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La Commedia dell'Arte in Naples: A Bilingual Edition of the
176 Casamarciano Scenarios/La commedia dell'arte a Napoli:
edizione bilingue dei 176 scenari Casamarciano (review)

Eleanor Selfridge-Field

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be an easy book for a general reader: Kendrick's discussion of the music is peppered with rhetorical and other terms, and it might have benefited from the inclusion of a glossary; one does sometimes want him to call a spade a spade—or a diatessaron a fourth! Even the general reader, though, should enjoy the sexual connotations given to *cantus durus* and *cantus mollis* in the singer Fabio Varese's seduction sonnet, which helps Kendrick illustrate the earthier side of the city's musicians' everyday lives. Occasionally, too, we need to be given the full text of a piece under discussion in order to make sense of it, as in the analysis of Gabussi's *Sperent in te omnes* (pp. 195–6). Indeed, given the importance of the book to a wide variety of readerships, the publishers might have encouraged the author to include not only a glossary of rhetorical and other terms as applied to music but also some information on lesser-known religious orders, such as the Somaschi. The reader would also have been assisted by tables of institutions with their *maestri* and singers, a list of the archbishops, some better maps of the city (the map and panorama provided are virtually unreadable, and indeed the book's illustrations are generally of poor quality).

The book is lavishly illustrated with music examples, many of them quite extended. This is certainly very welcome, given that the repertory being discussed is not otherwise easily accessible. There is, however, a downside in that textual discussion and musical illustration increasingly drift apart in some of the later chapters: by the end of chapter 8 (which has no fewer than twenty-seven musical excerpts), text and related example are fourteen pages apart, which makes for constant page-turning. Matters are not helped by the fact that, in the list of music examples at the beginning of the book, gremlins have ensured that the vast majority of page numbers are wrong—a real shame in a book of this importance. Nor does the index seem to be exhaustive. The important singer and publisher of ornamentations, Giovanni Battista Bovicelli, gets just one index reference (to his *Regole, passaggi* of 1594), but there are at least three other pages in the book, where he is discussed in his role as singer at the cathedral and at S. Maria presso S. Celso, which are not indexed. That said, the book is extensively endnoted and carries a comprehensive bibliography, as well as useful appendices providing information on the musical items of the Ambrosian liturgy and a calendar of *feste di precetto* with information on processions and the location of the main liturgical celebrations.

Quibbles aside, this is a highly significant work of musical scholarship. Robert Kendrick has provided the definitive guide to Milanese music for his chosen period but, much more than that, he has once again made a hugely important contribution to the writing of music history: Milan is the workshop in which he has honed a whole new approach to the study of early modern musical culture in the urban context, one which will form a model for a long time to come.

NOEL O'REGAN

La Commedia dell'Arte in Naples: A Bilingual Edition of the 176 Casamarciano Scenarios/La commedia dell'arte a Napoli: edizione bilingue dei 176 scenari Casamarciano. Ed. by Francesco Coticelli, Anne Goodrich Heck, and Thomas F. Heck, with a foreword by Nancy d'Antuono. 2 vols.: i, English Edition; ii, Edizione italiana. (Scarecrow Press, Lanham, Md., 2001. ISBN 0-8108-4116-9.)

The number of substantial collections of scenarios for the commedia dell'arte represented in printed editions can be counted on the fingers of one hand; all five fingers will be required only if one includes now scarce transcriptions from the nineteenth century. Francesco Coticelli cites seventeen unedited collections of all periods in all of Italy. Thus the appearance of a bountiful collection such as this one in a handsome edition with an informative introduction and commentary is much to be welcomed. It was supported by an award from the Weiss/Brown Publication Subvention Fund of the Newberry Library, Chicago. The award is well deserved, for this edition has no equal in the published literature.

The Casamarciano collection is preserved in the National Library, Naples, with the shelfmarks MS. XI.AA.41 (vol. 1) and 40 (vol. 2). Scenarios—the skeletal descriptions of roles, settings, and actions from which plays were improvised—are almost always anonymous, although they can sometimes be associated with a particular troupe or theatre. They never seem to be clearly dated. In one sense this is appropriate, for they were used over and over again. This collection, which was originally formed by Annibale Cersale, the count of Casamarciano, and once belonged to Benedetto Croce, is considered to represent the period 1650–1700.

Ignorance about the commedia leaves a regrettable hiatus in our knowledge of theatres, acting technique, and the personnel who

crossed back and forth between comedy and early opera. This ignorance comes about because the commedia was improvised. Acting, like music, was often a heritable profession: *comici* tended to descend from and to marry other *comici* (or, failing that, ballerinas, singers, or instrumentalists). At the troupe level, theatres of the period were extraordinarily inbred. This reduced the need, if one was ever felt, for committing texts to paper.

Scenarios are therefore brief and somewhat formulaic, and in some ways this is a blessing, because the plots and situations were highly patterned. What individualizes the works is less the stories they tell than the ways in which they were presented, which ultimately we are not privileged to know. Scenarios generally itemized the players by their generic 'masks' (Il Dottore, Pantalone, Coviello, Flaminia, Truffaldino, &c.) and listed the props required for staging (tables, chairs, costumes, musical instruments, pots, &c.) They indicated the general location to be portrayed; in this collection it is often 'a street in Naples', but there are items set in almost every Italian city and a few elsewhere.

Comedy troupes, especially the *dottori* within them, took pride in their pedantry. They could reproduce a large number of dialects and other manners of speech, could recite in Latin, could quote at length from classical tragedies (satirizing them as they went), and were skilled in presenting pastorals. The art was by no means a monolithic one: it was impressively fluid. However, it reached a low ebb in the later seventeenth century, as routines degenerated into one-off street jokes and gestures. What this collection represents is a grey area between the best of the genre as it was known earlier and the seeds of the reformed comedy that appeared in the first half of the eighteenth century.

By way of prefiguring the *opera buffa*, the works in this collection are notable for the ubiquity of flirtatious maids and Spanish captains. Many titles that appear to resemble those of early *opere buffe* are too thinly developed to make the case one way or the other. More than twenty titles (e.g. *Chi la fa l'aspetti*, *Emilia*, *Gli sdegni amorosi*, *La commedia in commedia*, *Il finto astrologo*) find an analogue in the Venetian operatic repertory, especially between 1740 and 1750, but there are no true matches of content. It seems truer to the substance to say that improvised comedy inspired many comic operas and intermezzi than to claim that there was a direct relationship. Nonetheless, scenarios for such works as *Nerone imperadore* and *Lucrezia romana* (i.e. works satirizing antiquity

as portrayed on the opera stage) come rather close to approximating the murky crossover area in the Venetian theatre of the 1720s and 1730s, in which comedians increasingly sang their (satirical) texts.

When read straight through here, the scenarios are not always dazzling. They are full of clichés, and from their sheer bulk it is easy to determine exactly what their most frequent clichés were. Disguises and cross-dressing rank high on the list, as do the obscenities for which comedy of the later seventeenth century was often condemned (in some cases for allusions that can also be found in comic madrigals of the sixteenth century). Many works include a low-life figure who cheats, deceives, or steals. One could almost create one's own scenarios from a list including some other frequent ploys—naive maidens, false engagements, ghosts, gambling and debt, tawdry gifts, matchmaking, baskets of food, and long-necked lutes (*colascioni*). Some works called for trumpets and drums, some for costumes for Jupiter, Venus, and Cupid.

The example most accessible to English-speaking readers should not be taken as representative of the whole, but it gives some sense of the blurry margins between genres. This is the case of *Il Conte d'Essex* (The Earl of Essex), a figure who transcended genre and time to appear again and again on the seventeenth-century stages, and the device of the handkerchief (here a scarf). In the scenario (i. 472 ff.), which was to depict London, the Earl loved the queen's cousin, Eurinda. The Queen, who had given him a silk scarf as a symbol of her love, was shocked to see it worn by Eurinda. The treatment is more formal than usual. Before being beheaded, the Earl, in a grand gesture not typical of the commedia, wrote a note to be delivered to Eurinda in which he claimed to die on account of his love for her.

While it is doubtful that English-speaking readers will wade through large portions of the Italian, or Italian readers through the English, it is certainly advantageous for the former to have access to the texts, sketchy though they are, in both languages. And performers will rejoice at the unusual copyright notice, whereby the editors 'hereby grant permission to non-profit arts and/or educational organizations to perform these texts for demonstration purposes in exchange for a video recording of the performance'. This may encourage many aspirants to peruse the substantial secondary literature on the natures of the roles and the techniques of *lazzi* (the improvised routines that every *comico* needed in his repertory).

ELEANOR SELFRIDGE-FIELD