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# *Society for Seventeenth-Century Music*

A SOCIETY DEDICATED TO THE STUDY  
AND PERFORMANCE OF 17TH-CENTURY MUSIC

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## Seventh Annual Conference

University of Virginia, Charlottesville

April 8-11, 1999

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### Conference Program, April 1999 (University of Virginia)

#### FRIDAY MORNING

#### NORTH ITALIAN MUSIC

Margaret Murata, chair

**Gregory Barnett**, "Chronicles of Musical Success and Failure in Late-Seventeenth-Century Italy"

Apart from the music that we study, we know little of most seventeenth-century musicians. In documents that preserve their words—such as prefaces, dedications, or even treatises—musicians of this period typically reveal few details of themselves and instead devote their prose either to musical issues or to the praise of their patrons. On the strength of an eclectic and little-known set of primary materials, this paper takes up the northern Italian musician's life during the latter half of the seventeenth century. The narratives assembled here treat the conflicts that arose between individual musicians and the organizations that provided their employment, the competition and consequent jealousies between musicians inherent in their milieu, the financial insecurity typical of the musician's life and the sometimes alarming consequences of errors made in the pursuit of a career, and the various and intricate means by which musicians sought to augment their earnings and improve their standing with patrons.

The materials that tell these tales of precarious musical careers originate in various sources: letters written by composers and performers to the powerful Bentivoglio family of Ferrara; musicians' petitions to municipal and ecclesiastical institutions in Bologna and Ferrara; *ordini* published by various musical *accademie* of northern Italy; and similar records of musical activity from the late seventeenth century. The larger aim of this study is to present an in-depth context for music of the late Seicento by reconstructing the circumstances of rank-and-file musicians from this period, thereby illustrating how professional affairs shaped their lives and influenced their music.

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**Eleanor Selfridge-Field** (Stanford University), "The Rites of Autumn, Winter, and Spring: Decoding the Calendar of Venetian Opera"

An exact understanding of the Venetian calendar has eluded chroniclers from Salvioli in the seventeenth century, Bonlini and Groppo in the eighteenth, and Wiel in the nineteenth, to Alm and Sartori in recent years. The problem has two components: (1) reconciliation of the non-coincident financial, ecclesiastical, and administrative years and (2) differentiation of the principal seasons for public entertainment (opera, comedy, and gambling).

Music scholars have turned repeatedly to musical artifacts (manuscript sources and printed *libretti*) for the resolution of conflicting data, but these merely reflect the underlying confusion that inhere in primary sources. Intelligence reports, compiled weekly for various political and ecclesiastical bodies, provide a more secure basis for dating but any single series survives only sporadically.

Through a coordinated reading of eleven series of such documents against the six bibliographies and the two types of artifacts, it has been possible to date—usually to the day—the vast majority of the 800 operas produced in Venice between 1675 and 1750. This accumulated list resolves almost all problems of year-dating and fully defines the ever-changing limits of the seasons, not only for opera but also for comedy and important private entertainments.

This accumulation of chronologically ordered information, besides including many first-person descriptions of performances, defines important correlates of patronage, literary subject, and musical genre. Changes over broad stretches of time are also apparent. Among these the persistence of elements of courtly organization in the later seventeenth century and the changing relationship of opera and comedy in the early eighteenth century are particularly noteworthy. This talk concentrates on the seventeenth-century aspects of the changing cultural scenario.

**Respondent:** Irene Alm (Rutgers University)

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***Awarded the first SSCM Student Paper Prize:***

**Mauro P. Calcagno**, "Signifying Nothing: Debates on the Power of Voice in Seventeenth-Century Venice"

My paper deals with Italian seventeenth-century views about the power of voice, especially as manifested on Venetian opera stages. I show how these views arose from mixed beliefs about the problem of Nothing (*nihil, nulla*), a concept that had theological and metaphysical implications.

In *La Musica* (1614) Giovanbattista Marino highlights the dissociation of sound/voice from word. The former is "indistinct and inarticulate" and "signifies nothing," while the latter is rooted in the divine Word and is thus loaded with meaning. Marino warns against their arbitrary separation. However, in *Adone* (1623), his sensual description of the nightingale's song reveals his positive view of sound/voice, as does his captivating portrait of La Lusinga (Allurement), herself a singer whose voice eventually "vanishes into nothing."

Marino's ambivalence foreshadows a division of intellectuals into two groups: the advocates of voice and Nothing, and the skeptics. A hot debate erupts in the 1630s between members of the Venetian Accademia degli Incogniti and French intellectuals. For the Incogniti (many of whom were opera librettists), *nihil* is a positive concept, since it permeates the entire universe. For the French intellectuals, the idea of *nihil* is inconceivable as well as theologically inadmissible. The Incogniti's positive view of Nothing goes hand in hand with their support of opera, a genre that exalted the power of voice. The Incogniti's ideas about the positive value of Nothing persist in the second half of the century in the Accademia Delfica, which includes many Venetian librettists. In opposition to the Delfica, the critics of Nothing condemn the operatic voice. For example, Francesco Fulvio Frugoni compares singers to nightingales, but only to demean them by exclaiming "Vox, vox, praeterea nihil." Understanding the debate about voice and Nothing gives us new insight into the famous condemnation of Baroque opera by the Arcadians. A fear of what Shakespeare calls the "airy nothing" may well stand behind Gian Vincenzo Gravina's famous complaint about the excess of arias in Venetian opera (1715): "What is left today in Italian theaters is only pure voice."

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FRIDAY AFTERNOON  
FRENCH MUSIC

**Don Fader** (Eastern Illinois University), Sébastien de Brossard as Music Historian: a Modernist View of the *Querelle des anciens et des modernes* in Music

Recent studies of the role played by aesthetics in the reception of Italian music in early eighteenth-century France have tended to focus on aspects of musical criticism that were drawn from classicist theory. Many period critics, notably Lecerf de la Viéville, believed that French musical culture was divided in two: one party (the ancients) defended classicist ideals embodied in the music of Lully against the other (modern) "pro-Italian" party whose only aesthetic is that of pleasure. A comparison of Lecerf's writings with the views expressed in Sébastien de Brossard's *Catalogue* reveals that the differences between these two parties are nowhere near as great as Lecerf would have us believe. In spite of their differing opinions of Italian music, the two writers in fact agree on many aesthetic ground-rules. Both writers believe that modern art depends upon tasteful violations of the "rules" of authority in the arts, referred to as "licences" or "agrément inexpliquables" The two writers disagree, however, on the nature of these *agrément*s. In Lecerf's view, music ought not to draw attention to itself, and should act as an *agrément* to a text. For Brossard, however, "the rules" are not Aristotelian, but are instead drawn from Renaissance counterpoint. *Agrément*s for Brossard, signify meaningful interpolations of advanced Italianate techniques (rule-breakings) into an otherwise regular and rule-abiding counterpoint in the *stile antico*. Brossard expresses the typical modernist belief that all fields progress over time by reasoned innovation. At the same time however, Brossard also

believed that these advanced techniques tapped the greatest power of music: its ability to step entirely out of all theoretical bounds and into the realm of the *agréments inexplicables* in order to convey the strongest passions. This view of music as dependent upon techniques whose effects are inexplicable is likely to have been shared by other proponents of Italian music, and probably accounts for why no one attempted to meet Lecerf on the theoretical grounds on which he argued.

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**Catherine Gordon-Seifert** (Providence College), "The Allemandes of Louis Couperin: Songs without Words"

By the early seventeenth century in France, the allemande was no longer danced nor did it share stylistic features typical of its sixteenth-century predecessor. Whereas modern scholars agree that the seventeenth-century French allemande had become an instrumental piece that functioned primarily as a stately introduction to a suite or act, accounting for the allemande's unusual style is somewhat more problematic. Most scholars believe that allemandes were modeled after instrumental genres unrelated to dance, namely the toccata, prelude, or French overture; and yet allemandes differ from these in significant ways. Unlike preludes and toccatas, allemandes do not include virtuosi passages idiomatic to the instrument, and unlike overtures, allemandes lack rhythmic regularity and contrapuntal sections.

While the definition of the allemande as an instrumental piece that served an introductory function is indisputable, this paper offers another explanation for its unusual stylistic features: certain French allemandes, those by Louis Couperin, are more closely related to vocal rather than instrumental models, specifically resembling mid-century serious airs by Couperin's contemporaries: Lambert, Acidly, and Le Cam us. A comparison of Couperin's allemandes with serious airs not only reveals obvious similarities, such as common structural features, it also unveils a rationale for the curious stylistic traits common to both —the rambling and unmemorable melodies and passages seemingly lacking in internal organization and unifying musical devices. These features make sense only if we recognize that airs and allemandes were composed as imitations of "verbalized" passions. Since more than one passion is represented in pieces, and since certain musical devices combine to represent each passion, phrases often appear unrelated to each other.

Ultimately, this paper demonstrates a vital connection between seventeenth-century vocal and instrumental music in France and shows that the rhetorical and musical language inherent in airs served as a rationale for the composition (and even performance) of Couperin's allemandes. Interpreted as such, Le Galois' description of Couperin's compositions as "harmonically adventurous. . .full of chords and enriched with fine dissonances. . ." could refer to Couperin's ability to express a greater range of affects in his works than his contemporaries: a range of passionate representation equal to that of the serious air, making Couperin's allemandes "songs without words."

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**Lois Rosow** (Ohio State University), "The Descending Tetrachord: An Emblem Expanded"

Thanks to Ellen Rosow's seminal article, the descending tetra chord obstinate is now widely understood as "an emblem of lament." Nevertheless, other scholars, such as Tim Carter and Peter Hillman (referring to Monteverdi and Purcell respectively), have interpreted this bass pattern as a more general expression of love. The starting point for the present study is the music of Lully, where this structural device is used in two ways: on the one hand, for expressions of seduction, joyous desire, and love triumphant; on the other, for lamenting by lovelorn females much like those Rosow describes. The duality is perhaps not surprising: the endlessly repetitive cycle that suggests confinement in one context evokes ecstasy in another. This paper

will argue that the duality arose from the dual parentage, Venetian and Roman, of the relevant Italianate style in France. As Rosa nd has amply demonstrated, the lamenting lovelorn woman, singing over the descending tetra chord ostinato, attained the status of a *topos* in Venetian opera. Yet examination of a modest sample of Luigi Rossi's cantatas (as well as his opera *L'Orfeo*) suggests that for at least one important Roman composer, the descending tetrachord bass pattern represented pleasurable love and desire rather than lamentation. Further evidence for Roman usage, as transmitted to France, is a joyous Magnificat by the young Charpentier, former student of Carissimi. The familiar Latin text is set as a lilting non-stop *passacaille*, a celebration of the Lord that seems to prefigure the celebrations of Amour in Lully's later operatic *passacailles*. The duality described here is reflected in the work of such composers as Purcell and Bach, who were influenced by both the French and the (multiple) Italian styles. In Cantata 78, Bach, who probably did not associate French dances with words—was able to combine the French *passacaille* (a dance associated with poetry of pleasure or seduction) with Italianate chromaticism and a sorrowful text. For him the bass pattern was indeed an "emblem of lament"; the combination he created is powerfully referential but at the same time original.

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**Georgia Cowart, "Le Bourgeois gentilhomme, the Ornaments of Fête and the Utopia of Theatre"**

An enormous critical literature treating the *comédie-ballet* of Molière and Lully as spoken comedy has only partially illuminated the significance of this genre. Although the last decade has seen a growing interest in Lully's musical contribution, what is still needed is a radical reconsideration of the *comédies-ballets* as their contemporaries saw them, theatrical 'fêtes' taking music and dance not only as their "ornaments," as Molière called them, but also as the heart of their subject matter. Seen in this way, the *comédies-ballets* can shed unexpected light on the nature of entertainment and its audience in the seventeenth century. In *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme*, for example, the last and most famous of the collaborations of the "deux Baptistes," music and dance serve as symbols of the noble life to which the bourgeois M. Jourdain aspires. As such they contribute to a game of mirrors in which a play between courtly and burlesque styles reflects and comments on the social satire that underlies the work.

I will argue that this juxtaposition of noble and burlesque portrays not only the dual class structure of *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme* itself, but also of its dual audience, the aristocratic court of Louis XIV and the exuberant public of Molière's theatre in Paris. The "Ballet des nations," a quasi-independent piece standing at the close of *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme*, represents this dual audience as a jostling, querulous crowd of nobles and bourgeois coming together to view a "ballet." The entries that follow represent typical entertainments not only of the "nations" of France, Italy and Spain, but more importantly, of three major theatrical companies of Paris: Molière's troupe at the theatre of the Palais-Royal, the Italian *commedia dell'arte* with whose company Molière shared this theatre, and the Spanish players who had come to Paris with Louis' Spanish bride in 1660. I will interpret the "denouement" of this musical mini-drama, the final scene in which an earlier cacaphony of words and music is replaced by a general harmonious awe at the miracle of theatre, as a resolution of the social conflict posed by the comedy. This resolution lies in a view of theatrical entertainment, defined by its "ornaments" of music and dance, as a utopia of equality and harmony bridging the difference of nationality and social class.

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SATURDAY MORNING  
ITALIAN SACRED MUSIC

**Edmond Strainchamps** (State University of New York at Buffalo), "The Sacred Music of Marco Da Gagliano"

The historical reputation of Marco da Gagliano rests primarily on his secular music, especially on his six books of *a cappella* madrigals and his operas, among the earliest in the genre. Indeed, his opera *La Dafne* is today widely thought to be his most notable composition. The fact is, however, that Gagliano was most respected in his time as a composer of sacred music, especially so after 1608, the year in which he was appointed *maestro di cappella* of the cathedral of Florence. Nearly all his sacred music was created for the cathedral, Santa Maria del Fiore, and for San Lorenzo, the Medici household church. He published some sacred compositions in his lifetime (some of which are now extant only in incomplete form), but a large amount of Gagliano's sacred music remains unpublished in manuscripts contained within the Opera del Duomo and the Chapter Archive of San Lorenzo. This paper will survey the unknown repertory of Gagliano's sacred compositions and will discuss as well the varied style within the corpus of these works by this preeminent Florentine composer of the first half of the seventeenth century.

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**Jeffrey Kurtzman** (Washington University), "Monteverdi's Vespers of 1610 and the Development of the Italian Vesper Repertoire in the First Half of the Seventeenth Century"

Monteverdi's Vespers of 1610 and its relationship to Italian sacred music of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries has been the subject of a number of my publications and my recently released book by Oxford University Press. Those studies have demonstrated the unique as well as the derivative aspects of Monteverdi's music and its assemblage in the 1610 print. In this paper address the question of how Monteverdi's Vespers of 1610 relates to the Italian vesper repertoire up to the middle of the seventeenth century. The purpose will be to examine possible influences of Monteverdi's music on later composers and the way that important features of Monteverdi's psalms and Magnificats are represented or not represented in this repertoire. Issues discussed will include the role in later vesper music of a *cantus firmus*, the nature of text expression, the developing character of the concertato idiom, the role of solo voices and virtuoso embellishment, the role of obbligato instruments, the role of optional instrumental doubling, the role of a *ripieno* choir, the development of harmonic language and functional tonality, the role of specific structural devices, such as ground basses, ritornellos and other forms of repetition, and the stylistic range and diversity of the repertoire. Conclusions about this repertoire are necessarily preliminary in nature, since only a limited quantity of compositions apart from Monteverdi's own Venetian sacred music have yet been published, even by the most significant composers. Nevertheless, enough music is available to begin the process of understanding the scope and character of this repertoire and its principal musical features.

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**Sally Sanford** (Wellesley College), **Paul Walker** (University of Virginia), with **Zephyrus**, "Creating a Choral Sound for Music of the *Prima* and *Seconda pratica*"

Zephyrus is a local group of amateur singers formed in 1991 by Paul Walker for the purpose of exploring early vocal music for larger forces. In consultation with Sally Sanford the group has experimented with the application of early vocal techniques to a "choral" context. Included among these techniques are issues of air pressure and volume, ideals of vocal resonance and tone production, the uses of a steady and of a variable air stream, the incorporation of a "pyramid" of sound that brings out and makes fuller the lower pitches while lightening up the higher ones, handling of vowels and consonants, and the varying of sound

color as a means of conveying the meaning and emotional content of the text. In particular we consider the varying ways of applying these techniques to music from different times and places, with special emphasis on the differences in approach to *prima pratica* and *seconda pratica* vocal music. The singers will demonstrate the various technical points and will also illustrate with excerpts from Monteverdi's 1610 Vespers and other compositions. This work follows up on Ms. Sanford's exploration of early vocal techniques as presented in the recent *Schirmer Performer's Guide to Seventeenth-Century Music* (Stewart Carter, ed., NY 1997) and in her article comparing French and Italian vocal styles in the seventeenth century published in the first issue of our society's journal.

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## SATURDAY AFTERNOON COMPOSITION AND THEORY

**Stephen R. Miller** (University of the South), "Conflicting Signatures": Divergent Compositional Processes in Seventeenth-Century Imitative Textures"

For many years "compositional process" was a buzz word in musicological circles. It motivated many important sketch and source studies, particularly in the common-practice period, and has since spun off similar efforts in both historical directions. These kinds of questions have been brought to bear very successfully on sixteenth-century music, and Jessie Ann Owens's *Composers at Work* (1997) represents an important milestone for such investigations. While this paper does not undertake sketch studies for the seventeenth century, it does address the compositional processes available during the century. Specifically, by taking close account of imitative polyphony as it occurs in some seventeenth-century Italian liturgical music, this study provides a direct view on a fundamental conflict in contemporary compositional processes. Proof. Owens's work of recent years allows us to proceed in this direction with confidence. It now seems irrefutable that during the Renaissance composers initially conceived their works without recourse to writing and, at a later stage of the process, wrote down individual voices without recourse to score notation. On the other hand, we know perfectly well that the process was very different for much seventeenth-century music. Through the Baroque era, composition was largely a bass-driven enterprise, with composers envisioning the entire texture from the ground up, as it were. The manuscript evidence available suggests that composers would first write out a bass line, continue with the soprano, and then if necessary fill in interior voices. Proceeding in this way, Baroque composers were in effect employing a kind of score notation. For much of the work that scholars of the Seicento do, this disjunction in the compositional processes of the two periods poses few difficulties in a monodic repertory, for instance, or in any repertories manifesting "soprano/bass polarity," the conventional model for Baroque compositional process functions quite well.

But not all seventeenth-century repertories can be so described. In genres more dependent on imitative, equal-voice writing, the development of the bass-oriented, score-friendly process must have posed a serious challenge to the traditional methods described by Proof. Owens. In thinking about such issues I have been much encouraged by some work of David Schulenberg, especially his wide-ranging article of about a decade ago on "Composition before Rameau: Harmony, Figured Bass, and Style in the Baroque." Proof. Schulenberg points to key evidence in the keyboard and theoretical literature, showing that in the seventeenth century there were fundamentally different ways that a keyboardist might realize a basso continuo line—and the implication is that composers, too, might proceed in fundamentally different ways.

From careful study of several seventeenth-century imitative repertories, especially the Kyrie movements from Italian masses, it has become evident that they instantiate opposite processes in terms of a conservative, Renaissance approach and the newer "progressive" Baroque method. Close analysis of the imitative passages reveals in some cases a preoccupation with polyphonic motives while in others a fixation on harmonic structures. Most generally, the difference could be identified as a "contrapuntal" vs. "harmonic" orientation, but such terminology threatens to oversimplify the issue. A number of other less "theoretical"

matters are integrally involved, such as what genres musicians were most familiar with, their educational upbringing, and their instrumental background. The resulting difference in the compositional process for imitative polyphony is so marked that it is as dependable an indicator of composer as a signature itself.

It should perhaps be of little surprise that seventeenth-century liturgical polyphony — a lesser known repertory precisely because it has the reputation of lagging "behind the times" — would offer an unexpectedly close view of this crucial moment in the history of compositional process. Thanks to the strength of many conservative organizational structures like guilds and choir schools, a traditional approach to compositional process was better able to survive in a few pockets of this repertory.

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**Michael R. Dodds** (Southern Methodist University), "Modal Representation in Baroque Church-Tone Cycles"

The Baroque church tones are a set of modal categories arising from the harmonization and transposition of the eight plainchant psalm tones in Roman Catholic Offices. Adriano Banchieri's classic theoretical presentation of the church tones in *L'Organo suonarino* (1605) was followed by a long succession of treatments by other music theorists, including Johann Mattheson, who in *Das neu-eröffnete Orchestre* (1713) used them as the basis for his first listing of the twenty-four major and minor keys. In Mattheson's and many other theorists' listings, the eight church tones consist of four minor-third tones (on D, G, A, and E) and four major-third tones (on C, F, D, and G). In addition to their explication by theorists, the church tones were used as the basis for ordering numerous seventeenth- and eighteenth-century keyboard cycles, including sets of Magnificat versets, ricercars, toccatas, and didactic duos, of which almost forty are surveyed. These cycles' modal ordering allows comparison of works within like-numbered categories with respect to both outward aspects of modal representation (primarily final-signature combinations) and more "interior" tonal structures.

When these modally ordered cycles are examined with respect to outward aspects of modal representation, four distinct historical phases may be observed. First is the period in the late sixteenth century, when most categories were usually represented at the originally notated pitch level of the psalm tones (with the exception of tone 2 on G in *cantus mollis*, which even then was typically notated up a fourth). Second is the period from around 1600 to around 1700, when, except for the highly irregular tone 7, the church tones were fairly standardized and when the complete set of modal categories typically contained five distinct scale types. Third is the period from about 1700 to 1750, when "Ionian" signatures were used for all four of the major-third tonalities (including now tone 7), but "Dorian" and "Phrygian" signatures persisted for some of the minor-third tonalities. Fourth is the period after 1750, when the church tones were either all represented by "Ionian" and "Aeolian" signatures, in accordance with modern convention, or, in deliberate identification with the seventeenth-century tradition, by various of the other old "modal" signatures. Each new phase of the church tones' development reflects a significant shift in the conceptualization of mode.

Examination of outward aspects of modal representation naturally leads to consideration of the extent to which signatures actually reflect modal content in church-tone cycles. Among all the church tones, tone 4 (typically represented by a final of E with either a blank signature or a signature of one sharp), raises most pointedly the question of how — or whether — Renaissance modality evolved into the major-minor system. It is unique in undergoing a change to its characteristic fifth species, while the signature changes of the other tones affect only their characteristic fourth species. Comparison of numerous tone 4 keyboard works by South German composers suggests that in this repertory the "Phrygian" tone 4 did not so much evolve into "E minor" as be replaced by it, and to some extent continued to coexist alongside it as a distinct entity. Various instances of modal mixture in works by Johann Sebastian Scherer, Gottlieb Muffat, Johann Georg Albrechtsberger, and others are evidence not so much of an evolutionary development as of attempts to accommodate two very different tonalities and ways of conceptualizing mode.

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SATURDAY AFTERNOON  
WORKSHOP in ALTERNATIM PSALMODY

Michael Dodds, organizer; John Sheridan, organ; Sally Sanford, soprano

The workshop gave participants the opportunity to sing both plainchant and *falsobordone* in alternation with organ versets of the Seicento. Emphasis was placed on experiencing the unique qualities of a variety of tonalities and performance styles rather than recreating a vespers service, *per se*. Various performance-practice issues were explored.

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SUNDAY MORNING  
THE SACRED AND PROFANE

**Paologiovanni Maione** (Conservatorio di musica "D. Cimarosa", Avellino), "Ò Giulia de Caro—from Whore to Impresario: On *Cantarine* and Theatre in Naples in the Second Half of the Seventeenth Century"

‘Commediante cantarinola armonica, puttana’ are Giulia de Caro's high-sounding titles in the chronicles of the seventeenth century. The life of this Neapolitan ‘principessa del bordello’ offers clues to the theatrical context of an age which has yet to be properly researched. ‘Giulia de Caro’ may thus be seen as a privileged and interesting embodiment of a professional status which was—according to contemporary society—controversial and subject to conflicting interpretations. In the 1670s she ruled the Teatro di San Bartolomeo, the famous opera house in Naples, and her role as an impresario and actor-manager raises new questions concerning the social class of performers, and offers deeper insights into the legislation and organization of the world of the theatre. Her brilliant career on the stage—in aristocratic houses, at the Royal Palace and at public entertainment venues—reflects the adventurous life of a woman whose reputation, finally, was said to be that of ‘a virtuous and honest bride’.

Her employment as a whore, a comedian, a singer, and activity as an impresario are merely the highlights of a remarkable individual career, although perhaps not unique for Naples at that time. Another woman, Cecilia Siri Chigi, had been the impresario of the San Bartolomeo in the years before the management of the new "Carilda." She was responsible for the debut of Giulia de Caro on that stage in the opera *L'Annibale in Capua* by Pietro Andrea Ziani in the winter of 1671. Her *curriculum vitae* is comparable to the career of the "empress of the whores." The private house, the city square, the theatre building respectively hint at the working environments of prostitutes, actresses and singers; the common and widespread image of ‘dreadful and dissolute sirens’ refers to all actresses, who often went through the ignominy of public suspicion and infamy because of gossip concerning their reputations. Not all the complaints regarding social and moral behavior were groundless. Earlier and later chronicles and documents register many situations which hint at the doubtful morals of artists and singers. The position and the role of *comediante* and *cantarina* recall those of *meretrice* and *mercenaria*; women who searched for a professional identity were criticized and condemned. The struggle to achieve a better social status was fraught with difficulties, since being an actress could only mean leading "a free and licentious way of life"; the attempts of many performers to achieve social respectability through temperate and abstinent behavior were generally doomed to failure.

See **P. Maione**, "Giulia de Caro 'seu Ciulla' da commediante a cantarina: Osservazioni sulla condizione degli 'armonici' nella seconda meta del Seicento" in *Rivista Italiana di Musicologia* 32 (1997): 61-80.

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## **Kimberlyn Montford, "Religious Reform, Legislation, and Nuns' Music in Early Modern Rome"**

In early modern Italy, women had little legal, political, domestic or religious independence or power. Direct access to the courts was closed to them, nor could they serve as civic officials, priests or higher ecclesiastical administrators. Yet, through their participation in the spiritual and cultural life of their households and communities, women exerted societal influence in both formal and informal settings. Those women who joined one of the numerous religious communities in Rome found a situation that in many ways reflected the larger society, yet in its own way fostered an unprecedented sense of control. Monastic institutions served two important religious and social roles in Italy: they were symbols of religious devotion and purity, and they served as respectable alternatives to marriage for the young women of the community. In both cases, protecting and preserving the sanctity and virtue of the nuns was imperative.

Suspicion of nuns' music during the Counter-Reformation reflected both the Tridentine preoccupation with religious celibacy and traditional distrust of female religious autonomy. Regulations by Roman administrators prohibited certain types of liturgical and musical expression in female monasteries and decreased interaction between the sisters and male musicians. The authorities were well aware of the attraction of nuns' music, an attraction comprised partly of the skill and virtuosity of the singers, and partly of the allure of the "forbidden." To counteract some of that attraction, the officials severely limited any music but Gregorian chant in the convent churches.

An investigation of archival documents reveals that activity interpreting and enforcing enclosure in Roman female monasteries occupied religious authorities throughout the Counter-Reformation period. Yet nuns continued to perform in the monastic churches, often with many of the same members of the curial hierarchy present. This paper will explore those societal forces that resisted enclosure—families and patrician patrons who saw monastic foundations as extensions of their social milieu and monasteries that benefited socially, financially and spiritually from musical festivities. Such an investigation paints a more complete picture of early modern Rome, the women who inhabited its monastic institutions, and their music.

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