Venetian Instrumental Music in the Sixteenth Century

Venice was at the vortex of a revolution in the production of instrumental music during the sixteenth century. The recent development of music printing played a significant role in this revolution. The 'Venetia' imprimatur prompted the later belief that most music published in Venice was composed and performed there, but this was mistaken. Some composers whose music was published in Venice came from as far away as Sicily. 'Venetia' could also refer to the whole of the Venetian Republic, which stretched from the Alps to the Po, from Bergamo through Udine, to the Adriatic coast, and the array of Venetian holdings that stretched into the Aegean. Because of its political stature in the sixteenth century, Venice was a Mecca for musicians. Musicians arrived under the sponsorship of noted patrons—bishops, ambassadors, and noblemen, who were often the dedicatees of printed music.[1]

The Social and Intellectual Framework of Instrumental Music

Printers and Patrons, Performers and Listeners

Much published music involved both voices and instruments. The role of instruments was at first limited to short pieces, often for lute, and then to ensemble transcriptions of chansons. Among alternative venues for printing, Nuremburg was the first one of significance (from the 1540s). There was a surprising degree of similarity between the repertories printed in each. Overall the lute received even more attention in Germany (where a somewhat different tablature was employed) and sacred vocal music less. Music published in Venice was normally presented in mensural notation in a series of part-books. A single typesetter could set, on average, two pages of moveable type a day. Few Venetians worked as many days as would be customary today, because so many feasts dotted the calendar. Additionally, tasks involving reading and writing were heavily dependent on daylight, which was far more plentiful in summer than in winter, when the expenses of candle wax and lamp oil reduced the numbering of working hours. The great benefit of printing was that the creators of music now had the rudiments of an industrial-strength production system through which their music could become known to a broader audience and performed in a variety of ways.

Venetians were surrounded by music throughout their lives. They heard it in churches, *campi*, *palazzi*, *scuole grandi*, salons, *ospedali*, in gondolas, and at any open window. There was no such thing as a non-musical space in Venice. Because of Venice's vigorous trade with the Levant, there could be overlays of more eastern sounds. Trade with the

[1] This chapter has been improved in various ways by John R. Ahern, Bonnie J. Blackburn, Ilias Chrissochoidis, Jeffrey Kurtzman, and Craig Stuart Sapp, to all of whom I here express my cordial thanks.

transalpine Continent delivered a substantial presence of instrument makers near the Rialto. String instrument makers came especially from southern Bavaria and the Inn River valley in Austria. For musical staffs in ducal service, the procurators often relied on the recommendations of regents and ambassadors. A number of important instrumentalists came from the Bresciano and Veronese. Singers might come from almost anywhere. Wind and brass instruments were cultivated within family dynasties, among which the Dalla Casa (from Udine) and the Bassano (originally from the like-named town) were especially noted. Most of the Bassanos were transplanted to the court of Henry VIII in England, where they served as musicians for three generations before pursuing other careers.

Musicians in the service of the doge (which included those employed at San Marco) devoted themselves wholeheartedly to the doge and his immediate retinue, among whom the French ambassador and the Receiver of Malta (representing Venice's most important allies in the Fourth Crusade of 1204) were the most important. Appeals to its glorious past were thought to enhance Venice's image. The sixteenth century was the most unruffled one in the Republic's history, being bracketed by the battle of Agnadello (1509), which brought *terraferma* to its maximum extent, and the victory at Lepanto (1571), which filled the Holy League with self-satisfaction.

Script, Transcription, Embellishment, and Improvisation

The phrase *per ogni sorte di stromento*, so prevalent in music prints from the sixteenth century, suggests a generic product intended to accommodate anyone. While this flexibility must be borne in mind, there was a general inclination over time towards specialization. However, movement towards it was not uniform. Diverse threads of musical development yielded not only the fully scripted score but also selective embellishments, diminutions, and a wide array of transcriptions and arrangements. Some of the most influential innovations of the century arose from these processes of differentiation. If instrumentation was ever more clearly specified, the authority of a text was progressively liberated. The balance between these factors was constantly varying.

Much of the lute and keyboard repertory suggests an improvised practice (prior to 1600) in which the performer invented as he/she performed. The possibility of a growing interchange between what was written and what was performed should be entertained in solo repertories. In polyphonic pieces the dynamics again vary with the context and the period. On balance the direction was from a meandering kind of improvisation to highly articulate methods of embellishment. By the end of the century deviation from the script would itself by scripted by rules rather than by printed texts—whether the music was texted; whether an individual part moved in minims, crotchets, or quavers; whether it progressed by step or by leap. This amazing series of advances within the last three quarters of the century attests to the highly analytical minds that were honed by the intellectual intensity of the time.

Genre

The ricercar

The ricercar existed first as a genre for lute, in which it might be said to consist of musings on some kind of initial phrase. Within a generation it moved to the organ and became more elaborate, with greater imitation between voices and a tendency to open with a dotted figure (e.g. a dotted semibreve followed by a crochet). The ground underneath the ricercar shifted constantly, however, and individual approaches predominate over a standard model. All approaches held in common an exploration of imitative techniques. By the start of the seventeenth century, a prospective organist's audition at San Marco consisted of improvising new pieces on a *cantus firmus* selected by the *maestro di cappella* and then playing before the procurators, who made the final choice. We do not know what the procurators valued most, but hints of skill at improvised counterpoint surface from time to time. The earliest printed music associated with an organist active in Venice is Marc'Antonio Cavazzoni's *Recerchari, motetti, canzoni* of 1523. Cavazzoni (*c*. 1490-*c*. 1560), a Bolognese, provides the eight earliest ricercars for organ. Julio Segni (1498-1561), who served as organist at San Marco for roughly two years from late 1530, contributed 13 ricercars (noted for their clear points of imitation) to *Musica nova* (1540). Segni was considered by many to have been the best organist of his generation, but the procurators were unsuccessful in luring him back to Venice in 1541. Cavazzoni's son Girolamo (1525-after 1577), following his father's example, produced a volume of *Ricercari, canzoni, himni* (1543) which are noted for a certain austerity but also bring continuity to the still little-known ricercar repertory. The younger Cavazzoni had greater loyalties to the church of Santa Barbara, Mantua, than to San Marco. He supervised the building of Graziadio Antegnati's organ (1565), which was noted for its chromatic capabilities, and remained there until at least 1577.

A truly accomplished master of the keyboard ricercar was Jacques (Jachet) Buus (*c*.1500-1565), a Fleming who served as organist at San Marco (1541-51). During his Venetian tenure he produced two volumes of canzoni (1543, 1550) and two of ricercars (1547, 1549). His ricercars offer a useful basis for comparison of multiple approaches to the genre, as they are variously monothematic; polythematic with a succession of points of imitation; and polythematic with some recapitulation of early points towards the end of the work. The two latter approaches demonstrate a thorough mastery of Flemish counterpoint. Buus's works are noted for their exceptional length.

In the hands of less systematic composers, the complementarity between instrumental and vocal pieces was often apparent. Cavazzoni, Adriano Willaert (*c*. 1490-1562), and Cipriano di Rore (*c*. 1516-1565) are all represented in the Gardano anthology of *Fantasie, recercari, contrapunti* (1551). (The fantasia may have been derived from the ricercar but became subsumed by abstract titles into the orbit of solmization.) Rore was a pupil of

Willaert, whose *Musica nova* (1541) had been a seminal work. Three volumes of Rore's ricercars were published in the 1540s.

Four-voice ricercars gravitate towards the bolder ensembles of the later sixteenth century. The first book of ricercars (1556) by Annibale Padovano (1527-1575), who worked intermittently in Graz, is a good example. Willaert and Rore figure again in Girolamo Scotto's anthology of three-voice pieces, *Fantesie et recerchari … accomodate da cantare et sonare per ogni instrumento* (1549). The fantasia, which can be considered a species of ricercar, is discussed under 'Virtual Institutions.'

The canzone

The ricercar and canzone dominated the ensemble repertory in later decades of the century. A slight difficulty in following and differentiating their histories arises from the fact that while Venetian printers' anthologies were very popular in the mid-sixteenth century, the composers and arrangers of such collections often came from outside the Veneto. Ioan Maria's *Intavolature de lauto di recercari, canzon francese, motetti, madrigali, padoane, e saltarelli* (1546) is a pertinent example. As the century progressed, a core repertory of favorite pieces emerged from these anthologies and became 'must learn' pieces. This suited the canzone for instrumental ensemble, which had its origins in the transcriptions of French chansons. Starting from a strict transfer from vocal parts to instrumental ones in the 1530s, the canzone soon enjoyed an ever-growing freedom that enabled its migration from organ to ensemble and back. Because of the growing importance of diminution and ornamentation the canzone eventually became a platform for experimentation.

Like ricercars, canzones came in several varieties, but their categories were more obvious. (1) As ensemble pieces they could be polychoral works for two, three, or four groups of instruments. Each group could be composed of different timbres and/or be playing in contrasting ranges (the terms *grave* and *acuto* might distinguish them). (2) They could, alternatively, be four-voice (non-polychoral) works or organ works, in which case they leaned away from homophonic textures towards imitative ones. (3) As a platform for elaboration, it was the canzone that usually provided the basis for the functional distinction of individual voices through different levels of elaboration.

The toccata

The toccata was exclusively a work for organ or lute. It rarely had a title apart from a mode specification, suggesting that toccatas were not viewed so much as individual words as they were instances of a genre. Venetians did not produce a lot of toccatas, at least not on paper. Some of what survives is preserved in German organ tablatures, leaving open the question of whether the demand for them was greater in south German court chapels than in Venetian churches. This is true not only for the Gabrielis, who spent time at the Bavarian court, but also for Claudio Merulo (1533-1604), who is not known to have set foot north of

the Alps. (Merulo, however, was an adventurer of a different kind: he operated his own print shop from 1566 to 1561.)

Balli

Tracing the history of dance music in sixteenth-century suffers from a lack of musical evidence. Surviving keyboard instruments give witness to a strong presence. Venetian academicians had learned debates about tuning systems that continued into the early nineteenth century, with relatively even contributions from each century. Proficient builders of *cembali* were also long remembered. Period accounts mention numerous balli in private palaces and courtyards for weddings, inaugurations, and the last days of Carnival. When it comes to music, though, the surviving contributions amount to Marco Facilo's *Intavolatura di balli d'arpicordo* (1588) and Gio. Maria Radino's similarly titled volume of 1592. Facoli (whose first volume of *balli* is lost) rightly emphasizes 'ogni sorte di rima' because the works clearly arise from arias performed in the context of the *commedia.* He offers what otherwise seems a predictable collection of saltarellos and pavanes after an initial passemezzo 'in six modes' coupled with a pavane in four. Radino, a Paduan church organist, acknowledges a German patron in his much slimmer volume.

Rudiments of Instrumental Pedagogy

An important contribution to the development of instrumental music in Venice came from diligent pedagogy, codified in a series of important manuals. Composition *per se*, particularly in one of the learned imitative styles, was only as important as the creator's ability to demonstrate his musical 'idea.' Silvestro Ganassi (1492-1565) was a pedagogical pioneer. He apparently played the recorder and various string instruments, the use of which he explains in two books of pedagogy—*La Fontegara* (1535) for winds and [La] *Regola Rubertina* (1542), with its *Lettione seconda*, 1543), for bowed strings. From 1517 he was a *piffaro* (and contralto) in ducal service.

La Fontegara was something entirely new: a manual with many fingering charts to demonstrate 'how to play the flute [*flauto dolce*] and any other instrument, especially with diminutions ….' Two *cornetti*, three viols, and a lute are shown on the title page (shown as Fig. 2 in Ch. 10). Ganassi was the archetypal player of 'all kinds of instruments' to which so much instrumental music of the time appealed. The notation in musical examples is crude, with beams that zigzag from note to note. However, Ganassi is systematic in his instruction, showing a short note sequence (seconds ascending, seconds descending), then showing its elaboration through prescribed means. He considers thirds, turning figures, and leaps by turns. In comparison to counterpoint teaching, passing tones were produced in great profusion as a byproduct of the diminution process.

The *Regola Rubertino* concentrates on tuning systems and modes as understood by a viol player (frets are visible in the cover illustration). Alternative instrumentation in tablature is given in some cases. In the *Lettione seconda* Ganassi shows in proper

Renaissance form the numerical ratios that result from the careful placement of frets across the neck of the instrument (thus underpinning tuning) and offers instruction on bowing and fingering. In both volumes he offers a few ricercars more to show the applicability of his advice than to recommend the pieces themselves.

Instruments and their repertories

Each major feast had its own flavor and particular requirements. All that was new in Venetian instrumental music had to operate within the context of rituals that were old. At San Marco (discussed further down) instrumental ensembles were required on several feasts; they performed at particular inflection points of Mass and Vespers services. Their performances were carefully prescribed. Rigid forms of observance may have stimulated the increasing emphasis on improvisatory skill.

The lute

Even the lute was used in San Marco, although its main role was in private and academic music-making, and particularly (at first) in self-accompaniment by singers. One early impact of printing was to greatly increase the amount of lute music in circulation in the first decades of the century. Francesco Speracino's *Intabulatura de lauto* (1507) is not so much a new departure as a review of national and regional styles. It employs the practice, in vogue until the early seventeenth century, of entitling works with personal names (sometimes thought to be of specific women but in many instances derived from the surnames of noble families): 'La Mora,' 'La Bernardina,' and so forth, although the works are mainly arrangements of pre-existing works by noted masters of polyphony. A striking work is the 'Recercare de tutti li Toni,' which may be the earliest conscious example of a cycle through the full roster of modes then in use. The seventeen ricercars in Spinacino's volume establish a baseline for a genre that persisted throughout the century, though its characteristics changed from generation to generation. Notable contributions to the lute literature had begun with Joan Ambrosio Dalza's *Intabolatura de lauto* (1508), which offered linked pavanes and saltarellos. Works for solo lute often appeared at the end of publications otherwise consisting mainly of texted songs.

More than the importance of Venetian exemplars, early music printing demonstrated an reciprocal influences from place to place that suggest a quest for international exposure. Luis da Milan's *El maestro* for vihuela (Valencia, 1536) included pavanes and villancicos together with 40 *fantasie* on the church modes and Italian sonnets set to music. Efforts to internationalize the repertory through the assembly of generic collections were also conspicuous in Germany. Hans Newsiedler's *Neugeordent Künstlich Lautenbuch* (Nurenburg, 1536) was an extensive collection (73 pieces in the first volume, 47 more in the second) that appeared in the same year as Milan's. In France Philippe Verdolet's intabulated madrigals (1536) for a single voice required accompaniment by lute.

The lute repertory was largely aimed at well-off gentlemen. As other kinds of instrumental music were developed, the role of lute gradually declined, but there would be no way to get a sense of the aesthetics of instrumental music in Northern Italy in the early decades of the century without acknowledging the important role of the lute. Lute playing—marked by a probing attitude towards melodic line and a delicate ear for articulation among others—was undoubtedly a stimulus to much that followed in other repertories.

The Organ and Harpsichord

Italian organs of the sixteenth century were single-manual instruments, usually with eight or fewer registers, but the array of timbres and dynamic range they could produce far exceeded what their modest description suggests. (Dalla Libera documented 143 Venetian organs a half century ago.) The modest physical scope of period instruments may explain why printed notation seems modest and pieces short. In contrast to the lute, which was a chamber instrument *par excellence*, the roles the organ played in churches and convents were clearly defined and, given the strictures of the Council of Trent (1545-63), purposely restrained (at least on paper).

The distinction between the first and second organists at San Marco was redefined in the later sixteenth century. The verbal difference, which dates from the fourteenth-century distinction between an *organum magnum* (in the north-facing loft, where it would not block daylight), and an *organum parvum* (in the south-facing loft). After the establishment of an instrumental ensemble (1568) this distinction took implications for musical function. The first organist worked closely with the *maestro di cappella.* He was responsible for the *coro*, which was viewed as the mainstay of the *cappella*'s music. Notable *first* organists included Padovano (1552-65), Merulo (1565-84), and Paolo Giusto (1591-*c*. 1624). Merulo exemplifies the most sophisticated of the breed: he served for two decades, was a prolific composer, and closely emulated the intellectual rigors of the time. He exhibited great clarity of mind both in his compositions and, we read, in his pedagogy. He was a valued teacher whose influence spread far and wide. Throughout his tenure the *maestro di cappella* was the greatly respected Gioseffo Zarlino (1565-90), a mathematician and astronomer as well as a musician and composer.

The Instrumental Ensemble

The duty of the *second* organist was to direct the instrumental ensemble, a prospect that proved to be enormous stimulus to the instrumental imagination. In the context of solo performance there was much for an organist to master, since even at the first organ a working knowledge of ornamentation was expected. He worked directly with the *maestro de' concerti*, the leader of the band of instrumentalists. The scope of these differences can be readily appreciated by comparing the musical legacies of the second organists Andrea (1566-86) and Giovanni Gabrieli (1586-1612) with Merulo, a first organist. The Gabrielis

returned from Bavaria with full ability to score for brasses and woodwinds. The fledgling orchestra—consisting of players of *cornetto*, trombones in multiple sizes, *violone*, and dulcian (*fagotto*)—was established. Instrumentalists' skills were not usually well defined. Most played multiple instruments. This gave great elasticity to scoring. Treble instruments including violin officially accrued from 1603 but were clearly in use earlier at the Scuola di San Rocco. San Marco's substantial trombone section began to diminish after the plague of 1630-31.

The position of *maestro di concerti* was initially filled by two figures who were enormously influential as pedagogues—Girolamo Dalla Casa (1568-1601) and Giovanni Bassano (1601-1617). Where Merulo had taken a systematic approach to ornamentation not unlike Ganassi's, showing single melodic intervals and short passages before and after elaboration, Dalla Casa and Bassano elaborated entire compositions (see Ensemble Pedagogy below).

Winds, brasses, and tamburi

The growing importance of wind instruments is clearly documented by the large amount of pedagogical material that cites them, but the umbrella term "ogni sorte di stromento" hides their identities. Marin Sanuto's *Diarii* give detailed accounts (1496-1533) of a wide range of social activities—variously diplomatic, social, and political—that included instrumental numbers. Andrea Calmo's *Lettere* from later in the century focus less on society at large but more on musical components of academic gatherings. Woodwinds are cited in many private entertainments even before the start of the sixteenth century, but details of what they played are elusive. Evidence for viol and woodwind combinations are available through iconographical sources.

The Gabrielis and several other instrumentalists later active in Venice had been with Orlando di Lasso in Munich for the wedding of Wilhelm IV, duke of Bavaria, to Renate of Lorraine in the spring of 1568. The Gabrielis seem to have remained there for a number of years. Their stay in Munich surely contributed to Giovanni's indulgence of brass instruments, although in Venice had multiple companies of *piffari* earlier. The difference was again one of musical function. Three kinds of groups could be cited as piffari. The officially appointed ducal *piffari* we see in Gentile Bellini's "Procession of the Relic of the True Cross" outside San Marco (1496) is the one usually referenced. Groups of more heterogeneous composition and less formality are also cited in documentation of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. They could include tamburi, shawms, and a modest number of bowed strings (adapted for processions by the addition of a shoulder strap). Tamburi and instruments of a miscellaneous nature could also play on *campi* for feasts, but they were required to finish playing by nightfall.

Venues

San Marco

Most accounts of Venetian music focus on music of the ducal chapel, San Marco. Glorification of Venice's patron saint was a form of political promotion as much as it was a sign of religious observation. The basilica (as it came to be called in later times) had its own rites, and the kinds of instrumental music heard within it were very closely prescribed. The introduction of a regular group of instrumentalists in the *cappella* from 1568 had its main impact on a few designates feasts. Their salaries were minimal because their responsibilities were few. The unnamed predecessors who had played on special occasions earlier in the century may not have been significantly different from the group initially chartered. They would have performed on families of instruments of varying sizes.

From a musical perspective the feasts that were most lavishly celebrated were those of St. Mark (25 April); those that fell on a date commemorating a famous Venetian battle (there were several of these, starred below*); and feasts recognizing Venetian martyrs. Being closely allied with the doge, San Marco was a patriotic institution. Other feasts on which all orchestral instrumentalists performed included the Annunciation (25 March), St. Anthony of Padua (13 June), Assumption (15 August), Christmas Eve, Christmas, and Easter. Masses for the coronation of a doge and for an anniversary of a coronation also called for a full complement of musicians. On feasts of intermediate stature half the orchestra and one choir sufficed. This practice was refined over time. On most days of the year no music apart from chant was heard.

The instrumental ensemble was heard after the reading of the Epistle on certain feasts for which the mass was performed *a cappella*—Epiphany (6 January), Purification (2 February), St. Isidore* (16 April), the Apparition of St. Mark (25 June), All Saints' (1 November), and Corpus Domini (moveable). After the Epistle a canzone (by organ with or without instruments) was the usual choice in the sixteenth century. A ricercar was preferred for the Offertory. Most surviving Venetian masses lack musical settings of the Sanctus and Benedictus. Various theories of instrumental substitution have been proposed, but ambiguities and inconsistencies in documentation can only be fully resolved in the seventeenth century, when a violin solo was performed during the Elevation of the Host.

Other physical institutions

Over recent decades our knowledge of the musical practices and personalities in other Venetian institutions has been greatly extended. This is especially true for the four *ospedali* (the Derelitti, Incurabili, Mendicanti, and Pietà), although in the sixteenth century the organ seems to have been the only instrument regularly used. In contrast, the *scuole grandi* were very active. They were funded by wealthy merchants, and Venice had and abundant supply of them. Many were German, Dutch, or Flemish and this dynamic introduces interesting

possibilities for the less well documented musical practices of Venice. The *fabbrica* (*fontego* in Venetian dialect) of the German merchants near the Rialto was close to the shops of the best known German instrument makers (Tieffenbrucker et al.). The Scuola di San Rocco, near the Franciscan monastery of the Frari, became famous for its great *salone*, the walls of which were covered with Tintoretto's cycle on the life of Christ. San Rocco attracted many of the best chamber instrumentalists of the end of the century—Giovanni Gabrieli among them. Gabrieli's famous 'Sonata pian' e forte' was performed at San Rocco prior to its publication (1597).

Music of significant extent was rarer in the *scuole piccole*, of which hundreds are described by Vio. These *scuole* represented Venice's guilds. Each guild had a shrine in one of Venice's churches. On the annual feast of the church's patron saint (or in some cases the patron of a chapel within the church), the allied guild made provision for the celebration. For instrumental musicians the guild shrine was at the church of San Silvestro. However, few records survive from before 1660.

Virtual Institutions

Virtual institutions consisted of groups of amorphous composition that convened for particular occasions but not necessarily in a fixed location. They included academies, gentlemen's clubs (such as the *calze*), and networks of patrons with specific interests. They often had obvious links to particular kinds of music.

Among these academies it was rare for any one to survive for more than one generation. Music of any kind was incidental to a wider array of interests pursued with presentations by individual members and sometime by invited guests. They reflected the high intellectual callings of the Renaissance, extending to enquiries in mathematics, poetry and drama, and most of all debate on a specified subject. Some of the leading musical figures were undoubtedly invited to academies from time to time. The Accademia Venier, which in *c*. 1550 counted the organist Girolamo Parabosco (*c*. 1524-57) among its members, and the Accademia della Fama, which was headed by Bernardo Tasso (1557-1561), the father of the later famous poet Torquato, were the best known in the sixteenth century. Parabosco's involvement probably owed to his activities as a poet and dramatist[2] rather than to his musical skills. He served as organist at San Marco for the last six years of his life.

While there is no genre that is predominately associated with academies, instances within most genres occur where an academic settings seems to be indicated. The ricercar was migratory in its social attachments. Ensemble canzonas, although absorbed into the San Marco repertory towards the end of the century, were often composed with other,

[2] Among his surviving *commedie* are *Il Hermafrodito* (1546), *I Marinaio* (1560), *Il Pellegrino* (1560), *Il viluppo* (1568), and *La Notte* (reprinted 1586). Most of these were posthumous. Among his acquaintances were Francesco Corteccia (Florence) and Tiziano Vecelli (Titian) in Venice.

more secular venues in mind. Learned allusions, such as the solmisized titles of fantasias and ornamented versions of madrigals whose texts came from respected poets, are suggestive of performance in academies. This practice was prevalent at midcentury. In the Scotto anthology of 1549, for example, we find such subjects as 'Ut re mi fa sol la,' 'La sol fa mi fa re la,' 'Re ut fa re fa sol la' and so forth. Instances continue into the next century.

We find an early instance of the instrumental *battaglia* (a stylized reminiscence of battle inspired by Clément Janequin's 'Le guerre') in Francesco da Milano's *Intabolatura* (1536), but this subgenre is more directly associated with the Gabrielis. Their *Concerti* (1587), collected by Giovanni and published with a dedication to Hans Fugger, included both a *battaglia a 8* and a *ricercar a 8* by the recently deceased Andrea. Giovanni's dedication leaves no doubt of the enormous esteem in which he held his nominal uncle. He lists as Andrea's strengths his 'rare inventions,' 'new manners,' and his understanding of the 'true movement of the affects'; he then notes that Andrea was 'singular in imitation' and in capturing the meaning of words in texted music. Other settings can be found throughout Europe, for which reason the *battaglia* seems to have no fixed social context.

Clubs for gentlemen (differentiated by the patterns of their stockings, whence comes the nickname *calze*), cultivated group interests in drama, poetry, and festivity at certain prescribed times of year. The *calze* played an important role in festivities occasioned by weddings, Carnival, and political rites of passage. They also engaged in sports from time to time. Otherwise young gentlemen were encouraged (with varying support from government bodies) to learn fencing and social dancing (the latter consisting mainly of precise choreographies for groups rather couples).

Elsewhere in the Veneto

Venetian instrumental music benefitted enormously from the talents of musicians trained on the mainland. Among the provincial capitals (Bergamo, Brescia, Verona, Vicenza, Padua, and Udine as well as Dubrovnic and Split) Brescia was the most influential because of its prominent role in the development of string instruments. Baroncini has traced instruments called *violons* (in Savoy) and *violini* (in Vercelli, Turin, Brescia, Milan, and Mantua) as far back as 1523. Extensive information on three centuries of Brescian string-instrument makers can be found at Ugo Ravasio's website. Among early violinists from Brescia the first one known as a composer was Biagio Marini (1594-1663), who was the first violinist to be regularly employed by the San Marco orchestra (1617). Bergamo, to the northwest of Brescia, was associated with cornettists, some of whom emigrated to Germany towards the end of the century. (Marini remained at San Marco for only six years.) Brescia's golden period as a center for bowed strings endured until the plague of 1630-31, after which Cremona became the center of violin-making.

The art of organ-building was equally well developed in Brescia, where the monastic church of San Giuseppe houses a restored instrument made by Graziado Antegnati (1525-

after 1590), whose son Costanzo (1549-1624) was the author of the organ manual *L'Antegnata: Intavolatura de ricercari d'organo* (1608).[3] Ongaro has detailed an agreement whereby Marc'Antonio Cavazzoni was given the rent from the *constabelleria* of the Porta S. Alessandro in Brescia as a supplement to his pay from San Marco (1524-1569), suggesting that the organist-composer had previous ties to Brescia. Pietro Lappi, *maestro di cappella* at Santa Maria delle Grazie, composed the first *Canzoni da sonar* (*a 4*) to be published in Venice (1584). Floriano Canal served as a priest and organist at San Giovanni Evangelista (1581-1603), which was located in a neighborhood of violin makers. He brought out a like-named volume for 4-8 instruments in 1600.

Verona was a crossroad between German and Austrian traffic from the north and the east-west flow through the Veneto. Its most important contribution to the development of instrumental music was the fostering of its celebrated Accademia Filarmonica (1543). The academicians collected wind and string instruments of every description. They also sponsored the painting of murals showing details of instruments presumed today to have been in use in the sixteenth century. A recurring calendar of events from 1604 provided for public concerts every Wednesday. *Balli* in February were sponsored in the later sixteenth, when it retained an organist, lutenist, and violinist.

Palladio's Teatro Olimpico at Vicenza, opened in 1585, had no match in Venice, although it found many imitations in the villas that sprang up nearby in the next century. In Vicenza and Padua, plus the hills that lay between them, learned academies flourished throughout the sixteenth century. One suspects a stimulating cross-conversation between these academies and the villas' ephemeral residents occurred throughout the surrounding countryside. Among several notable restorations of recent years, Vincenzo Colombi's organ (1523-33) in the cathedral of Valvasone (north of Pordenone) may come closest to the kind of organ that Merulo and the Gabrielis would have played at San Marco.

Ensemble Pedagogy

The first organ/second organ bifurcation at San Marco engendered a slight division of instrumental subcultures. Those aiming to be organists had to master diverse imitative practices. The rise of instrumental pedagogues later in the sixteenth century gave rise to specialization by instrument and paved the way to virtuosity. By the 1620s this led to the rise of the sonata, which could be for any number of instruments, with basso continuo. It highlighted solo episodes, which are not evident on paper in the sixteenth century. Otherwise discerning the features that differentiated a late canzone from an early sonata could be elusive. This bifurcation is less evident on pedagogical writings than published pieces, but the combined impact of differentiation and detailed pedagogy was profound. The dominating figures for ensemble instruments were Girolamo Dalla Casa (1584), who

[3] Among Antegnati's other surviving organs of note are those of Santa Barbara, Mantua (mentioned above), and Santo Spirito, Bergamo.

considered the cornetto 'the most perfect instrument after the human voice,' and Giovanni Bassano (1585). Girolamo Diruta (1597) was the leading spokesman for the organ culture.

Dalla Casa

That Dalla Casa enjoyed the respect of all the *capella*'s musicians is easily understood. He saw the main virtue of the *cornetto* as being its ability to be as responsive as a human voice. The first volume of his *Il vero modo di diminuir per ogni sorte di stromento* (1584) was valuable to wind players, for it dealt with tonguing and the ornamentation of *passaggi* and cadences. The player was instructed to learn such tonguing patterns as *le-re le-re le-re*, *te-re te-re te-re*, *te-che te-che te-che*, and *de-re de-re de-re*. He inserted these mnemonics as lyrics into his musical examples to show how they were to be applied to musical patterns. In his Second Book (same year) he saw the mastery of diminutions (in four species—crotchets, quavers, semiquavers, and demisemiquavers) as one that required the further step of rendering what were then unfamiliar passages *a tempo*. 'Everyone should beat the tempo when practicing,' he wrote. 'If you do not do this every time your practice,' he continued, 'you will not have a good result' (*Il vero modo*, vol. 2, 'Alli lettori,' unnumbered page facing p. 1).

Bassano

At San Marco one good deed often begat another. Giovanni Bassano sent to press his own *Ricercate, passsaggi, et cadentie* in 1585, perhaps in anticipation of Dalla Casa's departure. Because the publication was dedicated to 'an excellent orator,' Luigi Balbi, we can be sure that Bassano viewed music as a close ally of grammar. Some of his raw *passaggi* include leaps and dotted figures. His distinction between *passaggi* and cadences was also notable. For both Dalla Casa and Bassano wind instruments could appropriately be accompanied by *viole* (Dalla Casa calls for a *viola bastarda* in a few places).

Bassano's contribution in this area continued with his *Motetti, madrigali, et canzoni francese … diminuiti per sonar con ogni sorte di stromenti…* (1591). We see as much in Bassano's works as in Dalla Casa's that the art of diminution was developed on a secure grammatical foundation. Both place equal weight on madrigals and chansons as models for diminution, not only in their commentary but also in the musical examples they select. Dalla Casa stresses regularity in his elaborations: given a series of minims, the performer should substitute running quavers; given crotchets, he would choose semiquavers, and so forth. Bassano's diminutions tended to flow in long sweeps up or down. Where Dalla Casa's figures could be mechanical, with mordent-like turning shapes on every minim, Bassano's contain variety from beat to beat, with intermittent dotted notes occurring from time to time (Figure 1).

<insert Figure 1>

Although Dalla Casa gets high marks for demonstrating continuous elaboration, he still subscribed to the categorical retention of one rhythmic value throughout long phrases (all quavers, all semiquavers etc.). Bassano displayed a more flexible approach and when using vocal models takes a madrigalesque approach to elaboration by highlighting particular words with florid runs of semiquavers or with dotted patterns within *passaggi*. The *passaggi* that the player is instructed to study offer detailed sequences for simple, short, and otherwise non-descript melodic segments that were common in vocal repertories of the time. Both allow that these modes of ornamentation can be used by vocalists as well as instrumentalists.

Diruta

Girolamo Diruta (*c*. 1554-1610) studied in the early 1580s with Zarlino, Merulo, and Costanza Porta. He became organist of the cathedral in Chioggia (Zarlino's hometown). His fame rests on two works. The first was the *Dialoghi musicali*, an anthology of instrumental pieces for 7-12 instruments (1592) with contributions by the Gabrieli, Merulo, and Padovano. The second was *Il transilvano: Il vero modo di sonar organi e istromenti da penna* (1597). The title honored the dedicatee, a Transylvanian. This first comprehensive manual on organ playing is cast as a dialogue between teacher and pupil. *Il transilvano* demonstrates Diruta's comprehensive knowledge of organ playing in northern Italy. It contains generous explanations of ornamented cadences, examples of tremolos, and the author's efforts to transcribe what different masters actually played at the keyboard. Diruta (among others) shows that new mannerisms associated with the early seventeenth century were already well known and apparently widely used.

Diruta's virtual dialogue (a popular rhetorical approach at the time) was founded on a gradually unfolding grammar of procedures and their applications. The enquiring scholar goads the learned teacher into giving long expositions of rules and principles. In his presentation of the *tremolo* and *tremoletto* Diruta discusses their application to passages in minims and crochets in a systematic way that builds on the approach established by his Venetian predecessors. According to Diruta, Merulo recommended *tremoletti* when the model descended by step:

<Figure 2a>

<Figure 2b>

Merulo, according to Diruta, allowed invertibility (upper-lower vs. lower-upper figurations) in his formulae for substitution for minims and crochets. The dialogue in which these examples are embedded continues in this manner:

> *Student*: These *tremoletti* seem more difficult than the first ones.
>
> *Master*: You speak the truth … [and] since we are speaking of *tremoletti*, in particular those of Claudio Merulo in his *canzoni alla francese*, which will seem very difficult at first, but if you follow the rules for *tremolo*, you will find them very easy.

Bovicelli

Although it is not a direct product of the Venetian school, Bovicelli's *Regole, passaggi di musica, madrigal, et motetti passeggiati* (1594) is essential reading on diminutions and *passaggi* because of its integral approach. Bovicelli tells us that he is from Assisi and is a musician in the Milan cathedral. He gives numerous examples of fully elaborated pieces by a range of masters of the time.[4] The author first demonstrates the application of his techniques to short phrases of texted works, then moves on to 'diversi modi di diminuir,' and finally to fully re-composed pieces by Palestrina, Rore, Merulo, and others. Like Dalla Casa he organizes his instructions by upward or downward motion and by intervallic size. Like Bassano he shows mixed rhythmic values and also indicates by a carat sign (reproduced in Figure 3) where the repetition of a pitch invited a *tremolo.*

<Figure 3>

Bovicelli distinguishes between the separate articulation of each note in a series and a smooth glissando, which he states should be used only in specific textual and musical contexts. Leaps belonged to the province of instrumental music.

From Old Values to New

The defining value of instrumental music in sixteenth-century Venice was its malleability. Irrespective of descriptive information in title-pages, almost any piece of music could be transformed into a work suited to a different situation. The issues engendered by such mutability are obvious. As deduced from performance a stylistic idiom could not be clearly attributed to a composer, a patron, or a venue, though all of them contributed to the achievements of the time.

[4] A modern, more extensive set of elaborations can be found in Richard Erig's comparative edition of 1976, the *Italienische Diminutionen*.

The practice of elaboration encountered one stumbling block: in performing imitative works it was impractical to ornament all voices to the same degree, and one voice (usually the treble) eventually came to serve as the voice to be used as a foundation for highly ornamented passagework. The *viola bastarda* took a lower voice as its model. The lute could wander between voices in an independent manner. In practice, and in opposition to what we may see on the page, it was inevitable that as the treble grew in prominence, the mid-range voices receded in importance. This was not evident until the seventeenth century, when what appeared to be new approaches rapidly came to the fore.

This approaching change can be inferred from small clues in title-pages, prefaces, advice from authors, and general cues in organ part-books. H. M. Brown compiled a listing of works (1575-1600) that contained such cues. As the new century approached performers came to differentiate between music that was exclusively tended for playing (i.e. Giovanni Gabrieli's 'Sonata pian' e forte' and 'Sonata octavi toni' in the *Sacrae Symphoniae* (1597) and that for singing (i.e. the cantata, from 1621 onward). In these works a growing divide separated ensemble players from "foundation" players such as organists.

One tangent of musical development completely obscured by this growing absorption in refining instrumental music was the modular approach of polychoral pieces. Without the Gabrielis the Venetian contribution would have been far smaller than it is, and despite the seeming ubiquity of their music today, a few little known works of massive proportions are known from manuscripts rather than prints. In addition to the *Concerti* (1587) and the *Sacrae Symphoniae*, the posthumous collection of his *Canzoni e sonate* for 3 to 22 instruments (1615) testifies to the continuing expansion of the genre. In his works sonorities were often contrasted by timbre (string vs wind) or by range (*acuto* vs *grave*). The organists accompanying these groups (which included portative players if there were more than two groups of instrumentalists) normally found only the lowest voice of a *coro* transcribed in the *organo* part-book. Cues to gross differences of timbre or range occasionally included modular indications (cues for Coro 1, Coro 2 et al.).

In instrumental contexts, polychoral practice contributed one little mentioned feature to later Venetian instrumental music. This was the echo effect, which gained traction during Monteverdi's era but was an inherent possibility in the robust pieces of Gabrieli's. To get from a simple polychoral idea to a substantial musical piece, it was necessary only to conjugate a polyphonic phrase through all its permutations—by exact repetition, repetition with contrast between registers, repetition with contrast between timbres, and so forth. Differentiated repetition was slowly mutated into paraphrases and extensions, forming the principle elements of the musical grammar of antecedents and consequents. Through the combination of this evolving grammar with contrasts of texture and timbre, the vocabulary of the early concerto was in gestation.

Meanwhile the fledgling violinists (for whom Gabrieli also composed) and other string players were steeped in the present—in the kind of minutiae Diruta addressed but also in techniques of tonguing and bowing capable of producing subtle differences of articulation. They were architects of sound, not (like some organists) of the correctness of signs on a page. Broadly considered, the details of virtuosic content were not typically specified in print until the 1620s, when Dario Castello filled page after page with long runs of *tremoletti* and other acrobatic devices in *passaggi*. A wind player himself, Castello is likely to have emerged from the wind community of Venice in the 1580s and have been cognizant of the examples of Dalla Casa and Bassano's books. Yet, in parallel to Gabrieli, he demonstrated to an unprecedented degree the ways in which soloists within the group could enhance the music with almost unbridled abandon. Meanwhile it is likely to have been Bassano who paved the way from the sixteenth century to the seventeenth during his 16-year tenure as *maestro de' concerti* at San Marco, which ended with his death in 1617.

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