
[Letter from Eleanor Selfridge-Field]

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~ COMMENTS AND ISSUES ~

To the Editor of the JOURNAL:

I SHOULD APPRECIATE the opportunity of expanding on a peripheral point in Carl Schmidt's interesting account of "An Episode in the History of Venetian Opera: The *Tito* Commission."¹

Had the author had occasion to consult my book, *Venetian Instrumental Music from Gabrieli to Vivaldi* (Oxford and New York, 1975), especially pages 39 and 300-4, he would have found a discussion of the same ensemble mentioned on page 464 of his article and described in the Venetian State Archives, Scuola Grande di S. Marco, Busta 194, fol. 268. The "instrument" of the tenth performer, far from being undecipherable, is a false surname—Savion—which belonged to Carlo Fedeli detto Saggion. Fedeli was a *violone* player who also composed ensemble sonatas, and was appointed *maestro de' concerti* at the ducal Basilica of S. Marco in 1661. There can be little doubt, in view of his seniority, that he was in charge of the ensemble engaged by Faustini as well.

Faustini's first violinist, "Rimondo," can be identified as Raimondo Angeli, who succeeded Fedeli as concertmaster at S. Marco in 1685. The second violinist, "Domenico," may have been Domenico Rossi, who served the Basilica on a free-lance basis in 1667. The "violetta" (i.e., modern viola) player

"Ruzzier," especially considering the slight sum he was paid, must have been Fedeli's own son Ruggiero, who was about ten years old at the time. (Ruggiero Fedeli went on to serve various German courts and theaters as a musician and composer.) The "viola da braccio" (i.e., cello) player named Marco is the only string player in the Faustini list who still cannot be identified.

A further point is that Dr. Schmidt seems to take the date of this document, "5 febraro 1664," literally, although many scholars (including Denis Arnold, whom he cites, and myself) who have examined the Faustini papers lean to the view that this date was given in the *more veneto* and would consequently equate to 1665 by the modern calendar. *Il Ciro* is reported as a work of 1665 in two widely used sources based on librettos—Antonio Groppo's *Catalogo di tutti i drammi per musica recitati ne' teatri di Venezia dall'anno 1637 all'anno presente 1745* (Venice, 1745) and Franz Stieger's *Opernlexikon* (Tutzing, 1975). In the latter source the more specific indication "Carn. 1665" is found.² Lent began on February 14 in 1665 (as opposed to March 1 in 1664), and the production of *Il Ciro* can well be imagined as part of the accelerated activity that the end of Carnival brought. In that case it would be one year closer to the production of *Tito*, and thus still more suggestive of in-

¹ This JOURNAL, XXXI (1978), pp. 442-66.

² Vol. I, p. 246.

strumental usage in the Cesti work on which Schmidt has provided so much interesting information.

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To the Editor of the JOURNAL:

I WISH TO MAKE A FEW COMMENTS ON E. Cynthia Verba's article on Rameau in the Fall 1978 issue of this JOURNAL. She states: "In order to understand fully what Rameau means by a change of key, it is necessary to understand the theoretical background in which the idea developed."¹ French Baroque theory before Rameau is, to be sure, a complicated area which has not yet received the in-depth study it deserves. Nevertheless, several excellent articles have recently appeared in the *Journal of Music Theory*: Albert Cohen's "Symposium on Seventeenth-Century Music Theory: France," XVI (1972), pp. 16-35; Lyn Tolkoff's "French Modal Theory Before Rameau," XVII (1973), pp. 150-63 and Walter Atcherson's "Key and Mode in Seventeenth-Century Music Theory Books," XVII (1973), pp. 204-32. On the subject of the transition from modality to tonality, it appears that the "theorists" are far in advance of the "musicologists."

I also wish to clarify some misconceptions concerning Masson's treatise. Dr. Verba remarks: "In France the clearest presentation of the major-minor tonal system occurs in Charles Masson's *Nouveau traité des règles pour la composition de la mu-*

sique (Paris, 1699). [Footnote 5] The first edition, published in 1694, is no longer extant. Both Rogers and Horsley cite Masson's treatise as one of the first detailed presentations of the two-mode system."² In a recent comprehensive article on Masson's treatise, Herbert Schneider lists a number of theorists including Bartolomi (1669), Bertali (1676), J. Rousseau (1683), D'Anglebert (1689), J. Ozanam (1691) and Charpentier (1692), to demonstrate that, concerning the division into major and minor, Masson was only following in the footsteps of many predecessors.³ In Schneider's words: "Verfolgt man die Modus- und Akkordlehre bei Massons Vorgängern und Zeitgenossen, so zeigt sich, daß es sich keineswegs um eine Erfindung Massons handelt, sondern daß diese Neuerung [Dur und Moll als die beiden modernen Tongeschlechter] bereits seit langem vorbereitet war."⁴ Actually, it was Hugo Riemann in his *Geschichte der Musiktheorie* who claimed that Masson was the first to have set up the modern keys.⁵ But surely, we should not still be basing our history of the development of tonality on Riemann when so much new material has come to light.

Concerning the first edition of Masson's *Nouveau traité*, Verba cites Imogene Horsley's Introduction to a reprint of the 1699 edition of this treatise as her source of information. To quote directly from Horsley: "As far as we know, the first edition is no longer extant. This volume is repro-

² Verba, p. 468.

³ Herbert Schneider, "Charles Masson und sein 'Nouveau traité'," *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft*, XXX (1973), pp. 245-74.

⁴ Schneider, pp. 252 and 254.

⁵ Hugo Riemann, *Geschichte der Musiktheorie*, 2nd ed. (Berlin, 1921), p. 460.

¹ E. Cynthia Verba, "Rameau's Views on Modulation and Their Background in French Theory," this JOURNAL, XXXI (1978), p. 467.