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Program Abstracts

**'E pur io torno qui': Sixteenth-Century Literary Debates,
the Audience's View, and the Interpretation of *Poppea***
GIULIO ONGARO

The libretto of *L'incoronazione di Poppea* has received considerable attention from scholars, perhaps more than that of any other early opera. Several solutions have been suggested to explain what at first blush seems to be a story without a clear moral compass, where the ending finds the wicked Nero and Poppea in

seems to be a story without a clear moral compass, where the ending lines are wicked here and Poppea in control of the situation. None of the solutions currently available is entirely satisfactory, and perhaps this is a case where no single interpretation can explain the problematic libretto. I think, however, that more light can be shed on this interesting question and I approach the problem from two different angles. First, I relate the question of the plot of *Poppea* to the spirited sixteenth-century debates on theater, particularly to the controversy surrounding Sperone Speroni's *Canace*, a tragedy criticized in its own time for the choice of immoral protagonists, siblings guilty of willfully committing incest. *Canace* was attacked by an anonymous writer (most likely the playwright Giovan Battista Giraldi Cinzio) and later defended by its author who was forced to tackle the questions raised by Giraldi Cinzio. This exchange is part of the intense intellectual debate stimulated by the increasing availability of Aristotelian writings. The consequences of this debate extended well into the seventeenth century, and influenced dramatic writing outside of Italy. In addition, I consider how a seventeenth-century Venetian audience might have reacted to the play in accordance with widely accepted dramatic theories of the time. While my conclusions do not magically solve all problems of interpretation, they provide a further contribution to the study of this complex and fascinating libretto.

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Out of the Dark Ages: Editing Cavalli's Operas in the Postmodern World

JENNIFER WILLIAMS BROWN

It has been nearly fifty years since Joseph Kerman condemned the period between Monteverdi and Gluck as "the dark age of opera." In our haste to decry Kerman's verdict as uninformed, however, it is easy to overlook a central reason he gave for selecting this epithet: namely "our essential ignorance" of this music. As Kerman exclaimed, "It is never produced; . . . the most important scores remain unpublished. . . . Scholars have left the field alone." Although the twin spheres of performance and scholarship have shone much light on this repertory since 1956, only a handful of operas between Monteverdi and Scarlatti have been published in modern scholarly editions. The works of leading seventeenth-century Italian composers Cavalli, Cesti, and others remain largely unavailable to scholars, performers, and students. To be fair, editing is a tricky business, one that has become harder in recent years as scholars question what it means to "fix" a work as slippery as an opera in a printed edition. The seventeenth-century repertory is especially problematic in this regard. Most musical sources are lost; those that survive are mainly neat copies whose pristine surfaces belie considerable textual turmoil and whose texts have uncertain relationships with the music as performed. Thus the editor risks establishing a text that replicates the vagaries of music copyists while losing touch with both the composer's thought processes and the fascinating, destabilizing forces of live performance.

This paper begins by evaluating attitudes to seventeenth-century opera texts taken by performers (*e.g.*, Leppard, Jacobs) and scholars (*e.g.*, Curtis, Holmes) and reviewing recent editorial studies by musicologists (*e.g.*, Gossett, Parker) and non-musicologists (*e.g.*, Orgel, Greetham). It then examines selected operas by Cavalli, whose numerous surviving autographs and production scores offer us an unparalleled opportunity to discern various stages in composition and adaptation. It concludes by advocating an approach to editing Cavalli's operas in which "the Score" is not "the Opera," but rather a text that can be deconstructed to shed light—if only incompletely—on various stages of the work's compositional and performance history. As we celebrate the 400th anniversary of Cavalli's birth, the time has come to bring his music out of the "Dark Ages."

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Opera in the "Atascadero": Seventeenth-Century Spanish Views on Opera, Politics, and the Pleasures of Venice

LOUISE K. STEIN

Letters to and from the Spanish ambassador in Venice in the years 1672-1705 contain references to opera and other attractions and entertainments in Venice as well as elsewhere in Italy. This paper will extract from and analyze these newly-found documents that describe how Spanish diplomats and listeners heard and evaluated opera when outside the Hispanic world. The ways in which these Spaniards listened to opera in

Italy and framed their sometimes peculiar experiences in letters to others within the Spanish cultural and aristocratic network offer a new lens through which to view Venice as a cultural center and opera as a politically-charged event in the later seventeenth century. In addition to precious comparisons between Venetian opera and Spanish *comedias en musica* the letters offer some facts about and reactions to the visits of prominent aristocrats and political figures (such as the Duke of Mantua and the French ambassadors) to Venice and to the opera houses, as well as comments on the visitors' social and sexual liaisons—some of which were arranged on the excuse of a visit to the theaters. The documents contain occasional to singers and to stage effects, both of which fascinated Spanish connoisseurs of musical theater at home and abroad. With rare exceptions, the Spaniards seem to have been much less interested in composers. Venice and its musical theater attracted and fascinated foreign visitors, and this in itself was a matter that the Spaniards stressed again and again in their letters, as they found themselves on display in the cosmopolitan mix. But in spite of all the glitter and sophistication of Venice (which is also referred to as that "atascadero" or sunken watery hole!), the high quality of the operas that could be heard and seen there, and the opportunities to view and to purchase paintings by Venetian masters, the Spaniards abroad were terribly homesick. They longed to trade their exalted diplomatic assignments for the chance to return home. They missed their brand of musical theater and tried to cultivate and promote it abroad, just as they preferred their beloved cuisine, longed to be in the bosom of their extended families, and found it difficult to maintain their health away from the dry climate of Castile. The letters tell us a great deal about how Spaniards thought about musical theater, politics, and public behavior, and the extent to which Spanish aristocrats attempted to maintain their own cultural values and forms of expression when they traveled or lived abroad.

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Word and Image in Seventeenth-Century Venetian Librettos: The Frontispiece as Operatic Emblem

MAURO CALCAGNO

Examination of the frontispieces of seventeenth-century Venetian librettos in the first thirty years of their publication (1637-68) sheds new light upon the meaning of the operas. Interpretation of these images, considered as "paratexts" (Genette), affects and reflects that of the texts, creating a powerful hermeneutical circle. My paper focuses on the frontispiece of Aureli/Boretti's *Eliogabalo*, staged in the Teatro Grimani in the 1667-68 season. This opera replaced Cavalli's work on the same subject, scheduled for that season. For unknown reasons, the librettist Aurelio Aureli was forced to completely rewrite the text and Giovanni Antonio Boretti's music replaced Cavalli's. It was thought that Cavalli's *Eliogabalo* was cancelled because its musical style was old-fashioned. But, in the conservative intellectual climate of the Venice of the 1660s, abrupt cancellations like this were more likely based on moral and political issues. The frontispiece of the Aureli/Boretti *Eliogabalo*—a lady, a child, and a motto—provides a window into these issues (as do images in other contemporary librettos). Referring to prostitution, bisexuality, despotism, and justice, this image emphasizes political, religious, and erotic meanings included in the verbal text and thus creates an interface between the opera and the contemporary sociopolitical world. Indeed it is only by understanding this

broader context—and thus the ideology of opera patrons such as the Grimani—that we can explain why Cavalli's *Eliogabalo* never reached the stage.

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Civic Identity and Civic Glue: Venetian Processions and Ceremonies of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries

JEFFREY KURTZMAN

Civic life in Venice was characterized by frequent processions, many of them the most lavish and formally organized in Italy, that marched around St. Mark's square, to the Rialto, and to and from churches in every part of the city. Most of these processions announced their passage with music, and the most important were accompanied by the ringing of bells, the firing of blunderbusses and artillery, and the explosion of fireworks when the procession reached its destination. The inevitable sacred service that followed was itself often characterized by sumptuous ceremony and music, often followed by banquets and dancing, whether in the doge's palace, other residences, or even in piazzas in the open air. Venetian processions were not only displays of civic pride and unity, but also served as the official route of public display of justice.

displays of power, wealth, and piety, but also served, as the official cortege or pniaanx of priests, laymen, and musicians traveled from one quarter to another, as a moving cord to bind together the piazzas, neighborhoods, and parishes through which it passed. The music and other sounds of a procession could be heard long before the procession could be seen, and trumpets, drums, and especially guns and fireworks echoed off buildings and wafted far beyond the cortège itself. The sound and the noise of the procession made all those within earshot part of the celebration, part of the city's ritual life, whether they could see the cortège itself or not. And the procession served to invite the nobilissima et singolare. The procession was also commemorated in several large paintings by Andrea Michieli detto il Vicentino, as well as in an engraving in Giacomo Franco's *Habiti d'huomeni et donne venetiane* (1610), which will also figure in the presentation.

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In Search of a *Stile accademico*: The Earliest *Esperimenti d'esame* of the Bolognese Accademia Filarmonica

GREGORY BARNETT

From its founding in 1666, the Accademia Filarmonica of Bologna represented one of the most prominent musical societies of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. It was distinguished, not as a gathering of aristocratic connoisseurs as were many earlier Italian accademie, –but as a meeting ground of professional composers and performers. Moreover, a primary aim of the Accademia Filarmonica was the stimulation of new musical composition. To that end, entrance into the Accademia at the highest regular rank of *compositore* required the submission of a composition, the so-called *esperimento d'esame*.

This paper examines the earliest *esperimenti d'esame*—those dating to the end of the seventeenth century— with an aim toward studying the genres and styles cultivated by composers who sought membership in the prestigious Bolognese academy. All of the *composizioni d'esame* studied here survive as autographs in the archives of the Accademia, and among the composers represented are Pietro Paolo Laurenti, Francesco Gasparini, and Francesco Antonio Pistocchi. From these compositions we gain not only a unique perspective on compositional craft of the late Seicento, but also a conspectus of the most esteemed musical styles and genres as practiced by the membership of the Accademia. Various styles represented, and the candidates for admission clearly emulated famous models of composition from the late Cinquecento and the Seicento—for example, *a cappella* and concertato styles, along with specific fugal and modal techniques—as a means of demonstrating both erudition and virtuosity. Yet the result of this investigation is not the extrapolation of any normative *stile accademico* from these compositions, but rather the discovery of diverse and sometimes conflicting interpretations of long-standing theoretical tenets and respected

compositional models. The findings detailed here thus offer considerable insight into the musical culture of Bologna in the late Seicento, in which the Accademia Filarmonica stimulated divergent ideas and eclectic styles among its ambitious composer-members.

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Giovanni Paolo Colonna and Petronio Franceschini: Building Acoustics and Compositional Style in Late Seventeenth-Century Bologna

MARC VANSCHEEUWIJCK

Although known to music historians for their instrumental sonatas and concertos with trumpets, composers in San Petronio produced primarily large-scale vocal-instrumental compositions for eight to nine soloists, double choir, trumpets, strings and continuo, often in a dense contrapuntal style. In a building as vast as the Bolognese San Petronio Basilica, which has a reverberation time of twelve seconds as well as other peculiar acoustic phenomena, this might seem absurd, and many hypotheses have been formulated in the past about performance practice. In this presentation I analyze some of the compositions written for services in the church by its *maestro di cappella*, Giovanni Paolo Colonna (1637-1695), in order to describe ways in which the acoustics of the building might have influenced the style and compositional techniques of the composer. Through a comparison with similar compositions by his colleague Petronio Franceschini—who is virtually unknown as a composer of liturgical music, partly because even the most recent catalogue (1938) of the San Petronio archives lists only one out of seven large boxes containing his sacred music preserved there—I will point out some of the main differences in approach the composers used to

preserved here—I will point out some of the main differences in approach the composers used to circumvent the particular acoustical phenomena in San Petronio. Although we can undoubtedly identify a typical Bolognese style (since most musicians worked for several churches at the same time) or even a San Petronio-style, each composer associated with the basilica maintained nonetheless a very definable personal musical language. I illustrate my talk with visual sources and recordings made on location.

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Hercules Dancing in Thebes, in Pictures and Music

BARBARA SPARTI

What makes Jacopo Melani's *Ercole in Tebe* such a golden nugget for dance historians and musicologists is the importance given to the dance, not only in the libretto descriptions, but also in the accompanying engravings and in Melani's fully written-out dance music. Before Irene Alm's seminal work in Venice, it was a common assumption, even among seventeenth-century specialists, that Italian opera had little or no dance and that opera composers did not write their own ballet music. Yet Melani's *Ercole in Tebe*, with four end-of-act *balli*, is indeed an exception. This may be due to the special occasion for which the *fiesta teatrale* was composed. Its first performance in 1661 not only inaugurated Florence's beautifully renovated Teatro della Pergola but celebrated the marriage of Cosimo Medici III and Princess Marguerite Louise of Orléans.

My paper explores the libretto by Giovanni Andrea Moniglia, a frequent collaborator of Melani, and the official *Descrizione* written a year later by the eminent *letterato* Alessandro Segni, which include detailed descriptions of the ballets and the names of choreographers and the almost fifty members of the Accademia degli Immobili who danced as nymphs, shepherds, fauns, amori, and furies. I also discuss the previously unexamined pictorial sources which consist of extraordinary engravings illustrating the dance scenes, such as the finale with cupids in the air, tritons in the sea, and nymphs on the beach, all dancing together to the same music. The attention to the dance in the opera's conception, performance, and literary and artistic accounts, pointed to a likely inclusion of the dance music by Melani himself. This was confirmed in the Vatican Library score. Melani's music, in parts and with instrumentation indicated, is particularly important

considering how little is known about dance and dance music in seventeenth-century Italy, a time of transition when the new French style of dancing and the previous Italian one co-existed, and pantomimic *balli* in operas were very popular. My presentation includes excerpts of Melani's ballet music and an analysis of the dances performed, which, among leaps and caprioles by momentarily frozen figures, feature a gavotte and a *canario* with castanets.

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An Italianate Oratorio latino for the Electoral Court of Mainz: Daniel Bollius' Repraesentatio on the Nativity of John the Baptist

STEWART CARTER

Daniel Bollius's *Repraesentatio harmonica Conceptionis & nativitatis S. Ioannis Baptista* has been called "the first oratorio in the Italian style on German soil" (Grottron, *Mainzer Musikgeschichte*, 1959). Missing since World War II, along with other music manuscripts—including many by Bollius—in the collection of the University Library of Wrocław (Breslau), this oratorio has recently resurfaced in the Staatsbibliothek zur Berlin, Preussischer Kulturbesitz. Bollius's *Repraesentatio* was written between 1619 and 1625 as a birthday gift for his employer, Johann Schweickhardt von Kronenburg, Prince-Archbishop of Mainz. In spite of certain traditional features characteristic of the German historia—the use of turba choruses and a narrative-style biblical text—it also reveals innovative Italianate traits. Its title suggests a possible influence of Emilio de' Cavalieri's *Rappresentatione di Animo, et di Corpo*, but Bollius's oratorio resembles more closely the Roman *oratorio latino* of the mid-seventeenth century in its adherence to biblical sources and division into two fully developed structural parts. Its prominent part for a narrator, designated Evangelista, invites comparison with Heinrich Schütz's *Historia der Auferstehung Jesu Christi*, with which it is roughly contemporary. Its elaborate interludes for a variety of instruments, however, call to mind the latter composer's *Historia von der Geburth Jesu Christi*, composed some forty years later. Even in his choice of

text—the story of the nativity of John the Baptist—Bollius reveals himself as an innovator.

This paper examines the unique position occupied by Bollius's *Repraesentatio* in the history of the oratorio in light of contemporary Italian/Catholic as well as German/Lutheran trends. It offers a possible explanation for the composer's contact with the Italian style, focusing on his former place of appointment, the Hohenzollern court at Sigmaringen. It further shows this work to be one of the most innovative and original sacred dramatic works of the early seventeenth century and offers an assessment of Bollius's style for the first time since the disappearance of nearly his entire compositional output more than fifty years ago.

N.B. Stewart Carter's edition of the *Repraesentatio* was performed during the 2003 SSCM Annual Conference at Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, North Carolina, conducted by

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"Sharppers, beaus, the very Cits"; the Wits' Expectations of the Players in Purcell's *Fairy-Queen*

MICHAEL BURDEN

That a work so large and important as Purcell's *Fairy-Queen* passed almost unnoticed by those reporting events in seventeenth-century England is one of the great conundrums of English musical history. So elaborate and expensive was it, that the seat prices were hiked and, as the anonymous author of the Prologue recounts, the otherwise everpresent on-stage audience was banished. The scandal of the expense of its staging alone—some £3,000—and the elaborate nature of the production as described in the libretto should have guaranteed a wide reportage. That it was ignored has hampered our understanding and assessment of the opera as a theatrical and musical event.

Now, however, a variety of evidence relating to the casting of the first performances has emerged which puts the opera in an entirely new light. It not only suggests an inspiration for the work, a possible reason for its low key reception, and elucidates long-acknowledged obscurities in the text of the opera itself, but forms the basis of an argument which suggests that the opera was written not, as is sometime thought, as vehicle for Thomas Betterton's grand actresses, but as one for a protégé not ten years old, and that many of the cast were, in fact, children.

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Awarded the 2002 Irene Alm Memorial Prize

The Hamburg *Ratsmusik* and its Repertoire: Johann Schop's *Erster Theil Neuer Paduanen* (1633-1640)

ARNE SPOHR

During the first two decades of the seventeenth century, the English instrumentalists and composers William Brade, Thomas Simpson, and John Dowland made a significant contribution to the development of German instrumental ensemble music. The Free Imperial City of Hamburg especially became an important center for the publication of their collections of stylized pavans, galliards, and other dances. Much of this music belonged to the repertoire of the Hamburg *Ratsmusik*, the ensemble of civic instrumentalists. The collection *Außerlesener Paduanen und Galliarden Erster Theil*, published by the *Ratsmusik* members Zacharias Füllsack and Christian Hildebrandt in 1607, became a model for the following decades; pavans and galliards in the English style continued to be an important part of the *Ratsmusik* repertoire as late as the 1630s and 1640s. The Hamburg violinist and composer, Johann Schop, director of the *Ratsmusik* from 1621 to 1665, published his *Erster Theil Neuer Paduanen, Galliarden ...* in 1633-1640. It is one of the most substantial collections of this type dating from the first half of the seventeenth century, comprising a variety of genres and styles.

Many of Schop's pavans (which make up more than half of the music) exhibit distinctly conservative features. For instance, the use of *chiavi naturali* and mixed clef-combinations (i.e., g2 and c1 clefs for the upper two parts) resembles the older Füllsack and Hildebrandt print and also English consort music written around 1600. Most of Schop's dances show truly polyphonic partwriting. Moreover, Schop frequently alludes to Dowland's *Lachrimae* collection (1604), quoting the famous tear-motif itself, and also using motifs from John Lantieri's *Deven*. Schop's collection *Erster Theil Neuer Paduanen* is an important

works from John Langdon's *Favari*. Schop's collection *Erster Theil newer Taaunen* is an important example of a civic music repertoire in seventeenth-century Protestant Germany. My paper gives a survey of the various styles and forms found in this collection; this variety will be examined in context of the functions the music fulfilled in the social life of Hamburg. The conservative features of Schop's music are viewed as a reflection of Hamburg's political order and economic stability the music had to represent. In a historiographic perspective, Schop's music is seen as an example of the actual diversity of conservative and progressive styles co-existing in German seventeenth-century instrumental ensemble music.

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She Descended on a Cloud "From the Highest Spheres": Florentine Proto-monody *alla Romanina*

NINA TREADWELL

When the Florentine court's *prima donna* Vittoria Archilei descended on a cloud, in singular display from the flyloft of the Uffizi theater on May 2, 1589 she inaugurated the performance of a set of *intermedi* that were perhaps the most spectacular yet produced in Florence. The *intermedi*, performed several times, formed the centerpiece of a series of celebrations for an event of particular political import: the wedding of Duke Ferdinando I de' Medici and the French princess Christine of Lorraine. Two years after the wedding, at the request of Duke Ferdinando, a musical print was issued that was (like the numerous printed *descrizioni*) both commemorative and propagandistic in function.

This paper takes the opening number of the Medici-commissioned print—the song that Archilei (La Romanina) sang as she descended on her cloud—as the centerpiece of a discussion regarding issues of musical ownership and authorship. In this paper I discuss La Romanina's performance of "Dalle più alte sfere" in light of the conflicting evidence regarding the song's attribution, either to Archilei's husband Antonio (in the 1591 musical print) or to Emilio de' Cavalieri (in Bastiano de' Rossi's *Descrizione*). I demonstrate how the impetus to publish the lavish embellishments that Archilei ostensibly sang was crucially bound up with rivalry between competing courts regarding female performance of this "new" repertory. Harnessing the possibilities of print technology enabled the Florentines to capture and claim as their own La Romanina's likely quasi-improvised performances some two years previously. By so doing the Florentines rivaled the female-centered musical traditions of competing courts at the same time as effectively distilling, through the medium of print, a primarily Roman/Neapolitan-associated performance practice.

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Andromache, Dido, and the Mother of Euryalis:

Seneca's Legacy in Domenico Mazzocchi's Virgilian Laments

SUSAN P. SHIMP

In 1638 Roman composer Domenico Mazzocchi published two *dialoghi*, setting women's laments from Virgil's *Aeneid*. In "Dido furens," the famous queen of Carthage struggles with abandonment and madness, then takes her own life in an almost defiant act of suicide. In "Lamentum matris Euryalis," the mother of Euryalis grieves after the brutal death of her warrior son, but instead, asks the gods to take her life. Each setting contains extremely sharp and flat musical harmonies that warrant explanation in Mazzocchi's theoretical addendum to the collection and that even render the pieces practically unperformable without the transposing instruments described in Giambattista Doni's *Lyra Barberina*.

Each of these women's laments is highly indebted to the words of Seneca's *Andromache*, who reappears just two years later in Rome in a now lost production of his *Troades*, mounted for the Barberini court. Contemporary descriptions of both Mazzocchi's laments and the lost *Troades*, however, point to aspects of *Andromache*'s texts that clarify a number of the textual and musical curiosities in Mazzocchi's settings. First, the *metaboliae* or shifts in the poetic meter of *Andromache*'s "Huc et latebris," described by Jean-Jacques Bouchard in the 1640 production, point to the common rhetorical organization of these laments and demonstrate the grammatical role of Mazzocchi's *mutatio modi*. Second, the interchangeable nature of the term *metaboliae*—applying to both poetic meter and to tonal elements—speaks to conception

of the essential unity of text and music in Rome of the Seicento. Indeed, it is the shifting between the diatonic, chromatic, and enharmonic genres that Athanasius Kircher praises in his description and reprint of the "Lamentum matris Euryalis" in his *Musurgia universalis* (1650). Finally, this comparison of the Troades with Mazzocchi's *Aeneid* text settings, demonstrates the persuasive format handed down from the likes of Andromache to Virgil's women, ultimately creating a "grammar of lament" that helped shape the Baroque aesthetic of tearful persuasion.

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Constructing a Stemma of Monteverdi's *Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda*

TIM CARTER

It is obvious that all printed first editions in the seventeenth century will somehow be based on one or more manuscript sources placed before the typesetter. Most scholars, however, fail to consider the issue, chiefly, it seems, because we tend to grant any print the status of a primary source rather than viewing it as one link in the chain of production. Yet even if manuscript exemplars rarely survive (their usefulness generally ends once the type has been set), one can still deduce their nature from traces in the printed product which, in turn, need to be read in terms of the processes that brought it to fruition.

Monteverdi's *Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda* is a case in point. It was first performed at the palace of Girolamo Mocenigo in Venice in Carnival 1624, and was later included in the composer's Eighth Book of madrigals, the *Madrigali guerrieri, et amorosi*, printed in Venice in 1638 by Alessandro Vincenti. It is variously distributed across the partbooks of the Eighth Book, while there is a "full score" in the Basso continuo book. The problem for editors, however (although no one has yet discussed it fully), is that there are quite significant differences between the text and music of the *Combattimento* as it is represented in the partbooks and in the score. The only way to resolve those differences—and therefore to produce a cogent edition of the piece—is to consider what materials might originally have been sent to the printer, and what editorial operations were performed on those materials at one or more stages prior to typesetting. The argument is complex—relying largely on nitpicking issues of underlay and orthography—although the conclusion is straightforward. Broadly speaking, the partbooks and score would seem to transmit two different states of the *Combattimento*: one (the partbooks) somehow deriving from the original performing materials (now lost), and the other reflecting later editorial intervention, not entirely, if at all, by the composer. This opens up the issue of how the materials given to Vincenti for the typesetting of the *Madrigali guerrieri, et amorosi* might relate to manuscripts prepared by Monteverdi and others at various stages, including when the contents of the Eighth Book were sent to Vienna (it is dedicated to Emperor Ferdinand III). It also raises the questions, which I try to answer, of just who Monteverdi's "silent" editor might have been and why he acted as he did.

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A Feast for Eye and Ear: Sound, Space, and Image in Seventeenth-Century Europe

WENDY HELLER, Moderator

The papers presented in this conference demonstrate vividly the extent to which interdisciplinary studies have enlivened and transformed our thinking. Arguably, for art historians and musicologists, working across disciplines is no longer a luxury but rather a necessity. We both deal with cultural objects and their relationship to the societies that produced them. For decades we have combed the same archives, studied the same patrons, and invoked the same external evidence about social and political context—arriving, in many instances—at similar conclusions with surprisingly few collaborative efforts. In seventeenth-century studies, the relationship between visual and aural media is particularly acute. This is the period in which composers became deeply preoccupied with questions of representation and expression, in which spectacle became an integral part of musical invention, and in which the crafting of increasingly beautiful and sophisticated musical instruments became a matter of artistic pride and concern. In the age of opera, architecture was not only important for the building of theaters and other performance spaces, but also engaged the imagination

of librettists, designers, and machinists who created imaginary worlds on the stage. Moreover, this influence was multi-directional, as visual artists were in turn inspired by dramatic images.

On the panel, three distinguished scholars from the Princeton Department of Art History and Archaeology share with us their thoughts on our mutual concerns in the study of early modern culture.

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A Virtuoso Performance: A Castrato in the French Court

ROGER FREITAS

The seventeenth century is often viewed as a period when music-making in Europe became a largely professional endeavor, marked by the rise of the virtuoso. But musicologists like Anthony Newcomb and John Rosselli have asserted the almost hybrid status of these performers, who, in Newcomb's words, "existed in a no man's land somewhere between the courtier and the professional musician." The career of the castrato Atto Melani (1626-1714), who gradually transformed his identity from servant-musician to gentleman-diplomat, precisely illustrates the tensions and potentialities of this condition. This paper focuses on Atto's complex relationship to the French court as revealed in his voluminous correspondence. Early in his career Atto recognized the paradox that although singing might be his avenue to success, it also limited him socially; being a professional marked him as inferior to the aristocratic class he aimed to join. And so he was forced to walk a fine line: although a castrato, he affected the reticence of an amateur; although trained to sing, he sought out duties in diplomacy and espionage; and although outwardly obsequious, he regularly disobeyed his masters' orders. Whether conducting Mazarin's espionage in Germany, subtly supporting the papal prospects of Giulio Rospigliosi in France, or even undermining French interests in Rome, Atto aspired to the behavior of any good courtier, exploiting his native talents to advance personal designs. It was a risky tack and, indeed, Atto suffered serious setbacks, including a period of banishment from France. But in the end his strategy succeeded, as he accumulated land, wealth, and titles (based on diplomatic, rather than musical, skills). The value of Atto's example is not that it tells a new story about the status of musicians in the seventeenth century—although it does confirm the persistence of the "court singer" model—but rather that it fills out that story with a new level of detail. For the first time one can begin to understand why a castrato might aim to escape the stigma of the musician and how he might in fact succeed.

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From *Ercole amante* to *L'Hercule amoureux*: Translating Cavalli

LISA CHENSVOLD

Francesco Cavalli was the leading opera composer in Venice for over three decades, from the 1640s to the early 1670s. It was a testament to Cavalli's reputation that he was selected to travel to France and compose an opera to celebrate the marriage of Louis XIV to Maria Teresa of Spain in 1660. The result of his efforts was *Ercole amante* (1662), set to a libretto by Francesco Buti. The poet Isaac de Benserade wrote additional texts and Lully provided music for ballets which were inserted between each of the acts. The entire spectacle was the brainchild of Cardinal Mazarin, close advisor to Louis, and Mazarin arranged the building of a new theater (the Tuileries) and enlisted coveted Italian musicians and designers for the occasion. Despite the cardinal's best efforts, *Ercole amante* was a debacle and effectively sealed the fate of Italian opera in France; the French had been introduced to Italian opera on several occasions but ultimately rejected it in favor of their own model, analogous but still different. The catastrophe that was *Ercole amante* is usually attributed to a series of glitches which plagued the production: the protracted delays, the deficient acoustics of the theater, the cumbersome scenery changes, the excessively long performance, and most of all, operatic politics, the primary source of which was a nasty power struggle between Cavalli and Lully. But the Paris libretto of *Ercole amante* (Robert Ballard, 1662) presents illuminating evidence regarding the opera's failure. Printed alongside Buti's text is a French translation, the significance of which has yet to be explored. This paper examines the French redaction of the libretto and asks how the anonymous translator's choices—omissions, elaborations, etc.—directed the reader (and perhaps even the audience) to privilege certain aspects of the drama over others, a process which hints at the perceived shortcomings of the opera. Curious typographical and other variations between the Italian and French texts also raise intriguing questions about peculiarly French preferences which may have implications for our understanding of the unlucky fate of Italian opera in seventeenth-century France.

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Staging Venice

REBECCA HARRIS-WARRICK

In the late seventeenth century, the august Paris Opéra, whose bread and butter had always been the mythology-based *tragédie en musique*, developed a sudden fascination with Venice. Between 1697 (*L'Europe galante*) and 1710 (*Les Fêtes vénitiennes*) no fewer than five *opéra-ballets* put La Serenissima on display, mixing contemporary people in real places such as the Piazza San Marco, the Ridotto, the Teatro Grimani, and the Grand Canal with *commedia* characters and the occasional god, in stories often revolving around the amorous adventures of young Frenchmen, in what was clearly seen as a sexually inviting and exotic land. These productions—some of them blockbusters—followed on the heels of a series of travel reports about Venice that had been published in the *Mercure galant* and that covered much of the same territory as these works: Venetian carnival season, balls and operas, or quaint practices among the populace. They also coincided with the growing fascination for Italian music among some members of the French public and the banning of the Italian Comedians by Louis XIV after their performances had become too licentious. This paper will examine the imaginary Venice displayed on the stage of the Paris Opéra: the markers—musical, choreographic and otherwise—used to signify "Venetian-ness," the aesthetic debates inherent in the works, and the agendas from outside the Opéra that worked their way onto its stage, which, like many of the protagonists, often went in disguise. It will also draw upon Irene Alm's research on dance in Venetian opera and the balls held in Venice's opera houses as a potential corrective to French fantasies.

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Dancing Venice: The *Forlana* in France

CAROL G. MARSH

The fascination with Venice that is evident in French operas and opera-ballets beginning in 1697 is also manifested in the dance types that appear in these works. Three new "Italian" dances—the *forlana*, the *saltarella*, and the *vénitienne*—appear in the works of André Campra and his contemporaries; they join the *bouffées*, *menuets*, and other French dances utilized by Lully and his successors. French dancing masters participated in this new fashion by creating choreographies to the Italian dance types, and at least seventeen such choreographies were published in Feuillet/Beauchamp notation between 1700 and 1724. Most of these dances are by Pécour, choreographer at the Paris Opéra from 1687 to 1729, and are for one couple; four are identified as having been performed at the Opéra, while the others were apparently choreographed for ballroom use. Both the stage and ballroom dances demonstrate how this famous choreographer responded to the unusual musical structure of these pieces, and they can, perhaps, illustrate his "take" on Venetian dance in the early eighteenth century. My paper compares the three Italian dance types mentioned above, revealing their similarities and differences and then focuses on the ten *forlana* choreographies by Pécour that are set to Campra's music. I discuss those elements of both music and choreography that seem to have marked these dances as "Venetian," at least to contemporary Parisian audiences. Video and live demonstrations of some of the dances are included.

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