value (often the quarter note) are quite common, suggesting a possible influence from teaching methods that emphasize the use of a single note value—that is, methods that anticipate "species" as a pedagogical tool. The "Canzon undecima 'L'Averolda,'" takes this to an unusual degree, developing its repeated-note opening motif by repeating the same chord in quarter notes for several successive beats, which shows the possibility of suspending contrapuntal motion for an unexpected effect (see Ex. 3.15). Overall, Maschera's canzonas show a loose adherence to Zarlino's precepts, at least in terms of note succession, but deviate through an awareness of stylistic advancement and practical experience.

Example 3.15: Maschera, "Canzon undecima 'L'Averolda,'" mm. 29–43.

This contrapuntal style, perhaps slightly outdated by vocal standards, was transmitted via organists to other instrumentalists over several decades, with Maschera's canzonas being followed consistently by similar works. Tarquinio Merula's *Libro primo delle canzone* (1615) added only a *basso seguente* as a sign of its later genesis, and even Giovanni Picchi's *Canzoni da sonar* (1625) maintained much of the same style, as Andrew Dell'Antonio found in his classic study of this repertoire.[104] As a major genre that persisted with stylistic consistency over many years, the canzona played an important role in carrying a "hidden pedagogy" of contrapuntal practice from organists to a wider range of instrumentalists.

These examples demonstrate the vast range of ways in which instrumentalists in the sixteenth century could have come across contrapuntal knowledge. Many of these do not display command or even engagement with the wide array of sources available to modern scholars. As I have argued, however, in practical terms, a student receiving a

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[104] Andrew Dell'Antonio, *Syntax, Form, and Genre in Sonatas and Canzonas, 1621–1635* (Lucca: Libreria Musicale Italiana, 1997).

musical education in the later sixteenth century could still absorb a variegated range of different conceptions of counterpoint. These could range from different traditions of improvised counterpoint, which were likely highly regional and varied, to the widely disseminated canzonas of Maschera that distilled and perfected the new contrapuntal language for instrumentalists. Through the synthesis of oral and literate traditions, the varied experiences of each instrumentalist yielded a body of composers with many different skill sets and priorities in their composition of counterpoint.

Chapter 4

Diminution Manuals as an Oral-Literate Interface:

From Improvisation to Composition

Although counterpoint formed the fundamental framework for sixteenth-century composition, there is considerable evidence to suggest that the surfaces of the music could be enlivened with well-developed methods of ornamentation. The most prominent technique, on which I will focus in this chapter, was that of diminutions, the replacing of a note with a number of quicker, ornamental notes. There are various names for this in the sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century literature: the term *passaggi* referred to ornaments or graces in this style, and verbs such as *diminuire* were commonly used to refer to the diminution of note values. The word *minuta* was used mainly by Girolamo Dalla Casa and Girolamo Diruta with apparently the same meaning, while *gorgie* (or *minuta con la gorgia*) refers to the practice as executed in the throats of singers.[1]

This was a style of ornamentation familiar to both singers and instrumentalists, but it appears to have become rather more important and far-reaching as an instrumental practice. The earliest substantial publication dealing with diminutions was by Venetian *piffaro* Sylvestro di Ganassi,[2] and most of the publications from the practice's richest period of the 1580s–90s came from instrumentalists, some of them of holding employment in prominent positions.[3] Although most volumes were intended to be useful

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[1] Other terms found less frequently include *fioretti* (little flowers) and *passo* (step), both of which were used by Lodovico Zacconi, and *glosa* (which casts the ornamented version as a "gloss" on the original), a Spanish word used by Diego Ortiz.

[2] Sylvestro di Ganassi dal Fontego, *Opera Intitulata Fontegara* (Venice: Ganassi, 1535).

to both singers and instrumentalists, extended publications by singers were less frequent, with only Giovanni Battista Bovicelli's manual of 1594 rivaling the instrumentalists' volumes in scope.[4] The small oblong duodecimo volume published by Giovanni Luca Conforti in Rome was very concise, with advice for inexperienced singers, and may have been intended for children or amateurs trying to replicate the singing they heard in Roman churches;[5] Conforti did however mention that the volume could be used by instrumentalists too. The publications by instrumentalists, usually specified for general instrumental use by a rubric such as *con ogni sorte di stromenti*,[6] aspired at times to an almost encyclopedic exploration of the technique that could be adapted for any of the main instruments. Published in large volumes, they contained both exercises of a pedagogical nature, and example pieces showing how the diminutions could be used to embellish a melodic line in practice. These publications by instrumentalists provide evidence for a major virtuosic instrumental tradition that continued in the *stile moderno* compositions of the early seventeenth century.[7]

The tradition of diminutions has been connected to various styles of the early baroque period in some existing scholarship. Howard Mayer Brown, in the first

[3] The most important manuals of the 1580s–90s that will be considered below are: Girolamo Dalla Casa, *Il vero modo di diminuir* (2 vols, Venice: Gardano, 1584); Giovanni Bassano, *Ricercate, passaggi et cadentie* (Venice: Vincenti and Amadino, 1585, 2/1598) and *Motetti, madrigali, et canzoni francese* (Venice: Vincenti, 1591); Riccardo Rognoni (Rognonio), *Passaggi per potersi essercitare nel diminuire terminatamente con ogni sorte d'instromenti* (Venice: Vincenti, 1592; facsimile, with preface and translations by Bruce Dickey, Bologna: Arnaldo Forni, 2002).

[4] Giovanni Battista Bovicelli, *Regole, passaggi di musica, madrigali, e motetti passeggiati* (Venice: Vincenti, 1594).

[5] Giovanni Luca Conforti, *Breve et facile maniera di essercitarsi ad ogni scolaro* (Rome: n.p., 1593).

[6] For further discussion of the use of this phrase, see Allsop, *The Italian "Trio" Sonata*, 28–29.

[7] The only seventeenth-century work I will consider in this chapter is Francesco Rognoni Taeggio, *Selva de varii passaggi secondo l'uso modern, per cantare, e sonare con ogni sorte de stromenti* (Milan: Lomazzo, 1620; facsimile, with introduction by Guglielmo Barblan, Bologna: Arnaldo Forni, [1970]).

substantial study of sixteenth-century ornamentation, wrote that "the ultimate triumph and justification of improvised ornamentation [from the sixteenth century] was the role it played in transforming the music of the Renaissance into something new and essentially different."[8] Referring primarily to vocal music, Brown believed that "reactions against the virtuoso" were responsible for the controlled and carefully notated ornamentation and the rethinking of the relationship between expression and ornamentation that is key to much *seconda prattica* vocal repertoire; these changes were prompted by the excesses hinted at in diminution manuals that, in Brown's view, could easily border on the tasteless.[9]

Brown did not really consider the impact of diminutions upon instrumental music even though he acknowledged that the diminution tradition was probably more central for instrumentalists, writing that "instruction in the art of diminutions may have formed part of the elementary training of almost everyone who learned an instrument."[10] A connection between diminutions and the *stile moderno* instrumental repertoire was probed to some extent by Timothy Collins, who built his study upon Brown's chapter title of "Reactions against the virtuoso."[11] Collins evoked the notion of grace (*grazia*) in order to interpret sources rejecting virtuosic excesses of ornamentation. His sources leave

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[8] Howard Mayer Brown, *Embellishing Sixteenth-Century Music* (London: Oxford University Press, 1976), 75.

[9] Other writers such as Bruce Dickey (who, besides his scholarship on early instrumental music, is a performer who has mastered the art of diminutions) have resisted such judgements of the diminution aesthetic, combining discussion their complexity with awareness of the graces they may bring to a composition; see Bruce Dickey, "Ornamentation in Early Seventeenth-Century Italian Music," in *A Performer's Guide to Seventeenth-Century Music*, ed. Stewart Carter and Jeffrey T. Kite-Powell (rev. ed., Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2012), 293–95.

[10] Brown, *Embellishing Sixteenth-Century Music*, 63.

[11] Timothy A. Collins, "'Reactions against the Virtuoso:' Instrumental Ornamentation Practice and the *Stile Moderno*," *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 32, no. 2 (2001): 137–52.

some space for interpretation, with many showing elaborate examples of diminutions

even after they have derided those who are too exhibitionist; many authors suggested that

the practice is only unappealing when it is executed badly—and, of course, the author's

examples and method should help the user to avoid this outcome. Although Collins

considered the written-out ornaments of the *stile moderno* a reaction against the excesses

of diminutions, he did not really address the virtuosity that remains evident in these

compositions.

Others have proposed a straightforward development between diminutions and

baroque instrumental compositions. Peter Allsop, for example, saw the new sonatas as

notations of previously ornamental practices that were aimed towards "denying the

performer the option of free embellishment."[12] Likewise, Imogene Horsley

acknowledged that by the seventeenth century, diminutions "were again becoming part of

the composer's vocabulary."[13] Like Brown, she perceived the process as happening via

vocal music (particularly madrigals), and she devoted little attention to the *stile moderno*

repertoire and to the instrumentalists for whom the diminution tradition was a very direct

heritage.

In this chapter, I will revisit the relationship between the diminution tradition and

the skills of Italian instrumentalists in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. I

begin by discussing some possible intersections between oral and literate traditions

through an assessment of Ganassi's *Fontegara*, and consider some of the issues of

pedagogical method and intent raised by the early publications of Ganassi and Ortiz. I

then extend this to the main flowering of the published tradition in the 1580s–90s, to

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[12] Allsop, *The Italian "Trio" Sonata*, 91.

[13] Horsley, "The Diminutions in Composition and Theory of Composition," 127.

propose some far-reaching implications that the notation of this method may have encouraged through its pedagogical use. Various types of structural and organizational thinking can be traced through these diminution manuals, and I consider the lessons and musical instincts that these books may have imparted to their users. Finally, I look at some examples of ornamented pieces, and compare earlier examples by Riccardo Rognoni (1592) with some by his son, Francesco Rognoni Taeggio (1620), to demonstrate some "compositional" rather than "improvisatory" tendencies that may have arisen through the study of diminutions as set down in writing. My readings of these sources through their pedagogical potential and the differences between oral tradition and written text propose new possibilities for the relationship between the diminutions tradition and the emergence of new compositional styles for instruments in the seventeenth century.

Positioning early diminution manuals between the oral and literate traditions

There are two major sources from the middle decades of the sixteenth century that are devoted to detailed explanation of the diminution technique. Sylvestro di Ganassi's *Opera intitulata Fontegara* of 1535 was a substantial treatise on recorder playing, with the largest portion being devoted to examples of diminutions. Diego Ortiz's *Trattado de glosas sobre clausulas* (also published in Italian as *Glose sopra le cadenze*) of 1553 was intended for the viol, and focused almost entirely on the technique of diminution. The well-formed tradition demonstrated in these sources clearly had a substantial heritage: these must have been notations of a pre-existent tradition. Howard Mayer Brown suggested that the continuities preserved between fifteenth- and sixteenth-century

keyboard sources are indicative of a broader common heritage between the repertoires and techniques of these centuries.[14] He also proposed that the lute repertoire of the sixteenth century showed similar concerns, a point that draws upon Imogene Horsley's discovery of broad similarities between the diminution tradition and ornamentation in dance variations of the sixteenth century.[15]

Some early theoretical writers seem less well-versed in the diminution tradition than these practical musicians do. Attempts by Coclico and Fink to discuss diminutions lack the easy invention of Ganassi and Ortiz, who appear to have been active and expert users of this ornamental system.[16] Ganassi had strong connections within the instrumental traditions of Venice. He was hired to a good position as *piffaro* to the Doge in 1517, a position he apparently retained for most of his working life; other family members also were *piffari*. Strong links with the other *piffaro* dynasties of sixteenth-century Venice such as the Bassano family are therefore highly likely: the Bassanos were highly regarded as exceptional wind players and makers of wind instruments, and may have been who Ganassi was referring to when he boasted in the *Fontegara* of knowing all the finest wind players of his time.[17] The methods that Ganassi described in the *Fontegara* were likely those passed that through teaching and oral practices around the *piffari* and other musicians acting artisanally in sixteenth-century Venice. Diego Ortiz does not connect so obviously to the *piffaro* or to artisanal traditions, as he spent most of his career primarily

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[14] Brown, *Embellishing Sixteenth-Century Music*, xii–xiii.

[15] Ibid. xiii, and Imogen Horsley, "The 16th-Century Variation: A New Historical Survey," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 12, no. 2/3 (1959), 118–32.

[16] Adrian Petit Coclico, *Compendium musices* (Nuremberg: Montani and Neuberi, 1552); Hermann Finck, *Pratica musica* (Wittenberg: Rhau, 1556); see Brown, *Embellishing Sixteenth-Century Music*, 31–32.

[17] Ganassi, *Fontegara*, f. 4r (foliations refer to those pencilled in the D-W copy).

as a church musician; he was appointed *maestro di cappella* at the viceregal chapel in

Naples, and his other surviving compositions are sacred pieces. The musical material

found in the *Trattado*, however, shows a significant connection to unwritten and

improvised traditions through his selection of formulae such as the *basse danse* "La

Spagna" and the *passamezzo* dance for some of his examples, as discussed in the

previous chapter. Like "La Spagna," the *passamezzo* was a harmonic schema with

connections to instrumental variations on dances, and also the tradition of the *tenorista*

and improvising soloist.[18]

Ganassi's *Fontegara* was a genuine tutor book, featuring some quite detailed

discussion of technique including fingering charts and tonguing, but he clearly considered

the art of diminution to be a central concern in learning how to play the recorder. A large

proportion of the volume is dedicated to musical examples showing several ways to apply

diminutions to each interval between a second and a fifth, yet, despite the length of these

examples, he writes that he could show the user "endless possibilities" for diminutions,

but that he is "afraid that these would puzzle you too much."[19] One surviving copy

preserved in Wolfenbüttel (D-W) gives hints of his ability to provide "endless

possibilities," as it presents an additional 175 diminutions on a cadential formula in

autograph manuscript at the end of the volume. An autograph note by Ganassi in the front

of the volume states that he had originally prepared the manuscript additions for a

Florentine gentleman, and (inaccurately) that there are an additional 300 diminutions, as

well as some information on playing the *lira* and the *viola da tasti*. Even though the

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[18] For more on the *passamezzo*, see Horsley, "The Sixteenth-Century Variation and Baroque Counterpoint," 161; Horsley, "The 16th-Century Variation: A New Historical Survey," 121–23.

[19] Ganassi, *Fontegara*, 75v.

Wolfenbüttel copy does not fully preserve the additions in the exact form that Ganassi describes, the hint of their existence, or his intention to write them, is telling.

Clearly Ganassi expected some or all copies of his publication to go to amateur players above the social level of the professional musician. He was willing to exert additional effort with manuscript additions for wealthy patrons whom he knew personally, and he dedicated his volume to the Venetian doge. The volume itself is smartly presented with good quality printing; Ganassi himself is given as the publisher on the colophon, although it is unknown whether he actually possessed the technical skills to self-publish such a volume entirely without assistance; he also notes on the title page his 20-year privilege for printing the work. His intentions may have been misjudged however: the recorder was not an instrument that the wealthier members of society seemed interested in learning. Wind instruments were frequently considered distasteful, and were unfavorable compared to the voice, lute, or viol, as discussed in chapter 1. Even the picture on the front of the *Fontegara* (see Fig. 4.1) shows what appear to be professional musicians in a private gathering, possibly either the Ganassi or Bassano family; they play recorders, surrounded by other stringed and wind instruments of their profession.[20]

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[20] It has been variously speculated that the wind-playing family on the front of the *Fontegara* depicts members of either the Ganassi or Bassano families, although it is unlikely this could be conclusively proved; see Maggie Lyndon-Jones, "More Thoughts on the Bassanos," *FoMRHI Quarterly* 83 (1996): 24–27; Han Tol, "What the Woodcut from *Opera intitulata Fontegara* Shows Us about Ganassi," *American Recorder* 54, no. 1 (2013): 26–32.

Figure 4.1: Sylvestro di Ganassi, *Fontegara*, frontispiece.

Ganassi aspired to justify the recorder as an instrument of great potential, bestowing upon it the ability to imitate the human voice and therefore the possibility of expressing emotion naturally. It seems likely, however, that there was not widespread appeal for such a volume, and it had no significant imitators. Perhaps it was for this reason that Ganassi's next foray into publishing turned instead to the viol, a much more respected instrument among the classes he was trying to cultivate, and more likely to be a model for commercial success.[21] Ortiz, too, chose the viol for his publication.

Towards the end of the *Fontegara*, Ganassi acknowledged that his book cannot really succeed in its pedagogical goals without the real-life example of teacher; he wrote that in order to acquire the important qualities of *imitatione*, *prontezza*, and *galanteria*,

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[21] Sylvestro di Ganassi dal Fontego, *Regola Rubertina* (Venice: Ganassi, 1542); *Lettione seconda* (Venice: Ganassi, 1543).

one must find an expert singer (rather than an instrumentalist) to imitate.[22] Perhaps he

knew that his intended users were unlikely to employ quality recorder players as

instructors (and, indeed, would probably not subjugate themselves to imitating lower

individuals); copying a good singer was an acceptable alternative, and gave weight to

Ganassi's legitimization of the recorder as a proxy for the expression of the human voice.

In other places he asked users to appeal to the nature of the recorder, asking that they

trust the instrument to show them the way. These methods were intended to approximate

the way a student learning from their teachers would presumably adapt naturally to the

demands of the instrument while copying the teacher's playing.

Other sixteenth-century sources suggest similar techniques, indicating that oral

learning continued to intersect with literacy. Giovanni Camillo Maffei, when writing a

detailed letter about the art of singing in 1562, proposed "listening to the people who sing

easily" as a core piece of advice, as though to acknowledge that his discourse mixing

arcane anatomy with practical advice (and some diminutions) cannot possibly replicate

the experience of observing and imitating a master.[23] Likewise, Praetorius wrote that the

trillo could only be learned "through live demonstration and the efforts of a teacher." He

made an allusion to the naturalness of this process with the comment that "one may learn

from the other [singer] just as one bird learns by watching another."[24] Giulio Caccini,

whom Praetorius cited, gestured to both the written and experiential sides when he wrote

out the *trillo* in a precisely accelerating rhythm. Claiming that this written-out form is

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[22] Ganassi, *Fontegara*, 77v.

[23] Giovanni Camillo Maffei, *Lettere*, trans. Carol MacClintock, *Readings in the History of Music in Performance* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1979), 46.

[24] Michael Praetorius, *Syntagma Musicum* (Wittenburg: Richter and Holwein, 1614–18); portions trans. Hans Lampl, "Praetorius on Performance: Excerpts from the Syntagma Musicum III," selected with commentary by Steven E. Plank, *Historic Brass Journal* 6 (1994): 263.

exactly how he has taught the highly regarded women in his family, Caccini then

transcends the limitations of printing by inviting doubters to come and listen to the *trillo*

of his wife; elsewhere he denigrates the presumption of those who would attempt to learn

without the demonstration and model of an experienced master such as himself.[25]

Through these examples, the gulf between the musical education of the

professional and the wealthy amateur starts to widen. Clearly these professional

musicians who were writing knew that the only way to really achieve mastery—the

mastery that could make performing a livelihood—was through the oral methods of

imitating an experienced performer and receiving the wisdom directly and practically.

This was a method that was been honed while being passed down through generations of

piffari and other instrumentalists. Wealthy amateurs who were seized of the importance

of engaging in musical activities through the educational philosophies of humanism

seemed to prefer the text-based methods that printing made possible. While this could

have some success in speculative theory, as it did in other purely intellectual disciplines,

the embodied and expressive demands of music dictated that such methods could not be

fully successful for music. These differences in approach were representative of a wider

tension between the learning techniques of artisanship and humanism, and between what

might be termed natural imitation and artificial text-based learning.

The idea of learning from nature had a strong heritage in other artisanal fields: it

was this trend that Pamela Smith identified in her study of artists in Early Modern

Germany. She proposed that a student artisan learned the *scientia* of artistic mastery

through observing and copying nature, and that "the final result for which the artisan

strove was an imitation of nature much more profound than the reflection of nature in the

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[25] Giulio Caccini, *Le nuove musiche,* ed. H. Wiley Hitchcock (Madison: A-R Editions, 1970), 8.

mirror; beyond verisimilitude the artisan sought knowledge of materials and an ability to produce."[26] Walter Ong supported such propositions, drawing on various studies to suggest that the intelligence of preliterate societies is "situated in operational contexts" and so an individual solving a problem falls back upon natural or instinctual understanding of the situation rather than employing logic.[27] Ganassi's *Fontegara* acknowledged the necessity of an "operational context," in his entreaty that the reader learn from the instrument and the example of singers, and he optimistically asked for the learner's "intelligence and dexterity to apply and put in practice what you have learned."[28]

The essentially oral nature of the practice Ganassi attempted to notate comes through in his discussion and musical examples. The most unusual feature of the diminution portion of his treatise is his large number of diminutions using unusual time signatures and divisions of the tactus. He devoted many pages to diminutions into groups of five (which he calls *proportio subsesquiquinta*) and seven (*proportio superpartiensquartas*), a division that Ganassi called "rather difficult and special" (see Ex. 4.1).[29]

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[26] Pamela H. Smith, *The Body of the Artisan: Art and Experience in the Scientific Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 98.

[27] Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 50–55.

[28] Ganassi, *Fontegara*, 75v.

[29] Ibid., 69r.

Example 4.1: Sylvestro di Ganassi, *Fontegara*:
a. "Regola seconda: Moto de seconda assendente," no. 1 (ff. 29v–30r);
b. "Regola quarta: Moto de seconda assendente," no. 1 (69v–70r).

a.

b.

Ganassi's attempts to clothe these unconventional divisions with names evoking the language of speculative theory do little to disguise their exceptional nature in sixteenth-century music: metric divisions into five and seven did not have any proper place in formal music theory or composition, but were rather based on experience and intuition. Amongst his sample diminutions are also some rather unusual rhythms (see Ex. 4.2) that cut across beats and employ dotted notes in uneven and unexpected ways. Brown suggests that this was an attempt to "fix improvisatory rhythms in writing" rather than "a particularly scholastic turn of mind" or "an excess of pedagogical zeal."[30]

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[30] Brown, *Embellishing Sixteenth-Century Music*, 23–24.

Example 4.2: Ganassi, *Fontegara*:
a. "Regola prima: Moto de seconda dessendente," no. 9 (f. 13v);
b. "Regola seconda: Moto de seconda assendente," no. 8 (f. 30v);
c. "Regola terza: Moto de seconda assendente," no. 5 (f. 49v).

a.

b.

c.

It is clear from these examples that Ganassi was attempting to notate an improvised practice that had developed among players without a strong understanding of mensural notation, who were unencumbered by clear, rational divisions of musical time into multiples of two and three. A spirit of improvisation developing outside of notational constraints would prove difficult to notate accurately, and clearly Ganassi struggled to put it into notation that looked normal by sixteenth-century standards. His brief example of how to put diminutions together in a "compound" way (that is, possessing variety in his three parameters of melody, time, and rhythm, see Ex. 4.3) demonstrated a style of ornamentation that probably sounded very natural when improvised by an experienced player, but looks strange on the printed page—it would probably sound strange if played metronomically, too.

Example 4.3: Ganassi, *Fontegara*:
a. Example of diminutions that are compound in rhythm, time, and melody (f. 8r);
b. Example of diminutions with multiple different proportions (f. 76v).

This point received continued support from Zacconi half a century later, when he wrote that some idioms that were happily accepted when improvised would inevitably receive condemnation if written down accurately.[31] He proposed that it was better to learn such things by ear, because the rhythms could not be written down precisely. In other words, Zacconi saw two options for notating such improvised ornamental practices through dictation: either write them down accurately and risk criticism for their irregular or unconventional appearance on the page, or notate them in a corrected and acceptable manner that distorts the true sound of the practice. Zacconi failed to resolve this conflict in his own treatise, and his notated diminutions seemed to follow the second of these possibilities, codifying them in a regular manner while lessening their adherence to musical practice beyond the notated score. By striving to notate his diminutions with fidelity to their sound, Ganassi was attempting to recreate the experience of learning them from an experienced practitioner. The simple act of constraining the tradition in notation

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[31] Zacconi, *Prattica di musica*, 1:58r.

(however accurately it is done) risks discarding the ineffable freeness that Ganassi seemed to perceive, replacing it with notation that both restrains and prescribes.

The question remains of whether it could be possible in the present day to understand the nature of an oral practice that potentially underpins Ganassi's volume. Based on evidence of orality from other traditions, an unwritten diminutions practice may have had at its base some simple memorized material that was then elaborated on with diminutions that behaved like a natural language. The style was probably learned by listening to other musicians who used standard patterns and formulas of diminution, but could constantly adapt to the requirements of the situation;[32] such a learning style would not necessarily result in an analytic understanding of the practice, but rather an ability to improvise as in language. The result could have been similar to what Jack Goody calls "generative reconstruction,"[33] in which the mind does not reproduce any particular earlier path, but rather uses a standard language to create another version. Such improvisations may also have reflected the *copia* that is often found in oral cultures, the continued, fluent creation of material that—given the ephemerality of sound—is valued more for its continued production than for its quality at any given moment.[34] For the players, there was likely not much question of conceiving of their playing in terms of a musical text— such performances bring into question the ontology of performance, raising the question

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[32] Ong suggested the importance of this style of learning for some bards in the twentieth century; see Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 59.

[33] Goody also used the variant terms "creative reconstruction" and "generative recall," both of which convey a similar sentiment; see Goody, *The Interface between the Written and the Oral*, 179–80.

[34] Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 40.

of whether they should be thought of as musical works (ontological objects) or as dynamic actions.[35]

Although Ganassi's *Fontegara* was received favorably by some, there were no more publications quite like it. In the next generation, Giovanni Bassano (from a family who, as noted earlier, probably had connections with Ganassi) did not attempt the same approach in his diminution manual of 1585, which is discussed below. Likewise, Ortiz chose an instrument that the wealthy amateurs presumably already knew how to play and provided practice pieces and diminutions at a mostly simpler level that did not obviously break the "rules" of music, and appeared graceful and attractive.

Pedagogical principles in diminution manuals of the 1580s–90s

After these early examples from Ganassi and Ortiz, the main flowering of notated diminutions in Italy came in the last two decades of the sixteenth century.[36] These sources may have had a significant influence on the next generation, since they were being published and disseminated at a time when the future composers of *stile moderno* instrumental music were being trained in the instrumental practices of their time. Diminution manuals of the 1580s–90s became more standardized, suggesting the adopting of a successful formula. They generally consisted of two parts: a section in which isolated notes, intervals, scales, and cadential patterns were divided into smaller note values and rhythmic patterns; and secondly, some example pieces featuring either a single part from a polyphonic piece or a *bastarda* mix of parts, with diminutions applied

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[35] Ong's concept of "language as a mode of action" may be appropriate here, which he uses to characterize the activities of poets and other speakers in oral cultures; see Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 32.

[36] The practice did flourish elsewhere at a later point, particularly in England where publications on the "division violin" became popular in the later seventeenth century.

to demonstrate their practical usage. The general lack of extensive accompanying written instruction suggests that these publications were not intended as treatises; "manual" is probably the best term for them, as a volume with practical exercises to supplement the lessons of a teacher.

Although authors broadened the appeal of their publications by describing them as suitable for voice or any instrument (*ogni sorte de stromenti*), most were written by instrumentalists. Here, I will focus on three particularly significant publications by instrumentalists during these decades. It is notable that the two highest-regarded members of the instrumental ensemble at S Marco both published diminution manuals within a short space of time. Girolamo Dalla Casa, *capo de concerti delli stromenti* at S Marco published his substantial two-volume manual *Il vero modo di diminuir* in 1584. This was quickly followed by the *Ricercate passaggi et cadentie* of his close colleague Giovanni Bassano in 1585.

Both Dalla Casa and Bassano had strong links to the *piffaro* tradition. The Bassano dynasty has already been mentioned in chapter 2, and likely had connections to Ganassi, as discussed above; Giovanni, as its most successful representative, probably received instrumental training within the family as well as his choirboy's training at San Marco. Dalla Casa came with his two brothers from Udine in the north-east of the Venetian territories, a city that had highly regarded *piffaro* players and also, as discussed in the previous chapter, a significant tradition of improvised counterpoint. Dalla Casa and Bassano were central figures in the move from oral *piffaro* cultures to literate church circles, and their decisions to write and publish diminution manuals may be connected to this broader culture. Each appears to have been the first in their family to notate their

music and see it into print, showing a new willingness to exploit their education and literacy, and advance their careers through the prestige of publication.

The third substantial diminution manual considered here is the 1592 *Passaggi per potersi essercitare* by Riccardo Rognoni.[37] An instrumentalist who specialized in the violin, Rognoni was appointed as a *musico* to the governor of Milan, and provides evidence (along with Bovicelli) of a strong Milanese tradition of diminutions. Rognoni also apparently educated his sons in the art: the diminution manual of Francesco Rognoni Taeggio will be considered later in the chapter.

Despite some similarities between the backgrounds of these composers and the earlier generation, there is an immediate contrast between their publications. While the earlier works by Ganassi and Ortiz seemed to be written primarily for amateurs, the diminution manuals of the 1580s–90s appear to be aimed towards those within and preparing for the profession. Dalla Casa's preface directly announces this, writing that his intention in publishing was so that everyone in the profession (*ogn'uno nella professione*) can learn to use diminutions well. Accordingly, Dalla Casa's manual does not give any great detail about how the instruments are to be played; his comments on cornetto technique represent the corrections of common technical mistakes from an accomplished player, and could not possibly serve as any kind of introductory tutor. The cornetto, despite Dalla Casa's understandable advocacy of it, did not seem to be played by anyone in Italy other than professional instrumentalists (and, indeed, was soon to die out altogether). Moreover, the authors all make it clear that these diminutions can be played

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[37] The title page gives his name as "Richardo Rogniono" but, given other records and the spelling of his sons' names, I standardize it to "Riccardo Rognoni" here.

on a wide range of instruments—all the instruments that a professional could be required to master for their job—rather than restricting usage to a single instrument.

It is notable that these volumes reach a much higher level of difficulty than that by Ortiz, which was presumably aimed quite accurately at an amateur level of accomplishment (perhaps, at a level of ornamental display that could remain within the limits of *sprezzatura*). Dalla Casa made a point of using very small note values, writing carefully (and repeatedly) that he considered these essential for making diminutions; Bassano too was careful to define the smallest note value in use in his manual. The diminutions of all three composers are of considerable technical difficulty, employing speed and intricate patterns.

Moreover, these later volumes were commercial prints from Venice's leading music printing companies, Gardano and Vincenti, and were produced using economical moveable type in quite large formats, with functional rather than attractive design. The publications of Ganassi and Ortiz are rather different, being small in format (oblong-quarto) and with engraved music. Since Ganassi self-published his *Fontegara*, he probably intended to distribute some copies through presentation and personal connections (as is suggested in his handwritten note to the D-W copy, which shows him selling an expanded version for one scudo to an acquaintance)—he may not have had the distribution networks of the print houses. Ortiz published in Rome, which had a far less stable music printing industry than Venice, but had a certain reputation for more specialized and customized publishing jobs.[38] Around the middle of the century, the

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[38] For a study comparing the music printing industries of Venice and Rome, see Jane A. Bernstein, "The Publishing of Palestrina's Music in Sixteenth-Century Rome and Venice," in *Palestrina e l'Europa: Atti del III Convegno Internazionale di Studi (Palestrina, 6–9 ottobre 1994)*, ed. Giancarlo Rostirolla *et al.* (Palestrina: Fondazione Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina, 2006), 1075–87.

major printers of Venice may not have been willing to undertake a print like Ganassi's *Fontegara*, given that much of their trade was in *frottole* and music for amateur singers rather than instrumentalists. The sudden willingness of publishers at the end of the century to publish these works shows the opening of a new market of printed pedagogical materials for professional use.

As well as being aimed towards a different audience, these later volumes do not show Ganassi's attempts to reflect freer improvisational practices. The unconventional rhythms and divisions of Ganassi's manual are almost entirely absent in these volumes, which were published around the same time that Zacconi (quoted above) was speaking against notations that broke the accepted conventions. Only in Rognoni's publication do we find a small number of examples marked "dieci semicrome contra una minima" (see Ex. 4.4), and even these may make more sense divided into a beat of four and a beat of six.[39] This suggests that the next generation was becoming thoroughly rooted in the constraints of mensural notation, where only multiples of two and three are technically acceptable. Indeed, there are indications in their writing that these composers have succumbed to the limitations of notation in their playing too, and not just on the paper. Dalla Casa noted that it is important to keep the sense of beat and play diminutions in time, and he railed against wind players who, he claims, have a tendency to rush. Ganassi's example of "compound" diminutions (discussed above) would retain relatively little sense of beat, given the irregular and constantly changing subdivisions of the measure; perhaps such unusual numbers of notes in a measure arose from a tendency to rush a regular number of notes and insert more to make up the time (i.e., five notes instead of four). For all his attempts at theoretical justification of these unconventional

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[39] Rognoni, *Passaggi per potersi essercitare*, 1:13.

time signatures, Ganassi was clearly not adhering to the inner logic of mensural notation, but later, the composers of the 1580s–90s fulfilled expectations that the notes divide into regular groupings at the faster note values.

Example 4.4: Riccardo Rognoni, "Ottima e settima" (*Passaggi per potersi essercitare*, 1:13), excerpt.

Dieci semicrome contra una minima

Another element that developed swiftly away from the early example of Ganassi was the provision of short units of diminution that provide multiple possibilities to be memorized and fitted into new situations. Ganassi's examples suggest that this was not necessarily a totally new way to practice this technique, since they are fairly well-developed; such methods were presumably used to some extent in the pre-literate tradition too. His units have signs of improvisation to them, both in their individual details (as discussed above) and in their broader organization. His method was to move through intervals and other related gestures and provide a line of diminutions for each, consisting of about six to eight different options. He had a certain order he would offer these in: quarter notes; mixed values with dotted notes; some eighth notes; mostly eighth notes; some sixteenth notes; more sixteenth notes; mostly sixteenth notes; finally any miscellaneous additional diminutions. Ganassi showed a reasonable attempt to organize the diminutions, probably by creating a template for this progression of note values, then improvising a variation to fill each category. His diminutions do not really show any organization besides this: there is, for example, little correlation or ordering within the different diminutions in quarter notes.

It is likely that the act of writing helped to clarify the use of short units as a pedagogical technique, as it did in other literate disciplines. Walter Ong theorized that once a society develops literacy, they begin to break language down into its constituent parts, which can then be analyzed and critiqued—that is, writing is a "seperative" activity that allows for its components to be viewed from an objective distance.[40] Similarly, Jack Goody discussed the breaking down of language into discrete units that can then be assigned an abstract semantic meaning and given new uses, indicating that this is an important point in the development of literacy in a society.[41] Many of the techniques of basic literacy discussed in chapter 1 show similar methods: students identify letters, group them into syllables, then they see these syllables in simple religious texts to learn their uses and meanings in written words. Much of this would have been spoken out loud: connecting the symbols on the page with their sounding, active manifestation was an important part of the method.[42] Once the basic units were properly combined in practice—in declaimed text, or written prose—their constituent parts became largely indistinguishable, disguised amongst a larger dimension of meaning; all the process of learning them was hidden from view once the units had been thoroughly mastered.

Connections between diminutions and these broader traditions and pedagogies of literacy quickly become apparent. The notated units in the diminution manuals represent an attempt to understand an improvisational language and make its constituent parts available for study and practice, in the hope they can be successfully reassembled by the learner in a piece at a later stage. Once they start to be written down, the composers (or

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[40] Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 45.

[41] Goody, *The Interface Between the Written and the Oral*, 186.

[42] On the continuing importance of reading aloud even after the extensive spread of literacy, see Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 113–14.

transcribers) begin organizing, analyzing, thinking critically, and understanding them as semantic units that can be ordered or manipulated in many ways. Some of their efforts become at times formulaic, permutational, even verging on the encyclopedic. The act of writing "permits not only the recording but the reorganization of information," allowing the synchronic observance of musical material that had previously lacked permanence.[43]

Riccardo Rognoni's manual is a good example of this, showing a surprisingly clear and methodical organization on both large and small scales. The first volume of his *Passaggi* begins with patterns of diminution on an ascending and descending scale, with diminutions in successively wider intervals, shorter note values, dotted notes, and rhythmic or melodic patterns (see Ex. 4.5): he is much more thorough with his variations than Ganassi, and in places they take on the nature of permutations. The second volume begins with common cadences, each with up to 30 diminutions arranged in a very steady progression from simple to complex (see Ex. 4.6). Often each one will build on the previous one in a developing process of variations. His example pieces, however, show how the diminutions are to be mixed freely in practice: in his words, the *passaggi* are, "the seasoning of the sound and the ornament of the music, for without this variation of *passaggi*, frequent repetitions are tedious to the ear."[44]

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[43] Ibid., 186–87.

[44] Rognoni, *Il vero modo di diminuire*, 2: "Ai virtuosi lettori."

Example 4.5: Rognoni, "Primo esempio di far prattica sopra l'instromenti" (*Passaggi per potersi essercitare*, 1:5), excerpt.

Scala per ascendere, e descendere

Seconde, e terze

Terze, e seconde

Seconde, e quarte, tre contra una

Example 4.6: Rognoni, "Cadentie maggior" (*Passaggi per potersi essercitare*, 2:19), excerpt.

Also prominent in Rognoni's manual is the scalar presentation that allows the learner to practice forming the diminution on each scale degree in turn (see Ex. 4.7)—the diminution takes on the character of a motif used in sequence, or a contrapuntal subject that enters at a variety of pitch levels throughout a piece. This use of sequences indicates that the composers were starting to consider the units of diminution outside of their musical contexts, as abstract objects that could be manipulated for technical reasons.[45] The interplay of fingerings and registers on each instrument create varying challenges for each transposition, since they are not just simple shifts of pitch, as they would be within a voice. Repeating the diminution at a variety of pitch levels would also reinforce the memory of the figure firmly. This also occurs in Dalla Casa's work, for example, he uses

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[45] Drawing on the research of Alexander Luria, Ong identifies abstraction and a "distancing from the situational usage" as characteristic of societies that are developing a literate mind-set; see Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 49.

ascending and descending sequences on the first page, and even repeats them in full three times with different tonguings to help the student practice.

Example 4.7: Rognoni, "Ottima e settima" (*Passaggi per potersi essercitare*, 1:12), excerpt.

The other major method used by these manuals to aid students is the provision of models showing how units of diminution can be used together in the ornamentation of a piece. This was something that Ganassi did not seem to appreciate, since he only gave extremely brief (single phrase) example of how to combine his listed diminutions in practice (although he did try to explain his example at some length).[46] The composers of the next generation devoted considerable proportions of their manuals to extended examples. The most common method was to apply ornaments to a part, often the soprano, of a popular chanson or madrigal. This was the method chosen by Dalla Casa, who was particularly interested in pieces by Adrian Willaert and Cipriano de Rore, and also printed some of the unornamented originals above his ornaments so that the diligent student can understand the relationship between original and ornamented versions (see Ex. 4.8; Bovicelli did this too, in his volume of vocal diminutions). Others just provided

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[46] Ganassi, *Fontegara*, 76r–76v.

the ornamented versions, perhaps assuming that the user would be able to supply the rest

of the parts, and hence see their unornamented part at the same time if they so wished.

Example 4.8: Girolamo Dalla Casa, "Passi e cadenze de semicrome e di treplicate" on Adrian Willaert's "Helas ma mere" (*Il vero modo di diminuir*):
a. Original melodic line;
b. Dalla Casa's diminutions.

a.

b.

Dalla Casa showed a clear pedagogical method in his sample ornamentations, one

that had its roots in Ganassi's work, but was developed and simplified, with much clearer

examples. Ganassi had proposed a difference between "simple" diminutions that used the

same metrical divisions, rhythms, and melodic shapes, and "compound" diminutions that

vary all three of these parameters (he allows hybrid mid-points between these too). Dalla

Casa did not explain what he was doing in so much detail, and he did not use this idea

with as much rigor as Ganassi—perhaps Dalla Casa's version is more practical and

realistic, since the constraints of Ganassi's "simple" diminutions would generate only a

dull, repetitive set of diminution categories. Single rhythmic values provide the

foundation for Dalla Casa's system, with him providing a full diminution in each main

note value for practice, before the student can progress to the joining of note values

together in mixed diminutions (see Ex. 4.8 for an ornamentation in mainly eighth notes).

Bassano took a different approach in his manual (which is much more concise than that of Dalla Casa) by providing ricercares with diminutions for the student to practice (see Ex. 4.9). These could be considered an important abstraction of the process, since they were not ornamentations of a pre-existing piece, but an original composition designed to provide practice in the playing of diminutions. Bassano's choice of the term "ricercata" for these connected them back to the contrapuntal genre, providing an alternate version that focused on the ornamental surface rather than the contrapuntal structure. By using this generic designation, Bassano positioned the practicing of diminutions as a legitimate technique that merited the same attention as counterpoint. It also showed that diminutions could serve as a composition (even if just for practice purposes) and did not necessarily need to depend on a pre-existing piece to have an identity as a musical work and creative act. These various developments during the latter decades of the sixteenth century demonstrate the extent to which literate thinking was changing the traditions of oral practice.

Example 4.9: Giovanni Bassano,"Ricercata seconda" (*Ricercate passaggi et cadentie*), mm. 1–25.

Methodical practice, structuring, and indicators of "composition" thinking

There were a number of reasons why the diminution manuals of the 1580s–90s could

have transmitted an appearance of authority to learners. Their authors were players at the

top of the profession, employed in prestigious positions (as advertised on their title pages)

and often holding some reputation as virtuosos; their publications suggested a possible

route that learners could follow to achieve the same accomplishments. Previously, the

only real way to develop advanced skill would have been through lengthy observation of

and practice with an experienced player; the use of print was an equalizing factor that

made these advances available those outside the main centers where these teachers

worked.[47] The scale and difficulty of some of these volumes (those by Dalla Casa and

Rognoni in particular) suggested a thorough and comprehensive approach that conveyed

experience and authority. As shown in the previous section, creators of these diminution

manuals found their practices increasingly becoming codified and rationalized as they

were guided by the notation they were using. Here, I consider some of the implications

that these notated diminutions held for learners who may have used these manuals, and

the musical literacy and thought processes that they could have encouraged.

There are many aspects of the diminution manuals that could promote an

abstracted or theoretical understanding of some aspects of the music. Through

presentations of intervals, scales, and cadences, the authors encouraged the identification

of certain combinations of pitches. Increased awareness of these units of pitch that may

be expressed arhythmically and named separates the concept of pitch from the musical

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[47] Such a development may not have been so true for the singers, who seemed to still rely heavily on the example of a teacher; see Timothy J. McGee, "How One Learned to Ornament in Late Sixteenth-Century Italy," *Performance Practice Review* 13 (2008): Article 6. The *Breve e facile maniere di essercitarsi ad ogni scolaro* of Conforti was unusual among the vocal manuals in that it specifically mentioned on the title page that the user will be able to learn without the assistance of a teacher using this volume.

experience into an abstracted notion. Likewise, when rhythms are constrained into categories of named note values that obey the rules of mensural notation, an understanding of rhythmic hierarchies is promoted.

The large-scale organization of many manuals held the potential to encourage methodical assessment and analysis of the music in a number of ways. By focusing attention on the fundamental building blocks of music—intervals, scales, and cadences—authors encouraged a methodical understanding of these constituent parts, promoting the literate idea that music can be analyzed and understood through observation of the page; the ordering of the diminutions according to interval size, or the labeling of cadences, helped to make their organization clear. It is not evident whether instrumentalists during a pre-literate era would have thought in terms of intervals and scales. Some understanding of these matters may arise from knowledge of the natures of certain instruments, for example, the natural harmonics available to the trumpeter, or the ascending scales heard when successively pressing down fingers upon strings or uncovering holes on a woodwind instrument. It seems unlikely that a methodical or theoretical understanding of intervals or scales was useful in many traditional modes of instrumental performance prior to the sixteenth century. Since a learner working through a diminution manual would have ample opportunity to play through the options for each interval, and to observe and play hexachords and scalar runs, the use in practice of such essentially theoretical constructs would have become apparent to instrumentalists through their engagement with the printed texts. The medium of notation would thus have conditioned the instrumentalist to develop certain physical and musical habits.

Likewise, diminution manuals encouraged learners to identify cadences as opportunities for ornamentation, by presenting examples of cadences at different pitches, with sample diminutions to ensure that the cadences are practiced in isolation. While the cadence might seem intuitively to constitute a traditional opportunity for decoration, not all styles prioritize cadential gestures. For example, Franco-Flemish polyphony will often disguise cadences through elision, or overlay cadential gestures in some voices with continuing phrases in others; likewise, the improvised polyphony discussed in the previous chapter of this dissertation relied on the continuity of a cantus firmus that never came to a stop, and only allowed for a full cadential motion at the end of a section. The focus on the ornamentation of cadences in the diminution manuals of the late sixteenth century brought a greater sense of importance to the cadential gesture, helping players to identify cadences and bringing a greater structural significance to cadences throughout a given composition.

The manual authors' tendency to organize their diminutions into categories could also have promoted more analytical thinking from learners. As composers increasingly grouped similar types of diminutions together in their books, they encouraged learners to think in terms of categories, relationships, and stylistic types; for example, they would have been more aware of the differences between long–short–short rhythms in simple and compound meters. The difference between eighth–sixteenth–sixteenth in a simple meter and dotted eighth–sixteenth–eighth in compound meter is much more striking when expressed in notation than when casually heard amongst other diminutions.

Such organization also encouraged learners to observe patterns in each category. Rather than pick up diminutions at random, the more organized methods attempt to move

progressively through the possibilities, from less complex to more complex, with each example building on the previous one. Oral transmission of this practice would have largely precluded such organization, and the student learning through such a method could not reliably preserve the sound for analysis and categorization. While Rognoni still championed constant variety when executing diminutions, a learner playing directly from the more abstracted parts of his manual would have been encouraged to see patterns, sequences, and categories. Once set down in notation, the diminutions do not just provide opportunities for the composer to organize and understand them, but also give the learner the same chance for this intellectual development. Diminution manuals offered an opportunity to fuse the development of specific patterns of thought with physical habits at the instrument.

Setting down the diminutions in text also had implications for the use of memory. Memorization through repetition was a key pedagogical method in the diminution tradition: the learner was presumably supposed to repeat the formulas until they were easily recalled in the mind and executed naturally by the muscle memory of the fingers when required in the ornamentation of a piece. In the eight-page treatise that ends his brief manual, Conforti advised that learners understand the types of *passaggi* that are written in the book, and memorize them for the purpose of demonstrating them and improvising in company.[48] The memorization in earlier oral cultures was likely more formulaic, particularly in artisanal situations of learning, where a student could learn through copying an action (during or after the demonstration of the teacher) without much verbal explanation. Oral cultures, by their nature, had a lack of fixed repetition in their performances, with the rearrangement of standard formulas and expressions

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[48] Conforti, *Breve et facile maniera di essercitarsi ad ogni scolaro*, "Dichiaratione sopra li passaggi," 4v.

according to the context and occasion dominating over exact reproduction (which, after all, could not be checked or confirmed without text).[49] The learning in such a culture consisted of the assimilation of a language of formulas and actions until improvisation in a clearly defined style was successful. Indeed, Jack Goody has suggested convincingly that the act of exact memorization and fixed repetition only became possible with the use of texts.[50]

The addition of writing or musical notation to the process of learning diminutions could therefore have a number of consequences. While a master playing diminutions for a student to copy might be improvising them *ad libitum*, perhaps without much structure and with potentially little repetition, once diminutions are written down they can take on a new level of precision. The forms of the individual diminutions can be fixed, whether the learner is playing directly from the notation or copying a teacher who mediates between text and student by playing them first. It is easy, even expected in this situation, to repeat the same diminution a number of times until it is memorized, and potentially return to it later to check that it can be repeated exactly. This could have the effect of limiting practice to the discrete examples that are notated, and ensuring that those examples are exactly and consistently executed; their presentation in categories and sequences may have also aided memorization. There is however also the possibility that writing them down lessens the need for memorization: if it is possible to go back to the written, exact version, the permanent fixing of so many diminutions in the memory may become less urgent. Obviously the volumes could not be consulted in the moment of

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[49] Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 61, 26.

[50] Goody has suggested that the mnemonic techniques discussed by Frances Yates (and after Goody's publication, Mary Carruthers) were predominantly word-based, and so were products of oral cultures; see Goody, *The Interface between the Written and the Oral*, 177, 180–81.

improvisation, but their presence as written objects lessened the need for long-term memorization.

The possibility of referring to compendia of possible diminutions while preparing the ornamentation of a piece could also have changed the way that learners thought about this process. When the options were not written down, the learner would be reliant upon their memory for appropriate diminutions, or would fall back upon open invention within stylistic boundaries. When unsupported by text, a player's memory could only store a limited number of possibilities, so relying on the memory would most likely result in a selection of possibilities being used repeatedly. Relying on pure invention would probably produce a wider selection of ornaments, but increase the ephemerality of the resulting improvisation. Written lists of diminutions could encourage a different type of creative process, since they could serve as reference materials when deciding which diminutions to use. The act of writing had the potential to slow down the creative process, allowing for a much more considered approach to the arrangement of diminutions on the page.[51] Referring to lists of diminutions gave users an additional level of choice over which options to employ, and could have encouraged them to think critically about which type of diminution and specific permutation would be most suitable for each moment of a piece, choose those that were most likely to please, and explore more unusual options without the risk that occurred in improvised performance situations. Such evaluative procedures would help to train the musician in the taste and style that would be necessary to refine original compositions, honing and stimulating their creativity. The writing down of the diminutions first could also help to develop

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[51] Ong referred to writing as a "time-obviating technology" that, by slowing down the creative process, allows the mind to cultivate different modes of thought and creation; see Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 40.

virtuosity and complexity, since the slower nature of writing meant that difficult passages could be carefully worked out and notated, then studied and practiced on the instrument.

The line between improvisation and composition can be quite thin, and recent studies in improvisation have frequently sought to annul this binary through consideration of improvisation as a "real-time composition."[52] Perhaps this would be an appropriate assessment of the accomplished improvisation of a fugue by a keyboardist such as Johann Sebastian Bach who was extremely well-trained in the contrapuntal arts: such an improvisation would engage with motivic material and manipulate it in multiple parts while considering larger questions of structure and pacing. An impromptu improvisation of diminutions, however, would be unlikely to impart such qualities into performance—and indeed, these qualities may not even be desirable in improvisation, if the appreciation from improviser and listeners alike is based in the moment and not judged against a longer time scale or the technical and contrapuntal ideals of a strict genre like a fugue.

Adding to this, a tendency towards ornamenting cadences would seem to naturally privilege the growth of complexity across a piece or phrase. Such a growth could be thought of as similar to teleology, or a goal-oriented trajectory that prioritizes growth, direction, and development. Such aspects can only really be considered properly once a composition is created through the careful and evaluative procedures of writing rather than extemporization.

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[52] For further discussion of recent scholarship on this topic, see George E. Lewis and Benjamin Piekut, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Critical Improvisation Studies* (2 vols, New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 1:10–11; on problematic distinctions between improvisation and composition in medieval music, see Leo Treitler, "Speaking of the I-Word," in ibid., 262–65.

Just like the listing of units of diminution, the inclusion of sample pieces in the

diminution manual has multiple implications for learners and the process of learning.

Such sample diminutions undoubtedly provided learners with a good demonstration of

what was possible, and how a master might approach a particular melody line. However,

they could also provide a reason not to improvise: the excellence of these versions and

the fixed nature of their appearance in the physical print could provide an impediment to

the invention of new versions during the moment of improvisation (particularly if these

had been partially or fully memorized), and repeated playing of these examples could fix

particular options in the mind and thus constrain the imagination.[53] Perhaps some authors

tried to circumvent this by providing more than one sample diminution for a popular

piece (for example, Rognoni's four versions of Rore's *Ancor che co'l partire*) but this

would not match the experience of hearing a good musician improvise multiple

versions—and indeed, Rognoni explicitly states that his ornamented parts are to be

memorized.[54]

While the act of reading diminutions could have a variety of impacts upon the

performer, there were also considerable benefits that could come from working out

diminutions on paper, an activity that begins to border on composition rather than

ornamentation. Turning the selection of diminutions into a slower, text-based process

allowed for consideration of shaping, pacing, and form. The constant variation that

Rognoni suggested was ideal in improvisation is an indicator of earlier concepts of *copia*,

the constant and varied creation prized in many oral cultures. Once the creative process is

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[53] Ong posited that the acquisition of literacy can disable genuine oral utterances, suggesting that literacy "introduces into the mind the concept of a text as controlling the narrative and thereby interferes with the oral composing process;" see Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 59; Goody would perhaps disagree with this however, since he perceived a greater continuum between oral and literate practices.

[54] Rognoni, *Passaggi per potersi essercitare*, 2:43.

slowed down and considered more carefully, the focus can be on selections that are of

high quality rather than copious in number; indeed, Dalla Casa expressed the sentiment

that it is better to do fewer diminutions, but make them good.[55] The lens of written

notation also makes possible broader structural assessment, since the piece can be

conceptualized independently from the progression of time. Many of the progressions of

diminution units found in the manuals tend to go from simple to difficult, for evident

pedagogical reasons. Such an ordering, when played through from beginning to end,

gives the continuous impression of becoming more complex over time.

Development of an instrumental compositional style through the writing of diminutions

The example pieces that authors of diminution manuals published occupy an interesting

space between ornamentation and composition. While they are to a certain extent reliant

on a pre-existing model, such pieces may also show a compositional intent in the

selection and arrangement of the diminutions—one that is enhanced by the greater

deliberation and thought possible when the diminutions are written out rather than

improvised. In this final section, I will examine some examples of composed diminutions

from the manuals of Dalla Casa, Bassano, Rognoni, and his son Rognoni Taeggio to

demonstrate instances of learning from the written exemplars of the manuals, and ways in

which the act of writing could have influenced the creative process towards specifically

compositional rather than improvisational features.

      While the exact creative processes of composers cannot be known for certain,

some seem to point towards a more improvisatory origin to their diminutions. This is

particularly the case for Bassano, whose sample pieces with diminutions published in the

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[55] Dalla Casa, *Il vero modo del diminuire*, "Ai lettori – Del cornetto."

Motetti, madrigali, et canzoni francese (1591) are for the most part relatively

straightforward, and have features that suggest he may have been transcribing the results

of improvisation rather than working out his intentions carefully, as one might expect of a

printed work. The diminutions adorning the pieces are relatively uniform, and contain

many instances of scalar motion or a leap followed by a recovery—figures that Bassano

used very frequently in the isolated units of diminution listed in his earlier manual. These

features are not particularly complex, and likely would not need to be worked out or

developed on paper. It seems quite likely that these were favorite figures of Bassano

when he improvised, since their usage gives the impression of a naturally learned

language that is loosely applied to the diminutions while the melodic line determines the

overall shape. There are moments where Bassano seems to be considering the results

more carefully, although it cannot be determined whether he was actually working out the

diminutions on paper or just thinking more about the possibilities since he was ultimately

writing them down. His diminutions on Cipriano de Rore's "Ancor che co'l partire," for

example, feature some large leaps that are unsuited to the voice, demonstrating an

awareness of the possibility of the forces used, and at times breaks away from the tyranny

of the original vocal line, such as in the use of a dotted motif and considerable disjuncture

at mm. 9–12 (see Ex. 4.10).[56] Generally though, such moments are infrequent, and his

diminutions are often relatively aimless and apparently chosen without a view to a deeper

organization of the ornamentation of the piece; Bassano did not seem to consider what he

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[56] Measure numbers of specific works with diminutions will refer, unless stated otherwise, to Richard Erig
and Veronika Gutman, eds., *Italian Diminutions: The Pieces with More Than One Diminution from 1553 to
1638* (Zürich / Schweiz: Amadeus, 1979), since this volume's standardized format and printing of the
diminutions in parallel allows for the consistency of measure numbers and the immediate comparison of
different versions.

was writing to the extent that these could be considered "compositions;" in this respect, they do not appear to have benefitted much from the fact that they were notated.

Example 4.10: Bassano, diminutions on Cipriano de Rore's "Ancor che co'l partire" (*Motetti, madrigali, et canzoni francese*) mm. 8–12.

Likewise, Bassano does not show many indicators that he developed distinct styles for voices and instruments. His diminutions are rarely so challenging that they could not be performed effectively on voice or any suitable instrument; only occasionally do wide leaps or fast note values seem to demand execution by an instrumentalist. Instances of the fastest note values occur mainly in his purely instrumental pieces, but even then are using sparingly in comparison with the work of, for example, Dalla Casa.

Indeed, the diminutions of Dalla Casa show much greater variety, and suggest a much more deliberate compositional process that utilizes the reflection made possible by writing diminutions out. A comparison of his two different ornamented versions of Orlando di Lasso's "Susane un jour" demonstrates a number of distinct stylistic features that are particular to his work. The first version shows a clear preference for accelerating note values over the course of each phrase, particularly transitions from sixteenths to triplet sixteenths. Dalla Casa seems to have been much more interested than Bassano in the relationship between duple and triple subdivisions, frequently using varied triplet and compound time diminutions in his sample ornamentations. Most of the other ornamentation in this version consists of scales in sixteenth notes and written-out cadential ornaments (see Ex. 4.11a). Dalla Casa's second version of "Susane un jour"

shows him choosing to focus on a different set of options. Here, he appears to emphasize the possibilities of a long–short–short rhythm, and also quick ascending tirata figures and syncopations (see Ex. 4.11b).

These ornamented pieces by Dalla Casa also reveal a more flexible relationship with the original melodic line than can be seen in Bassano's pieces. Usually, only pieces explicitly written for the viola bastarda will have the melody skip between parts; in other ornamented versions, the melody remains in one voice, with that voice ornamenting the melody's pitches. At several points in Dalla Casa's "Susane un jour" though, he fills in rests in the superius part with diminutions (see Ex. 4.11b, mm. 12–15).

Example 4.11: Dalla Casa, diminutions on Orlando di Lasso's "Susane un jour" (*Il vero modo di diminuire*), mm. 1–16, two versions.

Sometimes these are based loosely on the melodic outlines of the contratenor; other times they are not based on any pre-existing voice in the texture. The use of

diminutions for the filling in of rests in the melodic part was condemned by Zacconi, who compared that practice to the social impropriety of one conversant talking over another, yet Dalla Casa's practice shows him conceiving of a line as a solo part that did not need to leave space for the other parts.[57] He evidently did not feel the need to conform exactly to the original phrase structure or to social expectations of leaving room for the other players, and was willing to employ his compositional agency to create a more continuous solo display.[58] Dalla Casa did include a piece that showed a "conversational" conception of diminutions, in which he provides all four parts in their entirety and each performer ornaments in turn—written for voice, these diminutions may acknowledge the greater desire of amateurs to sing such pieces and share both the responsibility for ornamentation and the chance to momentarily shine.[59]

Like Dalla Casa, Rognoni went to considerable effort to instill variety into his ornamented pieces, showing a level of imagination that suggests the careful and measured construction on paper rather than free improvisation and transcription. In his diminutions on Rore's "Ancor che co'l partire," Rognoni uses a wide range of rhythmic values and units, very different to the rather limited rhythmic profile of Bassano. These range from frequent outbursts of thirty-second notes through to intricate rhythmic variants such as the sixteenth–eighth–sixteenth figure that ends the phrase in m. 43. Rognoni did not hesitate to break away from the contours of the vocal line to pursue particular musical gestures, such as the scales and octave displacements that artfully

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[57] Zacconi, *Prattica di musica*, 1:58r–59v.

[58] As Howard Mayer Brown wrote, "ensemble performers are constrained to control the exuberance of their improvisation, whereas the extravagance of soloistic ornamentation was limited only by the single performer's imagination and his technical skill;" see Brown, *Embellishing Sixteenth-Century Music*, 58.

[59] For an example ensemble diminution by Dalla Casa, see Cipriano de Rore, "Alla dolc'ombra," in *Il vero modo di diminuire*, vol. 2.

obscure the original melody in mm. 60–64; a similar figure using thirty-second notes occurs in mm. 70–71 (see Ex. 4.12). At the end of this phrase, as in other places, Rognoni extends the decoration at the end of the phrase to almost cover the space until the next entry; like Dalla Casa, he is interested in preserving the continuity of the melodic line even when the original part calls for a long note or a rest.

Example 4.12: Rognoni, diminutions for *ogni sorte di stromento* on Rore's "Ancor che co'l partire" (*Passaggi per potersi essercitare*), mm. 59–71.

As shown in my discussion above of Rognoni's listing of possibilities for diminution, he tended to suggest practicing figures in sequences; this, indeed, featured prominently among his innovations. He may have become used to hearing diminutions played in this way, since he sometimes used sequences when ornamenting a stepwise passage in a piece, for example, the ascending flourishes that ornament the three descending notes in mm. 68–69 of "Ancor che co'l partire" (see Ex. 4.12). These various characteristics of Rognoni's ornamental practice suggest that he was working these parts out in writing, carefully considering how to find a suitable variety of figures that had a musical logic and produced an interesting solo part.

These diminutions by Dalla Casa and Rognoni also make a considerable attempt to establish a virtuosic dimension to their ornamentation, and it seems likely that the act of notating helped them to develop more difficult versions. The diminutions of Ganassi and Bassano, who seemed to stand closer to the oral and improvisatory traditions in many ways and did not appear to exploit the possibilities of composing in notation so much, were nowhere near as difficult technically (with the exception of Ganassi's unintuitive subdivision and rhythms). The streams of notes martialled by Dalla Casa and Rognoni (and later writers of diminutions) were often wide-ranging in pitch and employed very short note values or detailed rhythmic profiles; such ornamentations demonstrate a devotion towards calculating complex ornaments on the page, removed from the temporality of performance. The act of writing allowed for the careful calculation of different possibilities, patterns, and distinctive gestures that are generally lacking in Bassano's ornamented pieces.

An interesting development that occurs in these pieces is the increasing stratification of musical styles between vocal and instrumental compositions. For much of the sixteenth century, it appears that ornamental styles were largely similar for both singers and instrumentalists (although such skills seemed more widespread among instrumental players). As discussed above, Bassano's diminutions were fairly uniform in their treatment of the voice and instruments, showing only very minor differences between texted and untexted versions. This situation starts to change with some of Riccardo Rognoni's pieces. His diminution manual contained four different versions of Rore's "Ancor che co'l partire:" one texted, one for any instrument (*per sonar con ogni*

sorte di stromento), and easy and difficult versions for the viola bastarda.[60] A comparison between the vocal and the first of the instrumental versions show various ways in which Rognoni began to cultivate different methods of ornamentation for each. The two versions are clearly related: there are a number of passages where the diminutions are identical, suggesting the copying of written sources rather than improvisation afresh. However, the diminutions for voice tend to reserve the most florid ornamentation for the penultimate syllable of each phrase (see Ex. 4.13); this was a practice that could also be seen in the diminutions of Giovanni Battista Bovicelli and also Giulio Caccini—singers who were careful that their ornamentation would maintain the clarity of the text. In Rognoni's instrumental diminutions however, he could ornament more freely, and he frequently employs lengthy diminutions stretching over multiple syllables that were relatively clear in the vocal version. He also exploited the instrumentalist's ability to perform streams of very fast notes and also wide leaps in pitch (see Ex. 4.13). The latter was a characteristic that Bovicelli identified as particularly "instrumental," and generally unattractive for singers.[61] Rognoni's instrumental version also included a much greater variety of rhythms and figures.

Example 4.13: Rognoni, diminutions for voice and for *ogni sorte di stromento* on "Ancor che co'l partire" (*Passaggi per potersi essercitare*), mm. 30–36.

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[60] Rognoni, *Passaggi per potersi essercitare*, 2:42–47.

[61] Bovicelli, *Regole, passaggi di musica*, 15.

It seems likely that the presence of words in the vocal versions had numerous effects—perhaps even imposing limitations—on the composing of diminutions. A sensitive ornamentation increasingly had to show regard for the intelligibility of the words, suggesting the careful placement of ornaments and the curtailment of excessively complex flourishes. This only became more important into the seventeenth century, when meanings of the text and its emotive content also took on greater importance. The phrases of the song necessarily divided the melodic line up into units, and while these could each receive their own distinctive shape, the overall cohesion was provided by the text, and there was not really a need for unifying or structural choices to make in the diminutions themselves. In the instrumental versions, the layer of meaning provided by the text was obscured or missing, so matters of musical logic could come to increased prominence. Rognoni showed that he was willing to eschew the contours and meaning of the vocal line if it gave him greater options for demonstrating the possibilities of his instrument.

These qualities become much clearer in the diminutions of his son, Francesco Rognoni Taeggio, who surely studied with his father and knew the *Passaggi per potersi essercitare* well. His diminutions on Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina's "Io son ferito ahi lasso" show further developments of these same differences.[62] The vocal version, as discussed in chapter 2, becomes a sacred contrafactum with the text "Quanti mercenarii," thus turning from a madrigal into a "motetto passeggiato." Rognoni Taeggio's diminutions are representative of the vocal ornamentation covered in the first volume of his manual, being a combination of the tradition of diminutions and the new ornaments such as the *trillo*, *gruppo*, *accento*, etc., that were championed by Caccini. Indeed, these ornaments appeared in Bovicelli's diminution manual nearly a decade before Caccini's

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[62] Francesco Rognoni Taeggio, *Selva de varii passaggi secondo l'uso moderno*, 1:48–49, and 2:55–57.

publication of *Le nuove musiche*, and had some associations with a more affective and expressive style of singing, although they were also favored because they helped to preserve the clarity (and therefore the expression and meaning) of the words. Rognoni Taeggio's interest in this newer style of ornamentation emphasized his need to engage the meaning and embodiment of the sung text: these ornaments preserved a realm of meaning that could not be separated from the text and the emotions represented by the singer, and indeed, appear to have been only imperfectly captured by the notation of the day.

The only pieces of totally contemporary vocal music included in Rognoni Taeggio's diminution manual were two monodies by the famous Milanese *bastarda* singer Ottavio Valera, complete with Valera's own ornamentation.[63] Perhaps Rognoni Taeggio was acknowledging that the ornamentation of modern vocal music was largely a matter for performers, not composers—for the emotive extemporization of performance rather than the rational calculation of musical notation. All of Rognoni Taeggio's diminutions for voice were written on sacred compositions (or contrafacta) of older pieces by composers such as Palestrina and Rore; these did not necessarily demand a consistently emotional engagement, leaving Rognoni Taeggio free to combine the two styles of ornamentation freely. With the exception of the use of affective ornaments, Rognoni Taeggio's ornamentation technique for voice is largely similar to that of his father, showing the careful distribution of ornaments onto penultimate syllables and other important points (see Ex. 4.14), and a general avoidance of diminutions whose difficulty may obstruct the meaning or delivery of the words (although his vocal writing is generally more difficult than that of his father).

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[63] Rognoni Taeggio, *Selva de varii passaggi secondo l'uso moderno*, 2:72–75; for further discussion of Ottavio Valera, see Wistreich, *Warrior, Courtier, Singer*, 215–17.

The differences between Rognoni Taeggio's vocal and instrumental diminutions of "Io son ferito ahi lasso" are similar to those of his father, but more pronounced. Again, there are a few points with similarities between the vocal and instrumental versions, suggesting an inherent relationship and comparison during the compositional process. There are numerous places where the vocal part features affective ornaments or only ornaments on the penultimate syllable, whereas the instrumental version has much longer diminutions; his father showed a similar tendency, but here there is a much greater level of distinction between vocal and instrumental. An interesting example of this is in mm. 48–49 (see Ex. 4.15), where the voice ascends rapidly to illustrate the word "surgam." The instrumental version takes this idea and expands it with a threefold repetition.

Example 4.14: Francesco Rognoni Taeggio, diminutions for soprano on "Quanti mercenarii," a contrafactum of Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina's "Io son ferito ahi lasso" (*Selva de varii passaggi secondo l'uso moderno*), mm. 5–17.

Towards the end of the piece the instrumental version moves further away from the voice part, with fewer parallel diminutions and a generally higher level of complexity. In mm. 102–3 the instrumental diminutions continue over a rest in the vocal part with extroverted floridity, an example of a weakening of vocal phrases in the instrumental version. Some phrases develop patterns and sequences, whereas vocal diminutions are somewhat limited in opportunities for repeating or developing units of diminution on a

longer basis by the distribution of the text and the need to maintain clarity. At the end,

Rognoni Taeggio's composition culminates with diminutions in continuous sixteenth

notes, which are enlivened with echo effects.

Example 4.15: Rognoni Taeggio, diminutions for soprano on "Quanti mercenarii" and diminutions for instrument on "Io son ferito ahi lasso" (*Selva de varii passaggi secondo l'uso moderno*), mm. 43–52.

These examples from the Rognoni family point to some ways in which texts could

contribute to the identity of a piece and the range of possible diminutions. In the absence

of a sung text, some instrumental diminutions show an increased interest in musical

means of creating structure and logic. The preliminary step to this, overriding the phrase

structure of the vocal part by eliding phrases, was used by a number of these composers.

The most extreme form of this was the *bastarda* diminution, in which each part is

borrowed in turn to create a continuous texture. Once the reliance on the structure of a

single vocal line and the disposition of the text was weakened, composers were free to explore how diminutions could be used to create structure.

Some initial examples of the overriding of vocal phrase structures come from the ricercares in Bassano's diminution manual. Although his ornamented pieces are not as original as those by Dalla Casa and Rognoni, the ricercares show Bassano combining his interest in diminutions with the structures he learned in contrapuntal practices. The act of consciously composing a sample piece to demonstrate diminutions (a piece that does not necessarily have an underlying polyphonic structure being ornamented) seemed to inspire more carefully constructed writing from Bassano. These ricercares show a generally more varied selection of diminutions than were found elsewhere in his diminution manual and *Motetti, madrigali, et canzoni francese*, suggesting that he was considering his choices and thinking critically about his work as he composed it. Although his basic building blocks of scalar motions and leaps with recoveries are still evident, there are also interesting syncopated figures, repeated and developed diminutions over a number of measures, and the effective cultivation of patterns.

Moreover, Bassano's ricercares show him imagining these parts as constituents of larger contrapuntal structures. He begins each ricercare with a distinct subject that remains unornamented for a few measures and that clearly establishes the meter and modal identity of the piece. Throughout the course of the ricercare he then establishes internal cadences, each followed by another distinct subject that is, again, unornamented at first. Only the "Ricercata terza" lacks a strong internal cadence; all the others include cadences to the final of the mode and to important secondary pitch areas. Having sectionalized each piece, Bassano then carefully chose diminutions to give each section a

particular character by focusing on a specific note value, pattern, or sequence. His selections generally create a sense of motion that culminates in the cadential ornamentation ending each section. Although Bassano's other works in the diminution tradition do not usually show any particular structural or compositional tendencies, the ricercares show him combining contrapuntal instincts with the surface decoration of ornamentation, and making use of the increased consideration that notation can make possible.

Turning to the next generation, diminutions from Francesco Rognoni Taeggio suggest some of the lessons that may have been learned from this practice, and some of the possibilities that could come from a written approach to diminutions. His two sets of diminutions on Palestrina's "Vestiva i colli" (one "con diverse inventioni" for any instrument and one in a "modo difficile" for viola bastarda) are among his most carefully constructed compositions, and demonstrate his attempts to create musical logic in the absence of texts.

In both these ornamentations, Rognoni Taeggio uses the poetic structure of "Vestivi i colli" to structure the diminutions; it does not merely dictate the phrase structure (and indeed, Rognoni Taeggio does not follow Palestrina's phrase structure precisely) but rather the beginning of each poetic line provides the impetus for a new idea and diminutions in a particular style (see Fig. 4.2). In the instrumental version "con diverse inventioni," a striking moment is at the bold point of imitation that Palestrina uses to set the fifth line of text, "quando li cori...," at m. 41. Here, although Rognoni Taeggio does not start a new phrase, he switches entirely to diminutions in 6/4 (which essentially acts as a compound subdivision against the original pulse) and maintains this new meter

throughout the fifth and sixth lines of the poem (see Ex. 4.16). The use of a different meter for a lengthy portion of the piece (mm. 41–60) gives the impression of a ternary structure being imposed over Palestrina's original madrigal. This sense is heightened by the motivic similarities between the very opening of the piece and the new idea in C time at m. 64, which presents the opening rhythm in rhythmic diminution (see Ex. 4.17).

Figure 4.2: Rognoni Taeggio, diminutions "con diverse inventioni" on "Vestiva i colli."

Vestiva i colli e le campagne intorno	C time; canzona rhythm and sixteenth-note diminutions
la primavera di novelli onori	diminutions in eighth notes
e spirava soavi arabi odori,	temporary move into diminutions in triple time
cinta d'erbe, di fronde il crin adorno,	simpler new theme, becoming sixteenth-note diminutions
quando Licori, a l'apparir del giorno,	Compound time; all eighth- and sixteenth-note diminutions
cogliendo di sua man purpurei fiori,	(continues previous texture)
mi disse in guidardon di tanti ardori:	change to C time; rhythmic diminution of m .1
A te li colgo et ecco, io te n'adorno	Diminutions in eighth notes
[A te li colgo et ecco, io te n'adorno.]	Diminutions in eighth notes accelerate to fast ending.

Example 4.16: Rognoni Taeggio, diminutions "con diverse inventioni" on Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina's "Vestiva i colli" (*Selva de varii passaggi secondo l'uso moderno*), mm. 41–51.

**Example 4.17: Rognoni Taeggio, diminutions "con diverse inventioni" on "Vestiva i colli,"
mm. 1–5 and mm. 64–72.**

Rognoni Taeggio also carefully controls the pacing of the diminutions within each

of these spans defined by the lines of text. Like Bassano, he often begins each new

section with a distinctive idea. Sometimes these are quite simple and look like the

subjects typical of contrapuntal instrumental music; elsewhere they are more melodic or

use a distinctive category of diminution. After these starting points, he selects

diminutions to increase the rate of movement towards the cadence or beginning of the

next idea. His method for the third line of text ("e spirava…," m. 24) evokes Dalla Casa

in its acceleration from duple to triple meters. For the repetition of the final line (m. 83),

Rognoni Taeggio begins with a very simple figure, before accelerating to the fastest note

values in the piece for a culminating ending (see Ex. 4.18).

His diminutions for viola bastarda show some of these compositional choices

being transferred to a different medium. Again, Rognoni Taeggio uses the lines of the

text to provide a basic organizational outline. Each new line is now distinguished by a

different figure that he uses to give the impression of successive entries in imitative

polyphony. While these sometimes follow the entries of Palestrina's points of imitation, more often they will follow a varied pattern according to the length and nature of the new idea. The viola bastarda version also makes use of diminutions in patterns and sequences to create a melodic line that is unified by musical ideas (see Ex. 4.19).

Example 4.18: Rognoni Taeggio, diminutions "con diverse inventioni" on "Vestiva i colli," mm. 81–end.

Example 4.19: Rognoni Taeggio, diminutions for viola bastarda on "Vestiva i colli," mm. 14–22.

For players of melodic instruments, the technique of *bastarda* shows a unique combination of counterpoint and ornamentation. This compilation of portions from different voices of a contrapuntal piece into a single, wide-ranging melodic line required the arranger to look at a polyphonic texture in a particular way—rather than considering harmony or contrapuntal relationships between multiple parts, the focus of the *bastarda* arranger was on contrapuntal entries at their different pitch levels. By picking out distinctive melodic material from the different voices, they created a single melodic line that repeated the *soggetto* with unusual insistence, varied across a broad pitch range. The understanding this developed was rather different to that required by most other

composers of counterpoint, who would be focused on the relationships between parts, the progressions of intervals, and the harmony of the whole. This adaptation of counterpoint into a single melody line made instrumentalists who engaged with the *bastarda* technique think in a very different way about counterpoint, and engage with its horizontal rather than vertical characteristics.

The examples from the diminution tradition discussed here demonstrate the many ways in which this ornamental idiom could make a significant impression upon the skills and habits of an instrumentalist. Through methodical practice of examples from the diminution manuals, a performer could expect to acquire various habits including the sequencing and patterning of motifs, a tendency to move from simple to difficult, and a greater awareness of the different categories of diminution and their usage. Although counterpoint and ornamentation are often considered as opposites—one structural, one merely decorative—there are actually many similarities in this particular repertoire. The emerging technique of species counterpoint has a parallel in Dalla Casa's pedagogical limiting to one or two classes of diminution at a time, and even the use of mixed diminutions could appear in the more complex counterpoints against a cantus firmus. There was also a need for diminutions to fit in with the counterpoint: Aurelio Virgiliano's rules for diminutions stated that each unit should begin and end on the melodic note, so as to preserve the voice-leading relationships between the ornamented part and the rest of the ensemble. In the very last works of the diminution tradition, the challenges of organizing a large quantity of varied material become evident, as composers such as Rognoni Taeggio looked for new formal structures to shape their diminutions. Many of these developments depended on, firstly, the printing of diminutions and the experience

of learning through reading rather than listening and, secondly, the act of writing

diminutions down, where patterns can be sought and final products polished. These

contrapuntal and ornamental intersections characterized the environment in which

instrumentalists were trained in the late sixteenth century, and the habits they acquired

through these practices and repertoires informed their professional activities, and

provided a basis on which they could build their compositional techniques.

Chapter 5

Literacy, Pedagogy, and Compositional Approaches

in the *Stile moderno* Instrumental Repertoire

The previous discussions of counterpoint and ornamentation have each culminated in a discussion of music by the generation of instrumentalists active in northern Italy at the end of the sixteenth century. Mainly born around the middle of the sixteenth century, instrumentalists such as Maschera, Bassano, and Rognoni seem to stand directly at the interface of oral and literate traditions in their field. While their educations and professional experiences varied, they responded to the challenges of balancing the oral and literate aspects of their careers in different ways.

The instrumentalists of the next generation, born in the 1570s–90s, entered a musical environment that was increasingly replete with examples of notated instrumental music, and where players who were participating fully in the literate musical culture took on the role of teachers. As mentioned in the first chapter, even the most essential aspects of biography and education remain unknown for a majority of these instrumentalists, so precise discussion of their formative years remains largely out of reach. However, their entry into and education within the literate cultures discussed here raises many questions. Did instrumentalists learning their craft in these final decades of the century play the printed canzonas of Maschera? Did they learn their diminutions from the manuals produced by the instrumentalists employed in the most prestigious musical institutions of northern Italy? How did young, aspiring instrumentalists interact with family members in the profession? To what extent did older instrumentalists and the *maestri di cappella*

insist upon musically literate participants in their ensembles and performance spaces? Precise answers to such questions must, for now, remain largely unanswered in individual cases. Generally speaking, though, for the generation of the 1570s–90s the acquisition of musical literacy was necessary for employment and advancement in the most important centers of musical activity, and interaction with the cultures of literacy discussed here became essential for instrumentalists aspiring to reach the top of their field.

For an instrumentalist, musical literacy could create a route to new commercial opportunities and professional connections, and give the chance to build a reputation that was not merely based in ephemeral sound, but rather on physical paper. It offered the possibility of ascending the ranks from a mere *prattico*, who cannot record his creative acts in notation, to a composer, a *musico*, a member of the literate musical elite whose creations could be preserved, both for dissemination among those not present at the performance and for posterity. Increasing numbers of instrumentalists from this generation seized the opportunity to enter this literate world, becoming composers who wrote down their newly invented instrumental works and saw them into publication through the most prestigious printing companies. Dario Castello and others referred to this new instrumental repertoire as the *stile moderno*, a fitting term with many suggestive connotations. Not only did it evoke contemporary debates about old and new music, about *prima prattica* and *seconda prattica*, but it also alluded to the movement of instrumentalists into a modern era. These were works imagined through the composers' new skill of literacy, which increasingly rejected the old oral practices and trappings of tradition through engagement with the act of writing.

In this final chapter, I examine some works from this instrumental *stile moderno* of the 1610s–20s for evidence of their connections to the trends of pedagogy and literacy discussed in the previous chapters. Select compositions by Giovanni Gabrieli, Giovanni Paolo Cima, Salamone Rossi, Giovanni Battista Buonamente, Dario Castello, and Biagio Marini suggest that many of the most idiosyncratic features of the *stile moderno* may have had their roots in the composers' experience of being educated in musical literacy, while oral traditions may be seen gradually weakening their hold.

<u>A route to a new instrumental idiom: Giovanni Gabrieli</u>

Some works push the boundaries of the canzona genre and point towards the sonata, which—although generic labels were applied inconsistently—essentially diverged from the canzona in the early seventeenth century. In particular, works of Giovanni Gabrieli from the late 1500s show many innovations that relate to his training as an organist and his status as a literate musician. I will briefly discuss Gabrieli's idiom as an introduction to the seventeenth-century works in this chapter, since his music begins to show the intertwining of contrapuntal and decorative idioms that characterize later instrumental music.

As an organist at S Marco from 1585 to his death in 1612, Giovanni Gabrieli was responsible for the provision of a great deal of instrumental music for churches and institutions around Venice. He had at his disposal the unusually fine instrumental ensemble (discussed in chapter 2), which had benefitted from the leadership of esteemed cornettists/instrumentalists Girolamo dalla Casa (during 1568–1601) and Giovanni Bassano (during 1601–17). A large quantity of the instrumental music he composed for

S Marco was published in the *Sacrae symphoniae* (1597) and posthumous *Canzoni et sonate* (1615), giving us an unusual insight into the repertoire of this key institution.[1]

Following a long S Marco tradition dating back at least to Willaert, Gabrieli took advantage of the architecture of the building to enable the arrangement of *cori spezzati*, the dividing of instrumental forces around the space. This practice is evident in many of his canzonas, which divide the players into two or more separate choirs, who can then interact in various ways (see Ex. 5.1). The practice had been used by his uncle Andrea Gabrieli during his time at S Marco, but generally only for the repetition and exchange of material between groups of singers, a practice that harks back to the singing of chant in alternation. Giovanni Gabrieli developed a much more sophisticated and varied use of the multiple groups, composing pieces in which they could interact on a carefully detailed scale, using techniques such as hocketing, sequence, answering, echoing, etc. In the genre of the canzona, this represented a considerable development to the contrapuntal model exemplified by Maschera, through its crafting of intricate interrelated parts. One of the key tenets of Maschera's ensemble counterpoint was that the parts were essentially equal, and their relationships and interactions were defined by the logical ordering of imitation; by dividing them into groups and manipulating the texture according to external spatial considerations, Gabrieli imposed another layer of compositional determination onto the counterpoint that depended on the act of writing to carefully order the parts and transmit these wishes to the performers.

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[1] Giovanni Gabrieli, *Symphoniae sacrae* (Venice: Gardano, 1597), ed. G. Francesco Malipiero, *Opera Omnia di Giovanni Gabrieli* I, part 2 (Venice: San Giorgio Maggiore and Mainz: Universal Edition, 1969).

Example 5.1: Giovanni Gabrieli, "Canzon per sonar septimi toni" (*Sacrae symphoniae*), mm. 1–7.

He also further differentiated between the parts by beginning to specify particular instruments for each part. This is particularly relevant in the cases where he wrote two prominent treble parts, generally for cornetto (the assumption must remain that these were intended for Dalla Casa and Bassano).There is limited evidence to suggest that in later years it was possible to perform these works just with the two treble parts and

continuo, pointing towards the emergence of trio sonata textures from a larger

contrapuntal structure.[2]

The other notable result of writing canzonas for such esteemed instrumentalists

was the incorporation of virtuosity into the individual parts. This was not the case in the

traditional ensemble canzona, which was generally of a standard that could be played

without difficulty by a group of some competency, and without any particularly striking

instrumental characteristics. Gabrieli, though, had as models the manuals on diminution

produced by Dalla Casa and Bassano during their tenures at S Marco, and the example of

the practices he heard from them in the church. It is quite safe to assume that the virtuoso

instrumentalists of S Marco practiced diminutions where they were appropriate in the

church repertoire, and developed their skills to a virtuosic degree through the courses of

their careers there. Their diminution manuals show great experience in producing large

numbers of permutations for each excerpt and in beginning to express themselves

idiomatically on their instrument (as opposed to conforming to vocal style). While the

diminution manuals rarely contain examples of ornamented canzonas specifically, it

could be argued that their ornamenting of lines from chansons constitutes a form of

decorated canzona, although the genre is not generally considered this way in

scholarship.[3] The most highly decorated passages by Gabrieli show a clear influence

from his instrumentalists' practicing of diminutions; see, for example, the end of his

"Canzon per sonar septimi toni" from the first volume of *Sacrae symphoniae* (Ex. 5.2).

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[2] Allsop, *The Italian "Trio" Sonata*, 87.

[3] They are discussed in this manner in Sumner's early study of the canzona, but generally diminutions have since been regarded (not necessarily correctly) as a separate genre; see Sumner, "The Instrumental Canzone Prior to 1600."

Example 5.2: Gabrieli, "Canzon per sonar duodecimi toni" (*Sacrae symphoniae*), mm. 79–end.

Example 5.2: cont.

In this sense, the diminution practice did not directly influence the rigorous counterpoint for which the canzona was known. It did however have a strong influence on the ornamental surface of the music. A comparison between canzonas by Maschera and Gabrieli shows clearly the introduction of more ornamental touches, within an imitative framework. This detail became vital when the sonata began to be discerned as distinct from the canzona, since in the sonata the richly decorated surfaces began to become fundamental, and started to control or displace the counterpoint, leading in many cases to a succession of harmonies rather than an interweaving of contrapuntal lines.

Counterpoint and diminutions for organists: Giovanni Paolo Cima

Giovanni Paolo Cima (c. 1570–1630) spent much of his career as an organist at the
Milanese church of S Maria presso S Celso, acting as the *maestro di cappella* in his later
years.[4] He seems to have been highly regarded in Milanese musical circles: his works
appear in anthologies alongside the other leading composers of the city, and he likely
held the acquaintance of the Rognoni family and the main musical printers, the Lomazzo
family. The Cima family seemed quite musical, with Giovanni Paolo's brother, Antonio,
and a son, Giovanni Battista, pursuing much the same career.[5]

Cima seemed to receive a good grounding in counterpoint, as we would expect
from an organist. In 1622 he contributed some canons to a volume about counterpoint by
a fellow Milanese theorist, Camillo Angleria.[6] The book was dedicated to Cima,
indicating both his interest in the subject matter and the author's respect for Cima's
abilities. As a composer, Cima wrote motets for the church and also organ music. His
interest in other instrumental music—sonatas composed explicitly for strings and
winds—was relatively unusual for a Milanese composer at that time however. He showed
a definite interest in writing for small instrumental ensembles, with his most notable

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[4] Much documentary evidence about his years at this church is collected in Renato Frigerio and Rossella
Frigerio, "Giovan Paolo Cima organista nella Madonna di S. Celso in Milano: documenti inediti
Dell'Archivio diocesano di Milano," *Il Flauto dolce* 16 (April 1987): 32–37.

[5] For more on the activities of the Cima family, see Robert L. Kendrick, *The Sounds of Milan, 1585–1650*
(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

[6] Camillo Angleria, *La Regola del contraponto, e della musical compositione* (Milan: Rolla, 1622); Cima's
pieces are on 112–[121].

pieces being the four sonatas published in his large *Concerti ecclesiastici* collection of 1610.[7]

Although Cima's "Sonata à 2" from the *Concerti ecclesiastici* is scored for violin and violone, it shows certain features that may have resulted from the literate organists' culture. The piece demonstrates the use of counterpoint, interaction between the parts, and the inclusion of decorative note values that point towards the written idiom as a means of organizing musical material. The opening of this sonata (see Ex. 5.3) shows Cima modifying his contrapuntal language to fit the reduced forces of violin, violone, and basso continuo. He was clearly drawing upon the imitative polyphonic openings of the canzona repertoire, transferring them into a texture of fewer parts. A five-voice point of imitation is dispersed among the parts: the opening violin takes a high soprano entry of the *soggetto*, the continuo adds lower soprano and alto entries, and the violone finishes with a tenor imitation. The fifth and final entry, lower in the bass, follows after a brief diversion. The entries conform to a strict formula of alternating between authentic (G–G) and plagal (D–B flat) regions of the mode, as though they are constrained by the limited range of singers rather than being played by flexible instruments of wide ranges. Cima's evocation of the imitative point in a small ensemble hints towards the contrapuntal idioms that call for multiple imitative entries to be played on the same instrument, thereby conflating the repeated instances of the *soggetto* into a single melodic line. A similar approach is found in the contrapuntal organ repertoire or pieces using the *bastarda* technique. The thinner texture places an emphasis on the shape and character of the *soggetto*, since it is not covered by much other contrapuntal material.

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[7] Giovanni Paolo Cima, *Concerti ecclesiatici (*Milan: Lomazzo, 1610; facsimile, Florence: Studio per Edizione Scelte, 1986); ed. Rudolf Hofstötter and Ingomar Rainer, *Wiener Edition Alter Musik*, vol. 1 (Vienna: Doblinger, 1998).

Example 5.3: Giovanni Paolo Cima, "Sonata à 2" (*Concerti ecclesiatici*), mm. 1–19.

Cima showed an awareness of the contrapuntal possibilities of this *soggetto*, using a varied version to launch into a new section. His next major use of the theme in m. 29 overlaps the entries at a closer imitative pace (two half notes instead of three). His third return to the theme shortens the *soggetto* to a measure or less of its original length (see Ex. 5.4) and slightly alters it. Again he creates the impression of entries in different registers, with a decorated soprano entry in the violin, an incomplete alto entry from the continuo, followed closely by the tenor entry from the violone; the lower soprano and bass entries come after this. The shortened alto entry gives the sense of being feigned, or deceiving the listener into believing that the entry continues for the full theme instead of abruptly cutting off after three notes—perhaps a sensitive continuo player would continue the entry unbidden.

Example 5.4: Cima, "Sonata à 2," mm. 71–90.

These manipulations of the *soggetto* demonstrate Cima's interest in contrapuntal procedures that have their basis in the working out of compositional possibilities on paper. The rearrangement of a polyphonic texture into a limited number of voices was a method of composition that necessarily relied on the reorganization of the material in writing. Cima was also interested in finding an inner coherence in the piece by returning to the same *soggetto* multiple times, to show the different contrapuntal relationships he had worked out, and give the pieces a sense of unified structure. Each new appearance of the *soggetto* introduces a new section, contrasting texture, or change in compositional idea.

In addition to this interest in organizing imitative entries in two parts, Cima also uses the medium to develop textures where distinctive material is passed between the parts in quick alternation (see, for example, Ex. 5.3, mm. 13–15 and mm. 23–24). Such

alternations have a strong compositional impulse, being united by common motivic material between the parts and carefully ordered and controlled by the composer. Such a treble–bass alternation evokes the exchange between hands in the organ repertoire, a texture that can only be recreated in writing for multiple independent instruments; Dalla Casa's ornamented ensemble madrigals, discussed in chapter 4, show that in improvised practice, such short alternations were generally impractical. Elsewhere in the piece there are longer passages that are exchanged between the parts (see mm. 19–22 of Ex. 5.3 and mm. 80–88 of Ex. 5.4) in a manner that, although it does not quite replicate invertible counterpoint exactly, hints towards those contrapuntal processes.

This sonata by Cima also demonstrates his interest in shorter note values that serve a decorative purpose; that is, interest in and knowledge of the diminution tradition. He seemed to select diminutions that could serve particular contours or shapes, choosing the rhythmic and melodic cells carefully. The new idea introduced in mm. 13–14 (Ex. 5.3) combines various ascending scale diminutions so that they move upwards in waves and intensify in tempo. Elsewhere he uses eighth notes to fill in large leaps, as in the development of the *soggetto* in m. 72 (Ex. 5.4) and to counter a line in suspensions (Ex. 5.4, mm. 80–88); there is a similar passage using sixteenth notes. His last exchange between the instruments (see Ex. 5.5) makes use of a short figure of diminution that is both rhythmically and melodically distinct and maintains its motivic integrity while it is adapted to different pitch levels.

Example 5.5: Cima, "Sonata à 2," mm. 98–end.

The careful interplay between contrapuntal treatment of a *soggetto* and

arrangement of different units of diminution shows Cima combining his experiences with

the organ canzona repertoire and the improvised ornamentation practices that organists

used along with other instrumentalists. His treatment of these idioms depends on their

juxtaposition on the written page. The *soggetto* of the contrapuntal sections is quite

highly developed, being distinct and characterful in comparison with the sometimes bland

subjects found in many pieces in the canzona genre. While it is conceivable that the

simpler subjects could have been used in improvised polyphonic settings, a more

complex idea such as this can only really be explored properly with the control of written

composition. Cima is also very open to insertions of contrasting material such as

diminutions between imitative points based on the *soggetto*.

His use of diminutions shows a tendency to focus on a particular note value or motivic cell, ordered to create a particular directed effect. Only in the violin part of the last few measures leading to the final cadence (see Ex. 5.5, mm. 106–end) does Cima use diminutions for their original purpose, as a relatively free decoration. Elsewhere they become a structurally essential portion of the compositional language—indeed, they sometimes behave in a similar manner to species counterpoint in short note values—and they create both character and momentum. Often they will ornament simple progressions of chords rather than the melodies from polyphony that were used in the diminution manuals. Since there is no distinct melodic material to preserve, Cima must have felt no pressure to limit the diminutions or maintain much indication of the underlying part; he is not constrained by the earlier adage that the player should begin and end a diminution with the same note, so as to preserve the voice-leading progression.

Cima seems to develop a distinction between the contrapuntal *soggetto* or other melodic material, and simple harmonic material that can be elaborated. While the former maintains and even intensifies the idea that ornaments should be limited and carefully chosen so as to maintain the qualities of the melodic line, the latter portions give free reign to ornamentation to generate the character of the music. In this way, diminutions can become a structural aspect of the music that creates phrases or sections of a defined character. The inner coherence of the diminutions—which may be focused on a single note value, motif, or gesture—becomes increasingly important once they are no longer merely decorative but the primary point of interest.

Other works by Cima show this interplay between counterpoint and decoration to be a consistent aspect of his style when writing for instrumentalists of the church. The

following "Sonata à 3" for violin, cornetto, and violone in the *Concerti ecclesiatici* is written using similar techniques. The melody at the beginning is presented in close imitation between the violin and cornetto parts (see Ex. 5.6a), with the first measure being a canon at the unison, at the space of a half note.

Example 5.6: Cima, "Sonata à 3" (*Concerti ecclesiatici*): a. mm. 1–6; b. mm. 15–19; c. mm. 68–end.

Beginning at m. 15, a distinctive measure of diminutions is passed around the ensemble (see Ex. 5.6b) and developed at greater length by the violone. The ending of the piece features a succession of different diminutions (sixteenth notes, dotted notes, and a written-out *gruppo* figure; see Ex. 5.6c) that are passed between the pair of treble instruments and the bass part.

As an organist, Cima's grasp of musical literacy was neither novel nor surprising. Nevertheless, his compositions for other instrumentalists show him embracing the styles that they would have been trained in, and using his compositional abilities to find larger structural coherence in the disparate, even opposing, ingredients of counterpoint and decoration. Cima was interested in bringing these into a structure that was continuous yet constantly varied, flowing smoothly between different textures and surface rhythms, yet tied together by recurring themes and maintaining a larger coherence.

Orality and literacy among string players at the Gonzaga court: Salamone Rossi and Giovanni Battista Buonamente

Cima, as an organist, was deeply steeped in the traditions of the church, which showed through in his interest in counterpoint and diminutions. Other instrumentalist-composers were situated more within the secular society of the courts, and held a different relationship to these traditions. I turn now to selected compositions by Salamone Rossi (1570–c. 1630) and Giovanni Battista Buonamente (late 1500s–1642) to illustrate some intersections between oral and literate cultures in their instrumental music, and the influences of secular and sacred working environments in their written compositions. Both these instrumentalists were associated with the Gonzaga court in Mantua, one of the

most artistically ambitious courts in Northern Italy. Duke Vincenzo Gonzaga (r. 1587–

1612) employed many performers and some significant composers in a musical

establishment that has been documented through studies of Monteverdi, musical-

theatrical entertainments, and music written for the Palatine basilica of S Barbara.[8] The

presence of instrumentalists in the court and Palatine basilica is not particularly well

evidenced in the sometimes sparse archival materials, but they likely provided

entertainment for dances and played in theatrical entertainments in a less formal

capacity.[9]

Both Rossi and Buonamente suffer from the incomplete biographies that befall

most instrumentalists from this time, so only a small amount of information is available

to contextualize their backgrounds. Salamone Rossi was most likely born in Mantua and

spent practically his entire career in the area; he also had a sister, Europa Rossi, who was

a singer of some esteem.[10] He periodically dedicated publications to the Gonzaga family,

many of which catered to the secular entertainment demands of the court with canzonette

and madrigals; his volumes of instrumental music were also kept within the music

collection of the court.[11] He was sometimes paid for his musical activities within the

court, but was presumably removed from the musical culture at S Barbara and the other

[8] More general studies include Iain Fenlon, *Music and Patronage in Sixteenth-Century Mantua* (2 vols, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980); Donald C. Sanders, *Music at the Gonzaga Court in Mantua* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2012).

[9] See Susan H. Parisi, "Musicians at the Court of Mantua during Monteverdi's Time: Evidence from the Payrolls," in *Musicologica Humana: Studies in Honor of Warren and Ursula Kirkendale*, ed. Siegfried Gmeinwieser (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1994), 183–208; Parisi, "Acquiring Musicians and Instruments in the Early Baroque: Observations from Mantua," *Journal of Musicology* 14, no. 2 (1996): 117–50, and the collection of archival data in Parisi, "Ducal Patronage of Music in Mantua, 1587–1627: An Archival Study" (PhD diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1989).

[10] The most substantial bibliographical detail about Rossi is collected in Don Harrán, *Salamone Rossi: Jewish Musician in Late Renaissance Mantua* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).

[11] Parisi, "Ducal Patronage of Music in Mantua," 713–14.

Mantuan churches by his Jewish faith; this may have prevented him from holding a long-term salaried court appointment too.[12] Most of his professional activities consisted of playing with a small group of string players (his *concerto*) who provided dances and other short pieces for courtly entertainment.[13] Essentially nothing is known about his training, but Mantua and the surrounding region had many talented performers who could have taught him. Rossi seemed to be trained in the most useful aspects of secular music: viol and violin playing, and singing of polyphonic music. Judging from his publications, his skill on the violin became more important in the latter years of his career.[14]

It has long been suggested that Buonamente learned the violin from Rossi, based on their presence together in Mantua and similarities in their compositional outputs.[15] While confirmation of this point is unlikely to arise, Buonamente certainly appears to have grown up in the Mantuan environs, and must have known instrumentalists active in the Gonzaga court, although direct evidence of his presence does not survive in the somewhat sparse instrumentalists' records.[16] He also had connections to the church and the Franciscan order, and later in his career used his capability in sacred music to find

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[12] Although Rossi was likely excluded from the church, he did have some connections with the highly literate community of Hebrew scholars in Mantua; to what extent their interests extended to music, however, remain unclear.

[13] For further details, see Harrán, *Salamone Rossi*, 18–24.

[14] The volumes of compositions by Rossi considered here are: *Il secondo libro delle sinfonie è gagliarde à tre voci* (Venice: Amadino, 1608); *Il terzo libro de varie sonate, sinfonie, gagliarde, brandi, e corrente* (Venice: Vincenti, [1613?]); *Il quarto libro de varie sonate sinfonie, gagliarde, brandi, e corrente* (Venice: Vincenti, 1622). All his extant instrumental works are edited by Don Harrán in *Complete Works. V. 11: Instrumental Works, Book 3.* [S.l.]: American Institute of Musicology and Neuhausen: Hänssler, 1995.

[15] The claim was first made by Paul Nettl, "Giovanni Battista Buonamente," *Zeitschrift für Musikwissenschaft* 9 (1926–27): 528–42. It has since been discussed by the main surveys of Buonamente's life and works, Stanley E. Romanstein, "Giovanni Battista Buonamente and instrumental music of the early Baroque" (PhD diss., University of Cincinnati, 1990), 1:4, and Allsop, *Cavalier Giovanni Battista Buonamente*, 29.

[16] See Allsop, *Cavalier Giovanni Battista Buonamente*, 22–33.

employment opportunities that were not available to Rossi. After employment with the

Gonzaga duchess who married into the Holy Roman Empire, Buonamente received posts

as a violinist and occasional singer at churches in Bergamo and Parma, and ended his

career with an appointment as *maestro di cappella* in Assisi. Regrettably, most of his

later sacred works appear to have been lost, as are his first three volumes of instrumental

music. I will focus here on pieces from his fourth volume of instrumental music, which

are likely representative of the compositions he produced following his Mantuan training,

and were published in the year that he departed for Vienna.[17]

An initial distinction between the works of Rossi and Buonamente can be found

in their approaches to counterpoint, which may demonstrate the difference between

Rossi's exclusion from the literate Christian church practice and Buonamente's

knowledge of the modern church music that later brought him the potential for high-level

church employment.

Rossi's collections of instrumental music show his close reliance on the forms and

styles of music that he used as a primarily secular instrumentalist. His earlier volumes are

dominated by large numbers of dances and short sinfonias.[18] Although these works show

some effective writing for a small instrumental ensemble, there is no particular

development of extended contrapuntal relationships. At most a simple imitative opening

devolves into loose polyphony where there are rarely any breaks in any of the parts. Such

polyphony is more reminiscent of improvised polyphony, where a continuous texture,

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[17] Giovanni Battista Buonamente, *Il quarto libro de varie sonate, sinfonie, gagliarde, corrente, e brandi per sonar con due violini e un basso di viola* (Venice: Vincenti, 1626; facsimile, Florence: Studio per Edizioni Scelte, 1982). The volume is edited in Romanstein, "Giovanni Battista Buonamente," 2:296–783.

[18] A small number of dances in Rossi's *Terzo libro* were based on pieces by his fellow Mantuan string player Giovanni Battista Rubini; see Harrán, *Salamone Rossi*, 22.

relatively undogmatic approach, and the generation of effective but not particularly striking musical material must have been commonplace.

He shows some more polyphonic rigor in the genres associated with contrapuntal practices. His single canzona in the *Primo libro* and the three *canzoni per sonar* in the *Secondo libro* are somewhat more focused around the presentation of a *soggetto* and its imitation around the ensemble in the manner of a ricercare, showing Rossi engaging with the published contrapuntal compositions for instruments and working out his counterpoint with more rigor. At times he uses gestures that are familiar from the ricercare and canzona repertoire, such as the *soggetto* heard in the second section of the first *canzon per sonar* (see Ex. 5.7). These pieces are generally written in bipartite forms, with a contrapuntal section to start, then a second section involving a loosely homophonic triple time and another contrapuntal section, with both halves being repeated.

Example 5.7: Salamone Rossi, "Canzon [prima] di sonar" (*Il secondo libro delle sinfonie è gagliarde à tre voci*): a. mm. 1–6; b. mm 22–26.

The case is considerably different for Buonamente, suggesting that even if he did study some aspects of instrumental performance with Rossi, he also benefitted from contrapuntal training. His *Quarto libro* of instrumental music, published in 1626, includes modest sinfonias and dances after Rossi's model, but also includes sonatas demonstrating a much greater facility with written, sophisticated counterpoint.

Buonamente's first four sonatas of the *Quarto libro* are conceived abstractly (unlike the remaining variation sonatas, which are discussed further below), and demonstrate his interest in more sophisticated contrapuntal textures and sensitivity to the use of multiple different *soggetti* in a piece. His "Sonata prima" uses a succession of three distinctive ideas in its opening (see Ex. 5.8, mm. 1, 16, and 20), each one introduced in an imitative point and passed around the ensemble. A contrasting central section does not resort to the generic triple-time dance character favored by Rossi, but rather is a slow-moving passage with some interesting harmonic moments of chromatic alterations, harmonic sequences, and a delayed resolution to the modal final: these harmonies point towards Buonamente's mastery of the harmonic idiom and his dedication to working out new harmonic combinations. The final section of the piece returns to principles and ideas from the first part. The initial *soggetto* is different to that of m. 1 (although similar in character), but the second and third themes from the first section recur, alternated and combined together in counterpoint. Allsop identified this sonata as an example of Buonamente's "concern for structural integration based on thematic recurrence," highlighting the importance of motivic integrity and larger compositional structures in his works.[19]

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[19] Allsop, *Cavalier Giovanni Battista Buonamente*, 137.

Example 5.8: Giovanni Battista Buonamente, "Sonata prima" (*Il quarto libro de varie sonate, sinfonie, gagliarde, corrente, e brandi*), mm. 1–33.

He demonstrates in a few places across these four sonatas his knowledge of more sophisticated contrapuntal procedures. The opening idea of "Sonata prima" is quickly shown to be invertible counterpoint once the *soggetto* reaches the basso part, and the bass line from m. 1 moves up to the canto primo part. "Sonata seconda" makes use of inversion (see Ex. 5.9a). Rhythmic augmentation appears as an integral part of the opening theme in "Sonata terza," (see Ex. 5.9b), while the second *soggetto* of m. 9 later

returns simplified in m. 37 and in rhythmic augmentation for the ending in m. 85. The

opening *soggetto* of "Sonata quarta" is an amalgam of two contrasting ideas (see

Ex. 5.9c) that recur later, both separately and in combination with new ideas.

Example 5.9: Buonamente's contrapuntal procedures (*Il quarto libro de varie sonate, sinfonie, gagliarde, corrente, e brandi*):
a. inversion: "Sonata seconda," mm. 15–16; mm. 25–26.
b. augmentation: "Sonata terza," canto primo, mm. 1–5; canto secondo, mm. 9–10; canto secondo, mm. 37–38; canto primo, mm. 86–89.
c. compound *soggetto*: "Sonata quarta," canto secondo, mm. 1–3.

In comparison to Rossi, Buonamente shows much more interest in developing

different types of contrapuntal writing. He consistently involves all the parts, and tries

creating multiple subjects that can be deployed at various points throughout the piece to

aid structural coherence. Although Allsop suggest his contrapuntal approach is somewhat

conservative,[20] such techniques show Buonamente—a violinist by training—to be

connecting with some of the advanced techniques of late-Renaissance polyphony and

bringing them into the domain of the instrumentalist. Through the medium of writing and

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[20] Ibid., 139.

the nuanced compositional language that became available through literacy, Buonamente forged a successful contrapuntal idiom for instrumental ensembles.

These free canzonas and sonatas relying on counterpoint make up only a minority of Rossi's and Buonamente's published sonatas. The rest were variation sonatas, in which some kind of schema—bass line, chord sequence, or melody—provided the impetus for a set of variations. Although such sonatas were cultivated by a number of *stile moderno* composers, it was these Mantuan composers who apparently held the idiom in particularly high regard, and composed the greatest number of variation sonatas.

The types of schemas on which these sonatas were based may be testament to the oral heritage of improvising upon certain tunes. Some are based on popular songs such as *Questo è quel luoco*, *L'è tanto tempo hormai*, and *Porto celato il mio nobil pensiero*. Others use dance themes such as the *tordiglione*, which appeared in the dance manuals of Fabritio Caroso[21]—such tunes were presumably heard frequently in the secular society in and around the Gonzaga court. Other sonatas use the standard formulas that were commonly used by *cantastorie* for reciting epics such as the *romanesca* and *ruggiero*, which were at this time being set down in *alfabeto* notation for the guitar.[22] The early example of Diego Ortiz shows that the *romanesca* had a heritage of being used for instrumental elaboration, since his featured alongside *passamezzi* and other similar

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[21] For an English translation, see Fabritio Caroso, *Courtly Dance of the Renaissance: A New Translation and Edition of the "Nobiltà di Dame" (1600)*, trans. Julia Sutton and F. Marian Walker (rev. ed., New York: Dover, 1995). The *tordiglione*, which is related to the *gagliarda*, appears on 287.

[22] On the growing popularity of chord progressions in *alfabeto* notation, see Cory M. Gavito, "The *alfabeto* Song in Print, 1610–ca. 1665: Neopolitan Roots, Roman Codification, and '*Il gusto popolare*'" (PhD diss., University of Texas at Austin, 2006); on these progressions in instrumental music, see Richard Hudson, *Passacaglio and Ciaccona: From Guitar Music to Italian Keyboard Variations in the 17th Century*, Studies in Musicology, No. 37 (Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms International, 1981).

schemes in his diminution manual.[23] It may be an indication of Rossi's essentially secular outlook as an instrumentalist that he cultivated themes that were popular in secular society. Such sonatas were likely written to fulfill requirements in secular entertainment, by combining secular tunes that everyone knew with more impressive instrumental writing.

These variation sonatas show another aspect of the diminution tradition. After the early example of Ortiz, composers of diminution manuals tended towards the more sophisticated polyphonic output rather than schemes like the *romanesca*, but the variation sonatas of Rossi and Buonamente's generation demonstrate the later consolidation of the diminution technique into a number of distinct formulas that could be used as variations upon the melodic or harmonic content of a theme. Repeating harmonic and/or melodic structures act as a constraint against the freely and willfully unstructured diminutions found in the earlier instances of the practice, encouraging composers to shape and control the diminutions. Their notation enabled a much more focused development of diminutions across a piece, making possible the delineation of clearly characterized variants that could have larger structural coherence. The written medium also allowed for a more coherent ensemble approach to variation. Rather than a single instrumentalist controlling the ornamental surface, as in Ortiz, or each part having to ornament in turn, as in Dalla Casa's ensemble madrigals, the single creative mind could direct multiple parts in writing, and create interesting new options for interaction between the parts.

One formulization that frequently occurs in these sonatas is a focus on one particular type of diminution, either on a single note value or on a distinctive rhythmic and/or melodic cell that functions as a motif. This recalls Dalla Casa's interest in

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[23] Ortiz, "Recercada settima," *Trattado de Glosas*, 2:58–59.

providing examples of diminutions that focused on a single note value, or Rognoni's tendency to repeat diminutions in sequences until they give the impression of motifs. I have already suggested that such practices can be found in some later examples such as the ornamented pieces by Rognoni Taeggio. In these variation sonatas, focus on a particular category of diminution became a way to evoke difference characters in successive variations, and established some standard types of variations that recur in a number of compositions.

As the examples below demonstrate, a basic method of variation was to reduce the rhythmic surface to mainly eighth notes. This was used for the first variation in a number of Rossi and Buonamente's sonatas. There were two main options for executing this: either to have a short motif in eighth notes passed between the parts, or to use a lengthier stream of eighth-note diminutions running in one or both upper parts. In many places, Rossi and Buonamente begin with the first of these options, then move to the second later in the piece to generate greater momentum. When eighth-note units are employed in alternation or with a hocketing effect, the written medium allows for great control over the consistency and dovetailing of gestures, and in places the instruments can create a compound melody through the interaction of their parts. Similar procedures are available for variations that focus on sixteenth notes: distinct motifs can be passed between the parts, the instruments can alternate to form a single melody line, or they can coordinate in a show of harmony that would be practically impossible in an extemporization. Finally, gestures that had previously served only an occasional ornamental or expressive function such as the *gruppo* could assume a motivic and functional purpose. There are multiple instances in these sonatas where an intricately

notated *gruppo* figure is loosened from any cadential function and becomes a unit of diminution that can define a variation.

The ability to use the medium of writing to refine and plan carefully the character of each variation seems to have hastened a distinction between different stylistic traits, and enabled composers to bring in more contrasting styles. This would have been difficult in an improvised ensemble setting, where the level of communication between players would have rendered impossible the consistent execution of drastic stylistic transformations across the ensemble. Rossi and Buonamente's sonatas often have a variation in a different meter, usually a triple-time dance meter, which adopts a characteristic rhythm across the ensemble. There are also instances of controlled syncopations and/or suspensions, sometimes approaching the complex harmonies of the organists' *durezze e ligature* (dissonances and suspensions) idiom. It is possible for organists, as highly trained individuals, to improvise such textures and harmonies; an ensemble of instrumentalists, however, could only rely on a written composition for such an intricate interplay of parts. By the same logic, it also became possible to incorporate material of a more elaborate contrapuntal nature: Buonamente in particular would sometimes introduce a new diminution or figure and treat it as though it were an imitative point, passing it between voices at different pitch levels.

On a larger scale, this written working-out of diminutions allowed for broader matters of structure and pacing to be worked into the composition. Examples of full sonatas by Rossi and Buonamente demonstrate how the details identified above could play into the composition of a larger structure.

The first of Rossi's published variation sonatas, the "Sonata sopra l'aria della romanesca" from *Il terzo libro de varie sonate, sinfonie, gagliarde, brandi, e corrente*, establishes many hallmarks of this style. After his initial presentation of the *romanesca* theme with a melody from the violins, he proceeds through seven variations (see Ex. 5.10). With the exception of variation three, which alludes to the *durezze e ligature* texture, the other variations all use particular categories of diminution of varying complexity. A four-note figure that characterizes the first and second variations is a fundamental motif found often in these sonatas, which has plenty of potential for being hocketed or dovetailed between instrumental parts or strung into longer patterns. Variation four uses sixteenth notes in another familiar gesture, again passed between the parts—this variation forms a natural culmination to the first half of the sonata. Although the upper parts return to the alternating eighth notes in the next variation, the bass now provides constant motion with running quarter notes; these continue to the end of the piece. The sixth variation increases the surface rhythm considerably with the sequential repetitions of a distinctive motif; after alternating for much of the variation, the two violins join together in the final measures. The final variation turns to running eighth notes in both parts, which Rossi asks to be repeated and played faster the second time. This use of "perpetual motion" in all three parts and a quicker repeat recurs in a number of Rossi's sonatas, demonstrating his interest in leading the sonata to an impressive ending.

Example 5.10: Rossi, "Sonata sopra l'aria della romanesca" (*Il terzo libro de varie sonate, sinfonie, gagliarde, brandi, e corrente*), incipits.

Theme: bass with melody

V1: eighth notes, mainly ascending, hocketing

V2: eighth notes, mainly descending, hocketing

V3: longer notes with suspensions

V4: sixteenth notes, descending, hocketing

Example 5.10: cont.

V5: eighth notes, mixed directions, hocketing

V6: quick motif, in sequences and hocketing

V7: both playing eighth notes; repeated faster

Buonamente's "Sonata sesta sopra rugiero" from *Il quarto libro de varie sonate, sinfonie, gagliarde, corrente, e brandi* shows many similar methods. The *ruggiero* is a relatively simple theme, with none of the tonal ambiguity that characterizes the *romanesca*, although it has similar origins as a formula for *cantastorie* singing tales of Ruggiero from Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*.[24] Buonamente used the same version of the theme as is found in Rossi's *Terzo libro*, but the following six variations in this sonata show a greater awareness of the possibilities of stylistic distinction (see Ex. 5.11).

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[24] On the *ruggiero*, see Alfred Einstein, "Die Aria di Ruggiero," *Sammelbände der Internationalen Musikgesellschaft* 13 (1912): 444–54; James Haar, "Arie per cantar stanze ariostesche," in *L'Ariosto, la musica, i musicisti*, ed. Maria A. Balsano (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1981), 31–46.

Example 5.11: Buonamente, "Sonata sesta sopra rugiero" (*Il quarto libro de varie sonate, sinfonie, gagliarde, corrente, e brandi*), **incipits and final variation.**

Theme

V1: eighth notes, hocketing

V2: sixteenth notes, hocketing

V3: eighth notes in both parts

V4: eighth notes in bass

V5: triple time

Example 5.11: cont.

V6: various diminutions

The first variation of this piece, like Rossi's first choice in the sonata discussed above, is a four-note motif; Buonamente is a little stricter with the pattern than Rossi was. His next variation employs a number of different diminutions in eighth, sixteenth, and thirty-second notes, essentially ornamenting ascending and descending motifs between the violin parts. The third and fourth variations form a pair based on their use of running eighth notes, first in the violins, then in the basso continuo. Even within a generally

uniform texture, Buonamente still looked for opportunities to employ imitation, occasionally passing a more distinctive figure from the upper to lower violin part. The next variation moves to the dancelike rhythms of a triple meter, with appropriately homophonic and straightforward writing, as a reprieve of intensity before the final variation employs a mixture of diminutions as a culmination. Sixteenth-note and dotted rhythmic ideas are presented by the violins together, and quick notated *gruppi* are exchanged in alternation. The ending makes a gesture towards the first variation by borrowing the rhythm.

These works by Rossi and Buonamente show interactions between the oral and literate cultures of the time, and hint at the contrasting backgrounds of the two individual composers. Rossi, primarily active in the secular realm, seemed to be not as experienced in writing counterpoint for instruments as he was in writing for voices in madrigals, and he preferred to base his sonatas on popular tunes and dances that presumably fell within his repertoire as a violinist in a small ensemble, which presumably improvised in performance a great deal. Buonamente clearly had a more consistent affinity for counterpoint, perhaps as a result of contact with the organists and composer-theorists of the church tradition. While he did embrace some of the same secular sonata conceptions that brought Rossi success, he tended to approach his sonatas with a more rigorous compositional technique born of greater experience in the literate genres of music.

Venetian *piffaro* traditions and the *stile moderno* sonata: Dario Castello

Unlike Buonamente and Rossi, who were deeply integrated with the string-playing traditions of Mantua, Dario Castello seems to have been associated with the wind-playing

piffari of Venice. As discussed in chapter 1, his biography is notoriously problematic, and

definite evidence of his professional activities remains lacking. His title pages, supported

by the quality of his compositions, point towards his association with the Venetian *piffari*

who had been moving into the church. Likely following the examples of Dalla Casa and

Bassano, Castello seems to have been a virtuoso cornetto player who led a wind

ensemble and had connections with S Marco. His direct acquaintances remain unknown,

but other musicians with the Castello name suggest that his was a reasonably prominent

dynasty in Venetian musical life.[25] He would presumably have had some familiarity with

the works of Gabrieli, Bassano, and other Venetian instrumental composers of the

previous generation, and possibly some connections with the organists and other church

musicians of the early seventeenth century. His compositions suggest considerable ability

as a performer, but also hint at a lack of experience beyond instrumental music—besides

his sonatas, only a single motet survives.[26] The two volumes of sonatas are notable for

their use of the term *stile moderno* prominently on their title pages, and represent some of

the most advanced compositions to emerge from the Venetian wind players.[27] Given

Castello's tantalizingly obscure background, they bring up interesting questions about his

training and the way he came to think about the compositional process.

All of Castello's sonatas are constructed according to a sectional form, and all

include sections that are polyphonic or contrapuntal, but Castello's writing of

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[25] Selfridge-Field, "Dario Castello," 183–85.

[26] "Exultate Deo," in *Ghirlanda sacra scielta*, 73–79 (Venice: Gardano, 1625).

[27] Castello's published instrumental works consisted of *Sonate concertate in stil moderno… Libro primo* (Venice: Bartolomeo Magni, 1621; facsimile, Florence: Studio per Edizioni Scelte, 1979), ed. Rudolf Hofstötter and Ingomar Rainer, *Sonate concertate, libro primo*, *Wiener Edition Alter Musik*, vol. 2 (Vienna: Doblinger, 1998); *Sonate concertate in stil moderno… Libro secondo* (Venice: Magni, 1629; facsimile, Florence: Studio per Edizioni Scelte, 1981), ed. Rudolf Hofstötter and Ingomar Rainer, *Sonate concertate, libro secondo*, *Wiener Edition Alter Musik*, vol. 3 (Vienna: Doblinger, 1998).

counterpoint underwent some changes between his first and second books of S*onate concertate*. The sonatas in *Libro primo* tend to be closer to a canzona model during imitative sections, frequently using the long–short–short rhythm that recurs frequently across the repertoire. Castello gives the impression of being considerably less interested in contrapuntal technicalities than Buonamente, who would often choose a simple theme that had more possibilities. The contrapuntal devices used in the *Libro primo* are fairly limited, since he tended to rely more on the alternation of material than on the development of proper polyphonic relationships or the manipulation of *soggetti*. In a few places he develops a *soggetto* to some extent, as in "Terza sonata" where he uses some close imitations and metric displacement, and the "Settima sonata," in which he develops a subject and countersubject with some consistency. In both cases, however, inelegant intervallic relationships arise between the parts, as in a persistent recurrence of the interval series of 3rd–4th–2nd–2nd–4th that ends each instance of the subject–countersubject cell in "Settima sonata;" a different alignment of the two ideas produces an uncomfortable perfect 5th–diminished 5th motion. As Banchieri recognized with his discussion of *contrapunto alla mente*, such intervals do not particularly matter in performance, since they pass quickly, but a composer with some theoretical training would tend to avoid such combinations when writing counterpoint. Likewise, this is unlikely to be a situation where such combinations arise from the expressive demands of the *seconda prattica*, given that this is a contrapuntal and not particularly affective portion of the sonata.

Sometimes Castello avoids contrapuntal engagement altogether in places where it would generically be expected: his spun-out themes at the beginning of "Prima sonata"

and "Terza sonata" are repeated verbatim in the second soprano part creating a façade of contrapuntal exchange but no true interplay of parts. The *soggetto* of "Nona sonata" is passed around the ensemble with entries alternating between starting notes of G and C in a conventional manner, but the entries barely overlap, and there are no countersubjects besides the simple bass line (see Ex. 5.12). Where he does write an intricate play of parts in "Seconda sonata," with a unison canon at the half note between the two upper parts, he makes the parts fit by decorating stationary harmonies held by pedals in the bass, rather than by attempting a canon that generates a series of harmonies (see Ex. 5.13).

Example 5.12: Dario Castello, "Nona sonata" (*Sonate concertate in stil moderno… Libro primo*), mm. 1–13.

Example 5.12: cont.

Example 5.13: Castello, "Seconda sonata" (*Sonate concertate in stil moderno… Libro primo*), mm. 1–12.

Particularly in his first publication, there are some suggestions in Castello's music that he was more experienced in forms of improvised polyphony than he was in the formalities of written, learned counterpoint. I previously suggested that the typical openings employed at the start of many canzona may have been used as a means to facilitate improvised counterpoint; it certainly occurs far more frequently in the written canzona repertoire than the models of French chansons would suggest (although there are

obvious popular predecessors such as Josquin's "Mille regretz"). If Castello received a more traditional *piffaro* education, he may not have had the opportunity to pick up skills like those of Giovanni Bassano, who seemed to have a thorough knowledge and held a teaching position in the church, or Buonamente with his skillfully contrapuntal sonatas and published canons. Castello's preference for these typical canzona openings is surely not a result of a desire to write simple music, given the manifest difficulties elsewhere in these pieces; rather this may be a result of the confluence of oral contrapuntal practices with Castello's written medium.

In his *Libro secondo*, Castello does develop some greater complexity in his contrapuntal sections, although the general style remains consistent with the earlier publication. His later sonatas remain somewhat detached from the technical procedures of those highly trained in counterpoint; he was likely imitating the polyphonic pieces he encountered in his professional activities rather than displaying rigorous study. Some of his *soggetti* are sufficiently long and complex as to be broken down into two discrete ideas; his "Sonata ottava" (see Ex. 5.14a and b) uses a similar procedure to what Buonamente employed in his "Sonata quarta" (Ex. 5.9c). Castello also explores the use of contrasting themes in each part that interlock but can later be developed separately (as in "Sonata quarta") and a more strongly characterized and ambitious countersubject ("Sonata duodecima"). The *Libro secondo* seems to show greater confidence in creating and entwining multiple ideas that likely came to Castello through his experiences in composing and playing during the several years that separate the two volumes; he never really demonstrates much interest in the more technical aspects of contrapuntal writing. Places like the opening of "Sonata decima" demonstrate the consistency of his approach

over the two volumes: the canon between the two soprano parts essentially decorates a single D-minor harmony, which is sustained by the continuo, in essentially the same manner as "Seconda sonata" from *Libro primo*.

Example 5.14: Castello, "Sonata ottava" (*Sonate concertate in stil moderno… Libro secondo*): a. mm. 1–4; b. mm. 15–23.

Castello's later pieces show an increasing tendency to decorate the simple outlines of his contrapuntal subjects with diminutions. This was already evident in some sonatas of *Libro primo*, such as "Quarta sonata," where the melodic line is broken up with leaps in a very instrumental style. In *Libro secondo* such decorations become more frequent, with leaping eighth notes and running sixteenth notes characterizing many of Castello's openings. Such complicated *soggetti* actually work well with Castello's lack of interest in contrapuntal relationships: most of his ideas would likely have limited opportunities for processes such as inversion and stretto. The decoration of relatively

simple contrapuntal outlines was something that could have been done in performance, and the few notated examples of diminutions on canzonas by Dalla Casa, Bassano, and Rognoni Taeggio suggest that this was a recognized practice. In his written compositions, Castello combines the decorated performance practice with the consistency that such decorations can acquire through notation.

The decoration of contrapuntal ideas and the prioritizing of surface interest over structure are indicative of Castello's broader focus on ornamentation, which seems to go deeper than any of the previous composers discussed here. This interest was likely closely linked to his training and performance practices on the cornetto, since, despite his absent biography, we can place him with reasonable certainty among the Venetian wind players of the early seventeenth century, for whom the diminution tradition was just waning after its peak; Castello could have learned the technique through the last lingering oral practices, from the manuals produced by Venetian publishing houses or, most likely, a mixture of both. The Magni printers, who published Castello's *Sonate concertate*, were the successors of the Gardano firm, who had previously published Dalla Casa's *Vero modo di diminuire*.[28]

Castello had two specific uses for the diminution idiom in his compositions: firstly, using them for structural, motivic purposes and secondly, using them in purely decorative ways. This was an intensification of the approach of predecessors such as Giovanni Gabrieli, with whose music Castello was surely familiar. When Castello used diminutions to add consistent elaboration to contrapuntal ideas or to develop patterns and

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[28] On the relationship between the Gardano and Magni firms, see Jane Bernstein, *Print Culture and Music in Sixteenth-Century Venice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 139.

sequences, he benefited from the written medium. This enabled much more complex and extended ideas to be treated as building blocks and repeated in a consistent manner.

The freely decorative ornamentation in Castello's works is among their most striking features. There are particular points in the sonatas where Castello frequently uses highly florid ornaments and diminutions, such as the solo sections in which each instrument plays in turn, and at the end of each piece. There are some indications that these sections may reflect some semi-improvised ideas that were worked out on the instrument and transcribed. Many of Castello's gestures, particularly at cadences, are highly idiosyncratic and seem to demand a certain freedom of performance style. The ornamentation at final cadences sometimes rejects the metrical demands of the notation system, with long chains of ornaments over a held chord or pedal, giving the impression of a cadenza during which the accompaniment is suspended and the metrical hierarchy destroyed; see the ending of "Sonata seconda" (Ex. 5.15). Diminutions over a final or penultimate chord were seen repeatedly in pieces notated in the diminution manuals, suggesting such usage was a common tradition. Although Castello transcribed his endings into (usually quadruple) meter, they do not really follow the meter properly. The sweeping and florid scales, written-out *trilli* and *gruppi*, and original and sometimes eccentric gestures are more evocative of pieces that claim explicitly to be written-out ornamentation, such as Monteverdi's "Possente spirto" from *L'Orfeo*.

However, even in these passages there are indicators of the written idiom influencing the final result. The careful interplay of parts that makes many of Castello's endings so complex only becomes possible once the parts are written, particularly in the ending where the main parts move together in parallel for complex passages or there is an

intricate interplay of instruments, as in the end of "Sonata quinta" (Ex. 5.16). Castello's lengthy sequences and repetitions of distinct diminutions point to a reasonably rigorous method of learning diminutions, and his choices of diminutions are both varied and logically organized, closer to a figure such as Rognoni Taeggio who had links to the literate tradition. Finally, Castello's tendency to repeat a set of ornaments verbatim in both parts during the solo sections, and a general disinclination to leave spaces where performers may add their own ornaments, points to his trust in the medium of print and his own improvisational–compositional skills rather than those of the performers who purchased his volume.

Example 5.15: Castello, "Sonata seconda" (*Sonate concertate in stil moderno… Libro secondo*), mm. 95–end.

Example 5.16: Castello, "Sonata quinta" (*Sonate concertate in stil moderno… Libro secondo*), mm. 116–end.

A virtuoso violinist at the oral-literate interface: Biagio Marini

Drawing the previous case studies together, I will end with some examples from the

works of Biagio Marini (1594–1663). One of the instrumentalists to benefit most from

the trends discussed here, Marini's broad output encompasses sacred and secular,

instrumental and vocal compositions. His career shows him to have been a highly trained

and adaptable musician.[29] He was hired as a *musico* at S Marco in 1615 aged 21, likely

his first professional appointment. This was followed by positions both across northern

Italy and at the Wittelsbach court at Neuburg an die Donau, where his employer Duke

Wolfgang Wilhelm gave him the noble title of "Cavalier."[30] Marini later acquired enough

wealth to own properties in Brescia and moved swiftly between positions with apparent

ease, due to his reputation as a virtuoso violinist; he occasionally sang too as part of his

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[29] The most recent biography of Marini is Franco Piperno, "Marini, Biagio," in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* vol. 70 (2008), <www.treccani.it>, accessed 3/3/2017.

[30] Clark, "The Vocal Music of Biagio Marini," 40–41.

duties.[31] His career provides a strong example of how opportunities for instrumentalists had improved since they had entered the literate musical establishments: an instrumentalist who was a skilled performer and capable in the main fields of musical literacy could enjoy a successful and varied career, opportunities across a wide geographic area, and social advancement.

Although many gaps in Marini's biography have been filled in for his adult years, his childhood and training before the S Marco appointment remain quite unclear. Baptized in Brescia, he certainly came from a musical family: his father Feliciano, a player of the theorbo, was employed before his son's birth at the court of Sigismund III Vasa of Poland.[32] An uncle, Giacinto Bondioli (who, if baptisimal records are correct, was a similar age to Marini and perhaps learned music with him) was an organist and composer.[33] Marini likely grew up in Brescia, a city with a strong tradition of string playing and many years of connections between the church and civic instrumentalists, as was discussed in chapter 2. Important string players such as Giovanni Battista Fontana have been suggested as possible violin teachers.[34] Given Marini's swift employment at S Marco and his later skill in managing, composing, playing, and singing for the church, some education within the Brescian church is also a possibility; organists and string

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[31] Roark Miller, "Divorce, Dismissal, but no Disgrace: Biagio Marini's Career Revisited," *Recercare: Rivista per lo studio e la pratica della musica antica* 9 (1997): 8.

[32] Marco Bizzarini, "Da Milano a Varsavia: le musiche polichorali di Pietro Lappi con dedica a Sigismondo III (1605)," in *La musica policorale in Italia e nell'Europa centro-orientale fra Cinque e Seicento / Polychoral Music in Italy and in Central-Eastern Europe at the Turn of the Seventeenth Century*, ed. Aleksandra Patalas and Marina Toffetti (Venice: Fondazione Levi, 2012), 208.

[33] Thomas D. Dunn, "*Lo zio oscuro*: The Music of Giacinto Bondioli," in *Barocco Padano 5: Atti del XIII Convegno internazionale sulla musica italiana nei secoli XVII–XVIII*, ed. Alberto Colzani *et al*. (Como: AMIS, 2008), 197–234.

[34] Daniele Torelli, "'Sopra le tenebre del mio povero inchiostro:' Biagio Marini e la musica sacra," in *La musica e il sacro: Atti del XII Convegno internazionale sul barocco padano nei secoli XVII–XVIII*, ed. Alberto Colzani *et al* (Como: AMIS, 2006), 151.

players who developed the ensemble canzona were active in Brescia, including Florentio

Maschera and Floriano Canale. Although suggestions that Marini studied with his uncle

Bondioli are presumably incorrect if the small age difference between them is accurate,

he likely also picked up some skills from other musicians in his family. Marini later

showed himself to be passing skills to his own children and ensuring they received a

musical education: some appear in lists of performers, and he had his children educated

in the church while he was at the Wittelsbach court.[35]

Marini's first opus was published when he was in his early twenties. An ambitious

collection titled *Affetti musicali*, it contains sinfonias, short dances, and a few sonatas and

canzonas.[36] With the pieces apparently named for acquaintances, colleagues, and patrons,

Marini seemed intent on setting out his credentials as a player and composer in the

secular instrumental genres.[37] Rossi's publications form an apt comparison, and the

pieces may have served similar purposes. The main difference between these two players

was Marini's affiliation to the church—at that time employed by S Marco, he already had

considerable experience with church music; his later compositions show him to possess

ability in the composition of counterpoint and church music in the modern style. Perhaps

the ambitious Marini wished to demonstrate his equal ability in secular music; his

following publication of madrigals (opus 2) built on the first to demonstrate his ability in

vocal as well as instrumental secular music. Despite Marini's versatility and ability in the

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[35] Clark, "The Vocal Music of Biagio Marini," 18.

[36] Biagio Marini, *Affetti musicali…nella quale si contiene, symfonie, canzon, sonate balletti, arie, brandi, gagliarde e corenti à 1. 2. 3.* (Venice: Magni, 1617; facsimile, Florence: Studio per Edizioni Scelte, 1985); ed. Franco Piperno (Milan: Edizioni Suvini Zerboni, 1990).

[37] On the family names and other references used as piece titles by Marini, see Franco Piperno, introduction to *Affetti Musicali*, xvi–xxv; Rebecca Cypess, "Instrumental Music and 'Conversazione' in Early *Seicento* Venice: Biagio Marini's *Affetti Musicali* (1617)," *Music and Letters* 93 (2013): 453–78.

vocal genres, the *Affetti musicali* collection establishes him as an instrumentalist primarily. Such an approach stands in contrast to a figure such as Monteverdi: despite being an accomplished string player,[38] Monteverdi used his first publications to situate himself as a skillful composer of vocal counterpoint in both secular and sacred genres, and proclaimed on the title pages his lineage from the notable composer Marc'Antonio Ingegneri. Marini made no such claim about a teacher in the *Affetti musicali*; the publication could have been designed to promote Marini as the leader of a small string group who could provide secular entertainment rather than as a composer, given its similarities to Rossi's work. The publication represents the earliest stage in Marini's development, and may demonstrate how he reconciled his training as a composer with the practices and experiences he received as an instrumentalist.

The canzona "La Bemba" demonstrates many fundamental aspects of Marini's early style. In structure it is similar to many of the early pieces by Rossi, being tripartite with a central triple-time section (see Ex. 5.17). Similarly to some of Castello's works, an opening that appears to invite counterpoint becomes merely an exchange of material between the parts, suggesting that this simplification of an accepted contrapuntal structure may have been reasonably common among instrumentalists. Marini follows the same procedure in the triple-time section (mm. 19–29), with a four-measure phrase being repeated exactly by the second violin. In both of these cases, once the theme has been played by both parts, Marini briefly fragments it in exchanges between the players, but he does not really develop it into a fully contrapuntal texture. In the third section of the piece, Marini employs the typical canzona rhythm of long–short–short in homophony

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[38] Peter Holman, "'Col nobilissimo esercitio della vivuola:' Monteverdi's String Writing," *Early Music* 21 (1993): 576–90.

rather than as a *soggetto* with polyphonic potential, and the rest of the piece consists of a selection of diminutions, including dotted rhythms, short rhythmic patterns, eighth notes, and forte–piano echoes.

Example 5.17: Biagio Marini, "La Bemba" (*Affetti musicali*, Op. 1): a. mm. 1–12; b. mm. 19–29.

Where the two upper parts deviate from the largely homophonic texture, they do so through the simple means of alternating the parts (mm. 45–49), or creating harmonies in thirds using sequences (mm. 66–76). "La Bemba," while being an effective and at times imaginative piece, seems to demonstrate the work of an instrumentalist who has

played many canzonas and has a working knowledge of diminutions, but does bring their counterpoint studies ambitiously into this particular piece.

The other canzona in the volume, "La Marina," demonstrates a working knowledge of straightforward counterpoint: a simple *soggetto* is passed around in a series of imitative points with entries moving by fifth (Ex. 5.18a). The section in triple time at the end is based on a modification of the same *soggetto* (Ex. 5.18b). However, this canzona does not include any particularly interesting decorative features or diminutions, and Marini does not really reconcile his contrapuntal learning with the language of his ornamented playing.

Example 5.18: Marini, "La Marina" (*Affetti musicali*, Op. 1): a. mm. 1–6; b. mm. 38–44.

The sonata "La Foscarina" seems to demonstrate some of Marini's lessons in counterpoint and shows him thinking more imaginatively about bringing his compositional and instrumental training together (Ex. 5.19). It is one of the longest pieces

in the volume, consisting of five contrasting parts in alternating meters, including one

inspired by the organ idiom of *tremolo*.[39]

Example 5.19: Marini, "La Foscarina" (*Affetti musicali*, Op. 1): a. mm. 1–11; b. mm. 38–44; c. mm. 99–end.

[39] See Stewart Carter, "The String Tremolo in the 17th Century," *Early Music* 19 (1991): 49–60.

The opening section combines elements of canon and imitation, showing that Marini can fit together in counterpoint a *soggetto* that is quite complex and decorated; the last section reprises this with a slight variation created using dotted notes. A similar technique to that found in "La Bemba" is used in the second section, with a phrase played by each instrument in turn, although instead of repeating the phrase verbatim Marini transposes it up a fifth. A fully imitative texture is found in the third section (Ex. 5.19b) and fourth section, which use ideas based around eighth notes and dotted notes, respectively. At the cadences, particularly those mid-way through the fourth section and at the end of the piece, Marini uses diminutions for the purposes of florid decoration, in a way that is very similar to the later examples of Castello (Ex. 5.19c). Patterns of diminution are often underpinned by a pedal, as though to give the impression of suspended time while the upper instruments improvise. Like Castello, Marini uses the written medium to control such ornaments carefully between the multiple parts.

By way of comparison, it is worth discussing briefly the one piece in the *Affetti musicali* collection that is not by Marini: the canzona "La Hiacinta" is by his uncle, Giacinto Bondioli (Ex. 5.20). An organist who is not known to have any particular experience on other instruments, Bondioli composed a piece that shows similar contrapuntal characteristics to Marini, but lacks all of the decorative features. It is essentially a *bicinium* for violin/cornetto and trombone, with a basso continuo part that just follows the bottom line in *seguente* fashion. Reasonably long, it only has a brief contrasting triple-time section (m. 110), with a conservative contrapuntal language informing the rest. Much of the musical material is derived from a canzona long–short–short opening; only in a brief passage straight before the triple time (mm. 96–109) does

he use any kind of decorative language, where eighth notes in one part that recall a texture used occasionally by Cima. In Marini's case, his experiences as a player of the violin began to inform his compositional technique; Bondioli remained largely conservative and separate from such influences in this piece for instrumental ensemble.

Example 5.20: Giacinto Bondioli, "La Hiacinta" (*Affetti musicali*, Op. 1), mm. 1–14.

The sole instrumental piece in Marini's *Arie madrigali et corenti*, Op. 3, is the "Romanesca" that ends the volume (Ex. 5.21).[40] The dedicatee of the piece, the "giovanetto" Giovanni Battista Magni, was most likely the son of Bartolomeo Magni, publisher of the volume, continuing to show Marini's close relationships with the publishing companies of Venice[41]—the question arises of whether Marini taught violin to the boy, or whether the piece had some pedagogical purpose. Dating from just three years after his opus 1, it consists of a theme and six variations. Although not technically designated a "sonata" in the publication, it is clearly akin to the variation sonatas of Rossi and Buonamente.

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[40] Biagio Marini, *Arie madrigali et corenti a 1, 2, 3. Op. 3* (Venice: Magni, 1620).

[41] Vittorio Bolcato, "Magni," in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* vol. 67 (2006), <www.treccani.it>, accessed 3/2/2017.

Example 5.21: Marini, "Romanesca" (*Arie madrigali et corenti*, Op. 3), incipits.

Theme

V1: dotted rhythms

V2: eighth notes, "in altro modo"

V3: eighth notes, in bass

V4: "Gagliarda"

V5: "Seconda parte" of the gagliarda

V6: "Corente"

Marini employs ideas from the diminution tradition for some of his variations. After the simple melody–bass presentation of the theme, the first variation is all in dotted notes, the next all in eighth notes over a sustained bass line. Given the single treble instrument, Marini does not have opportunities for alternations between two voices in the

upper register, but he does use an arrangement often seen in other variation sonatas, inverting the texture so that the bass has the eighth notes in the following variation, while the violin has a very straightforward upper part. The unusual aspect of Marini's set of variations is the dance variations that occur at the end. A single variation featuring some dance rhythms was reasonably commonplace in the sonatas by Rossi and Buonamente, but they did not explicitly label these as dances or draw attention to them. Marini's labeled "gagliarda" is followed by a largely quarter-note diminution in the same time, then the piece ends with a "corente" [*sic*]. Such clear inclusion of two different genres of dances is a striking feature, and draws attention to Marini's awareness of characteristics of the dances as stylistic markers that could be appropriated and incorporated into other pieces for a particular effect. The diminution manuals may have contributed to this with their selection of rhythms typical of popular dances as options in the lists of possibilities; the "Vestiva i colli" variations of Rognoni Taeggio point to the greater recognition of dance rhythms as a particular subset of ornamental possibilities.

This piece displays a greater separation between the diminutions than the earlier examples by Rossi and Buonamente. By reducing the number of sections and delineating them more, Marini recognized the greater stylistic contrasts and enforced their separation, ensuring that the performer properly takes in each new version and considers it as a distinct part of the composition. Marini also shows an effort to arrange the sections to create a broader structure of momentum and direction: the dotted notes add rhythmic interest while maintaining a steady progression. The eighth notes encourage greater momentum, but also allow the intensity to fall back a little when they are transferred to the bass and the treble part remains largely uninvolved. Between the two dances there is a

natural increase in speed, given that the *gagliarda* was among the most vigorous of the regular dances, with kicking and jumping,[42] but the *corrente* was generally quicker still, with its dance steps being primarily hopping and stepping.[43] These features together create an acceleration in motion towards the end—whereas Rossi and Buonamente did this through an increase in surface rhythms and sometimes tempo, Marini uses the characters of different dance styles to create the same effect, giving the dance meters a structural quality in the piece.

Many of the finest examples of the early seventeenth-century Italian instrumental style can be found in the large opus 8 compendium by Biagio Marini, published in 1626. Titled *Sonate symphonie canzoni, pass'emezzi, baletti, corenti, gagliarde, et retornelli*, this was a wide-ranging and carefully constructed volume, demonstrating major instrumental genres of the day ranging from simple dances and ritornelli to novel ensemble canzonas and challenging sonatas for violin.[44] The music was probably not written entirely on Italian soil: it was published in Venice while Marini was working for the Wittelsbach court, and some of it may represent the music he created and used in his professional duties there. Nevertheless, in the absence of opuses 6, 7, and 8, which are presumed lost, it serves as a summation of this early period of his career and demonstrates his synthesis of literate and oral skills upon the instrument.

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[42] Fabritio Caroso, *Courtly Dance of the Renaissance: A New Translation and Edition of the "Nobiltà di Dame" (1600)*, trans. Julia Sutton and F. Marian Walker (rev. ed., New York: Dover, 1995), 39–41.

[43] Gustavia Yvonne Kendall, "'Le gratie d'amore' 1602 by Cesare Negri: Translation and Commentary" (DMA diss., Stanford University, 1985), 444.

[44] Biagio Marini, *Sonate symphonie canzoni, pass'emezzi, baletti, corenti, gaglirade, et ritornelli, Op. 8* (Venice: Magni, 1626; facsimile, Florence: Studio per Edizioni Scelte, 2004); ed. Maura Zoni (Milan: Edizioni Suvini Zerboni, 2004).

The first two sonatas of the collection demonstrate many aspects of Marini's music at this time. The sonatas that start the volume are often overlooked in favor of the four solo violin sonatas near the end of the volume, highly unusual works that have been recorded and discussed multiple times; the opening sonatas are nevertheless varied and original, with some varied instrumentations.

Many of the sonatas now show a persistent mastery of counterpoint, in which Marini no longer seems self-conscious or uncertain of how to fluidly combine counterpoint with the recent instrumental styles. The more straightforward "Sonata prima" begins by using the same technique as is found in some other works, repeating a phrase in each instrument in turn. "Sonata seconda," however, has a number of interesting contrapuntal features in the first section alone (Ex. 5.22a). The first violin plays a *soggetto* that combines the traditional (in the presence of a canzona long–short–short rhythm) with the unexpected (a descending chromatic line). The second violin has a contrasting countersubject of eighth notes that fits under the second measure of the *soggetto*. Marini employs these materials with entries across a range of pitches, and begins combining elements of the two together at m. 12. He later develops the idea further: m. 21 introduces a variant that turns the chromatic half notes into quarter notes, m. 43 uses a shortened version, and m. 64 recalls the long–short–short rhythm in an ascending chromatic gesture (see Ex. 5.22b). Marini's handling of this distinctive *soggetto* indicates a high level of confidence in handling contrapuntal and imitative textures by this point in his career.

Example 5.22: Marini, "Sonata seconda" (*Sonate symphonie canzoni*, Op. 8): a. mm. 1–21; b. *soggetto* at mm. 21, 43, and 64.

Marini turns to elaboration when he is not engaged with contrapuntal material. The "Sonata prima," which is not so concerned with counterpoint, has more decoration and ornamentation, particularly towards the end. The very fast diminutions at m. 106, involving sixteenth-note figures and a quick written-out *gruppo* that (unusually) trills across the interval of a third, are passed between the instruments over a relatively static bass line that gives the impression of suspending time during the decorations (Ex. 5.23). The last idea in the sonata combines quarter notes in one part and eighth notes in the other, but this straightforward rhythmic layering is enlivened by the octave leaps in each part that result in continuous voice crossing between the parts, an inventive use of some

more disjunct patterns of diminution. "Sonata seconda," as befits its more contrapuntal nature, uses diminutions in dialogue and close correlation.

Example 5.23: Marini, "Sonata prima" (*Sonate symphonie canzoni*, Op. 8), mm. 106–end.

The final pages of the collection are given over to a lengthy "Passemezzo concertato" in ten sections, for two violins and continuo. Other volumes of the time show a tendency to save an important piece until last, such as Monteverdi's *Ballo delle ingrate* that ends his eighth book of madrigals. Marini's "Passemezzo concertato" has avoided

such attention, since it is not as outwardly revolutionary; however, it provides a thorough demonstration of Marini's qualifications as a literate instrumentalist, in addition to some lingering influences from oral traditions.

The *passamezzo* itself was rooted in oral traditions: the set of chords originally arose as a dance, and may have developed through the improvisation of variations over a repeated bass theme.[45] By the mid-sixteenth century, the *passamezzo antico* and *passamezzo moderno*, as well as the closely related *romanesca*, were becoming the most popular dance themes. Notated *passamezzi*, which sometimes included variations, probably represent a formula that was widely used by everyone from amateurs through to virtuoso Spanish vihuelists; Ortiz's appropriation of the scheme was briefly discussed in chapter 4. By placing a *passamezzo antico* in such an important position in his opus, Marini claimed this oral heritage, connecting himself with not only the dance traditions of the Italian violinists, but also with players and composers who had appropriated *passamezzo* formulas for original compositions.

Marini also rejected purely vocal music as a basis for instrumental composition, claiming a popular dance as a serious genre with which to develop a suitable finale for his publication; he no longer needed the legitimization of a work by a contrapuntal master such as Willaert or De Rore, as the diminution composers had. The creation of this piece through writing, rather than through the improvisatory models that underpinned similar *passamezzi* for dancing, allowed Marini to develop a much wider range of variations and provide a summation of his compositional abilities.

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[45] See Horsley, "The Sixteenth-Century Variation and Baroque Counterpoint," 161; Horsley, "The 16th-Century Variation: A New Historical Survey," 121–23.

Example 5.24: Marini, "Passemezzo concertato" (*Sonate symphonie canzoni*, Op. 8), incipits.

Theme

V1: eighth notes in both parts

V2: eighth notes, hocketing

V3: eighth notes in bass

V4: eighth notes passing between treble and bass

V5: canon in thirds

Example 5.24: cont.

V6: chromatic motion ("*Larga di battuta*")

V7: sixteenth-note *gruppi*
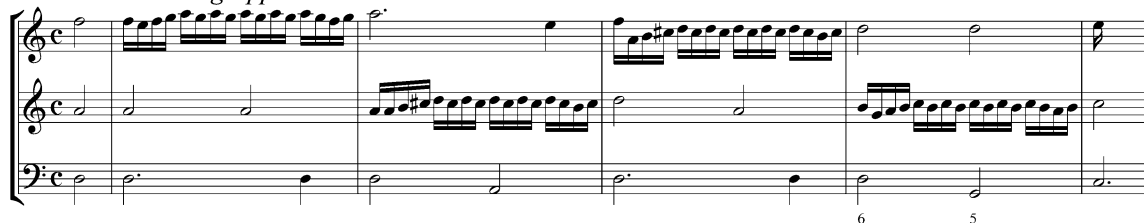
V8: contrapuntal

V9: canon at the unison

As a standardized chord progression, the *passamezzo antico* is not normally particularly polyphonic in any strict sense (see Ex. 5.24). Marini demonstrated his contrapuntal abilities in the eighth variation, a sober piece of polyphony based on a *soggetto* that enters successively in all three parts at the beginning. He is also interested in showing his ability in close canons, such as in the final, ninth variation: this is a canon at the unison, at the space of one quarter note. The canon creates intricate patterns that hocket between the two violins. A similar idea pervades the fifth variation, where there is a canon in thirds between the violin parts, with the bass a tenth below; the focus here is

not necessarily contrapuntal, but on interlocking patterns that create perpetual movement between the parts.

Marini also demonstrates his mastery of ornamental language in some variations. The third and fourth variations use diminutions in eighth notes, purely in the bass in the third variation, alternating between the violins and the bass in the fourth variation. The written medium allows him to involve the bass to a much greater extent, creating conversational exchanges and regulating a consistency of style between the parts. The seventh variation sees Marini borrowing the ornamental *gruppo*, the measured trill. Increasingly considered as an affective ornament, Marini here reclaims it as a diminution, which he passes between the parts. Unlike improvised diminutions, which will tend towards being unstructured, Marini's writing focuses and refines particular categories of ornamentation.

Marini's works provide a summation of the influence that oral and literate traditions had on the instrumental music of the early seventeenth century. Like the other composers considered here, he continued to engage with material from the oral realm, such as the *romanesca* and *passamezzo* schemes, and he used decorative and ornamental language that suggested he held skills in improvisation. However, he also came to show a considerable level of contrapuntal skill, and he used the experience of composing on the physical page to help organize his thoughts structurally. The materials of his childhood education in the 1590s to early 1600s were adapted, built upon, and transformed in purpose. Diminutions became structural and goal-oriented; counterpoint showed elements of modern, expressive idioms alongside a conservative, learned sophistication; dance

themes were used as the basis for the most ambitious compositions; canons were regularized to create intricate patterns between multiple instruments.

These instrumentalists stood at a unique point in history. Singers largely negotiated the oral-literate divide during the medieval period, when manuscripts could be varied and imprecise, and the mind was a necessary and at times more reliable method of recalling information. The instrumentalists of the sixteenth century, however, were crossing from oral into literate realms during the first great age of music printing, when the very nature of a musical text was evolving, and the easy supply of printed music was quickly changing the acts and creations of musicians. I have argued that the transformative nature of engagement with musical texts, particularly through pedagogical materials during the formative years of an instrumentalist's life, can leave deep impressions on their creative activities and their very conceptualization of music. It is the novelty of this compositional mentality—combined with the final lingering of oral traditions that had developed to entertain and charm listeners—which generated the personality and self-assurance of this idiomatic instrumental repertoire.

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