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THE LYRIC MODE OF VOICE:

SONG AND SUBJECTIVITY IN ITALY, 1769–1815

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for my father,
Rudy Peritz (1946–2015)
who always believed in my voice

yes! radiant lyre sing to me
become a voice

Sappho, fragment no. 118, c. 600 B. C. E.

Father [Marin] Mersenne and Father [Athanasius] Kircher had said that if an instrument could be imagined that was, at the same time, a wind instrument and a stringed one, it would be more perfect than any other.

This marvelous instrument is as ancient as the world, and we all possess it: it is the human voice.

Il quotidiano veneto, 30 December 1803

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INTRODUCTION
LYRIC RESIDUES

Naturae clamat ab ipso vox tumulo[1]

On a sweaty July day in 2013, a team of researchers dug through the floor of a tiny chapel in the countryside near Padua and exhumed a set of human remains. The bones were found in surprisingly good condition, given that the skeleton had been moldering in the underground tomb for just shy of two centuries. The tomb's contents were transported to the laboratory of the Museum of Pathological Anatomy at the University of Padua, where scientists performed an array of tests with names like Computed Tomography and X-ray Microtomography analysis. This exhumation did not invite the same media attention as did the bones alleged to belong to Richard III, removed from a car park in England in 2012, or those found during the construction of a new subway line in Rome in 2018. Still, many a musicologist and opera fan shared links to the story, because it promised to reveal something of a long-lost voice. The skeleton belonged to the singer Gasparo Pacchierotti (1740–1821), a once-famous castrato whose soprano had baptized La Fenice, purportedly moved Marie-Antoinette, and temporarily placated Napoleon. As the Paduan researchers put it, writing up their study for *Nature*, they had disinterred his bones in order "to understand the bodily secrets of his sublime voice."[2]

Note: Throughout the dissertation, I use the Italianized versions of names (e.g., Orfeo) when referring to a specific character in an Italian work, and the Anglicized version (e.g., Orpheus) when referring to the character or figure in general. In quotations, I insert brackets around all ellipses that do not appear in the original text, owing to the ubiquity of ellipses in the eighteenth-century works under consideration. I have retained original orthography except where it would have rendered the transcription incomprehensible. Translations and transcriptions are my own unless otherwise attributed.

[1] "Even from the tomb, the voice of Nature cries." Epigram to Ugo Foscolo, *L'ultime lettere di Jacopo Ortis* [The Last Letters of Jacopo Ortis] (Milan: 1798/1802); quoted by Foscolo from Thomas Gray's *Elegy Written in a Country Church-Yard* (London: 1751), l. 91.

[2] Alberto Zanatta et al., "Occupational Markers and Pathology of the Castrato Singer Gasparo Pacchierotti (1740–1821)," *Nature Scientific Reports* 6 (2016), <https://www.nature.com/articles/srep28463>, accessed 19 February 2019.

What does it mean to understand a voice through its material remains? Are material remains necessarily the remnants of bodies, and voices only flesh, bones, and cartilage, or can we find vocal traces in other media? Scientists note the fusions and fissures in a skull and ribs, hypothesizing about the sounds that caused them and were caused by them. Yet we can only imagine the timbre, tone, inflections, and pronunciations that once vibrated through those now-desiccated bodies. We cannot hear them unless we have audio recordings, and even then, we must peel away layer upon layer of technological and stylistic mediation to get at the sheer materiality of the voices that resonate beneath. Such a labor of "understanding" is based on even scanter material when we sift through the remainders of pre-phonographic voices. We cannot take first-hand accounts like letters and reviews at face value, nor can voices be readily transduced in words, least of all adjectives (as famously lamented by Roland Barthes).[3] Musical notation captures certain parameters such as pitch and rhythm approximately but imperfectly, and others, like inflection and timbre, hardly at all.

If voices, historical and otherwise, seem hopelessly inaccessible, ineffable, and alien because they resist direct capture, they are tempting as sites of inquiry for that very reason. Indeed, Lacanian philosopher Mladen Dolar argues that the singing voice appears to have meaning precisely because its resistance makes it seem capable of the impossible, of "cur[ing] the wound inflicted by culture."[4] It inspires the fetish. I cannot argue with this too assiduously—I am no philosopher—but I would say that we need not get at what voice "is" in order to understand what it is believed to be doing, since voices are always, necessarily, culturally contingent, formed within particular historical and

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The remains of arguably the most famous castrato singer, Carlo Broschi *detto* Farinelli, were exhumed for study in 2006, but they were incomplete.

[3] Roland Barthes, "The Grain of the Voice," in *Image-Music-Text,* trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1977), 179.

[4] Mladen Dolar, *A Voice and Nothing More* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2006), 31.

spatial contexts. As such, they have the capacity to reveal much about the cultural wounds that need stanching.

Put another way, voices might be sites where bodies of ideology are buried. It is for this reason that, in this study, I peer into a mausoleum's worth of sepulchers in an effort to unearth the contingencies of making, hearing, and mediating vocal sounds in late eighteenth-century Italy. I was led to that time and place—one that may seem remote even to many musicologists—by my search for the musical origins of one particular ideology of voice (a term to which I shall return soon). This ideology has become so thoroughly naturalized that it no longer seems like one at all. It is the notion that the sounds of our voices convey the uniqueness of our inner selves, and as such represent our individual, inalienable claims to political and social agency. At first, the origin of these assumptions appears to be glaringly obvious. Voices are unique to individual bodies, and we use them in order to communicate; naturally, then, they stand in for the identity and agency of their owners. Yet far from being natural, such assumptions have relatively recent, man-made roots. Philosophers of voice generally point to the Enlightenment and its wealth of treatises and essays concerned with questions of emotion, reason, and political subjectivity.[5] As the narrative goes: driven by dissatisfaction with the modes of representation and agency available under the *ancien régime*, the *philosophes* built upon Michel de Montaigne's poetics of self-knowledge and John Locke's theories of understanding in order to delineate voice as the quintessential expressive medium of the self.

Central to this ideological move was a new epistemology of emotion in which feelings, and their expression, confirmed the existence of a self. This idea, and its connection to voice, is most clearly articulated in Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Essay on the Origin of Languages* (Paris, 1755; published

[5] Amanda Weidman, "Anthropology and Voice," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 43 (2014): 39.

posthumously in 1781), in which the author posits an originary and foundational connection between voice, language, and human emotion. In Rousseau's construction of pre-linguistic, primordial society, humans felt only physical needs, for which gesture and "inarticulate sounds" sufficed because people were concerned solely with their own survival.[6] Emotion, and hence sociability, evolved after man first took himself "out of himself" and "transported" his consciousness into another's body. Rousseau characterized this experience as the genesis of pity, which in turn gave rise to all the other passions. Thus humanity developed feelings through the mobility of human consciousness, as the ability to transport one's mind, via "imagination," into another's body: what we would now call sympathy and empathy.[7] We might call this individual, consistent, yet imaginatively mobile consciousness a "self."[8] Rousseau's idea was that this self forged "social affections" with other selves by signaling their mutual humanity. Sight fell short in this, as it could go no further than the surface of things.[9]

The voice, by contrast, was not superficial but interior, a warrant of an inner life and therefore of humanity. "Voice proclaims a sensitive being," Rousseau argued, because "man alone sings";[10] he is able to sing because of his capacity to feel, in that "passion makes the vocal organs speak."[11] Primitive humans communicated those passions through vocal inflections before they even formed language, in a medium Rousseau cast as "song."

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[6] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Essay on the Origin of Languages,* in *Essay on the Origin of Languages and Writings Related to Music,* trans. and ed. John T. Scott (Dartmouth, NH: Dartmouth University Press, 2009), 305–6.
[7] Rousseau, *Languages,* 306.
[8] Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), x, 32, 35.
[9] Rousseau, *Languages,* 306.
[10] Rousseau, *Languages,* 325–6.
[11] Rousseau, *Languages,* 318.

Rousseau was not the first to propose that language originated with song rather than with speech. He, and Herder for that matter, likely got their respective tales of primordial song from *La scienza nuova* (The New Science; 1725–44) by the Neapolitan philosopher-historian Giambattista Vico.[12] Yet where Vico regarded primordial song as a barbarous practice best left in the uncivilized past, Rousseau spun out a jeremiad on its loss. He lamented that the modern gap between vocal accents and the passions was irreparable, and that the progressive complexity of human language and society forever precluded a return to those directly expressive accents of passion.[13] Nevertheless, what a voice could, and did, do in Rousseau's ideological framework was to announce the presence of a self: voice, as song, made audible the unique consciousness and capacity for feeling innate to each individual human body. In theorizing the primordial origins of human society, Rousseau forged a link between voice and the feeling subject.[14]

In practice, however, imagining what that originary song sounded like, and proposing how modern music might approximate its effects, proved a fraught undertaking. What voice could arouse pity, give rise to the other passions, civilize barbarians, and create "culture," all without severing the fundamental connection between song and selfhood? Rousseau deemed it impossible, despite his idealization of Italian opera buffa and his efforts to copy it in the *intermède Le devin du village*

[12] Jürgen Trabant argues thus in comparing the linguistic theories of Vico, Condillac, Rousseau, and Herder. Vico's phrase for the primordial song-language is "parlare cantando." See Trabant, *Vico's New Science of Ancient Signs: A Study of Sematology* (London: Routledge, 2004), 93–105. In mentioning Herder, I should note the significant influence of folk song on late eighteenth-century discourses of voice. In my future book project, the role of vernacular/popular/folk singing (e.g., gondolier songs, *cantimbanco* improvisation) will make an important addition to the overarching narrative.
[13] Rousseau, *Languages,* 329, 331, and passim.
[14] The terms "subject" and "subjectivity" are a bit anachronistic here, despite Kant's use of the term "Subjektivität," because Rousseau does not use them and they were not in circulation in Italy until the nineteenth century. The concept was in play in Italian contexts *avant le lettre,* however, and these terms sum up the concept more handily than the concatenations of terms I would otherwise have to spin out.

(1752).[15] Perhaps the metamorphosis of a quasi-mythical origin story into a naturalized truth took place not in polemical texts and musical notation alone, but through the very medium at its center: the sound, the sonic materiality, of the voice. The search for material traces and the quest for the origins of an ideology might lead to the very same spot.

This is why I look to Italy, the motherland of eighteenth-century Europe's most famous singing voices. As Robert O. Gjerdingen notes in his work on galant-era compositional pedagogy, unlike the French and the Germans, the Italians in this period rarely theorized outright about music in pamphlets and treatises. Rather, the labor of musical training was cultural and social, necessarily carried out *viva voce,* and for that reason must be reconstructed today out of the remnants of practice and inferred from evidentiary traces.[16] For his composition-oriented study, the material remains of practice consist primarily in the *zibaldoni,* or student notebooks, of exercises like *partimenti* and *solfeggi*, without explicit acts of theorizing until much later. In a similar vein, published singing treatises were few and far between in Italy during the mid-to-late eighteenth century, and those that were published, were published elsewhere, in Vienna, Paris, and London. They tell us more about the commodification of Italianate singing pedagogy than about the nuances of practice.[17] This does not mean the singing voice was not undergoing significant reforms, nor that its practices had no cultural effects. Such work was simply happening in other forms and media, leaving residues that are

[15] The major study of Rousseau's musical-cum-philosophical approach to voice and passion can be found in Daniel Heartz, *Music in European Capitals: The Galant Style, 1720–1780* (New York: Norton, 2003), 709–18.
[16] Robert O. Gjerdingen, *Music in the Galant Style* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2007), 3–13.
[17] Aside from Tosi's *Opinioni de' cantori antichi e moderni* (Bologna, 1723), the only major singing treatise published in Italy during the eighteenth century was Giovanni Battista Mancini's *Pensieri e riflessioni pratiche sopra il canto figurato* (Milan, 1776), which had originally been published in 1774 in Vienna. Examples of foreign-published treatises promising to share the secrets of Italianate technique include Giusto Fernando Tenducci's *Instruction of Mr. Tenducci, to His Scholars* (London, 1785) and various editions of *Solfèges d'Italie* (Paris, 1772–).

even harder to trace than those of composition pedagogy (which eventually slid into script in the form of musical scores).

Where then are the residues of pre-phonographic vocal sounds? My framing of the material traces of sonic practices owes much to recent groundbreaking work on sound in the (post)colonial archives. I would emphasize here that, regardless of its historically-subordinated political status, Italy must not be positioned as a land of colonized people, for obvious reasons, and I do not intend to colonize postcolonial methodologies, only to engage and amplify them. Ana María Ochoa Gautier compellingly writes of sound in postcolonial Colombia, in dialogue with Gary Tomlinson on song in the early modern "New World":

> Many of the acoustic dimensions of the colonial and early postcolonial archive are not presented to us as discrete, transcribed works. […] They are instead dispersed into different types of written inscriptions that transduce different audile techniques [i.e., listening practices] into specific legible sound objects of expressive culture.[18]

My study is undertaken in sympathy with such an approach: that of reading between the "official" lines in search of the remnants of (often devalued) sonic-vocal practices, and taking them as essential evidence in crafting an intellectual, or epistemological, history. Though its racial and ethnic power dynamics were radically different from those explored in such (post)colonial studies of sound, the Italy of the late eighteenth century provides fertile ground for a critical study of historical voices and their implications for "universal" (i.e., Eurocentric) epistemologies of selfhood. Neither the ideologies nor the practices of voice in this time and place have been transmitted by a single

[18] Ana María Ochoa Gautier, *Aurality: Listening and Knowledge in Nineteenth-Century Colombia* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014), 3. See also Tomlinson, *Singing of the New World: Indigenous Voice in the Era of European Contact* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007). For a thought-provoking essay on grappling with the limitations and lacunae of the colonial archive (beyond the study of music and sound), see Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).

authoritative source, yet the rich cultural context of voice in the late Settecento invites us to confront the possibilities and limitations of what we can learn from its scattered material traces.

In the present project, then, my aim in unpacking sonic objects and their attendant discourses is to destabilize Western narratives about voice as agency, and thus resituate these Enlightenment-inflected myths of subjectivity as ideological processes for containing modes of difference. Those processes, I argue, marked certain modes of otherness in order to de-fang them, naturalize them, and coopt their elusive power—all while perpetuating the discourses that marked them as liminal, as threats in need of "civilizing" or "domesticating." Universalizing constructs of liberal subjectivity vis-à-vis voice emerged, in part, from the collision of ideologies and practices of voice for which we lack direct "transcriptions"; such practices were linked, by those with the cultural influence to shape ideologies, to certain bodies and subjectivities that refused or resisted capitulating to dominant paradigms of agency. In the chapters that follow, the bodies and subjectivities under discussion pertain primarily to female singers and castrated male singers, meaning that I focus on discourses keyed to gender and (dis)ability. Yet I intend for the methods and aims of my project to extend beyond its empirical boundaries in my own future work and that of others.

Ideologies of voice: essential, illusory, historical

Before we delve into the late Settecento, let me explain what I mean by "ideology of voice," and proceed to locate my music-historical approach within the broader interdisciplinary field of voice studies. "Voice" is a moving discursive target with a multiplicity of denotations and connotations across fields and contexts. For that reason, cultural anthropologist Amanda Weidman deconstructs the monolithic concept of "voice" into a set of power dynamics:

> Ideologies of voice can be characterized as culturally constructed ideas about the voice. […] Ideologies of voice set the boundary for what constitutes communication, what separates language from music. […] Ideologies of voice determine how and where we locate subjectivity and agency.[19]

As the present study will show, the Enlightenment-era connection between voice and subjectivity grew from a metaphor into an ideology. The musical-vocal process of shaping this ideology was characterized by repeated conflict in discourse and in practice between two oppositional philosophies of voice vis-à-vis language. Roughly speaking, these two philosophies are, one, that voice is the bearer of meaning beyond words, and two, that voice is the fantasy-laden surplus of linguistic expression. In the first, vocal materiality and embodiment manifest an essential uniqueness; in the second, vocal sounds are no more than a vehicle for the transmission of words. In my study, these two lines of thought are invoked in a historically-emic manner, as an experiment in exploring through a historical lens the contingencies of "universalizing" theories of voice. For that reason, they appear more frequently as a fraught, intertwined dyad rather than as a rigid dichotomy.

For modern scholars of voice, these tensions will undoubtedly resonate with recent philosophies about the meaning, or lack thereof, of sonic-vocal materiality. Since the mid-twentieth century, theories of voice have been heavily indebted to poststructuralism and psychoanalysis owing to the overwhelming influence of Derrida and Lacan.[20] As a challenge to their theories, at the turn of the twenty-first century the feminist philosopher Adriana Cavarero argued for voice as representative

[19] Amanda Weidman, "Anthropology and Voice," 45. In this specific quote, Weidman is engaging with the notion of vocal ideology explored in Anna Stirr, "May I Elope": Song Words, Social Status, and Honor Among Female Nepali Dohori Singers," *Ethnomusicology* 54, no. 2 (2010): 257–80.

[20] See, for example, Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology,* trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998); Jacques Lacan, *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis 1959–1960,* ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. D. Porter (New York: Routledge, 1992); idem, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis* [1964] (Seminar XI), ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Alan Sheridan (London: Penguin, 1979), not to mention the many scholars writing in their wake.

of individual essence and embodied uniqueness, against the purported logocentricity of, especially, Derrida.[21] In her *A più voci* (For More than One Voice, 2003), Cavarero, like Rousseau, argues for an originary link between voice and expression that was later displaced and devalued by the symbolic (that is, by a language whose meaning, following Saussure, is both arbitrary and limited by convention). Voice, for Cavarero, offers infinite expressive possibilities because it spills out over the boundaries of language. The asemantic voice in her gloss resists control and, by extension, concrete interpretation, with its instability, and the anxiety it has engendered, having long enabled the ideological devaluation of voice and the privileging of language. Michel de Certeau's earlier work on glossolalia (speaking in tongues) takes a similar view. As he puts it, voice beyond language defies hermeneutics,[22] creating a problem for those who allow meaning only to the "interpretable."

One of the recurring themes throughout the current project is that of the multivalent practices and discourses through which historical interlocutors have labored to naturalize, narrativize, civilize, or otherwise contain the uninterpretable parameters of the sounding voice, and what they feared would happen should voice be allowed to remain uninterpretable. The sustained influence of Lacan on voice theory positions the uninterpretable as not only elusive but, crucially, illusive. Dolar essays a psychoanalytic approach that runs counter to Cavarero's deeply humanistic philosophy (although not directly in response to it). Voice seems to both represent and instantiate subjectivity, Dolar acknowledges, but it is nothing apart from its interpretable content: voice, as the material that conveys language and thereby transmits (linguistic) meaning, "disappears" into the very "utterance

[21] Adriana Cavarero, *For More than One Voice: Toward a Philosophy of Vocal Expression,* trans. Paul Kottman (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005).
[22] Michel de Certeau, "Vocal Utopias: Glossolalia," *Representations* 56 (1996): 34. Carolyn Abbate famously writes of the problems in reconciling hermeneutics with the immediacy of performance in her essay "Music—Drastic or Gnostic?" *Critical Inquiry* 30, no. 3 (2004): 505–36.

[it makes] possible."[23] Dolar thus poses voice as an "object" in the Lacanian sense, that is, as "the attempted objectification […] of a constitutive lack in the subject," as glossed by Martha Feldman and Judith T. Zeitlin.[24] This lack or "gap" appears to have deeper meaning because it resists interpretation, yielding for Dolar the "structural illusion" or "fantasy" that voice bears a unique power. Yet, we should underscore that since this fantasy of vocal meaning cannot be immanent, it must emerge out of particular cultural lacks. Many cultures do not construct voice in this way, as Judith T. Zeitlin, for one, demonstrates in her study of voice in early modern China. And if it pertains to only a part of the world, even so universalizing a philosophy as Dolar's turns out to be simply another construct.[25] Dolar's argument is, nevertheless, historically productive after all, for if we sift through the residue of vocal materialities from a particular time and place, we might get at what was at stake in its processes of "object-ification."

One way of investigating those processes is by examining media that purportedly manifest a confrontation between sound and text. Classics scholar Shane Butler embarks on such an investigation in *The Ancient Phonograph* (2015), interpreting the extralinguistic utterances and sounds of ancient poetry as being voice. Butler rejects Dolar's premise by arguing that such extralinguistic elements are not extraneous to a text's meaning, but constitutive of it. Such texts, he notes, ought not be read as mere "tools" for the "transmission" of language, but as vocal media

[23] Dolar, *A Voice and Nothing More*, 15.
[24] Martha Feldman and Judith T. Zeitlin engage Dolar, among many others, in a quest to delineate the role(s) of aesthetics in voice studies. See their introduction, "The Clamor of Voices," in *The Voice as Something More: Essays Toward Materiality,* eds. Martha Feldman and Judith T. Zeitlin (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, forthcoming 2019).
[25] Zeitlin notes that voice, while an important aspect of Chinese musical and literary culture, was not used as any kind of metaphor, and thus the idea of voice as a representation of agency is in no way a universal concept. See her "From the Natural to the Instrumental: Chinese Theories of the Sounding Voice before the Modern Era," in *The Voice as Something More.* Weidman similarly emphasizes the oft-unmarked imbrication of Western power struggles in ideologies of voice in "Voice and Anthropology," passim.

(hence the title).[26] Butler's privileging of apparently aesthetic elements implies two possibilities for theorizing the voice in artistic works. While his texts are literary, we can take vocal music—opera specifically—as a test case of our own. Either we read voice as the tool through which opera's meaning, that is, its verbal and musical content, is transmitted (voice is necessary but servile); or we can read voice as the medium itself, its sonic materiality generating meaning(s) that exceed the interpretable, with verbal and musical content as its tools. As we will see, this is a tension that undergirds the case studies in this dissertation, all of which examine in various ways the confrontation between the sounding voice and representations of voice.

Long before Butler's monograph appeared, two of the most-discussed theorizations of the singing voice in European art music addressed similar questions. The most-cited essay on the singing voice is probably Barthes's "The Grain of the Voice" (1977), which we might regard as, among other things, a highly idiosyncratic and unsystematic attempt to think about the materiality and affective power of individual voices.[27] Barthes's geno-song/pheno-song construct (drawing on Julia Kristeva's geno-text/pheno-text) is another means of dealing with the medium/tool distinction. But Barthes does not solve the problem, certainly not for a music historian (nor did he set out to do so). His proposals rely on hearing voices via recordings, but neglect to acknowledge how recording technologies and listening practices (i.e., "audile techniques" in sound studies parlance) remediate the experience of hearing those voices.[28] Vocal materiality surely meant something different to listeners before the advent of phonographic recording. Moreover, Barthes's examples (the voices of

[26] Shane Butler, *The Ancient Phonograph* (Brooklyn: Zone Books, 2015), 20, 24.
[27] Barthes, "The Grain of the Voice."
[28] The term is Jonathan Sterne's, from his seminal work in the field of sound studies. See Sterne, *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), passim.

Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau and Charles Panzéra) are by his own admission adduced for his personal affinity for French *mélodie*—a genre of song that was indelibly shaped by the interplay between voice and the French language, as Katherine Bergeron shows in her gorgeous study *Voice Lessons* (2010).[29] Without regard for either technological mediations or mediations of genre, Barthes's concept of "grain" is philosophically tantalizing but musicologically unsatisfying.

If we take the singing voice as a medium of expression in and of itself, we must consider how both voice and expressivity function within the generic conventions they make audible. There is no unitary voice in music, certainly not in a global context, nor even within the limited scope of European art music or opera. What kind of opera are we talking about? Which kinds of voices sing which roles? Yes, voices can and do sing—but when, where, how, what, and for whom? In theorizing voice, scholars outside of music typically overlook musical genres and conventions, instead relying on ahistorical and/or generalized interpretations of musical works, genres, and practices. Singing voices, especially operatic ones, tend to get lumped into a single capacious category, as Mary Ann Smart points out in her review of Cavarero's *A più voci*. She therefore encourages musicologists to create their own theories of voice: "if we don't do it, someone else always will."[30]

Well before Smart's call to theorize voice, Carolyn Abbate advanced a contextualized theory of voice through an "Orphic" history of opera in "Opera; or, the Envoicing of Women" (1995). Abbate's argument functions as a gentle rebuke to philosopher Catherine Clément, who had put forth an enticing but limited feminist reading of opera as "the undoing of women," based on libretti,

[29] Katherine Bergeron, *Voice Lessons: French Mélodie in the Belle Epoque* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).
[30] Mary Ann Smart, "Theorizing Gender, Culture, and Music," *Women and Music: A Journal of Gender and Culture* 9 (2005): 107.

to the near-exclusion of music and voice.[31] Abbate moves far beyond analyzing operatic plots, instead considering opera as a dynamic genre in which agency is conferred less by the libretto than by the interplay of score and performance. Voice thus becomes the site of a struggle for representation and agency within the experience of performance, in that Abbate sets the concept of authorial voice against the sounding voice of the singer. "As a voice she [the singer] slips into the 'male/active/subject' position […] and stands before us having wrested the composing voice away from the librettist and the composer who wrote the score." Abbate's primary "object" here is opera, not voice; nevertheless, her readings of metatheatrical dramatizations of vocal agency, here and elsewhere, have influenced my own approach.[32]

Within the last decade-plus, the notion of a culturally- and historically-situated approach to voice and singing has inflected many musicological studies. I focus here on those that are implicated in my own methods and sources, including the studies by Ochoa Gautier, Tomlinson, and Bergeron mentioned above. Questions about how voices signified and sounded in the context of early modern Italian operatic culture have yielded nuanced scholarship by, among others, Mauro Calcagno ("Signifying Nothing: On the Aesthetics of Pure Voice in Early Venetian Opera," 2003), Emily Wilbourne ("*Lo Schiavetto* (1612): Travestied Sound, Ethnic Performance, and the Eloquence of the Body," 2010; *Seventeenth-Century Opera and the Sound of the Commedia dell'Arte,* 2016), and Martha Feldman (*The Castrato: Reflections on Natures and Kinds,* 2015).[33] Beyond Italy, James Q.

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[31] Carolyn Abbate, "Opera; or, the Envoicing of Women," in *Musicology and Difference: Gender and Sexuality in Music Scholarship,* ed. Ruth A. Solie (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 225–58; Catherine Clément, *Opera: or the Undoing of Women* [1979], trans. Betsy Wing (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988).

[32] Abbate, "Opera; or, the Envoicing of Women," 254, 248–52. See also her *In Search of Opera* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), esp. pp. 1–6, in which she reads Orpheus's severed head as a symbol for the "uncanny aspects of operatic performance."

[33] Mauro Calcagno, "Signifying Nothing: On the Aesthetics of Pure Voice in Early Venetian Opera," *Journal of Musicology* 20, no. 4 (2003): 461–97; Emily Wilbourne, "*Lo Schiavetto* (1612): Travestied Sound, Ethnic Performance,

Davies's *Romantic Anatomies of Performance* (2014) is a deeply materialist study of the voices (and hands) of mid-nineteenth-century performers of European art music, proposing a multiplicity of "expressive truths" across readings of voices, bodies, and politics.[34] Recent articles by Nina Sun Eidsheim on Maria Callas (2017) and Roger Freitas on Adelina Patti (2018) read the reception of particular singers' voices through a critical lens, showing how descriptions of vocal sounds and practices are shaped by broader social and cultural currents.[35] This dissertation centers on music within the European art tradition of the late eighteenth and early ninetheenth centuries, yet is underwritten by research on topics outside that period and repertoire, from Eidsheim on voice as vibration, to Laurie Stras on vocal damage, Steven Rings on timbre and popular-music voices, and Brian Kane on acousmatic sound, all of which have inflected my interpretations of modes of producing, hearing, and mediating sound.[36]

By engaging such scholarship on representations and mediations of musical sound, I enter into dialogue with a variety of historical-musicological studies of voices and singing in the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries. Many such studies, ranging from biographies of individual singers to explorations of performance practice and vocal training, provide indispensable context for thinking about voice as a set of codified sonic-physical practices. Will Crutchfield's essays

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and the Eloquence of the Body," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 63, no. 1 (2010): 1–43; idem, *Seventeenth-Century Opera and the Sound of the Commedia dell'Arte* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016); Martha Feldman, *The Castrato: Reflections on Natures and Kinds* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2015).

[34] J. Q. Davies, *Romantic Anatomies of Performance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014).

[35] Nina Sun Eidsheim, "Maria Callas's Waistline and the Organology of Voice," *Opera Quarterly* 33, nos. 3–4 (2017): 249–68; Roger Freitas, "Singing Herself: Adelina Patti and the Performance of Femininity," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 71, no. 2 (2018): 287–369.

[36] Nina Sun Eidsheim, *Sensing Sound: Singing and Listening as Vibrational Practice* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015); Laurie Stras, "The Organ of the Soul: Voice, Damage, and Affect," in *Sounding Off: Theorizing Disability in Music,* ed. Neil Lerner and Joseph N. Straus (New York: Routledge, 2006), 173–184; Steven Rings, "A Foreign Sound to Your Ear: Bob Dylan Performs 'It's Alright, Ma (I'm Only Bleeding),' 1964–2009," *Music Theory Online* 19, no. 4 (2013); Brian Kane, *Sound Unseen: Acousmatic Sound in Theory and Practice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

on voice in the classical era and the nineteenth century in *Performance Practice: Music after 1600,* his chapter on vocal performance in the nineteenth century in the *Cambridge History of Musical Performance,* and his in-depth work on the vocal practices of the castrato Velluti all offer technical insight into the workings of voices—everything from vibrato to registration to styles of embellishment.[37] Influenced by Crutchfield's revolutionary work on historical recordings, Feldman's chapter on vocal production and technique in *The Castrato* is a master class in excavating historical practices from highly mediated technological fragments.[38] Marco Beghelli's study of nineteenth-century singing treatises, Rodolfo Celletti's monograph on the history of bel canto, and multiple works by John Potter have explored the technical and practical foundations of Italianate operatic voices in the long eighteenth century and beyond.[39]

Amid all of these, from philosophies to histories of voice, my study intervenes as a reading of a single moment in the intellectual and performance histories of voice, crafted from the traces of sounds and practices. In thus interrogating the relationships between voice as a concept and as a set of sonic practices, I make recourse to two broad categories. First, "voice" is a set of culturally-

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[37] Will Crutchfield, "The Classical Era: Voices" and "The Nineteenth Century: Voices," in *Performance Practice: Music after 1600,* eds. Howard Mayer Brown and Stanley Sadie (New York: Norton, 1990), 292–322, 424–60; idem, "Vocal performance in the nineteenth century," in *The Cambridge History of Musical Performance,* eds. Colin Lawson and Robin Stowell (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 611–42; idem, "G. B. Velluti e lo sviluppo della melodia romantica," *Bollettino del centro rossiniano di studi* 53 (2013): 9–85. Howard Mayer Brown and George J. Buelow have also published on eighteenth-century aria embellishment practices, as have many others since. See Brown, "Embellishing Eighteenth-Century Arias: On Cadenzas," in *Opera & Vivaldi,* eds. Michael Collins and Elise K. Kirk (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1984), 258–76; Buelow, "A Lesson in Operatic Performance Practice by Madame Faustina Bordoni," in *A Musical Offering: Essays in Honor of Martin Bernstein,* eds. Edward H. Clinkscale and Claire Brook (New York: Pendragon, 1977), 79–96.

[38] Feldman, "Red Hot Voice," ch. 3 in *The Castrato,* 79–132.

[39] Marco Beghelli, "I trattati di canto italiani dell'Ottocento: Bibliografia, caratteri generali, prassi esecutiva, lessico" (PhD diss., University of Bologna, 1994); Rodolfo Celletti, *A History of Bel Canto,* trans. Frederick Fuller (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1991); John Potter, *Vocal Authority: Singing Style and Ideology* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998); idem, *Tenor: History of a Voice* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009); idem, "Vocal Performance in the 'Long Eighteenth Century,'" in *The Cambridge History of Musical Performance,* 506–26.

oriented and historically-determined practices of sound-making, language-use, literary production, and so forth. Second, "voice" is a metaphor or other kind of discursive representation of agency, authenticity, and/or authority.[40] A central contention of this study is that some iterations of sonic-musical practices of voice reflected and even effected the epistemological shift that gave rise to these discursive, often metaphorical and ultimately ideological, constructions.

With this in mind, I dig into the voice-subjectivity nexus between discourse and practice. From there, I lay out a set of intertwined narratives about how ideologies and practices of voice together shaped conceptions of subjectivity, and how new ontologies of selfhood organized the experience and production of vocal sounds. Voice had to be reconceived, I argue, because late-eighteenth-century Italy had a bit of a PR problem—one with surprisingly high cultural and political stakes.

The voice problem

"But voice wasn't a problem at all," you might be thinking. "What about Gluck? What about opera buffa?" Gluck and Calzabigi's *Orfeo ed Euridice* (Vienna, 1762) has of course been read as a concerted aesthetic return to the "ancients," meant to ratify both the ancient Greeks and the Seicento Tuscans as progenitors of opera. Their neoclassical experiment reintroduced into "serious" opera a speech-like vocal style intended to facilitate plain, direct communication by elevating poetry above music and subjugating singers to the composer and librettist. One standard narrative of eighteenth-century opera reform tells us that Gluck and Calzabigi's noble simplicity prohibited the materiality of the voice from intervening between the poetic-musical message and its reception by an

[40] Weidman, 38.

audience. Gluck's Viennese reforms ostensibly reined in vocal excesses, confirmed the supreme authority of "the work itself," and thereby redirected the trajectory of music history away from Italy towards German-speaking lands. If the focus is on Italian music, we can cite the tremendous success story of opera buffa, from its humble origins in the intermezzo through Piccinni's *La buona figliuola* to Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro* or even *Don Giovanni*.[41] The speechlike declamation and songlike melodies, the simple accompaniment, the rapid changes in emotion were presumably what inspired Rousseau's *Essay* in the first place.

While the Gluck-Calzabigi reforms and the rise of comic opera play roles in my narrative, neither gets directly at the specific problem of the voice that emerges from studying serious opera in Italy. There, more than anywhere else, the idea of the singing voice was stuck between a public hungry for virtuosity and intellectuals anxious to (re)make opera into a more literate genre. The voice had a privileged place in Italian culture, one that was not so easily usurped by the reformist views put into practice in Vienna and, later, in Paris by Calzabigi, Gluck, and their imitators. Opera audiences in Naples, Venice, Parma, and other Italian centers mostly rejected the subjugated voice of Gluckian opera, because a huge part of the culture of opera in Italy centered on an obsession with virtuosic voices and the singers who flaunted them—the voice as spectacle.[42] Voice might be reformed, but it had to remain in the spotlight: if not as a spectacle, then how?

In mid-to-late eighteenth-century Italy, the aesthetic debates surrounding the flashy voices of opera seria masked deeper concerns about Italy's political status, carved up by foreign powers, and

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[41] For a detailed study of how Carlo Goldoni revolutionized opera buffa, see Daniel Heartz, "*Vis Comica*: Goldoni, Galuppi, and *L'Arcadia in Brenta,*" in *Venezia e il melodramma nel Settecento,* ed. Maria Teresa Muraro, 2 vols. (Florence: Olschki, 1978–1981), II: 33–73.

[42] See, for one, Renato di Benedetto, "Poetics and Polemics," in *Opera in Theory and Practice, History and Myth,* trans. Kenneth Chalmers and Mary Whittall, eds. Lorenzo Bianconi and Giorgio Pestelli (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 1–65, esp. 37–8.

about the diminishing authority abroad of Italian cultural products in the realms of literature and philosophy. Even the musical composition of Italian operas had become a cosmopolitan, rather than predominantly Italian, endeavor. The voice remained Italy's most famous cultural export. The Italian peninsula, particularly the musical centers of Naples and Venice, excelled at producing singers, creating superhuman, astonishing voices to send to theaters and courts and churches across the world. Yet around midcentury, that excellence grated against the reformist theatrical project of the Enlightenment, in which the *philosophes* and their Italian counterparts, such as the members of the Accademia dei Pugni in Milan, articulated a longing for verisimilitude and feeling—not wonder—in the theater.[43] To these Enlightenment intellectuals, awe-inspiring Italianate voices ran roughshod over both poets and composers, pleasing the ear and enervating the mind without touching the heart.[44]

Singers were not the only problematic figures. Opera composers and librettists were also taken to task for allowing the balance of expressive elements to become lopsided, as Antonio Planelli pointed out in *Dell'opera in musica* (Naples, 1772). The wildly celebrated poet laureate Pietro Metastasio, whose libretti defined the genre of Italian opera seria, was accused by progressives of limiting the composer and the drama with his ubiquitous poetic voice. Even pro-Metastasian critics

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[43] See Denis Diderot, *Entretiens sur* Le Fils naturel [1759], in *Diderot: Selected Writings on Art and Literature,* trans. and ed. Geoffrey Bremner (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 1994); Pietro Verri, "La musica," in *Il Caffè* 2 (10 August 1765), repr. in *Il Caffè: ossia Brevi e vari discorsi distribuiti in fogli periodici,* ed. Sergio Romagnoli (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1960), 343–7; Martha Feldman, "Music and the Order of the Passions," in *Representing the Passions: Histories, Bodies, Visions,* ed. Richard Meyer (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2003), 37–68; Stefano Castelvecchi, *Sentimental Opera: Questions of Genre in the Age of Bourgeois Drama* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013); and many others too numerous to list here.

[44] See Francesco Algarotti, *Saggio sopra l'opera in musica* (Venice: G. Pasquali, 1755); Verri, "La musica"; Antonio Planelli, *Dell'opera in musica* (Naples: D. Campo, 1772); Matteo Borsa, *Saggio filosofico sopra la musica imitativa teatrale*, in *Opuscoli scelti sulle scienze e sulle arti tratti dagli Atti delle Accademie, e dalle altre Collezioni filosofiche, e letterarie, e dalle opere più recenti inglesi, tedesche, francesi, latine, e italiane, e da manoscritti originali, e inediti*, eds. Carlo Amoretti and Francesco Soave (Milan: Marelli, 1781), IV: 195–234; Saverio Mattei, *Memorie per servire alla vita di Metastasio ed Elogio di N. Jommelli* [1785] (Bologna: Forni, 1987); among many others.

like the Neapolitan intellectual Saverio Mattei complained that the poet's unsurpassable talent had made it impossible for anyone else to write a decent opera libretto.[45] The reform-minded composer Niccolò Jommelli, requesting a libretto from his collaborator Gaetano Martinelli, asked for a non-Metastasian-style text because "if the poet [i.e., Metastasio] is so keen to sing, very little indeed is left to the poor composer."[46] In a similar vein, reformist literati such as Calzabigi and Matteo Borsa praised the universalizing maxims of Metastasio's opera libretti for their literary merit, but disagreed with more conservative thinkers like Mattei about the appropriateness of Metastasio's poetry for expressive music.[47]

Voice, Italy's much-loved and much-maligned cultural product, had to be rebranded. But those who would reform Italian culture through its voices had to mediate their attempts in order to ensure that voice remained in the spotlight. The solution lay in the most authentic convergence of poetry, music, and voice known to (Western) history: the figure of the ancient poet-singer.

"The finest and most useful materials"

How does something abstract become accessible? For literate Italians in the years around 1800, it was through symbols, metaphors, and myths, particularly classical ones. We tend to think of such

[45] Saverio Mattei, *La filosofia della musica o sia la riforma del teatro,* in Pietro Metastasio, *Opere* (Naples: De Bonis, 1781), 3: iii–xlv.
[46] Jommelli to Martinelli, letter of 1769; qtd. and trans. in Marita P. McClymonds, *Niccolò Jommelli: The Last Years, 1769–1774* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1980), 488ff.
[47] See Ranieri de' Calzabigi, "Dissertazione [...] su le poesie drammatiche del sig. Abate Pietro Metastasio," preface to *Poesie del sig. Abate Pietro Metastasio,* ed. Calzabigi (Paris, 1755); for a later, private, and far less polite version of Calzabigi's views on Metastasio, see his letter to Kaunitz on *Alceste* (6 March 1767), trans. in Heartz, *Haydn, Mozart, and the Viennese School, 1740–1780* (New York: Norton, 1995), 731. Giuseppe "Joseph" Baretti, an Italian expatriate residing in London, attempted to rehabilitate Metastasio's reputation as poet laureate by arguing that his verses were indeed high art, and only seemed otherwise because so consistently ruined by incompetent musical settings. See Baretti, *The Italian Library* (London: A. Millar, 1757), lxxvii.

rhetorical figures as having become outdated by the late eighteenth century, yet in Italy they persisted long afterwards. As late as 1822, the exiled Italian writer Ugo Foscolo published an English-language defense of allegory as an Italian cultural idiom, arguing that it enabled the arts to contribute to "the improvement and perfection of social life."[48] He took this stance partly in response to Germaine de Staël's criticism of Italian neoclassical literature in the 1815 essay "On Translation," especially in objection to her urging Italian writers to translate northern works instead of continuing to "sift the ashes of the past" for inspiration.[49] For Foscolo, classical allegory served not as a limit to the imagination, but as the most immediate means of activating it:

> Ridiculous as allegories may appear to metaphysical critics [e.g., English and German writers], they have been, nevertheless, the finest and most useful materials for artists to work from; and the disrepute into which they have now fallen has arisen from the injudicious use that has been made of them […] for every allegory is, in truth, only an *abstract idea personified*, which, by thus acting more rapidly and easily on our senses and our imagination, takes a readier hold of the mind (emphases added).[50]

Allegories corralled abstract concepts into figures and stories through which the otherwise inaccessible could become accessible; here, then, lie the residues we have sought. It is therefore through allegories that I explore the late Settecento ideology of voice, organizing my cases and themes around the figure of the lyric poet-singer. The word *lyric* (Italian, *lirico*), derived as it is from the classical Greek *lyra*, of course denotes poetry declaimed or sung to the accompaniment of a lyre, and more broadly, poetry intended for musical setting—but in the late eighteenth century, those

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[48] Ugo Foscolo, "Dissertation on an Ancient Hymn to the Graces" [1822], in *Opere,* ed. Franco Gavazzeni (Turin: Einaudi-Gallimard, 1994), I: 147.

[49] Germaine de Staël, "The Spirit of Translation" [1815], transl. Joseph Luzzi from French in *The Romanic Review* 97, nos. 3–4 (2006): 283. The French original was translated by Pietro Giordani as "Sulla maniera e l'utilità delle traduzioni" and published in Milan's *Biblioteca italiana* in January 1816; repr. in *Discussioni e polemiche sul romanticismo (1816–1826),* ed. Egidio Bellorini (Bari: Laterza, 1943), I: 3–9. Literary scholar Joseph Luzzi calls the publication of the essay in Italian translation "the most dramatic event in the saga of Italian Romanticism." Luzzi, "Translator's Introduction: 'Italy in Translation,'" *The Romanic Review* 97, no. 3: 275.

[50] Foscolo, "Dissertation on an Ancient Hymn," 144.

denotations were fast accruing new cultural connotations. Foscolo, in the same essay, cast the figure of the ancient singer-poet as the originary creator of authentic song, emblematic of a storied past in which "the Lyric song in Greece was the spontaneous effusion of genius and the passions."[51] What voice could be more natural, more intimately tethered to feeling, than the voice that spontaneously created lyric? As I will show, for literati and musicians in the preceding decades, the archetypal lyric figure both encompassed and superseded the elements of poetry, music, and performer. Invoking lyric song—which singers, composers, and writers did in a multitude of ways—indexed a foundational vocal authenticity by connecting a singer to naturalness and feeling. Through the heuristic of "lyric," then, I trace the emergence of alternatives to what we might call the virtuosic or "heroic" voices of opera seria.

In the entry on "lirico" found in the Italian editions of Diderot and D'Alembert's *Encyclopédie* (*Dizionario di belle lettere,* 1795), Jean-François Marmontel declared that unlike contemporary poets (including Rousseau) who were only "pretending," ancient lyric poets like Orpheus and Sappho had had an "authentic character" and "actually sang to the harmonies of the lyre."[52] The lyre is central to the mythologies of both Orpheus and Sappho, and connects them in a kind of genealogy of lyric song. Ovid's version of the Orphic myth tells of how, after the singer's evisceration at the hands of the Maenads, his lyre floated away, still softly and mournfully playing of its own accord. The animate lyre then landed on the shores of Lesbos, where Sappho took it up as

[51] The phrase "spontaneous effusions" becomes especially important in chapter 1, below. Foscolo, "Dissertation on an Ancient Hymn," 143.

[52] Sappho and Orpheus, along with Pindar, Anacreon, Amphion, et alia are mentioned by name throughout the entry, though not in this specific quote. "Fra noi, Malherbe, Rousseau fingevano di cantar sulla lira. [...] Il poeta lirico avea sempre un carattere vero [e] questi poeti [Orfeo, Saffo, et alia] cantavano realmente sugli accordi della lira." Jean-François Marmontel, "Lirico," in *Dizionario di belle lettere,* trans. unknown (Padua: Bettinelli, 1795), II: 186.

her own.[53] The lyre in this story has an immanent power, sounding without human interference and passing on Orpheus's inspiration to its new owner.

In the modern era, the trope of a plucked string instrument's ability to generate music without human agency has been most closely associated with the British Romantic poets of the early nineteenth century. Coleridge's *The Eolian Harp,* Shelley's *Ode to the West Wind,* Byron's *To His Lyre* and many other Romantic lyric poems position a stringed instrument like a harp or lyre as a proxy for the poet-speaker, with the wind that vibrates its strings a metaphor for poetic inspiration. Late eighteenth-century natural scientists described the Aeolian harp as a "sound prism," in that its vibrating strings pulled otherwise inaudible sounds from the air and transformed them into music.[54] The Aeolian harp, like Orpheus's and Sappho's lyre, was therefore understood as more than an accompaniment to expression. These instruments, vibrating with the harmonies of nature, seemingly created sonorous expression in and of themselves. In both classical and modern lyric contexts, the symbol of the lyre or harp functioned as audible and visible manifestation of unseen expressive forces; when coupled with the voice, the instrument made visible what was also heard from within, yet hidden inside, the singer-poet's body.[55]

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[53] As retold in Margaret Reynolds, "Before the Beginning," *The Sappho Companion* (New York: Palgrave for St. Martin's Press, 2001), ix. Classicists today disagree about whether Sappho was a real person or a kind of stock figure invoked in post-archaic literature. The question resonates with similar ones about the identity of Homer. Both are discussed further in chapters 2 and 3. Carolyn Abbate compares Orpheus's head to an Aeolian harp, "inspired from outside, breathed into," as one metaphor for operatic singing; see *In Search of Opera,* 3.

[54] Thomas L. Hankins and Robert J. Silverman, "The Aeolian Harp and the Quest of Nature," in *Instruments and the Imagination* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 94.

[55] British Romantic poets such as Blake, Wordsworth, and Byron often indexed song in their verses as a shorthand for authenticity (as in Wordsworth's *Lyrical Ballads,* Blake's *Songs of Innocence and Experience,* etc.) See Maureen N. McLane, *Balladeering, Minstrelsy, and the Making of British Romantic Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), and Gillen D'Arcy Wood, especially "Wordsworth Castrato," in *Romanticism and Music Culture in Britain, 1770-1840: Virtue and Virtuosity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 88–117.

The lyre or harp appears as a double for the unseen, natural expressivity of voice in Charles Burney's description of the singing of Gluck's Vienna Orfeo, alto castrato Gaetano Guadagni. (We will spend more time on Guadagni in chapter 1.) For Burney, Guadagni's voice was defined by its unique ability to execute a diminuendo, which sounded "like the dying notes of an Aeolian harp. […] Guadagni, after beginning a note or passage with all the force he could safely exert, fined it off to a thread, and gave it all the effect of extreme distance."[56] Opera auditors normally praised a singer's *messa di voce* or "swell" (< >), or the execution of difficult *passaggi,* to applaud mastery of the art of song. The deified castrato Farinelli had often been compared to instruments, from violins that could not keep up with his runs to trumpets incapable of besting him in breath control.[57] But Guadagni was not a virtuoso singer in the Farinellian vein. Rather, he distinguished himself in the opposite way, by pulling his voice back, drawing his listeners toward something deep inside him with an ever-thinning thread of sound. His voice seemed like breath made sonorous by the work, not of human artifice, but of nature itself. Yet Guadagni must have labored to perfect this "natural" harp effect, since such a diminuendo is no mean technical feat (as Burney acknowledged by crediting Guadagni's agency). Indeed Burney's description reveals a balancing act between the natural, authentic expression associated with the Aeolian harp and lyric song, to which Orfeo was intimately connected, and the labor required to at once project naturalness and obscure the artifice in that projection.

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[56] Burney, *A General History of Music, from the Earliest Ages to the Present Period* (London, 1789), 2: 876. Burney had heard Guadagni as Orpheus in a 1773 production of Gluck and Calzabigi's *Orfeo ed Euridice* in London, though that version was technically a pasticcio, with arias by other composers (including Guadagni himself) interpolated.
[57] Burney, *The Present State of Music in France and Italy* (London, 1771), 205–6 and 208–9. On the growing distinction between virtuosic castrati and emerging Orphic castrati beginning in the 1760s and 1770s, see Feldman, *The Castrato,* xxi, 186–205.

This balancing act was of particular concern to reformers of Enlightenment theater. Diderot addressed it in the spoken theater in his *Paradoxe sur le comédien* (1773–7), which deemed the skilled but unfeeling actor's immersion in a role "terrifying," presumably because it passed off the artificial as natural.[58] For Diderot, an actor who truly felt what he expressed would certainly be authentic. And yet this authenticity could yield only a "fine moment," not a "fine performance": the instability of real feeling would threaten the unity of the actor's style and delivery.[59] Any such break in the unity of an actor's portrayal would expose, indeed highlight, the artificiality of performance, because the perception of continuity was intrinsic to the audience's acceptance of a character as a stable, consistent, and verisimilar "I"—that is, as a self, or subject. For Diderot, the best actor was the one who *felt* the least, "terrifying" or not, because that actor could sufficiently distance himself from his role so as to calculate how to play it effectively.

A similar paradox unsettles the claims of lyric poetry to authenticity. Modern literary scholars have long debated this point in British Romantic poetry of roughly the same era, interrogating the subtle slippage between lyric persona and poet in, for example, the *Lyrical Ballads* of Wordsworth and Coleridge (1798/1800).[60] The lyric mode should be private, meditative, almost solipsistic, in order to be authentic, yet the very term "lyric" also presupposes an audience and, thus, a performance.[61] In his 1953 essay "The Three Voices of Poetry," T.S. Eliot famously characterized lyric poetry as the "poet talking to himself"; similarly, Shelley's "Defence of Poetry" (1821) described

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[58] Diderot, *Paradoxe sur le comédien* [1773–7, pub. posth. 1830], trans. and ed. Geoffrey Bremner, *Diderot: Selected Writings on Art and Literature,* 154.
[59] Ibid, 153–4.
[60] See Scott Brewster, *Lyric,* in *The New Critical Idiom* series (London: Routledge, 2009), 2 and passim.
[61] Brewster, *Lyric,* 16–17. As the first lyrics (those of Sappho, Anacreon, Pindar) were so called because they were set to the music of the lyre, they necessarily played with the performance, for an audience, of individualized expression and subjectivity. The disjuncture between late eighteenth-century notions of archaic lyric and that of modern Classics scholars is touched on in chapters 2 and 3 of this dissertation.

the lyric poet as "a nightingale, who sits in darkness and sings to cheer its own solitude with sweet sounds."[62] There is that same tension between authenticity and *conveying* authenticity, especially obvious in such quotes from later, more self-conscious lyric poets like Shelley and Eliot, as they labor to cover over the performativity of lyric with the discourse of interiority and spontaneity. Both the performance and its obfuscation are necessary: after all, the poet who sings to him- or herself can be only recognized as a poet if his or her solitary meditations are, somehow, overheard (or read).

Thus the lyric mode in poetry is "intensely self-reflexive," both "a self-conscious reflection on the relationship of poetry, subjectivity, and voice," and producer of "uncertain or contradictory constructions of the self."[63] By the late eighteenth century, as voice was increasingly conceived as a manifestation of subjectivity, lyric also came to connote "immediacy of expression, vivid subjectivity, poetic intensity, passion."[64] Lyric was not merely a genre but a mode, in the literary sense of designating identifiable markers of mood, manner, or method, separately from designations of genre. Bringing together the paradox of theatrical performance with the self-reflexivity of lyric poetry, I have chosen the phrase "lyric mode of voice": it denotes a complex of characteristic discourses and practices, spanning genres and media as the fraught interplay among music, poetry, timbre, inflection, and more.[65] The lyric mode of voice was self-reflexive, inhabiting the strained space

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[62] T.S. Eliot, "The Three Voices of Poetry," in *On Poetry and Poets* [1957] (London: Faber, 1990), 89; Percy Bysshe Shelley, "A Defence of Poetry" [1821], in *Poetry and Prose,* eds. Donald H. Reiman and Neil Fraistat (New York: Norton, 2002), 512.

[63] Brewster, *Lyric,* 34. Wordsworth's oft-cited description of lyric poetry (in the "Preface to the Lyrical Ballads," 1800) as "emotion recollected in tranquillity" hints at a way around this problem by posing the creative act of writing as rooted in authentic emotional experience—but as a reflection upon the memory of that experience, rather than in-the-moment feeling. This becomes a crucial point in chapter 2, below. See William Wordsworth, "Preface," in Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Lyrical Ballads,* ed. Martin Scofield (Ware, UK: Wordsworth Editions Ltd., 2003), esp. 17–20.

[64] S.v. "lirico," §2, *Grande dizionario della lingua italiana,* ed. Salvatore Battaglia (Turin: Unione tipografico-editrice torinese, 1961–2004). The first use of the term in this meaning is given here as Alessandro Verri's *Le notti romane al sepolcro de' Scipioni* (Rome: Neri, 1793), vol. 1.

[65] Of course, my reference to "mode" is also made with one eye on the ancient Greek modes. This connection makes an appearance in chapter 2, in the case study of Sarti and Rezzonico's opera *Alessandro e Timoteo* (Parma, 1782).

between authenticity and performance, disavowing the problem while simultaneously and necessarily performing it. But how exactly? How did singers, poets, composers, and listeners grapple with this slippage? By tethering it, through Orpheus and Sappho as allegorical figures, to bodies and subjectivities that already tested the boundaries between artifice and nature: namely, those of the castrato singer and the female singer.

In the chapters that follow I show how, from the Italian Enlightenment through the Napoleonic era, anxieties about agency, identity, and subjectivity in Italian culture were tightly interwoven with the problems, and possibilities, of voice. Through the lyric mode as an organizing principle, I read in the textual and musical residues of vocal materiality the palimpsest of an ideological process: a power struggle between the voices that proclaimed universal selfhood, and those that resisted being civilized, domesticated, or naturalized.

Chapter summaries

The four central chapters are organized thematically and chronologically around Orpheus (Part I) and Sappho (Part II). Each part opens with a prologue that lays out guiding themes for the two ensuing chapters, drawing on the cultural resonances of the eponymous lyric figure, after which individual chapters interweave readings of texts (vocal and aesthetic treatises, performance reviews, novels, and poetry) with case studies of one to two musical works.

Part I, "Orfeo; or, Castrati of Sensibility" follows castrato singers, beginning with Millico, who positioned themselves as heirs to Orphic song in order to recast their "unnatural" voices as audible feeling. Chapter 1, "The Orfeo Act," reads Millico's vocal theory through his narrative about his own Orphic experience (in *L'atto d'Orfeo,* Gluck/Calzabigi, Parma, 1769), afterwards turning to

Guadagni's invocation of lyric immediacy in Bertoni's *Orfeo* (Venice, 1776). Chapter 2, "The Poet Sings," traces how literati and composers attempted to seize control over the political possibilities of lyric subjectivity with operatic challenges to Orphic voice (Sarti/Rezzonico, *Alessandro e Timoteo,* Parma, 1782; Paisiello/Pepoli, *I giuochi d'Agrigento,* Venice, 1792). Part I closes with the elision of voice and lyric selfhood in the mythologizing reception history of Pacchierotti.

Part II, "Saffo; or, Domesticating the Tenth Muse" explores how emerging fantasies (and nightmares) of female voice manifested anxieties about women's role in "enlightened" society. Chapter 3, "Confessional Fragments," opens in the 1780s, where a burgeoning archaeological fervor, in conjunction with the rise of the epistolary novel, inspired Italian authors to translate, narrativize, and even forge fragments of Sappho's Greek lyric poetry. Such writers transformed the aesthetics of the Sapphic sublime into a strategy of appropriation, imposing new meanings on feminine poiesis in hopes of reanimating the sepulchral voices of Italian culture. Chapter 4, "Sublime Suffering and the Good Mother," traces how the themes of the previous chapters, especially chapter 3, seemed to be rendered audible by the voice of singer Luigia Todi. Reading Todi's Italian reception as shaped by, at once, discourses of the Sapphic sublime and fantasies of an enculturating maternal song, the chapter argues for a major shift in the aesthetics and ontology of the prima donna voice. Part II ends by connecting the resonance of women's voices in the act of mourning to the emergence of a national consciousness.

The epilogue, "Closing the Historical Gap," traces the lyric mode of voice into the early nineteenth century and beyond. It opens where Part II left off, with the symbol of the tomb, and reads it as a site of vocal negotiation between castrato and prima donna, Orpheus and Sappho, death and apotheosis (Zingarelli/Foppa, *Giulietta e Romeo,* 1796–1817). The conclusion raises questions of

how voice could be at once individual and universal, and whose voices were overwritten by narratives of "civilizing" song. It closes by proposing to develop this research further through engaging (post)colonial theory and critical race studies in order to unpack myths of voice and universal subjectivity.

PART ONE: ORFEO
OR, CASTRATI OF SENSIBILITY

PROLOGUE
IL RITORNO D'ORFEO IN ITALIA

On a summer evening in 1769, Parma's Teatro Ducale was transported to ancient Greece by the power of song. It happened during a performance of Gluck and Calzabigi's *Orfeo ed Euridice*, its first production on Italian soil, celebrating the royal wedding of Maria Amalia Habsburg and Ferdinand Bourbon. Years later a writer recounted the marvelous effects of Orfeo's performance that night, telling how, in the recitative preceding the aria "Che farò senza Euridice?" "the singer managed to color his voice so well" that every listener was moved to tears: "I realized that here, too, we could achieve the same effects as in Greek music."[1] In this story the singer transformed into a real-life Orpheus, eliciting tears with his vocal expression. The audience in turn was relocated to a modern facsimile of ancient Greece, where music had moral, even political, power.

But the narrator of the anecdote was no mere spectator. The Orfeo he describes was, in fact, himself: the castrato Giuseppe Millico. Millico had long since shot to fame as a castrato of sensibility, thanks to that very *Orfeo* in Parma and another in London (1773); indeed, after the Parma performance he had become Gluck's go-to primo uomo, originating the male lead in *Paride ed Elena* (Vienna, 1770) and accompanying the composer to Paris to assist with the French revision

[1] "Mentre si cantava il recitativo che precede l'aria 'Che farò senza Euridice,' riuscì al cantante di colorire così bene la sua voce che fece piangere tutti gli ascoltatori e fin d'allora mi accorsi, che anche da noi si potrebbero ottenere i medesimi effetti della musica greca." Giuseppe Millico, preface, *La pietà d'amore,* libretto by Antonino Lucchesi (Naples: Porcelli, 1782), n.p. Note that the preface is unpaginated after the first page. The preface is reproduced in its entirety, in the original Italian, in Ludwig Finscher, "Der Opernsänger als Komponist: Giuseppe Millico und seine Oper *La pietà d'amore*," in *Opernstudien: Anna Amalie Abert zum 65. Geburtstag,* ed. Klaus Hortschansky (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1975), 68–70. On Millico's discussion of vocal "colors," see Feldman, *The Castrato,* 190–6.

of *Orfeo ed Euridice* as *Orphée et Eurydice* (1773–4).[2] Without explicitly revealing his own Orphic connection to Parma, Millico told the tale in the preface to the printed score for his 1782 opera, *La pietà d'amore* (Naples: Porcelli), as an intervention in local debates on theatrical reform. Gluck and Calzabigi's operas had been introduced to Naples in the 1770s, beginning with two separate productions of *Orfeo ed Euridice* in 1774 at the Palazzo Real and San Carlo, and productions of their other collaborations soon followed (albeit with many revisions in light of audience expectations). Calzabigi himself returned in 1779 to Naples, where he and Millico collaborated on several works in the early-to-mid-1780s. By the time Millico published his preface in 1782, *Orfeo ed Euridice* functioned as a metonym for progressive operatic aesthetics in Naples. Unsurprisingly, then, in his preface Millico reiterated the major points of Gluck and Calzabigi's reforms—even while proffering an apologia for having contravened them in his music—and borrowed liberally from popular treatises by Neapolitan literati Antonio Planelli (*Dell'opera in musica*, 1772) and Saverio Mattei (*I libri poetici della Bibbia…*, 1766–74).[3]

More than just an homage (and a mea culpa) to Gluck and Calzabigi, however, Millico's

[2] On Millico's life, reception, and compositions, see Finscher, "Der Opernsänger," 57–90, and Irene Brandenburg, "Vito Giuseppe Millico: Studien zu Leben und Werk eines komponierenden Kastraten im 18. Jahrhundert," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Salzburg, 1995. Millico was involved in various iterations of Gluck's *Orfeo,* and his *La pietà d'amore* might be read as continuing that work; see Alessandra Martina, *Orfeo-Orphée di Gluck: Storia della trasmissione e della recezione* (Turin: Passigli, 1995), esp. 84–143.

[3] Antonio Planelli, *Dell'opera in musica* (Naples: Donato Campo, 1772), rept. in Francesco Degrada, ed., *Dell'opera in musica* (Fiesole: Discanto, 1981); Saverio Mattei, *I libri poetici della Bibbia*…, 5 vols. (Naples: Stamperia Simoniana, 1766–74), in particular, the section *La filosofia della musica* in the final volume, which is quoted at length in Paolo Fabbri, "Saverio Mattei e la 'musica filosofica,'" in *Studien zur italienischen Musikgeschichte* 15, no. 2, ed. Friedrich Lippmann (Regensburg: Laaber-Verlag, 1998), 611–29. For an overview of late-eighteenth-century Neapolitan debates on opera, see Renato Di Benedetto, "Music and Enlightenment," in *Naples in the Eighteenth Century: The Birth and Death of a Nation State,* ed. Girolamo Imbruglia (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 135–53. Millico's musical engagement with Neapolitan reform currents in his music for *La pietà d'amore* is explored in a thorough analysis of his intellectual debts to Planelli in Anthony DelDonna, "Tradition, Innovation, and Experimentation: The Dramatic Stage and New Modes of Performance in Late Eighteenth-Century Naples," *Quaderni d'italianistica* 35, no. 1 (2015): 139–72.

Orphic tale served as the opening gambit for his own theory of voice. The unnamed Orfeo singer seemed an antidote to the virtuosic voices of opera seria, offering the possibility of reforming opera by tethering voice to feeling. Millico's anecdote of the Parmesan Orfeo thus provided the origin story for a new mode of voice: it established that Orpheus had returned to Italy after the long exile imposed by Metastasian opera seria, bringing with him a mythical voice that could save opera from itself.

In Part One: Orfeo, I explore tensions between voice, interiority, and musical expression through focusing on certain moments and texts that responded to Millico's 1769 Orphic turn. Millico's Orphic-lyric voice formed the foundation for a kinship, albeit a fraught one, with other castrati such as Gaetano Guadagni and Gasparo Pacchierotti, all three of whom embodied the archetypal castrato of sensibility in late eighteenth-century opera. Along the way these "sensible" castrati and their interlocutors, from Bettinelli to Stendhal, engendered an array of ideologies about the role of voice in art and in society. I situate these ideologies within two intertwined approaches to reforming voice, approaches conceptualized, in the chapters that follow, as the lyric and epic modes of voice. Chapter One, "The Orfeo Act," introduces the lyric voice as a marriage between Orphic symbolism and Enlightenment aesthetics of sensibility, conceived and enacted primarily by castrati seeking an alternative to operatic paradigms of virtuosic voice. Chapter Two, "The Poet Sings," explores how literati countered such claims to Orphic authenticity and individuality by repositioning singers as mouthpieces for the poet's (Homer-esque) voicing of epic. These two nascent ideologies of voice were overlapping and yet incompatible. Each offered a way to solve the voice problem: in a musical culture that vociferously criticized the agency of singers within the opera house, how could voice, the primary medium of opera, be redeemed? The lyric mode portrayed voice as the audible

expression of an individual, feeling subject with claims to political agency, whereas the epic mode required that voice be reined in, sundered from individualized expression, and turned toward a civilizing purpose—no longer a tyrant, but a public servant.

CHAPTER ONE
THE ORFEO ACT

"A new Athens": *Le feste d'Apollo* (Parma, 1769)

How did Gluck and Calzabigi's Viennese experiment end up in Bourbon-ruled Parma seven years after its premiere? The idea to include a version of Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice* in the 1769 Habsburg-Bourbon nuptial events came from Carlo Innocenzo Frugoni, court poet at Parma since 1725 and the *segretario perpetuo* of the Parmesan Accademia delle Arti. Frugoni had been singled out by Bettinelli as one of the three contemporary lyric poets whose verse ought to be taken as a model for modern poetry (along with Algarotti and, of course, Bettinelli himself).[4] They had become friendly when Bettinelli visited the Parmesan court in the 1750s. Buoyed up by the success of the 1765 revival of Traetta's French-flavored opera *Ippolito ed Aricia* (1759),[5] Frugoni pasted together three Greek myths, each titled for its protagonist(s): *L'atto di Bauci e Filemone*, *L'atto d'Aristeo*, and *L'atto d'Orfeo.* The entire offering was dubbed *Le feste d'Apollo*.[6] The Grecian overtones of Frugoni's plan resonated with the ongoing neoclassical platform of prime minister Guillaume Du Tillot, who had been pushing the idea of Parma as the Athens of Italy. Du Tillot enlisted Gluck to revise the 1762 *Orfeo* for the occasion and to contribute new music for the other two acts and prologue. Before his

[4] Saverio Bettinelli, *Versi sciolti di tre eccellenti moderni autori, cioè, Sig. Ab. Carlo Innocenzo Frugoni, Sig. Co. Francesco Algarotti, e P. Saverio Bettinelli* (Venice: 1770), passim.
[5] Martina, *Orfeo-Orphée,* 60. On the 1759 *Ippolito ed Aricia,* see Feldman, *Opera and Sovereignty,* ch. 3, "Programming Nature, Parma, 1759," 97–140.
[6] "Con la maggior pompa, e rigoroso solenne rito solevano gli Ateniesi celebrare annualmente le Feste d'Apollo." [Carlo Innocenzo Frugoni/Carlo Gastone della Torre di Rezzonico], preface, libretto to *Le feste d'Apollo* (Parma: Stamperia Reale, 1769), n.p. On Du Tillot engaging Gluck, see Andrea De Pasquale and Giovanni Godi, eds., *Il Ducato in Scena: Parma 1769: Feste, libri, politica* (Parma: Biblioteca Palatina, 2009), 19. *Le feste d'Apollo* premiered on 24 August 1769. The first two acts set poetry by Giuseppe Maria Pagnini and Giuseppe Pezzana, respectively. The sets were designed by the Galliari brothers and by the architect Francesco Grassi. Costumes were designed by Giovanni Batti. The dances were choreographed by Giuseppe Bianchi.

death in 1768, Frugoni had completed only the libretto for the prologue, leaving his successor, Count Carlo Gastone della Torre di Rezzonico, to finish the libretti and plan the wedding events.[7]

Frugoni and Du Tillot knew that producing *Le feste d'Apollo* for a visible international event could position their new Athens at the vanguard of operatic innovation in the Italian peninsula. *L'atto d'Orfeo* ("the Orfeo act") departed from the usual fare in several significant ways, even though Parma had long been open to the same French cultural influences as had inspired Gluck's opera.[8] Within the typical production model of opera seria, composers rarely collaborated personally with the poet on crafting a new work.[9] Certain libretti, particularly those of Metastasio, were set to music dozens of times, and though composers did sometimes correspond with poets about their texts, the libretti were nonetheless considered a kind of repertory or canon. By contrast, Calzabigi had intended his libretto for *Orfeo ed Euridice* to be set only by the composer with whom he had created it, setting the precedent for a new level of collaboration between poet and composer.[10] In an unusual move for Settecento opera, Calzabigi had composed his 1762 libretto in conjunction with Gluck's score. Gluck, when preparing his Parisian revision of the opera, credited Calzabigi's poetic genius with having enabled him to compose "passionate" and "touching" music, while a decade later, Calzabigi would assert his own influence upon the score by claiming that he had dictated every

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[7] Martina, *Orfeo-Orphée*, 60.

[8] See Feldman, "Programming Nature," in *Opera and Sovereignty.* Regarding French influences upon Gluck's Viennese work, see Bruce Alan Brown, *Gluck and the French Theater in Vienna* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

[9] Gluck and Calzabigi's opera was classified as an *festa teatrale,* not an opera seria, but this was still unusual. On the generic classification of *Orfeo ed Euridice,* see Raymond Monelle, "Gluck and the 'Festa Teatrale,'" *Music & Letters* 54, no. 2 (1973): 308–25.

[10] Calzabigi expressed interest in other performances of his libretto, but seemed concerned that Gluck's music was not used and that his reformist project might be ignored: "Favorisce avvisarmi che il mio Orfeo fu rappresentato in una Villa. Mi dice che la Musica per una casa di campagna era assai buona. Dunque non fu eseguito colla musica di Gluk [sic]. Desidererei sapere chi ha fatta questa nuova Musica, per mia curiosità, e se vi ha messi de' passaggi." Letter to Paolo Frisi, 20 December 1770, repr. in Mariangela Donà, "Dagli archivi milanesi: lettere di Ranieri de' Calzabigi e di Antonia Bernasconi," *Analecta musicologica* 14 (1974): 291.

musical and poetic accent to the composer. The collaborators announced the symbiotic nature of their partnership as a new model for operatic creation.[11]

The new model directly challenged vococentric opera seria, given that Gluck and Calzabigi's less-than-subtle intention with *Orfeo* had been to wrest back creative agency from singers. They had attempted this by breaking many generic conventions of the midcentury *dramma per musica*, namely jettisoning da capo arias and restricting opportunities for vocal virtuosity. In their stead, they augmented the roles of chorus and orchestra, two forces typically thought of as supporting players in opera seria, and integrated several ballets into the action.[12] The choruses and ballets heightened the spectacle while giving the soloists time to rest their voices, now that the six to seven singers traditionally required for opera seria had been whittled down to three. Of those, Orfeo took up the most stage time by far, meaning that the opera relied heavily on the vocal and dramatic abilities of its primo uomo. The Orfeo of the Vienna production, alto castrato Gaetano Guadagni, thus necessarily became the third collaborator in Gluck and Calzabigi's project. The central role of the singer-figure, in an opera partly about restricting the agency of singers, would become particularly significant in the work's Italian reception.

The Parmesan production took a less restrictive approach to voice, despite Gluck's presence during the rehearsal period, because it required many accommodations to the local performing forces

[11] Calzabigi, letter to the *Mercure de France,* 1784; Gluck, letter to the *Mercure de France,* 1773. Both quoted in Enrico Fubini, "L'estetica di Ranieri de' Calzabigi," in *Ranieri de' Calzabigi tra Vienna e Napoli,* eds. Francesco Paolo Russo and Federico Marri (Lucca: Libreria Musicale Italiana, 1997), 7-9.

[12] Gluck experimented with color and instrumentation in the orchestra, often composing "ugly" sounds in the service of the drama. The score frequently employs diminished sonorities for ominous effect, and includes a large brass section as well as chalumeaux, English horns, bassoons, and harp, which were not standard for an opera orchestra at the time. Padre Martini would acknowledge Gluck's cosmopolitan composition style as "[knowing] how to unite the best parts of Italian music with those of French; similarly, also with the best of the Germans' instrumental music" ("egli avesse saputo unire tutte le più belle parti della Musica Italiana, con alcune della Francese; così pure il bello della Musica Strumentale de Tedeschi"). See his letter to L'Abbé Arnaud, 28 February, 1777, qtd. in Martina, *Orfeo-Orphée,* 90-1.

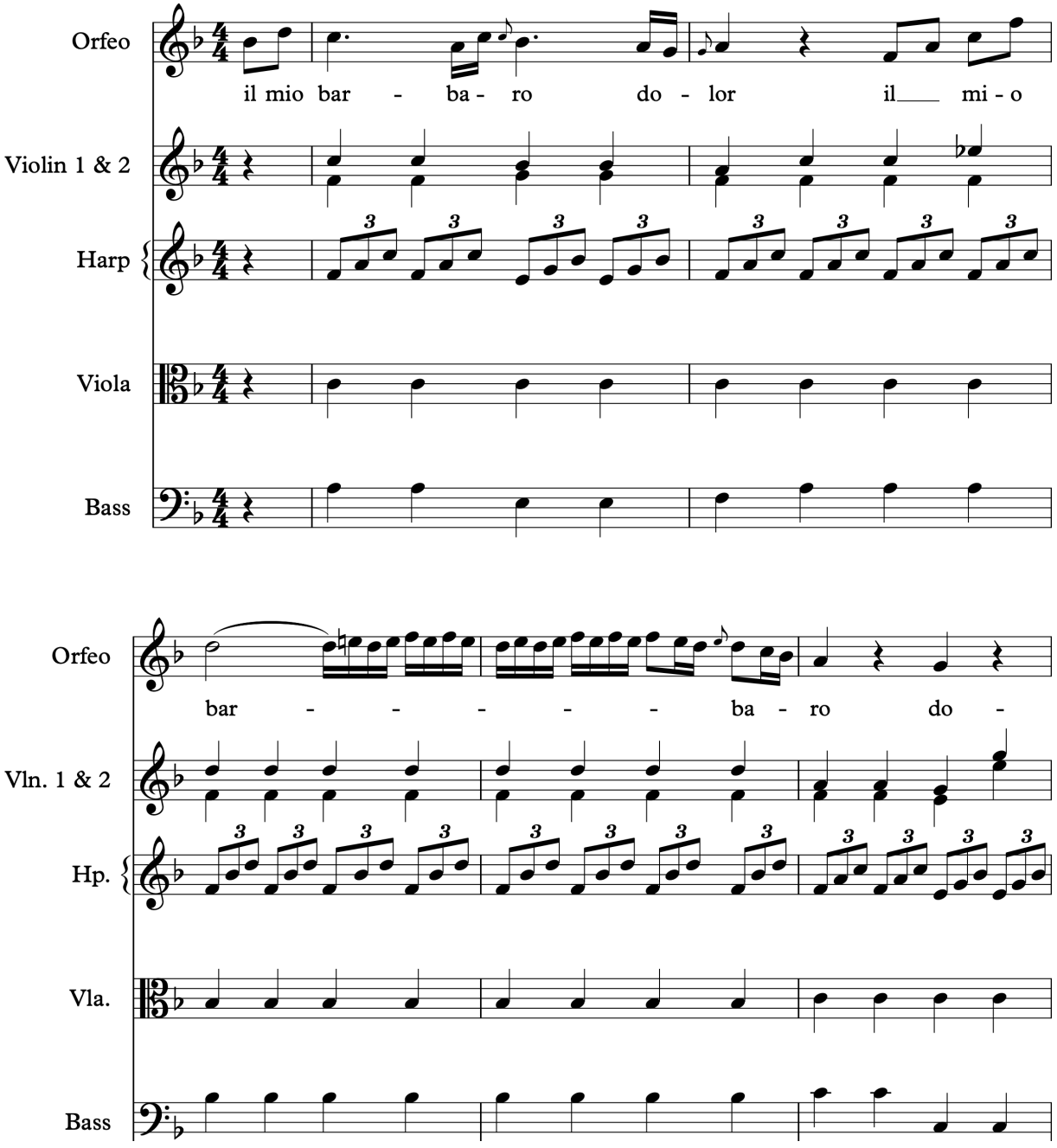
(and audience expectations). Alessandra Martina has given a detailed and comprehensive account of all the changes for Parma in her 1995 study, only a few of which I highlight here.[13] The Parmesan impresarios did not engage Guadagni for their production, despite his having sung in Traetta and Frugoni's wedding triptych *Le feste d'Imeneo* (Parma, 1760) and his having created Orfeo for Vienna; they instead hired the relatively little-known Millico. Neither Patricia Howard nor Paolo Cattelan has advanced an explanation for this in their respective studies of Guadagni.[14] Whatever the reason, with a soprano Orfeo, the role now had to be adjusted from its original alto version, making this the only time that Gluck would personally authorize score revisions for an Italian *Orfeo*. Orfeo's standalone arias were transposed up by either a third or a fourth, while cavatinas attached to choruses (such as "Deh! placatevi") were raised a whole step. Gluck also minimally recomposed duets and recitatives so as to accommodate Millico's higher range without altering the tessituras of the other roles. Gluck's altering the score to fit Millico's range was a necessary capitulation to vocal demands, even within the limits of his and Calzabigi's reform manifesto.

Backtracking on his anti-ornamentation stance was quite another thing. Gluck allowed additional textual repetitions in Orfeo's arias to make room for Millico's embellishments and additional high notes, most egregiously in "Deh! placatevi" and "Che farò senza Euridice," respectively (**examples 1.1** and **1.2**).

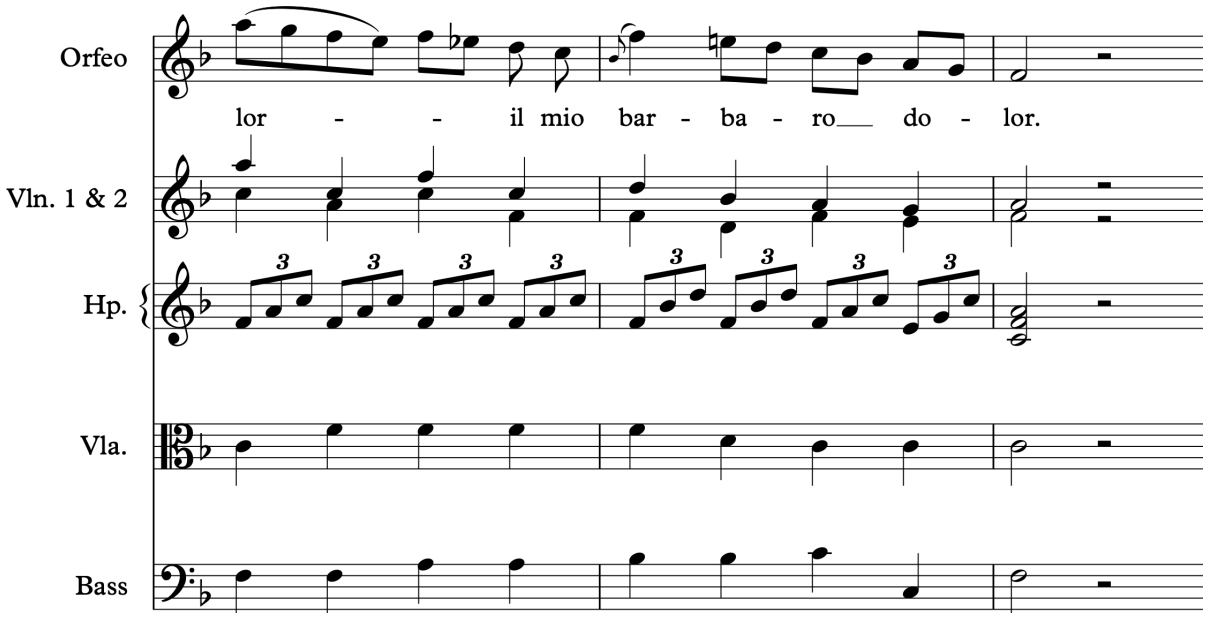
[13] See Martina, *Orfeo-Orphée,* 84–8.

[14] According to Sartori's libretto catalog, Guadagni sang both in his hometown of Padua and in four operas in Venice that year. See also Paolo Cattelan, "Altri Orfei di Gaetano Guadagni," preface to Ferdinando Bertoni, *Orfeo* (Milan: Ricordi, 1989), xvi; Patricia Howard, *The Modern Castrato: Gaetano Guadagni and the Coming of a New Operatic Age* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 126–7.

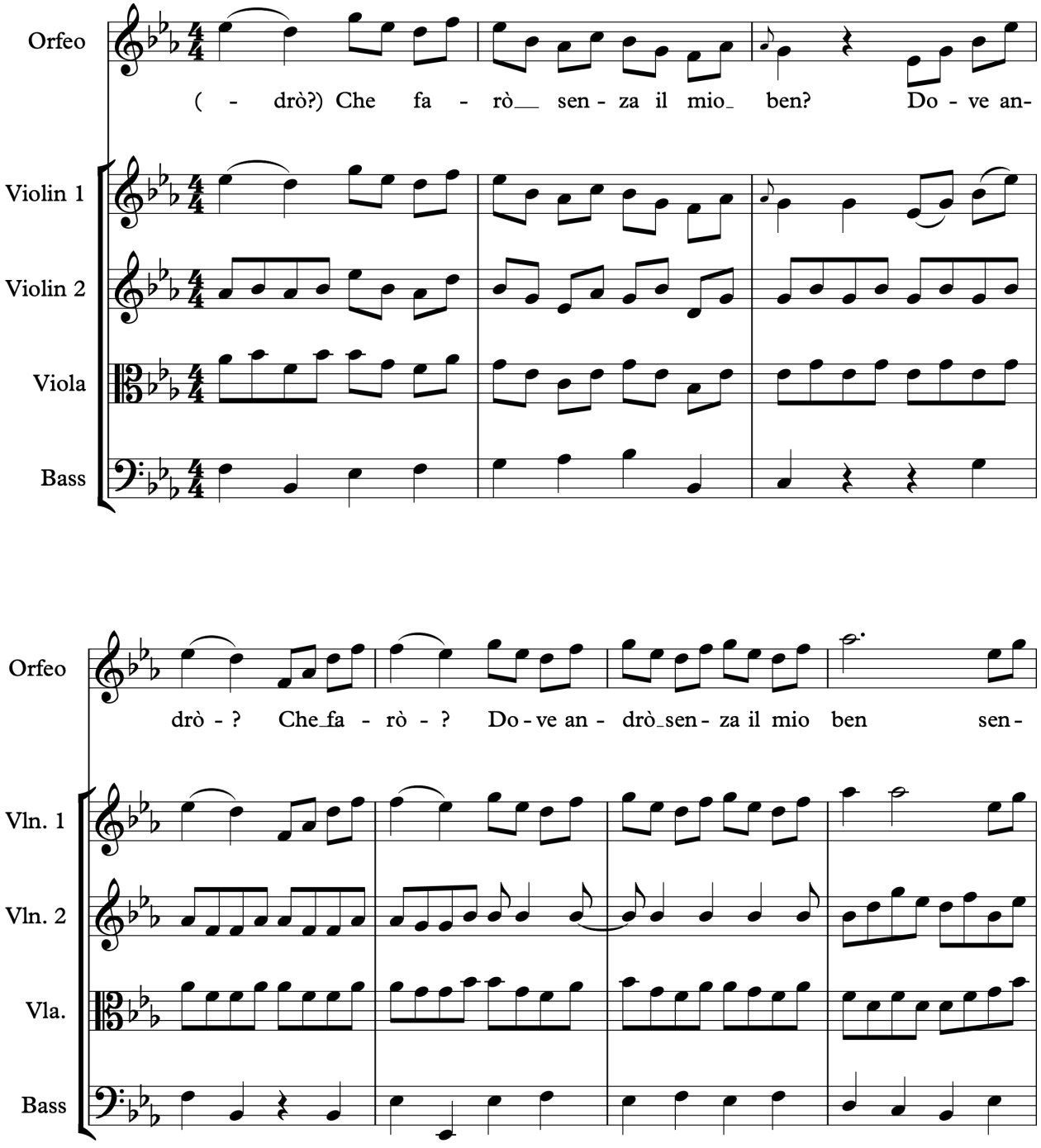
Example 1.1 Final measures of Orfeo's cavatina in the Underworld, "Deh! placatevi,"as revised for Parma. Gluck inserted two measures' worth of embellishments, here and in the previous refrain (47[R]). In Gluck/Calzabigi, *L'atto d'Orfeo*, I-PAc, MS.M.C.20, 49[R] – 50[R].



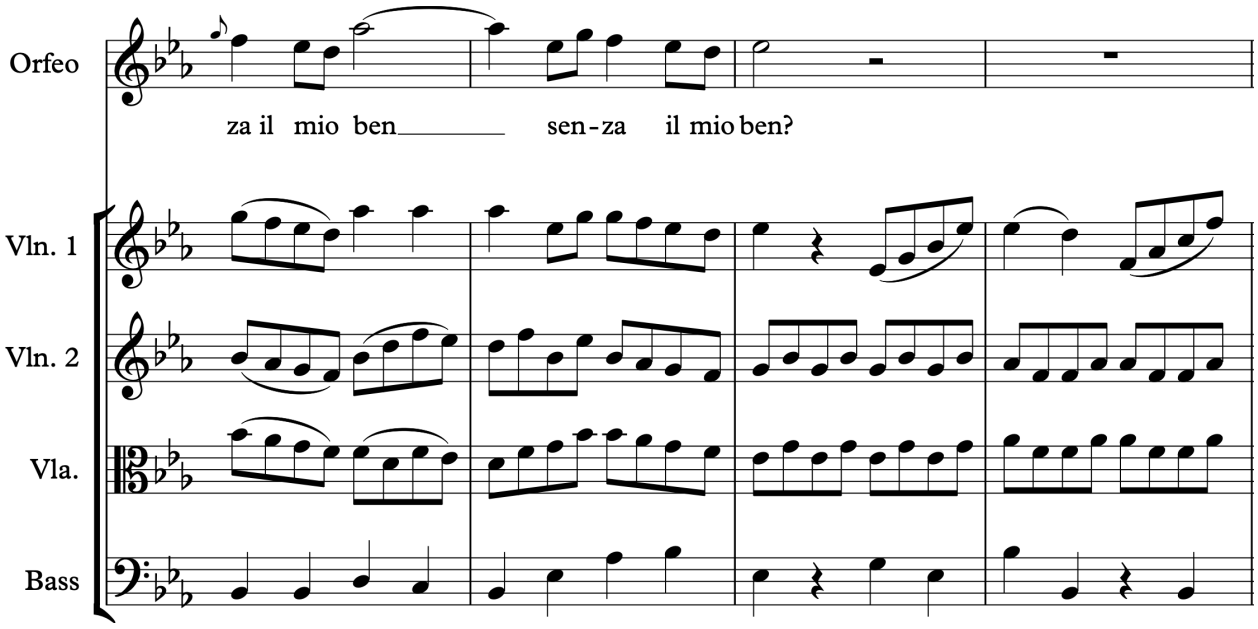
Example 1.1, continued



Example 1.2 Final measures of "Che farò senza Euridice" as revised for Parma. Note the textual repetitions and the accompanying high A flats in the vocal part. In Gluck/Calzabigi, *L'atto d'Orfeo*, I-PAc, MS.M.C.C.20, 102[v].



Example 1.2, continued



To explain Gluck's retreading on this point, one nineteenth-century author claimed that Millico had balked at the score, disappointed by the lack of *fioritura* and the ban on extensive embellishment.[15] The French biographer's characterization of Millico here is inconsistent with the singer's well-known enthusiasm for Gluck's style, however, and may well have been an attempt to exonerate Gluck by pinning the blame on Millico. (The French had high stakes in absolving Gluck from the dirty necessities of Italian opera, given that they credited him with reforming their own *tragédie lyrique* in the 1770s and 80s.)

Even the Parmesan orchestra ended up redirecting focus back onto the singers. Under the direction of the ducal court's maestro di cappella Gian Francesco Maria Fortunati, the players struggled with a score that had been composed for the superior instrumental forces at Vienna. Gluck

[15] Gustave Desnoiresterres, *La musique française au XVIII siècle. Gluck et Piccinni (1774-1800)* (Paris: Didier, 1875), 72. Cited in Martina, *Orfeo-Orphée,* 119.

recomposed multiple numbers in order to make them more manageable, but still had to hold twenty-seven music rehearsals for the Orfeo act alone.[16] To further simplify the burden on the orchestra and accord with Italian tastes, most of the ballets from Vienna were cut except for those pantomimes that were integral to the plot.[17] The upshot was that instrumental music became comparatively marginalized, rendering the soloists far more central than they had been to the Vienna production.

Despite the alterations, many Italian spectators did not appreciate Gluck's approach. Similar capitulations to local tastes and talents were made in other productions across the Italian peninsula, yet responses to *Orfeo ed Euridice* over the next decade remained mixed. Fortunati wrote Padre Martini during the Parmesan rehearsal period confessing himself perplexed by the work and describing the music as "more pitiful than the Lamentations of Jeremiah." He argued that although "it may be written by a master, [it is] without taste and too difficult."[18] Several years later, after heavily reworked versions of the opera had appeared across Europe, the Neapolitan ambassador to France, Domenico Caracciolo, grudgingly acknowledged the moderate success of Gluck's operas in Italy. Still, he expressed his disbelief that Gluck's operas were enjoyed anywhere, insisting that it was due only to other aspects of the production besides music that anyone had liked *Orfeo* at all. He pointed out that in London and in most of Italy, the work was tolerated only when filled out with

[16] See *Il Ducato in Scena,* 82. Many orchestrations were simplified for Parma by redistributing parts (e.g., substituting clarinet for chalumeau in "Chiamo il mio ben così," eliminating the three trombones from the scene with the Furies, etc.). In other cases, the parts were made less active (e.g., in "Che puro ciel," the solo cello line becomes a series of sustained notes, while the flute line, independent in the Vienna version, instead imitates the second violin part). See Martina, 84, and Gluck, *Le feste d'Apollo,* I-PAc, MS.M.C.C.20.

[17] On ballet in the Parma *Orfeo* see Martina, 84–8; on the ballets in Gluck and Calzabigi's *Alceste* in Bologna, see Margaret R. Butler, "Gluck's *Alceste* in Bologna: Production and Performance at the Teatro Comunale, 1778," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 65, no. 3 (2012): 727–76.

[18] Letter from Gian Francesco Maria Fortunati to Padre Martini in Bologna, 4 July 1769. Quoted in Martina, 85–6.

arias by other composers.[19] Pro-Metastasian critic Saverio Mattei agreed that Italian opera seria had arrived at a dismal state, but saw Gluck's solution to the problem as a one-off: the paucity of true arias in *Orfeo ed Euridice* could only yield "perpetual monotony" should operas continue to be composed in the same style.[20] For most Italian critics, Gluck's reforms did not succeed in mitigating their fascination with voice.

The Parmesan production nonetheless set Millico up as a star and as a new type of singer. He became the chosen castrato of the immortal Gluck, and the singer who had brought the Orfeo myth back to Italy with his vocal expressivity. Small wonder, then, that he used the story as a pretext for reconceiving voice—and for reclaiming some agency in that shift for himself.

Sensibility and nature

Millico's staging of his Orphic turn combines the (neo)classical—new Athens, Greek music, Orpheus himself—with emblems of sensibility, integrating ancient with modern to provide double support for his theory of voice. The neoclassical aspects of the 1769 Orfeo act can be gleaned from the work's history, but Millico's tropes of sensibility merit further unpacking. Elisabeth Le Guin has explored sensibility (or *sensibilité*) in Enlightenment-era music as "the deliberate cultivation of

[19] "Egli è vero piacque in Italia l'*Orfeo,* siccome le altre opere di Gluck non sono piaciute in niun luogo, però fu accolto l'*Orfeo* favorevolmente nei nostri Teatri per la sua novità […] non fu lo stile di Gluck né la sua musica, che fece il buon successo, ma il concorso di varie cose sostennero la musica e lo stile. Di fatti in tutta l'Italia ed anche in Londra si è cantato l'*Orfeo* con la giunta di Ariette d'altro autore." Letter from Caracciolo to Padre Martini, 10 March 1777. Quoted in Francesco Vatielli, "Riflessioni sulla lotta gluckista in Italia," *Rivista musicale italiana* XXI (1914), 651. Among those "other composers" was none other than Guadagni himself, who wrote for himself a more florid rendition of "Men tiranne" from the Underworld scene for the London production; on his setting, see Howard, *The Modern Castrato,* 137–42.

[20] "[…] continuare una monotonia perpetua, se si vogliono scrivere cinquanta, o sessanta drammi così." Mattei, *Elogio di N. Jommelli,* in *Memorie per servire alla vita del Metastasio ed elogio di N. Jommelli* (Bologna, 1785), 107.

physical and emotional hyper-receptivity to tender, intimate, tearful sensation."[21] In a specifically Italian context, sensibility indicated both this ability to feel tender, delicate sentiments and a tendency to become easily impassioned.[22] Both Le Guin and Stefano Castelvecchi, in his study *Sentimental Opera,* attribute the Continental diffusion of sensibility during the 1760s to translations of the works of Samuel Richardson's 1740 novel *Pamela, or, Virtue Rewarded.* Richardson's Pamela even appeared in several operatic adaptations over the ensuing decades, the most famous of which was 1760's *La buona figliuola* by Goldoni and Piccinni, reprised in London in 1766 starring Guadagni.[23] Millico's tale, read alongside Le Guin's and Castelvecchi's studies, resonates with salient aspects of Richardsonian sentimentality inasmuch as he pointedly situates his Orfeo as a neoclassical figure of sensibility.

There are three key markers of sensibility that I draw attention to here as part of Millico's rhetorical technique: communal tears, spectatorial absorption, and an insistence upon "naturalness." Regarding the first, Jerome McGann writes succinctly in *The Poetics of Sensibility*: "As we know, tears are the proper emblem of the literatures of sensibility and sentiment."[24] The definitive tableau of sensibility both within a text and in a text's consumption depicts a community of spectators who come together to feel, individually and collectively, along with a suffering subject.[25] Together, they relish their humanity through ubiquitous tears. Such tears are not tantamount to catharsis. Rather

[21] Elisabeth Le Guin, *Boccherini's Body: An Essay in Carnal Musicology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 53.
[22] "Che si emoziona facilmente: molto impressionabile e eccitabile; che prova sentimenti teneri, affettuosi o gentili; incline al sentimentalismo." *Grande dizionario della lingua italiana,* ed. Salvatore Battaglia (Turin: Unione tipografico-editrice torinese, 1961–2004), s.v. "sensibile," §6.
[23] Le Guin, *Boccherini's Body,* 53-4; Stefano Castelvecchi, *Sentimental Opera: Questions of Genre in the Age of Bourgeois Drama* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), esp. ch. 1, "Pamela Goes to the Opera," 13–39.
[24] Jerome McGann, *The Poetics of Sensibility: A Revolution in Literary Style* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 7.
[25] See, for one, Castelvecchi, *Sentimental Opera,* ch. 5, "Sensibility and the Moral Cure," in particular, pp. 143–56.

the spectators take pleasure in the communal experience of feeling (take, for instance, Castelvecchi's reading of spectatorship in Paisiello's *Nina*.)[26] In certain cases, communal tears could signify more than pleasure. Anne Vincent-Buffault, in her seminal study of tears in French culture, notes that in the second half of the eighteenth century weeping at the theater was theorized as a "moral effect," yielding a "social pact of sensibility which turned the theatre into a sort of political assembly."[27] Viewed in this light, it seems no small matter when Millico specifies that the "entire audience" in Parma wept at his performance of recitative.[28] Clearly it would not have sufficed for the audience to have been merely astonished. Millico-as-author had to have all of them cry, presenting a visible, physicalized display of otherwise undiscernible feeling. The audience members' lachrymose fellow-feeling resonated sympathetically with the idea of Greek music as a moral force. Crucially, in Millico's anecdote it was less Gluck's music than the singer's vocal performance which achieved this "moral effect." His own voice had become an agent of moral edification.

Millico-Orfeo drew forth sympathetic tears because he had absorbed his auditors into the world of the opera. In tales about virtuosos such as Farinelli or Marchesi, voice often precludes listeners' absorption in the drama because the singer draws attention to his vocal skill (and, consequently, to himself), thereby overshadowing his portrayal of a role.[29] In Millico's tale, by contrast, the nameless "singer" subsumes himself within his character in order to maintain the audience's immersion in Orfeo's story. As Michael Fried has argued, as well as numerous scholars

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[26] Ibid.
[27] Anne Vincent-Buffault, *The History of Tears: Sensibility and Sentimentality in France,* trans. Teresa Bridgman (Basingstoke, UK: Macmillan, 1990), 67–8.
[28] "Fece piangere tutti gli ascoltatori." Millico, preface, n.p.
[29] See, for one, Feldman, *The Castrato,* 43. This distinction is admittedly somewhat murky, as it is impossible to pin down when exactly spectators began to associate the subjectivity of the onstage character with that of the singer-actor playing the role.

writing in his wake, absorption into a scene—whether in a painting, novel, or opera—facilitated the sympathy which led to tears of sensibility.[30] Absorption and its ensuing emotional display were understood as proving the immanent moral value of both spectator and spectated: the former by being open to feeling, and the latter by arousing those feelings.

Millico was well aware of this. After all, he had himself served as a litmus test for sensibility in his friend Frances Burney's 1778 novel *Evelina* (a few years after she had dubbed him "another Orpheus" during his performance of chamber songs in a London drawing-room).[31] In one scene in *Evelina,* the eponymous heroine attends the opera in London with her tacky middle-class relations. During the performance, her relatives complain about the exorbitant ticket prices and the Italian singing, but Evelina finds herself transfixed by "the sweet voice of Signor Millico," whose rendition of a "slow and pathetic" aria has "caught all [her] attention." Evelina's cousins mock her absorption as "affectation," but for Burney, that absorption marked Evelina as unself-consciously natural and full of genuine sensibility.[32] Millico's Parma anecdote draws on a similar trope—and his spectators' absorption is all the more striking because the singer is unnamed. Millico used the spectators' dual show of absorption and emotion to reaffirm the moral value of those spectators, as well as the "sensible" origin of the singer's performance.

Millico further legitimized Orfeo's voice by announcing it as intrinsically natural. Le Guin has noted that within the sentimental mode the narrator, whether Richardson's Pamela or, as I

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[30] Michael Fried, *Absorption and Theatricality: Painting and Beholder in the Age of Diderot* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1980); Castelvecchi, "From *Nina* to *Nina*: Psychodrama, Absorption and Sentiment in the 1780s," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 8, no. 2 (July 1996), 98-99; Feldman, *Opera and Sovereignty,* 375-7.

[31] Frances Burney, letter of 27 February, 1773, printed in *The Early Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney,* ed. Lars E. Troide (Oxford, UK: Clarendon, 1987), 1: 260.

[32] Frances Burney, *Evelina* [1778], ed. Edward A Bloom (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 93–4.

suggest here, Millico, had to appear natural in order to absorb the spectator(s) into the scene.[33] The narrative of the preface comes across as natural, rather than constructed, because Millico effaced the singer-version of himself from it. He thus gave the impression that he was recounting his experience as an impartial spectator, without revealing that the anecdote is his own textual "performance" of that story. Of course, as a famous singer of the role, he left it to his readers to insert him back into the narrative. Secondly, and more directly, Millico credited the unnamed singer's success to his "expressing the words with that naturalness which is necessary to the sentiments of the drama."[34] His word choice aligns his theory of vocal expression with Gluck's approach to vocal composition, in which, as Charles Burney put it, the Bohemian composer "shunned all parade of unnatural difficulty...endeavour[ing] to write for the voice in the natural tones of the human affections and passions."[35] Beyond Gluck, the affinity between Millico's theory and the vocal philosophy of Rousseau is unmistakable: authentic vocal expression comes from nature, conveying human passions, and thence derives its power over the affections.[36]

Millico must have also had personal stakes in identifying voice with sensibility and nature. Through his emphasis upon naturalness he pushed back against the common denigration of castrati as uncannily unnatural, a judgment upon their surgically altered bodies and high voices. Rousseau, ever obsessed by fantasies of nature, had condemned the practice of castration for singing as "barbaric," as "sacrificing nature to fortune."[37] As Feldman has shown, by the second half of the eighteenth century even Italian writers denounced castrati as "monsters" and "denatured."[38] Millico

[33] Le Guin, *Boccherini's Body*, 80-83.
[34] "[…] esprimendo le parole con quella naturalezza, ch'è necessaria al sentimento del Dramma." Millico, n.p.
[35] C. Burney, *Present State of Music in Germany*, 267, 264.
[36] See Introduction, above, and Rousseau, *Essay on the Origin of Languages,* passim.
[37] Rousseau, *Dictionnaire de musique* (Paris: Duchesne, 1768), s.v. "castrato."
[38] Feldman, *The Castrato,* 177–8.

had come under personal fire as both ugly and unpleasant, being called "il brutto Millico" by Calzabigi and "[una] brutta figura" by Alessandro Verri, among others.[39] Such charges were levelled not only at bodies, but at voices more broadly, as the discourse of the grotesque extended beyond the castrato's physiology in order to malign virtuosity in general. Take this 1781 description by Mantuan professor Matteo Borsa, which relies on what were already highly conventional stereotypes of Italian operatic singing:

> [The singer] stops, mouth open, with his hand motionless on his breast for three or four bars while he sings a single note almost until he has lost breath and then, the orchestra having dutifully fallen silent, entertains himself with a trill followed by a crazed vocal passage without design, known as a cadenza, then hardly has he come back to his senses and uttered a few words on his situation than he stumbles fatally into an A or an O which sends his epiglottis into a convulsion.[40]

The virtuoso solipsistically "entertains himself" instead of connecting with his listeners, with his role, or with the poetry. Borsa's language evokes physical and mental infirmity, the perversion of nature: the embellishments are "crazed" and "without design," delivered while the singer has taken leave of his "senses," and which drive him "fatally" into a "convulsion." The virtuosic voice was widely satirized as grotesquely insensible, the risible product of both disability and self-importance.

Essential to Millico's redemption of his own voice was bridging this gap between voice and nature, and he did so by positioning vocal expression as the sonic manifestation of feeling.

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[39] Calzabigi uses the phrase in reference to Millico in several letters to Montefani in 1778, during the preparations for the Bologna *Alceste.* See Corrado Ricci, *I teatri di Bologna nei secoli XVII e XVIII: storia aneddotica* (Bologna: Monti, 1888), 627–44. Alessandro Verri was a fan of Millico's singing and acting, as frequently expressed in letters to his brother Pietro throughout the 1770s, but he found the singer's offstage persona and physical appearance nonetheless repulsive. *Carteggio di Pietro e Alessandro Verri,* ed. Sara Rosini (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 2008-), vol. 8, no. 964, 15 January 1777, 243.

[40] Matteo Borsa, *La musica imitativa* (1781), qtd. in Renato Di Benedetto, "Poetics and Polemics," in *Opera in Theory and Practice, History and Myth,* 32.

Sensibility, rather than the voice itself, therefore became the foundation of Millico's program for vocal education:

> One should cultivate [young singers'] spirits to render them sensible to the movements of nature […] they should be taught to recognize the beauties of poetry, because then they could dress themselves in the sentiments of the poets, and experience in themselves the same effects that they should produce in their listeners, and when this is done, they should practice their natural voice […][41]

What is striking about Millico's approach is how he presents the passions as necessarily individual and interior rather than universal, external forces. Just as Illuministi like Bettinelli, Cesarotti, and Verri insisted that literary form had to take shape from affective content, for Millico the voice of sensibility had to grow from a singer's own interiority. Becoming "sensible to the movements of nature," here, means learning to feel the passions oneself instead of approximating them by imitating conventional affective models. The passions, Millico suggested, originate in nature rather than within the human; it is within the human that nature transforms into expression by way of individual experience. Thus young singers were not to emulate his Orfeo but, through exploring their own interiorities, recreate it anew. In Millico's theory, the "spirit" stands in for the resulting interiority, gradually becoming receptive to nature through a sensible education. Millico termed the process "cultivation," an appropriately naturalistic metaphor for labor. The condition of sensibility, attained after the spirit has become open to feeling, rendered a singer capable of moving hearts with song. Voice was now the medium through which interiority could be, not "represented," but literally and metaphorically "made sensible."

[41] "Si dovrebbe coltivare il loro spirito per renderlo sensibile ai movimenti della natura...si dovrebbe loro insegnare a discernere le bellezze della poesia, perchè si vestissero dei sentimenti degli autori, e provassero in loro medesimi quegli effetti, che dovranno produrre negli ascoltanti, e quando ciò fosse fatto, si dovrebbe esercitare la loro voce naturale." Millico, n.p.

Millico did not completely sidestep the issue of practical vocal technique. The natural voice could only be unlocked through sensibility, but, he cautioned, it must also have a technical foundation that supported the spontaneous effusions of sensibility. The voice must not sound nasal or throaty, and should be "rendered obedient, and flexible, like dough."[42] His (delightfully Italian) metaphor is significant in that it presents even the trained voice as somehow unfinished. Vocal technique is not itself the end product—the "bread," if you will—but rather the pliant "dough" that can be stretched into whatever form the singer requires in order to convey feeling. Technique would be taught in order to assist singers' sensible expression, transforming vocal technique from the *raison d'être* of song to its imperceptible underpinning.

Millico's theory of voice might thus be read as a prospectus for putting Bettinellian *farlo sentire* into practice. Bettinelli, counting among his friends and influences Frugoni, Condillac, and Rezzonico in Parma, and Beccaria and the Verri brothers in Milan, had published in 1769 an aesthetic treatise entitled *Dell'entusiasmo delle belle arti*. His central concern in *Dell'entusiasmo* was elaborating what Maria Teresa Marcialis calls "an aesthetics of experience": because the passions are natural and originary, they cannot be effectively represented by aesthetic conventions.[43] In the chapter entitled "Trasfusione" (transfusion), Bettinelli explains that the passions can only be demonstrated by provoking the same experience in a spectator in real time through what he refers to as "farlo sentire" (making it felt).[44] That which is originary and natural becomes perceptible only

[42] "Si dovrebbe esercitare la loro voce naturale, cosa, che la maggior parte de' cantanti trascurano, per cui le voci, o prendono il naso, o la gola, o il flautino, o tanti altri disgustosi difetti, indi renderla obbediente, e flessibile, come una pasta, a fine che potesse cangiarsi." Millico, n.p.
[43] Maria Teresa Marcialis, *Saverio Bettinelli: Un contributo all'estetica dell'esperienza* (Palermo: Centro internazionale studi di estetica, 1988), passim.
[44] Saverio Bettinelli, *Dell'entusiasmo delle belle arti* (Milan: Galeazzi, 1769), "Trasfusione," 142–53, and passim.

through individual experience. Not all artists could succeed in *farlo sentire,* however—only those rare individuals capable of true enthusiasm.

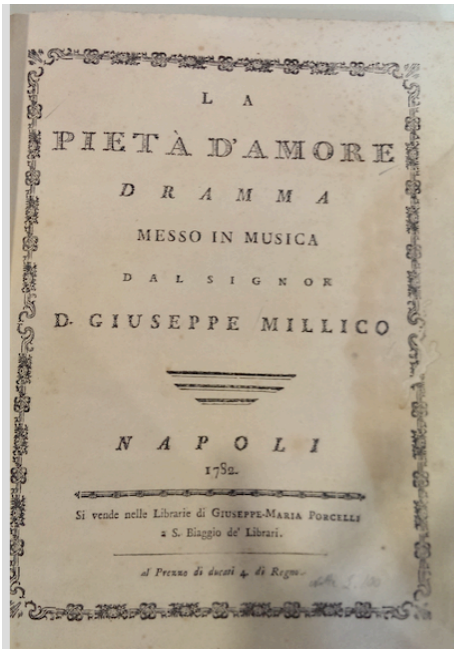
L A
PIETÀ D'AMORE
D R A M M A
MESSO IN MUSICA
D A L S I G N O R
D. GIUSEPPE MILLICO
N A P O L I
1782.
Si vende nelle Librarie di GIUSEPPE-MARIA PORCELLI
a S. Biaggio de' Librari.
al Prezzo di ducati 4. di Regno

Figure 1.1 Title page to Millico's *La pietà d'amore*, libretto by Antonino Lucchesi (Naples: Porcelli, 1782).

Orpheus's civilizing song

Millico's theory of expression proved more radical than Bettinelli's in that he suggested sensibility was potentially universal: not everyone had the tools to compose poetry or paint pictures with genuine Bettinellian enthusiasm, but almost everyone possessed a physical voice. Millico therefore bound voice even more tightly to sensibility by democratizing the notion of natural aptitude:

> Some modern singers will tell me that not all voices are capable of these perfections, and that consequently not all of them can produce the effects of Greek music. I reply to them that if the organs of the throat and the tongue, and the chest of the young singer are well-formed, all voices will produce more or less the same effect.[45]

[45] "Mi dirà forse qualche moderno cantore, che non tutte le voci sono suscettibili di queste perfezioni, e che non tutte per conseguenza possono produrre gli effetti della musica greca. Io gli rispondo, che se gli organi della gola, della lingua, e del petto del giovane cantante saranno ben formati, tutte le voci produrrano presso a poco il medesimo effetto." Millico, n.p.

The voice of sensibility could emerge from any well-trained, well-formed natural body—not from the deformation of nature but the embracing of it.[46] Millico's anyone-can-learn-to-sing mentality fit in with broader shifts in thinking about who was entitled to a voice and, consequently, to subjectivity and agency. Already in London and Paris, the burgeoning production of mass-printed vocal manuals advanced the notion that a competent singing voice could be attained by anyone who bought the right volume, as James Q. Davies has discussed in a nineteenth-century context.[47] Millico would not go quite that far, as he insisted on the necessity of in-person study with only the "most famous singers" as teachers.[48] Nonetheless, for Millico every healthy individual possessed a voice with the natural potential to arouse moral effects in those who heard it. This claim suggested that his Orphic triumph derived not from divinely bestowed gifts but from his own natural sensibility, "transfused" to the audience through the medium of voice. The labor of training the voice had discursively turned into cultivation of sensibility. In Millico's lyric ideology, sensibility, enthusiasm, and naturalness gave voice its emotional power. It was both universal and intensely individual.

Millico insinuated that these aesthetic considerations had very real implications for the political by subtly invoking two nascent concepts of subjectivity. Voice became, first, a metaphor for the expression of a sensible subject, and second, a marker of the agency of that subject within the

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[46] Certainly this was, in part, an advertisement for Millico's skill as a voice teacher, a position he held, at the time of publication, at the Neapolitan court. And indeed, Millico followed these claims in his essay with a history of his own self-taught technique and his successful instruction of Gluck's niece in Vienna.

[47] Examples in this period include *Instruction of Mr. Tenducci, to His Scholars* (London, 1785)and various editions of the *Solfèges d'Italie* (Paris, 1772–) On nineteenth-century vocal tutors and interiority, see James Q. Davies, *Romantic Anatomies of Performance,* ch. 5, "In Search of Voice," 123–51; on voice and the political, see *idem,* "Voice Belongs," in the colloquy "Why Voice Now?," conv. Martha Feldman, *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 68, no. 3 (Fall 2015): 677–81.

[48] "Ma per ottenere questo intento sarebbe a mio credere necessario, che i maestri de' cantanti fossero i più famosi cantanti." Millico, n.p.

political sphere. Both concepts resonated with the figure of Orpheus, who had long been associated with the political and social in addition to the aesthetic, as Vanessa Agnew and Pierpaolo Polzonetti have noted in their studies on Orpheus in eighteenth-century musical culture.[49] In 1725, Vico had emphasized the Orphic political and social, writing in his *La scienza nuova* that Orpheus "tamed the barbarians through their ears" and "taught the Greeks humanity" with his lyre. That lyre, Vico argued, "signified law," because the harmony of its strings had implemented a "civil empire."[50] Vico's pre-Enlightenment Orpheus aimed to civilize the barbarians with harmony and poetry, not with song per se. But forty-four years later, in the twilight of the Italian Enlightenment, Bettinelli explicitly located Orpheus's civilizing power in his song and, by extension, in his voice: Orpheus "became father and lord of the peoples domesticated by his song, and founded the most beautiful empire that has ever been, the empire of humanity and civil life."[51]

By the second half of the Settecento, Orpheus's song and Greek music were both read as connecting the aesthetic with the political through feeling, along the lines of Vincent-Buffault's "moral effect" of tears in the French theater. Planelli explained that the moral effects of ancient Greek music were superior to those of contemporary opera because Greek music came from Orphic song, and thus had as its purpose civil edification:

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[49] Vanessa Agnew, *Enlightenment Orpheus: The Power of Music in Other Worlds* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); Pierpaolo Polzonetti, "Tartini and the Tongue of Saint Anthony," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 67, no. 2 (Summer 2014), 429–86.

[50] "[Orfeo] vi compose in versi di maravigliosissima poesia, con la quale addimestica i barbari per gli orecchi. […] Viene finalemente Orfeo ad insegnarvi l'umanità […e] con tal lira, Orfeo ed altri poeti teologi, che professavano scienza di leggi, fondarono e stabilirono l'umanità della Grecia. […] Talchè la lira fu l'unione delle corde o forze de' padri, onde si compose la forza pubblica, che si dice 'imperio civile.'" Giambattista Vico, *La scienza nuova* (Naples: 1725–1744), §79, §615.

[51] "Orfeo dell'Esametro è l'inventore, e aggiugne [sic] corde alla cetra del Maestro, rinforza melodia, e forse ancora l'armonia, divien padre e signore di popoli mansuefatti al suo canto, e fonda il più bello imperio, che fosse mai, l'imperio della umanità e dell'amichevole vita." Translated into the past tense in English for clarity. Bettinelli, *Dell'entusiasmo,* 327–8.

> Through Orpheus [… men] had been invited to abandon their life of brutality […] and to enjoy, under the protection of law, the sweetness of civil society. […] With song accompanied by the harmony of a musical instrument [i.e., the lyre] men were taught their duties toward the Supreme Being, the laws of a nascent homeland were promulgated, and the principles of justice, friendship, conjugal love, courtesy, charity, compassion for others, and military courage were instilled.[52]

Millico built upon this myth while maintaining, contra Planelli, that even in modern times ("anche da noi") the Orphic voice could shape both the personal space of individual interiority and the public space of the political world—thereby revealing a natural and foundational relationship between the individual and the political. The Greeks had known true perfection in music, as Millico put it, but also democracy and civil power, all thanks to Orphic song. Whether Millico's Settecento Orfeo could (and should) accomplish the same proved an increasingly pressing concern for musicians and literati alike.[53]

Obbligato recitative and imitative melody

Within the musical language of late Settecento opera, what might Orphic song even sound like? And how could auditors recognize it as such? When Millico singled out the expressive high point of Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice,* he chose the recitative "Ahimè! dove trascorsi," and not the by-then famous aria it preceded, "Che farò senza Euridice?" Surely, emphasizing his performance of a

[52] "Da quali [Orfeo, Anfione, et al.] erano stati invitati [gli uomini] ad abbandonare una vita brutale […] e a godere sotto la protezion delle leggi le dolcezze della civile società. […] Con un canto accompagnato dall'accordo d'un musico stromento furono loro insegnati i doveri verso l'Essere Supremo, promulgate le leggi d'una patria nascente, istillate le massime della giustizia, dell'amistà, dell'amore coniugale, l'urbanità, la beneficenza, la compassione verso i loro simili, il coraggio militare." Planelli, *Dell'opera in musica,* 117–18.

[53] As an employee of the ruling Bourbon family in Naples, Millico would not have openly expressed any dissenting political views in the 1780s. However, he may have been secretly sympathetic to the radical cause: there is a sketch from 1794 that depicts Millico with Francesco Saverio Salfi, a literato and librettist who would five years later become secretary of the revolutionary Parthenopean (Neapolitan) Republic, along with two other men with known revolutionary leanings. All four, including Millico, are named and described by the artist as "Jacobins." The drawing is Francesco Lapegna's "Una riunione dei giacobini napoletani nel 1794," held in Naples's Museo di San Martino. It is mentioned briefly in Di Benedetto, "Music and Enlightenment," 151.

recitative, instead of the opera's most popular number, was an odd choice. By the 1770s, "Che farò senza Euridice?" had appeared often in manuscripts and prints across Europe, both à la carte and in aria collections.[54] Alessandra Martina shows that the aria circulated by itself on the Italian peninsula, mostly in Millico's E-flat version, and that the Italian diffusion of the opera stemmed almost exclusively from the Parma production rather than the Vienna one.[55] The recitative would have circulated along with the aria in many (but not all) cases, so it certainly was not obscure. Still, Millico hinged his entire vocal theory on a musical form that average Settecento operagoers famously associated with monotony.

Aside from the obvious arguments (that recitative invoked Greek drama, or was the focal point of Gluck and Calzabigi's aesthetic), Millico's focus on the recitative seems to have had a dual impetus. First, the recitative had been composed especially for his own voice by Gluck himself, as opposed to the arias, which were all transpositions of music written for Guadagni. During this time, arias were usually composed with a particular singer in mind and tailored to fit his or her voice. Singing an aria composed for another singer was a bit like wearing his or her ill-fitting suit of clothes. This question of "fit" had given rise early in the century to the practice of "suitcase" arias, in which singers could insert their preferred arias into extant roles in order to better show off their unique voices.[56] Interestingly, the role of Orfeo was not necessarily considered as having been tailored to

[54] Howard, *The Modern Castrato*, 136.
[55] In Italy, the most common version was a hybrid of the Parma and Vienna renditions, lacking the textual repetitions and high notes added for Millico at Parma, but set in Millico's higher-lying key of Eb major instead of the C major in which it was originally composed for Guadagni. Martina, 87–8.
[56] For example, see Margaret R. Butler, "From Guadagni's Suitcase: A Primo Uomo's Signature Aria and its Transformation," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 27, no. 3 (2015): 239–62; Jennifer Williams Brown, "On the road with the 'suitcase aria': The transmission of borrowed arias in late seventeenth-century Italian opera revivals," *Journal of Musicological Research* 15, no. 1 (1995): 323; Hilary Poriss, *Changing the Score: Arias, Prima Donnas, and the Authority of Performance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

Guadagni at all: in the diffusion of the work across Italy, Millico was often represented as the original Orfeo, almost as if the 1762 Vienna premiere with Guadagni had never happened (likely because Orfeo's arias circulated in copies made from the Parma production).[57] But popular misconceptions aside, the fact remains that unlike the arias, this recitative for Parma truly had been rewritten for Millico's voice.

The second, and more significant, reason that Millico focused on this recitative was because it allowed him the greatest expressive range and potential for personalization within the limits of Gluck and Calzabigi's reformist aesthetics.[58] In their *Orfeo,* arias had to be sung for the most part exactly as written, whereas recitatives required a speech-like flexibility of tempo and accentuation that derived from the performer's interpretation of the text. Put simply, this was where a singer could act, not only with gesture, but with his or her voice. The instrumental accompaniment in obbligato recitatives heightened the drama, yet left sufficient space for the actor-singer to deliver the text freely. Gluck and Calzabigi's approach to recitative followed a line proposed by many critics of opera seria, including Algarotti and Planelli, who had suggested that more such recitatives might smooth over the awkward acoustical and dramaturgical gaps between arias and secco recitative.[59]

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[57] In one instance, a manuscript score from the 1774 Naples (San Carlo) production—heavily reworked almost beyond recognition, without Gluck's approval—included the erroneous handwritten note that "the role of Orfeo, written for soprano, was accommodated and transposed for contralto" ("La parte di Orfeo scritta per soprano fu accomodata e trasportata per Contralto"). In Gluck and Calzabigi, *Orfeo ed Euridice,* I-Nc, 6.5.18; on these various Italian performing scores and their variants, see Martina, *Orfeo-Orphée,* 87.

[58] In opera seria, obbligato recitative is a type of musical declamation that combines rhythmic, pitched speech with instrumental accompaniment. The resulting stylistic register was considered more elevated and dramatic than that of normal secco (continuo-only) recitative, but freer and more text-focused than a fully-sung and accompanied aria. Until late in the century most serious operas contained more secco recitatives than obbligato. Gluck and Calzabigi had however insisted upon the superior expressivity of the latter, and used it exclusively in *Orfeo ed Euridice* in order to maintain dramatic intensity. Their reforms prohibited a singer's extemporized ornamentation in arias but left space for expressive vocal shading within obbligato recitatives.

[59] Ranieri de' Calzabigi and Christoph Willibald Gluck, *Preface to* Alceste (Vienna: 1769), facs. in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (Grove: London, 1980), 7: 466; Francesco Algarotti, *Saggio sopra l'opera in musica;*

Matteo Borsa, the virtuoso-mocking professor, found obbligato recitative so effective that he published an entire essay dedicated to it, entitled *La musica imitativa* (1781). Openly drawing upon the aesthetic theories of Rousseau and Diderot in addition to those of Bettinelli, his uncle and mentor, Borsa called for operatic declamation that followed the expressive accents of impassioned speech. Such "imitative melody," as he called it, allowed opera characters to naturally "give vent to their passions" and thereby move the hearts of their listeners. This was easy enough in comic opera, when the characters need only express their private everyday feelings. In serious opera, this was more difficult: imitating the vocal accents proper to larger-than-life seria passions could cause "the voice […] to break and choke." For that reason, the characters of opera seria were, as he put it, "voiceless": their arias pleased the senses but neither aroused nor expressed authentic emotion.[60]

While Millico conceived the passions as natural, albeit filtered through individual experience, for Borsa nature was utterly distinct from humanity. The passions emerged, not from nature, but from the uniquely human. Thus when it came to expressing those passions, nature's melodies were doomed to fall short of the human voice. Imitative melody gave characters passion, humanity, and voice. Clearly, many of these recurring terms—nature, imitation, passion—were moving discursive targets, ideologically charged yet fulfilling wildly different functions for Borsa and for Millico (that is, for literati and for singers, as we will see in more depth in chapter 2).

Planelli, *Dell'opera in musica*; Millico, preface to *La pietà d'amore*. Metastasio reportedly rejected this solution, claiming that overuse of obbligato recitative would diminish its potency. See Di Benedetto, "Poetics and Polemics," 42.

[60] Borsa, *La musica imitativa,* 220. Borsa is here comparing the characters in an opera seria, where he claims ostentation and vocal virtuosity ruled all, to those in opera buffa, which was based on naturalness. Although *Orfeo* is clearly not an opera buffa, Borsa did single it out as a model for *melodia imitativa,* set in opposition to *melodia naturale.* For Borsa, the characters that have "voice" are those who express their passions naturally, i.e., in *melodia imitativa,* while those restricted by the conventions of opera seria are "afoni," voiceless (lit., unable to phonate).

A "unified, complete, and musical whole": *Orfeo* (Venice, 1776)

Borsa's model for imitative melody was neither opera buffa nor opera seria but *Orfeo,* with its unprecedented wealth of *obbligato* recitatives. It was not, however, Gluck's opera that inspired Borsa, but a different one, which he called "a unified, complete, and musical whole": the *Orfeo* that premiered at Venice's Teatro S. Benedetto for Carnival in 1776, set to music by Ferdinando Bertoni (and without Calzabigi's approval, of course).[61] Gluck's *Orfeo* had by then been produced in several major Italian centers following the Parma version, including Bologna, Naples, and Florence, but had not yet appeared in what was arguably the capital of the Italian operatic scene.[62] Significantly, for Venice, no mere reworking of Gluck's score would do. It was only with Bertoni's remake, driven by none other than Guadagni, that Orfeo set foot in La Serenissima.

The 1776 Venetian *Orfeo* remake may be interpreted as Guadagni's attempt to bring Orfeo home to Italy on his own terms. While Millico traipsed across Europe as Gluck's chosen castrato, in the early 1770s Guadagni took *Orfeo* to other European cities in his own version of Orphic proselytizing. Indeed, Guadagni's self-identification with the character soon became part and parcel of the opera's mythology. He began inserting his own version of the aria "Men tiranne, " the *pièce de résistance* of Orfeo's Underworld scena, into almost all productions after premiering it in 1770 in London—quite ironic, given Gluck and Calzabigi's draconian stance on aria substitutions. Furthermore, circa 1773 in Paris, where Gluck and Millico were working on the French *Orphée,* a

[61] "Un tutto legato, compiuto e musicale." Borsa, *La musica imitativa,* 216. The opera premiered on 3 January. The libretto is Calzabigi's, albeit with a few minor alterations. Borsa's essay is actually in large part an argument in favor of Italian comic opera, which he claimed was more verisimilar because of the typical vocal style (which was more declamatory and less virtuostic than that of opera seria).

[62] Borsa might have had the opportunity to hear a (significantly reworked) version of Gluck's setting in Bologna in 1771, Florence in 1771 and 1774, and Naples in 1774, although we have no evidence that he encountered Calzabigi's libretto before the 1776 Venetian production with Bertoni's score. On these quasi-pasticcio Italian productions in the early 1770s, see Martina, *Orfeo-Orphée,* 17-157.

spurious rumor circulated that Orfeo's entire vocal part had been composed not by Gluck but by Guadagni himself.[63] That same year, Millico brought Gluck's original one-act *Orfeo* to London, an implicit corrective to the bloated, three-act pasticcio rendition given there by Guadagni in 1770. After this, Guadagni and Millico were set in opposition to one another by the London opera world: both Frances and Charles Burney complained that Guadagni's fans made sure that Millico's performance in Sacchini's *Tamerlano* was received with "coldness," while the London press opined that Millico was a better singer with a "sweeter" voice than Guadagni, even if he "did not play the character [Orfeo] so well" as Guadagni.[64] Cattelan and Howard both argue that Guadagni's acting ability had indelibly shaped the 1762 Vienna production, in that it enabled the poet and composer to build the work around his particular strengths. Guadagni was known for his onstage persona and dedication to acting—unsurprising, given that he had spent the 1750s in London training in the new, naturalistic acting style under the great Shakespearean David Garrick. His quasi-sacred commitment to absorptive acting led many to laud him as the real vehicle of opera reform.[65] Guadagni must have felt rather possessive of his legacy, given that his talents were literally and symbolically bound to Gluck and Calzabigi's *Orfeo*.

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[63] La Borde, *Essai sur la musique ancienne et moderne* (Paris: Pierres, 1780), 3: 317; qtd. in Cattelan, "Altri Orfei," x. La Borde also attributed Durazzo's choice of subject to Guadagni's acting talent, and noted how much Guadagni's portrayal had been celebrated all over Europe. Note that Millico was not singing Orphée in Paris—the anti-castrato French would not have liked that at all—but rather advising Gluck and taking part in the social scene.

[64] F. Burney, *Early Letters and Journals,* vol. 1, journal entry of 27 February, 1773, p. 256. The reviews appear in *The Morning Chronicle* (10 March 1773) and *The Evening Post* (9–11 March 1773), and both are qtd. in Howard, *The Modern Castrato,* 196.

[65] Guadagni "always gives pleasure but rarely astonishes." Giammaria Ortes to Johann Adolph Hasse, letter of 31 December 1768, trans. in Howard, *The Modern Castrato,* 120. On *Orfeo ed Euridice* as Guadagni's "one-man-show," and his acting as oratorio-esque, see Cattelan, "Altri Orfei," x, xiv; on Calzabigi's preference for Guadagni as "one of the in-crowd," see ibid., xviii. Daniel Heartz has written on the influence of David Garrick's acting style upon Viennese opera reform via Guadagni in "From Garrick to Gluck: The Reform of Theater and Opera in the Mid-Eighteenth Century," *Proceedings of the Royal Music Association* 94 (1967–8): 111–27.

And so Guadagni brought his Orphic role along in his "suitcase" when he returned in 1772 to Padua, where he had been on the roster of the choir of the Cappella Antoniana since his teenage years.[66] As Paolo Cattelan has discovered through archival research at the Santo, Guadagni and other castrato singers from the choir gave semi-staged, private performances of Gluck and Calzabigi's opera under the auspices of the marchese Giuseppe Ximenes. The atmosphere of Ximenes's Paduan academy fostered what was still, for Italy, a highly experimental operatic style.[67] In order to bring Orfeo out of private academies and court theaters and into a commercial opera house, however, Guadagni and his Paduan collaborators recognized that the opera had to be significantly reworked to appeal to public taste. They set aside Gluck's score and settled on Ferdinando Bertoni as the one to compose a Venice-friendly *Orfeo*. Bertoni was already in the orbit of the Paduan academy through his own association with Ximenes, and was well-known in Venice as the organist at San Marco and chorus-master at the Ospedale. His previous operas for Venice had enjoyed moderate success, and Guadagni sang in several of them in the late 1760s.[68] The combination of moderate fame and a willingness to follow Guadagni's lead made Bertoni an ideal choice for the composer of a Venetian remake.

There are many similarities between Gluck's and Bertoni's settings—understandable, given the uniqueness of Calzabigi's libretto and Guadagni's influence—but I focus on Bertoni's setting here as the version offered to a discerning Venetian audience and, as such, purposely "Italianized."

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[66] Cattelan argues that Guadagni's extensive experience singing sacred music in the Santo, along with his roles in Handel's oratorios in London, contributed to his "mythical," quasi-religious acting style. See "Altri Orfei," xiv.
[67] Paolo Cattelan, "La musica della 'omnigena religio': Accademie musicali a Padova nel secondo Settecento," *Acta Musicologica* 59, no. 2 (1987): 152–86; Martina, "L'*Orfeo* di Bertoni e gli altri *Orfei* veneziani," in *Orfeo-Orphée,* 135–52.
[68] George Truett Hollis, "Ferdinando Giuseppe Bertoni (1725–1813): A Study of His Operas and His Contribution to the Cavatina" (PhD diss., University of Southern California, 1973), 91.

Many of the central artistic and dramaturgical tensions that undergird Gluck's setting, I contend, come to the fore in Bertoni's. Put simply: while Gluck and Calzabigi could experiment more freely within the walls of Vienna's imperial court theater, Bertoni had to keep in mind audience expectations in a commercial theater in a major Italian opera center. Bertoni juxtaposed its reform elements with an idiomatically Italianate musical style—translating for the Venetian audience a new operatic approach to representing emotion. Bertoni had consulted Gluck's score as he worked, which he acknowledged in a brief prefatory note. Still, the composer followed only the bare bones stipulations for opera reform as laid out in the preface to *Alceste,* while keeping such essential Italianate elements as ornamented textual repetitions, climactic high notes, galant orchestrations, and so on.[69] Bertoni's harmonic palette is adventurous, but less aggressively so than Gluck's, evincing his attention to audience expectations. He also highlighted his singers' technical capabilities in a way Gluck had not, expanding the tessituras of the lead roles both upwards and downwards, and introducing leaps of octaves and tenths into the vocal line to display the singers' mastery of registration. Overall, Bertoni's vocal writing in *Orfeo* is more florid than Gluck's version, yet also more conducive to legato, *cantabile* singing.

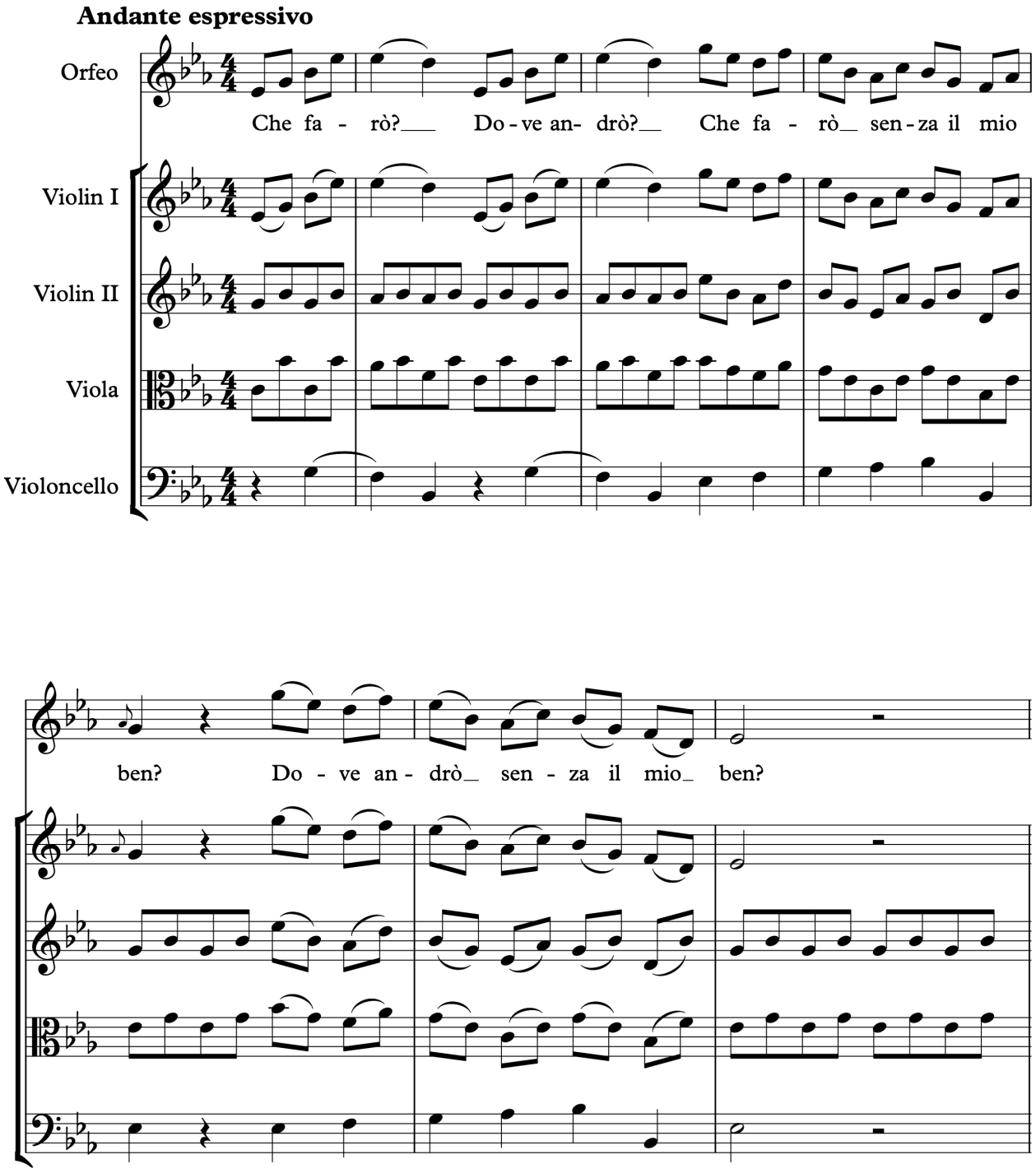
For an example of Bertoni's voice-friendly style, take the "refrain" of "Che farò senza Euridice?" Gluck's setting requires the singer to execute ascending and descending melodic lines via arpeggios in equal rhythmic values, something that sounds simple and is easy on a stringed instrument but is much less so with the voice (mm. 459-63; see **example 1.3**). Arpeggios of this type

[69] "Accintomi alla esecuzione, e privo dell'assistenza del Poeta, cui consultare al bisogno, credei mia fortuna, e interesse aver sotto gli occhi l'esemplare del sovralodato Maestro per seguirne le tracce, nell'ordine almeno da lui tenuto." Bertoni, preface to printed score, *Orfeo, azione teatrale* (Venice: Alessandri e Scattaglia, 1776), n.p. These similarities gave rise to a giant smear campaign against Bertoni, initiated by the Parisian Gluckists over the aria "L'espoir renaît dans mon âme"; see Tom Hammond, "A Note on the Aria di Bravura 'L'espoir renaît dans mon âme,'" in *C.W. von Gluck: Orfeo, Cambridge Opera Handbooks,* ed. Patricia Howard (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 109–12.

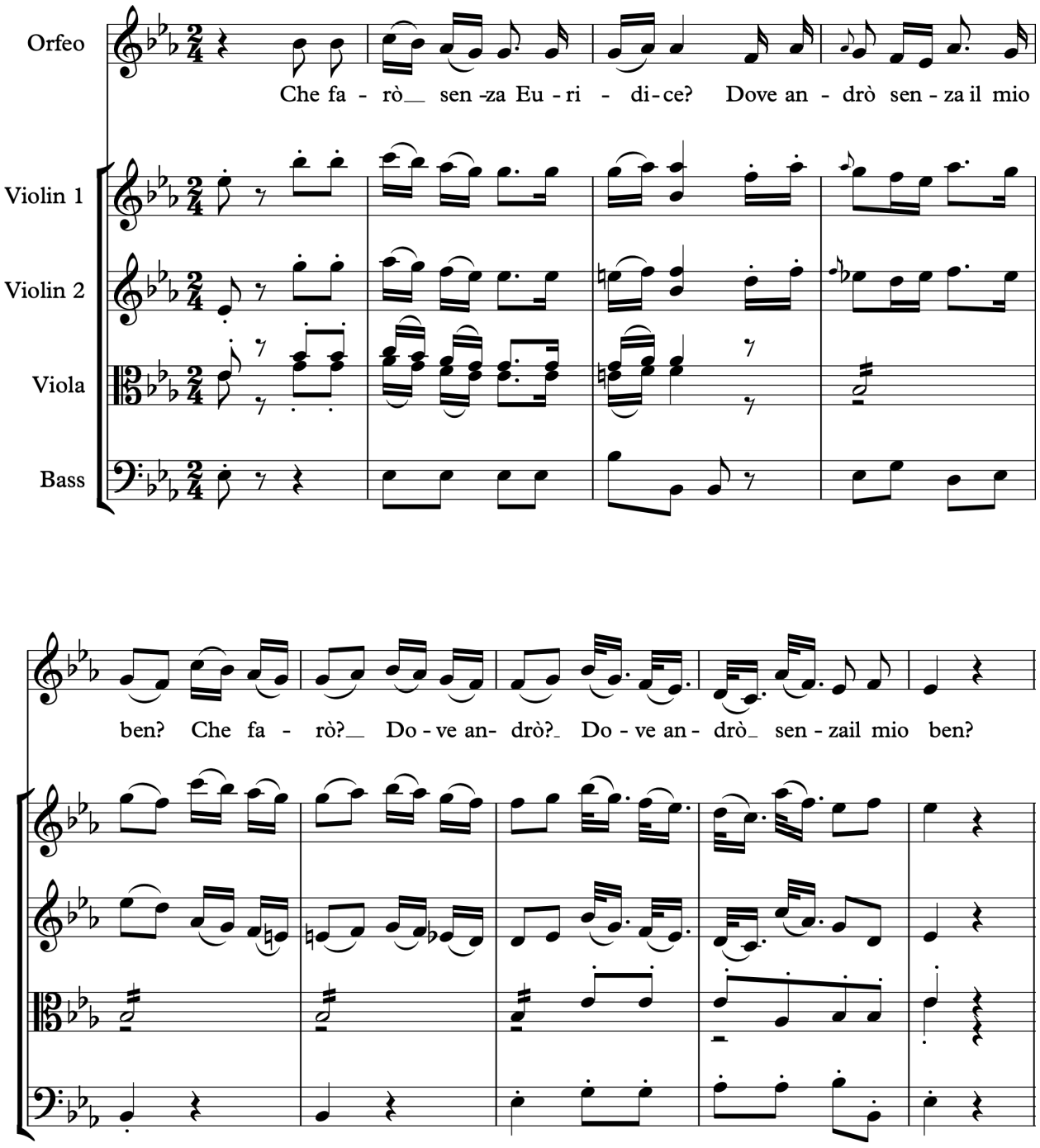
are quite common in Gluck's vocal writing, and in a way exemplify the composer's aesthetic: pretensions to simplicity which simultaneously rely on and obscure a high level of art. Bertoni set the same refrain in dotted-note arpeggios and descending stepwise motion, both of which facilitate a legato line across the changing open and closed vowel sounds (that is, "e-a-o"; mm. 12-15; **example 1.4**). Bertoni's take sounds showier, to be sure, but in reality it caters to the demands of the vocal instrument by making the vocalic transitions smoother. In this instance, Gluckian simplicity demands more control than Italian floridity does, undermining the Gluckian ideology of simplicity as fundamentally "natural." How much art was necessary for the appearance of simplicity, of naturalness? Even in Guadagni's performance of Gluck's setting, as recorded by Domenico Corri from the London performance of 1770, the singer ornamented these same phrases with dotted rhythms and inserted scalar melismas—much like those that later appeared in Bertoni's score.[70] Perhaps "natural" meant something quite different in the Italian tradition when it came to voice—less musical simplicity than a kind of vocal *sprezzatura*.

[70] Gluck/Guadagni, "Che farò senza Euridice?" in Domenico Corri, *A Select Collection of the Most Admired Songs* (Edinburgh: 1779), 1: 38-41.

Example 1.3 Gluck/Calzabigi, "Che farò senza Euridice?" from *L'atto d'Orfeo*, I-PAc, MS.M.C.C.20, 100^{V} – 101^{R}.



Example 1.4 Bertoni/Calzabigi, "Che farò senza Euridice?" *Orfeo*, azione teatrale (Venice: 1783), p. 80.



To whatever extent Guadagni influenced Bertoni's music, the remake successfully engaged the twin Venetian fascination with voice and novelty. The opera was repeated throughout the

Carnival season, even though tickets were twice as expensive as usual in order to cover the production costs, and it was reprised in June for the visit of the Grand Duke and Duchess of Tuscany. It was programmed again for the 1783 (S. Benedetto) and 1795 (La Fenice) seasons, by which time Guadagni had retired, and put on at other theaters from London to Esterhaža.[71] There were even two print runs of the complete score, in 1776 and 1783, confirming the opera's popularity—and the publicity push behind it (as opera scores were rarely printed at that time in Italy). Audiences and critics alike applauded the work. Even as Borsa had focused his praise on the recitatives, others appreciated the opera's so-called "natural melody." The abate Giammaria Ortes, for one, compared Bertoni's setting with Gluck's by pointing out that although Gluck's would appeal to anyone with a heart, Bertoni's would be preferred by those who make more use of their ears. The implication of Ortes' comment is perhaps less that Bertoni's music was emotionally unaffecting, and more that, unlike Gluck's, it was both moving and aesthetically pleasing.[72] Bertoni's *Orfeo* achieved this balance by offering up dramaturgically strategic moments of beautiful vocalism while also staging the power of vocal restraint, all the while tempering reformist ideology through musico-stylistic language that was familiar to its audience.

I approach Bertoni's opera as an Italianized musical intervention into late eighteenth-century debates about the gap between emotion and its aesthetic representation, helmed by Guadagni. The Venetian *Orfeo* played with mounting tensions between voice and text—between presence-based

[71] Francesco Caffi, "Bertoni," in *Storia della musica sacra nella già Cappella Ducale di San Marco in Venezia dal 1318 al 1797* (Venice: Antonelli, 1854–5), 439ff.

[72] "Quella [Orfeo] di Gluc [sic] è veramente più semplice e però piacerà generalmente più a chi à cuore, ma questa non piacerà meno, e sarà forse preferita a quella da quei che più che del cuore fan uso dell'orecchie." Letter from Ortes to Signora Burgioni in Berlin, 2 February 1776. Qtd. in Sven H. Hansell, "Ferdinando Bertoni's Setting of Calzabigi's *Orfeo ed Euridice,*" in *Venezia e il melodramma nel Settecento,* ed. Maria Teresa Muraro (Florence: Olschki, 1981), 191. This comparison resonates with the discourse of the Gluck-Piccinni *querelle*, which was happening around the same time in Paris (ca. 1774–80).

immediacy and the musico-poetic "work." In performance, the opera left ambiguous the boundaries separating Guadagni, Orfeo, and Calzabigi/Bertoni: when did expressive agency belong to the performer, when to the character, and when to the composer and/or poet? Diverging then from typical readings of the Orpheus myth in music, mine suggests that the Venetian *Orfeo* was not about vaunting the power of music above all else, but about the parity of words and music in an expressive context and the central role of the actor-singer.[73] Through the role of Orfeo—the original poet-singer-composer—Guadagni's Paduan-Venetian cohort dramatized the interrelatedness of words, music, and voice through a conflict between immediacy of passion and its aesthetic representation. The Venetian *Orfeo* therefore also reinscribed Guadagni as Orpheus incarnate, a singer who prioritized expression above vocal display.

Staging immediacy

The Venetian *Orfeo* became an experiment in staging verisimilar emotion within the formal constraints of Settecento opera. Bertoni's arias appealed to audience's ears, but the composer magnified their expressive meaning by limiting and interrupting them. In *Orfeo*'s aesthetic framework, a character's spontaneous feeling causes fragmentation of text and of music, indicated by ellipses and exclamations, changing poetic meters, and hybrid musical forms. Following the layout of Calzabigi's libretto, the strophes or refrains of Orfeo's cavatinas frame interludes of *obbligato*

[73] One could apply this reading to the opera more generally—at least, that Gluck and Calzabigi agreed upon the symbiotic nature of poetry and score—but that is beyond the scope of this chapter. On the parity of words and music in Calzabigi's aesthetics, see Fubini, "L'estetica," passim. Calzabigi's letter to the Bologna theater during preparations for the 1778 *Alceste* there reveals his concern with the contributions of the performer: "Senza Attori animati, che più mirino all'espressione ed all'azione che cerchino di rendersi interessati ed appassionati in ciò che dicono e fanno, queste Tragedie Musiche non ponno esporsi al pubblico, e qualora incurantemente ed all'uso nostrale si espongano, in vece di produrre il maraviglioso, d'eccitare il terrore e la compassione cadono nel ridicolo." Calzabigi to Antonio Montefani, letter of 17 April 1778, qtd. in Martina, *Orfeo-Orphée,* 93.

recitative or other declamatory (as opposed to *cantabile*) vocal writing. The dramatic effect is that of Orfeo singing part of an aria, then interrupting himself with a speechlike outburst. These sudden shifts, from singing marked as "singing" to singing marked as "speech," epitomize what I call, drawing on the eighteenth-century writings of Burney and Coleridge, lyric effusions. The term is typically associated with lyric poetry. As M.H. Abrams, one of the major twentieth-century scholars of literary Romanticism, puts it: the lyric effusion is "a spontaneous expression of personal circumstances and feelings."[74] The lyric effusion ranges in scale from a single word or line to an entire poem. For instance, in the 1790s, Samuel Taylor Coleridge composed what he labeled as poetic "effusions," verses lacking in "oneness of thought" that were something of a precursor to a full-on "lyric poem." As an appropriately Orphic example of the effusion/lyric trajectory, consider his "Effusion XXXV," which he later developed into "The Eolian Harp."[75]

For our purposes, then, the notion of lyric effusion can be used to conceptualize the verisimilar emulation of a spontaneous, emotionally-driven utterance. Put another way, it is the diegetic intrusion of "real time" into "aria time": an eruption of immediacy within the broader lyric moment. In ancient epic (such as the *Iliad*), the lyric moment takes place out of time, temporarily suspending the narrative flow of events. In eighteenth-century opera, "aria" is often designated as the "lyric moment." This is based on the definition of lyric as sung poetry, as well as the idea that aria, like the lyric moment, also typically happens outside of narrative time. More specifically, in Metastasian dramaturgy an aria tends to halt narrative time and provide a character with space to

[74] M.H. Abrams, *Correspondent Breeze: Essays on English Romanticism* (New York: Norton, 1986), 160.
[75] Samuel Taylor Coleridge published thirty-six of these "effusions" in his 1796 *Poems on Various Subjects* and defined them in the preface as works "lacking *oneness* of thought" (emphasis in orig.) As Jerome McGann glosses it, an effusion in Coleridge's oeuvre "tries to represent a variety of more primal experiences," before gradually growing into and becoming a full-on lyric poem. See McGann, *The Poetics of Sensibility,* 20.

reflect on his or her situation, yielding a stylized distinction between emotion and action/dialogue (though of course there are many exceptions). This non-verisimilar approach to diegetic time served in part to distance a character from the immediacy of his or her own emotional state, facilitating what Mário Vieira de Carvalho calls a "dissociation of outer behavior from inner experience." The "dissociation" is mirrored by the musico-poetic structures of opera seria; *secco* recitative correlating with outer behavior and da capo aria with inner experience.[76] In run-of-the-mill opera seria arias, the feeling of spontaneity was attained through the practices of extemporized vocal embellishments and, as Feldman has shown, through exchange between performer and audience.[77]

So what about inner experience expressed, not as reflection, but as spontaneous feeling? That is, not just accompanied recitative leading into an aria, but internal to it? By locating spontaneous effusions within a broader lyric moment, the expression of inner experience becomes a dynamic process. Again, this has been theorized with regard to British Romantic poetry—most famously so by Wordsworth himself, who in the Preface to his *Lyrical Ballads* described the process of creating poetry as "emotion recollected in tranquillity" that "gradually" leads to "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings."[78] The lyric effusion that I take up here is the verisimilar emulation of spontaneity on a quasi-diegetic level. The distinction I seek resonates with Borsa's claim that "although the illustrious Metastasio enchants me as I read him at my table, in the theater only *Orfeo* can move me

[76] Mário Vieira de Carvalho, "From Opera to 'Soap Opera': On Civilizing Processes, the Dialectic of Enlightenment and Postmodernity," *Theory, Culture & Society* 12 (1995): 42.
[77] Feldman, *Opera and Sovereignty,* ch. 2, "Arias: Form, Feeling, Exchange," 42–96.
[78] Consider Wordsworth's famous definition of poetry in the *Lyrical Ballads* Preface (1800): "I have said that poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity: the emotion is contemplated till, by a species of reaction, the tranquillity gradually disappears, and an emotion, kindred to that which was before the subject of contemplation, is gradually produced, and does itself actually exist in the mind." Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (1802), rept. in William Wordsworth, *The Major Works, including* The Prelude (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 611.

with full force."[79] In his view, *Orfeo* transfuses emotion directly to the listener, in the vein of Bettinelli's enthusiasm, because of the perceived immediacy and mobility with which the work represents that emotion. By contrast, Metastasio's chain of lyric moments represents emotion through and as a series of aesthetic objects to be contemplated at a distance. The concept of the lyric effusion therefore offers a framework for understanding late-eighteenth-century attempts to represent the immediacy of emotional experience, in line with Verri's and Cesarotti's argument that aesthetic forms should grow out of affective content instead of dictating and limiting it. Extant musical forms, like poetic ones, were similarly broken and re-formed to follow, not restrain, verisimilar ebbs and flows of feeling. By uniting different registers of vocal expression into one closed-form number, as happens several times in *Orfeo,* the line blurred between verisimilar spontaneity and marked performance.

Part of the reason that this dynamic process is particularly evident in the case of *Orfeo* is because the interplay between song and emotion is central to Orfeo's identity as a poet-singer. Already, given Guadagni's Orphic self-fashioning, there was a perceived affinity between Orfeo-the-singer and the real singer portraying him. This seemed to collapse the distinction between character and performer, inviting an audience to hear the performer's subjectivity as intertwined with that of the character he played. Charles Burney demonstrated the effects of such a collapse in his description

[79] "Sebbene l'illustre *Metastasio* mi rapisca leggendolo al mio tavolino, al teatro però solo l'Orfeo può colpirmi" (italics in orig.) Borsa*, La musica imitativa,* 216. Gillen D'Arcy Wood has argued that a Metastasian aria and lyric poem are similar in that they both function "as a vehicle of intense, momentary feeling"; he goes on to state that "because a singer […] cannot both sing and cry at once—that is, both truly feel and make art at the same time—the performance of the aria depends on highly formalized protocols that accommodate the physiological demands of vocal production to the dramatic representation of feeling." I would thus position the lyric effusion as akin to the Romantic "lyric turn" (or the Petrarchan *volta,* even), but with a sense of urgency from the musical-vocal setting that enhances that of the textual content. See Wood, "Crying Game: Operatic Strains in Wordsworth," *ELH* 71, no. 4 (2004): 985.

of Guadagni's portrayal of Orfeo in London in 1770. Burney seemed to hear Orfeo's lyric effusions as coming from Guadagni himself:

> The Music he sung was the most simple imaginable; a few notes with frequent pauses, and opportunities of being liberated from the composer and the band were all he wanted. And in these *seemingly extemporaneous effusions*, he proved the inherent power of melody totally divorced from harmony and unassisted even by unisonous accompaniment [emphases added].[80]

Patricia Howard has responded with puzzlement to Burney's commentary by pointing out that, upon her examination of Guadagni's notated embellishments for the role, "effusions are thin on the ground."[81] I would agree—and by way of explanation, suggest that Burney may well have been thinking of "effusions" *not* as vocal ornamentation, but as the many instances in which Guadagni erupted into emotionally-charged declamation (though, of course, his opportunities for doing so had been scripted for him by the librettist and composer). Something in Guadagni's vocal performance, or even the phenomenology of vocal performance itself, led even so canny a listener as Burney to map this spontaneity onto the performer rather than onto the text.

The expressive immediacy and emotional dynamism Guadagni brought to the role was noted by others who had heard his Orfeo in London. One writer contrasted Guadagni's effusiveness with Millico's approach to the character, noting how "the whole [dispute over the role] comes to this Point whether a Man should be affected by a sudden Event of distress, passionately & hastily [as in Guadagni's portrayal], or with despondency & dejection [as in Millico's]. These are their two ways

[80] C. Burney, *General History*, II: 876. It seems unlikely that Burney was writing of cadenzas or embellishments here, as Corri's account of Guadagni's ornamentation and Guadagni's own setting of "Men tiranne" seem a bit too musically restrained for such an interpretation. I read Burney's comment as addressing the immediacy and apparent spontaneity with which Guadagni delivered recitative, based upon the note that he was "unassisted even by unisonous accompaniment" (that is, continuo).
[81] Patricia Howard, *The Modern Castrato,* 139.

of Singing it."[82] The lyric effusion went beyond musical and textual markers, as the difference between passion and pathos boiled down to the performance. In Guadagni's portrayal, these "seemingly extemporaneous effusions" staged the kind of emotional spontaneity idealized by Diderot in *Paradox of the Actor*—without undermining the unity of expression required to maintain dramatic absorption.

In the Venetian *Orfeo,* Guadagni's effusions would have become audible only a minute or two into Orfeo's first solo number, "Cerco il mio ben così" (act 1, scene 1; see **table 1.1** for a chart of the scene's structure).

ORFEO: Cerco il mio ben così,	I thus seek my beloved,
In queste ove morì,	Where she died,
Funeste sponde,	On these sad shores;
Ma sola al mio dolor	But to my sorrow
Perché conobbe amor	(because she knew love)
L'Eco risponde.	only Echo responds.

At first, the cavatina is lively and galant, evoking sobs and sighs with a lilting, major-mode ritornello and a vocal melody characterized by sentimental dotted- and Lombard rhythms. After Orfeo's lengthy introductory recitative in the opening choral tableau, "Cerco il mio ben" seems markedly more like "singing." But something unusual happens after nature intrudes into Orfeo's grief, a transition augured by the horns and oboes "echoing" his last melodic line ("L'Eco risponde"). The woodwinds' echo shakes him out of the lyric moment and back into real time: he spontaneously cries "Euridice! Euridice! ah!," switching from aria into recitative and thereby breaking the expected

[82] George Bussy Villiers, letter to Lady Spencer, 16 March 1773, qtd. in Ian Woodfield, *Opera and Drama in Eighteenth-Century London: The King's Theatre, Garrick and the Business of Performance* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 50.

musical and poetic form (**example 1.5**).[83] The average audience member in a Venetian opera house in 1776 must have understood this as dramaturgically significant, especially if Guadagni emphasized the break by modifying his declamation style.

Compounding the sense of immediacy, Orfeo's recitative speech is riddled with enjambments, as if the line breaks cannot keep his emotion from spilling over. He repeats words—"il misero Orfeo, Orfeo infelice […] Euridice, idol mio, cara Euridice"—in paratactic syntax (an intriguing aspect of eighteenth-century dramatic lyric, as discussed by Gabrielle G. Starr).[84] The effect indexes the smattering of dashes, ellipses, and exclamations emblematic of eighteenth-century sentimental literature. As Janine Barchas, Michael Vande Berg, and other literary scholars have shown, typography and extra-grammatical utterances provided the textual means through which contemporary authors conveyed the immediacy and material vocality of impassioned speech.[85] While opera audiences did not necessarily see Calzabigi's punctuation and enjambments on the page, they did not need to. Bertoni intensified the recitative effusion with a series of chromaticisms and *fortissimo* diminished sonorities, transforming Calzabigi's visual-textual markers of impassioned

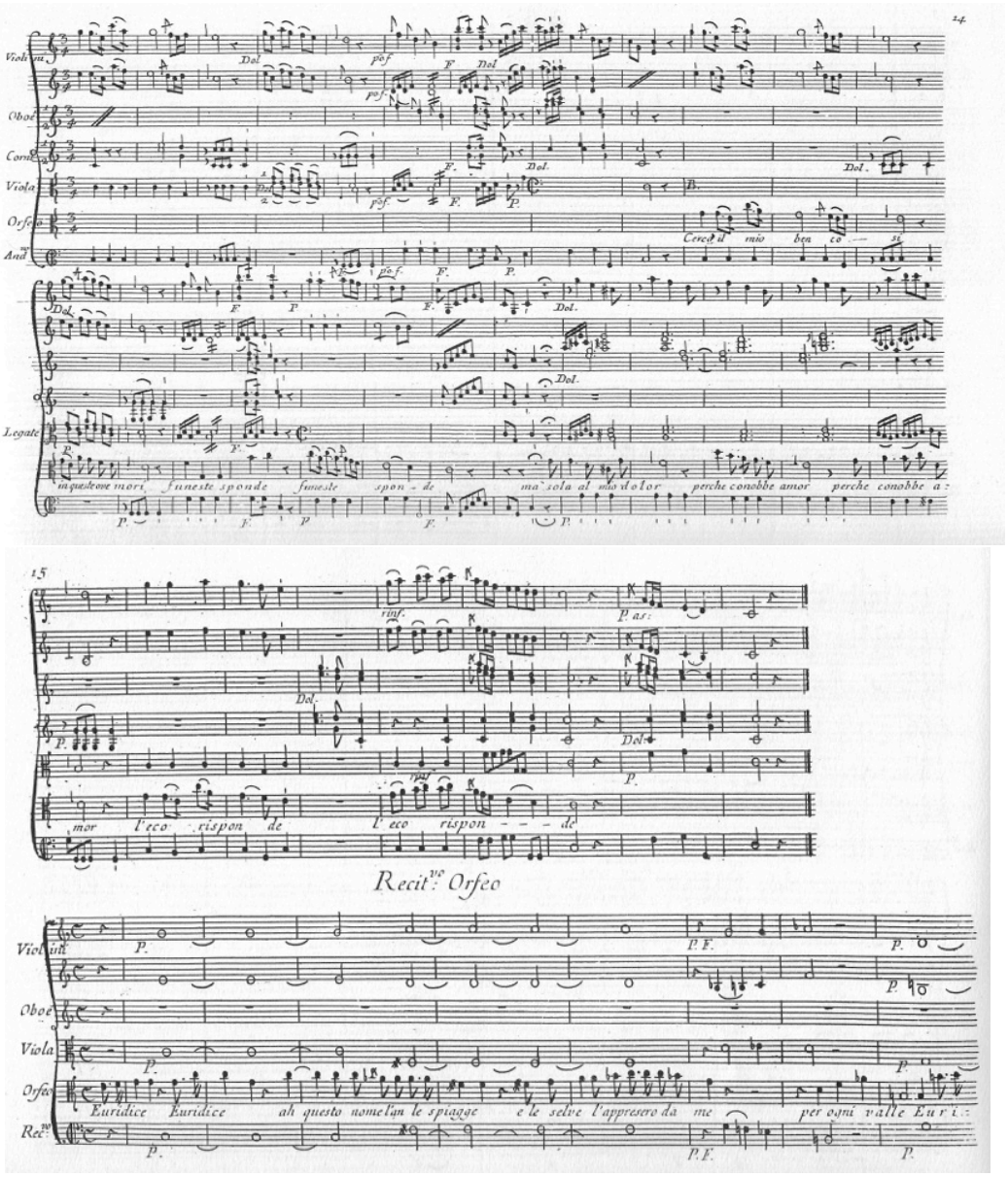
[83] The aria text is set in *settenari* and *quinari,* but the recitative text is in freer *versi sciolti* (as is typical for each). Also noteworthy is the fact that the aria text draws upon classical Latin verse, while the recitatives are of Calzabigi's own invention; the two strophes of the cavatina expand upon the Orpheus story from Virgil's *Georgics,* Book IV: "But Orpheus' self,/ Soothing his love-pain with the hollow shell [the lyre],/ Thee his sweet wife on the lone shore alone,/ Thee when day dawned and when it died he sang." From <http://classics.mit.edu/Virgil/georgics.4.iv.html>, accessed 24 April 2017. Interestingly, when I played recordings of Bertoni's and Gluck's settings of this part during a conference presentation, listeners agreed that Bertoni's shift here was especially noticeable due to the more "aria-esque" style of the preceding music. However, we all agreed that the effect is largely dependent on the singer's performance, and could go unnoticed if a performer chose not to bring it out. Many thanks to the participants in the "Operatic Workings of the Mind" conference at Oxford (September 2018) for their insights.

[84] See Gabrielle G. Starr on Aphra Behn, lyric, and soliloquoy in *Lyric Generations,* 54; also Castelvecchi, "From *Nina* to *Nina.*"

[85] Michael Vande Berg has written of Laurence Sterne's typographical oddities in *Tristram Shandy* as "exaggerating the conventional punctuation strategies of the age" in an attempt to "captur[e] the nuances of the human voice"; see "'Pictures of Pronunciation': Typographical Travels Through Tristram Shandy and Jacques le Fataliste," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 21, no. 1 (Autumn 1987): 23; Janine Barchas, "*Clarissa*'s Musical Score" and "The Space of Time," chs. 4 and 5 in *Graphic Design, Print Culture, and the Eighteenth-Century Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 92–152.

declamation into musical markers.[86] After this eruption, Orfeo's broken aria defied being heard as a performance. Guadagni's inflection, Calzabigi's poetry, and Bertoni's music staged it as a version of Bettinellian *farlo sentire*.

Example 1.5 Opening of "Cerco il mio ben così," followed by recitative break. In Ferdinando Bertoni, *Orfeo* (Venice: 1783), pp. 14–15.



[86] Castelvecchi explores this in his work on Paisiello's *Nina;* see *Sentimental Opera,* esp. 138, 179. Ellen Lockhart discusses grammatical markings in Rousseau's *Pimmalione* and relates them to musical grammar in "*Pimmalione* and the Melodramatisation of Italian Opera," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 26, no. 1 (March 2014): 1–39.

After the recitative effusion, Orfeo turns inward again to sing the cavatina's second strophe (or, as it is labeled in the print score, a second cavatina). The melody is essentially the same, though now with light embellishments added in the score, and modulated from C to D major (through the intervening recitative). The poetic text of these stanzas, "Piango il mio ben così," is parallel to that of the first. As in the first strophe, after the "wrong" voice responds—here, the murmuring river—Orfeo breaks into recitative. The fakery of nature's "voices," as the echo and the river, contrast with Orfeo's own genuine voice, playing out Borsa's nature-human dichotomy by marking authentic voice as uniquely human. The intrusion of nature into a speaker's interiority is a classic move in proto-Romantic lyric poetry and has a remarkably similar effect in this scene, catalyzing the speaker's shift from contemplating external nature to expressing his internal emotion.[87] In the break following the second strophe, Orfeo's spontaneous overflow of emotion proves too much and leads him to give up on the "cavatina" completely. Through poetry, music, and vocal performance together, Orfeo's hybrid aria complex reimagines the lyric moment as a struggle between representing emotion and feeling emotion. Now, nearly fifteen minutes into the opera, the eponymous protagonist, the original poet-singer, has yet to give the audience an aria worthy of his own mythology. Meanwhile, by foregrounding expressivity, Guadagni-as-Orfeo was also prevented from showing off his voice.

[87] M. H. Abrams describes a shift in nature's role in lyric poetry over the course of the eighteenth century, as the lyric poets' focus moved from outward scenic detail to an "inward turn" and the immediate emotional experience of the speaker. Here Abrams quotes Madame de Staël (1813) on lyric poetry: "One must wander in thought into the ethereal regions [...] and regard the whole universe as a symbol of the emotions of the soul." See his seminal work *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953), 91. The main difference between the "inward turn" and the "lyric effusion" is that my use of the latter is specifically connected with music and musical forms of declamation—and that the material, present voice, while only implicit in lyric poetry, is central to operatic performance.

Table 1.1 Chart showing structure of the cavatina-lyric effusions, Bertoni *Orfeo,* Act 1, scene 1.

ORFEO: Euridice! Euridice! Ombra cara, ove sei? Piange il tuo sposo Ti domanda agli Dei, A' mortali ti chiede, e sparse a' venti Son le lagrime sue, i suoi lamenti.	Euridice! Euridice! Dear shadow, where are you? Weeping, your husband Asks about you to the gods, Asks mortals of you, and strewn to the winds Are his tears, his laments.	**RECITATIVE** cadences in G minor
Cerco il mio ben così, In queste ove morì, Funeste sponde, Ma sola al mio dolor Perché conobbe amor L'Eco risponde.	I thus seek my beloved, Where you died, On these sorrowful shores, But to my pain (because she knew love) only Echo responds.	**CAVATINA (I)** C major
Euridice! Euridice! ah, questo nome San le spiagge, e le selve L'appresero da me: per me ogni valle Euridice risuona: in ogni tronco Scrisse il misero Orfeo, Orfeo infelice: Euridice, idol mio: cara Euridice.	Euridice! Euridice! ah, The shores know this name, and the forests Learned it from me: for me every valley Repeats "Euridice": on every trunk Miserable Orfeo, unhappy Orfeo wrote: "Euridice, my beloved: dear Euridice."	**LYRIC EFFUSION** **RECITATIVE** cadences in G minor
Piango il mio ben così, Se il sole indora il dì, Se va nell'onde. Pietoso al pianto mio, Va mormorando il rio, E mi risponde.	I thus lament my beloved, If the sun gilds the day, If it goes beneath the waves. Pitying my cry, The river goes, murmuring, And responds to me.	**CAVATINA (II)** D major
Numi! Barbari Numi D'Acheronte, e d'Averno Pallidi Abitator ecc. […]	Gods! Barbarous gods, Shadowy rulers Of Acheron, and of Avernus, etc.	**RECITATIVE** cadences in F major with arrival of Imeneo

The lyric effusion reappears in a more integrated form near the end of the opera, after Orfeo has lost Euridice for the second time, in "Che farò senza Euridice?" Here the rondò form itself, which was still flexible and much-debated in 1776, structures Orfeo's oscillation between reflection

and immediacy. As in Act 1, scene 1, a dramatic obbligato recitative (this time, Millico's favorite, "Ahimè! dove trascorsi") precedes an incongruously cheerful opening ritornello. Bertoni's "Che farò," like Gluck's, is in the major mode. The vocal line has an elegant dotted rhythm, smoothed by appoggiaturas and stepwise motion, and is bolstered by a contrapuntal orchestral texture replete with pastoral horns and plangent oboes. All this to say, Orfeo's inner experience does indeed seem "dissociated" from his outward expression: how can he sing a major-mode, galant-style cavatina after the heart-rending pathos of the preceding recitative? Simply put, he cannot. As in Gluck's setting, between each of the three iterations of the main melodic theme or refrain ("Che farò senza Euridice?/ Dove andrò senza il mio ben?") there are effusive episodes. These effusions are not recitatives properly so-called, but rather new musical material that conjures up the dramatic contrast of an intervening recitative, reminiscent of seventeenth-century arioso. The effusions are musically and vocally intense, while the refrain is stylistically redolent of the cavatinas in "Cerco il mio ben così." The aural effect is less acoustically shocking here than in the first scene, but the dramatic effect is similar.[88] The flexibility of the rondò absorbs the effusion-reflection dynamic and naturalizes "broken" form into a new aria form (**table 1.2**).

In *Orfeo* the privilege given to declamation marks both *cantabile* and virtuosic writing (as in Euridice's and Imeneo's arias) as the "other" category of singing. This move subverted expectations, given that embellished, usually da capo, arias made up the bulk of non-comic operatic offerings in 1770s Venice. By framing effusions with such marked "song-like" cavatinas and refrains, hybrid aria forms invited spectators to witness a foundational creative process: from feeling the sparks of passion

[88] On the "acoustic shock" between speech and song, see Carolyn Abbate and Roger Parker, *A History of Opera* (New York: Norton, 2012), ch. 6, "Speaking and Singing before 1800," 147.

(in lyric effusions) to kindling those sparks into lyric poetry—into Orphic song. For, as Matthew Gumpert puts it, the lyric poem is "always a citation of prior poetic statements, but designed to

Table 1.2 Chart of aria form, "Che farò senza Euridice?" *Orfeo,* Bertoni/Calzabigi.

Ahimè! dove trascorsi? Ove mi spinse Un delirio d'amor? Sposa!... Euridice, Euridice… Consorte… ah più non vive, La chiamo in van. Misero me! la perdo E di nuovo e per sempre. Oh legge… oh morte! Oh ricordo crudel! Non ho soccorso, Non m'avanza consiglio. Io veggo solo (Oh fiera vita!) il luttuoso aspetto Dell'orrido mio stato. Saziati sorte rea: son disperato.	Alas! where have I gone? Where has My loving delirium pushed me? Wife!... Euridice, Euridice… Consort…ah she no longer lives, I call her in vain. I am miserable! I have lost her Again, and forever. Oh law… oh death! Oh cruel memory! I have no help, No advice. I see only (Oh barbarous life!) the sorrowful view Of my awful state. Be satisfied, guilty Fate: I am in despair.	**recitative**
Che farò senza Euridice? Dove andrò senza il mio ben?	What will I do without Euridice? Where will I go without my beloved?	**refrain I** **A**
Euridice?... Oh Dio, rispondi! Io son pure il tuo fedel.	Euridice? Oh God, respond! I am yet faithful.	<u>lyric effusion I</u> B
Che farò senza Euridice? Dove andrò senza il mio ben?	What will I do without Euridice? Where will I go without my beloved?	**refrain II** **A**
Euridice! Ah non m'avanza Più soccorso, più speranza Né dal mondo, né dal ciel.	Euridice! Ah there is no More help, no more hope neither from earth, nor from heaven.	<u>lyric effusion II</u> C
Che farò senza Euridice? Dove andrò senza il mio ben?	What will I do without Euridice? Where will I go without my beloved?	**refrain III** **A'** [**with extended ending**]

sound spontaneous and original."[89] Orphic song, the lyric poem *par excellence,* will recall the lyric effusions without actually replicating them. The two hybrid-form numbers are not portrayed as true Orphic song because the lyric effusions keep derailing them, although they adumbrate what would become standard in nineteenth-century aria form.[90] But of course Orfeo was the original poet-singer, and this was Venice, after all. There had to be a place for his song.

Orphic poetics

The Venetian *Orfeo* allowed Orfeo-Guadagni to perform this mythical Orphic song—but only when it can be both contained and marked. This principle is revealed by the opera's god-figure, Imeneo, who appears in order to help Orfeo tune his lyre to a more persuasive mode. In the original version for Vienna, the role was fulfilled by Amore, played in Gluck's setting by a female soprano. Bertoni rewrote the role for the rising-star tenor Giacomo David, a change which repositioned the character as a kind of sovereign or father figure. Imeneo first appears after the lyric effusions of "Cerco il mio ben così" in order to tell Orfeo: "If you can placate the furies, monsters, and traitorous death with song […] your beloved Euridice will return with you."[91] Now, the god implies, is not the time for spontaneous emotion but for eloquence and performance. As Rousseau wrote, the "cry of Nature" once conveyed passion, but only functioned as language "before it was necessary to persuade

[89] Matthew Gumpert, *Grafting Helen: The Abduction of the Classical Past* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2012), 94.
[90] See, for one, Steven Huebner, "Lyric Form in Ottocento Opera," *Journal of the Royal Music Association* 117 (1992): 123–47.
[91] "Se placar puoi col canto/ Le furie, i mostri e l'empia morte, al giorno/ La diletta Euridice/ Farà teco ritorno." Act 1, scene 2.

assembled men."[92] Orfeo must pull himself together, turn his effusions into poetry, and move hell and earth with his song.

Of course, Orfeo's voice is not given license to run wild: he is to wield his song against the Furies, but he must keep his spontaneous emotional outbursts in check. As we know, Orfeo must lead Euridice out of the Underworld without looking at her, and in Calzabigi's libretto, he is also prohibited from revealing why. "Restrain your gaze," Imeneo commands in his aria, "contain your words."[93] It is not only sight and speech that Imeneo seeks to control here. While *accenti* means "words," it also carries the poetic valence of "accents," of tone and inflection.[94] (*Accento* was a common term in this period for a singer's expressive vocal inflection, as discussed in chapter 2 below.) For Orfeo, losing control of his voice now becomes just as dangerous as losing control of his gaze. Imeneo's prohibition covers not only the words Orfeo might speak, but how he speaks them—a reminder that Orfeo sings only as commanded by the gods (in other words, as permitted by the librettist and composer).

Imeneo's instructions underline the same running tension between marked performance and the "authenticity" of spontaneity, a tension which complicates attempts to stage the Orpheus myth within an Enlightenment aesthetics of verisimilitude. Vanessa Agnew calls Orpheus the "archmusician," arguing that his mythology was "archetypal" and "foundational" to self-reflexive musical thought in late eighteenth-century Europe.[95] Nonetheless, in this opera, it is less his song than his recitatives that ratify his authenticity. Thus the one way Calzabigi could write a unified aria

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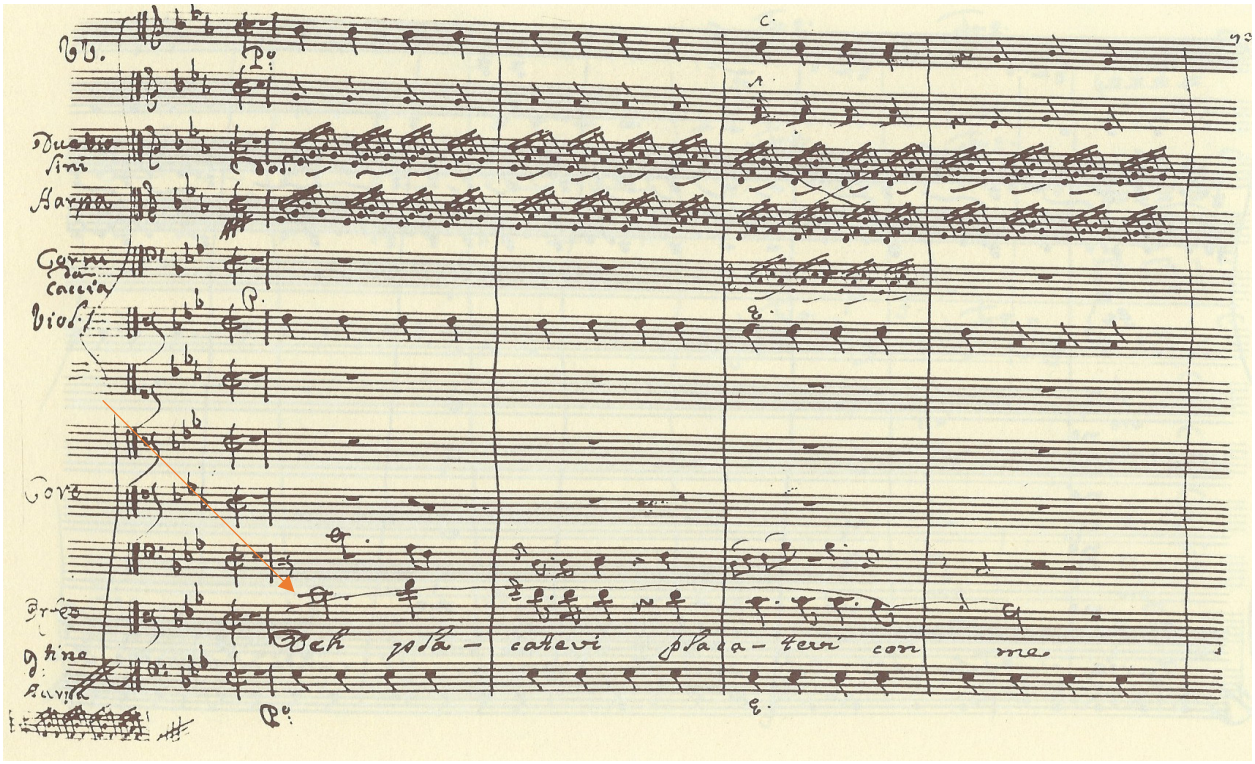
[92] Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin and Foundation of Inequality among Men or Second Discourse* [1754], in *The Discourses and Other Early Political Writings*, ed. and trans. Victor Gourevitch (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 146.
[93] "Gli sguardi trattieni,/ Affreni gli accenti."
[94] And thus, "extralinguistic" meaning, as Cavarero (among others) puts it. See *For More Than One Voice,* esp. 136–7.
[95] Agnew, *Enlightenment Orpheus*, 7, 9.

for Orfeo without undermining the project was to make that aria diegetic. Bertoni composed Orfeo's diegetic song as a simple ballad that grows into a full *aria patetica.* This aria type privileged the timbre of the voice above text and expressive verisimilitude: timbre itself became expression. A focus on the sensual materiality of voice is seemingly out of place in the Gluck/Calzabigi aesthetic, yet in Bertoni's opera it is sanctioned by an authority figure and, as such, permissible.

Orfeo performs his role of archmusician only the one time, in the song commanded by Imeneo, as the cavatina-with-chorus "Deh! placatevi… Men tiranne" (Act 2, scene 1). The scene complex stages the civilizing effect of "sanctioned" vocal performance: over the course of the scene, the Furies gradually metamorphose from cruelly barbaric to sympathetically sentimental. They first block Orfeo's passage with noisy four-part harmony, supported by large orchestral forces. Orfeo responds by singing, with sparse accompaniment: "Ah! be merciful with me."[96] He repeats Imeneo's word choice of "placare" ("Deh! placatevi"/"Se placar puoi"), self-consciously performing the god's command to the letter. His solos here are clearly marked as diegetic: first by the *obbligato* harp, which approximates Orfeo's lyre, and second, in his vocal line, which exemplifies the ideal of bel canto by spinning out in long, cantabile phrases.[97] The Furies are harsh and musically unsophisticated, alternating between repeating notes and outlining diminished sonorities, primarily in homophony. Orfeo's solo sections throughout the scene sound all the more songlike for being set amidst the Furies' clamor. Bertoni sought unprecedented legato from Guadagni here, as evinced by the composer's marking a long slur over the vocal phrases in this section (**example 1.6**)—a marking which appears in none of the other vocal parts in the autograph.

[96] "Deh! placatevi con me."
[97] In Gluck's score, there is a second orchestra, led by the obbligato harp. The Parma version includes this second orchestra, but Bertoni dispensed with it and wrote the entire Underworld scene for the one orchestra.



Example 1.6 "Deh! placatevi," Bertoni/Calzabigi, facs. of autograph in *Orfeo,* azione teatrale, ed. Paolo Cattelan (Milan: Ricordi, 1989), 90[R]. The red arrow indicates the portamento marking.

As promised, Orfeo finally soothes the Furies when he relies on his voice alone. He sets aside his lyre (signalled by the harp dropping out) and sings the cavatina "Men tiranne" without diegetic accompaniment. Prefiguring the musical idiom of Mozart's Belmonte or Ferrando, he sings, "You would be less cruel towards my cry, my lament, if you would feel, for only one moment, what it is to languish for love."[98] This is where we can see most clearly how Bertoni and Guadagni imagined Orphic song for their Venetian audience. In "Men tiranne," where Gluck's vocal writing was arguably at its simplest and most restrained, Bertoni's instead created opportunities for Guadagni to seize musical and vocal agency. The vocal part in Bertoni's setting traverses a larger range, from G3

[98] "Men tiranne, ah voi sareste/ Al mio pianto, al mio lamento;/ Se provaste un sol momento/ Cosa sia languir d'amor."

to D-flat5 instead of C4 to D5, and is predominantly made up of dotted rhythms and short melismas rather than the syllabic straight rhythms of Gluck's. Gluck's setting of the whole scene complex includes, along with the choral sections, three short cavatinas for Orfeo: "Deh placatevi," "Mille pene," and "Men tiranne," all with *obbligato* harp accompaniment that prevented the singer from taking rhythmic liberties. By dropping the harp for "Men tiranne," Bertoni freed up the orchestral texture so as to accommodate Guadagni's embellishments; he also cut the text of "Mille pene" entirely, likely so that he could expand "Men tiranne" into a vocal showpiece. Bertoni's version of "Men tiranne" alone spans 41 measures, compared with only 15 for Gluck's (with "Mille pene" adding another 24 to Gluck's setting). For their Venetian audience, Bertoni and Guadagni prioritized the persuasive materiality of voice above text, orchestration, and Gluckian simplicity.

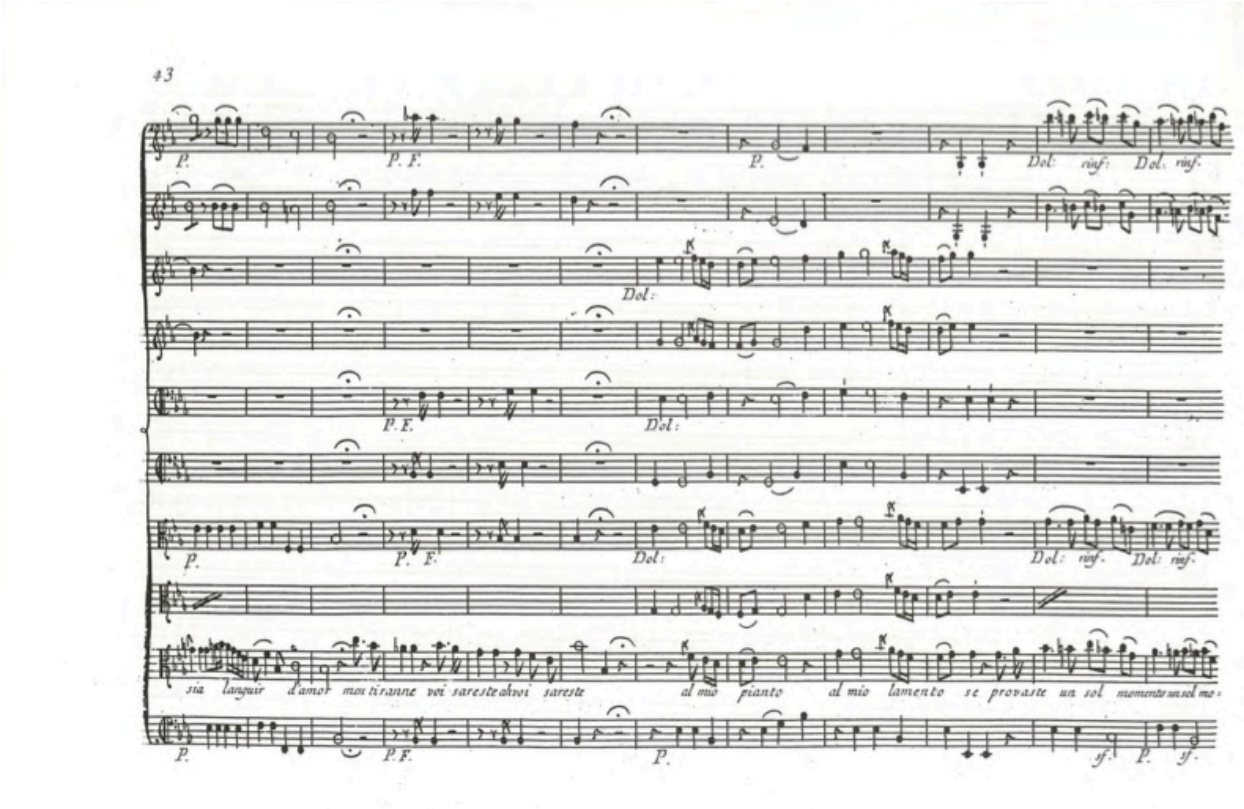
Most strikingly, Bertoni's "Men tiranne" has five fermatas above sections with sustained or otherwise inactive instrumental parts (compared with only one, on the penultimate note of the vocal line, in Gluck's setting, and more than anywhere else in Bertoni's score). Bertoni left space for Guadagni to ornament these sections and probably, in some, insert cadenzas (see mm. 16–17, 19, 24, and 27; **example 1.7**).[99] Such a showcase for the sonorous beauty of the voice seems paradoxical, in that it contradicts the authenticizing emphasis on recitative and verisimilitude.[100] But recitative is

[99] In the absence of measure numbers in Bertoni's score, I count from the beginning of each new section to minimize the need to count hundreds of measures. See Bertoni, *Orfeo* (Venice: 1783), 41–4 (original pagination).

[100] In the following scene, Euridice sings a bravura rage aria, her lack of control symbolized by her vocalism run amok. In an opera seria, such an aria would be typical and thus unmarked, especially for the prima donna. In the world of Bertoni's opera, however, this aria would have been marked by its incongruity within the surrounding musical framework, even as the Venetian audience might have hoped for and welcomed such a break. Beyond any aesthetic ideals, one cannot help but think of her explosion into virtuosity as a capitulation to audience expectations. Euridice, sung by the prima donna Camilla Pasi, gave the Venetian operagoers the vocal pyrotechnics they would have expected and demanded without undermining the reformist project (or Orfeo's unique mode of vocal expression). In this way, the opera does not purport to "fix" the problem of vocal virtuosity, but rather simultaneously stages and perpetuates it. This dynamic characterized many of the post-1759 reform operas in Parma as well; see Feldman, "Programming Nature, Parma, 1759," in *Opera and Sovereignty,* 97-138.

not the only warrant of authenticity. Even in Bertoni and Guadagni's more elaborate rendition, Orfeo's song does not spring forth *ex nihilo.* Rather, it can be heard as the poetry resulting from his prior lyric effusions: note how he moves the Furies by calling up the "experience" of emotion ("Se provaste un sol momento/ Cosa sia languir d'amore"; if you felt/experienced, for only a moment, what it is to languish for love). Within the aesthetic and ideological framework of Bertoni's opera, the gods—and the audience—have heard the workings of Orfeo's inner experience through his effusions, and so recognize in his song the complete lyric moment, reflection and experience together.

Example 1.7 "Men tiranne," Bertoni/Calzabigi, *Orfeo* (Venice: 1783), p. 43, mm. 22–33. Note the more florid melodic writing, the large leaps, and the fermatas.



Many of the elements that both Bertoni and Gluck employed in their composition of diegetic song became hallmarks of the genre, especially the arpeggiated accompaniment and simple

yet *spianato* vocal style.[101] Their constructions of Orphic song can be read as ancestors to the hymns, romances, and ballads of Romantic opera: in both contexts, the act of diegetic singing serves to distance a character from his or her own emotions, such that he or she can perform those emotions for an implied audience through marked "song."[102] The intrusion of "real time" into "aria time," and the consequent disruption, redirection, or intensification of the lyric moment, also became standardized through such forms as the rondò and, later, the cantabile-tempo di mezzo-cabaletta complex. More broadly, by exploring the dynamic tension between "spontaneous emotion" and "tranquil reflection," composers, poets, and performers sought to understand the foundational relationships among emotion, interiority, and poiesis—and to experiment with aestheticizing subjectivity.

Diegetic song moves the monsters of the Underworld, but Imeneo is persuaded to help Orfeo for a second time only after the lyric effusions of "Che farò senza Euridice?"—despite the fact that Orfeo broke the rules with both his gaze and his voice. The god, a theatrical representation of the sovereign, responds to Orfeo's spontaneous overflow of passion because he knows it to be authentic, while the lowbrow Furies are civilized by beautiful vocal lines. In the case of *Orfeo,* both types of singing are fundamentally portrayed as authentic, depending on the circumstances. But what happens if the sovereign himself is swayed by an inauthentic song? What happens when the

[101] For example, see the discussion in chapter 2, below, of Sarti's "Pietose lagrime" (*Alessandro e Timoteo,* 1782). This is also the case in various compositions by Millico, such as his chamber songs with harp, and his cantata with Cimarosa, *Angelica e Medoro* (date unknown.), in which Angelica reveals her secret love for Medoro in a diegetic song with lyre (harp) accompaniment.

[102] On diegetic song in early nineteenth-century Italian opera, see Rossana Dalmonte, "La canzona nel melodramma italiano del primo Ottocento," *Rivista italiana di musicologia*, 11, no. 2 (1976): 230–313.

king is taken in and manipulated by a deceitful, mellifluous-voiced singer with a persuasively-tuned lyre?

CHAPTER TWO
THE POET SINGS

Too many Orfei

While castrati of sensibility coopted Orphic symbolism for their own ends, as seen in chapter 1, the Orpheus craze also provided fodder for satirizing self-aggrandizing musicians and intellectuals. For instance, theorists Stefano Arteaga and Vincenzo Manfredini spent the mid-to-late 1780s engaged in a cantankerous print polemic, with Manfredini defending "modern music" against Arteaga's classicism. In the third volume of *Le rivoluzioni del teatro musicale italiano* (1788), Arteaga glibly noted that Manfredini had spent time in Moscow, "perhaps with the intention of civilizing those people with the sound of instruments, as Orpheus did," a feat of which Arteaga obviously thought Manfredini incapable.[1]

More amusing—and more cutting—are the operas in which librettists and composers poked fun at the phenomenon of Orphic self-fashioning. Anthony DelDonna writes of how Saverio Mattei, the Neapolitan antiquarian, translator, and Metastasian apologist, was mocked in Paisiello and Lorenzi's *Il Socrate immaginario* (Naples, 1775) with a spot-on parody of the Underworld scene from *Orfeo,* harp and all. The hapless, Don Quixote-esque protagonist, fancying himself both Socrates and Orpheus, was meant to represent the pseudo-musicologist Mattei.[2] Even more blatant, and directed at singers more broadly, was the popular 1780s opera buffa *Li tre Orfei*, set in Venice, in which three suitors each dress up as Orfeo and engage in a singing competition in order to rescue

[1] "Il Signor Manfredini, che ha dimorato lungo tempo in Moscovia, e che vi sarà forse andato col disegno d'incivilire que' popoli al suono degli strumenti come faceva Orfeo." Stefano Arteaga, *Rivoluzioni del teatro musicale italiano, dalla suo origine fine al presente,* 2nd. ed (Venice: 1785), III: 42.
[2] Anthony DelDonna, *Opera, Theatrical Culture and Society in Late Eighteenth Century Naples* (Burlington, VT: Routledge, 2012), ch. 1, "Opera, Antiquity, and the Neapolitan Enlightenment in Paisiello's *Socrate immaginario* (1775)," 13–41.

their shared paramour from the (faux) Underworld. The Act 1 finale follows the two buffo characters, Monsù and the Marchese, as they don over-the-top garb and argue over which of them makes a better Orpheus. They are interrupted by the arrival of the *mezzo carattere,* Don Lavinio, who is decked out in Grecian drapery and carries a lyre. Impressed by Lavinio's authentic getup, the Frenchman Monsù exclaims: "But this is really Orpheus!" The requisite harp and Gluckian demonic chorus soon make aural appearances as part of an elaborate scheme to humiliate the aspiring suitors. The scene erupts into an imbroglio as all three Orpheuses sing over one another, replicating the cacophony of singers' claims to Orphic voice.[3] But several years earlier, even as Millico was writing his own Orphic story in the 1782 *Pietà* preface, some intellectuals regarded Orphic posturing as not merely ridiculous, but dangerous. In portraying voice as possessing a privileged connection to feeling, and feeling as individual agency, these Orpheuses had yoked the emotional to the political. This could prove useful if managed carefully, but the risk of revolution loomed large. If anyone could play Orfeo by successfully engaging listeners' emotions, how would people distinguish true civilizing song from an insidious grab for power?

Perhaps not everyone with a voice should be handed a lyre. In the spring of 1782, back in Parma, court poet Count Carlo Gastone della Torre di Rezzonico dedicated his own "noble lyre" to Maria Amalia Habsburg and Duke Ferdinand Bourbon in celebration of Parma's "Greek soul." The occasion was the Parmesan visit of the "Conti del Nord," the future Russian tsar Prince Paul Petrowitz and his wife Maria Feodorovna, and the vehicle, Rezzonico's new dramma per musica

[3] Act I, scenes 11–12, in Anon., *Li tre Orfei* (Venice: 1787). All three male roles were written for lower (i.e., unaltered) male voices, in contrast to Orfeo, which was exclusively performed by castrati in the Italian peninsula until the end of the century. No composer is given in the libretto for that production, but the libretto from a production given in Pisa in 1786 lists Marcello di Capua (/Bernardini) as the composer, confirmed by the various extant manuscript copies of the score. The work, or variations of it, was also performed in Florence, Padua, Livorno, Rome, and Genoa from c. 1783 to c. 1798, demonstrating how widely familiar this Orphic humor must have been.

Alessandro e Timoteo. In the style of a Shakespearean prologue, Rezzonico set the scene for his opera with a narrative poem about the "competition" among a crowd of "new Orpheuses." Printed with the libretto, the verses introduce the opera's protagonists, but more importantly, they suggest Rezzonico himself as the true victor of the Orphic competition. With flowery language and Shakespearean pretensions, he positioned himself as the greatest bard of them all, and his poetic genius—represented by the "noble lyre"—as being responsible for turning Parma into Athens.[4]

Rezzonico had studied under none other than Bettinelli in his youth, at the Collegio dei Nobili in Parma (1752-8), and credited his mentor as a strong artistic and intellectual influence.[5] He therefore would have been as familiar with Bettinelli's take on Orpheus's civilizing song as he was with Millico's self-fashioning: Rezzonico had taken over the production of *Le feste d'Apollo,* the same pasticcio in which Millico had performed the "Orfeo act," following Frugoni's death in 1768. Bettinelli's work strongly influenced Rezzonico's, as evidenced both by Rezzonico's own admission and his literary output, and *Alessandro e Timoteo* was no exception. Like *Le feste d'Apollo, Alessandro e Timoteo* was produced as a theatrical spectacle for an important international event. It was also the first new "serious" opera given at Parma since *Le feste d'Apollo*, making Rezzonico's production a

[4] "A te, Coppia immortal, sacra è la mia/Non vulgar cetra, e de' canori ludi/Splende per te l'antico onor più bello./[…] e nuovi Orfei per l'aura/Spandono a gara […]/Ah! dove regna/Il Borbonico Gernio un'alma greca/Pericle ammira, e si ricorda Atene." Count Carlo Gastone della Torre di Rezzonico, *Alessandro e Timoteo,* in *Opere,* ed. Francesco Mocchetti (Como: Ostinelli, 1815–1830), 3: 190–1. I use this reprint in order to provide page numbers, as the original 1782 libretto (Parma: Stamperia Reale, 1782) is partially unpaginated. I translate "cetra" and "cetera" as "lyre" rather than "kithara" because they are often used interchangeably with "lira" in poetic Settecento Italian, usually as a literary metaphor for poetic genius. "Cetra" adds a bit of Greek flavor to the poetry but does not appear to intentionally denote a different instrument. The metaphor goes back at least as far as Petrarch: "Secca è la vena de l'usato ingegno/ E la cetera mia rivolta in pianto."*Rime sparse* 292, ll. 13–14.

[5] The 1783 review of *Alessandro e Timoteo* lists Bettinelli as one of the poet's inspirations, while Rezzonico names Bettinelli as one of those most offended by contemporary opera seria's failings (along with Algarotti). See "*Alessandro e Timoteo*" [review], *Journal encyclopédique ou universel* 11 (1 March 1783): 303–308; repr. in *Gazzetta di Parma* 14 (4 April 1783): 111–17, and 15 (11 April 1783): 118–120. See also Rezzonico, "Osservazioni intorno al dramma *Alessandro e Timoteo,*" in *Opere,* 3: 282.

high-profile enterprise.[6] He ensured that the work was sufficiently spectacular by offering four hours of choruses, ballets, elaborate scene changes, and special effects, all set to music by Giuseppe Sarti, then the maestro di cappella at Milan. For the *argomento*, Rezzonico drew from Dryden's 1697 ode *Alexander's Feast* and Athenaeus's *Dypnosophistae* to craft a shockingly political opera around the ancient Greek poet-singer Timoteo (Timotheus). Seeking vengeance, Timoteo had famously "excited the fury of Alessandro [Alexander the Great] with the Phrygian mode, and calmed him with the Lydian mode," ultimately driving the king to destroy the city of Persepolis in a musically-induced rage.[7]

"A theater of theater itself": *Alessandro e Timoteo* (Parma, 1782)

By choosing the story of a scheming poet-singer, Rezzonico seized an opportunity to advance his own ideology about the relationship between poetry, music, and voice. In an essay on *Alessandro e Timoteo* written after the opera's premiere, he praised the recently deceased Metastasio, but argued that the other poet's dramas were only musical "tragedies" and not true "lyric dramas" like Rezzonico's own.[8] In musical tragedy, he explained, the music was permitted to dominate, while in a genuine lyric drama words and music would be equal, as in ancient Greece. He expressed regret that Metastasio had not read *Alessandro e Timoteo*, but proclaimed himself certain that he would have

[6] Aside from a short *favola pastorale* in 1773, only comic and semi-serious operas (e.g., *drammi giocosi* and similar) had been produced at the ducal theater. See Gaspare Nello Vetro, *Il Teatro Ducale e la vita musicale a Parma: dai Farnese a Maria Luigia (1687-1829)* (Rome: Aracne, 2010), 338ff.

[7] "Timoteo eccitava i furori d'Alessandro col modo Frigio, e calmavali col modo Lidio." Rezzonico, *Alessandro e Timoteo,* 3: 193. In his preface, Millico briefly mentions this story as evidence of the emotional power of Greek music, but does so with approbation rather than censure.

[8] "I loro [Zeno and Metastasio] Drammi non sono veracemente e puramente lirici, bensì tragedie in musica…"; "Perciò i Drammi ebbero titolo di lirici, quantunque assai male corrisponda quest'antica voce al moderno significato." Rezzonico, "Osservazioni," 3: 250, 262.

approved of this attempt to follow the Greeks and "strip away the inverisimilitude of musical and theatrical action" in opera.[9] Rezzonico must have been fantasizing about how his own contributions could supersede those of the great Metastasio: he would be the one to reclaim "lyric" and liberate serious opera from the clutches of domineering singers and sycophantic composers.

Rezzonico made his aesthetic aspirations political in the libretto by drawing out simmering anxieties about the dual, or dueling, powers of song and sovereignty in antico regno Italy. *Alessandro e Timoteo* plays out a veritable nightmare of kingship in the character of the irrational and violent Alessandro, while issuing a warning about singers like Timoteo who wield their voices to disastrous effect. Throughout his oeuvre Rezzonico insisted upon the civic ramifications of misused voice, drawing on tropes dating to the early Seicento as he borrowed political language in order to vilify singers' power. After the opera's premiere he explained that he had attempted to link his poetry with Sarti's music so as to ensure that neither could "usurp the rights of the other," an imbalance threatened by the demands of tyrannical singers.[10] He also issued by-then conventional complaints about the "laws imposed upon the poet by singers, [who have] by now become Pisistratuses of the stage."[11] He predictably argued that singers "overturn the order of opera," in that "the singer commands the composer, and [together] they command the poet."[12] The stereotypical equation of

[9] "Io non credo ch'egli potesse mai disapprovare l'impresa da me tentata d'avvicinarmi a' Greci, e di spogliare di gran parte dell'inverisimiglianza la musica e l'azion teatrale." Rezzonico, "Osservazioni," 3: 249.
[10] "La poesia, e la musica fossero in tal modo collegate, che per forza dovessero rispettarsi a vicenda, e non usurpare l'una i diritti dell'altra." Rezzonico, "Osservazioni," 3: 282.
[11] "La seconda cagione si è il *codice musico,* ossiano le leggi che al poeta impongono i cantanti, omai divenuti Pisistrati della scena" (emphasis in original). Rezzonico, "Osservazioni," 3: 279. Pisistratus was the king of ancient Athens (ca. 6th c. BCE– 527 BCE) whose name was synonymous with tyranny. On the changes suggested by Sarti, see Giovio, *Della vita e degli scritto del cavaliere Carlo Castone conte della Torre di Rezzonico patrizio comasco, Memorie,* in Rezzonico, *Opere*, I: ixxxiv; see also Mercedes Viale Ferrero, "'Potrà dirsi questo Dramma uno sforzo della Musica, e dell'arti italiane per agguaglirare i Greci': *Alessandro e Timoteo* a Parma, 1782," in *La festa teatrale nel Settecento: Dalla corte di Vienna alle corti d'Italia,* ed. Annarita Colturato and Andrea Merlotti (Lucca: Libreria Musicale Italiana, 2011), 286.
[12] "Ecco [i musici] adunque rovesciato tutto l'ordine dell'Opera, mentre il musico comanda al maestro di cappella, e questi al poeta." Rezzonico, "Osservazioni," 3: 281.

singers with usurpers and tyrants overlapped with the fraught and flexible identification of castrati with antico regno power, a theme explored extensively by Feldman, and which is instantiated in the opera's dyadic title of *Alessandro e Timoteo*.[13]

The traditional primo castrato role in Metastasian opera was that of prince-in-waiting or usurper of kingship, an association which would have implicitly positioned Timoteo (castrato) in relation to Alessandro (tenor) as a potential threat. In order to stage these tensions explicitly in the libretto, Rezzonico made his Timoteo a poet, a composer, and, crucially, a singer, not a mere instrumentalist. Even though Dryden's Timotheus was already a singer, Rezzonico noted that his own libretto combined two different musicians named Timotheus from Greek history, one a lyric poet-singer who died before the birth of Alexander the Great, and the other a tibia player in Alexander's employ. [14] He drew attention to this point in order to slip in a barb against virtuosity, remarking that fudging the chronology by making Alessandro's Timoteo a singer enabled Rezzonico to compose "poetry full of sentiment and flattery, in whose expression modern music triumphs."[15]

Rezzonico went a step further and wrote his mistrust of singers into the very dramaturgy of the opera. Diverging from his source texts, he portrayed Timoteo's musical effects as (meta-) theatrical rather than supernatural. In so doing, he kept the libretto in line with both the Aristotelian unities and his own mission of verisimilitude, all the while subverting myths about the magical power of song over the emotions. In Rezzonico's opera, Timoteo's songs do not literally transport Alessandro to different locations (the Kingdom of Love, the tomb of King Dario, and so forth).

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[13] Feldman, *The Castrato*; idem, *Opera and Sovereignty.* These associations were hardly rigid, however.
[14] Rezzonico explains this by giving his interpretation of Plato's taxonomy of the three types of music, which separates the lyre-playing singer (*citaredo*) from the wind player (*citarodia*) and the string player (*citarista*); see *Alessandro e Timoteo,* 3: 318, n. C. On combining the two Timotheuses for the libretto, see 3: 313ff.
[15] He calls the poetry in his libretto "una poesia piena di sentimento, e di lusinghe, nella cui espressione trionfa la moderna musica." Rezzonico, "Osservazioni," 3: 289.

Rather, Alessandro only imagines he has been magically transported, because Timoteo's songs are coordinated with diegetic scene changes masterminded by Timoteo himself—rendering Parma's Teatro Ducale, in Rezzonico's words, "a theater of theater itself."[16] Behind Alessandro's onstage pavilion, the audience could see various pieces of scenery that were moved around in plain view, a constant reminder that Timoteo's music was only one part of a unified theatrical illusion (**figure 2.1**). The libretto indicates that the opera's action occurs entirely within the gardens of Persepolis, quickly establishing the unity of place and the plot point of Timoteo's stagecraft. The audience was invited to witness what Alessandro could not: the artificiality of the singer, who seemed to have power only because his songs were supported by a production over which he retained the utmost control.

That unified artistic vision and execution make explicit Timoteo's threat to Alessandro by parodying the role of absolutist monarch. Historian Joseph Klaits writes of Louis XIV, the absolutist *par excellence*: "As a virtuoso performer in the elaborate piece of baroque stagecraft that was his reign, he wanted Europe to believe that he also had composed the script, built the set, designed the costumes, and directed the action."[17] In Rezzonico's libretto, Timoteo has indeed done all of those things, showing he can play the role of king more convincingly than even Alessandro himself does.

[16] "Erasi adunque figurato in mia mente un teatro sul teatro stesso. Ne feci Timoteo direttore, ed inventor principale." "Osservazioni," 3: 286–7. While the scenographer Pietro Gonzaga's original designs for *Alessandro e Timoteo* are missing, some of his other surviving illustrations offer an idea of what his designs for the production may have looked like. In the scene description for scene 1, Rezzonico explains how the theater-of-theater concept works onstage: "Il fondo della tenda s'innalza nelle mutazioni di Scena, e lascia vedere gli oggetti, che le stan dietro."

[17] Joseph Klaits, *Printed Propaganda under Louis XIV: Absolute Monarchy and Public Opinion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 13.

Figure 2.1 Pietro Gonzaga (scenic designer for *Alessandro e Timoteo*), illustration of a military pavilion; I–Vgc, inv. 30861. This is not necessarily a design for that opera, but it offers an idea of what the set might have looked like. The moving set pieces described in the libretto likely would have been where the tents are located in this illustration, in the wings but still visible.

Despite his lofty intentions, Rezzonico soon experienced firsthand the power wielded by singers over opera production. At first, all seemed smooth sailing: Sarti arrived from Milan to provide the music, and, according to the poet, was so excited to set the poetry that he began "to cry with my Alessandro." Sarti reportedly kissed Rezzonico's manuscript and claimed that these were the greatest verses he would set to music in his entire career.[18] Rezzonico's goal in recounting this was presumably to show that Sarti was on board with his project—until the singers started meddling. Two virtuosos had been engaged for the title roles, the celebrated tenor Giacomo David (the Imeneo from Bertoni's *Orfeo*) with top billing as Alessandro, and the lesser-known soprano castrato Michele Neri, *detto* il Manzolino, as Timoteo. David and Neri had sung together in 1777 in Guglielmi's

[18] "Venne intanto da Milano il celebre maestro Sarti, ed avendo udita da me la poesia, ch'egli era pregato a rivestire de' suoi dottissimi numeri, lo vidi piangere col mio Alessandro, ed animarsi ed accendersi a tal segno, che baciò il manoscritto, e giurommi che più bei versi non aveva ancor posti in musica, nè corsa più nobile carriera." Rezzonico, "Osservazioni," 3: 247.

setting of Metastasio's *Artaserse* at the Teatro Argentina in Rome, as Artabano and Artaserse, respectively, sharing the stage with Millico in the quasi-sentimental role of Arbace (one of his last stage appearances). That same year in Rome, Neri had also created the title role in *Ifigenia* (librettist unknown) with music by Sarti. Whether or not their previous connections emboldened them to band together, the singers and composer soon prevailed upon the librettist to sacrifice his post-Metastasian vision and accommodate their musical demands.[19] Rezzonico grudgingly accepted Sarti's modifications, even allowing extensive fioritura in the lead arias, but the conflict left a mark on the poet's ego. Clearly, his post-premiere complaints about tyranny and usurpation had had a rather personal impetus. In the drama of his own opera, in which political order is undermined by the machinations of a singer-cum-impresario, art was spilling over into life.

Timoteo's counterfeit lyre

The "tyrannical virtuoso" was not the only singer-figure castigated by Rezzonico. The Orphic myth of lyric voice was similarly unsettled by the play-within-a-play conceit of *Alessandro e Timoteo*, as if to show that even the likes of Millico and Guadagni were only as effective as the theatrical whole. Rezzonico suggested this by inserting into Timoteo's role certain recognizable musical and textual references to the "Orfeo act" of thirteen years prior; in so going, he framed Orphic song as being no more than another of Timoteo's manipulative musical modes. When Alessandro finds out that the Persian king Dario has been murdered (scene 7), Timoteo's recitative invocation and the ensuing ritornello reference Orfeo's diegetic cavatina, "Deh! placatevi con me," from Gluck's opera.

[19] Rezzonico, "Osservazioni," 3: 247–8.

Timoteo's call to "flatter [Alessandro's] pain, Muses, with song" ("Si lusinghi il suo duol, Muse, col canto) recalls Amore's speech explaining that song is the key to saving Euridice ("Se placar puoi col canto"; see chapter 1 above on this). Where Orfeo sings to soothe ("placar […] col canto"), however, Timoteo sings to flatter ("lusinghi […] col canto "). In response to Timoteo's invocation, "the orchestra imitates the sound of a plucked lyre" with repetitive pizzicato arpeggiated triads, much like those in "Deh! placatevi con me" (the "canto" Amore bids Orfeo sing).[20] Staying in the deceptively Orphic vein, Timoteo's vocal line in the aria consists primarily of dotted rhythms, and is frequently short-breathed owing to the eighth-note rests that interrupt the textual repetitions. Timoteo even repeats "dolor" ("sorrow") as the final word of a *tronco* line to close the aria, possibly imitating Orfeo's final phrase of "Deh! placatevi con me" ("il mio barbaro dolor").

Timoteo pretends to echo the sincerity of "Deh! placatevi," but this Orfeo is merely a role the singer dons in his ongoing attempt to unhinge Alessandro. For one, he sings what appears to be some of Rezzonico's self-proclaimed "poetry full of feeling and flattery":

TIMOTEO: Pietose lagrime,	Pitiful tears,
Ite a torrenti;	run in torrents;
Col muto cenere	with silent ashes
Su l'urne algenti	upon silver urns
Parli il dolor.	may sorrow speak.

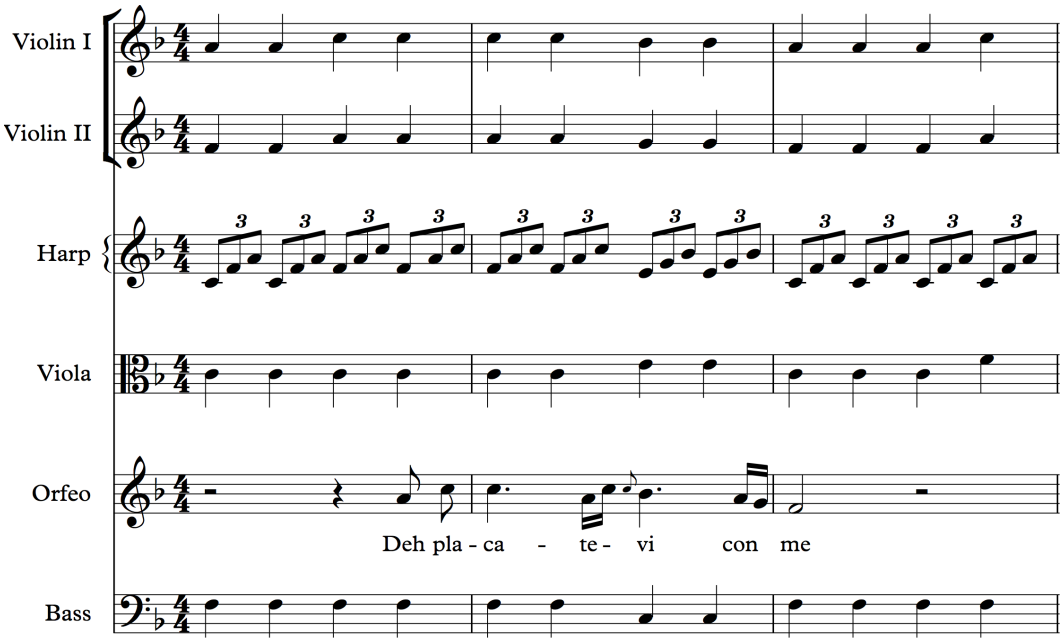
The poetic language is strikingly distinct from Calzabigi's simple verses in *Orfeo ed Euridice*—particularly evident in Rezzonico's use of "ite," which makes the text come across as flagrantly high-flown. The apostrophizing of tears and anthropomorphizing of pain operate on a similarly elevated

[20] I have translated "lusinghi" as "flatter," based on the valence of Rezzonico's word "lusinghe" in his "Osservazioni" (see above). As the librettist and impresario of *Le feste d'Apollo,* Rezzonico was unquestionably familiar enough with *L'atto d'Orfeo* to make such borrowings on purpose. Footnote B in the libretto, which appears attached to Timoteo's invocation, reads: "L'orchestra imita il suono d'una cetera pizzicata." Rezzonico, *Alessandro e Timoteo,* 3: 215. Rezzonico included this in the libretto so that even those reading it as poetry, without seeing the opera, could grasp the reference.

rhetorical level, while, significantly, teasing the Orphic metaphor of giving voice to sensibility. Here, Rezzonico twists the relationship between voice and sensibility: Timoteo does not voice genuine feeling, but instead "flatters" Alessandro's "sorrow" by ventriloquizing it.

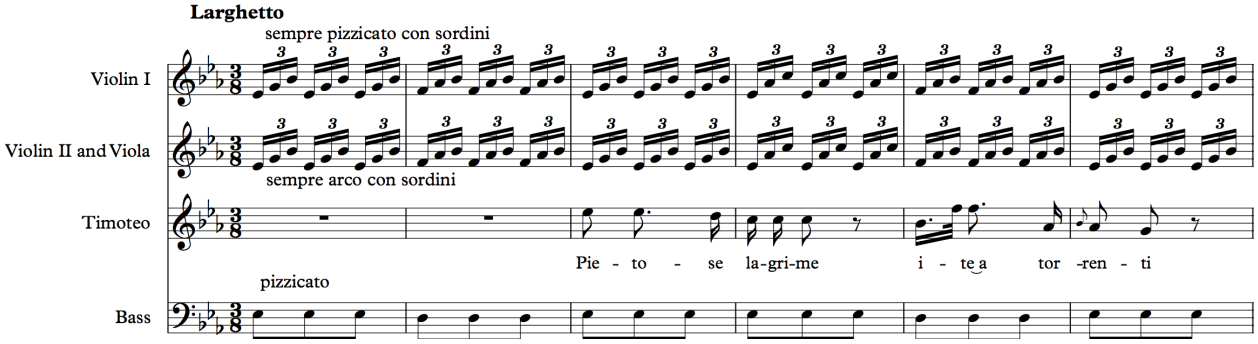
Even as Sarti's score recalls Gluck's, it reveals the inauthenticity of Timoteo's lyre. The composer assigned pizzicati to only the first violins and the bass, leaving the other strings to play col arco (**examples 2.1 and 2.2**).[21] These two different string sounds reinforce the impression that Timoteo's lyre is a trick, especially as compared with the verisimilar harp used by both Gluck and Bertoni for "Deh! placatevi con me."

Example 2.1 "Deh! placatevi," mm. 4-6; in Gluck/Calzabigi, *L'atto d'Orfeo*, I-PAc, Corradi Cervi Ms.M.C.C.20, 46[R].



[21] For this study, I consulted the manuscript score held in Parma's Biblioteca Palatina, Sezione musicale (I-PAc), Borbone Borb. 3148/I–II.

Example 2.2 "Pietose lagrime," mm. 17–22 (note the violins—both plucked and bowed—imitating the lyre's chords); in Sarti/Rezzonico, *Alessandro e Timoteo*, I-PAc, Borbone Borb.3148/I, 218^{V} – 219^{R}.



Sarti also undermined the aria's Gluckian simplicity by writing large leaps into the vocal line, both to show off Neri's skill in registration and to add a dash of the histrionic to Timoteo's performance. The last straw is the musical and dramatic irregularity of the aria's close. Instead of repeating the final ritornello or at least landing on a clear cadence, the aria is cut off when a funereal brass sinfonia interrupts Timoteo's final phrases. After some panicked exclamations from Alessandro—still within the same "number" in the score—the sinfonia initiates a diegetic scene change into King Dario's mausoleum. This metatheatrical break, planned and executed by Timoteo, intrudes on the illusion and reminds the audience that Timoteo is only playing Orfeo, another one of his many roles, within a production he is also directing.

Both in this scene and throughout the opera, Rezzonico seems to have had in mind Bettinelli's critique of the power of music over human emotion, particularly the problem of genuine versus artificially-inflamed passions. In *Dell'entusiasmo,* Bettinelli considered why music seemed to ignite emotion so readily, explaining that "we are almost musical instruments ourselves," and therefore vibrate in sympathy with sound through the "organ of hearing, which [has been] described as a lyre, and as a flute." Nonetheless, true enthusiasm in music was far rarer than in the time of the

Greeks, he (and everyone since the Greeks) claimed, because music and poetry were no longer united. The disconnect was partly to blame for the lack of performers who "feel, and make felt, the inspiration of their art and of their souls": most sang music and words composed by others instead of creating song from their own immediate experience.

Furthermore, for Bettinelli musicians were "mercenary," valuing their own gains above genuine art. Music had consequently become the "mistress, and maybe the tyrant, of drama."[22] This uneven distribution of power confused auditors, Bettinelli claimed, in that they mistake musical pleasure for genuine feeling: "Music lovers feel themselves so moved by pleasure, the sensual pleasure of the ear, [that] they believe themselves impassioned in their soul, and praise the art without knowing it, and the artifice without reason."[23] Bettinelli later went on to lump the ancient Timotheus in with modern musicians, maligning Timotheus's music as "effeminate" because it only "flattered the ear." He then launched into a litany of abuses that, he noted, applied just as well to the operas of his own day.[24] While Dryden's Timotheus might have "transfused" emotion through song, Rezzonico's and Bettinelli's Timotheus misled his listeners with sonic pleasure. For them, feeling alone was insufficient proof of authenticity because it was so easily counterfeited through "flattery."

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[22] "Radi [rari] sono i Cantori, o Suonatori, che sentano, e faccian sentir l'estro della lor arte, e dell'anima loro. Oltre al dover anch'essi recitar di memoria, e suonare, e cantar su la carta, v'ha l'impedimento primario dell'essere prezzolati. [...] Può dirsi la Musica veramente più intima all'anima, e all'Entusiasmo di tutte l'altre, essendo noi fabbricati quasi stromenti (e fu descritto l'organo dell'udito, come una lira, ed un flauto) musicali ed unisoni a que' che sentiamo, talchè rispondono dentro di noi moti, e risentimenti agli esterni. Tutte le nostre passioni hanno, e senton de' suoni corrispondenti; e il nostro cuore gl'intende, e commovesi a quelle corde, e vibramenti vivaci. [...] Il certo è, ch'ella [Musica] fu sempre unita alla Poesia tra gli antichi, e noi la vediamo fedele compagna de' nostri Improvvisatori, ancella, ed amica di qualche Tragedia a cori, Signora poi, e forse tiranna dei Drammi." Bettinelli, *Dell'entusiasmo,* 54–5.

[23] "Spesso avviene, che gli amanti di Musica sentendosi pur commossi da tal piacere, piacer sensuale d'orecchio, credansi appassionati nell'animo, e lodino l'arte senza conoscerla, e l'artefice senza ragione." Bettinelli, *Dell'entusiasmo*, 56.

[24] "La cui [di Timoteo] musica diceva essere effemminata per lusingar l'orecchio, e notavane i suoni moltiplici, cioè trilli sopra una sillaba o una vocale, l'adattar piccole aria a piccole parole, il collocar il bello nell'ornato, la forza nell'artifizio, traendo così la tragedia al basso sino a lui non sapendo alzarsi egli sino alla dignità di lei [Elettra]. […] voi qui credete udir la critica delle nostre Opere, che son tragedie così trasformate, e credo che tal trasformazione l'avran detta in greco Metastasi." Bettinelli, *Lettere sui pregi delle donne*, in *Prose edite e inedite in prosa e in versi* (Venice: 1799–1801), 13: 111.

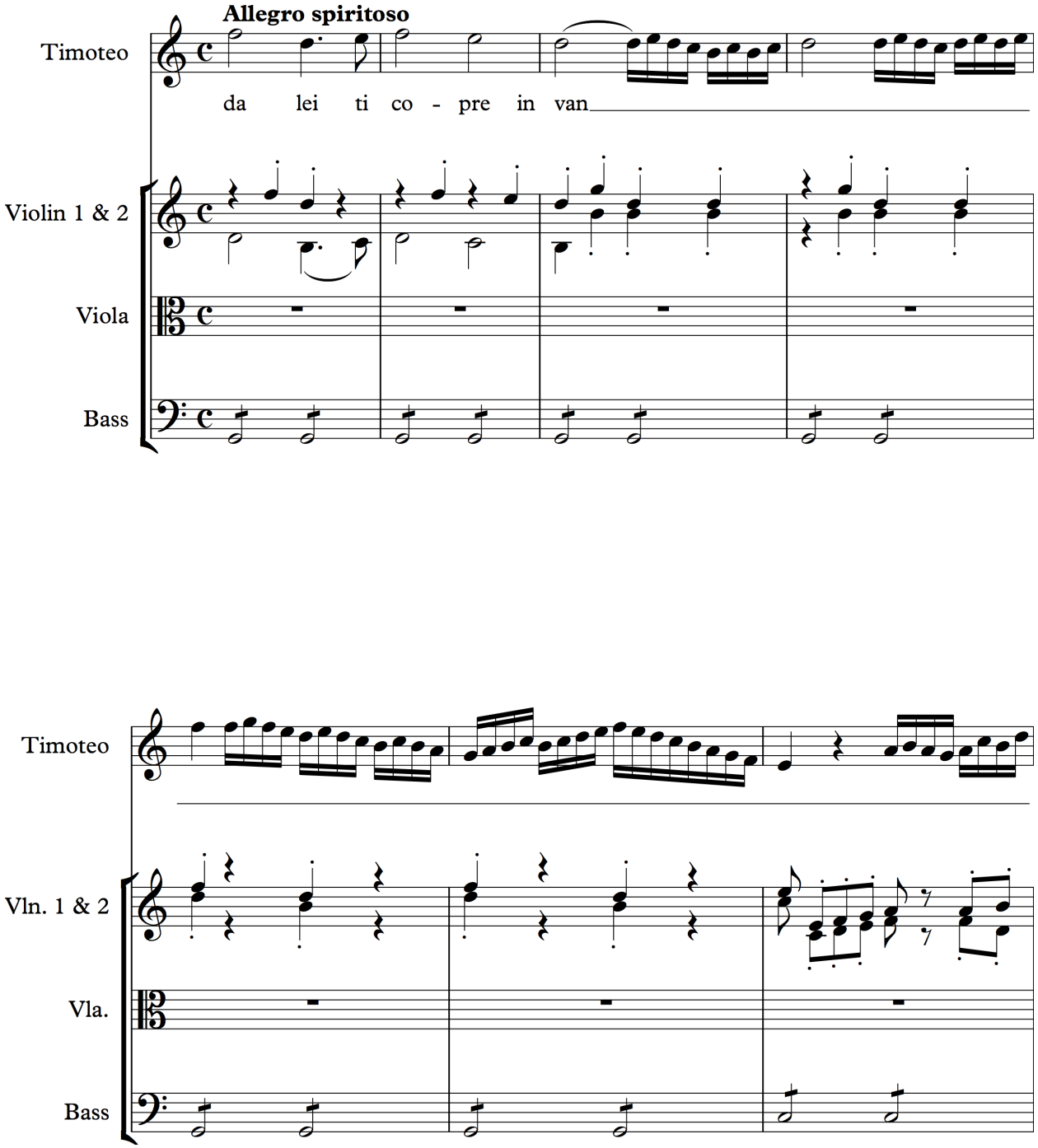
Perhaps the notion of sensibility through voice offered, not a moral affirmation of humanity, but a simple exercise in sensuality.

Yet even "mercenary" singers, however suspect their motivations, were capable of achieving some measure of good. In the scene following his Orfeo act, Timoteo seeks to mitigate Alessandro's bloodlust by reminding him of the transience of earthly glory. "Is it then a dream, a shadow, the greatness of kings?" he asks, gesturing to King Dario's tomb (scene 8).[25] His question plays upon the inauthenticity of the production he has been staging for Alessandro, as if to suggest that theater and kingship are equally illusory (and again highlighting Rezzonico's interest in Shakespearean metatheatricality). He first reveals the mortal limits of kingly power by transporting Alessandro to Dario's tomb through the scene change after "Pietose lagrime," foreshadowing Alessandro's own eventual and ineluctable transition into the grave. Timoteo then performs the challenge with his voice: he delivers an unusually long obbligato recitative, followed by a fiery aria di bravura ("Nel seno il cor mi palpita") in which he reminds the king that his days are numbered and he ought to "think about it, o King" ("Pensaci, o Re"). Aided by the wonder of his flexible larynx, the castrato intimates that the king will one day be supplanted. Timoteo alone checks the sovereign's tyrannical behavior, because he can do so safely from within his production; Alessandro does not realize that his surroundings—the cave, Dario's tomb, the mourners—are merely the artifices of "theater," and not truly conjured up by Timoteo's vocal magic (**example 2.3**). Now Timoteo's vocal virtuosity becomes at once self-serving and politically beneficial: it civilizes the raging king and (albeit temporarily) prevents war. In Bourbon-controlled Parma in 1782, this would have been a significant statement. Before the French Revolution erupted, and a decade before Italian operas staging sovereigns' deaths

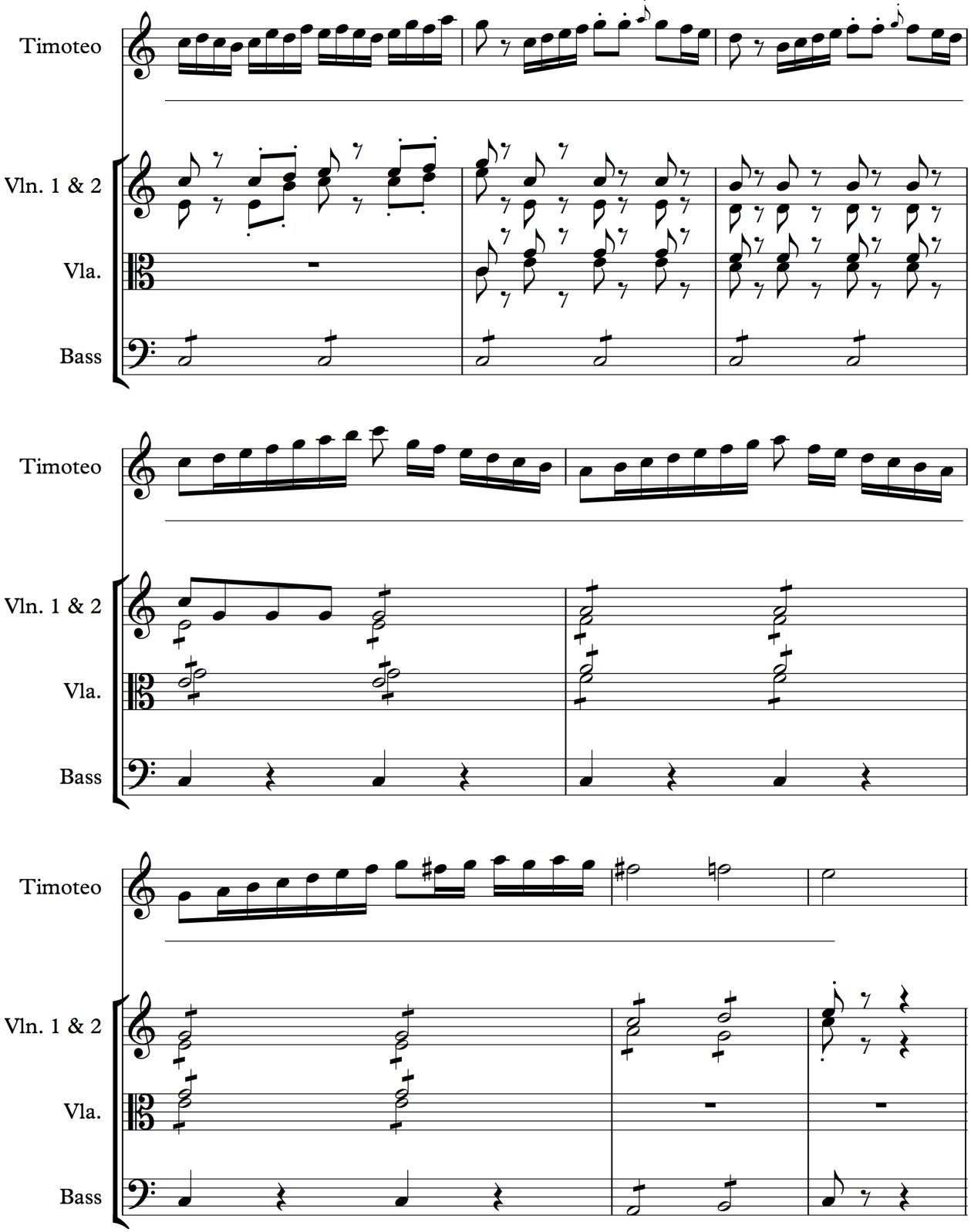
[25] "È dunque un sogno, un' ombra/ La grandezza de' Re?"

became thinkable, let alone popular, Timoteo's direct challenge to Alessandro's absolute authority would have been quite astonishing indeed.

Example 2.3 "Nel seno il cor mi palpita," in Sarti/Rezzonico, *Alessandro e Timoteo*, I, 267[V] – 269[R].



Example 2.3 continued



Curiously, the most acclaimed moment in the opera was neither Timoteo's Orfeo act nor his virtuosic aria, but his recitative line: "Is it then a dream, a shadow, the greatness of kings?" One widely disseminated French review of the opera, soon reprinted in Italian, described a discussion ignited by Timoteo's provocative question:

> The author [of this review] was sitting in the royal box, close to the Count of the North, when that line was sung […] [Prince Paul] showed the most vivid emotion; he said to the poet: "Count Rezzonico, you should engrave that in golden letters." […] He then shared some quotes from Antoninus or Marcus Aurelius about vanity and the nothingness of human greatness. The duke of Parma testified to the poet that it had touched him as well. Rezzonico replied, "There is another one that I believe is even better for a prince like you to learn by heart: […] 'If the land is happy, I am a god.'"[26]

Timoteo had inspired the audience, and royalty both real and operatic, with a voice tuned to the political mode. Alessandro, the onstage sovereign, could not properly function for the audience as what Feldman calls the "intermediary of the subject's inner experience"; the theatrical mechanisms that ought to have made this possible were invisible to the onstage king, but made visible to his spectators through the machinations of Timoteo-as-impresario, in a reversal of the established order.[27] In the royal box, Prince Paul and Duke Ferdinand resonated with Timoteo's ruminations on the mortal limitations of kingship, while in the opera, Alessandro breaks his sword. Timoteo lends his voice to Rezzonico's endorsement of the "good" princes (those in the audience) by cautioning the "bad" one (the onstage Alessandro), simultaneously critiquing and condoning absolutism. Mercenary

[26] "L'auteur étoit dans la loge de S. A. R., près de M. le comte du Nord, quand on chants le vers que nous venons de traduire ainsi; l'auguste voyageur ne put l'entendre sans la plus vive émotion; il dit au poëte: *M. le comte de Rezzonico, faites graver cela en lettres d'or.* A cette invitation mémorable, il ajouta des réflexions dignes d'Antonin ou de Marc-Aurele, sur le vanité, le néant des grandeurs humaines. Le duc de Parme témoigna suffi à l'auteur combien le même vers le touchoît. *Mgr.,* répondit M. de Rezzonico, *il y en a un autre que je crois mériter encore plus d'être appris par cour par un prince comme vous.* […] *Se la terra è felice, un nume io sono*" (italics in original). "*Alessandro e Timoteo*" [review], 306.
[27] Feldman, *Opera and Sovereignty,* 282–3, in dialogue with Georges Bataille, *Sovereignty,* in *The Accursed Share: An Essay on General Economy*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Zone Books, 1993).

though he may be, at least Timoteo here turns his voice to serve Rezzonico's ideology. For the poet, it was the voice that transmitted political maxims that established and protected civil harmony.

As expected in a work about the tyranny of singers, Timoteo's vocal power turns destructive by the opera's finale. In order to distract Alessandro from his romantic pursuit of Taide, Timoteo's beloved, the singer pretends to raise the ghosts of the Greeks left unburied after the Persian wars. Driven by Timoteo's coordinated song and stagecraft, Alessandro falls victim to his misguided sensibility and sets the onstage city of Persepolis on fire—leading Stefano Arteaga, for one, to call Alessandro a "raving madman" in his ambivalent 1783 review.[28] In this period, ending an opera with such violence, and without so much as a *licenza*, had unsettling implications. The entire action of the opera has taken place within the palace, but Alessandro's destruction of Timoteo's scenery moves from the play-within-a-play into the opera's "real world" beyond. With this ending, Rezzonico's theater of theater warns that theatrical illusions might shatter the fourth wall and incite violence in the world outside the opera house. Timoteo is a figure for the mercenary nature of singers, but, more disturbingly, he augurs the downfall of civilizations should voice and misplaced sensibility be allowed to run amok. When he sings of political truths, he fights tyranny and serves the greater good; when he sings of counterfeit emotion, he endangers society.

In Rezzonico's view, voice was most salutary when separated from the singer's individuality and treated as a mouthpiece for political edification. Yet if theatrical performance enacted and perpetuated tyranny, how else might that vocal power be reined in, harnessed, and redirected for the good of civilization?

[28] Arteaga, *Rivoluzioni,* III: 131–5. He describes Alessandro as "farnetico," a raving madman. While Arteaga praises the overall "good taste" of Rezzonico's poetry, he declares *Alessandro e Timoteo* more fit for a narrative poem than an opera.

The tale of the charlatan and the *citaredo*

One such possibility for redirection emerges from a constellation of texts by the writer Alessandro Verri. By the 1780s, Verri was solidly enmeshed in Roman neoclassicism, but he had a Lombard Illumunismo pedigree: together with Cesare Beccaria, Paolo Frisi, and others, Alessandro and his elder brother Pietro had founded the progressive literary journal *Il Caffè* in Milan in the early 1760s. Pietro Verri became friendly with Bettinelli a few years later, and it was through Pietro's agency that *Dell'entusiasmo* was first published.[29] In the late 1760s, Alessandro traveled to London and Paris, where he met many of the thinkers idealized in *Il Caffè*, before ultimately settling in Rome and publishing several novels there in the 1780s and 1790s. One particular letter from Alessandro to Pietro, sent in 1777 from Rome to Milan, reveals another contemporary fantasy of voice, a compromise that drew upon Millico's Orfeo act while diverting it to a new—or, rather, ancient—purpose.

The voice Alessandro wished to hear was that of the ancient Greek rhapsode (in Italian, *rapsodo* or *citaredo*), the category of singer that declaimed epic verses to his own invented musical accompaniment. The Homeric rhapsode, in the words of Adriana Cavarero, was "the poet who sings the glories of the past and educates the present generations"—that is to say, a mouthpiece for public cultural and civic edification.[30] As Angela Esterhammer has shown, in the second half of the eighteenth century this figure reentered the cultural imaginary when classicists began debating the

[29] Bettinelli claimed that Pietro Verri had taken the manuscript and had it printed without his knowledge, but Ettore Bonora has shown that this was only false modesty. See Bonora, "L' 'entusiasmo delle belle arti' e Pietro Verri," in *Parini e altro Settecento: fra classicismo e illuminismo* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1982), 180–94.
[30] Cavarero, *For More than One Voice*, 100–1.

authenticity of "Homer."[31] If this figure of the rhapsode could lend his voice to educating modern Italians about their more recent literary past, he just might lead them to a more civilized future. Alessandro wrote to Pietro:

> The castrato Millico [...] met Jean-Jacques Rousseau in Paris. He went there under the pretext of copying music. Seeing [Millico] was a castrato, [Rousseau] lit up and begged him to sing. Millico obliged and sang, even though the harpsichord was horribly out of tune and a torment to accompany himself upon. Rousseau was astonished and transported, above all by Millico's singing of the most beautiful *ottave* by Ariosto and Tasso, for which he had invented music of expressive declamation that was completely new and amazing. Rousseau told him that if Tasso had heard him, he would have written a new [epic] poem for him.[32]

On a basic level, the snippet relays an enticing bit of gossip about two celebrities, the famous Orfeo and the hermetic *philosophe.* But a subtle grammatical shift in the Italian signals a change in register, turning from the recent past tense in which the anecdote begins into the *passato remoto*, indicating that the following content may be read as both journalistic and mythic. And it does so by proposing the discourse to follow as no mere bit of gossip but something worthy of attention, as a deliberate choice of a kind the brothers argued in *Il Caffé* was essential to literary form.

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[31] See Angela Esterhammer, "Was Homer an *Improvvisatore*?: Histories of Improvisation in Antiquarian Scholarship and Popular Culture," ch.4 in *Romanticism and Improvisation, 1750–1850* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 59–77.

[32] "Questo musico Vito Millico, che ha cantato nel passato carnevale all'opera di Roma, ha pure conosciuto a Parigi Gian-Giacomo Rousseau. Andò da lui col solito pretesto di copiar musica. Vedendo ch'era musico, si rasserenò e lo pregò di cantare. Cantò per compiacerlo, benchè il cembalo, orribilmente scordato, fosse un tormento per accompagnarsi. Rousseau rimase attonito e trasportato, massimamente per il di lui canto delle ottave più belle di Ariosto e del Tasso, nelle quali egli ha inventata una musica di espressiva declamazione affatto nuova e che è mirabile. Gli disse Rousseau che, se il Tasso lo avesse inteso, avrebbe fatto per lui un nuovo poema. Millico pregò a Giangiacomo di cantare. Non voleva, s'imbarazzava, finalmente, tremando, fece qualche mediocre cantilena e la grossa e brutta moglie lo andava animando e consolando chiamandolo *mon petit ami*. Voltaire chiama quella donna *une sorcière* e non la può soffrire, ed io sono sempre stato un freddo conoscitore del merito di Rousseau, le di cui opere mi hanno quasi mai persuaso e spesso dispiaciuto e la di cui condotta mi ha risvegliato sentimenti anche di minor considerazione. Lo crederò un ottimo uomo, ma certamente strano quanto Diogene. Io credo che mi farebbe compassione di vederlo ed è certo che, per quanto sia ammiratore delle sue opere, nessuno troverebbe sensato di far la parte di anacoreta e misantropo in una capitale di seicentomila anime e di far il copista di musico per essere accessibile a tutti, sempre non volendo vedere alcuno. È un ciarlatano." A. Verri, letter of 22 February 1777. Previously qtd. in the original Italian in Feldman, *The Castrato,* 352.

Key to Verri's positioning of Millico as a modern-day rhapsode is the repertoire Millico reportedly performed for Rousseau. Although Verri often praised Millico's operatic performances in his letters, he focused on Millico's own settings of *ottave* by Italy's two great modern poets, Ariosto and Tasso. (I suspect that, if the encounter actually happened, Millico sang an excerpt from his cantata *La morte di Clorinda,* which sets Canto XII, stanza 69 of Tasso's *Gerusalemme* liberata; as far as I have discovered, it is his only extant work that sets either Ariosto or Tasso directly.)[33] The Cinquecento poets of the *Orlando furioso* and *Gerusalemme liberata* frequently appear in the Verri brothers' letters and essays as exemplars of Italian literary genius.[34] Rousseau, Alessandro claimed, was not taken in by the ear-tickling roulades of an aria, but was moved by Millico's "expressive declamation" of Italy's own epic past, thereby bringing the figure of the rhapsode into an encounter with modern vernacular poetry. In Verri's story of the rhapsode, Millico materializes the epic voice of Italian literary glory.

This epic mode of voice coincided with the late Settecento move toward with imbuing texts with markers of voice and immediacy (as we have seen throughout this dissertation). Though there had been innumerable musical settings of Tasso's and Ariosto's poems since the Cinquecento, the poets had not necessarily looked kindly upon this cooption of their work. Anthony Welch argues that Tasso had objected to the widespread singing of verses from his *Gerusalemme liberata*, whether by *cantastorie* in the streets or *cortegiani* in their academies, with the poet insisting that Ariosto's

[33] The cantata, incipit "D'un bel pallor ha il bianco volto asperso," is scored for soprano and strings. Millico composed some works based on Ariosto (e.g., the cantata *Angelica e Medoro*), but used Ariosto's story as re-told with new poetry. There are two extant manuscript copies of *La morte di Clorinda,* held at I-MC (4-A-10/4) and D-MÜs (SANT Hs 2685).

[34] For example: "Nessuna Accademia di Poesia ha formato un Tasso, o un Ariosto. Un ceto d'uomini non farà mai cosa che oltrepassi la mediocrità." Pietro Verri, "Della economia politica," in *Opere filosofiche di Pietro Verri* (Pavia: 1803), 1: 207.

verse was the stuff of vocalism while his own continued what he conceived as a non-musical Homeric tradition.[35] By Verri's time, neoclassical reimaginings of the rhapsode offered a legitimizing connection between modern poetry, classical models, and the civilizing power of voice.

Alessandro Verri's fascination with the figure of the *citaredo* as a civilizing force becomes more evident in a scene from his 1782 novel, *Le avventure di Saffo, poetessa di Mitilene* (The Adventures of Sappho, Poetess of Mytilene). In Book II, the philosopher Eutichio throws a dinner party during which his *citaredo* Melanzio begins to sing,

> lightening the mood with his melodious voice mixed with the sound of the lyre. He first unfolded the song with moderate breath like a voice heard from far away that gradually gets closer, and then, crescendoing with full melody, agitated the rapid notes of the lyre, abundantly spilling out the song, such that all with drooping eyelids had turned to watch in silence. Melanzio sang some verses from the *Iliad*, animating with harmony that divine meter and those celestial ideas, so that with double delight it descended upon attentive ears to possess the heart.[36]

Melanzio's song has a very real public utility in *Saffo*. That is, his singing the epic past proves more beneficial to society than agonizing over the realities of life (and death): when a nearby volcano erupts, Eutichio keeps his guests from panicking by distracting them with Melanzio's performance of Homer's verses. Eutichio then remarks,

> See how marvelous is the magnanimity of the Trojan and Greek heroes, and, no less, the beauty of the verses of Homer in praising them, and also the skill of my *citaredo*

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[35] Anthony Welch, *The Renaissance Epic and the Oral Past* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 29, 33. The term "charlatan" (Italian: *ciarlatano*) was often used in reference to the *cantastorie* or *cantimbanchi* who extemporized verses in town squares. These popular improvisers were different from the "learned" improvisers of the Arcadian Academy, though by the early nineteenth century they were frequently conflated by disdainful Grand Tourists. On the tension between the two types of poetic improvisation in Italy, see Paola Giuli, "From Academy to Stage: Improvisation, Gender, and National Culture," in *The Formation of a National Audience in Italy, 1750–1890: Readers and Spectators of Italian Culture,* eds. Gabriella Romani and Jennifer Burns (Lanham, MD: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2017), 153–70.

[36] "Incominciò il citaredo Melanzio a cantare […] rallegrandola [la mensa] con la melodiosa voce mista al suono della lira. Egli da prima spiegò il canto con moderato alito, come voce da lungi udita, e che gradatamente si avvicina; e quindi crescendo con piena melodia agitava le rapide note della lira, spandendo ampiamente il canto; verso di cui tutti con ciglio sospeso avean rivolti gli occhi in silenzo. Cantò Melanzio alcuni versi della Illiade, animando con l'armonia quel metro divino e quei celesti pensieri, onde riunito il doppio diletto, scendeva per le attente orecchie a impadronirsi del cuore." Alessandro Verri, *Le avventure di Saffo, poetessa di Mitilene* [1782] (Rome: Frugoni, 1809), II: 155–6.

> in animating, with the allurements of music, such excellent ideas; yet neither heroes, nor poets, nor musicians, are shaped by the scholastic disciplines.[37]

Verri, via Eutichio, drew a lineage from the epic heroes through Homer to the rhapsode. In his idealized civil society, these central figures would contribute to the social good by (respectively) generating, transcribing, and propagating foundational myths, together preventing the masses from questioning their existence or rising up. Verri's philosophical contemporaries had had the opposite effect, he suggested, becoming the downfall of society by focusing on what Eutichio calls "useless truths" instead of "nobler and healthier persuasions."[38] By this point, Alessandro Verri had become disenchanted with the ideology of his youth, turning against the *philosophes* he had once revered when a member of the Accademia dei Pugni. Looking back on his time in the Parisian salons of the late 1760s, Alessandro judged his erstwhile companions harshly: "The only fruit of the pride with which the sophists of that time had attempted the reform of mankind was a rapid and continuous destruction."[39]

The simultaneous discrediting of sophistry and exaltation of the hero-poet-rhapsode is revealed in Verri's 1777 letter when he moves from Millico's musical performance to Rousseau's. Rousseau becomes marked as abject when Verri states that his harpsichord was "horribly out-of-tune." Rousseau, now living as a recluse, is out of tune with society, and his harpsichord, far from a civilizing lyre, shares his fate. Rousseau fares badly again when he attempts to play and sing after Millico, as he trembles, performs poorly, and then, embarrassed, has to be comforted by his infantilizing wife. Verri to remark that he has never been convinced by Rousseau's work, and that he

[37] A. Verri, *Saffo,* II: 156.
[38] A. Verri, *Saffo,* 157; Cavarero, *For More than One Voice,* 100–1.
[39] A. Verri, *Vicende memorabili dal 1789 al 1801,* ed. Giovanni Antonio Maggi (Milan: Guglielmini, 1858), 520–1.

finds his hermetic behavior—living in Paris yet refusing most visitors—ridiculous. "He is a charlatan," Verri writes. Verri thus stages an encounter between the expressive singer-composer who brings Tasso to life, and the broken-down philosopher who shuns society while purporting to fix it.

Woven into Verri's retelling of this alleged bit of gossip are claims about the power of voice to displace self-important intellectualism as the prime civilizing and edifying force. These claims resonate with Bettinelli's ideal of a modern "Accademia delle Bell'Arti" in which

> [the students] will have only paintbrushes, and musical instruments, and song, and they [won't] know how to "reason," besides painting and singing, and they will understand one another, and communicate their ideas through the soul, the passions, fantasy, [and] the senses, not like other academicians with arguments and demonstrations and calculations and disputes of wits. This art is carved within the human heart by nature, not written in the brain or in books.[40]

Bettinelli, like Millico, traced the aesthetic expression of the passions to nature, but went so far as to reject reason as being merely imitative. Alessandro Verri also mistrusted the self-importantly academic, but contra Bettinelli and Millico, his conservative leanings meant he was unwilling to democratize the moral and the aesthetic. In Verri's worldview, people were little better than Orpheus's barbarians: they had to be continuously re-civilized through tales of heroic deeds, as recorded in epic poetry and animated by the *citaredo*'s song.

It stands to reason that literati such as Rezzonico and Alessandro Verri would have been wary of a purely Orphic-lyric mode of voice. Such a voice rested upon the individuality and uniqueness of the singer, and assigned to him poetic as well as musical and vocal agency. But a rhapsode, dedicated

[40] "Parmi ad un certo modo aprire in questo trattato un' Accademia delle Bell'Arti, nella qual […] non hanno altro che pennelli, e stromenti di suono, e di canto, nè sanno pur ragionare, fuorchè dipingendo e cantando, e tra loro s'intendono, e si comunican le loro idee per la via dell'anima, delle passioni, della fantasìa, dei sensi, non come gli altri accademici per argomenti, e dimostrazioni, e calcoli, e disputo dell'ingegno. Quest' arte è scolpita nel cuore umano dalla natura, non del celabro scritta, o nei libri." Bettinelli, *Dell'entusiasmo,* 10–11. This does still fit into Rousseau's outlook to some extent—the nostalgia for a long-departed originary expression destroyed by reason and civilization—but Alessandro Verri was clearly not interested in redeeming Rousseau in his letter to Pietro.

to the expression and dissemination of poetry through vocal music—that was a role suited to even such singer-composers as Millico and Guadagni, because it protected the poetic text as prime agent of meaning. Individual sensibility was necessary insofar as it enabled the singer-composer to feel the poets' sentiments and "transfuse" them to his audience, but the singer's agency was otherwise limited to the service of the given texts. For singers who sought to draw upon both the individuality of lyric and the edificatory purpose of epic, the operatic stage posed a somewhat unsurpassable obstacle: everything that took place on such a stage was marked as performance, steeped in artifice and inauthenticity. But perhaps a more private setting—a drawing-room, a salon, even an empty landscape—could collapse the distance between singer and listener. Perhaps voice could somehow be not only individual, but intimate.

Song culture and neoclassical subjectivity

Classics professor Francesco de' Rogati—friend to Cesarotti, Mattei, and Rezzonico—suddenly found the solution to Italy's poetic problems one evening in Naples when he heard Millico sing and play the harp. De' Rogati had been agonizing over the current state of Italian lyric poetry, which he felt had declined to such a point that few verses were truly suited to song. This portended ill for poetry, obviously, but also for music: without "sufficient poetry to be set," how could Italian vocal music arise from the doldrums in which it currently languished? The answer came to him when he chanced to hear a new musical setting of Anacreon's third ode, one composed and performed by "one of the best singers in Italy." Translated into Italian by Saverio Mattei in the mid-1760s, Anacreon's ode was made even "more alive, more captivating, more brilliant" by Millico's music and voice. The same evening, Millico performed songs with texts by other poets, but his music

overshadowed the poetry—leading de' Rogati to realize that, if only the other poetry had been as good as Anacreon's, those songs would have also engaged "the mind and heart." De' Rogati resolved then and there to translate the extant verses of Anacreon, and Sappho, too, in hopes that such worthy lyrics would lead composers to "awaken the Italian Muses with their harmony." In the preface to his 1782 printed volume of Anacreontic odes, De' Rogati credited Millico's composition and performance with inspiring this epiphany.[41]

De' Rogati's vignette animates a now-familiar scene: a singer declaims poetry to lyric stringed accompaniment, inspiring his listeners with a perfect unity of voice, music, and words. Like Alessandro Verri with his letter, de' Rogati named Millico at the outset, emphasizing the castrato's reputation as not only a singer but a respected composer. Also like Verri, de' Rogati avoided explicitly connecting Millico with Orpheus. Yet de' Rogati did not seem to have been in search of a rhapsode at all: he prized the supposedly personal lyrics of Sappho and Anacreon, not the universal epics of Homer, yet in selling those lyrics to his readers he ignored Millico's well-known

[41] "Mentre ondeggiava ne' miei dubbj intesi a caso una sera dal signor Millico maestro di musica, ed uno de' primi cantori d'Italia sull'arpa cantare la mentovata ode III. tradotta dal signor Mattei. Io m'intesi scuotere, al trasporto io non seppi resistere: le bellezze, i sentimenti, le immagini di quella poesia mi sembraron più brillanti, più seducenti, più vive. […] Il Signor Millico stesso, che con tanta grazia, e tanto diletto cantò l'ode riportata, cantò pure altre canzonette […] ma le parole cedean di pregio di gran lunga alla musica. Riflettei in questa occasione, che se quella musica avesse vestita, e adornata poesia più bella [come quello d'Anacreonte] […] l'impegno della mente, e del cuore sarebbe stato maggiore. […] Una traduzione d'Anacreonte per servire alla musica, mi lusingo, che impegnerebbe i maestri di cappella a svegliare colla loro armonia le Muse Italiane" [sentence is a fragment in the original]. Francesco Saverio de' Rogati, "Discorso preliminare," in *Le odi di Anacreonte e di Saffo recate in versi italiani* (Colle: A. Martini, 1782), 1: 16–19. The ode, incorrectly identified by Mattei as Anacreon's fourth, appears in his *I libri poetici della Bibbia,* 1: 64ff. De' Rogati was undoubtedly influenced in his endeavor by Mattei's *Libri poetici,* in which Mattei rendered the psalms into Metastasio-esque Italian verse. De' Rogati's approach to translation is discussed in more depth in chapter 3, below. Volume 2 of de' Rogati's translations, which includes Sappho's odes, was published a year later in 1783. Millico's success as a singer and composer of chamber music is documented in the journals of Frances Burney, among others, who frequently recounted hearing him in her father's home in London in the early 1770s. Burney remarks that Millico told her father that he had to have printed several volumes of his chamber songs for voice and harp, in order to save himself the expense of paying a copyist to keep up with demand from the ladies. See her journal entry of 9 May 1773, in *The Early Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney,* 1: 260.

identification with Orpheus. As a symbol or shorthand for lyric authenticity, Orpheus had grown stale—but lyric had not. So who, or what, was to replace him as lyric model?

De' Rogati's neoclassical project avoided tropes of Orphic individuality, fraught as those had become, and was instead aimed at renewing the archaic historical practice of lyric poetry, known within Classics as "song culture."[42] The poetry of Anacreon and Sappho was not, generically speaking, epic like that of Homer (their predecessor) or tragico-dramatic like that of Euripides (their successor), but lyric. Yet, as Classicist Leslie Kurke reminds us, Greek lyric cannot be mapped directly onto modern conceptions of lyric poetry (that is, as a mode defined by certain signature elements of discourse and practice). Historically, archaic Greek lyric was less a mode than a genre: a type of "embedded song" which was "always intended to be heard, not overheard," and which "served in general as a means of socialization and cultural education."[43] In contradistinction to modern lyric, much archaic lyric repertoire was not intended to invoke the individual or "personal." Choral lyrics, such as Pindar's odes, were sung at public gatherings and religious rituals, while even solo lyrics, or melic monodies, were more about the place of an individual within a given community and less about the unique interiority of the lyric "I," with the soloist akin to what we might call a chorus leader.[44] De' Rogati did not apprehend such a distinction, but did recognize the quasi-public nature of Anacreon's monody as having been composed for performance at symposia (small semi-private gatherings of fifteen to twenty men). While only men attended archaic symposia, de' Rogati emphasized that his own intended audience was not so limited: his female contemporaries who

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[42] For an overview, see Leslie Kurke, "The Strangeness of 'Song Culture': Archaic Greek Poetry," ch. 2 in *Literature in the Greek and Roman Worlds,* ed. Oliver Taplin (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 58–87.
[43] Kurke, "Song Culture," 59–60. The heard/overheard contrast is in reference to the common definition of lyric poetry as "overheard" or, in T.S. Eliot's famous description, as "the poet talking to himself"; see the introduction, above.
[44] On Sappho as *khoregos,* or choral leader, see Gregory Nagy, *Pindar's Homer: The Lyric Possession of the Epic Past* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 435, 370–1.

"lack[ed] scholarly language" (i.e., Greek) were to be brought this poetry as part of de' Rogati's translating mission. His attention to "il bel sesso" revealed his understanding of women's developing role in contemporary salon, or *salotto*, music culture.[45]

Either way, de' Rogati's preface shows that he knew at least something of the historical context of archaic Greek song culture, and how that context might be used to shape the reception of his poetic project. He explained, "Anacreon wrote his odes for the friendly gatherings of his times: a song corresponding to the candid simplicity of those odes must have awakened in the souls of his listeners a thousand delightful thoughts of pleasure."[46] The presumed effects of Anacreon's odes recall those of Alessandro Verri's *citaredo,* especially the notion that song rouses or touches the soul. Yet while Verri's Melanzio inspired listeners with declamation of epic heroism, de' Rogati's Anacreon edified through simplicity and delight. Such pleasure was in no way frivolous. De' Rogati saw it as evidence of the "greater engagement" between Anacreon's songs and "the mind and heart," suggesting active rather than passive reception.

Active reception was made possible by the Anacreontic-lyric model of the relationship between voice and self, quite different from voice in the epic mode. Melanzio, as a *citaredo* or rhapsode, functioned as the narrator who ventriloquized every character in an epic, a stand-in for the "original" Homer. Anacreon and the other archaic lyric poets, as Kurke points out, were not exactly unfolding their own unique subjectivities either, but they nonetheless played different versions of themselves in their lyrics. The archaic lyric poets courted identification between their own voices and

[45] De' Rogati, "Discorso preliminare," 14. The development of *salotto* song culture and de' Rogati's Sappho translations are taken up in chapter 3, below.
[46] "Anacreonte, scrisse le sue odi per le allegre brigrate [sic] de' suoi tempi: un canto corrispondente alla ingenua semplicità delle medesime dovea destare negli animi di chi le udiva mille idee ridenti di piacere." De' Rogati, "Discorso preliminare," 14.

each "lyric I,"[47] creating a series of miniatures of absorptive performance. This self-conscious blurring in song culture, between the experiential-personal and the performative, facilitated the subjective reception of lyric poetry, thereby complicating the notion of authenticity. Such lyrics created brief moments of affective engagement that inspired "a thousand delightful thoughts of pleasure," that is, a multiplicity of responses, as opposed to one "correct" response. As read through his preface, de' Rogati's argument in favor of revivifying song culture was based on the opportunities such lyrics provided for active, interpretive, subjective engagement with extant sources—a model for edification that was opposed to passive listening and the rigid imitation of models.

In her study of the *duetto notturno,* Licia Sirch argues that late Settecento vocal chamber music exhibited a move from a rationalist aesthetics of imitation to a proto-Romantic one of "soggettività," with texts by Sappho and Anacreon functioning alongside those of Metastasio to bridge the two frameworks.[48] Sirch reads the work of the poet Aurelio de' Giorgi Bertola to isolate two concepts central to the transitional aesthetic of the vocal *notturno*, "la grazia" and "il pittoresco" (grace and the picturesque). She asserts that these concepts enabled more traditionally classical texts to survive the broader sea change of proto-romanticism by inviting listeners to engage with them subjectively. Thus nature and Arcadian classicism, connected through the symbol of the landscape, transformed from models into a "paradise that we can and must admire with pleasant melancholy," in the words of Franco Fido.[49] That is to say that, instead of rejecting classicism, which encompassed both archaic lyric and Metastasio, many now confronted it as an idyllic and remote past, tinged with

[47] Kurke, "Song Culture," 62.
[48] Licia Sirch, "Notturno italiano: sulla musica vocale da camera tra sette e ottocento," *Rivista italiana di musicologia* 40 (2005), 153–226, esp. 161–3.
[49] Franco Fido, "Bertola e Metastasio," in *Il melodramma di Pietro Metastasio: la poesia, la messa in scena e l'opera italiana del Settecento,* ed. Elena Sala Di Felice and Rossana Caira Lumetti (Rome: Aracne, 2001), 766; qtd. in Sirch, 160.

the sense of loss. The concepts of *la grazia* and *il pittoresco* shaped an "aesthetic mold, based not on academic conventions, but on the direct observations of landscapes and nature, and the consequent sensations occasioned by their immediacy," what I refer to here as neoclassical subjectivity.[50]

This notion of neoclassical subjectivity dovetails with what Elisabeth Le Guin calls the "semiotic lack" in the contemporary aesthetics of sensibility. A semiotic lack was created when a work was left open or incomplete, as in a landscape painting without figures or a sonata without a melody, and functioned as an invitation for spectators to "insert themselves" into the work and, in so doing, "complete" it.[51] For de' Rogati, the "candid simplicity" of Anacreon's verses—their straightforward language and strophic organization—offered a similar opening. Judith Peraino, in her discussion of medieval song, notes how strophic structures place the emphasis in performance on voice, which, she argues, then "becomes a focus on the psychology of self, or a mode of self-consciousness fundamentally opposed to the physicality and participatory nature of choral refrains or dance."[52] With simplicity, both formal and vocal, functioning as an open invitation to contemplation and even completion, the Settecento performance of Anacreon's lyric strophes could have achieved an effect of immediacy—becoming "more alive," as de' Rogati put it. Simplicity also created a sense of intimacy, born of listeners' self-insertion into the semiotic lack and this voice-centered "focus on the psychology of self."

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[50] Sirch, "Notturno italiano," 161.
[51] Le Guin, *Boccherini's Body,* 72, 75.
[52] Judith Peraino, "The Turn of the Voice," ch. 1 in *Giving Voice to Love: Song and Self-Expression from the Troubadours to Guillaume de Machaut* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 36–7. The contrast Peraino strikes between self-conscious voice and the collective participation of choral song resonates with the monodic/choral distinction discussed by Kurke, as well as with the tension between monumentality and individuality within *I giuochi d'Agrigento,* discussed in the present chapter, below.

De' Rogati intended that Anacreon's simple strophes, rendered into poetic Italian, would make available to his contemporaries a vast range of emotional and intellectual connections, and open a door for subjectivity into the newly moody Arcadian landscape. A certain brand of vocal simplicity similarly engaged the subjectivities of listeners by evoking a combination of immediacy, intimacy, and nostalgia for the classical past. Perhaps no singer better inhabited the aesthetics of intimate simplicity than Gasparo Pacchierotti.

Castrato da camera

Pacchierotti followed Millico's trajectory as an Orphic castrato and became for many the quintessential voice of sensibility.[53] Musicologist Lorenzo Mattei characterizes him as "the spiritual heir to Guadagni," an epithet which presumably takes into account not only the shared attention of the two castrati to acting but various other commonalities as well, including the fact that both of them sang the title roles in Gluck's *Orfeo* and in Bertoni's remake.[54] Eighteenth-century writers, such as the Burneys, Lord Mount-Edgcumbe, and Innocenzo della Lena, and modern scholars including Feldman, Mattei, and Stephen Willier, all read Pacchierotti as the antithesis *par excellence* to the virtuosic-and-cold stereotype embodied in the same period by the *bravura* castrato Luigi Marchesi.[55]

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[53] Feldman, *The Castrato,* 196. Note that "Pacchiarotti" is a common spelling variant of the surname, as is "Gaspare" for his given name.

[54] Lorenzo Mattei, "Il battesimo della Fenice: Paisiello e i *Giuochi* di un conte drammaturgo," preface to facs. score of *I giuochi d'Agrigento* (Ricordi: Milan, 2007), XVIII. Pacchierotti and Guadagni had both also worked closely with Ferdinando Bertoni, and retired (separately) to Padua. On Guadagni, see Howard, *The Modern Castrato,* passim; on Pacchierotti, see Stephen Willier, "The Illustrious Musico Gasparo Pacchierotti: Final Triumphs and Retirement Years," *Studi musicali* 38, no. 2 (2009): 409–443.

[55] Innocenzo Della Lena, *Dissertazione ragionata sul teatro moderno* (Venice: Storti, 1791); Richard Edgcumbe Earl of Mount-Edgcumbe, *Musical Reminiscences of the Earl of Mount Edgcumbe…*[1834] (New York: Da Capo, 1973); Charles Burney, *General History*; Frances Burney, *The Early Journals*; Feldman, *The Castrato*; L. Mattei, "Il battesimo"; Willier, "The Illustrious Musico."

Contemporary descriptions of Pacchierotti's singing abound with references to the intimacy, sociability, and sentimental edification generated by his voice, often connected with accounts of his activities as a "private" performer. Like Millico, Pacchierotti frequented musical salons in London and often performed there to the great delight of the other guests, but where Millico became known for his harp-playing and composing, Pacchierotti was identified most clearly through the emotional intimacy of his vocal performance style. Alessandro Verri wrote of him as a singer of "great expressivity" in the salon (*in camera*),[56] and the singer was known for his sensitive performances of small-scale, self-enclosed works outside the opera house (such as Haydn's *Arianna a Nasso*).[57] Lord Mount-Edgcumbe emphasized the unique quality of Pacchierotti's more "private" performing style:

> As a concert singer, and particularly in private society, he shone almost more than on the stage; for he sung with greater spirit in a small circle of friends, and was more gratified with their applause, than in a public concert room, or crowded theatre. I was in the habit of so hearing him most frequently, and having been intimately acquainted with him for many years, am enabled to speak thus minutely of his performance. On such occasions he would give way to his fancy, and seem almost inspired: and I have often seen his auditors, even those the least musical, moved to tears while he was singing.[58]

Mount-Edgcumbe cited his personal "intimate" relationship with Pacchierotti as a guarantee of his ability to accurately report the experience, while asserting how "private society" enabled Pacchierotti to open himself to inspiration. "Inspired" has a Neoplatonic valence here, as if Pacchierotti could open himself to divine possession—enthusiasm, perhaps?—in the intimacy of his "small circle of

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[56] "L'ho inteso cantare in camera, è musico di molta espressione e mi dicono che abbia in teatro molto sentimento nella azione." Letter from Alessandro to Pietro, in *Carteggio di Pietro e Alessandro Verri,* vol. 8, no. CCIX (964), January 15, 1777, 243.

[57] Willier, "A Celebrated Eighteenth-Century Castrato: Gasparo Pacchierotti's Life and Career," *Opera Quarterly* 11, no. 3 (1995): 108–9; Feldman, *The Castrato,* 200.

[58] Qtd. in Willier, "The Illustrious Musico," 422. On the discourse of intimacy in late-eighteenth-century lyric, see David Wellbery, *The Specular Moment: Goethe's Early Lyrics and the Beginnings of Romanticism* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996), esp. ch. 1, "Idyllic and Lyric Intimacy," 3–26.

friends." Like the Anacreon of de' Rogati's essay, Pacchierotti's art came alive in the social context of a sociable, quasi-private space.

Though Pacchierotti was not a poet, nor even a composer like Millico and Guadagni, his vocal accents took on a poietic cast for many who wrote of him. Charles Burney deemed Sarti's cantatas, among them those composed for and sung by Pacchierotti, "the most perfect and complete models of chamber Music that have ever come to my knowledge," owing to the marriage of music and poetry inspired by Pacchierotti's voice.[59] Frances Burney stated that "if he had not been a singer, he would probably have been a poet. […] The *effusions of his imagination resembled his cadences in music*, by their excursionary flights, and impassioned bursts of deep, yet tender sensibility" (emphases added).[60] Pacchierotti's "effusions" encompassed voice, poetry and music, all bursting forth from the same "deep, yet tender" font of "sensibility." The ideological labor of authenticizing, previously performed by the symbolism of Orpheus and his lyre, was beginning to inhere in voice alone—in private, intimate voice.

Pacchierotti's vocal intimacy was confirmed by his singing in the private sphere, but carried over into his public appearances as his name became synonymous with vocal expressivity. His particular sensibility of voice shaped Italian operatic offerings in the 1770s-80s, from his preferred starring vehicle, Bertoni's *Quinto Fabio* (Milan, 1778) to Bianchi's controversial *Il disertore francese* (Venice, 1784). But it was in *I giuochi d'Agrigento,* the collaboration between Alessandro Pepoli and Giovanni Paisiello for the 1792 inauguration of Venice's La Fenice, that Pacchierotti's intimate voice made audible the aesthetics of neoclassical subjectivity. The opera itself was something of a study in

[59] C. Burney, *General History,* IV: 179.
[60] F. Burney, qtd. in Willier, "The Illustrious Musico," 434. The idea of "effusions" as a precursor to lyric poetry is discussed in chapter 2, above.

the potential for sensibility in public, and publicized, performance. Pepoli typically followed a Calzabigian line in his reformist libretti, but with *Giuochi* he eschewed the proto-Romantic subjects (Ossian, Shakespeare, northern history, etc.) favored by many of his contemporaries and sought to inject quasi-Metastasian classicism with strains of sensibility.[61] This change in approach made sense for such a high-profile opening, given that Pepoli's prior opera reform efforts had been met with resistance, and the poet must have been eager to capitalize on the participation of the anointed castrato of sensibility.

As noted previously, Pacchierotti's sensibility of voice was heard in opposition to the virtuosic ethos of Marchesi; this contrast was exemplified by the clash between Pepoli and Marchesi over the opera *La morte d'Ercole* (Venice, 1790), which ended up never being staged. When he later published the failed libretto, Pepoli prefaced the text by rehearsing his artistic differences with Marchesi and his ilk through a satirical dialogue. Notice how Pepoli's ideology of voice here aligns with the lyric:

Storditello [Marchesi]:	[on sitting down while singing] How do you expect me to bring forth my voice?
Cordisasso [Pepoli]:	From where? Do you not perhaps bring it forth from your breast, and are you not perhaps in the situation of being a dying man, one that demands very little voice? [...These situations] give you a wide open field for acting. [...]
Storditello:	Your "beautiful situations" deprive me of too many of my musical delights!
Cordisasso:	That may be quite true. But I would have hoped to acquire an actor who was [also] hoping […] to limit himself.[62]

[61] L. Mattei, "Il battesimo," IX.

[62] "Storditello: Il *Rondeau* a sedere […] come volete ch'io possa trarre la voce? Cordisasso: Da dove? Non la traete forse dal petto, e non siete forse nella situazione d'un moribondo ch'esige pochissima voce? […] in quella situazione nuova e interessante […] vi danno tutto il campo di agire […] Storditello: […] per le vostre belle situazioni [mi] private di tante mie Musicali delizie. Cordisasso: Sarà verissimo. Ma io avrei sperato [nell'] acquisto di un *Attore* quale sperava (a dispetto

Pepoli, ventriloquizing Cordisasso, plays upon the metaphorical location of feeling as being in the heart or breast. The word "petto" in Pepoli's dialogue can mean "chest," as in *voce di petto,* but also the more poetic "breast" (akin to *seno*). While singers in this period likely employed chest voice more often than commonly assumed today, we can comfortably presume that the heavier, darker timbre of chest voice would have been ill-suited to a pathetic aria sung by a dying man. If Storditello's character was indeed dying during the scene in question, his voice should not have come from his "chest voice" but from his breast, with the physical site serving as a metonym for deep emotion. Just like that, Pepoli-as-Cordisasso sweeps away the singer's concern with material vocal production in order to locate the voice in feeling. Connected with this, then, is the necessity of "limiting" oneself musically in order to open up expressive vocal possibilities. Following the viewpoint espoused here by Pepoli as a corrective to Marchesi, the role he conceived for Pacchierotti in *Giuochi* highlighted the singer's intimacy of expression as well as his oft-admired judgment in "limiting" his own voice.[63]

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della vostra intelligenza) di ridurvi" (emphasis in original; ellipses not in brackets denote original punctuation). The names are puns, of course: "Storditello" is the diminutive of "stordito," which means "stunned," and indicates someone who, in general, is out of touch with himself or reality; it is also a play on the practice of nicknaming castrati with diminutives. "Cordisasso" translates, ironically, to "heart of stone." Alessandro Pepoli, *Le nuvole concedute* (Venice: Curti, 1790), VII-VIII; orig. Italian qtd. in L. Mattei, X.

[63] Pacchierotti, in "combining all styles, and joining to exuberance of fancy the *purest taste and most correct judgment*, united every excellence, could by his variety please all descriptions of hearers, and give unqualified delight to every true lover of really good music" (emphases added), Lord Mount-Edgcumbe, qtd. in Willier, "The Illustrious Musico," 418; qtd. also in L. Mattei, "Il battesimo," XVIII. As Thomas Bauman shows, Pacchierotti and the other two leading singers had been engaged before the music was composed, so Paisiello and Pepoli had no choice but to tailor the role to Pacchierotti's talents. See "The Society of La Fenice and Its First Impresarios," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 39, no. 2 (Summer, 1986): 332–54.

"Among these ruins, I may moan in freedom": *I giuochi d'Agrigento* (Venice, 1792)

The story of *I giuochi d'Agrigento* (The Games of Agrigento) was of Pepoli's own invention, though many elements are reminiscent of Metastasian libretti. The opera opens as Eraclide, the king of Agrigento (in Sicily), crowns a winner at his Olympic-style athletic games, offering as a prize the hand of his daughter Egesta. The games' victor Clearco, son of the king of Locri, resists marrying Egesta because he harbors a incestuous love for his sister Aspasia, a shame that has driven him to flee Locri for Agrigento. Eraclide and his chorus of priests repeatedly prevail upon the tormented Clearco to wed Egesta, while Aspasia arrives to seek the brother whose secret romantic love she returns. In the opera's climactic scene we learn that Clearco is not the prince of Locri at all: as a baby, Clearco (real name: Alceo) had been sacrificed to Jupiter by his true father, King Eraclide himself, to atone for crimes against the gods. Unbeknownst to all, a nurse in the Locrian employ rescued the Agrigentan infant and passed him off as the Locrian prince, in order to hide that the real Locrian prince had died in her care. After much ado, including tempests and earthquakes sent by the gods, all is revealed, and Clearco/Alceo marries his beloved Aspasia. The admixture of historical and mythological elements ensured that La Fenice's opening could boast sumptuous sets and stage machinery, while the oscillation between public (choral) and private (solo) singing staged an overarching conflict between publicness and interiority.

Pacchierotti took the role of Clearco, Giacomo David (Rezzonico's Alessandro) played Eraclide, and the virtuosic soprano Brigida Giorgi-Banti sang Aspasia. David and Banti were both celebrated for their bravura technique, and the arias Paisiello wrote for them flaunted those talents. Banti, often described as possessing an astonishing instrument but little musical intelligence, had two big arias, each with a broad tessitura, extensive *fioritura*, and large leaps, reminiscent of Mozart's

Vitellia.[64] Similarly, David's arias demanded great range and flexibility, especially his Act 1 showpiece "Vedrò ridente il Sole," which sparkles with chromatically-inflected runs and numerous opportunities for cadenzas. In contrast to those of David and Banti, Pacchierotti's solos as Clearco are positively Orphic-sentimental in both poetic and musical language. Lorenzo Mattei interprets Pacchierotti's vocal style in *Giuochi* as relying upon "beautiful simplicity as a privileged vehicle for the communication of tender feelings," a description reminiscent of those of Gluck's Orfeo.[65] The dearth of virtuosic writing for Clearco may have been necessitated by Pacchierotti's age—he was fifty-two at the time, rather old for a castrato—but he had still been hired over singers with a more brilliant style, indicating that he had been engaged for a reason. Paisiello's florid vocal writing for tenor and soprano does the heavy bel canto lifting in *Giuochi,* adumbrating the soprano-tenor pairing central to Romantic opera and leaving space for the castrato to explore a sentimental expressive landscape.

Paisiello and Pepoli dramatized Clearco's emotional isolation by situating all three of Clearco's major solos as moments of inwardness set off by scenes of publicness. Two of those solos are cavatinas set within choral scenes, evoking a sense of intimate reflection amidst the ritual collectivity of choral odes, and juxtaposing both types of archaic lyric song (insofar as they were taxonomized in that period). Clearco's introductory cavatina "Dolce di gloria" (Act 1, scene 1) is brief and simple, as its declamatory-style vocal line, sustained rhythmic values, and short-breathed phrasing momentarily pull the focus to Clearco amid the celebratory choruses of the titular Games. Clearco's other cavatina *con coro*, the prayer "Gran dio che de' mortali" (Act 2, scene 5), picks up on

[64] See Mario G. Genesi, "La soprano monticellese Brigida Giorgi-Banti, protagonista a Londra del 'Galà' in onore della vittoria dell'Ammiraglio Howe a Lizard Point," *Strenna piacentina* 1992, 157–8; C. Burney, *General History,* IV: 507.
[65] L. Mattei, "Il battesimo," XVIII.

the function of diegetic song as discussed in chapter 1: he unfolds his true feelings by performing them as song meant to be heard rather than overheard. Through the performativity of his public prayer, Clearco asks the gods for deliverance from his sin, though the "true" sin (his incestuous love) is never disclosed. That is, he distances himself from his self-loathing by performing it as a public religious ritual of self-abnegation. Throughout this scene, Clearco's internal struggle becomes externalized not via scripted vocal expression, but through the larger musical-harmonic structure, as the tonality oscillates between F major and F minor (a Gluckian technique). His vocal line in the prayer, or *preghiera*, is strikingly simple, imbued with melancholy by the sparse accompaniment of woodwinds. The disjuncture between his individual sensibility and the public community is rendered audible by the timbral and textural contrasts between Clearco's austere self-expression and the richly orchestrated, homophonic chorus that surrounds his *preghiera*. The reviewer for the *Gazzetta urbana veneta* wrote of Pacchierotti's rendition of this solo that he "emitted a sweetness, which he always does in his singing," holding a "monopoly" on "the favor of souls who are sensible to the subtlety of musical expression."[66] At that performance Pacchierotti even repeated the cavatina in a *bis,* much to the delight of the audience, leading the reviewer to dub him "the First *Musico* in the world for this type of moving song."[67] Here was Pepoli and Paisiello's understanding of a true *voce di petto*: a voice restrained from showiness, which then elicits reciprocal feeling from others. (Not that this prevented Pacchierotti from responding to the audience's applause with an encore, of course—restraint is a relative term.) Clearco's vocal writing in both cavatina *con coro* scenes

[66] "Il gran Pacchiarotti a cui non potrebb' essere meglio raccomandata l'esecuzione de' pezzi affidatigli, in questo della Preghiera […] sparge una soavità, che sempre fu propria del suo canto, e gli appartiene come in facoltà privativa onde mantennesi giustamente il favore delle anime sensibili alla finezza dell'espressione musicale." *Gazzetta urbana veneta* 42 (26 May 1792), 335.
[67] "Lo serbano ancora il Primo Musico, che in questo genere di canto animato abbia il Mondo." *Gazzetta urbana veneta* 46 (9 June 1792), 363.

exemplifies the creators' belief in the affective power of simplicity, highlighted by the contrast between the surrounding choral monolith and Pacchierotti's intimate moments of interiority.

The same tension between public and private selves is staged without the soloist-chorus contrast in Clearco's one true aria, "Sognai tormenti, affanni" (Act 1, scene 10), through a gradual shift from sentimental musical language into vocal virtuosity. During the aria, Clearco is attempting to reassure the suspicious high priest Cleone that his former torments have ceased, all the while despairing to himself that his guilty feelings may never be silenced. Here, the conflict between Clearco's "public" face and his internal struggle unfurls through the aria's irregular formal structure, one in which text that would once have been set as da capo is instead given new music in order to sketch a psychological trajectory. When Clearco begins dissembling to the priest at the opening of the aria, his vocal line epitomizes Paisiello's sentimental musical language, with its largely triadic and stepwise melodic motion. A heart-throbbing breathlessness, as his fear of discovery, undermines the false calm of Clearco's melody, owing to accompaniment which is predominantly dotted and/or syncopated (e.g., strings entering in repeated eighth notes on the second half of the first beat of each measure).[68] The sentimental register of the A section is further reinforced by the use of lower neighbor notes on downbeats (sounding like leading-tone appoggiaturas) in the strings' theme, marked *sotto voce,* like a barely-suppressed alternate vocal line. Clearco turns completely inward in the B section with an aside, unheard by the priest: mocking his apostrophizing command to his own feelings to "silence" themselves, rests interrupt his phrases and break up words (e.g., "tace/te").[69] In

[68] Compare with the heart-throbbing accompaniment to "O del mio dolce ardor," the aria composed for Millico by Gluck in *Paride ed Elena* (Vienna, 1769), which uses similar syncopated figuration.
[69] "Affetti miei tiranni / Tacete, oimè! tacete!" (My tyrannical feelings, silence yourselves!)

this internal monologue, Clearco's suppressed feelings claim both agency and voice as he struggles to contain them.

When Clearco snaps out of his internal monologue and redoubles his efforts to convince Cleone of his happiness, he counterintuitively abandons vocal simplicity and turns instead to floridity. This switch implies that in Clearco/Pacchierotti's sensibility of voice, simplicity reveals genuine emotion, while florid song diverts attention away from feeling—which of course is exactly what Clearco hopes to do, distracting Cleone from his hidden pain with flashy *fioritura*. For that reason, when the A section text returns, it is with new music and a highly embellished vocal line, yielding what Lorenzo Mattei calls a hybrid da capo/rondò form.[70] Paisiello employed a series of subtle musical intensifications—rhythmic, chromatic, melismatic—in an attempt to musically narrate an otherwise imperceptible psychological progression. The fact that this kind of virtuosic vocal writing appears at all in Clearco's role shows that Pacchierotti was indeed still capable of producing it. Paisiello, possibly at Pepoli's urging, simply did not wish to overuse it.

But what of Clearco's genuine, intimate, authentic vocal expression, when he is neither performing humility for a crowd nor lying to the priests? Clearco's public deceptions are differentiated from his sole private moment through clear musical contrast: the deceptions occur in numbers marked as song, whether cavatinas or arias, and the private moment in, significantly, recitative only. In the printed libretto for the 1792 opening, the text for Clearco's lengthy recitative scena "Eccovi, o sacri orrori" (Act 2, scene 11) appears alongside a full-page engraving of Pacchierotti's profile, marking it as his defining moment in the opera (**figure 2.2**).

[70] L. Mattei, "Il battesimo," XVIII.

Figure 2.2 Portrait of Pacchierotti, in libretto to *I giuochi d'Agrigento*, 69.

The recitative is not a prelude to an aria, but offered in lieu of one. In the scene, Clearco seeks a private place to ruminate on the contents of a letter he has just received, eventually questioning his very identity in light of the information it relates. The scenic description in the libretto immediately sets the mood: "An open, uncultivated place, scattered with various ancient tombs. Some temple ruins are seen in the background."[71] This is both the decadent classical past haunting Sirch's proto-romantic present and the vacant landscape of Le Guin's semiotic lack. The setting also conjures strains of the Gothic akin to those of Alessandro Verri's spectral Roman ruins in *Le notti romane,* which was published that same year. These themes guide the first half of the scene, as Clearco

[71] "Luogo incolto e aperto, sparso di vari antichi tumuli. Vista in lontano di qualche tempio rovinato." Pepoli, *I giuochi d'Agrigento,* Act 2, scene 11.

describes his surroundings. The sounds of nature, especially of birdsong and the rustling of the wind, exemplified *grazia* for Bertola, while "nature speak[ing] to the heart" constituted the *pittoresco*.[72] Clearco has found himself in a scene set for exploring neoclassical subjectivity.

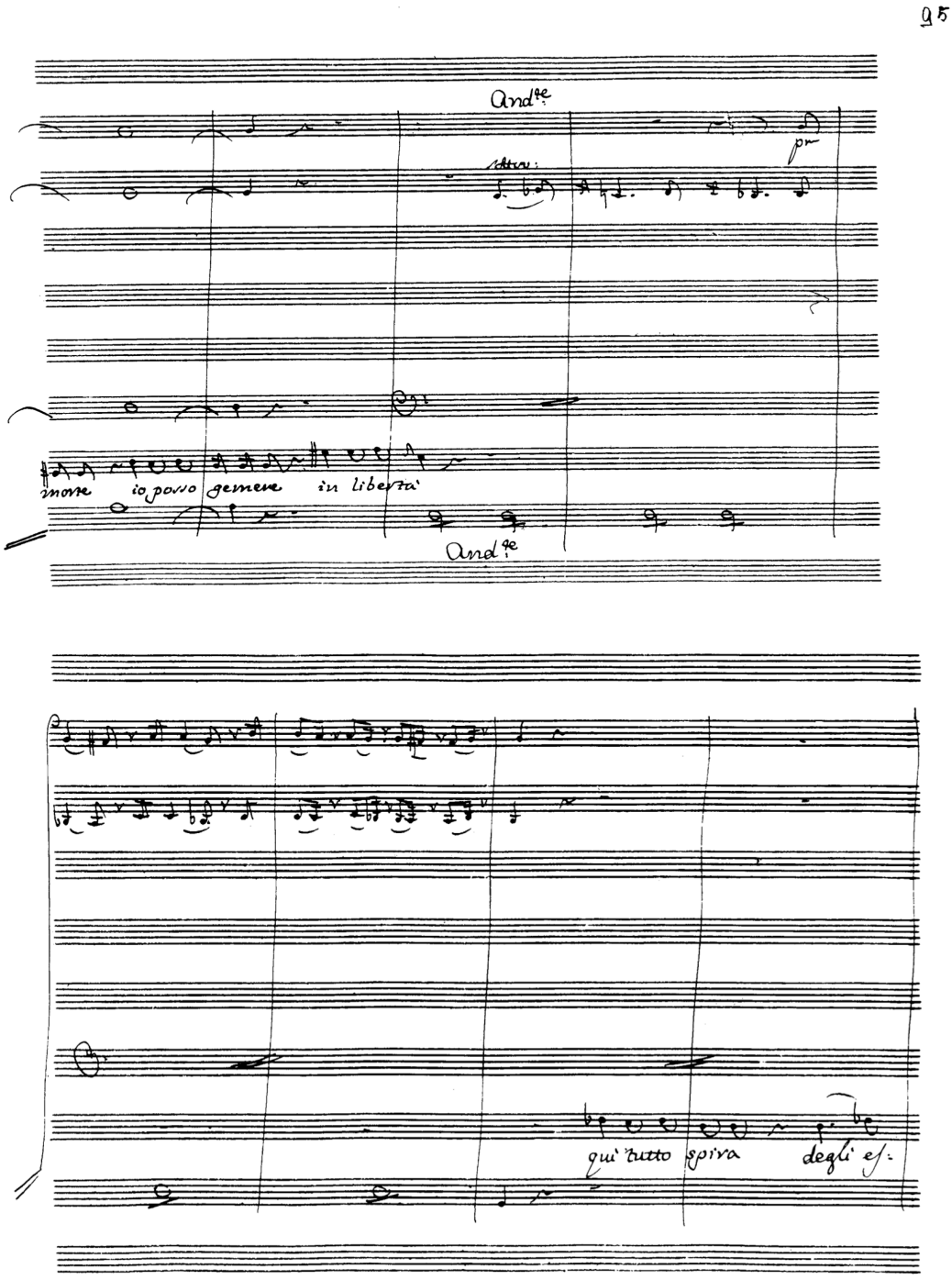
Clearco (Esce pensoso col foglio in mano)	**Clearco** (He enters, thoughtful, holding a piece of paper)
Eccovi, o sacri orrori	[**D minor**] Here you are, oh sacred horrors
Bramati dal mio cor. Fra quelle auguste	that my heart craves. Among these august,
Ampie rovine, e questi	ample ruins, and these
Ferali alberghi della morte, io posso	baleful homes of death, I may
Gemere in libertà. Qui tutto spira	moan in freedom. [**A major**] Here everything breathes
Degli estinti il silenzio. Appena il canto	the silence of the dead. Only the song
De' fuggitivi augelli	of fugitive birds
L'interrompe talor. Dell'aura appena	interrupts it sometimes. I can just
Tra le frondi agitate	hear among the shaking fronds
Ascolto il sibilar. Secreti e soli	the whistling of the wind. The only secret
Del mio duol, de' miei passi	witnesses of my sorrow, and of my steps
Testimonj saran gli sterpi, i sassi. --	will be the bushes, the stones. --
Giusti Dei, che scoperta! A me Aristocle	[**Eb major**] Good gods, what a discovery! Did Aristocle
Non diè la vita? E questo foglio il prova?	not give me life? And this paper proves it?
Qual fulmine novello	What new bolt of lightning
Piomba sopra di me! -- Folle! che penso?	falls upon me! -- Madness! What am I to think?
Grazie forse non debbo	Should I not perhaps
Rendere al mio destin? ... Dei beni forse	give thanks to my destiny? ...Is not the greatest gift
Il più grande non è, restando amante,	that I, still a lover,
Più non esser German? -- Ma che ragiono?	am no longer a brother? -- But what am I thinking?
Forse ignoto a me stesso io poi non sono?	Am I not then, perhaps, unknown to myself?
Chisa, qual sen, qual fallo	Who knows what breast, what seed
Mi diè la vita? E come mai d'Aspasia	gave me life? And how
Colla Paterna Legge	with her father's law
Sperar la mano? Ah, che dal primo abisso,	can I hope for Aspasia's hand? Ah, from the first abyss
Che già mi vidi a lato,	that I saw next to me,
A un abisso peggior mi guida il Fato.	now Fate guides me to an even worse abyss.

Over the course of the recitative, Clearco turns from contemplation of the external world—nature and the ruins of culture—to the lyric immediacy of his own inner world, much like

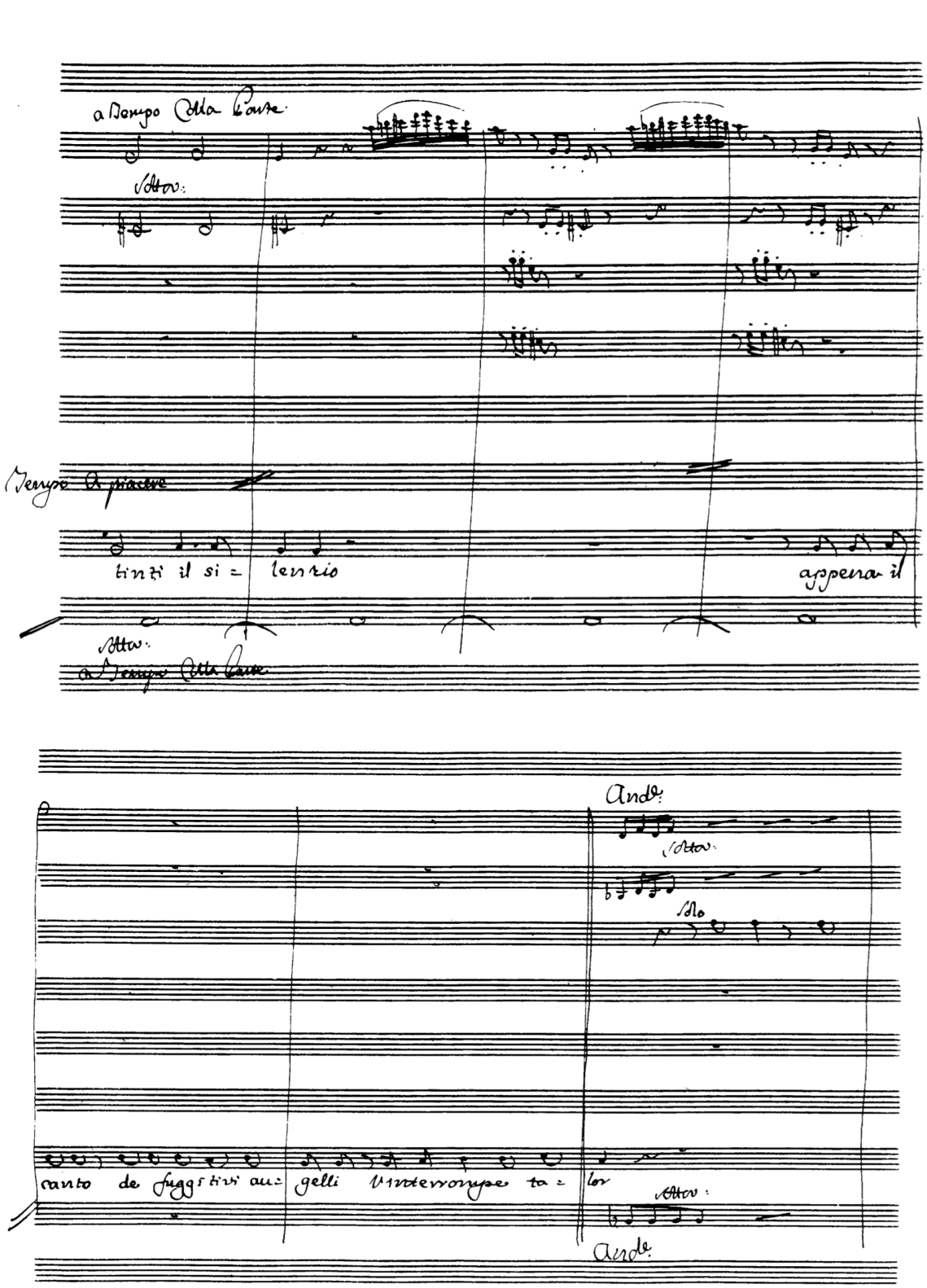
[72] Sirch, "Notturno italiano," 160.

Calzabigi's Orfeo or even the speaker of Wordsworth's *Tintern Abbey*. The scene begins with a sense of foreboding and gloom, sitting in D minor with a static texture, periodically broken up by the violins slowly outlining triads and emitting ominous *stile concitato* scales during vocal pauses. Once Clearco has settled on a spot among the ruins ("I may moan in freedom"), his focus shifts from the landscape of death to the graceful and picturesque sounds of nature, a change signified by the modulation to the dominant and the strings and oboes imitating wind and birdsong (**example 2.4**). As the recitative then progresses from engagement with the landscape to Clearco's own subject position, the emotional shifts within his speech become more rapid and immediate. (As shown in the translation above, his thoughts go from spanning multiple lines in the first half of the scene to being fragmented and disjointed in the second half.) The instrumental music enveloping his speech, however, provides little in the way of corresponding emotional clues, functioning primarily to signal external changes of location. The surrounding orchestral framework is, in a way, the unpopulated landscape of the semiotic lack. That lack must be filled through listeners' attention to the singer's delivery of recitative speech: a focus not on technical execution but nuanced expression.

Example 2.4 Paisiello/Pepoli, obbligato recitative for Clearco, "Eccovi, o sacri orrori," in *I giuochi d'Agrigento,* autograph MS, I-Vnm, 10186, It.IV.780, 95[R]–96[V]. Act 2, sc. 11, mm. 18–32. Note the "birdsong" and "wind" in the instrumental parts.



Example 2.4, continued



For Pacchierotti, whose sublime performance of recitatives was lauded by auditors from Arteaga to Stendhal, such a scene was perhaps more fitting than a bravura aria as his ostensible farewell performance.[73] He retired to Padua that same year, though he continued to sing privately at his villa for visitors like Alfieri, Cesarotti, Stendhal, and Rossini. He also emerged, unwillingly, to sing for Napoleon in 1797 and again, with sadness, for his teacher Bertoni's funeral in 1813. In the reception of *Giuochi,* most contemporary reviewers ignored the recitative scene in favor of praising that exemplar of metasong, Clearco's *preghiera.* Yet recitative, so dependent upon the subtleties of delivery that cannot be notated, nonetheless grew to monumental stature in the Ottocento nostalgia for the voices of bel canto. After *Giuochi,* and Pacchierotti's retirement from the stage, those recitative accents still echoed among the ruins and tombs of the empty classical landscape, becoming a synecdoche for the simple expressivity that was, by the time of Rossini, already lamented as lost.

Writing voice, materializing voice

For many in the nineteenth century, Pacchierotti's voice manifested signs of the transition between the aesthetics of classicism and those of proto-romanticism, not unlike the poetry of Anacreon. As the age of the castrati entered its gloaming, Pacchierotti was increasingly read as a singer in an older mold, a castrato whose style and voice were woefully incomprehensible to current practitioners. Many who wrote of him in the nineteenth century did so in language suffused with markers of lyric subjectivity. Stendhal, before denigrating contemporary singers as emotionless instruments, wrote: "Pacchiarotti, he of the sublime voice, was lost in bitter contemplation of the decadence of an art

[73] Arteaga, *Rivoluzioni,* III: 90; Stendhal, *Voyages en Italie* [1817] (Paris: Gallimard, 1973), 112–13.

which had been the enchantment and glory of his life."[74] Giovanni Pacini, known today as the composer of the 1841 opera *Saffo*, stated that "his *accento* and expression were such that they moved me to tears. Where are the other singers who, with a simple recitative, elicit a cry of universal admiration? Where is that *accento* that you feel in your soul?"[75] *Accento,* as Feldman defines it, connoted the "rhythmic-cum-expressive force that a singer would give to words and gestures."[76] As such, recall Amore/Imeneo's command to Orfeo to "restrain your *accenti*," those subtle yet essential nuances of vocal expression (see chapter 1, above). In rhetoric similarly reminiscent of Bettinelli's *farlo sentire* ethos, Andrea Majer emphasized the ineffability of Pacchierotti's *accento*: "I defy the genius of the sharpest writer to give an idea to those who haven't heard it of [...] Pacchierotti's mode of singing. The art of his style consisted in a few slight degrees of *smortazure, rinforzi, gruppetti,* mordents, trills, appoggiaturas, chromaticisms, shadings, etc., that human language cannot explain."[77] Ornaments could be taxonomized and notated, albeit with some awkward fussing, as the Paduan *maestro di cappella* Antonio Calegari attempted to do in his 1809 ornamentation treatise.[78]

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[74] Stendhal, *Life of Rossini,* trans. Richard N. Coe (London: J. Calder, 1985), 337.

[75] "Era tale l'accento e l'espressione che mi commosse fino alle lacrime. Dove sono più quei cantanti che, con un semplice recitativo, strapavano un grido di generale ammirazione? Dove quell'accento che nell'anima si sente?" Qtd. in Giovanni Toffano, *Gaspare Pacchierotti: Il crepuscolo di un "musico" al tramonto della Serenissima* (Padua: Edizioni Armelin Musica, 1999), 63.

[76] Feldman, *The Castrato,* 248.

[77] "Sfido l'ingegno del più acuto scrittore a dare un'idea a quelli che non l'hanno udito, del modo di cantare di un Pacchierotti. Consisteva l'artifizio del suo stile in alcuni minimi gradi di smorzature, rinforzi, gruppetti, mordenti, trilli, appoggiature, mezzetinte, sfumature, ec., che il linguaggio umano non ha mezzi da poter spiegare." Andrea Majer, *Discorso sulla origine progressi e stato attuale della musica italiana di Andrea Majer veneziano* (Padua: Tipografie e Fonderia della Minerva, 1821), 170. Majer was a noted opponent to Rossini's "modern" musical style, yet like both Rossini himself and Rossini fan Stendhal, he idealized Pacchierotti's lost singing style. See Carlida Steffan, "Presenza e persistenza di Rossini nella riflessione estetico-musicale del primo Ottocento," in *Gioachino Rossini, 1792–1992: Il testo e la scena, Convegno internazionale di studi, Pesaro, 25–28 giugno 1992,* ed. Paolo Fabbri (Fondazione Rossini: Pesaro, 1994), 82. Rossini famously defended his ornate vocal composition style by implying it was necessary, given the lack of singers like Pacchierotti who could create such inflections themselves: "Give me another Pacchierotti, and I shall know how to write for him!" (Datemi un altro Pacchierotti e saprò scrivere anche per esso!) Qtd. in Giuseppe Cecchini Pacchierotti, *Cenni biografici intorno a Gaspare Pacchierotti* (Padua: Tipi del Seminario, 1844), 14.

[78] Stephen Willier writes that Calegari collaborated with Pacchierotti on the treatise, but the 1809 manuscript (held at I-Pl) does not mention Pacchierotti, which seems rather curious. The treatise was published posthumously in 1836 by

But the *accento* defied attempts both to record it and to somehow make it material. As composers, led by Rossini, took over preemptively notating more and more of their singers' ornamentation, it seemed as though what could not be written was doomed to be forgotten. Like Bettinelli's enthusiasm, "Pacchierotti's mode of singing" had to be felt, not merely described—an aesthetics of experience and of presence.

Romantic constructions of Pacchierotti as the voice of sensibility were codified for Ottocento readers in a biography of the singer published by his nephew, Giuseppe Cecchini Pacchierotti, in 1844. The Gasparo Pacchierotti of this hagiographic text is described in language we have seen time and again throughout the preceding chapters, revealing how these strains had by then coalesced into an established discourse. Cecchini Pacchierotti lauded his uncle's "vivid imagination" and "profound sensibility," terms familiar from Bettinelli's *Dell'entusiasmo,* and claimed that his "magic inflections," his ineffable *accento,* had constituted a completely new style of singing.[79] Echoing Millico's prescription for authentic acting in the preface to *La pietà d'amore,* Cecchini Pacchierotti described how his uncle had always placed himself inside the characters he portrayed in order to discover how they felt.[80] He directly linked Pacchierotti's expressive vocality to classical models, while affirming Pacchierotti's agency in reanimating them: "The wonders of the Greeks' dramatic music, owing to

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Ricordi, and is identical to the manuscript apart from the names added by the publisher. The printed treatise is credited to Pacchierotti, "[il] Sommo degl'italici Orfei," and dedicated to Giuditta Pasta. Pacchierotti and Calegari certainly knew one another, and the latter expressed his desire to start a singing school for boys to train them in Pacchierotti's style, but there is no direct evidence showing that Pacchierotti was involved in the treatise. See Antonio Calegari, *Modi generali del canto premessi alle Maniere parziali, onde adornare o rifiorire le nude o semplici melodie o cantilene, giusta il metodo di Gaspare Pacchiarotti* (Milan: Ricordi, 1836).

[79] Cecchini Pacchierotti cites "immaginazione vivissima," "profonda sensibilità," and "magiche inflessioni." Cecchini Pacchierotti, *Cenni biografici,* 4, 7.

[80] "Era solito il Pacchierotti immedesimarsi nelle varie commoventi posizioni come se effettivamente fosse nel fatto ed il personaggio da lui rappresentato." Cecchini Pacchierotti, *Cenni biografici,* 11.

the union of the forces of poetry and song, were intuited and reproduced by Pacchierotti, even in recitatives with the barest accompaniment."[81]

To give evidence of his uncle's unparalleled expressivity in such recitatives, Cecchini Pacchierotti recounted a now-famous anecdote (previously shared in shortened form by Stendhal in his 1808 *Life of Haydn*). As Cecchini Pacchierotti's version goes, in 1776 Pacchierotti had been singing the role of Arbace in *Artaserse* at Forlì when, "in the judgment scene, he expressed in such a sublime way" the emotion of his character that he "enchanted not only all of the listeners, but the entire orchestra"—who consequently forgot to start playing again. When Pacchierotti asked the orchestra director what he was doing, he replied, "I am crying, signore!"[82] As Millico had promised, the effects of Greek music could indeed be replicated in modern times. But in this story, Pacchierotti managed to one-up Millico, playing his role so thoroughly that even those who were in on the theatrical illusion—the orchestra—could not help but be absorbed into it themselves.

Finally, in summing up Pacchierotti's life, his nephew emphasized the intimate connection between Pacchierotti as a singer and Pacchierotti as a private individual. In so doing, he implied that voice and subjectivity were symbiotic, that the labors of shaping a self and of shaping the voice must have been one and the same:

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[81] "Le maraviglie della musica drammatica dei Greci, dovute alle congiunte forze della poesia e del canto, furono indovinate e riprodotte dal Pacchierotti anche nei recitativi spogli di qualunque accompagnamento, e col divino genere patetico, cui si era principalmente consacrato, strappava involontarie lagrime e grida." Cecchini Pacchierotti, *Cenni biografici,* 5.

[82] "Nel 1776 sosteneva in Forlì la parte di Arbace nell'*Artaserse* di Metastasio, ed alla scena del giudizio espresse in un modo così sublime la convulsa generosità di un figlio che può evitare la morte e non lo fa per salvare il padre, mentre a nude proteste d'innocenza affida la stima dell'amante, che non solo incantò gli uditori tutti, ma perfino l'intiera orchestra, la quale dimenticando attonita il proprio dovere si ristette ad un tratto dall'accompagnamento! Nella profonda angoscia e generale silenzio il Pacchierotti avvertì primo agli ammutoliti strumenti, e sdegnoso domandando al direttore che facesse. […] *Piango,* rispose egli, *o signore!* Quale pagina gloriosa per l'arte in quel pianto, in quella risposta, in quella sospensione!" Cecchini Pacchierotti, *Cenni biografici,* 11.

> The cultivation of the spirit thus benefitted Pacchierotti no less in his private life than in the practice of his art. This very difficult art cannot in fact be separated from the other; since if clear diction and and good singing technique are enough for the ear, the soul wants much more. It wants great understanding and susceptibility to feeling deeply and making [it] felt; profound knowledge of the human heart in order to correctly seize it, and the study of man in life and in history; learned experience to produce a variety of effects; facility in reading every genre of music as if it were one's own language; in sum, it wants the union of all the gifts of an orator, a sculptor, a painter, a poet; being a singer-actor is the most difficult, because he must in a certain way *improvise* (emphasis in original).[83]

Pacchierotti, as Frances Burney wrote, might have been a poet, and in Cecchini Pacchierotti's representation, he was that and much more besides. He was capable of "improvising" on the highest artistic level because such expression seemed to flow spontaneously from within, as an extension of his inner self. Violet Piaget would in 1880 critique Burney's remark as "[not] perceiving that the secret of his influence lay in his being both [poet and singer] together."[84] A century after Burney wrote thus, Pacchierotti had come to be remembered as the archetypal lyric figure, poet and singer in one, effusing feeling through natural, simple, extemporized vocal performance. Within a nineteenth-century framework of *Bildung* he had done so, not by playing the lyre or writing poetry, but through his aesthetic and moral self-fashioning. Growing out of the ideology of Rousseau, Millico, Guadagni, and (as we shall see below) others, the nineteenth-century fantasy of Pacchierotti may be read as an

[83] "La coltura dello spirito giovò così al Pacchierotti non meno nel privato vivere, che nell'esercizio dell'arte sua. Quest'arte difficilissima non può in fatto starsene da quella disgiunta; poichè se basta per l'orecchio chiara pronuncia e bel metodo di canto, per l'anima ci vuole assai più. Ci vuole somma perspicacia e suscettibilità a ben sentire e far sentire; profonda fisiologia del cuore umano a coglier giusto, e studio quindi dell'uomo nell'uomo e nella storia; dotte esperienze per varietà di effetti; facilità di leggere ogni genere di musica come la propria lingua; in somma ci vogliono uniti i doni dell'oratore, dello scultore, del pittore, del poeta; stretto com'è l'attore cantante da maggiori difficoltà, perchè egli deve in certo modo *improvvisare,* mentre gli altri ricorrono a meditate accortezze. Sono questi i pregi che formarono i Pacchierotti." Cecchini Pacchierotti, *Cenni biografici,* 13.

[84] Vernon Lee [Violet Piaget], *Studies of the Eighteenth Century in Italy* (London: Satchell, 1880), 121. Bonnie Gordon evocatively considers Lee's fascination with castrati and the materiality of their voices, although without mention of this Pacchierotti anecdote, in her "It's Not About the Cut: The Castrato's Instrumentalized Song," *New Literary History* 46, no. 4 (Autumn 2015): 647–67.

iteration of the now-cliché notion that an individual's interiority becomes perceptible through one's voice.

In the same 1880 *Studies of the Eighteenth Century in Italy,* Violet Piaget (under the *nom de plume* Vernon Lee) narrates her accidental visit to Pacchierotti's villa, spinning out a beautiful and strange excursus on the singer's liminality as read through the scant material remains of his life. The villa still stands today, a twenty-minute drive from the Padua city center, and may be rented out for weddings, baptisms, and conferences. But in the late nineteenth century, it stood in "a quiet corner of Padua" where "the town seems insensibly to grow into the open country," amid "tracts of desolate gardens, with only mutilated statues and rows of unclipped trees." The garden of the villa is "a beautiful tangle of trees and grass and flowers," as if nature had taken over after Pacchierotti's death, unaware of the decay of the surrounding landscape. Piaget and her fellow travelers encounter a young gardener who tells them that the grounds once belonged to "a famous singer, by name Gasparo Pacchierotti":

> The gardener led us into the house, a battered house, covered with creepers and amphorae, and sentimental inscriptions from the works of the poets and philosophers in vogue a hundred years ago—beautiful quotations, which, in their candour, grandiloquence, and sweetness, now strike us as so strangely hollow and melancholy. He showed us into a long narrow room, in which was a large slender harpsichord. (...) It was open, and looked as if it might just have been touched, but no sound could be drawn from it. [In another room] hung the portrait of the singer (...) a face with deep dreamy eyes and tremulously tender lips, full of a vague, wistful, contemplative poetry, as if of aspirations after something higher, sweeter, fairer—aspirations never fulfilled but never disappointed, and forming in themselves a sort of perfection. This man must have been an intense instance of that highly-wrought sentimental idealism which arose, delicate and diaphonous, in opposition to the hard, materialistic rationalism of the eighteenth century; and the fascination which he exerted over the best of his contemporaries must have been due to his embodying all their vague ephemera; cravings in an art which was still young and vigorous—to

> his having been at once the *beautiful soul* of early romanticism and the genuine artist of yet classic music (emphasis in original).[85]

Piaget reads the remaining possessions of Pacchierotti as vestiges of the "hard, material rationalism of the eighteenth century," now "hollow" and "melancholy," because soundless and empty. She casts the ineffability of his voice, his "beautiful soul," his "sentimental idealism," as belonging to "early romanticism," setting up the quintessential material-spectral tension inherent to voice writ large. The opposition she delineates between idealism and rationalism is clearly colored by her own position within a still-Romantic epistemology. Yet her view of the eighteenth century vis-à-vis Pacchierotti's villa is not so unlike de' Rogati's contemplating the Arcadian landscape, filtered through a melancholic nostalgia.

"Part I: Orfeo" has traversed the second half of the Settecento, from Parma to Venice and back again, following singers, poets, and texts in an attempt to pick out the threads which, through the symbolism of Orpheus, linked voice with lyric subjectivity. Enthusiasm, sensibility, spontaneity, individuality, immediacy, effusions, *accenti*: the ideology of lyric voice was explored in writing on the one hand, as natural expressivity or as the twin to epic voice; and on the other, enacted in performance, from staging verisimilar emotion to composing a psychology of self. Initially voice had been conceived by Calzabigi, Gluck, Planelli, Borsa, and others as a vehicle for expressing the passions, demanding that the singer shed his own agency in order to immerse himself in his role. This seemed the perfect antidote to singers' stereotypical self-obsession, as a new focus on the passions consequently required that the self be subordinated to the (Orphic) symbol. But as feeling

[85] Lee, *Studies of the Eighteenth Century*, 121–2.

gradually became understood as not merely attached to, but constitutive of, selfhood, voice too became bound up with interiority and moral edification. If voice was to express genuine emotion instead of stock affects, the singer had to feel such emotion firsthand, as Millico argued; this claim necessitated a "cultivation of self" by implying that voice expressed not only the passions but the inner workings of the subject who felt them. Such an epistemological shift can be glossed as moving from identifying singers with symbols of expressivity, like Orpheus, to fantasizing that singers' voices were aural representations of their invisible selves.

The voices explored here have largely been unique cases—Orfei, star singers, famous poets—yet they all looked towards the potential of shaping a universal, or communal, voice. Millico wanted to make the Orphic voice accessible by encouraging the cultivation of sensibility; Guadagni sought to reshape Italian operatic dramaturgy with his lyric effusions; Rezzonico and Verri dreamed of bringing Italy's poetic glory to the people through the voice of the *citaredo*; de' Rogati offered up Anacreon's lyrics as a starting point for subjective engagement with once-authoritative models. Nonetheless, the connection between subject and voice was so far only possible in exceptional cases such as that of Pacchierotti. What was still missing was a sense that voice could make audible all subjectivities, not just those of the most touching (and highly trained, highly paid) singers. Could the universal voice promised by Millico, the democratic voice that guaranteed civil power, exist in Italy?

The voice of the castrato was, perhaps, ultimately too Other to ever become fully naturalized into the vox populi, though it kept singing into the early twentieth century (and beyond, thanks to wax cylinder recordings). But there were other options: then, as now, the alterity of voice could be mapped onto several modes of difference, containing them and absorbing their power without

sacrificing the supremacy of text. What if voices that could shape modern subjects were already everywhere, already woven into the fabric of society, and only needed the guidance of a few benevolent men to accomplish their work? Forget the castrati—for, as the myth goes, Orpheus's bodiless head floated down the river, still singing mournfully even after his death. His lyre, however, wended its way to the shores of Mytilene, where it was found and given voice again by the mytho-historical mother of lyric poetry: Sappho.

PART TWO: SAFFO
OR, DOMESTICATING THE TENTH MUSE

PROLOGUE
SAPPHO IS IGNITED BY PHAON

In the popular 1782 novel *Le avventure di Saffo, poetessa di Mitilene* (The Adventures of Sappho, Poetess of Mytilene), the eponymous poet both discovers and loses her voice because of a man. Alessandro Verri, the novel's author, cast Saffo's voice as the side effect of her unruly (hetero)sexuality, overwriting the narratives about the "tenth Muse" in which she was considered a genius in her own right. In Verri's version, Saffo's sublime spark ignites when she sees the young Faone in an athletic competition, after which she improvises her first poem in his honor. Faone awakens at once her desire and her voice (**figure 3.1**). Even so, it is Faone, not Saffo, whom Verri later describes as speaking with "a tongue moved by the gods." Verri robs Saffo of her divine gift for language and bestows it instead on her male love-object. This theft, in turn, silences Saffo's physical voice: upon hearing Faone's inspired speech, "all her thoughts and motions were suspended, even her breath."[1] Her poetic voice is ignited by the sight of Faone's body, but her physical voice is suffocated by the sound of his speech—rendering her genius no more than the remainder of Faone's gifts. Saffo regains agency over her own body and voice only when, in hopes of extinguishing her "pernicious flame," she leaps to her death from the cliffs of Leucade.[2]

In presenting self-sacrifice as the defining act of female subjectivity, Verri's novel took a line familiar from the writings of his cohort of progressive literati, known as the *caffetisti* (see chapter 2).

[1] Alessandro Verri, *Le avventure di Saffo, poetessa di Mitilene* (Rome: 1797 [1782]), 90, 88. Note that the first edition of *Saffo* is stamped with "Padova 1780," probably to evade the Roman censors. Throughout the dissertation, I provide page numbers from the 1797 reprint for the reader's convenience, as this edition is available online in digital form.
[2] Verri, *Saffo,* 257.

Verri had been part of the *caffetisti*'s Accademia dei Pugni (Academy of Fists) in 1760s Milan, and though his *Saffo* was written after he had broken with his erstwhile colleagues, some fifteen years later, it functions as a parable for the *caffetisti*'s writings about women. Primarily through the article "Difesa delle donne" (Defense of Women), they insisted that women's public bodies and voices distracted from and thereby hindered masculine attempts at literary and political progress.[3] In order to serve the public good, women had to be contained, either by being relegated to the realm of sensibility and domesticity, or through self-sacrifice. As Rebecca Messbarger, following Luciano Guerci, puts it, for the *caffetisti* "feminine virtue appears to achieve perfection in death.")[4] To be sure, limiting women to the domestic sphere hardly seems "enlightened" today, yet at the time it represented a major shift in early modern epistemologies of sex and gender, as Thomas Laqueur, Eve Tabor Bannet, Carol Duncan, and many others have shown.[5] If we take the *caffetisti* as an Italian iteration of Habermas's emergent public sphere (their journal, *Il Caffè,* was modeled on *The Spectator,* after all), then we might ask how women fit into their *illuminismo* bourgeois public. Feminist critics of Habermas such as Messbarger and Joan Landes argue that the construct of the eighteenth-century public sphere effaces the fact that bourgeois publicity was built upon the "suppression of women's subjectivity." Women had to be suppressed, because female publicness

[3] "Difesa delle donne," in *Il Caffè, o sia Brevj e varj discorsi* (Venice: Pizzolato, [1763-] 1766), I: 300–314; cited and discussed at length in Rebecca Messbarger, "For the Public Good: *Il Caffè's* Defense of Women," in *The Century of Women: Representation of Women in Eighteenth-Century Italian Public Discourse* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 87–104.
[4] Messbarger, 102; Luciano Guerci, *La sposa obbediente: Donna e matrimonio nella discussione dell'Italia del Settecento* (Turin: Tirrenia Stampatori, 1988), 104–5.
[5] Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992); Eve Tabor Bannet, *The Domestic Revolution: Enlightenment Feminisms and the Novel* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000); and Carol Duncan, "Happy Mothers and Other New Ideas in Eighteenth-Century French Art," in *Feminism and Art History: Questioning the Litany,* eds. Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard (New York: Harper and Row, 1982), 201–20.

connoted Old Regime luxury and the "feminization" of politics, which threatened the encroachment of "style" and "dissimulation" upon masculine nature and reason.[6] Thus in the *caffetisti*'s "enlightening" project, political and artistic agency was reserved for men struggling to shake off the shackles of the Old Regime. The figure of Sappho, emerging as the archetype of female voice and lyric subjectivity in the late Settecento, offered a convenient screen upon which literati could project both fantasies and nightmares of female selfhood.

Figure 3.1 "Saffo si accende per Faone" (Saffo is ignited by Faone), aquatint by Henry Tresham, in Alessandro Verri, *Le Aventure* [sic] *di Saffo* (Rome: 1784 [repr.]), p. 7. In this scene from Book I, chapter 4, Saffo, "ignited" by love, offers Faone flowers and improvises verses in his honor.

[6] Messbarger, 91; Joan B. Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere in the Age of the French Revolution* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988), 10-11, 45, and passim. On "dissimulation," see Lynn Hunt, "The Bad Mother," in *The Family Romance of the French Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 95-8.

A slew of Sappho-inspired texts appeared in Italy and France in the late eighteenth century, the majority of which cast the poet as pitiful, sentimental, and pointedly heterosexual. Joan DeJean connects the trend to the rise of Hellenistic neoclassicism, citing as examples Claude de Sacy's *Les amours de Sapho et de Phaon* (1775) and Jean-Jacques Barthélemy's *Voyage de jeune Anacharsis en Grèce* (1788), in addition to Verri's novel.[7] More specifically, these literary endeavors were driven by the broader antiquarian and archaeological fervor characteristic of mid-to-late eighteenth-century Europe from Edinburgh to Herculaneum, spurred on by the midcentury writings of German archaeologist and art historian Johann Joachim Winckelmann, who famously pieced together a history of Greek civilization by studying its material remains. In the 1780s and 90s, some Italian writers claimed to have found long-lost textual fragments and pasted them together into a cohesive whole, which they then rendered in the vernacular for mass consumption—not unlike Winckelmann's history, but also indebted to the Ossianic tradition stemming from Scotland and wending its way through Europe. Verri's *Saffo* was marketed as one of these ancient Greek "translations."[8] DeJean glosses such faux-archaeological texts as attempts by the "man of letters" to one-up the "historian" by "reading between the lines," that is, by coaxing a literary narrative out of bits and pieces.[9] Conveniently, the historical Sappho now existed in nothing *but* fragments, which men of letters curated for ideological ends like display items in a museum case.[10] Verri and his cohort

[7] Joan DeJean, *Fictions of Sappho, 1546–1937* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 138–9, 168.
[8] For example, the advertisement printed in the *Gazzetta urbana veneta* no. 68 (25 August 1792), among many other sources. As late as 1797, *Saffo* was still being printed with a "translator's note" to keep up this pretense, although it is unclear as to whether or not readers believed it.
[9] DeJean, 139.
[10] On Sappho as fragments, see, for one, Pamela Gordon, introduction to *Sappho: Poems and Fragments,* transl. Stanley Lombardo, ed. Susan Warden (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 2002), v-xxv.

were wary of women of letters.[11] When it came to confronting female poiesis, many such men presented themselves as modern-day iterations of Homer: as having a "privileged relationship with the Muse [consisting of] a superhuman power to hear the absolute tale and to make it into a story, one that is necessarily partial and incomplete, but humanly audible."[12] For them Sappho's fragments amounted to voice and nothing more—the mere residue of logos—until given narrative, and hence meaning.[13]

In a sense, their late Settecento Sappho was indeed the tenth Muse. For however much her voice, like those of the other Muses, was no longer audible, it became so when mediated through the language of her male interlocutors. In service of the progressive project of enlightenment, then, and to attain some measure of what the *caffetisti* called "social utility," women were to lend men their voices and give life to men's words. Only by sacrificing themselves to this greater cultural good might women lay claim not only to social utility, but to an enlightened subjectivity.

[11] For a general overview of the ideologically-driven exclusion of women from the Italian literary establishment ca. 1800, see Giovanni Carsaniga, "The Romantic Controversy," ch. 27 in Peter Brand and Lino Pertile, eds., *The Cambridge History of Italian Literature* (Cambridge, UK and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 403. Paola Giuli argues that in order to defend Italian women from Grand Tourists' censure, and consequently, for women to protect themselves from charges of emasculation, (male) literati minimized their importance in Italian literary culture; see her "From Academy to Stage," 162.

[12] Cavarero, 95-6.

[13] On voice as the "surplus" of logos, see Mladen Dolar, "The Object Voice," in Renata Salecl and Slavoj Žižek, eds., *Gaze and Voice as Love Objects* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996), esp. 17, and his *A Voice and Nothing More.*

CHAPTER THREE
CONFESSIONAL FRAGMENTS

Laurels and lyres

In 1776, the *improvvisatrice* Maria Maddalena Morelli, under the Arcadian name Corilla Olimpica, became the first and last woman crowned poet laureate on the Roman Capitol. She shared the honor with such icons of Italian verse as Petrarch and Tasso, not to mention her more recent colleague in the Arcadian Academy, Pietro Metastasio. She had already received the Arcadian laurels and Roman nobility, but the Capitoline crowning was her poetic apotheosis. Corilla's admirers wrote of how, during her improvisations, she "suddenly ignite[d]" with inspiration, leading them to laud her as "Sappho reincarnated" and "the tenth Muse";[14] a famous illustration displays the iconography attendant upon such epithets (**figure 3.2**). Sappho had by no means been forgotten prior to 1776, but Corilla's fame as a female poet, in particular one whose sounding voice was regarded as essential to her craft, seems to have reminded literati about the power of the female poetic voice. Sappho had been admired by the likes of Plato, Aristotle, and Horace, fascinating readers for more than two millennia as "a kind of mother goddess of poetry," in the words of Ellen Greene.[15] What woman deserved to stand alongside Petrarch and Tasso, if not an Italian Sappho?

[14] On reception of Corilla Olimpica and changing Italian literary aesthetics, see Paola Giuli, "Poetry and National Identity: *Corinne,* Corilla and the Idea of Italy," in *Germaine de Staël: Forging a Politics of Mediation,* ed. Karyna Szmurlo (Oxford, UK: Voltaire Foundation, 2011), 213–32, esp. 215, 222. The association between female genius and Sapphic tropes grew even stronger as the nineteenth century went on; see, for one, Esse, "Encountering the *Improvvisatrice.*"
[15] Ellen Greene, Introduction, *Re-Reading Sappho: Reception and Transmission* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 1.

Figure 3.2 Bartolomeo Pinelli, portrait of Corilla Olimpica, based on a portrait by Francesco Bartolozzi, n.d.

Unsurprisingly, Corilla's crowning as the modern Italian Sappho carried significant ideological weight. As Paola Giuli argues, it served as a public declaration of Arcadia's turn away from Metastasian aesthetics towards the sensist values of immediacy, spontaneity, and sensibility. In honoring Corilla, the Arcadian Academy stayed in line with shifting, and polarizing, literary tastes, but shrewdly used the female poet as the canary in the coal mine.[16] Authors of printed volumes of lyric poetry similarly updated their Arcadian classicism with a dash of feminine-gendered sensibility. In 1782, Francesco de' Rogati explained that he had translated the Greek odes of Anacreon and

[16] Giuli, "Poetry and National Identity," 227. Another famous Arcadian *improvvisatrice,* Maria Fortuna, published that same year a play entitled *Saffo* (Livorno, 1776). Fortuna was esteemed by Casanova for her improvisations, and she maintained an epistolary relationship with Metastasio. Bianca Danna suggests that Alessandro Verri wrote his novel with knowledge of Fortuna's play, because the play was published by the same printer who published Verri's treatise on the theater in 1779. Danna describes Fortuna's play as "confessional" in style, though I am not entirely certain to what she is referring, based on my own reading of the work. See Bianca Danna, "Saffo, l' 'alter ego' al femminile," in *Metamorfosi dei Lumi: Esperienze dell' "io" e creazione letteraria tra Sette e Ottocento,* ed. Simone Carpentari (Messina: Edizioni dell'Orso, 2000), n.p.; Maria Fortuna, *Saffo, tragedia* (Livorno: Falorni, 1776).

Sappho into Italian in hopes of inspiring his countrymen to produce more engaging vocal music. According to his commentary, the two archaic poets provided different types of musical inspiration. Anacreon's lyrics exemplified the ideal of "delightful simplicity," signaling a nostalgia-inflected return to Arcadia's roots. Sappho's lyrics, by contrast, expressed the gamut of "violent" passions, resonating with late-eighteenth-century notions about gendered bodies, sublimity, and, of course, voice.[17]

As late Settecento writers mourned the death of authentic lyric—that oft-cited, long-lost ancient unity of poetry, music, and voice—Sappho seemed to have envoiced its original swan song. She became "a figure for voice in a lyric tradition that mark[ed] the loss of song," as she had been for ancient writers in the centuries following her death.[18] As both poet and trope, Sappho provided tools for reenergizing a stagnant literary and musical culture—the voice through which male authors and composers experimented with a new lyric aesthetics of sensibility and sublimity, under the guise of an authenticizing classicism in a peculiarly Italian marriage of proto-romantic modernity and quasi-mythic antiquity.

Much like Italy itself, Sappho was also represented not just as a symbol for lost lyric voice but as a mutilated or fragmentary corpus, the latter in its dual sense as both physical body and collection of texts. She thus offered writers a fantasy of how they might renew Italian culture: by mediating her voice anew and unifying her disparate pieces, perhaps Italy, too, could become whole.

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[17] Francesco Saverio de' Rogati, "Discorso preliminare," *Le odi di Anacreonte e di Saffo recate in versi italiani* (Colle: A. Martini, 1782), I: 19. De' Rogati's discussion of Anacreon's odes is taken up above, in chapter 2 of this dissertation.
[18] Yopie Prins, "Sappho's Afterlife in Translation," in *Re-Reading Sappho,* 36. Prins is referring here to Sappho's construction by her readers in the centuries immediately following her life and death; but, as I have argued throughout this dissertation, the late Settecento was similarly obsessed by a fear of having lost "authentic" lyric song. Walter Benjamin writes of texts "living on" through translation (*überleben*) in his *Illuminations,* and Prins reads Sappho through this lens.

This chapter also traces a narrative by bringing together diverse episodes. It sets up the backdrop for the final chapter's exploration of embodied female voice by closely examining several key moments and works that, I argue, shaped critical late Settecento notions of a Sapphic sublime. To help guide the reader through this chapter's mosaic of fragments, I offer a list of the major themes to be outlined here: the rise of written texts that seemed to voice publicly a private self, namely, the lyric, the epistle, and the confession; a fascination with tombs as sites of identity and history; the archaeological drive to discover, reassemble, and translate fragments; and the conception of female subjectivity as fragments of voice, awaiting the unifying power of the man of letters—a double for a fragmented homeland, also awaiting the unifying power of the man of letters.

The confessional imagination

As we know, eighteenth-century literary explorations of female interiority were bound up with the rise of the novel, particularly the epistolary novel. Such novels as Richardson's *Pamela* and Rousseau's *Julie*, in which the male authors wrote letters in the guise of female characters, drew on the long-standing connotations of female epistolary voice as inherently autobiographical, authentic, and natural. As Elizabeth C. Goldsmith points out in *Writing the Female Voice,* such assumptions conveniently limited the literary merit allowed to real women's writing while bestowing additional prestige on men who convincingly wrote like women.[19] Significantly for Italian writers, many of whom were critical of such Anglo-French currents, there was well-established Classical literary precedent for exploring female interiority in this way. Ovid had famously ventriloquized

[19] Elizabeth C. Goldsmith, Introduction, *Writing the Female Voice: Essays on Epistolary Literature* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1989), x.

mythological female protagonists from Penelope to Medea in his *Epistulae Heroidum /Heroides* (Letters from Heroines; composed ca. first century B.C.E.) *Heroides* 15 is one such epistle, addressed by Sappho to Phaon, notably Sapphic in style owing to its multiple rapid shifts in tone and affect. (I'll return to this idea of Sapphic style below.) Ovid bolstered the sense of authenticity in the *Heroides* through what was, in his time, a new literary technique: the deeply personal use of "I," which enabled the male poet to speak through a borrowed female voice.[20] The epistles are self-consciously public letters that reveal a writer's awareness of readers beyond his or her nominal addressee. Ovid's poetic epistle laid claim to female interiority by purporting to speak in, and publicize, the voice of Sappho's lyric "I."

In the later decades of the eighteenth century, the convergence of epistolarity and voice as markers of authorial authenticity dovetailed with the rise of a "vocal" mode of literature: the confession. Though reconceived by Rousseau in his posthumously-published *Confessions* (1782), "confession" still had strong religious significance, especially in Italy. In both literary and religious contexts, confession functioned as what we would now call a performative utterance (in J.L. Austin's sense). In civil as well as religious trials, for instance, confession produced by torture had long been regarded as the clearest proof of guilt, a belief which Cesare Beccaria strongly opposed in his seminal 1764 *Dei delitti e delle pene* (which was widely translated and disseminated in this period). As a result of arguments like Beccaria's, along with large-scale shifts in the perceived role of the sacraments, by the end of the eighteenth century confession had become more an act of proving devotion than a

[20] On Ovid's ventriloquization of Sappho in *Heroides* 15, see, for one, Vicky Rimell, "Epistolary Fictions: Authorial Identity in *Heroides* 15," in *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 45: 109–35. On the influence of Ovid's *Heroides,* especially the Sappho letter, on the development of the epistolary novel, see one of the pioneering studies of feminist literary history: Ellen Moers, *Literary Women: The Great Writers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), esp. 5.

disciplinary tool, a practice of self-declaration rather than self-condemnation.[21] In literature, confession was not quite the same as memoir or autobiography, both of which, even in the late eighteenth century, tended to emphasize the writer's public rather than inner life.[22] Literary confessions, by contrast, were concerned with delineating and "unveiling" an individualized interiority, in and through writing. As Rousseau put it at the beginning of his *Confessions*: "I feel my heart and I know men. […] I dare to believe that I am not made like any that exist. […] I have unveiled my interior as Thou [i.e., God] hast seen it Thyself."[23]

Confession as a literary device thus seemed to "authenticate the voice behind" a fictional text.[24] As such, the "confessional imagination," to borrow Eugene L. Stelzig's term, aligned with the contemporary turn to lyric by sharing such discursive markers as authenticity, immediacy, and "the intense overflow of powerful feelings."[25] By the nineteenth century the confession, much like the lyric, became "a form that focuses on the problems and processes of writing about the self."[26]

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[21] Confession as a genre of life-writing was also associated with St. Augustine, with whose *Confessions* (ca. 397 – 400 C.E.) Rousseau's entered into (polemical) dialogue. On the history of confession in Catholicism, including the shift in the late eighteenth century, see W. David Myers, "From Confession to Reconciliation and Back: Sacramental Penance," in *From Trent to Vatican II: Historical and Theological Investigations,* eds. Raymond F. Bulman and Frederick J. Parrella (Oxford, UK and New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), accessed via Oxford Scholarship Online, <www.oxfordscholarship.com>, 13 April 2018, unpaginated in online edition.

[22] On the transition to "modern" autobiography via Rousseau's *Confessions* and Alfieri's *Vita* (published posthumously in 1806), see Luzzi, "Alfieri's *Prince,* Dante, and the Romantic Self," ch. 5 in *Romantic Europe,* esp. 128.

[23] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Confessions,* I.1, trans. Christopher Kelly, in *The* Confessions *and Correspondence, Including the Letters to Malesherbes,* ed. Christopher Kelly, Roger D. Masters, and Peter G. Stillman (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1995), 5. E.J. Hundert, drawing on the *Confessions* and the epistolary novel *Julie,* describes Rousseau's conception of self as an "individual [who] establishes his authenticity and moral freedom by making contact with an *inner voice* rather than responding to the wills and expectations of others" (emphasis mine). See E.J. Hundert, "The European Enlightenment and the History of the Self," in Roy Porter, ed., *Rewriting the Self: Histories from the Renaissance to the Present* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), 82-3.

[24] Susan M. Levin, *The Romantic Art of Confession: De Quincey, Musset, Sand, Lamb, Hogg, Frémy, Soulié, Janin* (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1998), 9.

[25] Eugene L. Stelzig, "Poetry and/or Truth: An Essay on the Confessional Imagination," *University of Toronto Quarterly* 54 no. 1 (1984): 18.

[26] Levin, *The Romantic Art,* 1. Levin is concerned primarily with later Romantic writers, as evinced by her title, but many of the points she makes certainly hold true for Rousseau's *Confessions*—and, I suggest, other works in the late eighteenth century that were experimenting with the relationship between voice (authorial or otherwise) and interiority.

Invoking confession ratified for readers the presumed authenticity and uniqueness of the speaker's voice, as well as the experiences, interior and otherwise, that it related; it imposed structure upon the disorganized bits and pieces of individual experience without precluding the spontaneity and immediacy with which they were transmitted. The confessional mode invited readers to imagine otherwise disorganized and incomplete "fragments of the self" as instantiating a coherent narrative of selfhood.[27]

Even before the publication of Rousseau's *Confessions* in 1782, the concept of confession offered men of letters an essential mediating role as Homer-figure, historian, and confessor. In 1780, the Arcadian poet Vincenzo Imperiale published his "translations" of "newly discovered" Sappho poems under the title *La Faoniade* (The "Phaoniad"). Imperiale himself had concocted these fragments along with an overarching narrative, drawn largely from Ovid's *Heroides*, within which to set them. He claimed that a collection of Sappho's hymns and odes had been excavated after twenty-four centuries from the Temple of Apollo on the island of Leucade, thanks to the Russian scholar "Ossur."[28] Part I of the *Faoniade* is made up of a series of hymns to Apollo, Venus, and Cupid in which Saffo sings about her secret desire for Faone and her internal struggle over his indifference. Venere (Venus) is portrayed as a Marian figure and asked to intercede with her son Amore (Cupid) on Saffo's behalf, a clue that the texts were written through the lens of Catholic religious practice in

[27] Stelzig, 20, 29.
[28] [Vincenzo Imperiale], *La Faoniade: Inni, ed Odi di Saffo* [1780] (Venice: 1786), 12-13. It is quite possible that Imperiale was simply playing with the techniques of verisimilitude like those employed in *Pamela,* and, more recently and subtly, James Macpherson's Ossianic poems (as translated in the 1760s and 70s by Cesarotti)—but the narrative nonetheless frames his text as an archaeological "discovery." Eventually, Imperiale's so-called translations would be sold along with Verri's *Saffo* novel, a two-for-one deal on fictional Sappho scholarship and testament to its enduring popularity (as in the 1809 Rome edition).

addition to that of a nascent confessional imagination.[29] Saffo's intensely personal mode of address emulates that of Ovid's Sappho, while the pretense that these hymns and odes had been sung aloud as lyrics—before being written down—shifts them into an implicitly confessional, because decidedly vocal, register.[30]

Confession is also invoked explicitly. In hymn 3, addressed to Amore, Saffo refers to her passion for Faone as her "guilt" (colpa) and sings: "Yes, I confess it to you" (Sì, te'l confesso). To emphasize the point, Imperiale summarized that particular hymn as Saffo "confessing her faults to" Amore (gli confessa i suoi falli).[31] Saffo certainly had a lot to confess, according to Imperiale. Contra de' Rogati (1783) and Verri (1782), both of whom would later cast the poet as a tragic but chaste figure, Imperiale claimed that his Saffo had been "lascivious" and "prostituted herself," proved by these newly-discovered poems.[32] However, the reader had to take the translator's word for it. Imperiale noted that he had bowdlerized several of the more salacious poems out of consideration for the "pure morals of religion in which we live."[33] He did not include the "originals," as that would have required him to forge passable Aeolic Greek. Imperiale cast himself as the curator of authentic, albeit mutilated, artifacts: the censored verses themselves were only confessional fragments, but thanks to Imperiale's synopses and endnotes, they became legible (and audible) as Saffo's lost lyric confessions. In sum, Imperiale parlayed his fictional, disjointed verses into narrative wholeness in a performative literary act that created Sappho's subjectivity by forging her voice.

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[29] Saffo addresses Venere as "Madre," calls her "materna," asks for her intercession with her son (i.e., Cupid), and so forth; see the two hymns to Venere, Part I, nos. 2 and 4.
[30] For instance, in hymns 3 and 5, Saffo sings about the sound (suono) of her lyre (cetra; plettro Eolio) and of her voice (accenti; canti).
[31] Imperiale, *La Faoniade,* part 1, hymn 3, pp. 35, 37.
[32] Imperiale, *La Faoniade,* 101.
[33] Imperiale, *La Faoniade,* 14.

Imperiale's two imposed meta-narratives in the *Faoniade* subtend and reinforce the confessional mode in order to heighten the stakes of his project. The first meta-narrative is that of the poems' "plot" and the second, that of their modern "discovery." The story told in Imperiale's annotations traces Saffo's self-destructive passion for Faone and ends with her suicidal leap from the Leucadian cliff. By the final ode in the collection (n. 5 of part 2), it becomes clear that these verses were designed to be read as Saffo's *last* confession, and as such her ultimate, self-defining act of vocality. Confession in the Catholic context was a sacrament of penance, and therefore understood as a preparation of the soul for death. A significant symbol of death had provided the origin for the term: in first-century Rome, a Christian martyr's tomb was called a *confessio*,[34] thereby designating a site of memory and self-declaration as one of the faithful. Only later in the history of Christianity did the term come to denote a typically self-condemning speech-act or text. According to Imperiale, "Ossur" found the *Faoniade* papyri in a stone box behind a wall in the Apollonian Temple of Leucade—a wall marked as containing Sappho's tomb.[35] Sappho had been a martyr to passion rather than Christian faith, but this tomb was nonetheless her *confessio*, even though the corpus "Ossur" exhumed from it was not her physical remains but her poetic ones.[36] Sappho's lost voice, the originary female voice of Western lyric, was reanimated and appropriated by replacing her nonexistent body with a male-authored text.

[34] Levin, *The Romantic Art*, 3.
[35] "E da una rotta iscrizione potè confusamente arguire, d'essere ivi stata sepolta la infelice Saffo." Imperiale, *La Faoniade,* 11-12.
[36] This obviously presented a bit of a paradox for Imperiale: practically, how could the final odes have been recorded and preserved? Did Sappho compose them and leave the papyrus on the cliff when she jumped? Imperiale evaded this issue to a certain extent by relocating Sappho's immediate experience of suicide into an earlier ode (Part II, no. 3) as a prophetic dream, with the final ode (Part II, no. 5) leading up to her death but ending before the scene at the cliff. He even commented that the final ode was comparatively "weak" because Sappho must have been nervous at the prospect of her impending leap, adding a touch of writing-in-the-moment verisimilitude.

In imagining Sappho's corpus as a dyad of body and text, Imperiale cast her as what we might now call a hauntological figure for lyric: a voice, emanating from inside the tomb, whose original body is no longer present and whose death must be continually staged, replayed, and thereby disavowed.[37]

Excavating female interiority

In his Sappho poems, Imperiale juxtaposed the authenticizing voice of the confessional mode with the burgeoning trend of antiquarianism. An archaeological drive had swept Italy ever since Paestum, Herculaneum, and Pompeii had been rediscovered around midcentury. Greece, then under the Ottoman Empire, was largely unknown to European travelers but Italy, particularly Southern Italy, soon became the prime destination for philhellenic tourists and scholars.[38] Before long, the wealth of ancient artifacts unearthed along the Tyrrhenian coast excited an antiquarian fervor in the Italian peninsula and beyond. Among the discoveries were various busts, statues, and portraits depicting female figures identified (erroneously) as "Sappho" (**figure 3.3**).[39] The influx of Greek material culture into Italian villas and imaginations suggested the possibility that Sappho's complete corpus, or at least further fragments of it, might also be unearthed. Imperiale's "Ossur" pretext might not have seemed so far-fetched in 1780.

[37] The concept (and portmanteau) come from Jacques Derrida, *Spectres of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International,* transl. Peggy Kamuf (London: Routledge, 1994). Tamara Levitz writes a beautiful excursus on hauntology as related to mourning and Stravinsky's *Perséphone* in her *Modernist Mysteries: Perséphone* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 475–84.
[38] For an engaging study of neo-Hellenism in eighteenth-century Italy, see Giovanna Ceserani, *Italy's Lost Greece: Magna Graecia and the Making of Modern Archaeology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).
[39] Margaret Reynolds, *The Sappho Companion* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 167–70.

Figure 3.3 Roman fresco, from between 55 and 79 B.C.E.; discovered at Pompeii in 1760 and commonly called "Sappho" thereafter, likely owing to the woman's writing implements and pensive gaze. It is now assumed to depict an unknown high-society Pompeiian woman, but still labeled in the museum (and on gift-shop postcards) as "Sappho." In the National Archaeological Museum at Naples, inv. no. 9084.

Imperiale was only one of several Italian writers to draw on such archaeological fantasies as a means of reframing literary forays into female interiority. The best-known example of this is, again, Alessandro Verri's novel on *Saffo*. In order to legitimize his novel as a "history" he had "translated," and thereby mitigate the genre's lowbrow associations in Italy, Verri inserted footnotes and commentary alluding to the archaeological and ethnographic research underpinning his text.[40] To that same end, he eschewed what he called the "terza lingua bastarda" (bastard third language) style

[40] Verri's aims in writing *Saffo* are often interpreted as seeking to rehabilitate the novelistic genre in the eyes of his Italian literary contemporaries, who generally regarded the novel as a dangerous waste of time. Gaetano Trombatore has argued that Verri's sentimental, chaste rendition of Sappho and Phaon was an attempt to impart gravitas and morality to the genre. Along similar lines, I read his archaeological-historical framing as a legitimating move. See Gaetano Trombatore, "I romanzi di Alessandro Verri," in *Belfagor: Rassegna di varia umanità* 23 (1968): 36–49, 129–55. On the commingling of Hellenism and the genre of the novel in Italian Enlightenment literature, including a discussion of *Saffo,* see Tatiana Crivelli, "Sappho, ou le mythe de l'ancienne Grèce," in *Les lumières européennes dans leurs relations avec les autres grandes cultures et religions,* ed. Florence Lotterie and Darrin M. McMahon (Paris: Éditions Champion, 2002), 145–64.

of French novels, favoring instead the "simple" and "unaffected" style of "excavated antiquity" (antichità dissotterrata).[41] As one piece of evidence for *Saffo* as excavated antiquity, Verri cited excerpts from Sappho's "real" lyrics, treating them as monologues in the poet's own voice. The two lyrics appear in his novel as primary sources, refracting authenticity onto the many other (fictionalized) moments of interiority relayed by Verri's omniscient narrator. Sappho's "genuine" poetic fragments seemed to confirm Verri's novelistic narrative, yielding a tantalizing and inextricable blurring between lyric autobiography, archaeology-inflected history, and fictional domestic novel.

Key to blending these registers and genres was the diegetic appearance of Saffo's voice. Verri inserted his translations of the two odes into a scene of archaic lyric performance, a setting that resonates with the epistolary mode by inhabiting a similar space of publicized privateness. The novel's Saffo sings for a large group of dinner guests, accompanying herself on the lyre. She begins by improvising poetry upon various themes suggested by the audience, and is so skilled in this that she seems "favored by the Muses"; Verri was doubtless thinking of Corilla Olimpica here. Saffo then goes on to sing an ode which—the narrator informs us—is secretly addressed to Faone:[42]

"Ode a Faone," in A. Verri, *Le avventure di Saffo* (1782)

Felice al par de' Numi chi d'appresso	Happy like the Gods, s/he who nearby
Ascolta il dolce suon di tua favella:	Hears the sweet sound of your speech:

[41] *Carteggio di Pietro e Alessandro Verri,* ed. G. Seregni (Milan: 1942), 12.164, letter to Pietro, 16 January 1782.
[42] Verri, *Saffo,* 219–20. In Verri's own footnote to this scene in the novel, he argues that the ode must have been addressed to Faone, and not to a woman, because the historical Sappho would not have been so admired if her behavior had been so "shameful." He also claimed that there were two Sapphos from Lesbos, both poets, one of whom was the lover of Phaon, citing as evidence the oral histories he claimed to have translated from the denizens of Mytilene and Lesbos. For a more detailed analysis of Verri's translation of this ode, along with a discussion of Ugo Foscolo's later version, see Elisanna Pecoraro, "La seconda ode saffica nell'interpretazione del Verri e del Foscolo," *Critica letteraria* 32 (1981): 538–47.

	Più felice di lor, se gli è concesso	Happier than they [the Gods], if s/he is allowed
	Destar su quella	To awaken on that
5	Bocca il soave riso …. E che ragiono?	Mouth a pleasing laugh…. And what am I thinking?
	Se ragion più non ho. La prima volta,	If I no longer have reason. The first time
	Che ti vidi, rimasi, come or sono,	That I saw you, I remained, as I am now,
	Misera e stolta.	Miserable and foolish.
9	Chiuse il silenzio le mie labra, aperte	Silence closes my lips, open
	Solo ai sospiri: e sol per lor faconde,	Only to sighs: and only in [sighs] am I able to speak,
	D'ogni altro favellar furo inesperte.	Of all other discourse [my lips] are incapable.
	L'amor m'infonde	Love inspires
13	Sottil fuoco vorace entro le vene:	A slender, voracious fire within my veins:
	Mi benda gli occhi: più non odo: sento	My eyes are blindfolded: I can no longer hear: I feel
	Che vivo ancor, ma vivo delle pene	That I am yet living, but living with suffering
	Coll'alimento.	As nourishment.
17	Scorre per le convulse membra il gelo	Flowing through my convulsing limbs is the ice
	Delle stille di Morte: io mi scoloro	Of drops of Death: I lose my color
	Siccome il fior diviso dallo stelo:	Like a flower separated from its stem:
	Ecco già moro.	Here I die already.
21	Oh, benchè estremo, avventuroso fiato,	Oh, although desperate, daring breath,
	Se giunge ad ammollir quel cuor spietato!	If you could reach to soften that cruel heart!

In his loose Italian translation from Sappho's Aeolic Greek, Verri approximated *stanze saffiche,* or Sapphic stanzaic form (three endecasillabi and one quinario), and added his own ending where the original is truncated (i.e., ll. 21–2 are Verri's own invention). Writing out the ode for this scene, especially with the addition of the final couplet, served to elide the novel's character "Saffo" with "Sappho" the historical poet, anchored in the lyric "I" of her poetry. Verri's history played out the fantasy that a real historical self could be excavated and reconstructed from fragments of lyric, in the same way that (contemporary archaeologists believed) Sappho's countenance could be excavated and reconstructed from fragments of fresco and marble.

But Verri's *Saffo* was still a novel, focused on and driven by the internal life of its female protagonist. In Italy the novel had not taken hold as it had in Britain, France, or even Germany,

largely due to the stranglehold of antiquity on Italian literature. Verri conjured an archaeological aura for *Saffo* in order to mediate his novelistic engagement with female interiority—such that Saffo's diegetic song about her love for Faone became a lyric-vocal reimagining of feminine epistolarity.

"A multitude of passions": Sappho fragment 31

In their faux-historical literary imaginings of Sappho, Imperiale and Verri both positioned lyric, or at least female lyric, as fundamentally confessional in nature. This was not entirely new, but it certainly fit in easily with contemporary (Italian) attitudes towards women's writing. The lyric that seems to have most clearly influenced such interpretations of Sappho was the one Verri staged as "to Faone," which scholars refer to as Sappho 31, fragment 31, or, most commonly in the eighteenth century, Ode II (incipit *phainetai moi*). Since at least the first century C.E., Sappho 31 has been considered among the greatest lyrics of all time, perhaps even definitive of the lyric mode.[43] Sometime following Sappho's death in the sixth century B.C.E., her complete works were gathered into nine books of papyrus scrolls and deposited in the Library of Alexandria, which was later destroyed in the Roman conquest of Egypt in 30 B.C.E. Most of her corpus did not survive. Only one complete poem by Sappho has been preserved from antiquity, thanks to citation in a treatise by Dionysius Halicarnassus: the Ode, or Hymn, to Aphrodite (Sappho 1). The rest of her oeuvre remains in fragments, ranging from those as short as a single word or phrase to multiple stanzas. Among the fragments, Sappho 31 is on the longer side, spanning seventeen lines. If the ode's truncated

[43] Lawrence Lipking, *Abandoned Women and Poetic Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), ch. 3, "Sappho Descending," esp. 58–9; Prins, "Sappho's Afterlife," passim.

seventeenth line is cut completely, the fragment can be treated like a self-contained lyric, something many translators have chosen to do.[44]

Like the Ode to Aphrodite, Sappho 31 also came down through antiquity because of its inclusion in a literary treatise, in this case Longinus's oft-cited *On the Sublime* (*Peri hypsous,* first century C.E.).[45] The Roman poet Catullus had famously translated fragment 31 into Latin in the first century B.C.E., adding his own final stanza, like Verri. Most of the translations of Sappho 31 from Roman antiquity through the eighteenth century, including Verri's, appear to have been based less on the archaic Greek than on Catullus's Latin rendering. The ode, from Sappho's Greek, reads as follows:

Sappho fragment 31[46]

1	φαίνεταί μοι κῆνος ἴσος θέοισιν ἔμμεν' ὤνηρ, ὄττις ἐνάντιός τοι ἰσδάνει καὶ πλάσιον ἆδυ φωνεί- σας ὐπακούει	That man seems to me to be equal to the gods who sits facing you and hears you nearby speaking sweetly
5	καὶ γελαίσας ἰμέροεν, τό μ' ἦ μὰν καρδίαν ἐν στήθεσιν ἐπτόαισεν, ὠς γὰρ ἔς σ' ἴδω βρόχε' ὠς με φώνας οὐδεν ἔτ' εἴκει,	and laughing delightfully, a situation which indeed makes my heart shudder in my breast; for whenever I look at you for a short time, it is no longer possible for me to speak,
9	ἀλλὰ κὰμ μὲν γλῶσσα + ἔαγε, λέπτον	but indeed my tongue has broken

[44] For a brief history of the discovery and transmission of Sappho's fragments, see Jim Powell, ed., *The Poetry of Sappho* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 45-6.

[45] Technically, "Pseudo-Longinus," because the treatise dates to the first century C.E., and the "real" Longinus lived in the third century C.E. In the late eighteenth century, the text was still attributed to Longinus, and for the sake of simplicity I will use that designation here.

[46] I am deeply indebted to Classical philologist Lauren Donovan Ginsberg for her invaluable assistance in preparing translations of Sappho 31 and Catullus 51. The translations from Greek and Latin provided here are hers; any errors in the interpretation of those translations are entirely my own.

	δ′ αὔτικα χρῶι πῦρ ὐπαδεδρόμακεν, ὀππάτεσσι δ′ οὐδ′ ἒν ὄρημμ′, ἐπιρρόμ- βεισι δ′ ἄκουαι,	and immediately a thin fire has run over my skin, I see nothing with my eyes, and my ears ring
13	κὰδ′ δέ ἴδρως κακχέεται, τρόμος δὲ παῖσαν ἄγρει, χλωροτέρα δὲ ποίας ἔμμι, τεθνάκην δ′ ὀλίγω ‘πιδεύης φαίνομ′ ἔμ′ αὔτᾳ.	from there a cold sweat comes over me, a trembling seizes me entirely, I am paler than grass, and I seem to myself to lack death by only a little.
17	ἀλλὰ πᾶν τόλματον, ἐπεὶ +καὶ πένητα	But everything must be risked, since even a poor man [end of fragment]

The myriad translations of fragment 31 through the centuries offer snapshots of different contemporary attitudes towards lyric poetry, gender, and the body.[47] The basic summary of the ode is this: the speaker first gazes upon, or perhaps imagines, an interaction between her beloved and a (real or generalized) man, then turns to focus on her own feelings about being in the beloved's presence. The physical symptoms she enumerates are now utter clichés for lovesickness. Her heart throbs, she cannot speak, she burns and freezes (millennia before Petrarch), becomes blind and deaf, turns pale, and feels as if she is dying.

Longinus had cited the ode as the exemplar of the sublime style in poetry, which made the fragment particularly relevant to late-eighteenth-century discussions of aesthetics. De' Rogati began the commentary for his Italian translation of the ode by citing at length the relevant passage from Longinus, and it is no coincidence that his translation of Longinus's analysis invokes late Settecento

[47] For a study of several such translations—though none of the ones I am discussing in this chapter—see Prins, "Sappho's Afterlife."

conceptions of effusion, enthusiasm, and sensibility. Indeed, Longinus's text (known widely via Boileau's 1674 French translation) clearly influenced many of the Settecento writers who espoused such ideas, especially Bettinelli.[48] Consider Saverio de' Rogati's citation of Longinus in the notes to his Italian translation of Sappho 31 (published in 1783):

> Do you not marvel at how she brings together *in one* the soul, the body, the ears, the tongue, the eyes, and finally the complexion […]? Observe *how many contrary movements of the mind and body* she excites, […] such that [there is] not one passion, *but in it, there seems to be together a multitude of passions*. All of this really happens to people in love: but her choice of important events, and their judicious combination, forms sublimity [emphases added].[49]

Fragment 31, and Longinus's interpretation of it, provided an authoritatively ancient model for breaking with rationalist aesthetics. In the discourse of sensibility, "feeling" denoted emotion and physical senses, both being based in the body as the site of individual experience. In fragment 31, the speaker's mental and emotional state are "made felt" (to use Bettinelli's phrase) through her vivid description of physical experience. By making that experience felt by the reader, the whole ode seems like something that "really happens to people in love."

In thus "making it felt," Sappho 31 exhibited the self-reflexive tension central to the idea of lyric, adumbrating the Orphic effusion/poetry dyad explored by Bettinelli's contemporaries (discussed in chapter 1 above). The lyric "I" flags the failure of language ("it is no longer possible for me to speak") to describe the immediate effects of passion. Yet in the context of performance—whether of an opera aria or an archaic lyric—the performer necessarily sings or speaks about this failure. Following Diderot's argument here, the good performer can do so because, no longer in the

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[48] On Bettinelli's adoption of discourses of the Longinean sublime, see Maria Teresa Marcialis, *Saverio Bettinelli: Un contributo all'estetica dell'esperienza,* 27.

[49] This is my translation of de' Rogati's Italian translation of Longinus. I am less interested in Longinus's original textual intentions than in how de' Rogati interpreted them in his own translation, hence my translation from de' Rogati instead of quoting from an English translation of Longinus. De' Rogati, II.208n–209n.

moment of passion, she or he recreates for others the experience of that nonlinguistic moment through and as lyric: "making it felt." In the case of Sappho, this tension was exacerbated by readers' desire to hear in her lyric "I" the confessional voice of the poet herself. As we have seen, Sappho's late Settecento translators unquestioningly conflated the poem's lyric "I" with its author (an assumption which scholars today regard as an anachronistic imposition of modern notions of lyric subjectivity).[50] Sappho must have been confessing her most intimate feelings through song in an archaic prototype for the feminine epistolary mode. How else did women write?

Recognizing in Sappho 31 a means to inject some Bettinellian enthusiasm and Corilla-esque sensibility into Italian song, de' Rogati translated that lyric tension into a late Settecento context. He made her confessional lyric explicitly about voice.

From lost voice to sublime lyric

Obviously, translation is a contingent mode of mediation, one shaped as much by the translator's motives as by the "original" text itself. De' Rogati was aware of this, and made a case for his new translation of fragment 31 by pointing out that all previous ones both ancient and modern had "transformed" the original such "that Sappho herself would no longer recognize her own work." He presented his approach as striking a balance between philological fidelity and cultural legibility. To

[50] On the mobility of the "self" in archaic lyric, see Leslie Kurke, "The Strangeness of 'Song Culture.'" Many Classicists have suggested that Sappho was not a single historical author but a stock figure invoked by later poets, or that she was a chorus leader, *khoregos,* educating women through her lyrics. For readings of Sapphic performance in archaic Greek cultural context, see Gregory Nagy, *Pindar's Homer: The Lyric Possession of an Epic Past* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990); Charles Segal, "Eros and Incantation," *Arethusa* 7, no. 2 (1974), 139–60; Bruno Gentili, *Poetry and Its Public in Ancient Greece: From Homer to the Fifth Century*, trans. A. Thomas Cole (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990); Paul Allen Miller, *Lyric Texts and Lyric Consciousness: The Birth of a Genre from Archaic Greece to Augustan Rome* (London: Routledge, 2014).

make Sappho's voice sing in Italian verse, de' Rogati vowed to capture the vivid, varied imagery of the original while producing a text that lent itself to musical setting.[51]

Sappho 31, as de' Rogati's Ode II[52]

1	Contento al par de' Numi	As happy as the Gods
	Parmi colui, che siede	He seems to me, who sits
	Incontro a' tuoi bei lumi	Across from your beautiful eyes,
	Felice spettator;	A lucky spectator;
5	Che sparse le tue gote	Who sees, now and then
	Talor d'un riso vede,	A laugh emitted from your cheeks,
	Ch' ode le dolci note	Who hears sweet notes
	Dal labbro tuo talor.	From your lips, sometimes.
9	Al riso, a' detti usati	At your laugh, at [your] usual words,
	Il cor, che s'innamora,	The heart that is in love,
	Fra i spiriti agitati	Amid agitated spirits,
	Non osa palpitar.	Does not dare to beat.
13	Veggo il tuo vago aspetto	I see your lovely face
	E alle mie fauci allora	And then to my mouth
	Non somministra il petto	My chest does not give
	Voce per favellar.	Voice for speaking.
17	Tenta la lingua invano	My tongue tries in vain
	D'articolar parola,	To articulate words,
	Corre un ardore insano	An insane heat runs
	Di vena in vena al cor.	Through my veins to my heart.
21	Un denso velo il giorno	A thick veil
	Alle mie luci involа;	Steals the day from my sight;
	Odo confuso intorno,	Around [me] I hear confusion,
	Ma non so qual rumor.	But know not what sound.
25	Largo sudor m'inonda,	Copious sweat bathes me,
	Spesso tremor m'assale,	Tremors assail me repeatedly,
	Al par d'arida fronda	Like a desiccated leaf
	Comincio a impallidir:	I begin to grow pale:

[51] De' Rogati II.209; I.30; I.24-5.

[52] Italian version in de' Rogati, II.209–15. Note that, for the sake of comprehensible grammar, the English here does not always match line-by-line with the Italian, but I have tried to privilege accuracy above idiomatic English in order to convey de' Rogati's interpretation.

29	Sì nelle fredde membra	In my cold limbs
	Langue il calor vitale,	Vital heat languishes,
	Che a me vicin rassembra	Such that it seems to me
	L'istante del morir.	The moment of death is near.

The Italian version, "Contento al par de' Numi," is set in a simple, strophic, ode-canzonetta form.[53] Each stanza is divided internally into two quatrains, and has a self-contained rhyme scheme in the pattern ABAC DBDC. Unlike Alessandro Verri and, later, Ugo Foscolo, de' Rogati chose not to emulate the *endecasillabi* and *quinari* of the *stanza saffica,* instead using *settenari.* The translator was trying to make "Sappho for Singing": stanzas of *settenari* are "lyric, melic, and suited to canzonettas," with a strong affinity to the genre-defining aria texts of Metastasio.[54] As Metastasio himself had known (according to de' Rogati) Italian vocal music demanded a special kind of poetic form. That certain archaic Greek lyrics lent themselves to translation into the musical Italian *settenario*, more so than into French or Latin verse forms, was the "gift of our language" (i.e., Italian).[55] In the eyes of de' Rogati, modern Italian lyric form alone provided the medium through which originary Greek lyric could sing again.

At the same time, the number and range of poetic images packed into Sappho's ode expanded lyric beyond the Metastasian palette. Metastasio's aria texts are typically universalizing,

[53] On the background of the "ode-canzonetta" as a Settecento form of Italian versification, see *The Oxford Companion to Italian Literature,* eds. Peter Hainsworth and David Robey (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), s.v. "versification."

[54] De' Rogati, I.25. In his preface, discussed in Chapter 2 above, de' Rogati explains that he was inspired to translate these verses for song after hearing Millico sing a harp-accompanied setting of Saverio Mattei's translation of an Anacreontic ode. In his *Libri poetici della Bibbia,* Mattei had translated the psalms into Metastasian-style Italian verse; he even declaimed them while accompanying himself on the psaltery (a plucked instrument, similar to a harp, zither, or dulcimer). De' Rogati apparently took his inspiration for the whole project from Mattei's endeavor. On Mattei and the psaltery, see DelDonna, *Opera, Theatrical Culture and Society,* 24, 31. Note that in this section, when referring to Metastasian aria texts, I use "lyric" in its simple meaning as poetry intended for singing.

[55] De' Rogati, I.27-8, 23-4.

balanced, and representative of a single categorizable, Cartesian passion, or sometimes two contrasting ones.[56] The symptoms enumerated in Sappho 31 may have been universal to "people in love," but Sappho 31 hinges on the personal immediacy of bodily experience rather than the universality of that experience, and leaps among a dizzying "multitude of passions" rather than following a single one throughout. This was how de' Rogati intended to shake up Italian vocal music: by importing, and regulating, the sensual multitudes associated with the Sapphic sublime into Metastasian lyric form.[57] In so doing, he co-opted the tenth Muse's inaudible voice to inspire his own meta-Metastasian song.

De' Rogati's act of mediation via translation effectively transformed Sappho 31 into a tale about voice, interiority, and sublime lyric poiesis. Through several minor translation choices, "Contento al par de' Numi" proposes that the lost, disembodied lyric voice might be recuperated by (and as) posthumous lyric text. This new resonance of the ode was the product of a cultural translation that went beyond language. The translator acknowledged that certain Greek expressions, however powerful in the original context, would not have had the same effect for Italian readers, leading him to create translations for such expressions on a metaphorical as well as literal level.[58] In "Contento al par de' Numi," the overarching cultural translation consisted of replacing the primacy of speech with that of voice. Sappho's Greek establishes the tongue as the agent of speech, with language as the origin of communication, without mention of the speaker's voice: "whenever I look at you for a short time,/ it is no longer possible for me to speak,/ but indeed my tongue has broken"

[56] On the aria as "the ideal presentation of a single, discrete passion" in a Cartesian mode, see Gary Tomlinson, *Metaphysical Song: An Essay on Opera* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 50.
[57] De' Rogati, I.19.
[58] De' Rogati, I.30.

(Sappho 31, ll. 7-9). De' Rogati instead cast voice as the medium of expression, with the tongue and mouth as mere tools: "I see your lovely face/ and to my mouth/ my chest does not give/ voice for speaking.// My tongue tries in vain/ to articulate words" (de' Rogati II, ll. 13-18). In his rendition, the problem is not a broken tongue but a lack of voice, since without voice the mouth and tongue have nothing to form into language. In this it resembles Catullus's translation, which de' Rogati knew well, but Catullus refers to voice only ambiguously: "nothing is left for me/ of my voice [vocis] in my mouth" (Catullus 51, ll. 7-8). Like the Italian *voce,* the Latin *vox/vocis* can signify both "voice" and "word." Catullus's usage is normally translated into English as "voice," but by locating *vocis* in the mouth he closely connects it with the related meanings of "word" and "speech."[59]

De' Rogati's "voce," however, functions as more than a convenient replacement metonym for speech. In a footnote, he clarified that voice originates not in the mouth, as other translations based on Catullus had had it, but in the chest—physiologically speaking, the lungs, which supply the breath that vibrates the vocal cords. The voice simply passes through the mouth but has its source in the "petto" (the chest or, more poetically, breast), which, beyond housing the lungs, was also an exceedingly common poetic metaphor for feeling.[60] That meant that expression did not originate in the mouth and tongue as language, but in the chest as feeling—and from there, it could be made audible by the voice. De' Rogati's Italian translation gives physical voice and metaphorical feeling a shared point of origin, and makes them jointly constitutive of authentic lyric expression.

This latter point becomes evident from the genre-defining turn initiated by the speaker's loss of voice. In the Italian, "voce" begins the final line of the fourth quatrain (l. 16), emphasizing voice

[59] Many thanks to Latin philologist Kevin Edholm Moch for his insights into the various usages and connotations of *vox* in Classical Latin. Private communication, 28 May 2018.
[60] II.211. The metonymical link among voice, feeling, and the chest (petto) is also discussed in chapter 2, above.

as the object that resolves the previous lines' enjambments. "Voce" also marks a clear turn in the middle of the ode, as the inward turn characteristic of vernacular lyric from Petrarch to Wordsworth. Beginning in l.17, the speaker abandons her address to the beloved in order to recite her litany of physical symptoms. In de' Rogati's Sapphic song, loss of voice inspires this inward turn, and the ensuing self-reflexive description of the experience of bodily suffering is what renders her lyric text into sublimity (according to Longinus's interpretation). Sappho is compensated for her physical and emotional suffering, and in de' Rogati's version for her loss of voice, by metamorphosing into a sublime lyric text.

Moreover, in de' Rogati's ode, the dismemberment of the lyric "I"—the breaking-down of her senses, voice, and body into multitudes—confers upon the resulting text both sublimity *and* beauty. These were not necessarily mutually exclusive in contemporary Italian aesthetics, I suggest, as in this case they were invoked together as a means of recognizing and mastering female lyric agency. First, the dismemberment, or "scattering," of the voiceless female body as a means of generating lyric was an underlying theme in Italian vernacular poetics. As Nancy J. Vickers argues in her now-classic article on the *Rime sparse*, Petrarch dismembers Laura's body "into scattered words" by describing her as beautiful parts rather than as a subject, all the while rendering her voiceless. Petrarch's text, his own "scattered rhymes" (i.e., *rime sparse*), is made up of these "individual fragments" of Laura's body, and it is through reassembling those pieces of Laura into an "idealized unity" that Petrarch's lyric "I" becomes a consistent self.[61]

[61] Nancy J. Vickers, "Diana Described: Scattered Woman and Scattered Rhyme," *Critical Inquiry* 8, no. 2 (Winter, 1981): 265–79, esp. 266, 272–3.

In fragment 31, the lyric "I" is not dismembered by a male gaze; rather, she dismembers herself through her own gaze (i.e., watching her beloved speak). Still, in Longinus's reading, the "self" that emerges is less Sappho's own than that of the reader, one who successfully overcomes the sublime experience of Sapphic multitudes in order to comprehend them as a unity. Here I follow Barbara Claire Freeman's feminist interpretation of the Longinian sublime as a "mode of domination" and "strategy of appropriation" through which the self "maintains its borders by subordinating difference." Longinus's "misreading" of Sappho takes her sublimity as contingent upon her ability to "creat[e] the illusion of wholeness" out of disparate parts. But as we have seen, Sappho's ode is instead about "an experience of total fragmentation," of "self-shattering," and not about the lyric "I" as a unified self. Longinus's gloss might thus be read as an attempt to "domesticate" the multitudes of Sappho's lyric by imposing wholeness, and thereby mastering it.[62] Significantly, then, it was the *reader's* capacity to make a unity out of dismembered fragments that instantiated a text's sublimity. All told, the resulting sublimity ratified the subjectivity, not of Sappho's lyric "I," but of her readers.

De' Rogati, steeped in the Italian lyric tradition, fused Longinus's mode of self-ratifying mastery with Petrarch's. His notes introduce Sappho fragment 31 as at once sublime and, like the scattered body of Laura, superlatively beautiful: "It is certain that this ode, although incomplete [monca], is one of the most beautiful, not only by Sappho, but of all ancient lyrics."[63] *Monca*

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[62] Barbara Claire Freeman, *The Feminine Sublime: Gender and Excess in Women's Fiction* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 13–14. Note that her concept of the "feminine sublime" considers dispossession and self-dismemberment, -scattering, or -dispersal as acts of extrapatriarchal agency, and therefore as resistance to domestication. For example, see her reading of the heroine's suicide by drowning in Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* (1899), a Sapphic-sublime ending *par excellence.*

[63] "È sicuro, che quest'ode benchè monca, sia una della più belle non solamente di Saffo, ma di tutti gli antichi lirici." De' Rogati, I.209. While the contrast between the beautiful and the sublime is characteristic of eighteenth-century aesthetic debates (at least, in German and English contexts), de' Rogati does not distinguish between them. His assertion

figuratively means "incomplete," but also denotes someone or something crippled, disfigured, or mutilated. Sappho's fragment 31, like the body of the lyric "I" it describes, is dismembered, mutilated, *monca.* This fragmentation connoted beauty in a Petrarchan mold and therefore, fundamentally, femininity: all the better to be unified, mastered, and domesticated through the discourse of the Longinian sublime.

With his translations into Metastasian verse, De' Rogati promised to compensate the silenced tenth Muse with a chorus of new voices: those of the "fair sex," whom he intended would sing her Italianized odes as chamber songs.[64]

Sappho in the *salotto*: "Contento al par de' Numi"

Around the time that de' Rogati's translations appeared in print, the culture of salon, or *salotto,* sociability began to flourish in progressive Italian cities like Milan, shifting from being a solely aristocratic phenomenon to a bourgeois one. This expanded the market for small-scale musical works that could be performed in a setting that was at once informal, semi-private, highly literate, and artistically discerning.[65] The *salotto* hosted a convergence of the public and the private spheres within which amateur and professional musicians performed amid political and cultural discussions, poetry readings and improvisations, impromptu theatricals, and the like.[66] De' Rogati stressed the

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of the ode's beauty immediately follows his citation of *On the Sublime,* and so comes across as a ratification of Longinus's argument.

[64] De' Rogati's translations went through multiple reprints into the first third of the nineteenth century, though set to music only a handful of times. Even decades later, they were still being advertised in booksellers' catalogues as the best Italian versions of Sappho and Anacreon.

[65] Carlida Steffan, *Cantar per salotti: La musica vocale italiana da camera 1800-1850: Testi, contesti e consumo* (Pisa: Instituti editoriali e poligrafici internazionali, 2005), 13.

[66] Steffan, *Cantar per salotti,* 13–14; Fulvia Morabito, *La romanza vocale da camera in Italia* (Amsterdam: Brepols, 1997), 9.

edificatory benefits of quality song texts for such gatherings, striking a comparison between late Settecento *salotti* and archaic Greek symposia. Connected with the rise of the *salotto,* composers had begun setting as song texts classic Italian poetry, mainly excerpts from Dante, Petrarch, Ariosto, and Tasso in addition to translations and imitations of Anacreon and Sappho. Metastasio's texts remained ubiquitous, as did faux-popular and regional songs and other texts decried by de' Rogati as "tasteless," part of a move toward regarding Arcadia as the site of nostalgia.[67] By welcoming classic Italian and Classical Greek texts back into the lyric repertoire, composers of cantatas and chamber songs responded to the contemporary project of rekindling Italy's poetic past in order to push back against challenges from other European literary traditions. The popularity of "new" poetic sources correlated with a rise in the number of chamber pieces composed for voice with piano, harp, guitar, or string quartet accompaniment, works intended for quasi-domestic use that formed something of a new repertory of music composed expressly for the *salotto*.[68]

De' Rogati's Sappho translations presented something of a challenge, the regulated versification structure notwithstanding, because the affective content and imagery did not easily lend themselves to the emerging musical style of *salotto* song. For that reason, most extant Sappho-themed musical works from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century set to music new texts that were merely about Sappho, usually dramatizing her suicide à la Imperiale and Verri. But one well-known opera composer did attempt to render de' Rogati's translations into *salotto* song: Niccolò Zingarelli, maestro di cappella at Milan and Loreto, who produced a great number of chamber songs

[67] Sirch, "Notturno italiano," passim. This is discussed in chapter 2, above.
[68] Previously, at least in Italy, most pieces performed in the *salotto* were reductions of opera arias. Maria Caraci Vela, "Il 'tragico colorito' della musica zingarelliana dalla cantata da camera alla romanza da salotto," in *Gli affetti convenienti all'idee,* eds. Maria Caraci Vela, Rosa Cafiero, and Angela Romagnoli (Naples: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1993), 428, 430.

and cantatas in the 1780s and 90s in addition to operas (of which his most famous is 1795's *Giulietta e Romeo*).[69] Though now largely forgotten and scattered across various collections, many of Zingarelli's chamber compositions remained in circulation in manuscript copies into the early decades of the nineteeth century.[70] As part of that chamber repertoire, Zingarelli composed a small assortment of canzonettas, labeled "Odi di Saffo" (Sappho's Odes), for soprano and string quartet—including "Contento al par de' Numi." Despite a lack of concrete information regarding its performance and composition history, Zingarelli's "Contento" seems to have been rather popular, given the number of manuscript copies (at least four, possibly more) that survive in song collections in repositories across Europe.[71] The two extant manuscript copies I have consulted both contain numerous lacunae and minor errors, such as missing accidentals and wrong notes, suggesting that they were made by non-professionals and circulated for recreational, semi-private use. Similarly, the string quartet accompaniment (as opposed to keyboard or harp) implies a larger gathering than a strictly private, domestic context, and was most likely that of the *salotto*.

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[69] Zingarelli also composed a large-scale cantata for operatic soprano and orchestra, entitled *Saffo: Monologo,* setting a new text dramatizing Sappho's last song and suicide leap. It was composed for public performance (with a "Signora Battaglini" as Saffo), and is clearly an ancestor to such nineteenth-century "Sappho's leap" works as Morlacchi's *Saffo* (1809) and Pacini's *Saffo* (1840). Other composers probably also set de' Rogati's translation of "Contento al par de' Numi," but one by Paolo Bonfichi is the only version I have found besides Zingarelli's. Bonfichi's is similar in style to Zingarelli's *Monologo,* rather than Zingarelli's own "Contento" setting, in that it is a large-scale cantata for soprano and orchestra. Although the date of Bonfichi's cantata is unknown, my guess is that it served as his "audition piece" for a post at the Milan Conservatory, where an MS copy now resides (I-Mc, Mus.Tr.ms.208), as he applied (unsuccessfully) for a composition post there in 1807. This might explain why the only copy is in Milan rather than Parma or Rome, where he spent most of his composition career—but of course, this is mere speculation.

[70] Caraci Vela, "Il 'tragico colorito,'" 423.

[71] This is actually quite a lot, given that so much manuscript music from the period has been lost. Such collections began to be assembled and printed in Italy in the second and third decades of the nineteenth century, most successfully by Ricordi in Milan, but in the late Settecento most chamber songs circulated in manuscript copies only. (This is quite different from the situation in England, of course.) To arrive at the music example that follows, I transcribed from the manuscript copy held at the Milan Conservatory I-Mc, Mus.Tr.162.5. Obvious errors on the part of the copyist (blurry notes, missing or inconsistent accidentals and dynamic markings) have been corrected, with the changes in brackets, but lacunae (e.g., empty measures) have been mostly left as they are (albeit with rests inserted into blank measures, etc.)

In a typical *notturno duetto,* the most popular *salotto* song type from the 1780s–90s, the musical setting consists of a "base" of an overarching mood (or *tinta*), normally in some variant of AB form, set off by touches of word-painting to highlight moments of particularly "picturesque" imagery in the poetry.[72] While the term *notturno duetto* expressed that the setting was for two voices, the term was sometimes used interchangeably with "canzonetta" in this period.[73] As Caraci Vela makes clear in her work on Zingarelli's vocal chamber music, the overwhelming numbers of sub-types are hard to taxonomize precisely, but "Contento" fits best into what she designates as the "canzonetta" type. Zingarelli's setting of "Contento" is unusual in several ways, perhaps owing to the strangeness of its text within the broader genre of *salotto* song. It is in ABA' form, which would only later, in Rossini's time, replace AB form as the most common chamber song structure.[74] Also, Zingarelli's setting intensifies the word-painting characteristic of the 1780s–90s *notturno,* moving beyond little flourishes of birdsong and so forth in order to follow, on a structural level, the rapid shifts among the multitudes of the Sapphic sublime. Zingarelli did so by varying time signature, tempo marking, key, and/or mode according to each poetic image or metaphor, dividing the already brief 90 measures into a series of episodes. The different tempi in his setting function much like mini-movements of a cantata or multi-part aria complex, similar to his approach in the cantata *Scena del Tasso,* as discussed by Caraci Vela.[75] Unlike that of Zingarelli's cantatas and scenas, however, the vocal style of "Contento" remains entirely appropriate for amateur performance—blending together

[72] See Sirch, "Notturno italiano,"165. On chamber song style from the time of Rossini on, see Morabito, *La romanza vocale*, 7 and passim.
[73] As noted by Ruth I. DeFord, "Canzonetta," in *Grove Music Online,* <https://doi.org.proxy.uchicago.edu/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.04808>, accessed 1 September 2018.
[74] Morabito*, La romanza vocale*, 20.
[75] Caraci Vela, "Il 'tragico colorito,'" 429.

elements from the musical registers of public (opera) and semi-private (*salotto*) into a kind of composed-out public intimacy.[76]

My analysis of "Contento" is uncharacteristically inchworm-like, but I have included such measure-by-measure details with the intention of bringing to the fore the unusually fragmentary quality of Zingarelli's setting. At first, the musical form matches the translator's poetic form: the ode begins simply, in a pleasant Andante 2/4 in F major, landing on a half cadence on the final *tronco* syllable of l.8 (mm. 1-20; **example 3.1/table 3.1**). (De' Rogati had reminded prospective composers to place cadences on every *settenario tronco* in order to properly serve the poetry, micro-manager that he was.)[77] When the second *ottava* begins with "Al riso" (At [your] laugh) (l. 9, m. 20), the meter changes to an Andantino 6/8 for what seems to be an unsophisticated evocation of laughter. Zingarelli's pictorial, madrigalistic approach to the poetry is similarly evident from the staccati on "non osa palpitar" ([my heart]…does not dare to beat) (l. 12, mm. 26-7). So far, the mood of his music seems completely unrelated to the turmoil of fragment 31. Nevertheless, though the sentimental, even galant music for the first two *ottave* does not fit the ethos of Sappho's ode, it does support the specific text it sets.

As we know from de' Rogati's translation, there is a major turn coming, instigated by the loss of voice. Zingarelli ensured that the significance of voice would be clear: the first text to be repeated in the song are the final lines of the fourth stanza, "my chest does not provide/ voice for speaking" (non somministra il petto/ voce per favellar) (ll. 15-16, mm. 33-40). The harmonic context

[76] The phrase and concept of "public intimacy" come from Joseph Roach, "Public Intimacy: The Prior History of 'It,'" in *Theatre and Celebrity in Britain, 1660–2000,* eds. Mary Luckhurst and Jane Moody (New York: Palgrave, 2005), 15–30. This is discussed further in chapter 4, below. On Pacchierotti's performance of vocal intimacy, though not read through Roach, see chapter 2, above.

[77] De' Rogati, "Discorso preliminare," 29. This would have been obvious to most composers, being standard practice for setting *settenari.*

surrounding "non somministra il petto" indicates that something is about to change, thanks to a smattering of E flats and F sharps. Both times these two lines are sung, Zingarelli draws attention harmonically and rhythmically to the word "voce," placing the first syllable ("vo-") on strong beat four, with the comparatively long value of a dotted quarter atop a piquant half-diminished seventh chord (mm. 34, 38). The vocal line leaps up from "petto" to "voce," as if to illustrate the connection between chest, feeling, and voice. If the singer does not breathe at the line-break between "petto" and "voce" but continues through the phrase, the effect is that of "petto" textually and musically running into "voce." A quick catch-breath is of course possible there, and if taken would dramatize the lack of breath provided by the *petto*. Either way, the singer would have performed de' Rogati's reading of Sappho's blocked voice.

Suddenly, in the next measure (m. 41), a jarring modulation signals the inward turn. With a chromatic half-step ascent in the cello, the quartet strikes a bright D major chord, immediately moving us from F major to G minor. The vocal part switches abruptly from cantabile singing to declaiming in quasi-recitative, shifting to G minor, Maestoso 2/4 for the text "Tenta la lingua invano" (My tongue tries in vain) (l. 17, mm. 41-44). The lyric "I" has lost its voice and turned inward, as indicated by the arresting change of key, time signature, tempo, and declamatory style.

Following on the heels of the inward turn and modulation, Sappho's multitudes manifest as increased musical fragmentation, shorter vocal phrases, and more frequent chromaticism. After the accompanied-recitative style of "Tenta la lingua invano/ d'articolar parola" (ll. 17-18, mm. 41-4), there is a three-bar detour into a frantic Allegretto, with sixteenth-note subdivisions in the accompaniment, for "corre un ardore insano di vena in vena" (an insane ardor runs through my veins) (ll. 19-20, mm. 45-7). The tempo then resettles into Andante while the accompaniment

paints the ode's "confusion" and "trembling" with agitated sixteenth-note figuration (mm. 55-8) and throbbing syncopations (mm. 59-67). The piece modulates back from G minor to F major at "largo sudor m'inonda" (l. 25, m. 60), but the preponderance of chromatic half steps and diminished seventh chords lend a sense of mounting tension despite the return to the home key.

That tension reaches a new height at the beginning of the poem's final stanza, "Sì nelle fredde membra/ langue il calor vitale" (In my cold limbs/ vital heat languishes) (ll. 29-30, mm. 69-72). Building energy struggles against stasis, with a dominant pedal in F major set to 16th- and 32nd-note repetitions verging on *stil concitato* above a chromatically-ascending cello. As the vocal part approaches the final two lines, the climax of the piece seems near as the speaker's death: "Ch'a me vicin rassembra/ l'istante del morir" (it seems to me/ the moment of death is near). But before those final lines can be sung, the built-up tension dissipates with a half-cadence in F major. We neatly pick up with music that echoes the opening for those last two lines—"it seems to me/ the moment of death is near"—as though the inward turn never even happened. And, in a way, it never did. The turn was utterly interior, experienced by the lyric "I" alone, neither heard nor felt by anyone else.

Table 3.1 Chart outlining basic structure of Zingarelli, "Contento al par de' Numi."

l.			**mm.**	**key**	**time**	**tempo**
1	Contento al par de' Numi	As happy as the Gods	**4-**	FM	2/4	Andante
	Parmi colui, che siede	He seems to me, who sits				
	Incontro a' tuoi bei lumi	Across from your beautiful eyes,				
	Felice spettator;	A lucky spectator;				
5	Che sparse le tue gote	Who sees, now and then				

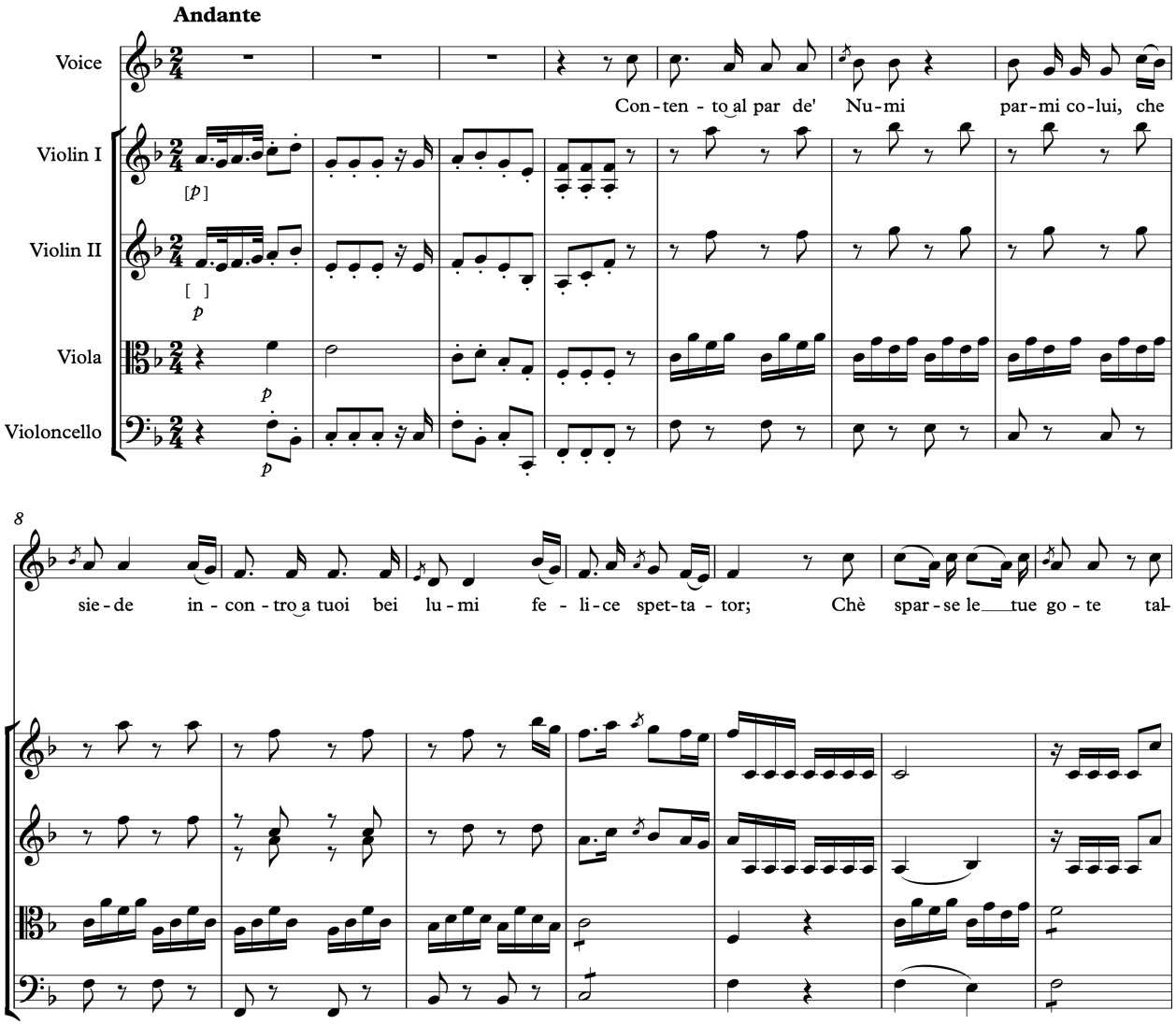
Table 3.1, continued

	Talor d'un riso vede,	A laugh emitted from your cheeks,				
	Ch' ode le dolci note	Who hears sweet notes				
	Dal labbro tuo talor.	From your lips, sometimes.	**-20**			
9	Al riso, a' detti usati	At your laugh, at [your] usual words,	**20-**		6/8	Andantino
	Il cor, che s'innamora,	The heart that is in love,				
	Fra i spiriti agitati	Amid agitated spirits,				
	Non osa palpitar.	Does not dare to beat.				
13	Veggo il tuo vago aspetto	I see your lovely face				
	E alle mie fauci allora	And then to my mouth				
	Non somministra il petto	My chest does not give				
	Voce per favellar.	Voice for speaking.	**-40**			
17	Tenta la lingua invano	My tongue tries in vain	**41-**	Gm	2/4	Maestoso
	D'articolar parola,	To articulate words,	**-44**			
	Corre un ardore insano	An insane heat runs	**45-**			Allegretto
	Di vena in vena al cor.	Through my veins to my heart.	**-47**			
21	Un denso velo il giorno	A thick veil	**47-**			Andante
	Alle mie luci invola;	Steals the day from my sight;				
	Odo confuso intorno,	Around [me] I hear confusion,				
	Ma non so qual rumor.	But know not what sound.	**-59**			
25	Largo sudor m'inonda,	I am bathed in copious sweat,	**60-**	FM		
	Spesso tremor m'assale,	Tremors assail me repeatedly,				
	Al par d'arida fronda	Like a desiccated leaf				

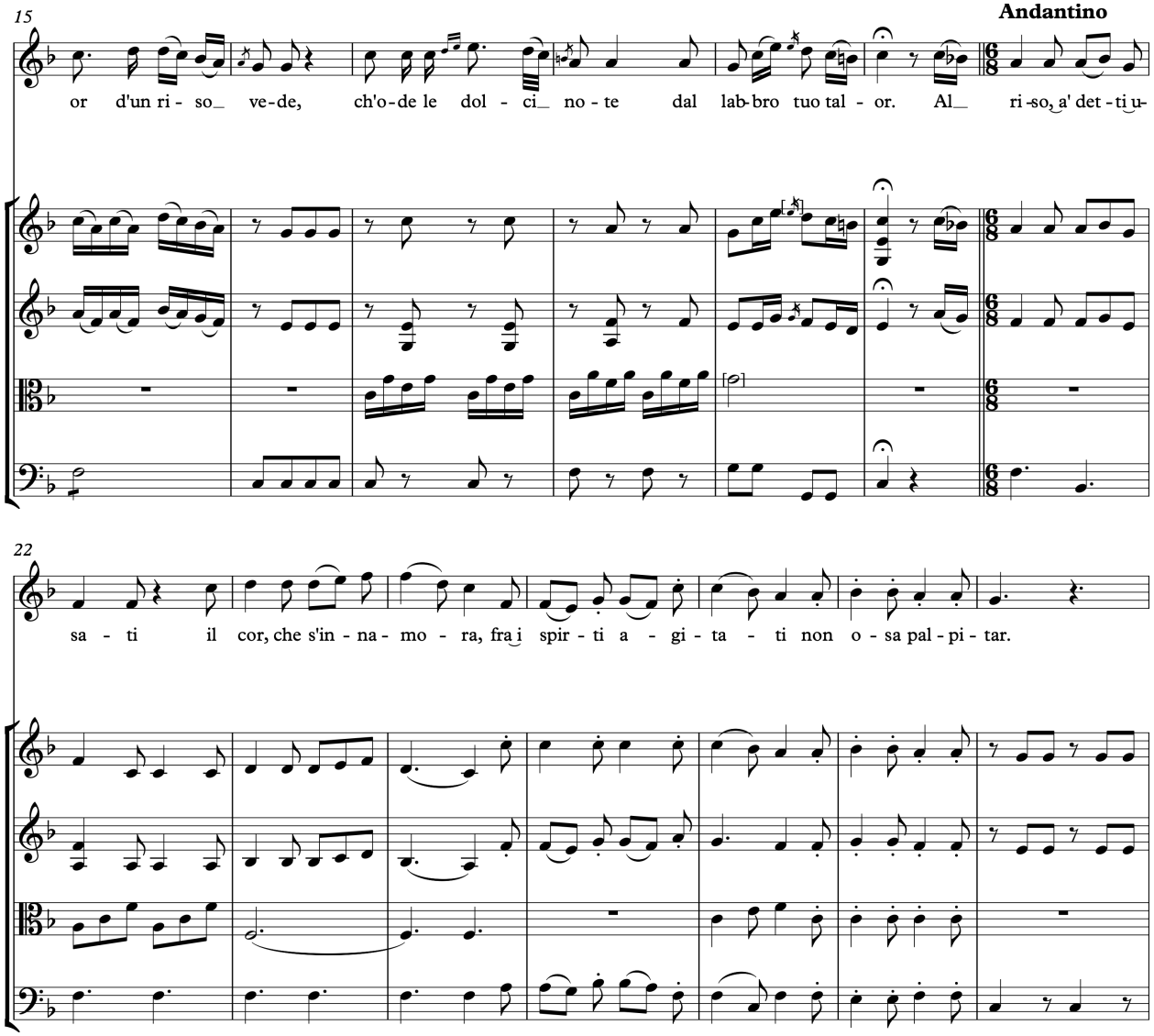
Table 3.1, continued

	Comincio a impallidir:	I begin to grow pale:				
29	Sì nelle fredde membra	In my cold limbs	**69-**	(V pedal)		
	Langue il calor vitale,	Vital heat languishes,	**-73**			
	Che a me vicin rassembra	Such that it seems to me	**74-**	FM		[same as opening]
	L'istante del morir.	The moment of death is near.	**-90**			

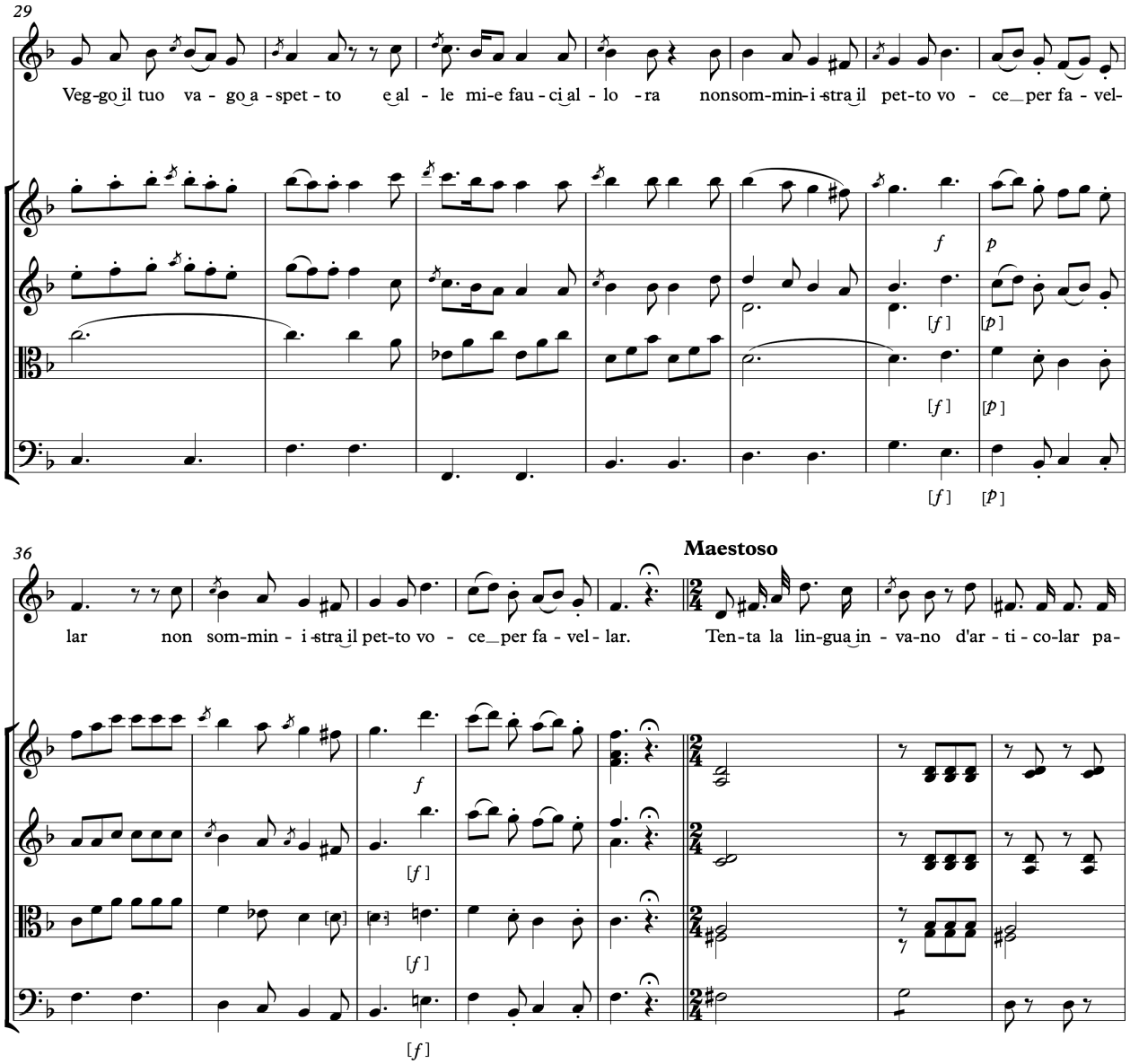
Example 3.1 Zingarelli, "Contento al par de' Numi," entire song, I-Mc, Mus. Tr. 162. 5.



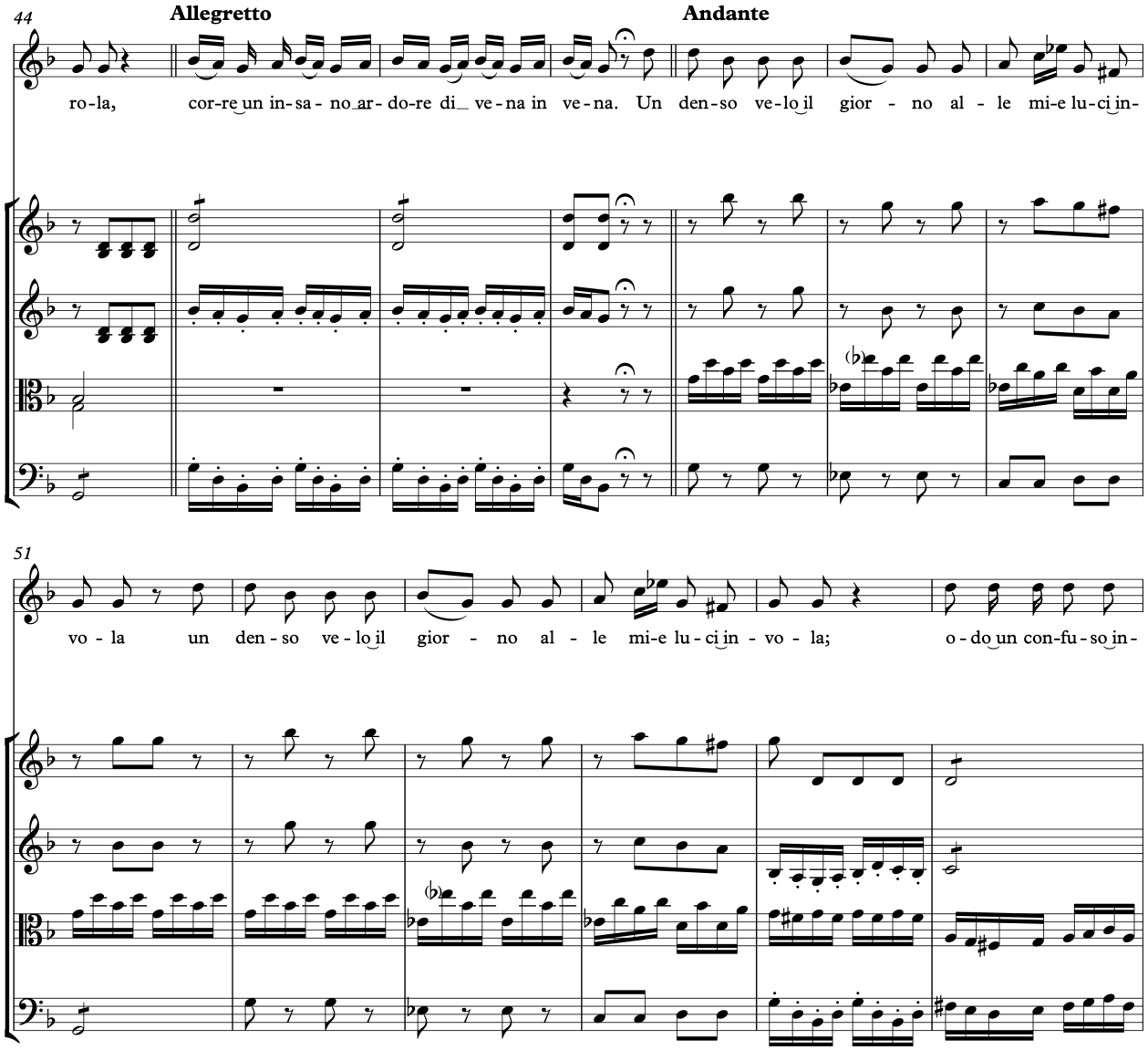
Example 3.1, continued



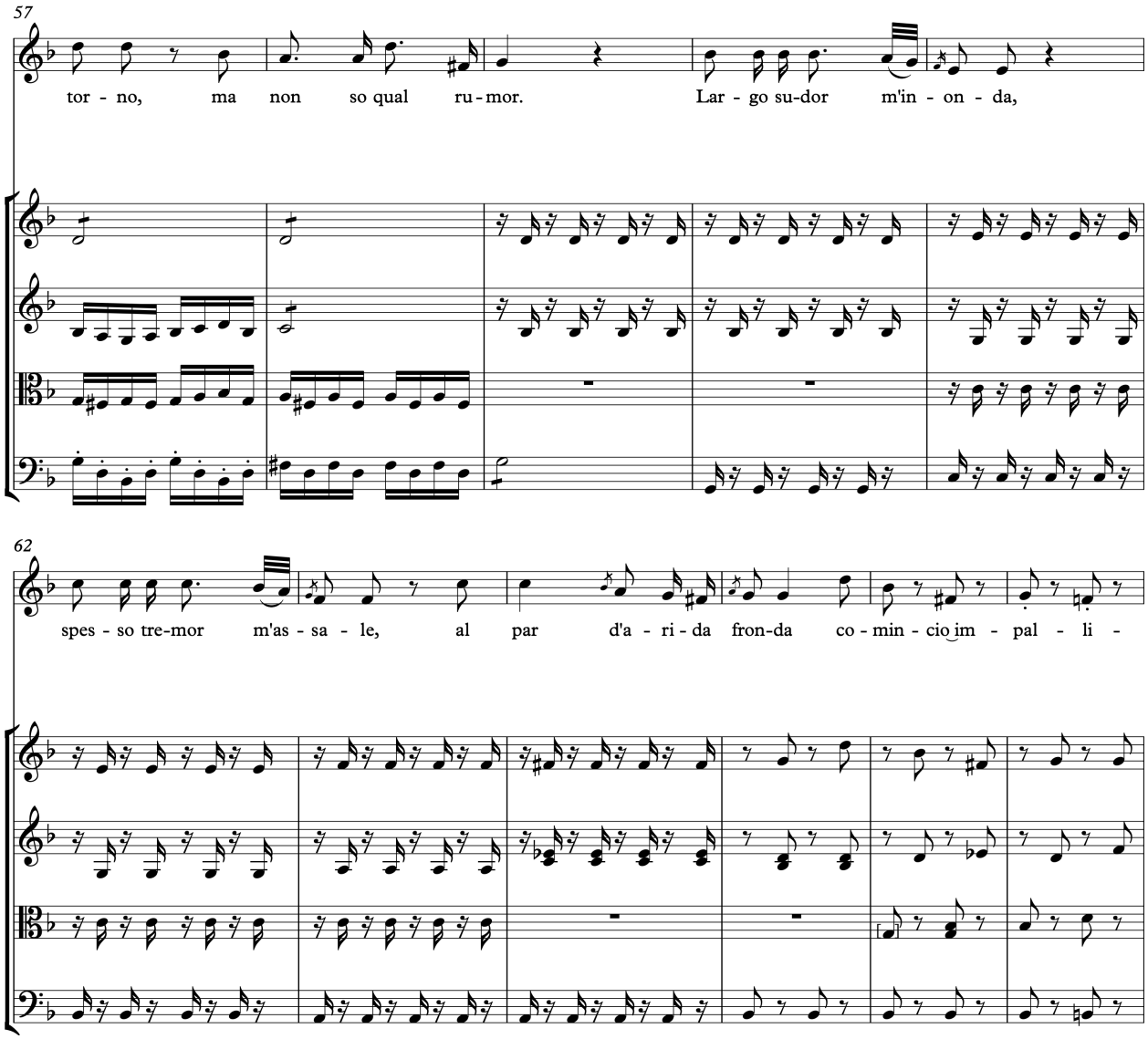
Example 3.1, continued



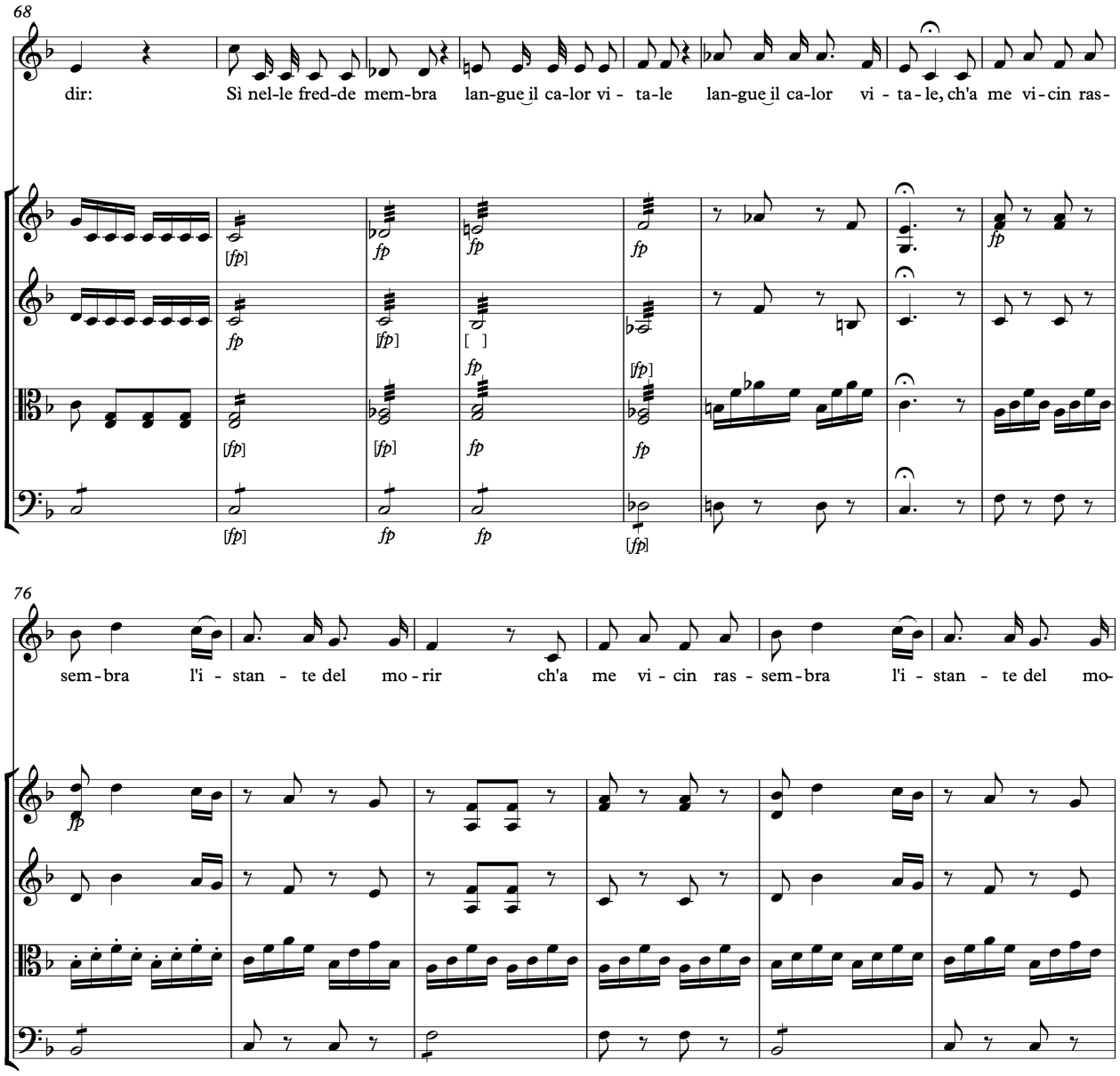
Example 3.1, continued



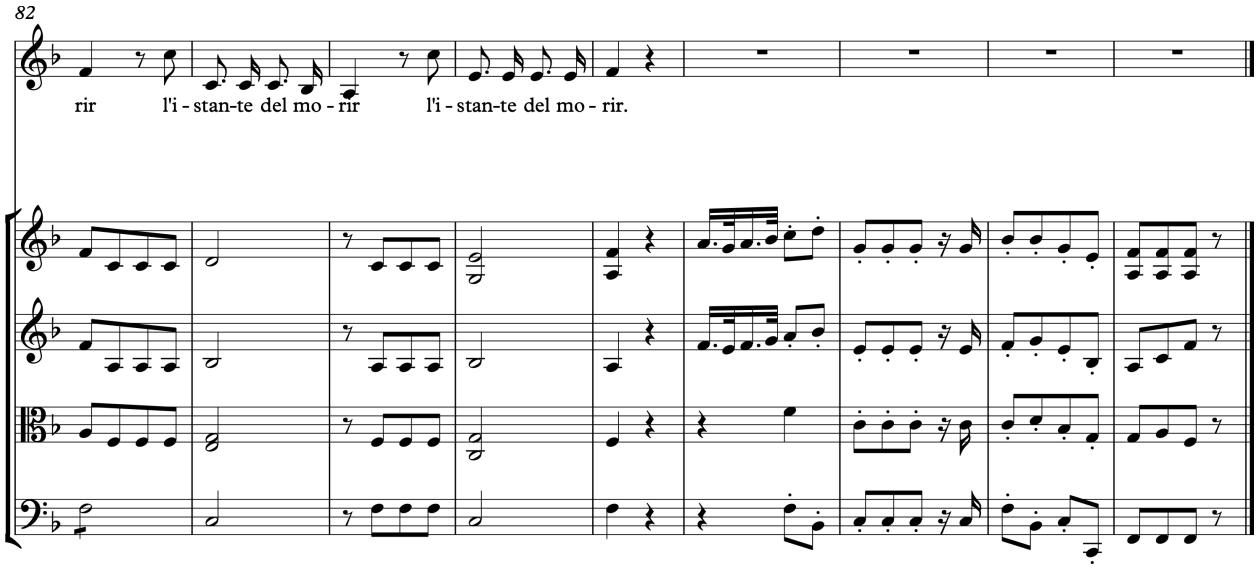
Example 3.1, continued



Example 3.1, continued



Example 3.1, continued



Does the opening theme return for the final lines because by reveling in death, or near-death, the lyric "I" regains her lost voice? More likely, Zingarelli made a purely musical decision to bookend the middle stanzas with pleasant simplicity in order to contain the unsettling effect of the intervening fragmentation. Like de' Rogati, Zingarelli stuffed a multitudinous, viscerally imagistic text into a manageable form. In the canzonetta, the result is something quasi-operatic in complexity but domestic, trivial even, in vocal style and scale. Zingarelli is not regarded as an avant-garde composer, but his setting of "Contento" demonstrates the difficulty of sustaining a representation of the Sapphic sublime within contemporary musical conventions. Perhaps that was why other composers (and even Zingarelli himself) quickly turned away from de' Rogati's translations, instead choosing generic texts about Sappho's leap that were far more easily set to dramatic music.

"My song could not make him love me": *Saffo* (Venice, 1794)

Given the popularity of Verri's and Imperiale's texts, the Sappho known to late Settecento readers was a tragic, lovelorn suicide, a kind of Orpheus-inflected Dido. Writing Sappho's suicide as a faux-history was one thing, but staging her death on the operatic stage was quite another. The early 1790s had seen a rash of "morte" operas in Venice, beginning with 1788's *La morte di Cesare* (Sertor/Bianchi) and followed by *La morte d'Ercole* (Pepoli's libretto for Marchesi, never staged), *La morte di Semiramide, La morte di Cleopatra,* and a new pasticcio production of Metastasio's *Didone abbandonata* for the famous singing actress Luigia Todi (*Didone* is unique among Metastasio's libretti in that it has a tragic ending for its protagonist).[78] But Sappho managed to avoid a similar fate. The only Sappho opera to have been produced in 1790s Italy indeed promises to stage the poet's suicide, only to evade it with an unexpected and unsatifying *lieto fine*.

Saffo, ossia I riti di Apollo Leucadio (Sappho, or The Rites of Leucadian Apollo, Mayr/Sografi) premiered at La Fenice for Carnival in 1794, featuring the "majestic" soprano Marianna Vinci in the title role, tenor Matteo Babbini as her admirer Alceo, and soprano castrato Girolamo Crescentini as Faone.[79] The opera's reception was lukewarm at best. The *Gazzetta urbana veneta* published a conspicuously brief review, mentioning only the overture, one or two unspecified numbers, and the production design ("the rest is not praiseworthy").[80] It was Mayr's first major

[78] For background on the "morte" operas, see Marita P. McClymonds, "'La morte di Semiramide, ossia La vendetta di Nino' and the Restoration of Death and Tragedy to the Italian Operatic Stage in the 1780s and 90s," in *Atti del XIV congresso della Società Internazionale della Musica, Bologna, 1987: Trasmissione e recezione delle forme di cultura musicale,* ed. Angelo Pompilio et al. (Turin: EDT, 1990), 3: 285–92; and Martha Feldman, "Death of the Sovereign, Venice, 1797," ch. 9 in *Opera and Sovereignty,* 389–435.

[79] Before the premiere of *Saffo,* Vinci had been noted for her "majestic bearing that dominates the scene"; *Gazzetta urbana veneta* 1 (1 January 1794), 3.

[80] *Gazzetta* 16 (22 February 1794), 127. The opera premiered on February 18. It seems as though *Saffo* was appreciated mostly for its sublimity-inducing scenery of tombs, caves, and cliffs (designed by Antonio Mauro), and the libretto describes them in detail, as if the ombra-esque flavoring could make up for the disappointingly "happy" ending. The first

Italian opera, but Sografi had recently authored the successful *La morte di Semiramide* and *La morte di Cleopatra* (both first set to music in 1791). Perhaps because there was no *morte* for the eponymous prima donna, *Saffo* ended up in the dustbin of operatic history.

As usual, the lead singers sang in both offerings given that season, and neither production was a significant premiere (as for an opening or a major artist's debut). The other opera given that season at La Fenice was *I giuochi d'Agrigento,* which had opened the theater in 1792 to great acclaim. This may account for the opera's portrayal of Saffo as a typical seria prima donna: in terms of both vocal writing and character type, the main roles in *Saffo* are essentially (and necessarily) copies of the castrato, soprano, and tenor roles in *Giuochi*. Still, the way the opera handles the Saffo character reveals a certain ideology at work regarding unruly female protagonists, undergirded by concerns about how best to appropriate female lyric agency. As public women with political power, Didone, Cleopatra, and Semiramide all had to die, whereas Saffo, transformed by Verri and Imperiale into a sentimental-epistolary-novel heroine, could still be domesticated.

The opera revolves around Saffo, Alceo, and Faone, all of whom converge at the Apollonian temple in hopes of freeing themselves from unrequited love (Saffo for Faone, Alceo for Saffo, and Faone for his dead wife). They await the prophecy of the Pythia, or High Priestess, who will tell them whether jumping off the cliffs will drown them or purge them. After much ceremonial ado, *Saffo* resolves in typical fashion with the marriage of the primary (soprano-castrato) couple. Alceo turns his unreciprocated feelings to a noble end and convinces Faone to marry Saffo, whom Faone

act is set on the cliffs of Leucade, Apollo's temple in the background; the cliff's stones are inscribed with the names and stories of previous supplicants who threw themselves into the sea and emerged alive and purged of their unrequited love. The second act takes place in the cave of the Pythia, which contains a smattering of tombs bearing inscriptions naming those who did not survive their Leucadian leaps—clearly drawing on the same myth that had inspired Imperiale's story about "Ossur" and Sappho's tomb. See Antonio Sografi, *Saffo, ossia I riti di Apollo Leucadio* (Venice: 1794), 5, 24.

does not love, in order to prevent her suicide. For both men, duty overrules desire, reaffirming opera seria's code of honor while proposing to reward self-sacrificing women with conjugal domesticity. In contrast to the French *Sapho* produced eight months later in Paris, which, as Sin Yan Hedy Law has shown, experiments with envoicing the female citizen, the Venetian *Saffo* minimizes the heroine's expressive-vocal power in order to make the *lieto fine* go more smoothly.[81] The opera is predominantly concerned with Faone's struggle to accept loss and banish ghostly voices—his own drama of Orphic resistant mourning—while Saffo's identity as poet-singer serves as mere backstory.[82]

Only once, Saffo gives what might be interpreted as a diegetic performance (Act 2, scene 2), but her song resembles the "real" Sappho's odes only insofar as it connects love with death. She sings to her entourage while preparing to enter into the Pythia's cave. Amid infernal low brass flourishes, Saffo declares her intention to die: "Let the sea be my grave" (siami sepolcro il mar). The cavatina that follows is a love-ode, but not to Faone:

Soave, dolce, cara è la morte	Gentle, sweet, and dear is death
quando ella è termine d'un rio dolor.	when it is the end of harsh sorrow.
Voi che provate l'istessa sorte	You who feel the same fate
ditelo, amanti, nel vostro cor.	in your hearts, tell me, lovers.

The aria bears the hallmarks of diegetic song: plucked, repetitive string arpeggios; collective address to the listeners, asking for a sympathetic response to the singer's plight; stepwise motion and dotted

[81] Sin Yan Hedy Law, "Composing *Citoyennes* through *Sapho*," *Opera Quarterly* 32, no. 1 (2017): 5-28. Note that the libretto for the French *Sapho* was written by a female author, Constance-Marie de Salm. Several of Sografi's other libretti are preoccupied with punishing and/or containing female characters who demand political agency (e.g., Semiramide and Cleopatra). Saffo, who desires death above power, is actually rewarded for this (albeit with a one-sided marriage and the silencing of her poetic voice).

[82] Verri's novel went through fifteen-plus reprints, well into the nineteenth century. It was probably known to most of the audience at La Fenice. On the reception of Verri's *Saffo,* see Bruno Toppan, *Du "Caffè" aux "Nuits romaines": Alessandro Verri romancier* (Nancy: Nancy University Press, 1984), 53–94.

rhythms in the vocal line, sprinkled with small leaps or melismas to intensify moments of repetition. Yet there is nothing in the libretto designating the cavatina as a "performance." It has no effect on the plot, and is wholly unremarked by the onstage listeners. There are no dramatic stakes, and hence no potential for Orphic agency in her song. Her voice may be beautiful, but in this mode it is powerless.

Saffo embraces a new kind of vocal power, one seemingly at odds with her character, in delivering her final aria (Act 2, scene 7). In the obbligato recitative leading into the aria, she rejects her lyric-poetic voice as useless: "my song could not make him love me" (il canto mio/ nol potè innamorar). For that reason, her last song takes a different register from the Orphic-sentimental one in "Soave, dolce, cara." This aria, "Pallida morte," marks the last time Saffo sings in the opera, aside from a few throwaway lines in the choral finale a whole five scenes later, yet there is no fanfare about it being her "last song"—again, covering over her lyric agency. The vocal line of "Pallida morte" is pure opera seria with an expansive tessitura and thrilling leaps. The horns, consistently present within the woodwind-heavy texture, underscore her bravery, while the contrapuntal interplay between the swirling upper strings and the ground-bass-like cellos evokes her steadfastness in facing a watery demise. "Pallida morte" presents an excuse to luxuriate in the soprano's vocal pyrotechnics, set off by the rich orchestration.

In apostrophizing death with vocal bravura, Saffo renounces her failed song of sensibility:

Pallida morte, vieni:	Pale death, come:
guidami al varco estremo;	guide me to the final crossing;
non palpito, non tremo;	I do not shake, I do not tremble;
sull'orme tue verrò.	I will follow your footsteps.
Amor, rossore, sdegno…	Love, shame, scorn…
vendetta… Affanno e speme,	revenge… Grief and hope,
a contrastar insieme	struggling together,
mai più vi sentirò.	I will never again feel.

Tra l'ombre delle amanti, delle letizia in seno, splender per me sereno, un astro alfin vedrò!	Among the shades of lovers, in the bosom of joy, I will finally see a calm star shining for me!

Sografi had clearly read Sappho's poetry in some form or another, probably in Verri's novel and/or de' Rogati's translations. Although highly conventional in form (note the quatrains of *settenari*) and affect, the text also makes reference to the shaking and trembling in fragment 31, and by enumerating the various emotions "struggling together," gestures to the fragment's multitudes.[83] But notably absent from this, and all of Saffo's solos, is the musical fragmentation that would have connoted Saffo's poetic-lyric authenticity as the author of her own words (as exemplified in Zingarelli's Sappho canzonetta). In "Pallida morte," this Saffo verbally rejects the markers of the Sapphic sublime without ever having performed them musically. The Sapphic sublime was not yet written into the score for the operatic stage, but sublimated into the materiality of the prima donna's voice.

It is in fact Faone, not Saffo, who expresses himself in fragments and effusions, most notably in his Orlando-meets-Orfeo dream/ombra scene at the dramatic climax of the opera (Act 2, scenes 9-10). This is not surprising, as Faone is introduced as an Orphic figure from the very start. In addition to being written for Crescentini, Pacchierotti's successor as the primo castrato of sensibility, Faone is musically quite similar to *Giuochi*'s Clearco (a role created by Pacchierotti in 1792, and played by Crescentini in addition to his performances as Faone in 1794). To amplify the Orphic

[83] The reference here to a "calm star" might be a nod to the so-called "midnight poem," sometimes attributed to Sappho as fragment 168B, and translated by de' Rogati as Ode III (immediately following Ode II/fragment 31 in his volume). Several other Sapphic musical works from this period, including Zingarelli's *Odi di Saffo,* include settings of or references to this fragment (incipit: "The moon and the Pleiades," or in de' Rogati, "Già in grembo al mar s'ascosero/ Le Plejadi, la Luna"). The Pleiades belong to the constellation Taurus, and to the naked eye are among the most visible stars in the night sky.

resonances, in his first vocal appearance Faone declares his desire to challenge the Furies and reclaim his dead wife from Hades (Act 1, scene 8). Faone, not Saffo, is the heir to Orpheus. Thus, in a corrective to the tragic ending of Verri's novel, the opera's Saffo is domesticated into an acceptable mold and married off. She is not a Cleopatra or Didone but an Euridice, rescued from the clutches of death by Alceo's tenor ex machina intervention.

But the Sapphic sublime is by no means forgotten in *Saffo*: it menaces the protagonists as a nightmare of female voice. Mayr and Sografi dramatized this through the main attraction of the titular "rites of Leucadian Apollo," that is, the Pythia. In a cave beneath the temple, surrounded by the tombs of supplicants, the Pythia is possessed by divine inspiration and becomes an oracle (Act 2, scene 4). As she prophesies the fates of Saffo, Alceo, and Faone, the Pythia appears to the horror-struck onlookers as "throbbing…agitated…trembling..." and "covered by a deathly pallor" (ellipses in original).[84] As we have seen, these physical symptoms were associated with the lovesickness of Sappho 31, a spectacle of sublime fragmentation. More generally, in the late Settecento they were also interpreted as "hysterical effects" of female desire run wild. Even the figure of the oracle had gendered undertones, connoting a certain type of feminine poiesis. As Paola Giuli has demonstrated, *improvvisatrici* like Corilla Olimpica were often portrayed as modern-day sibyls—a rhetorical move that stripped accomplished women of poetic agency by casting them as mere vessels and voices through which otherworldly inspiration flowed.[85] In *Saffo,* sublimity, sensibility, and inspiration are

[84] "Palpitante…/ Agitata…tremante…/ La ricopre un mortal pallor!"

[85] Giuli, "Poetry and National Identity," 221–5. Both oracle and sibyl refer to a woman who has the gift of prophecy when possessed by divine inspiration; the former is the Greek term and the latter the Latin (e.g., the Oracle of Delphi and the Cumaean Sibyl). Convulsions, also referred to as "vapors" or "hysteria," were a "fashionable malady" (une maladie à la mode) associated primarily with women in mid-to-late eighteenth century Italy, and commonly represented in plays and poetry of that period. Various medical treatises linked it with emotional or "spiritual" turmoil, usually caused by lovesickness (or reading trashy novels). See Marco Cerruti, "Le convulsioni di Marfisa e altre convulsioni," in *Nevrosi e follia nella letteratura moderna,* ed. Anna Dolfi (Rome: Bulzoni, 1993), 71–85.

gendered and twisted together into a "voice […] from hell," speaking through an uncontrollable, grotesquely suffering female body.[86]

"The voice of nature cries, even from the tomb"

Saffo and Faone's triumph over the Pythia rewrites (Verri's) history into a choice of unity over self-fragmentation. It was also political, this drive to unify and domesticate a scattered female corpus: for was that not what Italy "herself" had long since become? Apostrophizing the Italian peninsula as a mutilated or degraded female body was a poetic tradition reaching back at least to the Trecento, as literary scholars Margaret Brose and Joseph Luzzi have eloquently shown in their respective studies on the trope.[87] For two foundational examples, consider Dante's invective "Ahi serva Italia" (*Purgatorio* VI), in which he essentially calls his homeland a prostitute, and Petrarch's more melancholic "Italia mia" (*Rime sparse* 128), in which Italy is a "benevolent and merciful mother" with "mortal wounds" marring her "beautiful body." The trope persisted for centuries. In 1810, some half a millennium after Petrarch, neoclassical sculptor Antonio Canova designed Vittorio Alfieri's tomb for Santa Croce in Florence. Leaning melancholically on the tomb is the marble rendering of a young woman in classical draped garments, commonly taken to be an allegorical figure for Italy united in mourning for the tragic poet (**figure 3.4**).[88]

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[86] After the Pythia prophesies Saffo's suicide, Alceo begs Saffo not to listen: "That unhappy, deathly voice you heard, it is not a voice from heaven, it is from hell" (Quella, che udisti/ voce infausta fatale,/ non è voce del Ciel, ella è infernale); Act 2, scene 4.

[87] Margaret Brose, "The Politics of Mourning in Foscolo's *Dei sepolcri,*" *European Romantic Review* 9, no. 1 (1998): 1–34, and Joseph Luzzi, "Italy and Woman and Wound, Dante to Leopardi," ch. 7 in *Romantic Europe and the Ghost of Italy.*

[88] Dante Alighieri, *Purgatorio,* Canto VI, 76–151; Petrarch, *Rime sparse* 128.

Figure 3.4 Antonio Canova, tomb of Alfieri, 1810; in Santa Croce, Florence.

Not long before Canova designed Alfieri's sepulcher, the young Foscolo imagined a fragmented Italy singing through Sappho's voice. Foscolo is best known today as the author of the epistolary novel *L'ultime lettere di Jacopo Ortis* (The Last Letters of Jacopo Ortis; 1798–1802), often cited as the first true Italian novel. He was born to a Greek mother and Italian father on the Ionian island of Zante (Zakynthos), then part of the Venetian Republic, and grew up bilingual in both his mother's and father's tongues. He moved to Venice proper in 1792, where he later dedicated an ode to Napoleon as the "liberator" of Italy and fought under him against the Austrians. After Napoleon handed off the Veneto to the Habsburgs, sounding the death knell of the thousand-year Venetian Republic, Foscolo lost faith in both Italy and her liberator. In the aftermath of Napoleon's mutilation of Italy, Foscolo's quasi-fictional, quasi-autobiographical *Ortis* begins.

The novel tells the story of Jacopo Ortis, exiled from Venice after Campoformio, who falls in love with Teresa, a young woman forced by her father to wed a man she does not love. Ortis and Teresa are both left motherless by the actions of bad father-figures: Ortis must leave his mother behind to flee the Habsburgs' proscription, thanks to Napoleon, and Teresa's mother has been cast out by her father for refusing to enforce their daughter's unhappy betrothal. Finally, bereft of his beloved and his homeland, Ortis stabs himself to death. Literary scholar Brose reads Teresa, controlled first by her father and then by her new husband, as an allegorical twin to Italy, handed off from France to Austria.[89] Once again, the beautiful but maltreated female body is a double for Italy—even more so, as we shall see, when she gives voice to the mutilated verses of Sappho.

Voice is a crucial metaphor in Foscolo's writings, though much less discussed in scholarship than is his use of the leitmotif of tombs and sepulchers. I contend that Foscolo brings voice and tombs together in order to explore the idea of Italy as the convergence of memory, place, and voice. These intertwined themes are laid out in *Ortis* by the novel's epigram, for which Foscolo translated into Latin a quote from Thomas Gray's *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* (1751). The epigram maps the vocal onto the sepulchral in a way that undergirds the entire novel: "Even from the tomb, the voice of nature cries" (Naturae clamat ab ipso vox tumulo). Voices work in *Ortis* as reminders of what cannot be seen, but are nonetheless sensed. On a simple level, this includes rendering audible the characters' inner lives. For one example among many, in an early letter Ortis writes of how Teresa, overcome by the sublimity of nature, speaks to him in a voice he describes as "suffocated."

[89] Brose, "The Politics of Mourning," 3. The basic plot and the epistolary conceit of *Ortis* were obviously inspired by Goethe's wildly popular *Die Leiden des jungen Werther* (1774), not to mention Rousseau's *Julie, ou La nouvelle Heloïse* (1760). The influence of Cesarotti's translations of Ossianic fragments (1763–) is also evident. Beyond those sources already listed, see Mario Fubini, *Ortis e Didimo: ricerche e interpretazioni foscoliane* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1963).

The sounds of her voice express the "sincere joy […] coming from her heart" despite the "sweet melancholy" on her face.[90]

Indeed, Ortis's letters are rife with invocations of voices, emanating from sites of memory as sublime reminders of bodies that are no longer present. He listens to the harvest- and planting songs of peasant girls in the countryside, picturing himself one day being buried beneath their feet. At Arquà, he imagines the sound of Petrarch's "heavenly songs […] still resonating" in "the home of that sacred Italian," now a ruin covered by rambling foliage.[91] He hears the singing of a country girl and gazes up at the stars before laying face-down next to a churchyard cemetery, his "heart […] aspiring to a place much more sublime than earth."[92]

Driven by tensions between sight and sound, presence and absence, body and text, Foscolo's novel connotes immediacy, authenticity, and vocality through the epistolary form. *Ortis* is presented as a series of letters written by the protagonist to his friend Lorenzo, who serves as editor and mediator. The letters are deeply confessional in nature and composed in a Richardsonian "writing to the moment" style, by way of Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774); several are fragmentary, missing chunks of text (or so "Lorenzo the editor" tells us). In order to fill in the narrative lacunae generated by the epistolary conceit, Lorenzo includes an epilogue after Ortis's final

[90] "Il suo aspetto per lo più sparso di una dolce malinconia, si andava animando di una gioja schietta, viva, che le usciva dal cuore; la sua voce era soffocata." Ugo Foscolo, *Le ultime lettere di Jacopo Ortis* (Milan: 1802), 11–12. The idea of the suffocated voice as revealing internal turmoil is discussed at length in chapter 4, below.

[91] "La casa di quel sacro italiano sta crollando per la irreligione di chi possiede un tanto tesoro. Il viaggiatore verrà invano da lontana terra a cercare con meraviglia divota la stanza armoniosa ancora dai canti celesti del Petrarca." Foscolo, *Ortis,* 17.

[92] "Il mondo era in cura alla notte, ed io non sentiva che il canto della villanella, e non vedeva che i fuochi de'pastori. Scintillavano tutte le stelle, e mentr' io salutava ad una ad una le costellazioni, la mia mente contraeva un non so che di celeste, ed il mio cuore s'innalzava come se aspirasse ad una regione più sublime assai della terra. Mi sono trovato su la montagnuola presso la chiesa: suonava la campana de' morti, e un senso d'umanità trasse i miei sguardi sul cimiterio dove ne' loro cumuli coperti di erba dormono gli antichi padri della villa: --Abbiate pace, o nude reliquie: la materia è tornata alla materia; nulla scema, nulla cresce, nulla si perde quaggiù." Foscolo, *Ortis,* 64–5.

letter that describes the discovery of the protagonist's suicide. Lorenzo also prefaces the letters by calling their publication a "monument" that will stand in for Ortis's "tomb."[93] The resonances with Sappho's confessional fragments as portrayed in Imperiale's *Faoniade* are unmistakable—particularly given Foscolo's emphasis on the vocality of the novel's text as a warrant of emotional authenticity. In an essay appended to the 1816 Zurich edition of *Ortis*, Foscolo wrote: "One never reads it [*Ortis*]; one always hears it; nor does one hear the reader or the narrator, but rather a young man who speaks impetuously, and lets one discern the various colors of his voice and changes of his countenance."[94] As with Sappho's lyrics, the true form of *Ortis* was intended to appear as vocal, not textual. Still, in place of a lost voice and absent body, a fragmented text would have to suffice.

And so the voice that haunts *Ortis,* more than any other, is Sappho's. Ortis falls for Teresa when he overhears her playing the harp and singing "that little strophe by Sappho, translated by me with the other two odes; the sole remains of the poetry of that amorous girl, as immortal as the muses." After hearing Teresa sing, Ortis flings himself on her harp, weeping, and "no longer feeling the weight of this mortal life."[95] Sappho's ode remains with him as a poor substitute for Teresa's absent body and voice: "Oh, that little song of Sappho's! I hum it when writing, walking, reading: I did not rave like this, o Teresa, before I was prevented from seeing you and hearing you."[96] In a later

[93] Foscolo, *Ortis,* n.p.
[94] "Non si legge mai; si ode sempre; nè s'ode l'oratore o il narratore, bensì l'uomo giovine che parla impetuosamente, e lascia discernere i varj colori della sua voce e mutamenti della sua fisonomia." Foscolo, "Notizia bibliografica" (1816), repr. in Ugo Foscolo, *Prose litterarie* I: 172. In this same essay, Foscolo defends *Ortis* against those who deemed it a pale imitation of Goethe's *Werther.*
[95] "Ora ponti nel mio cuore, quand' io udiva a cantar da Teresa quella strofetta di Saffo volgarizzata da me con le altre due odi; unici avanzi delle poesie di quella amorosa fanciulla, immortale come le muse. […] Io non so dirti, mio caro, in quale stato allora io mi fossi: so bene ch' io non sentiva più il peso di questa vita mortale." Foscolo, *Ortis,* 22–23.
[96] "O! la canzoncina di Saffo! io vado canticchiandola scrivendo, passeggiando, leggendo: nè così io vaneggiava, o Teresa, quando non mi era conteso di poterti vedere ed udire." Foscolo, *Ortis,* 27. Ortis/Foscolo does not specify which ode he is referring to in these scenes, but given the fact that Foscolo translated Sappho 31 at least three times over the course of his life—not to mention the appropriateness of fragment 31 to Ortis's situation—we might presume that it is indeed that one (Ode II, as it would have been known at the time). On Foscolo's translations of Sappho, see Giovanna Fogli, "La

letter, Ortis recounts how he recited aloud Sappho's odes while sitting with Teresa under a tree, leading to their first kiss and confessions of love.[97] Sappho's voice, whether heard through Teresa's song, Ortis's translations, or merely in his own head, offers Ortis freedom from "the weight of this mortal life." Yet it is a freedom that can be attained, in the end, only through self-fragmentation. Like Sappho, Ortis attains sublimity in death, scattering his body and subjectivity into confessional fragments. Setting those fragments back together into a narrative of selfhood was the work of a Lorenzo, a Verri, an Imperiale—or the reader.

Sappho acted for Foscolo as a synecdoche not only for lyric but for his lost homeland.[98] He identified his birthplace of Zante, a mere sixty miles from Leucade in the Ionian Sea, by conjuring the sepulchral strains of Sappho's song: "I had as my cradle that sea/ where there was the naked spirit/ of Phaon's girl,/ and if the nighttime breeze/ blows mildly over the waves,/ the shores resound with the lamenting of the lyre" (*All'amica risanata,* 1803).[99] Sappho herself is nameless ("Phaon's girl") and disembodied—yet, as the sound enveloping his cradle, her lament became his lullaby. It is in a Sapphic vein, then, when Foscolo apostrophizes Zante as "my motherland" (o materna mia terra) and offers it his song in lieu of his exiled body ("Tu non altro che il canto avrai del figlio"; *A Zacinto,* 1802–3).[100] Sapphic song and the maternal lullaby flowed into one another, making an

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'canzoncina di Saffo' ed il tramonto della luna nelle *Ultime lettere di Jacopo Ortis,*" *Strumenti critici* 11, no. 3 (1996): 438–9; Pecoraro, "La seconda ode," passim.

[97] Foscolo, *Ortis,* 67.

[98] Giovanna Fogli writes that Foscolo's fascination with Sappho's song derives from his reading of her "essential poetic voice" as one that "resists the silencing of its own death." Throughout his oeuvre, she argues, he seeks to reaffirm his own voice by identifying himself with hers. See Fogli, "La 'canzoncina di Saffo,'" 434. Among Foscolo's juvenilia is the 1794 ode *A Saffo,* in which he writes to the poet: "let us weep" (noi piangerem); it is included in his *Versi dell'adolescenza,* and was published posthumously in *Poesie inedite di Niccolò Ugo Foscolo tratte da un Manoscritto originale* (Lugano: Naranzi, 1831).

[99] "Ebbi in quel mar la culla,/ Ivi era ignudo spirito/ Di Faon la fanciulla,/ E se il notturno zeffiro/ Blando su i flutti spira,/ Suonano i liti [lidi] un lamentar di lira." Foscolo, "All'amica risanata," ll. 85-90; in Ugo Foscolo, *Poesie* (Milan: Agnello Nobile, 1803).

[100] ll. 12-13; in Foscolo, *Poesie* (1803).

exiled body seem present and a fragmented self seem whole. For Foscolo it was those same voices, however domesticated and sublimated, that might do the same for Italy: unifying a fragmented place by invoking cultural memory and (re)writing history.

I will return to this claim at the end of the next chapter. But first, we have to go back in time, to Venice in the winter of 1790, in order to explore how Sapphic lament and maternal lullaby might have been heard through the very same voice. For if such meanings were not yet written into music, they were nonetheless imagined as shaping the very sound of the voice.

CHAPTER FOUR
SUBLIME SUFFERING AND THE GOOD MOTHER

A "moral cause": *Didone abbandonata* (Venice, 1790)

In 1791, the Venetian critic Innocenzo Della Lena described the most enthusiastic audience he had ever seen at a serious opera. "Neither when […] Guadagni played Orfeo, nor when Pacchierotti himself played Orfeo" had there been "so much applause."[1] What singer could have thus superseded the castrati of sensibility? Her name was Luigia Todi, and the role in which she triumphed, Cleofide in *Alessandro nell'Indie* (Caruso/Metastasio, 1791). In his treatise on contemporary theater, Della Lena devoted fifty-odd pages to Todi while proclaiming her the most "sublime" singer to have ever graced the operatic stage.[2] Della Lena was not alone in his fanaticism for the Portuguese mezzosoprano: she had already excited the enthusiasm of listeners across Europe, from Marmontel in Paris to Catherine the Great in St. Petersburg to Beethoven in Bonn. The Venetian opera season of 1790–1 was dominated by the public's obsession with her, as nearly every edition of the local periodical *Gazzetta urbana veneta* during those months mentioned Todi at least in passing, whether printing sonnets in her honor, glowing reviews, or updates on her health. *Alessandro nell'Indie* may have garnered the most applause Venice had ever given an opera seria, but even Todi's Venetian debut in the title role of *Didone abbandonata* a few months earlier had been a rousing success, immediately catapulting her to the status of Venice's prima donna. Within the span of three months and two operas Todi became one of the star female singers of 1790s Italy, compared by her contemporaries to Pacchierotti and by later generations to Giuditta Pasta. Such comparisons are

[1] Innocenzo Della Lena, *Dissertazione ragionata sul teatro moderno* (Venice: 1791), 79n–80n.
[2] Della Lena, *Dissertazione,* passim. He uses the word "sublime" (or "sublimità") in connection with Todi at least ten times, but see esp. 55–6.

telling: Todi played an essential role in the history of operatic voice as the transitional figure between the neoclassical simplicity espoused by Orphic castrati like Pacchierotti, and the romantic subjectivity performed by Ottocento prima donnas like Pasta. Resonating at this crucial aesthetic nexus, Todi's voice made audible for her listeners nascent fantasies of a marked, uniquely *female* subjectivity—fantasies shaped, as we shall see, through the discursive strategies of the female sublime and of its ensuing domestication.

Much like Sappho's voice in post-Metastasian Italian lyric poetry, Todi's voice seemed endowed with the power to revivify an ailing genre: in Todi's case, the opera seria once defined by Metastasio and his ubiquitous libretti. For Della Lena, Todi's voice, more than Calzabigian dramaturgy or Gluckian orchestration, breathed life into the most well-worn words. The critics at the *Gazzetta* agreed as they applauded her Didone: "The most sublime actress of the Gallic stage could not better […] express the soul of Metastasio" than did Todi.[3] Metastasio's libretto for *Didone abbandonata* was well-worn indeed, having been first put to music in 1724 and subsequently set at least fifty times. The production for the Teatro San Samuele in late November 1790 was not even a brand-new setting but a pasticcio, comprised of numbers by Vincenzo Rampini, Johann Gottlieb Naumann, Giuseppe Gazzaniga, Ferdinando Bertoni, and Giovanni Paisiello. This was a star vehicle, despite the recycled libretto and score, one intended to showcase Todi's acting talents by giving her the opportunity to convey both "regal majesty" and "impassioned grief."[4]

[3] *Gazzetta* 96 (1 December 1790).
[4] *Gazzetta* 96 (1 December 1790).

While the former was perhaps easy enough for most prima donnas, the latter is what drove Della Lena to praise Todi's vocal expressivity. He explained why opera seria needed voices like Todi's in order to realize its full moral potential:

> Words alone can never express the passions without naming them, e.g. *I love you, I hate you*: but the words themselves, without being properly extended [i.e., accented] and vibrated by the very necessary accompaniment of *the sound of the voice,* express rather a weak idea instead of a feeling. […] The curse of the abandoned Didone*,* read and acted coldly, without any vocal inflection or gesture, would leave the heart cold and unmoved [italics in original].[5]

For Della Lena, adding "the sound of the voice" shifted the words' power from the intellectual realm to that of the emotional. He illustrated this process and its moral effect by narrating how Venetian operagoers, normally disinterested and rude, underwent a stunning change in comportment during Todi's performance as Didone. They were so moved by her that they became the model of a Diderotian community of spectators, leading Della Lena to hail Todi as the "moral cause" of the audience's improved behavior. In mediating Metastasio's text through her voice and body, Todi transformed the poet's words from "weak ideas" into "feelings," thereby activating the spectators' inner moral sense.[6]

At first, this all appears to be another invocation of *accento* as the primary expressive practice of voice, familiar from the accounts of Pacchierotti's ineffable vocal style as discussed in chapter 2. Della Lena certainly aligned Todi's expressivity with the ethos of Pacchierotti's *accento*: "Nature is

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[5] "La sola parola non può mai esprimere le passioni senza nominarle, p.e. *io vi amo, io vi odio*: ma le parole stesse senza l'accompagnamento necessarissimo *del suono della voce* convenientemente esteso, e vibrato, esprimono piuttosto una languida idea, che un sentimento. […] Letta freddamente e rappresentata l'imprecazione di Didone abbandonata, senz'alcuna inflessione di voce, e senza gesto, il cuore resterebbe freddo senz'alcuna mozione." Della Lena, 40.

[6] Della Lena's phrase is "cagione morale." He insisted that no other singer, not even Pacchierotti or Babbini, had had such an effect on his or her audience. Della Lena, 65–7. On the connection between sympathy, emotion, and the "moral effect" of theater, see Vincent-Buffault, *A History of Tears: Sensibility and Sentimentality in France*; this theme is also taken up at length in chapter 1, above.

utterly simple, and whoever imitates nature most simply, as Todi does with the perfect expression of her singing, imitates it most sublimely."[7] In the neoclassical simplicity associated with the Pacchierotti school, lack of embellishment in a vocal part, especially in recitative, made an opening for vocal acting. Todi had had quite a bit of acting experience to draw on; before packing San Samuele as a seria star, she, like Pacchierotti's Orphic predecessor Guadagni, had been a buffa singer in London. Her earliest origins in the Portuguese spoken theater, followed by her training in the verisimilar acting-singing style of comic opera, likely colored her vocal approach to dramatic singing.[8] By attributing to Todi the naturalness and simplicity of the Orphic castrati, Della Lena positioned her as the heir to Guadagni and Pacchierotti. More importantly, in so doing he also shielded her from the critiques of prima donnas and other public women as artificial, stylized, and inimical to nature: hers was a female voice in the Orphic mold.[9]

This was a crucial distinction for Della Lena, given that Todi no longer sang roles generically akin to the naturalistic style: she delivered bravura arias while embodying tragically-flawed queens. Yet Todi transcended those well-worn libretti and da capo repetitions by lending her voice, not to her own glory, but to the service of the great Metastasio. As the *Gazzetta* critic put it, "The dedicated genius of Signora Todi to the dramas of the immortal Metastasio proves […] the sensibility of her soul, and that moral sense that makes her prefer the beauties of feeling to the prestiges of

[7] Della Lena, 53.
[8] Todi acted at the Bairro Alto theater in Lisbon as a teenager in the late 1760s, making her debut in Molière's *Tartuffe*. She moved from spoken drama to comic opera after she married Italian violinist Saverio Todi in 1769, then continued to perform soubrette-type roles in London in the 1770s before making a splash in the Parisian Concert Spirituel in 1778. She turned to serious repertoire in Turin, Berlin, St. Petersburg, and beyond in the 1780s. See Della Lena, passim; Claudio Sartori, *I libretti italiani a stampa dalle origini al 1800* (Cuneo: Bertola and Locatelli, 1990–), s.v.v. "Luigia Rosa Todi," "Luigia Todi"; Dan H. Marek, *Alto: The Voice of Bel Canto* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 2016), 52–3.
[9] On the equation of "style" with insincerity, artifice, and problematic femininity, see Landes, 45–8. By "public" women I do not intend "prostitutes," but rather women in the public sphere.

magnificence."[10] The *Gazzetta* critic emphasized that, in contrast to Todi, other singers of the role of Metastasio's Didone "warble" through their death scenes and, in "doing too much to listen to, make nothing felt."[11] By embracing vocal verisimilitude over virtuosity, and placing the poet's words above her own embellishments, Todi exhibited her capacity for moral judgment—one conspicuously lacking among contemporary prima donnas. Alleged to be among such malefactors was the soprano Brigida Giorgi-Banti, who had sung Didone in a setting by Anfossi two years earlier at San Carlo in Naples. Della Lena lumped Banti in with the castrato Luigi Marchesi as "inert, vapid, and cold" onstage, while Charles Burney deemed her an uneducated and "obstinate" street-singer's daughter.[12] Banti's was commonly considered to have been among the greatest voices of the late Settecento—so much so that an autopsy was performed on her corpse, not to discover her cause of death but to determine how she had produced such a sound. (Fétis, likely following the biography written by Banti's son Giuseppe, credited the soprano's vocal ability to her abnormally large lungs, larynx, and thoracic cavity.)[13] One writer in 1791 pondered what new operatic heights might have been reached if Todi had possessed a "vocal organ" like Banti's. "The world would be given something truly perfect," he declared, were opera's most impressive vocal instrument to have been transplanted into the body of its most touching actress.

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[10] "Il genio costante della Signora Todi per i Drammi dell'immortal Metastasio prova […] la sensibilità della sua anima, e quel tatto morale che fa preferire le bellezze del sentimento a' prestigii della magnificenza." *Gazzetta* 97 (4 December 1790).

[11] "Dopo aver udito tante altre Didoni nell'ultima scena, che non movevansi per ben gorgheggiare la loro morte, ora ne vediamo una in Lei, che senza i sconsj modi di chi per far troppo sentire non fa sentir nulla." *Gazzetta urbana veneta* 96 (1 December 1790), continued from previous. The double use of "sentire" (which means both "to hear" and "to feel," but also more generally "to sense" something) is a bit of a pun—too much of one "sentire" precludes the other, more important "sentire."

[12] Della Lena, 97. He lists Banti, Rubinelli, and Marchesi as those who sing "senza necessario trasporto" (lacking the necessary enthusiasm) while Todi, Pacchierotti, and Babbini are among the best. See also Charles Burney, *General History of Music* (London: 1789), 4:507.

[13] François-Joseph Fétis, *Biographie universelle des musiciens et bibliographie générale de la musique* (Paris: 1883), I: 237; see also [Giuseppe Banti], *Vita di Brigida Banti nata Giorgi* (Bologna: [1869]).

But could Todi have sung with expressivity and moral judgment through such a voice as Banti's? Certainly, technical-vocal perfection was never Todi's modus operandi. The *Gazzetta* critic, in his 1790 review of *Didone*, praised her "beautiful and artless voice" before, paradoxically, highlighting her art in "covering" its "natural defects."[14] The critic did not elaborate further in his review, but other interlocutors had much to say about both the defect itself and its effects. The main issue seems to have been related to Todi's difficulty navigating her *passaggi,* or register breaks. Stendhal later explained that she, like Pacchierotti and, famously, Pasta, had been unable to maintain an even timbre across her range. For Della Lena, it was precisely that lack of a unified timbre which rendered her singing sublime:

> I have observed this effect that is born in Todi, when the sounds of her voice are weak because of blockage, that in singing they then regain their sonority, especially in expressing the violence of the passions: and that is because the voice rises and acquires more force and melody, to the extent that our soul departs its ordinary state. But Todi's singing, which is always vividly animated and expressive so as to soften the heart, serves through this to correct and amend in large part, indeed, the natural or temporary defect of her voice.[15]

The agonism and violence he heard in Todi's shifting vocal sounds rendered audible the overcoming of some interior, invisible obstacle. This is a hallmark of the late Settecento female sublime: the mutuality of beauty and defectiveness, and of voice and voicelessness, in which the former is elevated to sublimity only because of the latter. For Della Lena, the sublime moment, as the exaltation of a listener's soul, resulted from the contrast between the weakened sounds of Todi's blocked voice and

[14] *Gazzetta urbana veneta* 96 (1 December 1790).
[15] "Quest' effetto ho osservato che nasce nella Todi, quando i suoni della sua voce sono affiocati per intasamento o costipazione, che in cantando riacquistono poi la loro propria sonorità, specialmente nell'esprimere la violenza delle passioni: e ciò perchè la voce s'alza ed acquista più forza e melodia, a misura, che la nostra anima esce dal suo stato ordinario. Ma il canto della Todi ch'è sempre vivamente animato ed espressivo per intenerire il cuore, serve con ciò a correggere, ed emendare in gran parte eziandio il difetto natural o avventizio di sua voce." Della Lena, 45. The soul as "exalted" was a common locution for describing the experience of the sublime, from Longinus to John Dennis (*The Grounds of Criticism in Poetry,* 1704), among many others; see chapter 3, above.

the full-voiced singing that burst free in their wake.

Stendhal's account of the defect matches Della Lena's in certain respects, but discourses of voice had changed since 1791. Stendhal described Todi's liminal register as having had a "suffocated tone," one which proved for her listeners "at once so moving and so natural in the portrayal of certain instances of violent emotion." Todi, along with Pacchierotti and Pasta, was the rare singer who had successfully embraced an "apparent defect […in order] to bring about a most fascinating touch of originality."[16] In this natural, imperfect state, her voice revealed the "originality" of its owner's interiority. While not altogether unexpected from Stendhal, writing retrospectively and Romantically from the 1820s, such a construction of voice as Della Lena's is rather surprising from an Italian critic in the early 1790s. It marked a significant departure from the predominant aesthetics of Italianate operatic voice in which anything called a vocal "defect" would have impeded a prima donna's career. Todi's interlocutors recognized in the idiosyncrasies of her instrument certain emotional inflections, such that her timbre instantiated a sensibility of voice that ran deeper than style and *accento*: they heard in the physiological qualities of her vocal apparatus a font of extralinguistic meaning. Todi, for Della Lena, was utterly unique and original, and for that reason not subject to the rules of bel canto. Indeed, he emphasized the "newness" and "rarity" of her voice and technique, even as he read in her expressive choices debts to Guadagni and Pacchierotti. Stendhal in the 1820s similarly adumbrated a genealogy of voice, likely in the interest of legitimating

[16] Stendhal, *Life of Rossini,* trans. Richard N. Coe (New York: Orion, 1970), 375. Stendhal might have heard Todi before she retired, when he traveled in northern Italy in 1799–1800. It seems as though his description of her singing was largely influenced by other sources, however, as it is unlikely he would have heard her many times (if, indeed, he heard her at all), and his description is very close to those in Della Lena's *Dissertazione*, among other Italian and French sources.

his own starry-eyed appraisal of Pasta (who was not yet beloved by most Italian operagoers).[17] For him, Todi served as the link between the beatified Pacchierotti and the rising star Pasta, all three of them connected not simply by their expressivity but by the "originality" of their vocal timbres.[18]

Something shifted between the heyday of the castrati of sensibility and that of Pasta, related to what and how the sounds of the material voice were understood as signifying. Giuseppe Millico, when treating voice as audible sensibility, had written in 1782 that the "natural voice" should be "obedient and flexible," and without any "detestable defects."[19] Would Millico have numbered Todi's suffocated timbre among those defects? Perhaps Todi indeed had an "obedient and flexible voice" but intentionally modified her production in the interest of verisimilitude, extending Millico's vocal acting to evoke the sounds of true vocal struggle. Or maybe she did have physiologically induced technical difficulties, and chose to turn them to expressive purposes.[20] Either way, contemporary accounts of Todi's singing presumed the latter to have been true, and did so in language that was exceptional for the time and place. They suggested, in a line now familiar from nineteenth-century reception of Beethoven, that Todi's physiological-vocal struggle revealed a deeper capacity for feeling and, consequently, for expressing authentic emotion.[21]

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[17] As Paolo Russo demonstrates, Italian audiences were skeptical of Pasta's vocality into the 1820s, despite her successes in London and Paris. No less discerning an auditor than Donizetti confessed himself baffled by her vocal appeal in 1826. See Paolo Russo, "Giuditta Pasta: Cantante pantomimica," *Musica e storia* 10, no. 2 (2002), 497–8.
[18] On Pacchierotti as emblematic for the nineteenth century of a long-lost *accento,* see chapter 2, above.
[19] Millico, preface, *La pietà d'amore,* n.p. Chapter 1 of this dissertation discusses in detail Millico's vocal pedagogy and his equation of voice with sensibility.
[20] On the aesthetics of vocal "failure" in more recent times, see Martha Feldman, "Voice Gap Crack Break," in *The Voice As Something More: Essays Toward Materiality*; Laurie Stras, "'The Organ of the Soul': Voice, Damage, and Affect."
[21] The defining essay on this is Joseph Straus, "Musical Narratives of Disability Overcome: Beethoven," in *Extraordinary Measures: Disability in Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 45–62.

Suffocation and compensation

In Todi's blocked vocal sounds, Della Lena and Stendhal cited undertones that were simultaneously violent and moving, pointing up a thrilling tension between the physical and the metaphysical, the exterior and the interior, in a female-coded aesthetics of voice.[22] Della Lena explicitly situated Todi's singing at this boundary with his phrase about "the soul depart[ing] its ordinary state," a common Settecento locution for the sublime (used by writers from John Dennis to Bettinelli, among others, but all derived from Longinus). Della Lena connected Todi's sublimity not only to her defective timbre, but to her ability to express through it both the "violent passions" and the "tender" ones. Her singing, as he put it, "is fitting for every interpretation and expression, tender, sweet, and affectionate, grave and serious, or pathetic, afflicted and anguished, joyful and exulting"; the timbre of Todi's voice was infinitely variable, but also fragmentary, blocked, and suffocated—altogether, an audible yet non-linguistic manifestation of the embodied multitudes that connoted female sublimity.[23] These metaphors derive from Sappho's own fragment 31 (incipit: *phainetai moi*), which served as the example *par excellence* of lyric sublimity in Longinus's first-century treatise *On the*

[22] Joseph Roach discusses a related tension in modern celebrity culture between "marks of strength" (charismata) and "signs of vulnerability" (stigmata), which taken together generate what he deems the rare, compelling quality of "public intimacy." He does not mark this as a necessarily gendered phenomenon, however, although most of his examples are actresses. See Roach, "Public Intimacy," 24.

[23] On unifying multitudes, or narrativizing fragments, as the discursive labor of sublimity, see chapter 3, above. "Il suo canto riesce ugualmente toccante e commovente nell'expressione delle più forti e violente passioni, ed affetti, come nell'opposte, specialmente poi nelle più tenere ed effettuose [sic]." Della Lena, 44. He went on to list all the passions she expressed in her voice: "Quindi'l suo canto melodioso pe' suoni perfetti di sua voce, è adatto ad ogni esecuzione ed espressione, tenera, dolce, ed affettuosa, grave seria, o patetica, afflitiva ed angosciosa, gioconda, ed esultante," pp. 44–5. Earlier, he wrote of Todi's ability to convey and awaken many different passions at once through a variety of means; for instance, in Didone's suicide scene: "si aggiunga a tutto ciò l'armonia della voce, accompagnata con canto mesto e patetico, vibrata e inflessa coll'espressione la più melodiosa e toccante, ed animata dalla più violenta passione, che in un tempo medesimo risvegliava la pietà, la compassione, il terrore," p. 42.

Sublime (cited widely throughout the eighteenth century).[24] The lyric fragment, in which Sappho's lyric "I" describes her suffocation, inflammation, blindness, and loss of voice in the presence of her beloved, had recently re-entered the Italian imaginary thanks to Verri's quotation of it in his 1782 *Saffo* novel, as well as Francesco de' Rogati's popular 1783 translation (on which see chapter 3, above). Glossing Longinus, de' Rogati had marked the fragment as sublime because it made the reader feel "the violence of passion."[25] As read through the 1780s reception of Sappho, Todi's singing performed the temporary loss of voice and compensatory sublimity that was understood as essential to female lyric. Suffocation, inflammation, blindness, loss of voice—all of these are symptoms experienced by Sappho's lyric "I" (in de' Rogati's Italian version, although not necessarily in the original Greek) as universal symptoms of lovesickness. Yet these metaphors for timbre are also born of physical reactions to real bodily-vocal trauma, a reminder that Todi's voice, however ineffable its moral effects, was also necessarily embodied. Della Lena experienced sublimity by affectively unifying Todi's assortment of vocal sounds—the blocked ones and the sonorous ones—into a narrative about how her *singing* overcame her *voice* ("But Todi's singing […] correct[s] and amend[s] her voice"). The out-of-body experience of sublimity became possible through hearing the violent sounds, and imagining the sensations, of embodied female suffering.

This all becomes apparent from the subtle but significant change in the way Todi's vocal defects were described—a change, that is, between the reviews of her performances in winter 1790

[24] On (Pseudo-) Longinus's treatise, though without mention of Sappho, see Robert Doran, "Longinus's Theory of Sublimity," in *The Theory of the Sublime from Longinus to Kant* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 25–94.

[25] Francesco de' Rogati, *Le odi di Anacreonte e di Saffo, recate in versi italiani* (Colle: 1783), 48–9. Notably, in de' Rogati's translation, Sappho loses her ability to speak (as in the original Greek) and her sounding voice as well, owing to the emotion-driven suffocation of her vocal apparatus. This distinction resonates with the narrative of Todi's blocked voice overcoming suffocation.

and those from the spring of 1791, when her defects went from something she "covered" (as in the 1790 *Didone* review) to audible evidence of sublime suffering. If Todi's Didone in 1790 only hinted at the fascination of suffering made sensible through voice, her Cleofide in 1791 enacted it outright. At the very end of 1790, immediately after *Didone abbandonata,* an unexplained affliction of the eyes that caused temporary blindness kept Todi off the stage. By all accounts, Venetian operagoers were anxious and bereft, even though Todi had only ever appeared in one opera in their city and would end up being absent from the stage for a mere six weeks. During that time, the *Gazzetta* wrote about her voice and/or her eyes in nearly every issue, three times a week, including speculations on her condition and laments about her presumed pain, all from fans and "experts" who had never even met her (in proto-*Us Weekly*-gossip-rag fashion).[26] The anonymous author of the pamphlet *Lettera d'un filarmonico imparziale* (Letter from an Impartial Music-Lover; Venice, 1791)—who from here on will be referred to as "the *filarmonico*"—mocked his fellow citizens' distress, even as he admitted he too felt "very pained" by Todi's absence. Like Della Lena, he saw Todi as the potential savior of the "peregrine" genre of serious opera and worried that her death might kill opera too.[27] By February 10, 1791, Todi had recovered and returned to the stage to sing Cleofide in *Alessandro nell'Indie.* Yet during the mere six weeks in which Todi's voice remained silent, Venetian operagoers were obsessed by fantasies, trumped up by the local media, about her suffering. Even the *filarmonico* could not help but revel in the accounts of her affliction and the pathos it might bring to her singing: "I knew not how to resist the idea of a blind Todi."[28]

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[26] The very first item in the 1 January 1791 *Gazzetta* (no. 1) discusses Todi's illness and promises to share any good news immediately with "that enlightened public which turns its sad gaze to the bed of her worries." The updates and encouraging poetry were a fixture in the publication until her return on February 10.

[27] *Lettera d'un filarmonico imparziale ossia Paralello tra i due celebri personaggi Signora Luigia Todi e signor Luigi Marchesi* (Venice: 1791) , 9–10.

[28] *Lettera,* 9.

After Todi's illness, her voice lent itself to a Sappho-inflected myth about the genesis of female lyric—a mode of expression born of, yet marked as Other to, the originary civilizing song of Orpheus. Steeped in violence, this myth positioned loss of sight or speech as a necessary sacrifice in order to be granted the gift of sublime song. The Settecento literary fantasy of Sappho, along with Sappho's mythological counterpart Philomela, provided an origin story.[29] Recall from chapter 3 how de' Rogati reworked Sappho fragment 31 such that the lyric "I" loses her tongue and capacity for language, but most significantly, her sounding voice too: her "chest does not provide/ voice for speaking." The lyric "I"'s voice is blocked and suffocated, forcing her to turn inward—and it is that turn which fragments the "I" and generates her sublime multitudes. Even more violent is Philomela's loss. As her myth goes, Philomela was raped, and her tongue cut out to prevent her from speaking of it. But she was "compensated" for her loss of bodily and linguistic agency with sublime song, through her metamorphosis from mutilated woman into nonlinguistic nightingale. Sappho also underwent a metamorphosis from dismembered lyric "I" into a fragmentary lyric corpus.[30] To earn

[29] Literary scholar Catherine Maxwell writes of song, compensation, and blindness as "symbolic castration" (citing Freud, of course) with regard to John Milton; see "The Changes of Philomel: Orpheus, Sappho and the Feminised Male Poet," in *The Female Sublime from Milton to Swinburne* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2001), 11–45. Rosemarie Garland-Thomson powerfully elucidates the significance of "compensation" in discourses of disability, noting how it implies loss, as opposed to "accommodation," which recognizes disability as difference rather than lack. See her chapter "Theorizing Disability: Feminist Theory, the Body, and the Disabled Figure," in *Extraordinary Bodies,* 49–50.

[30] Many ancient sources for the myth, including Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and Apollodorus's *Library,* have Philomela transforming into a swallow after her rape and mutilation at the hands of Tereus, her sister's husband. The sister, Procne, murders their son Itys and feeds him to Tereus as revenge, before metamorphosing into a bird herself. In these sources, Procne becomes the lamenting nightingale and Philomela the unmusical swallow. In many vernacular Italian sources, however, the roles were reversed such that Philomela is the nightingale and Procne the swallow. See, for one, Petrarch's *Rime sparse* 310 (the much-beloved "Zephiro torna"), l. 3, in which Procne chatters and Philomela weeps ("et garrir Progne et pianger Philomena"). Patricia Joplin offers a wide-ranging and deeply sympathetic reading of the entire Philomela-Procne myth through the lens of ritual patriarchal exchange in her essay "The Voice of the Shuttle is Ours," *Stanford Literary Review* 1 (1984): 25–53. Ann Rosalind Jones notes how Ovid and Petrarch present male singer-poets like Orpheus and Apollo as "inspirers and practitioners of lyric," while mythological women are either deprived of voice (Ovid's Echo, Procne, and Philomela) or stripped of their violent narratives and minimized into metaphors (Petrarch's take on the sisters in *Rime sparse* 310). Female poets in the Renaissance, such as Tullia d'Aragona and Gaspara Stampa, instead empathized with Procne and Philomela and invited them to lament together; Jones also makes a case for the feminist reader as an empowered Procne-figure. See Jones, "New Songs for the Swallow: Ovid's Philomela in Tullia

the designation of sublimity, they both had to be silenced and revoiced through suffering. Altogether the end result was a conception of sublime female song as a confessional voicing of loss and pain, but permissible only in nonlinguistic or fragmentary form.

The stakes of such a trade were not unfamiliar to women in late eighteenth-century Italy. Take the sonnet *O rondinella* (O swallow), composed c. 1778 by Bergamasque poet Paolina Secco Suardo (1746–1801), and published much later in her collected works under the Arcadian alias Lesbia Cidonia.[31] (The "Lesbia" in her name is in direct reference to Sappho, who was often dubbed in Italian sources "Lesbia," i.e., the girl from Lesbos.) The majority of Suardo's published works are not lyrics but quasi-epistolary poems, addressed to famous male contemporaries including Voltaire, Buffon, and Goldoni, and they are mostly concerned with such topics as human happiness, Italian identity, and prison reform.[32] Suardo is now remembered primarily for her connection to the genre of philosophical-poetical epistle, though less as author than as the addressee of fellow Arcadian Lorenzo Mascheroni's *Invito a Lesbia Cidonia* (1793). As a pretext for his pontifications about rationalism and scientific progress, Mascheroni invites Suardo to visit the University of Pavia's natural history collections with him in 500-plus lines of *endecasillabi*.[33] In *O rondinella*, however,

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d'Aragona and Gaspara Stampa," in *Refiguring Women: Perspectives on Gender and the Italian Renaissance,* eds. Marilyn Migiel and Juliana Schiesari (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 263–77.

[31] *Sonetto: O rondinella* [1778], in Paolina Secco Suardo Grismondi, *Poesie,* with preface by Saverio Bettinelli (Bergamo: 1822), 57; repr. in *Lesbia Cidonia: Società, moda e cultura nella vita della contessa Secco Suardo Grismondi,* ed. Francesco Tadini (Bergamo: Moretti e Vitali, 1995), 156–7.

[32] While many of these poetic epistles took the form of sonnets (usually Petrarchan in rhyme- and line-scheme), their epistolary addresses placed them into a more "public," less introspective register. The largest print collection of Suardo's poetry came out nearly twenty years after her death, in 1820, but was reissued in 1822 with a transcript of Saverio Bettinelli's eulogy for Suardo as a kind of preface. Others of her poems appeared in anthologies, as early as 1784 and into the mid-nineteenth century; for a small gathering of poems from such collections, see Paolina Secco Suardo Grismondi, *Miscellaneous Poems,* ed. Cynthia Hillman and Courtney K. Quaintance (Chicago: Italian Women Writers Project, n.d.), <http://artflsrv02.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/philologic/navigate.pl?iww.168>, accessed 26 April 2018.

[33] Mascheroni's letter-poem to Suardo was extremely popular, reprinted more than five hundred times between 1793 and 1900. See Erminio Gennaro, ed., *Lorenzo Mascheroni tra scienza e letteratura nel contesto culturale della Bergamo settecentesca* (Bergamo: Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 2002).

Suardo is neither mute recipient of masculine erudition nor versifying *salonnière*. For that reason, this sonnet is unusual within Suardo's extant ouevre, being an inward-turning lament with roots in Petrarchan lyric.

In the poem, the lyric "I" apostrophizes the titular swallow, who would have been recognizable to readers as Philomela's sister, Procne. After Philomela is raped and mutilated by Procne's husband, Philomela weaves her story into a tapestry (or a robe) and sends it to her sister (Sophocles, in a now-lost play, called her actions "the voice of the shuttle"). Procne understands Philomela's woven tale and frees her sister from her prison. Then, seeking revenge, Procne murders their son, Itys, and feeds him to his father. The husband wants to take his own revenge on both women, but all three are transformed into birds; he never catches them, nor do they ever truly escape his pursuit. While Philomela sings beautifully and sadly as the nightingale, Procne the swallow croaks a single word, over and over: "Itys." The female poet is positioned here as the would-be nightingale to accompany her sister the swallow in their eternal flight, but the lyric "I" is trapped by her imprisonment—or, rather, her acquiescence to domestication:

O rondinella che con rauco strido	O swallow who with hoarse shrieking
Sembri farti compagna al mio lamento	Seem to make yourself a companion to my lament
Mentre ti aggiri intorno al caro nido	While you wander around your precious nest
L'antico ripetendo aspro tormento,	Repeating the old, harsh torment,
Quanto t'invidio! io teco e piango e grido,	How I envy you! with you I weep and shout,
Ma non ho al par di te l'ali onde al vento	But I don't have wings like you, with which
Franca ti affidi, e d'uno in altro lido	You freely trust yourself to the wind, and from one shore to another
Puoi libera varcare a tuo talento.	You can cross, free, according to your inclination.
Se i vanni avessi anch'io n'andrei felice	If I too had wings, I would go happily
Quel dolce a riveder beato suolo	To that blessed, sweet-to-see-again soil
Dove partendo ho abbandonato il core;	Where, [in] leaving, I abandoned my heart;

E là vorrei... ma lassa a me non lice Per l'ampie vie del ciel seguirti, e solo Fatta simile a te son nel dolore.	And there I would like… but alas, I am not permitted to follow you through the wide ways of the sky, and only in [our] pain am I made like you.

Suardo's lyric "I" yearns not for sublime song, but for freedom. The swallow's voice is ugly and repetitive, yet the wings that came along with her metamorphosis grant her mobility and agency. In Suardo's sonnet, the swallow enjoys the freedom of resisting (or being denied) beauty and language—a resistance that defines Freeman's construct of "the feminine sublime."[34]

This alternative genre of sublimity is connected not only to female suffering, but to self-fragmentation and death as a refusal of patriarchal control. Sappho "seems to die" in fragment 31, and the Settecento character "Saffo" always commits suicide (except for when she gets married off, as in Mayr's 1794 opera). Suardo herself wrote of Sappho's choosing death over a powerless voice in the undated sonnet *Morte di Saffo*: "What use to me is song?" (Che valmi il canto?) her Saffo shouts before leaping off the cliff.[35] Gaining such freedom, in the form of power over one's own life and death, demanded what we might now call a rejection of the symbolic. Suardo, as a female poet writing in Petrarchan lyric form for a cohort of mostly-male Arcadians, sought not to reject it but to win a place for herself within it. Thus the lyric "I" stops herself from confessing her true desires to the swallow: "And there I would like… but alas, I am not permitted to follow you." She chooses to accept her limitations as the domesticated songbird, rather than risk ugliness and loss in pursuit of

[34] See Freeman, *The Feminine Sublime,* passim but especially chapter 1, as well as chapter 3 of this dissertation. Note that "feminine" does not necessarily align with "female" in Freeman's argument, but rather serves as the other to patriarchal (a term she explains as referring to socio-cultural structures, and not to the genders of the agents participating in and perpetuating such structures); see p. 4.
[35] Suardo, *Morte di Saffo*, in *Poesie,* 27.

agency.

But what would happen if such risks could be aestheticized? What if the threat of fragmentation and voicelessness could be transformed into a narrative of sublimity that was nonlinguistic—heard not in words, but through the very sound, the embodied materiality, of a voice? Now, this all hardly to suggest that Todi's real life followed any sort of myth. Rather, the Sapphic link between silencing, suffering, and compensatory song provides a cultural paradigm for how listeners in 1791 negotiated their emotional responses to Todi's vocal timbre. They filtered "the sound of her voice" through what they thought they knew of the singer's body and interiority, and through existing frameworks of female aesthetic agency.

When Todi publicly reclaimed her voice as the Cleofide who superseded Guadagni and Pacchierotti's Orfeos, she did so with a song now marked by suffering. I have argued previously that Orphic castrati Millico and Guadagni sought to move their listeners by subsuming themselves into their roles. Todi, at least from *Alessandro nell'Indie* onward, seems to have been understood somewhat differently, in that audiences' assumptions about her subjectivity blurred the line between her (real or imagined) suffering and the emotions of the characters she portrayed. Todi's case was unique, if not foundational, but such a conception of voice has long since become widespread. Mary Ann Smart discusses a similar blurring through the lens of the film *Callas Forever*; she argues that voice fascinates us because of the voyeuristic feeling of watching

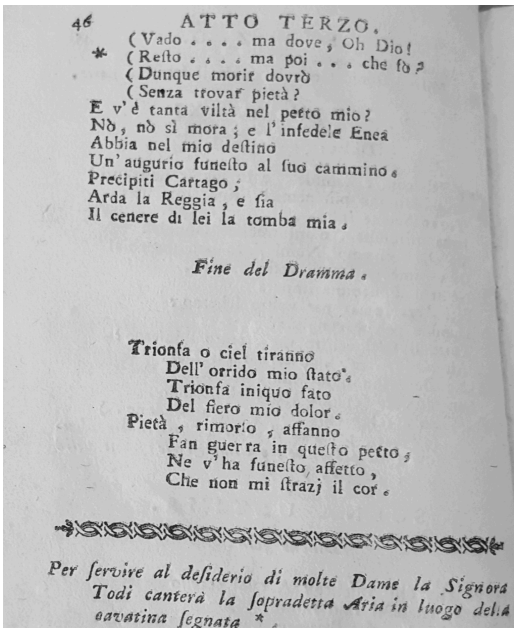
> the slippage at certain moments between the composerly musical fabric and the utterance that seems to emanate from the character, and the parallel uncertainty about where the character leaves off and the performer's personality begins. [...] It's the lack of perfect fit and the sensation of slippage that creates much of the thrill.[36]

[36] Mary Ann Smart, "Theorizing Gender, Culture, and Music," 110.

I take such slippage, between and among the voices of poet, composer, character, and performer, as fundamental to the lyric mode of voice. This slippage became metatheatrical owing to Todi's illness: however realistic her acting style, to her audience she was "always Todi."[37] She led audiences to morality via feeling, not merely because her onstage character needed their sympathy (as in the case of Orfeo), but because they believed that she, Luigia Todi, needed their sympathy. If it seemed as though her internal pathos and physical struggle played out in her shifting vocal timbre, breathing life and feeling into Metastasio's cold intellectual words, then Cleofide became all the more sympathetic for being animated by Todi's authentically suffering voice.

Furthermore, that slippage could be manipulated by changing the music that made it possible. After her return in *Alessandro nell'Indie* in February, Todi reprised her Didone in Padua (Nuovo Teatro, June) and Bergamo (Nuovo Teatro Ricardi, August). For the Padua *Didone*, the star's final number was altered: instead of Didone's declamatory-style suicide cavatina "Vado…ma dove?" (I go…but where?), Todi sang the showiest aria from *Alessandro nell'Indie,* "Trionfa o ciel tiranno" (O tyrannical Heaven triumphs). Because *Didone abbandonata* was a pasticcio, switching out numbers in order to accommodate the singer was nothing unusual. But the Padua production diverged from the Venice one in this number alone—in order to "serve the desire of many ladies"—while keeping everything else the same (**figure 4.1**). Given the geographical proximity between Venice and Padua, and the number of Paduan operagoers whose letters were published by the *Gazzetta,* it is highly likely that Paduan audiences would have been aware of Todi's illness and return

[37] *Gazzetta* 13 (12 February 1791).


46 ATTO TERZO.

(Vado . . . . ma dove, Oh Dio!
* (Resto . . . . ma poi . . . che fò?
(Dunque morir dovrò
(Senza trovar pietà?
E v'è tanta viltà nel petto mio?
Nò, nò sì mora; e l'infedele Enea
Abbia nel mio destino
Un'augurio funesto al suo cammino.
Precipiti Cartago;
Arda la Reggia, e sia
Il cenere di lei la tomba mia.

Fine del Dramma.

Trionfa o ciel tiranno
Dell'orrido mio stato.
Trionfa iniquo fato
Del fiero mio dolor.
Pietà, rimorso, affanno
Fan guerra in questo petto;
Ne v'ha funesto affetto,
Che non mi strazj il cor.

*Per servire al desiderio di molte Dame la Signora Todi canterà la sopradetta Aria in luogo della cavatina segnata **

Figure 4.1 Final page of libretto for Padua, Teatro Nuovo, June 1791. The note at the bottom of the page reads, "In order to serve the desire of many ladies, Signora Todi will sing the aria above instead of the cavatina marked *." The difference between the two numbers is apparent here even without the scores: first, from the distinction struck in the note between "cavatina" and "aria"; and second, from the ellipses, interrogatives, and paratactic syntax of "Vado" versus the traditional da capo aria text of "Trionfa." In Metastasio, *Didone abbandonata,* rev. Alessandro Pepoli (Padua: 1791), 46.

in *Alessandro nell'Indie*.[38] After all the publicity, Todi's Didone warranted a new ending: the aria substitution sent her to the funeral pyre with virtuosic bravura rather than ellipses-ridden vulnerability. With Cleofide's aria as musical and poetic intertext, Todi reenacted her successful (re)turn in *Alessandro nell'Indie* and refracted it onto *Didone*. She now "warbled" through her death scene like all those other Didones—but, unlike them, she could do so without undermining her capacity to engage the audience's sympathy. Her wordless, nonlinguistic melismas and

[38] The *Gazzetta* often included reviews and advertisements for operas in nearby cities, and Padua's offerings were regularly featured. Regarding changing the aria "for the ladies": this was a common trope in dedications and the like in opera libretti of the period, but in this case it nevertheless marks the change as being motivated to some extent by public opinion. The sole extant score of "Trionfa o ciel tiranno" is a manuscript copy held in a private collection in Venice. The copy has numerous inconsistencies and lacunae, so I have chosen not to include an excerpt here in order to avoid making extensive editorial changes. It does include what appear to be (clumsy) transcriptions of Todi's extemporized embellishments, however, showing that this was indeed a virtuosic aria.

embellishments reminded listeners that, even as "tyrannical Heaven triumph[ed]" over Didone and Cleofide, Todi triumphed through music. "Trionfa" made audible the fantasy that she had been compensated for her suffering with the gift of sublime song.

Sensibility versus science

Todi's immense success seemed to ratify sensibility as the savior of opera. At the same time, her triumph revealed a flip side to the thrill of slippage, in the form of growing concerns about the changing bases of opera. Was opera seria still, primarily, a display of musical skill, or had it become an exercise in eliciting emotion? Should vocal expressivity have the same weight as technical ability in evaluating singers? And, most importantly, what did it say about a society when (feminine) feeling superseded (masculine) skill in the public imagination?

These questions circulated vigorously in Venice during the fall and winter of 1790–1, owing to the resurgence of a long-standing feud between Todi and the soprano castrato Luigi Marchesi. In 1786, Todi and Marchesi had sung together in Sarti's *Castore e Polluce* at the court of Catherine the Great in St. Petersburg, during which time the castrato and the composer had colluded in blackballing Todi in an attempt to retain the empress's favor for themselves. Catherine supported Todi in the conflict, dismissing Sarti and Marchesi from her service and publicly gifting the female singer multiple pieces of diamond jewelry, including a tiara, necklace, and bracelets. The inherent symbolism in this gesture is too enticing to let pass unnoted: Catherine the Great, one of the major female rulers of late eighteenth-century Europe, literally and metaphorically crowned the victimized Todi, who then graduated from soubrettes to prima donna "queen roles" for the rest of her stage career. After four years in St. Petersburg (1784–8), the singer traveled with her husband and children

to engagements in Paris, The Hague, Berlin, and beyond. They arrived in Venice in late fall of 1790 for *Didone abbandonata,* in which Todi famously donned Catherine's diamonds as part of her costume.[39] At that point Marchesi, renowned for his astonishing virtuosity and technical prowess, had been for several seasons the preeminent singer in Venice. The local media gleefully dredged up the singers' past conflict and, almost instantaneously, gave rise to two warring factions (likened by the *filarmonico* to the Guelphs and the Ghibellines of medieval Florence). From autumn 1790 through spring 1791, the feud became the "only topic of public discourse" in Venice.[40]

For Venetian operagoers, Todi's and Marchesi's respective vocal talents stood for the two sides in an ideological debate, one characteristic of eighteenth-century aesthetics, about the comparative merits of verisimilitude and wonder in the representative arts. In the former camp, Todi's supporters focused on her interiority as the defining quality of greatness. For instance, one poetry anthology in her honor bore the title "A Luigia Todi, un'anima sensibile" (To Luigia Todi, a sensible soul).[41] Notably, it contains verses not only in Italian but in the Venetian dialect, a testament to her popular local appeal. The *Gazzetta,* as cited previously, similarly lauded "the sensibility of her soul" along with her choosing "the beauties of feeling" over "the prestiges of magnificence."[42] Magnificence, however, was precisely Marchesi's brand. His scheduled performances in the new opera *La morte d'Ercole* were advertised as a triumph of technê: "With the

[39] *Gazzetta,* passim, December 1790. Todi's eldest son had died suddenly at the age of 18 in May 1790 during her tour in The Hague. Todi completed her performing obligations anyway, attired in black and "covered in diamonds." Interestingly, this is not mentioned in the writings about her in Venice. On the performances in The Hague, see Nina d'Aubigny, letter of 29 July 1790, cited in Helen H. Metzelaar, *From Private to Public Spheres: Exploring Women's Role in Dutch Musical Life* (Utrecht: Koninklijke Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis, 1999), 40–1.
[40] *Lettera,* 3–4.
[41] Anonymous, "A Luigia Todi, un'anima sensibile" (Treviso: 1791).
[42] "Il genio costante della Signora Todi per i Drammi dell'immortal Metastasio prova […] la sensibilità della sua anima, e quel tatto morale che fa preferire le bellezze del sentimento a' prestigii della magnificenza." *Gazzetta* 97 (4 December 1790).

science of music, he has perfected the well-disposed gifts of nature, adding, with art, infinite ornaments to his voice." Ironically, *La morte d'Ercole* was cancelled before the premiere as a result of artistic differences between Marchesi and librettist Alessandro Pepoli—namely, conflict over the castrato's refusal to emote with his voice.[43] The feud's feeling/skill binary was underscored by gendered language (notwithstanding the liminal position of castrati in a late-eighteenth-century dichotomy of sex). Marchesi's fans depicted him as a "hero" who "enslave[d] hearts with the power of his song" by exercising his dominance over nature.[44] Todi, by contrast, was the muse who mediated nature through her suffering body.

In parsing the comparison between Todi and Marchesi, the aforementioned pamphlet *Lettera d'un filarmonico imparziale* posed the slippage inherent to female lyric voice as a threat to the science of music-making. This is not immediately apparent, since the author criticized Marchesi's lack of feeling in what seems a prelude to praise for Todi's sensibility:

> [Marchesi] has chosen the marvelous, and has obtained his intention of making himself admired. But the marvelous is the last of the pleasures. His singing—colored, refined, ingenious, quite rich—gives joy, pleases, surprises, satisfies, like a flowering garden, a fine piece of work, a stupendous machine, expensive clothing. He touches all the keys of pleasure, except that of sensibility.[45]

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[43] *Gazzetta* 102 (22 December 1790). "Colla scienza della musica ha perfezionato i doni della propizia natura, aggiungendo coll'arte infiniti ornamenti alla voce." Pepoli blamed Marchesi for the failure of *La morte d'Ercole* in his introduction to the published libretto and maligned him in the anti-virtuoso dialogue *Le nuvole concedute*, printed with the libretto as a kind of preface. On Pepoli's ideology of voice and *Le nuvole,* see chapter 2 of this dissertation. Pepoli ended up contributing a few additional scenes to *Alessandro nell'Indie* in order to beef up Todi's role; among these insertions was the aria "Trionfa o ciel tiranno." Pepoli's revisions to *Alessandro nell'Indie* are detailed in the *Gazzetta* 13 (12 February 1791).

[44] *Gazzetta* 3 (8 January 1791). It might seem a bit strange to have cast Marchesi as, at once, an intellectual and a Herculean hero, but suffice to say these were not uncommon tropes when referring to a castrato of his stature—Farinelli, half a century earlier, was certainly another such example.

[45] *Lettera,* 26; 22–3. "Egli ha scelto il maraviglioso, ed ha ottenuto l'intento di farsi ammirare. Ma la maraviglia è l'ultimo de' piaceri. Il suo cantare colorito, ricercato, ingegnoso, ricchissimo, rallegra, piace, sorprende, soddisfa, al pari d'un giardino fiorito, d'un lavoro finitissimo, d'una macchina stupenda, d'un abbigliamento prezioso. Egli tocca tutti i tasti del piacere, fuorchè quello della sensibilità."

The author dehumanized the castrato into a series of insensible objects, examples of nature tamed and made marvelous through the application of art and science. Surely Todi's sensibility was worthier than the "lowest of the pleasures." Yet the *filarmonico* claimed that Todi's Venetian success was owed not to her voice, but to the greater appeal of the tragic spectacle of female suffering above the performance of masculine political virtue. "Didone is more interesting than Enea [Aeneas]," he argued, "and Cleofide more than Alessandro, Poro, and all the heroes of Macedonia and India."[46] The *filarmonico* agreed that Todi's performance in *Alessandro nell'Indie* was a "nothing less than [a] triumph," but insisted that it was because the audience was "already penetrated with feeling" for her after her illness.[47] Excessive or misguided feeling was to blame for the feud cleaving Venice, too, thanks to the female operagoers whose "organs of sensibility seem more inclined to musical mania than men's."[48] As the *filarmonico* saw it, the sensibility of female singers and spectators together disrupted civil harmony by destabilizing science and study as the bases of culture. (No wonder Suardo, i.e. Lesbia Cidonia, is remembered as the addressee of Mascheroni's epistolary erudition and not as the author of confessional sonnets.) In order to remedy this disruption, the "music-lover" claimed to make his "impartial" assessment based on musical skill alone: the castrato's "applause [was] completely sincere and deserved" because of his "tireless, profound study of music."[49] Todi's study of music, on the other hand, was irrelevant to the comparison: "A [female] singer's worth does not consist of the excellence of her ability," but in her "moral qualities, [Todi] being perhaps the

[46] *Lettera,* 24. "Generalmente una donna sulla scena interessa più di un uomo. […] Accordo che Didone interessa più di Enea [...] e Cleofide più di Alessandro, di Poro, e tutti gli eroi di Macedonia e dell'India."
[47] *Lettera,* 13, 15. Della Lena argued vociferously against the idea that sympathy for Todi had influenced audiences to appreciate her singing; see Della Lena, 72.
[48] *Lettera,* 4. "La gara ha cominciato dalle signore, le quali come organi di sensibilità sembrano più proclivi degli uomini alla mania musicale."
[49] *Lettera,* 26. "In quanto a lui si può dire che gli applausi sono stati tutti sinceri, e meritati. Dico meritati perchè so che Marchesi ha fatto un indefesso profondo studio della musica."

only [woman] who brings her domestic virtues with her onstage."[50] When it came to evaluating voice as the practice of musical craft, the *filarmonico* placed Todi in a different category, praising her sensibility as the highest *feminine* virtue in order to distinguish it from true musical skill.

For writers like the *filarmonico,* the female lyric voice threatened to undermine the political work of heroic-virtuosic voices. Such a voice as Todi's did so through an uncanny slippage between "exterior" body and "interior" self, in which the voice made audible what was supposed to remain hidden. Female interiority, once externalized, became a tragic spectacle that overshadowed masculine genius. Forgive the word-play: if *unheimliche*, uncanny, means "un-home-ly," such slippery female voices had to be once again made "home-ly." They had to be domesticated.

Bad mothers

Praise for Todi's "domestic virtues" constituted part of an ongoing, late eighteenth-century cultural project that idealized women for their moral qualities in order to contain their influence upon the public sphere. Such valorizing of domesticity came about in the last decades of the Old Regime as a response to the perceived threat of women's public presence and voices. Landes writes of how, before 1789, *salonnières* lived beyond the boundaries of marriage and motherhood, and in so doing "subscribed to an ethos of sociability, not domesticity." In daring to exhibit themselves as critics of culture and politics, these women were "guilty of altering the masculine monopoly on linguistic meaning"—guilty of effeminizing men by asserting female agency over language.[51] By the eve of the

[50] *Lettera,* 15. In this context, *domestico* signified "pertaining to the home" or "household," and "concerning the family in its aspects as center of affectionate relationships [and] social institutions," and "private (in opposition to public)." See *Grande dizionario della lingua italiana* (Turin: Unione tipografico-editrice torinese, [1961-2004]), s.v. "domestico." Todi was married and traveled everywhere with her husband and children, so it is possible that knowledge of her family life influenced her reception in this manner; there is no positive evidence for this, however.
[51] Landes, 30–1.

French Revolution, the issue was perhaps less non-mothers than bad mothers, those who blocked fraternal republicanism and/or abandoned their conjugal responsibilities in favor of selfish pursuits. Lynn Hunt situates Marie-Antoinette as the archetypal bad mother within the French Revolution's Freudian "family romance," reading the queen's "corporeal body" as "the menace that the feminine and the feminizing presented to the republican notions of manhood and virility."[52] Marie-Antoinette had given birth to the next king of France, wielding her female body to block the Revolution's aims, but there were other ways to be a bad mother.

Italy's opera houses had become an arena for the public performance of bad motherhood, although the display took place in the boxes rather than onstage. Italian aristocratic women left their families—even their husbands—behind in order to put in fashionable appearances at the opera, often accompanied by *cicisbei* (noble male escorts, in a chivalric mold). While *cicisbeismo* had mostly faded away by the 1780s and 90s, and was possibly less widespread than contemporary polemical texts might suggest, accounts of the practice offer a highly visible Italian example of women shirking their domestic obligations in favor of style and publicness. As Martha Feldman argues, the fashion for *cicisbeismo*, along with a depressed marriage market, correlated with the tendency of Metastasian-style opera seria libretti to either lack mothers altogether or to feature superlatively bad ones (like the murderous Semiramide).[53] In both French and Italian contexts, women were seen as publicizing themselves linguistically and physically in ways that men feared as pernicious to the bourgeois values of enlightened society.

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[52] Hunt, 93–4.
[53] Martha Feldman, "The Absent Mother in Opera Seria," in *Siren Songs: Representations of Gender and Sexuality in Opera,* ed. Mary Ann Smart (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 29–46.

For the sake of progress, women had to become better wives, mothers, sisters, and daughters. If hand-wringing about the menace of women in the public sphere proved insufficient, then why not claim they possessed natural feminine virtues within the domestic sphere that would support men's efforts in the political sphere? Italian Enlightenment thinkers, such as the author of *Il Caffè*'s "Difesa delle donne," therefore framed women's role in the home as essential to the proper functioning of society. The author of the "Difesa" argued that women lacked social utility because men had neglected women's education, leading to women's disastrous "mismanagement of the domestic sphere."[54] By encouraging women to cultivate their domestic virtues, these writers intended to flatter women into accepting sovereignty over the domestic sphere as a replacement for public life.

The female education cited by the article's author and his ilk was far from the trivium and quadrivium. At issue was instead instruction in household economy and affective labor. In a treatise printed just before the "Difesa," *L'Amico delle fanciulle* (The Friend of Girls; Venice: 1763, repr. 1778), moralist Gasparo Gozzi insisted that parents consider seriously the education of their female children. Women were "the soul of society," thanks to their natural talents as mothers and household managers, and thus responsible for the emotional support of their husbands and the education of their own children.[55] This line of thinking drew in part from the works of Rousseau, especially from the gendered models for education laid out in his *Émile*. Yet, by tasking mothers with educating their young sons along with their daughters, Italian writers like Gozzi softened Rousseau's sharp division of edificatory labor and magnified women's domestic influence. One early Italian

[54] Messbarger, 87.
[55] Gasparo Gozzi, *Amico delle fanciulle* (Venice: 1763), 4, 7. For an in-depth study of his translation and reworking of the French original, see Gilberto Pizzamiglio, "L'*Amico delle fanciulle* da Parigi a Venezia," in *Conduct Literature for and About Women in Italy, 1470-1900: Prescribing and Describing Life,* ed. Helena Sanson and Francesco Lucioli (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2016), 103–117.

translator of Rousseau, Giovanni Maria Lampredi, reiterated in his introduction to *La nouvelle Heloïse* the social and political benefit of women's being properly educated in household matters, something he felt was not sufficiently covered in Rousseau's oeuvre. He deemed *La nouvelle Heloïse,* which he published in a heavily bowdlerized version, very dangerous to overly sensitive (female) readers. In its stead, "A treatise on the good government of domestic manners [would be] a very useful thing, because tranquility, peace, the concord of family members—including all citizens—depend on the good organization of the family."[56] Despite Lampredi's critique of *La nouvelle Heloïse*, he was clearly influenced by Rousseau's overall conception of society vis-à-vis the family. The domestic sphere comprised a microcosm of the political sphere; therefore, the organization of civil power must hew to that of the conjugal family unit.[57] The only functional political society for Rousseau, Gozzi, and Lampredi was one in which women embraced their natural role as the soul of the home.

Many women writers in the ensuing decades pushed back against the Rousseauian gender divide, arguing in favor of women's equal education not for the purpose of fashioning helpmeets but as a basic human right. Giuseppina di Lorena, princess of Carignano and friend to Pietro Verri, Beccaria, and Rousseau, published a novel set on an all-female utopian island, complete with a law mandating equality between men and women (*Les Aventures d'Amélie,* 1771).[58] Mary Wollstonecraft, whose *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) was translated into French and disseminated in Italy within a year of its initial English publication, wrote, "Would men but generously snap our

[56] Giovanni Maria Lampredi, ed. and trans., *La nuova Eloisa,* Jean-Jacques Rousseau (Venice, 1764), 4.
[57] Rousseau called the conjugal family "the first model of political society" and, as such, "the only natural society." See *Du contrat social* (Paris: Editions Sociales, [1762] 1955), 55–6.
[58] Marianna D'Ezio, "Italian Women Intellectuals and Their Cultural Networks: The Making of a European 'Life of the Mind," in *Political Ideals of Enlightenment Women: Virtue and Citizenship,* ed. Lisa Curtis-Wendlandt, Paul Gibbard, and Karen Green (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), 113, n21.

chains […] they would find us more observant daughters, more affectionate sisters, more faithful wives, more reasonable mothers—in a word, better citizens."[59] Wollstonecraft appealed to relational definitions of female subjectivity, dangling the carrot of better wives and mothers; yet throughout the *Vindication* she vehemently insisted that society, not nature, had rendered women inferior to men.

The pro-Napoleon writer Carolina Lattanzi expanded upon Wollstonecraft's arguments in her own revolutionary manifesto, *Schiavitù delle donne* (The Slavery of Women). She added the sound of her voice to her argument, delivering the text as a public speech to the members of the Mantuan academy in 1797. The printed pamphlet of her manifesto emphasizes the vocality and presence of her live speech by retaining Lattanzi's use of direct address ("Cittadini!") and non-linguistic vocalizations ("deh!"), reminding the reader that these were not cold ideas, but the moral appeal of a fellow citizen. Like Wollstonecraft, Lattanzi pointed to "frivolous education" as the reason behind women's acceptance of men's tyranny. While she acknowledged women's "very sensitive physical constitution," it was only a disadvantage in that men chose to "abuse" it. For Lattanzi, women possessed greater potential for society than they had in Gozzi's and Lampredi's view: subjectivity, political and otherwise, was neither male nor female. For that reason, rather than focusing on the typically feminine virtues (chastity, conjugal devotion) of heroic women like Lucretia and Judith, Lattanzi lauded them for their political contributions. These women had protected freedom and destroyed tyranny; they had been, first and foremost, citizens.[60]

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[59] Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman,* ch. IX, "On the pernicious effects which arise from the unnatural distinctions established in society," in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman and The Wrongs of Woman, or Maria,* ed. Anne K. Mellor and Noelle Chao (Los Angeles: Longman, 2007), 182. On the reception of the *Vindication* in 1790s Italy, see D'Ezio, 109–121.

[60] Carolina Lattanzi Etrusca, *Schiavitù delle donne. Memoria della cittadina Lattanzi letta nell'accademia di pubblica istruzione in Mantova li 14 Mietitore. Anno I. della Libertà d'Italia* (Mantua: 1797), 8–9; 12; 10.

Lattanzi gave the speech in "the first year of Italy's liberty," when Napoleon's conquest seemingly augured the institution of republican ideals in Italy. Unsurprisingly, Napoleon and Lattanzi's dedicatee Josephine Bonaparte were unresponsive. Nonetheless, from the late Settecento through the turn of the century, the sound of women's voices did in fact have significant cultural work to do. It was not, however, of the kind Lattanzi had intended with her speech.

Mediating culture

Gozzi emphasized in *L'Amico delle fanciulle* that women's potential contributions to society stemmed entirely from their affective and domestic labor. He singled out "sweetness of voice" as a uniquely feminine tool for such labor, arguing that this gift enabled women to teach even old learned men something new.[61] Of course, the feminine capacity to teach through voice facilitated a different kind of learning: not learning abstract theories, but learning how to feel. Verri's *Saffo* novel once again offers an example of idealized female voice in action, dramatizing how domestic labor might permit women voice without the suffocation and compensation demanded by Sapphic lyric. Above the door to the women's sitting-room in Saffo's father's home, a golden inscription proclaims: "Work keeps the soul tranquil, like exercise maintains the health of the body."[62] So important was this maxim, especially for young women, that Verri drew particular attention to it in his dedication to the 1797 Rome edition (which was addressed to Caroline Bonaparte, the fifteen-year-old sister of Napoleon). The ensuing scene in the sitting-room demonstrates this. Dorilla, Saffo's virtuous sister, has been weaving at the loom, while Saffo is in turmoil over her passion for Faone. Dorilla's voice then takes

[61] Gozzi, 5–7.
[62] "La occupazione conserva l'animo tranquillo; come l'esercizio mantiene la sanità del corpo." Verri, *Saffo,* 53.

on a special kind of power:

> [Dorilla] left off her weaving, and, resting her hands on her knees, with her eyes turned to the heavens, unleashed her beautiful voice in a sacred hymn. Her song expressed the prayer of Orpheus, who, pleading, went in search of Eurydice in the Underworld: and such was the sweetness of her voice, that, although it came from a breast that had not yet been ignited by the flame of love, from her natural sweetness she nevertheless expressed [love], moving the souls of others without disturbing her own. […] While Saffo was following the shifting emotions of the song with the artfulness of her fingers, involuntary tears fell from her eyes onto the lyre, as she heard the lament of Orpheus, separated from his beloved by the cruel sentence of death.[63]

Dorilla's "sacred hymn" functions as a foil to Saffo's extemporized verses about Faone's body from earlier in the novel. Dorilla is "tranquil," not inflamed like Saffo, because of her domestic labor. Dorilla's voice transforms the words of Orpheus into feeling, not through her own spectacle of suffering, but as part of her social utility.

Transfusing feeling as a mode of mediating culture had become an integral component of the good woman's social utility. On one hand, this opened up a new avenue through which privileged women could engage publicly with culture, as Susan Dalton argues in her study of art criticism in Napoleonic Venice.[64] On the other hand, it was a way of dressing up, reinscribing, and naturalizing the perennial content/form binary (one that had especially preoccupied the Verri brothers when

[63] Unlike Philomela, who weaves her silenced voice into a tapestry about her violation (or Aracne, another mythological woman who got in trouble for weaving what she was not permitted to speak), Dorilla's weaving is for the good of the household. In this scene, her weaving is clearly presented as a double for her song. "[Dorilla] lasciò di tessere, ed appoggiando le mani sulle ginocchia, cogli occhi rivolti al cielo sciolse la bella voce in sacro inno. Esprimeva il di lei canto la preghiera di Orfeo, che supplichevole va in traccia di Euridice nell'Inferno: e tant'era la soavità della di lei voce, che quantunque uscisse da un petto non ancora acceso dalla fiamma di Amore; nondinemo, per naturale dolcezza, lo esprimeva, commovendo l'animo altrui senza turbare il proprio. […] Mentre Saffo seguiva coll'artificio della dita la varia soavità del canto, le cadevano dagli occhi sulla cetra involontarie lagrime, come se ascoltasse le querele d'Orfeo diviso dall'amato oggetto per barbara sentenza della Morte." Verri, *Saffo*, 56–7.

[64] Susan Dalton, "Isabella Teotochi Albrizzi as Cultural Mediator: Gender and Writing on Art in Early Nineteenth-Century Venice," *Women's History Review* 23, no. 2 (April 2014): 204–19.

writing about language reform in *Il Caffè*)—a binary taxonomized through late eighteenth-century "complementarian" models of sexual difference.[65] Women's voices more readily mediated knowledge for the masses: Todi's voice transfused feeling into Metastasio's cold, intellectual ideas and made them accessible to the average operagoer. Of course, the simplistic emotional/intellectual binary did not hold up in practice. Women had to be educated, intelligent, and talented in order to have such influence in the public sphere, as in the cases of Todi and of Dalton's protagonist, Isabella Albrizzi. Todi's intellectual abilities—she spoke at least four languages and composed several libretti—were central to her performance practice, as Della Lena and the *Gazzetta* critics acknowledged. Yet it was neither her musical skill nor her intellect that inspired endless dedications and poetry.

"So we babble, and then we speak"

Todi's sensibility of voice took hold of listeners' imaginations because it seemed an answer to a nascent yearning, one bound up with broader social, economic, even medical shifts in how the roles of mother and wife were conceived in European culture.[66] That is to say, women's presumed capacity to transmit feeling through voice mapped onto renewed arguments about the feminine creation and cultivation of life as the crucible of civilization. Recall how Todi's voice awakened

[65] On the Verri brothers and language reform, see Lockhart, *Animation, Plasticity, and Music,* 29–30. The notion of a complementarian model of sex and gender comes from Laqueur's *Making Sex* (see n. 5, above). Laqueur argues that, prior to the eighteenth century, there was understood to be only one sex with a hierarchical continuum of genders. Sometime over the course of the eighteenth century, this one sex separated (conceptually) into two genders, which then became naturalized as two complementary but nonetheless hierarchical sexes. The construct of women as being the "form," or vessel, for masculine "content," or creation, reaches back at least as far as Plato, Aristotle, and Galen. On pre-Enlightenment conceptions of women's bodies and/as music, see Linda Phyllis Austern, "'My Mother Musicke': Music and Early Modern Fantasies of Embodiment," in *Maternal Measures: Figuring Caregiving in the Early Modern Period,* eds. Naomi J. Miller and Naomi Yavneh (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2000), 239–81.

[66] For a survey of the changes in conjugal law, nursing practices, marriage choice, and so on during this period, see Giovanna Fiume, "Nuovi modelli e nuovi codificazioni: Madri e mogli tra Settecento e Ottocento," in *Storia della maternità,* ed. Marina D'Amelia (Bari: Laterza, 1997), 76–110.

feeling within the insensible spectators in the Teatro San Samuele. A set of encomiastic verses, printed alongside a collectible Todi portrait, declared that Prometheus's fire "merely gave mortals life" while Todi's singing, more importantly, "instilled feeling" within them.[67] The *filarmonico* wrote, however sarcastically, that "at the singing of signora Todi, bronze and stone acquire sense and life, as they did with […] Orpheus."[68] Yet another poem from 1791 dismissed Orpheus as an outdated myth in order to attribute his animating song to Todi instead.[69] Prometheus's fire and Orpheus's lyre were, by the end of the century, ceding their mythological status as primordial civilizing forces to a fantasy of maternal voice.

The maternal displacement of the Orphic myth was effected by a growing belief in the edificatory potential of the embodied yet non-linguistic female voice—a voice that, unlike Orpheus's, was imagined as beyond or even before words (an idea now associated with Julia Kristeva's construct of the maternal "chora.")[70] This late eighteenth-century shift has been theorized in depth in the context of Germanophone culture. In his study of late eighteenth-century German lyric, for instance, David Wellbery writes that "primordial orality is the voice of the Mother." Even the Homeric rhapsode's declamation was read by Herder as a "lullaby," rather than as epic, and its civilizing function thus attributed to its maternal nature.[71] Wellbery builds on Friedrich Kittler's

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[67] Anonymous, "A Lei, mentre rappresenta Cleofide," in *A Lei, mentre rappresenta Didone* (Venice: 1791), unpaginated.
[68] *Lettera,* 12.
[69] *Gazzetta urbana veneta* no. 52, 29 June 1791.
[70] Julia Kristeva, "Motherhood According to Giovanni Bellini," in *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 237–70; Kaja Silverman, "The Fantasy of Maternal Voice," in *The Acoustic Mirror: The Female Voice in Psychoanalysis and Cinema* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 1988); Cavarero, "The Maternal *Chora*; or, The Voice of the Poetic Text," in *For More than One Voice,* 131–43.
[71] David Wellbery, *The Specular Moment: Goethe's Early Lyric and the Beginnings of Romanticism* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996), 190–1. Orpheus's civilizing song and the idea of modern rhapsodes are discussed in chapters 1 and 2 above.

claim that, in Germanophone culture circa 1800, Nature and Woman ideologically and ontologically fused in the concept of "the Mother's mouth." Kittler bases his argument on the coeval emergence of German theoretical and pedagogical texts which advocated, first, the maternal education of children, and second, a sound-based approach to literacy. Without ever truly "speaking" herself, Kittler writes, the good mother provided the building blocks of logos—embodied, sonorous voice—with which children could formulate speech and, by extension, men could create culture.[72] The domestic and maternal space thus became not only a Rousseauian microcosm, but a metaphorical womb for civil society.

The Italian version of the mother's mouth was not so different from what Kittler and Wellbery have limned elsewhere, although in Italy it was more forcefully underwritten by the need to revise perceptions of Italian music and language. Saverio Bettinelli espoused his own originary myth of maternal voice in a letter to none other than Paolina Secco Suardo, poet of *O rondinella.* The letter, which is undated, was published in a 1788 collection of epistles from Bettinelli to Suardo on the topic of epigrams. The letters are suffused with Bettinelli's concerns about the foreign, particularly French, "disdain" for Italian culture. It is telling, for example, that he equates the French notion of "musique italienne" with the meaningless warbling of songbirds: "They are all persuaded that we [Italians] are by nature nightingales and canaries."[73] (The negative connotation of birdsong

[72] Friedrich A. Kittler, "The Mother's Mouth," in *Discourse Networks, 1800/1900,* trans. Michael Metteer and Chris Cullens (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990), 28, 25.

[73] Bettinelli wrote of the unfair "disdain" for the Italian language among other nations: "Oh le differenze tra le nazioni sono un grand' enimma! Pur sembra, che noi siamo un po' più serj di fondo e di carattere: la nostra lingua è un po' più sdegnosetta della francese." He mocked the French for their misapprehension of all Italians as natural singers, but later devoted quite a few words to defending song as the origin of great literature (as discussed below): "Mi facea ridere a proposito di canto il ritrovarmi obbligato a saper di musica in tali occasioni perchè era italiano. Tutti erano persuasi, che noi siam per natura usignuoli e canerini, perchè tra lor corre in proverbio *la musique italienne.*" Saverio Bettinelli, *Lettere a Lesbia Cidonia sopra gli epigrammi* [1788] (Bassano, 1792), 7, 75. I use the 1792 reprint here, as I have not been able to view the 1788 original.

here may remind us of C.P.E. Bach's exhortation in his *Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments*: "Play from the soul, not like a trained bird!")[74] Beyond the implicit prejudice Bettinelli sensed in the comparison, birds also served as shorthands for different figures of voice, as we have seen; thus it is no coincidence that Bettinelli invoked the hoarse-voiced swallow when setting forth his theory about the vocality of language. In his twenty-third letter to Suardo, he attempted to explain the linguistic quality of *soavità* (sweetness) by analyzing an epigram, in this case, a tomb inscription. As Bettinelli had it, the first-century B.C.E. poet-improviser Archias had seen a swallow building her nest in a statue of Medea and apostrophized the creature in a brief verse: "To what miserable woman do you entrust your offspring, to she that killed her children?" Certainly, a strange text to single out for *soavità,* this scene of two mythological, voiceless infanticides. The swallow, as we know from Suardo's sonnet, croaks repetitively after murdering her son, while Medea, the archetypal murderous mother, is a silent statue in this verse.[75] Yet for Bettinelli, what elevates the brief verse into emotion is the sonic materiality of the words themselves. *Soavità* is the quality that makes language, not merely understood, but felt:

> Not only do I find the concept ingenious and the image sweet, but I sense the smoothness and roundness of each word, the various reverberations of every single word, their lovely turns, that harmonious sound of the phrase, of the voice, as well as of the verse.[76]

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[74] C. P. E. Bach, *Versuch über die wahre Art das Clavier zu spielen* (Berlin: 1753), 119; transl. in Richard Taruskin, *Oxford History of Western Music,* ch. 8.4, "Sensibility," <www.oxfordwesternmusic.com>, accessed 22 February 2019.
[75] "*A che misera affidi i tuoi parti, a colei che uccise i figli*?" (italics in original, used by the author to denote a quotation.) Bettinelli, *Lettere a Lesbia Cidonia,* 230. Bettinelli attributes the epigram to the Greek-turned-Roman poet Aulus Licinius Archias (fl. ca. 120–61 BCE), known for Cicero's defense of his Roman citizenship in the speech *Pro Archia* (62 BCE). Archias was probably not the author of that particular epigram, nor of many of the epigrams attributed to him in sources passed down from antiquity. The *Greek Anthology,* which Bettinelli cites as his source (as "l'antologia"), gives as the author of the swallow epigram the Greek poet Philippus, not Archias. See Alan Cameron, *The Greek Anthology: From Meleager to Planudes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).
[76] "Non sol trovo il pensiero ingegnoso, e dolce l'immaginetta, ma sento il liscio e rotondo della parola i varj riverberi d'una sola quel giro amabile quel suono armonico della frase e della voce non che del verso." Bettinelli, *Lettere a Lesbia Cidonia,* 233.

It was precisely this material, sensual quality of language, the "grain," even, which enabled the good mother to enculturate future citizens through the sounds of her voice. The swallow and the Medea statue, as archetypal "bad" or unnatural mothers without voices, could never have wielded this power. But it is their silent image of unnatural motherhood which turns Bettinelli to a longer excursus on *soavità*, culminating in the myth of "good" maternal voice.

As Bettinelli saw it, the edificatory potential of this feminine embodied vocality had ancient roots. Perhaps because he was addressing a female poet about the affective power of language, Bettinelli looked beyond Orphic song to what he presented as the maternal-feminine prehistory of Western culture. In this preliterate society, female voice had been the medium through which poetry, politics, and even nationhood were created and transmitted. His letter continues:

> Before the invention of writing, women were the teachers and scholars of poetic eloquence, instructing little children and instilling in them, with verses, the glories of their homeland, the memories of their ancestors, the sanctity of laws and of religion, so that for a long time, music meant "literature." To such an end, it was useful [to have] a sweet voice, a musical ear, a soft *accento*, united with a tender heart.[77]

Adriana Cavarero might well agree, given her theory of primordial voice in *For More than One Voice* (see Introduction). The embodied vocality Bettinelli heard and felt in reading the swallow epigram and other examples of *soavità* was rooted in (what he conceived as) female-driven practices of enculturation. Any given culture was only so civilized as the women who transmitted its lessons, however, since their "sweet voice[s]" were necessarily the product of their "climate"[78]:

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[77] "Le donne prima dell'invenzione della scrittura furono le maestre e le accademiche dell'eloquenza poetica insegnando a' fanciullini ed ispirando co' versi le glorie patrie le memorie degli avi la santità delle leggi e del culto, onde per tanto tempo musica volea dir letteratura. Per tal fin giova una voce soave un musicale orecchio un molle accento uniti al tenero cuore qual l'avete voi altre Sirene, a parlar da poeta." Bettinelli, *Lettere a Lesbia Cidonia,* 233.

[78] Such arguments about climate and cultural relativism were common in this period. Pietro Verri, for one, who (as we know from chapter 1) was a friend and supporter of Bettinelli's, cited "the physical differences of climates in which [people] live" as a major factor in shaping "the sensibilities of various peoples" when it came to eloquence and music. See "La musica," in *Il Caffè* 2 (10 August 1765); repr. in *Il Caffè,* ed. Romagnoli, 343–7. Equating the level of civilization of

> Oh how many times do I stop myself along my way to listen to the discourses, the conversations, that a mother has with her babe in arms, though she is the only speaker […] So we babble, and then we speak, and so spoke the children of those women so privileged by their climate, that is, by the homeland [i.e., ancient Greece] of eloquence, of music, of poetry, of good taste, of enthusiasm, of the noblest passions that ever were.[79]

If only mothers in late eighteenth-century Italy had been formed in a climate like that of this mythologized preliterate society! In Bettinelli's Italy, dominated by the chattering of nightingales, canaries, and swallows, such voices were rare indeed. Suardo, he implied throughout the letter, was in possession of one such rare poetic voice.[80]

Maternal idealization (and idolization) was not a novel phenomenon in Italy, given the deep Marian devotion of Italian Catholicism. Yet the emerging ideology of domesticity positioned the mother's song as a tool for the *secular* progress that many sought for Italian culture in the wake of Enlightenment thought: the maternal voice as the fons et origo of subjectivity. The good mother neither challenged patriarchal claims to language nor distracted from progress with her spectacle of suffering; she inculcated love for family and country through the vibrations, the sounds, the *soavità* of her voice. When heard through such a cultural filter, Todi's voice displaced from the Italian operatic imagination both the dehumanized canary-like bravura of Marchesi, as well as the

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a particular society with its treatment of women was a popular trope in proto-feminist writing in the eighteenth century, evident in Lattanzi's speech cited above, among many other examples.

[79] "Oh quante volte m'arresto per via per ascoltar le dissertazioni i colloquj che fa una madre con un bambolo in braccio, bench' ella sola sia l'interlocutore. […] Così noi balbettiamo, e poi parliamo, e così parlarono i figli di quelle donne sì privilegiate dal clima, cioè, dalla patria dell'eloquenza della musica della poesìa del buon gusto dell'entusiasmo delle passioni più nobili che fosser mai." Bettinelli, *Lettere a Lesbia Cidonia,* 233. In choosing the words "dissertazioni" and "colloquj," Bettinelli used high-flown academic terminology to describe what we would call "baby talk"; this matches his arguments elsewhere in his oeuvre about the superiority of emotion and enthusiasm to academicism and erudition (on which see chapter 1).

[80] Bettinelli, *Lettere a Lesbia Cidonia,* 233 (continued from previous).

primordial Orphic song of her lyric predecessors Guadagni and Pacchierotti.[81] Her voice invoked for listeners, at once, lyric lament and life-giving lullaby. In traversing gaps both timbral and metaphorical, Todi's singing made audible what was supposed to remain covered—creating an affective aural space that seemed home to a multitude of meanings.

If the good mother could be envoiced on the opera stage, perhaps she could do more than merely reanimate opera seria. She could do what Orpheus himself had failed to accomplish. She could liberate her people.

"Neither mother, nor wife can I call myself": *L'Andromaca* (Naples, 1797)

Once-absent mothers soon began to reappear on the seria stage. Some, like Fedra and Semiramide, were still irredeemably bad, but others showed what a good mother might offer society within the domestic sphere—and its political macrocosm. In 1793, Giuseppe Giordani set Cosimo Giotti's libretto *Ines de Castro* for La Fenice. Based on medieval, rather than classical, history, the premiere starred Giacomo David as King Alfonso of Portugal, Pacchierotti as Don Pietro, the king's son by his first wife, and Brigida Giorgi-Banti as the eponymous heroine. Ines is the secret wife of Pietro and mother of two young children with him; thanks to a convoluted plot full of jealousy and political intrigue, Act 3 sees Ines chained in a subterranean prison awaiting execution. Alone, she sings a dramatic obbligato recitative about her conjugal and maternal love for her family. The opera's antagonists, the Queen of Portugal and her son Rodrigo, bring Ines's children into her prison cell, threatening to murder them if she does not accept death. After appealing, unsuccessfully, to the

[81] Abbate writes of how Orpheus, as a "master-figure of the Opera Composer," has mutated from male voice to castrato voice to female voice, as part of opera's secret narrative of "women tak[ing] over musical sound." See Abbate, "Opera; or, the Envoicing of Women," 258 and passim.

queen's own maternal sense, Ines commits suicide by poison in order to spare her children. The queen is the quintessential bad mother, placing her ambition above all else, while Ines gives herself for her children. If the greatest show of feminine virtue was self-sacrifice, *Ines de Castro* enacted this to the letter. Over the next dozen years, Ines's story provided the basis for operas by Andreozzi, Nasolini, Bianchi, Pavesi, and Zingarelli.

Even bad mothers could be rehabilitated through self-sacrifice. In 1796, San Carlo premiered Pietro Alessandro Guglielmi's setting of Sografi's *La morte di Cleopatra*, starring Todi alongside David as Ottaviano Augusto. (Guglielmi had composed some of the music for a 1794 pasticcio version in Madrid, also for Todi, but this was the first full production.) As in Shakespeare's play, Cleopatra and Marco Antonio die together onstage in the final scene rather than submit to Ottaviano's humiliation—but Sografi's Cleopatra is less Semiramide and more Ines de Castro. After Antonio dies, she sings to Ottaviano, "I commend to you my poor children, and my desolate, unfortunate people. Only for them, I implore your grace" (Act 2, scene 13).[82] This Egyptian queen is no conniving enchantress, but a suffering mother desperate to protect those entrusted to her charge, making restitution for her bad behavior by sacrificing her life to save her people. In death she becomes the good mother, not only of her children, but of her subjects.

Weeping as the prima donna died onstage would become one of the great thrills of Ottocento opera, but in 1790s Naples, there had to be another way to have a good operatic mother. After all, the Kingdom of Naples was run by King Ferdinand IV only in name, but *de facto,* by his far more competent queen, Maria Carolina Habsburg (a champion of Enlightened despotism, in the

[82] "Ti raccomando/ I miei poveri figli…/ E questi desolati/ Popoli sventurati./ Solo per essi imploro/ Grazia da te." Antonio Simeone Sografi, *La morte di Cleopatra* (Naples: 1796), p. 48. There is also a setting of Sografi's libretto by Sebastiano Nasolini, which premiered in Vicenza in 1791 and was repeated often in northern Italy in the 1790s.

mold of her mother Empress Maria Theresa). Maria Carolina shaped Neapolitan cultural life by patronizing artists and literati, and had no small measure of political power herself, following the birth of several heirs.[83] Watching every onstage mother commit suicide for the greater good might not have appealed overly much to the real-life queen, especially once the need for the good mother's help grew ever more pressing with Napoleon continuing to encroach upon the Italian peninsula. In January 1797, a new opera by Giovanni Paisiello and Giovanni Battista Lorenzi premiered at the Teatro San Carlo as a starring vehicle for Todi. Entitled *Andromaca*, this *dramma eroico* follows the aftermath of the Trojan War: Ettore's (Hector's) virtuous widow Andromaca (Andromache, played by Todi) devotes herself to saving their young son, and the future of the Trojan people, from the nefarious conqueror Ulisse (Odysseus, played by David). As was typical for operas given at San Carlo, the work was dedicated to the king, but this particular work had been commissioned in honor of Maria Carolina's name day.[84] In thus honoring Queen Maria Carolina with the story of Andromaca, the loving wife and good mother envoiced by Todi, the opera positioned the Habsburg queen as the protector of Italy against Napoleonic imperialism.

The action of *Andromaca* unfolds in between the events of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey,* although, notably, there is no direct source for the plot in either Classical or contemporary literature, and Lorenzi took the opportunity to shape the plot to fit the occasion. As Troy burns, Ulisse seeks to

[83] Queen Maria Carolina used her cultural influence, particularly her patronage of musical tragedy, as part of her self-fashioning as a Bourbon monarch, during a period of political upheaval elsewhere in Europe. See Anthony Deldonna, "Giovanni Paisiello's *Elfrida*: Operatic Idol, Martyr, and Symbol of Nation," ch. 3 in *Opera, Theatrical Culture, and Society in Late Eighteenth-Century Naples,* 73–108.

[84] In many Catholic countries, the *onomastico*—the festival of one's namesake saint—is celebrated in lieu of a birthday. *Andromaca* premiered after Maria Carolina's name day, but that had been the original intention of the commission. See the dedication in the libretto by Giovanni Battista Lorenzi, *L'Andromaca,* (Naples: Flautina, 1797). Todi had been singing Paisiello's music since her London debut in 1775 (*Le due contesse*), often including his arias in her recitals and pasticci (such as the 1790 *Didone abbandonata*); we can assume he was very familiar with her voice and its idiosyncrasies.

murder the dead Trojan hero Ettore's young son, Astianatte, on the basis of a prophecy blaming the boy for the unfavorable winds delaying the Greeks' homeward journey. Andromaca has hidden the child in Ettore's tomb, but Ulisse threatens to scatter Ettore's ashes if Andromaca will not yield the boy for sacrifice. Pirro, son of the dead Achille, secretly promises to save Astianatte out of love for Andromaca. After Pirro rescues the child from Ulisse, Andromaca agrees to marry him and leave Troy. Ulisse warns Pirro that Andromaca will be his ruin, but the opera sweeps this under the rug with a *lieto fine*.[85] Because Andromaca has protected both her husband's memory and their son's life, she is considered as having fulfilled her conjugal and maternal duties. She also proves the social and political utility of her duties, as it is through those roles that she ultimately contributes to the founding of Italy.

Andromaca hinges on Todi's transitional position between two paradigms of female subjectivity, and its opening scene and aria stage this tension between the suffocated voice of the female sublime and the political role of the good mother. The curtain rises on Andromaca's domestic space, with the smoking ruins of Troy visible through a window. Following a heroic horn ritornello, Andromaca awakens at what she thinks is the voice of her dead husband's ghost (**example 4.1**). Yet hers is the voice through which men speak. Andromaca's opening recitative text directly indexes Aeneas's famous speech from Book II of the *Aeneid,* in which the soon-to-be founder of Rome recounts to Dido his own encounter with the ghost of Hector. Ventriloquizing Aeneas, Andromaca sings to the imaginary ghost of her husband: "Ah, I saw you,/ but (ah me!) how different/ from that

[85] Andromache's virtue as wife and mother is of great importance in the *Iliad,* and Lorenzi's libretto centers on that aspect of her character while carefully avoiding the tragic ending associated with her in the tradition based on Euripides (including the Seicento libretti of Salvi and Zeno, and Racine's tragedy). On Andromache operas, see Suzana Ograjenšek, "The Rise and Fall of *Andromache* on the Operatic Stage, 1660s–1820s," in *Ancient Drama in Music for the Modern Stage,* eds. Peter Brown and Suzana Ograjenšek (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 112–38. Note that Troy was often read as the ancestor of Rome and, by extension, Italy (most famously so in Virgil's *Aeneid*).

Ettore of before,/ who returned, proud, from Achille's spoils, and when he made/ the vengeful flames shriek/ upon the inimical, criminal,/ barbarous Achaean sails."[86] In Virgil's epic, Aeneas cannot save Troy, but, on Hector's urging, he saves Troy's legacy by going on to found Rome. Here, Andromaca envoices Aeneas and symbolically assumes his heroic task.

The recitative ombra scene flows seamlessly into a short aria in E-flat major, through a final repetition of the horn ritornello (**example 4.2**). The aria begins with repeated pizzicato, sotto voce triplet arpeggios in the strings—a rather unusual choice for an aria in this context, as this accompaniment style was still typically associated with diegetic song (originating in operatic representations of Orpheus's lyre).[87] This quasi-Orphic lyre haunts the opening of Andromaca's aria as the palimpsest of lyric. Pushing against the "lyric" accompaniment, the vocal line juxtaposes the domestic with the heroic. The short phrases and gasping rests evoke the sobs and breathlessness of the sentimental idiom, while the expansive tessitura and the leaps of octaves and tenths mark the stylistic register as opera seria. The seria elements would have emphasized Todi's vocal defects, given that female voices typically have a natural *passaggio* around F sharp 5 or G5. Those defects would have been especially audible, and thrilling, when Todi's voice leapt from the strained, liminal range above the staff down into her chest voice (**example 4.3**).

ARIA
(ANDROMACA):

Ancor mi risuona	Still I hear
La voce dolente:	the sorrowful voice:
Ancora ho presente	Still I have before me

[86] "Ah, pur ti vidi,/ Ma quanto, ohimè! diverso/ Di quell' Ettor di pria,/ Che ritornò superbo/ Delle spoglie di Achille: e quando ei fece/ Strider la fiamma ultrice/ Sulle nemiche, e ree/ Barbare vele Achee." Aeneas's speech (to Dido) in which he recounts seeing Hector's ghost can be found in the *Aeneid,* Book II, ll. 274–6.

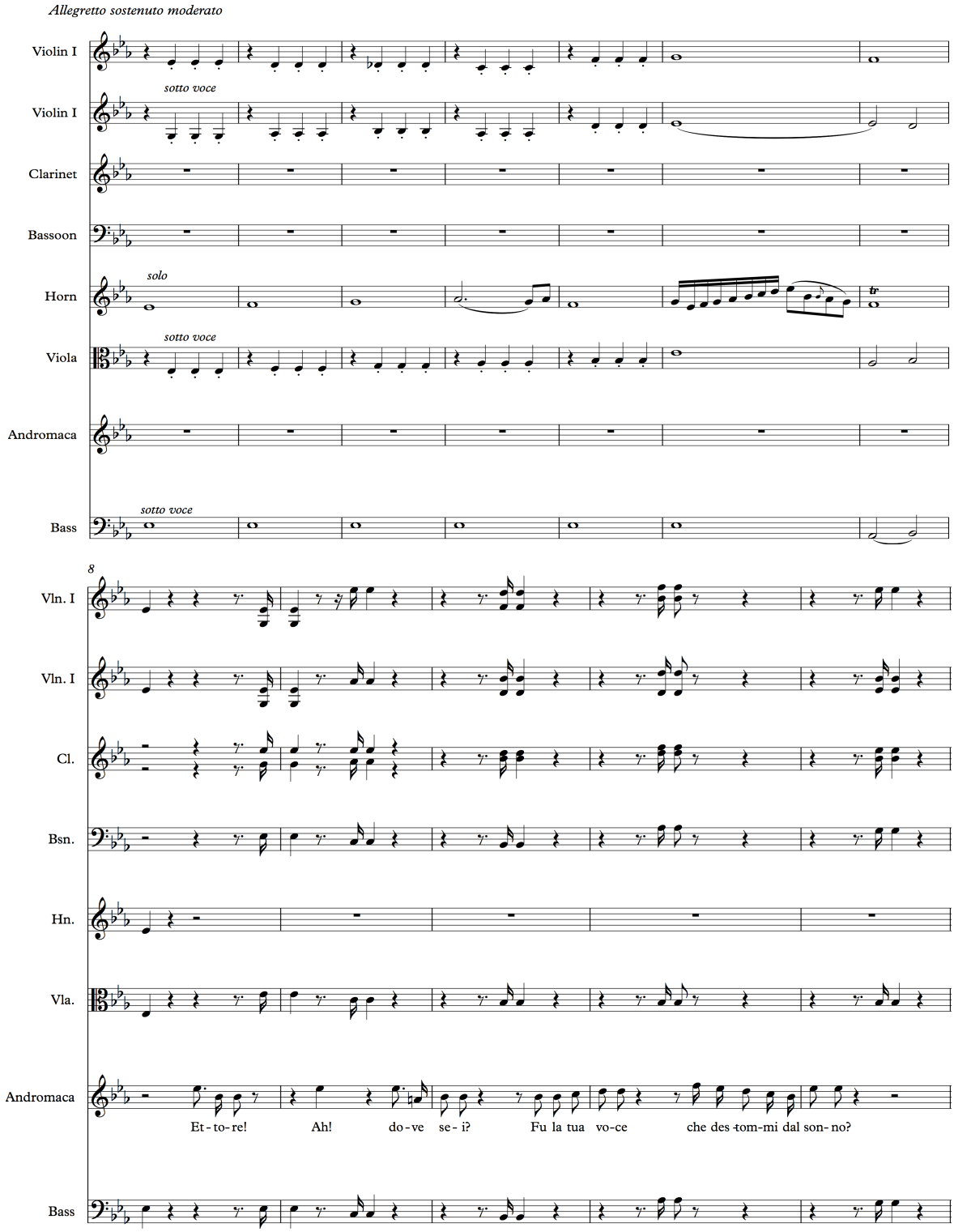
[87] By the 1780s, pizzicato triplet arpeggios in the strings were often used in Italian opera as a reference to the Orphic lyre and/or diegetic song more broadly, with the connotations of self-reflexive subjectivity. This grew out of the popularity of the trope in the *Orfeo* operas of Gluck and Bertoni. The resonances (both parodic and serious) of this trope in other operas are explored in chapters 1 and 2 above.

Lo spettro funesto…	the tragic ghost…
Nè parto, nè resto,	I neither leave, nor stay,
Non so che tremar.	I know not what to do but tremble.
Incerta, dubbiosa	Uncertain, doubtful
Non trovo consiglio:	I find no counsel:
Non placo il consorte,	I do not calm my husband,
Non salvo il mio figlio,	I do not save my son,
Nè madre, nè sposa,	neither mother, nor wife
Mi posso chiamar.	can I call myself.

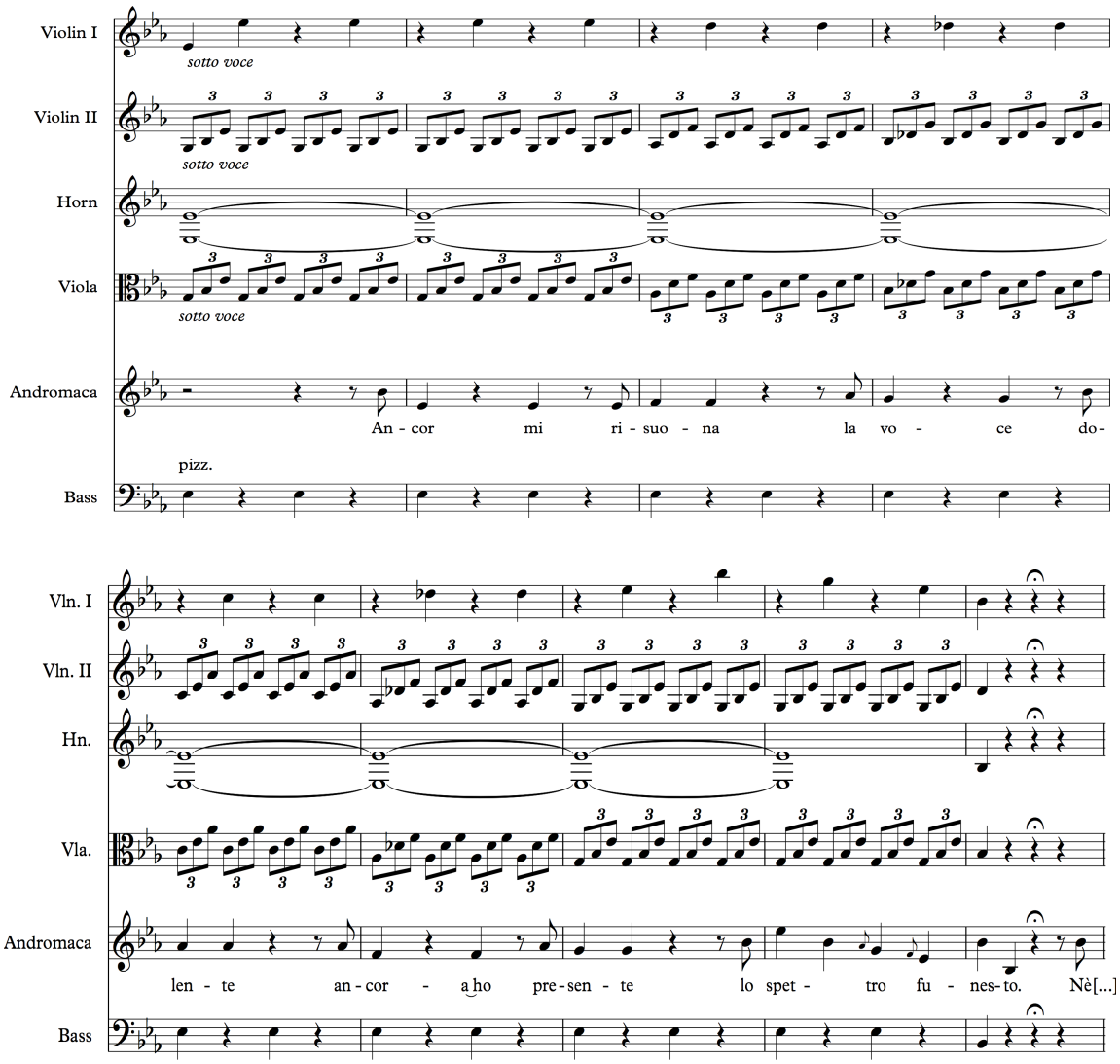
For most of the aria, Andromaca sings in these breathless, fragmented phrases; every time she bursts out in seria-style leaps, she is quickly suffocated back into silence. Only at the end of the aria does she overcome her suffocation—once she realizes that her purpose will be earning the names of "mother" and "wife."[88] She finally spins out longer phrases for the first time at the aria's climax, as she sings: "I do not calm my husband,/ I do not save my son,/ neither mother, nor wife/ can I call myself" (**example 4.4**). Andromaca is compensated with a full, sonorous voice after she defines herself as a would-be heroine of domesticity. By the end of the opera, she saves Troy's future, and puts the *eroico* in *dramma eroico*, by fulfilling her role as the good mother.

[88] Jean-François Marmontel emphasized that "the sacred names of friend, father, lover, spouse, son, mother" were more important than "titles" (e.g., king, queen, etc.) in eliciting emotion from an audience; see his *Poétique française* (Paris, 1763), II, X. Stefano Castelvecchi discusses Marmontel's sentimental dramaturgy and "sacred names" in relation to one of Paisiello's semi-serious operas, *Nina, o sia La pazza per amore* (Caserta, 1789); see Castelvecchi, *Sentimental Opera,* 136.

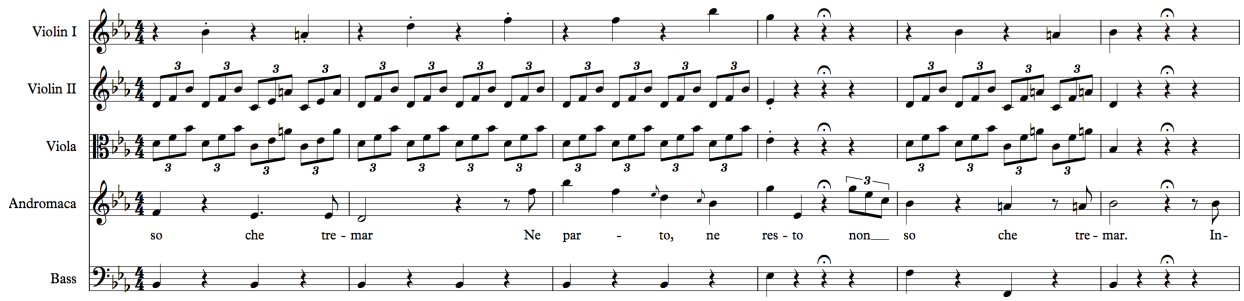
Example 4.1 Opening of act 1, scene 1, mm. 1–12. The stage directions next to the vocal line in the score read, "Andromaca, who sleeps; and is awakened, completely speechless and terrified, [at the sound?] of the ritornello" (Andromaca che dorme; e si risveglia tutta attonita ed atterrita [illegible] del ritornello). In Paisiello/Lorenzi, *L'Andromaca*, I-Nc, Rari 3.1.7, 19[R]–20[R].



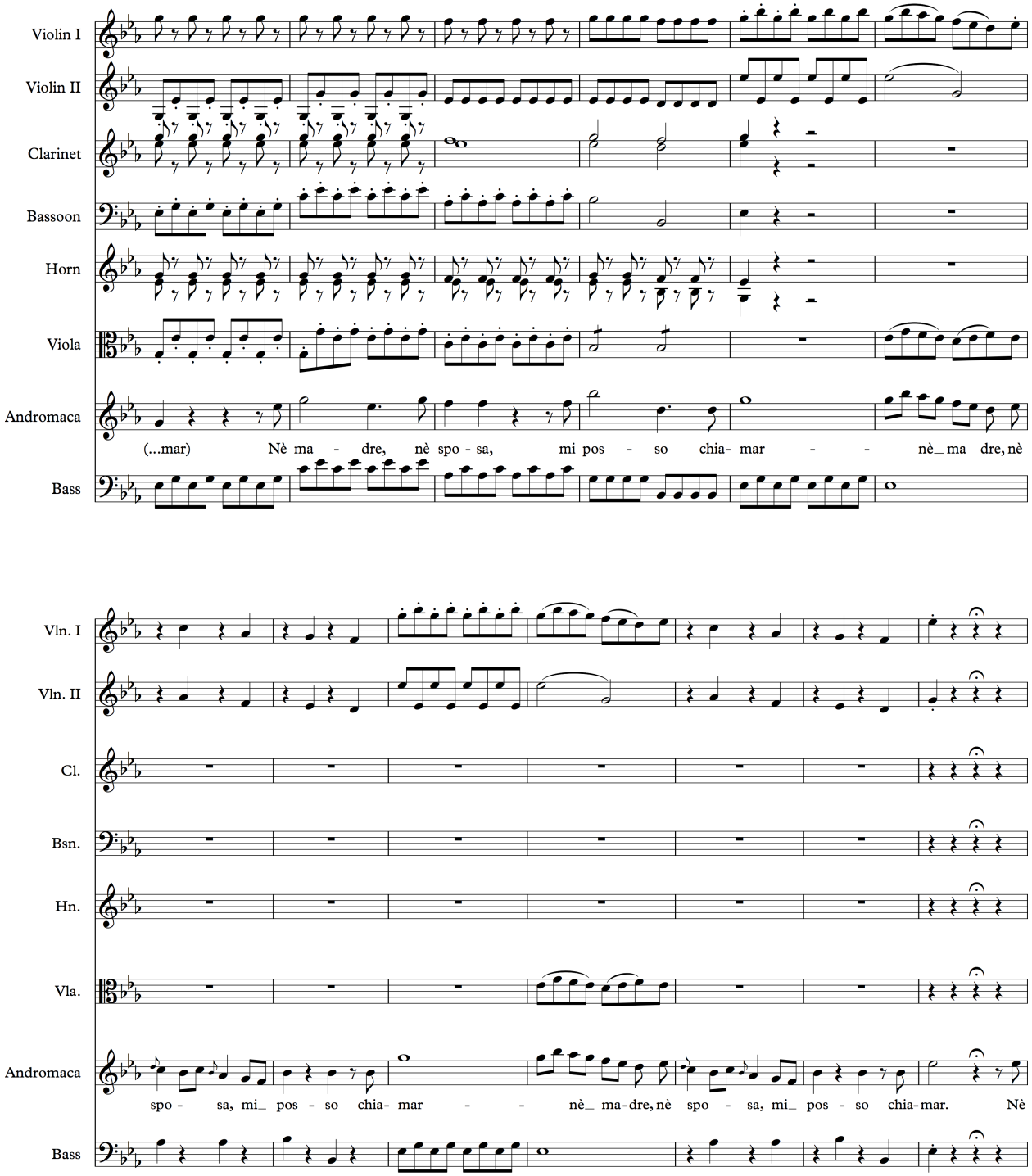
Example 4.2 Act 1, scene 1, mm. 93–101. Beginning of aria "Ancor mi risuona" (horn ritornello not shown). Note the gasping rests, breaking up words and phrases. In Paisiello/Lorenzi, 28^{R}–28^{V}.



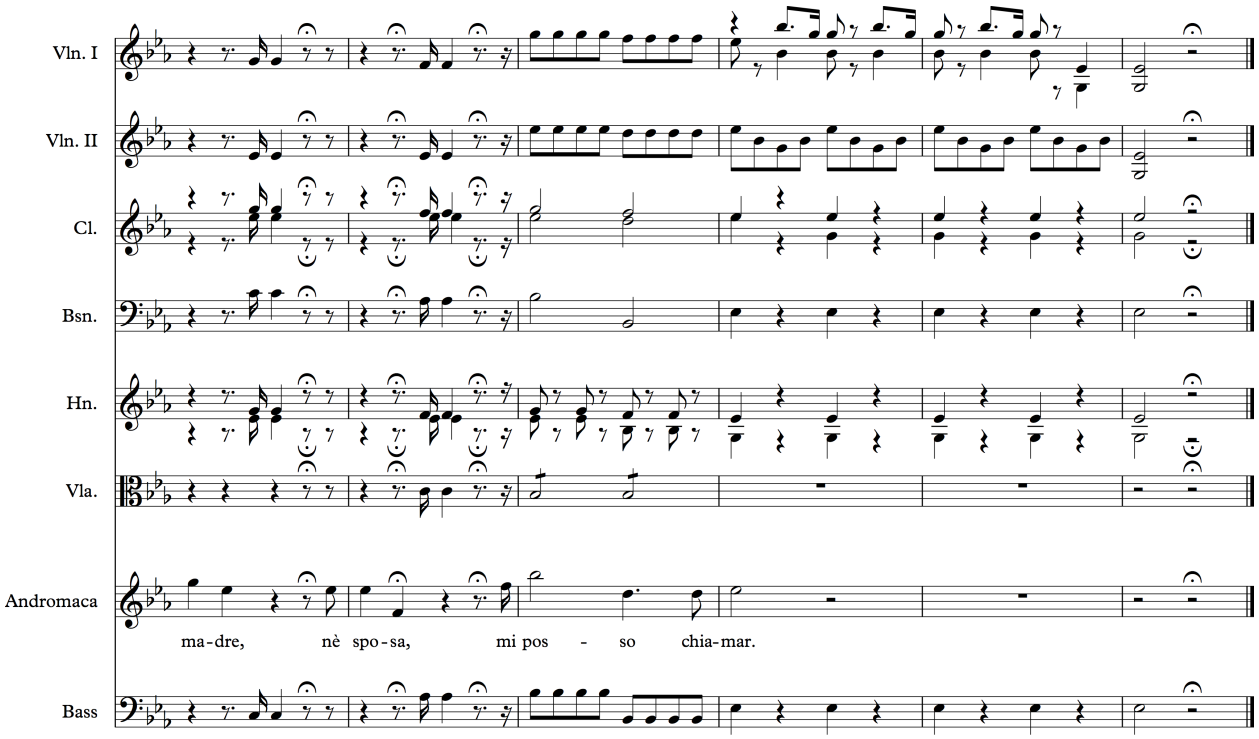
Example 4.3 Act 1, scene 1, mm. 104–9. Note the large leaps across registers in the vocal line. Tacet instruments cut for this excerpt. In Paisiello/Lorenzi, 29^{R}.



Example 4.4 End of act 1, scene 1, mm. 139–57. In Paisiello/Lorenzi, 31^{V}–33^{R}.



Example 4.4, continued



Andromaca's opening scene and aria were cut from the 1804 revival, which was given at San Carlo after Todi had retired from the stage and returned to Portugal. Perhaps the scene did not have the same effect when sung by the voice of a different singer, one lacking in the fantasies of extramusical meaning attached to Todi. Or perhaps establishing the good mother as the driving force of the plot was no longer necessary, because the ideology of domesticity had already been naturalized. The 1804 version began instead with a choral scene, as had become the fashion with the rise of Ossianic and French Revolutionary opera.[89] Already in northern Italy, where Napoleon had quickly gone from liberator to tyrant, the chorus in opera had a bigger role to play than it ever had

[89] On the new opening with chorus in the 1804 *Andromaca*, see Lorenzo Mattei, "Cori, preghiere e tempeste: Sul ruolo melodrammaturgico del coro nell'ultimo Paisiello (*I giuochi d'Agrigento, Andromaca, Proserpina*)," in *Giovanni Paisiello e la cultura europa del suo tempo,* ed. Francesco Paolo Russo (Lucca: Libreria Musicale Italiana, 2007), 231–74, esp. 239.

in the Settecento. As Monica Nocciolini explains in her study of opera in Napoleonic Milan (1797–1815), the national politics of opera libretti shifted from Salfi's Jacobinism to Romanelli's quasi-absolutist propaganda, but the one constant was the unprecedented weight of the chorus as the voice of "il Popolo" (the people).[90] As seen through the *Andromaca* revival, by the early Ottocento the allegory of Italy's origins depended more strongly on the idea of a people, and not just on the heroic individuals of Settecento opera seria. In 1804, Andromaca's struggle was framed by the collective voice of the subjugated Trojan people.

Mourning and the voice of history

Andromaca's internal conflict between conjugal and maternal love is externalized in the symbol of the sepulcher. Ettore's tomb serves a dual purpose in the opera, housing the hero's mortal remains while hiding his son from Ulisse. In the tomb, past and future converge, as they do in Andromaca herself: by accepting her role, she sutures the gap between her husband, whose voice is defunct, and their child, who does not yet have a voice.[91] Or, put another way, through mourning the heroes of the past and enculturating those of the future, tombs and female voices together acted as conduits between history and the nation.

The tomb was for many writers in post-Enlightenment Italy a site of spectral liminality,

[90] Nocciolini also argues that librettists at the time were unquestionably engaging with contemporary literature, even as composers remained focused on pleasing the audience rather than making political statements or making musical innovations. See Monica Nocciolini, "Il melodramma nella Milano napoleonica: teatro musicale e ideologia politica," *Nuova rivista musicale italiana* 29, no. 1 (1995): 5–30.

[91] Note that neither Ettore nor Astianatte speaks (or sings) in the opera. Ettore does not appear in the list of *personaggi,* so we can presume that Andromaca only imagines his ghost in the opening scene. Astianatte is specified as being a nonspeaking role, as was common in operas with young children as characters. (As a side note, Maria Malibran played the silent role of one of Medea's children in Mayr's *Medea in Corinto,* with Isabella Colbran in the title role, for the opera's premiere in Milan in 1813.)

haunted by the ghostly voices and fragmentary corpora of a past that could be neither revived nor forgotten. The remainders of those voices and bodies were rooted in histories that some hoped would prove fertile soil for quickening a national consciousness. We have met several of these shades already, whether engaged at length or merely in passing: Saffo's *confessio* preserved her last song, according to Imperiale's preface to the *Faoniade* (1780), replaying on loop the death of lyric (see chapter 3). Among the epigrams Bettinelli cited as exemplars of *soavità,* one is a funerary inscription that "makes a sepulcher speak, and oh how it makes us feel paternal and conjugal love!"[92] Alessandro Verri's *Le notti romane* novel (1792, pt. 1) follows a narrator—known simply as "Italo" (Italian)—who converses with the spirits of Caesar, Antony, et alia at the Tomb of the Scipios in Rome, and then (in pt. 2, 1804) takes them on a guided tour of Rome's ruins.[93] The epigram to Foscolo's epistolary novel *L'ultime lettere di Jacopo Ortis* (1798/1802) is his translation of l. 91 from Thomas Gray's *Elegy Written in a Country Church-Yard* (1751), which in the original English reads: "Ev'n from the tomb the voice of Nature cries." In one of Ortis's letters, Foscolo repeats and extends the quotation: "Nature cries even from the tomb, and her cry vanquishes the silence and obscurity of death."[94]

These sepulchral voices all had political implications, especially Foscolo's. The popularity of

[92] The following succeeds immediately the quotation of the swallow/Medea epigram, and precedes one about a dead father missing his wife and children: "Fa parlar un sepolcro, e oh come ci fa sentire l'amor paterno e maritale!" Bettinelli, *Lettere a Lesbia Cidonia,* 230. The contrast between the bad mothers epigram and the benevolent father one exemplifies the struggle Lynn Hunt lays out between the two archetypal parental figures in *The Family Romance of the French Revolution.*

[93] Ellen Lockhart interprets Roman ruins through the lens of (proto-) nationalism by connecting the idea of "animation" to political agency; voice is a part, though only part, of her argument, which includes a deft analysis of Verri's novel. See "Defining Italy in Haunted Rome," ch. 3 in *Animation, Plasticity, and Music in Italy, 1770–1830,* 85–111.

[94] The epigram to *Ortis* is the Latin translation of Gray's line: "Naturae clamat ab ipso vox tumulo," which Foscolo gives in Italian as "Geme la natura perfin nella tomba" (n.p.) In Ortis's letter of March 25, the quote returns as: "Geme la natura perfin nella tomba, e il suo gemito vince il silenzio e l'oscurità della morte" (74).

Gray's *Elegy* in the latter half of the century, Esther Schor explains, was synchronous with a growing link in England between mourning and "national consciousness," as the church graveyard eventually became a "synecdoche for the nation."[95] Italian writers' cathexis on tombs is typically read in a similar way, as manifesting the frustrated desire for an Italian identity by fixating on monuments to Italy's illustrious dead.[96] After the turn of the century, as Joseph Luzzi puts it, the Italian peninsula was increasingly regarded as a Europe's "mausoleum," littered with the ruins of fifteen-hundred-plus years of culture and—significantly—inhabited by Italians who had allowed the language of Petrarch to devolve into little more than "thoughtless music."[97] The crumbling mausoleum, the forgotten tomb, the untended graveyard were synecdoches for a politically- and linguistically-fragmented Italy. These Italian sepulchers were not silent; but whose was this lamenting "voice of Nature"? Could it even be heard through all the "thoughtless music"?

Foscolo attempted to answer this question with his *Dei sepolcri* (On Tombs; 1807), a long-form poem in which he positioned collective memory of the dead as the foundation of nationhood. Like *Ortis, Dei sepolcri* was composed as a reaction to what Foscolo took as another Napoleonic betrayal of Italy—this time, an attack not just on Italy's future, but on its past. In 1804, the emperor issued the Edict of Saint-Cloud, decreeing that burials must take place outside of city walls (for sanitation purposes), that all burial monuments must be the same size (in the interest of equality), and that their inscriptions (i.e., epigrams) must be overseen by a special commission. The law was extended to his holdings in Italy in the fall of 1806. Foscolo responded with 295 lines of unrhyming

[95] Esther Schor, *Bearing the Dead: The British Culture of Mourning from the Enlightenment to Victoria* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 53.
[96] Luzzi, *Romantic Europe,* 5–6; Brose, "The Politics of Mourning," passim.
[97] The latter is Luzzi's translation of Foscolo's phrase "musica senza pensiero." Luzzi, *Romantic Europe,* 6, 54, 74.

endecasillabi sciolti devoted to mythologizing the tombs and legacies of Italy's great men, from Petrarch to Michelangelo to Galileo. The ode (*carme,* Foscolo's term) sold even more copies than *Ortis,* despite its unusual, fragmented, and oft-critiqued style: namely, the famously abrupt transitions between sections of the poem, which soon after publication were already being debated as either "obscure" or "organic." Foscolo attributed the poem's formal irregularities to inspiration from the Greeks, who, he wrote, had taught moral and political lessons through, not order and reason, but "the imagination and the heart."[98] (The poem's fragmentary style is not incidental here, especially given Foscolo's fascination with Sappho; see chapter 3, above.) The entire poem—even the designation *carme,* another word for Greek lyric poetry—paints Italy as a mirror of the ancient Hellenic-Trojan past, with Foscolo as, at once, the Homer who creates a nation by singing of its heroes, and the Orpheus who reanimates the dead through song.[99]

Foscolo himself played the national bard in *Dei sepolcri*, yet he knew it was not enough. The epistemology of nationhood that unfolds within the poem relies upon a multitude of voices for performing the labor of memory. This was because, before the poet could do his work of nation-building, the people had to remember of the names of their dead. Therefore Foscolo, like Bettinelli, invoked female voices as the natural, because pre-literate, agents of national enculturation. In the closing episode of *Dei sepolcri,* Foscolo ventriloquizes the Trojan princess Cassandra, speaking through her in the future tense in order to foretell Homer's creation of the *Iliad* (his ideological Urtext of national epic). In the final verses of *Dei sepolcri*, the fall of Troy is foreshadowed through

[98] Brose, "The Politics of Mourning," 18–19. Brose delves brilliantly into the complex "rhetorical tropes" of these transitions, which were labeled "trapassi pindarici" (in reference to the ancient Greek choral odes of Pindar).
[99] On Foscolo's self-fashioning as the Orpheus, Homer, and Virgil of Italy in *Dei sepolcri,* see Luzzi, *Romantic Europe,* 40–1.

Cassandra's prophesying female acts of mourning: "And you palms and cypresses, whom the women of Priam's family plant, and who will grow, soon, alas! watered by widows' tears, protect my ancestors."[100] She enjoins the trees, planted and nourished by female mourning, to "protect [her] ancestors" so that "one day […] the tomb will narrate all" to Homer.[101] The poem ends with Cassandra's apostrophe to her dead brother, in which she binds together mourning and nationhood: "And you, Hector, will have your due mourning, wherever the blood spilled for the homeland is sacred and lamented."[102] As Brose compellingly argues, Cassandra here "become[s] the progenitor of *all* poets" (emphasis in original) as the voice that first names the dead. The trees, symbols of female lamentation and, crucially, nurture, watch over the heroes named by Cassandra, keeping them safe until the national bard comes to sing of them. Even then, in order to "call up the heroes," the poet needs help from "the muses who are the animators of mortal thought."[103]

Through the voice of Cassandra, Foscolo casts female-gendered practices of mourning, of lamenting and naming, as essential to cultural memory. Once the poet's imagination is given life by the muses, it can transmit epic; that epic, in turn, gives birth to political consciousness. Thus female suffering and loss, so central to the myth of sublime song, could metamorphose into a kind of maternal lullaby, one that voiced the myths, epics, and histories of an emerging national consciousness.

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[100] "E voi palme e cipressi che le nuore/ piantan di Prìamo, e crescerete ahi presto/ di vedovili lagrime innaffiati, proteggete i miei padri." Ugo Foscolo, *Dei sepolcri,* ll. 272–5.
[101] "Proteggete i miei padri. Un dì vedrete/ mendico un cieco errar sotto le vostre/ antichissime ombre, e brancolando/ penetrar negli avelli, e abbracciar l'urne,/ e interrogarle. Gemeranno gli antri/ secreti, e tutta narrerà la tomba." ll. 279–84.
[102] "E tu, onore di pianti, Ettore, avrai,/ ove sia santo e lagrimato il sangue/ per la patria versato, e finchè il Sole/ risplenderà su le sciagure umane." ll. 292–5.
[103] "E me che i tempi ed il desio d'onore/ fan per diversa gente ir fuggitivo,/ me ad evocar gli eroi chiamin le Muse/ del mortale pensiero animatrici." ll. 226–9.

EPILOGUE
CLOSING THE HISTORICAL GAP

Orfeo italiano

This study began at Pacchierotti's tomb in Padua in 2016, but it might have begun instead at Euridice's tomb on the stage of Parma's Teatro Ducale in 1769. That is how *L'atto d'Orfeo* opens, with a tomb at the center of a melancholy tableau of collective mourning. Millico's first vocalizations as Orfeo cut through the static, haunting chorus as he cried "Ah! Euridice!": a "cry of nature" paired with an act of naming.[1]

Tombs have served as liminal sites for vocal transitions and ruptures in many of the foregoing case studies. Bertoni's 1776 setting of Calzabigi's libretto opens with the same scene as Gluck's, albeit with cheerier musical language. Rezzonico and Sarti's *Alessandro e Timoteo* hinges on Timoteo's virtuosic confrontation aria, sung in King Dario's mausoleum, and the opera's dramatically catastrophic ending is instigated by a ghostly chorus of Greek warriors demanding proper burial for their forgotten bodies. Pacchierotti bid farewell to the opera stage with a scene of obbligato recitative, his ineffable *accento* echoing amid the scenery of ancient Agrigentan gravesites. Imperiale's *Faoniade* was purportedly excavated from Sappho's *confessio,* the remnants of her voice scattered across her now-empty tomb. Sografi and Mayr's Saffo sings of choosing the sea for her grave, as the grotesque Pythia foretells that very death while surrounded by the tombs of her former supplicants. Lorenzi and Paisiello's Andromaca links past to future when she hides Astianatte inside Ettore's sepulcher. We left off in chapter 4 at Ettore's tomb, alongside those of the other Trojan

[1] Gluck and Calzabigi, *L'atto d'Orfeo,* in *Le feste d'Apollo,* sc. 1. The phrase "cry of nature" comes, famously, from Rousseau's *Discourse on the Origin and Foundation of Inequality among Men,* previously cited in chapter 1, above.

heroes, where Foscolo invoked the Muses, ventriloquized Cassandra, and called on the voices of Italy to name and remember the dead.

But rather than end with Foscolo's verses, let us turn back to musical practices of voice by pausing at one last tomb scene: the opening of the third and final act of Foppa and Zingarelli's *Giulietta e Romeo* (1796), which takes place in the mausoleum where Giulietta (Juliet) lies entombed. *Giulietta e Romeo* is an important work in the history of Italian opera, insofar as it adumbrates many of the prototypical elements of the Ottocento bel canto repertoire. For our purposes, however, it is significant because the climactic tomb scene became the site of repeated engagement between our two lyric figures of voice, Orpheus and Sappho. And it did so because *Giulietta e Romeo* was surprisingly long-lived for an eighteenth-century opera, going through 57 different productions between 1796 and 1837. Romeo's *scena* in Giulietta's tomb at the beginning of Act 3, featuring the aria "Ombra adorata, aspetta" (Beloved shade, wait) was the highlight of the opera. The extended span of *Giulietta e Romeo*'s popularity has enabled musicologists, notably Andrea Malnati and Martha Feldman, to sketch out long-term shifts in musical-vocal practices and imaginaries by interpreting the performance and reception histories of Romeo's aria-scena complex.[2] In my reading, I draw from their respective studies on "Ombra adorata" in order to approach the aria as a space for replaying the merging of, and transition between, Orphic and Sapphic figures of voice.

We can skip over summarizing the two acts preceding the tomb scene, since the plot hews closely enough to what we know from Shakespeare's play, but an overview of Act 3 reveals a

[2] Andrea Malnati, "Per una storia della prassi esecutiva vocale dell'opera italiana: il caso di 'Ombra adorata, aspetta' di Niccolò Zingarelli," *Bollettino del centro rossiniano di studi* 50 (2010): 29–84; Feldman, "Shadow Voices, Castrato and Non," ch. 6 in *The Castrato,* esp. 211–37.

palimpsest of neoclassical lyric beneath the "modern" medieval-meets-proto-romantic surface.[3] The opening (Act 3, sc. 1) resembles that of the *Orfeo* operas, as both Malnati and Feldman point out: like Orfeo, Romeo dismisses a chorus of mourners in order to lament alone at his wife's grave ("Non più, compagni: andate"; No more, companions: go). Once alone, Romeo delivers a recitative (obbligato, as are all the recitatives in this scene), followed by the short aria "Idolo del mio cor," and another recitative, during which he drinks his fatal poison. Compounding the Orphic resonances, I'd add that the dramaturgy of the scene is clearly influenced by Calzabigi's in "Cerco il mio ben così," inasmuch as Romeo's alternation between "real time" and "aria time" within the same closed-form number stages emotion as a dynamic process (see chapter 1).[4] Romeo imagines he hears Giulietta calling him to "follow [her] through the shadows." In response, he sings the aria "Ombra adorata," in which he promises to become "indivisible" from her amid the "resound[ing]" "echo" of love.[5] (We might recall that in the aria complex of "Cerco mio ben così," Orfeo sings of Euridice's name resounding all around him, yet despairs that what he hears is only the echo of his own voice.)

Following "Ombra adorata," Romeo describes in recitative his poisoning with metaphors reminiscent of Sappho's love-death in fragment 31 ("I feel spreading through my veins/ the cold freeze of death").[6] He is interrupted by the disembodied voice of Giulietta, who is awakening from

[3] Foppa likely based his libretto on either Louis Sébastien Mercier's French reworking (as *Les Tombeaux de Vérone,* 1782) or Giuseppe Ramirez's Italian translation of Mercier (as *Le tombe di Verona,* 1789) instead of Shakespeare's play. Alessandro Verri translated some of Shakespeare's plays into Italian in the 1770s, but they were not published. See Vincenza Minutella, *Reclaiming Romeo and Juliet: Italian Translations for Page, Stage and Screen* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2013), 66–7.

[4] Malnati notes that in Zingarelli's autograph, there is no double bar line from the curtain of Act 3 through the end of "Ombra adorata, aspetta," and interprets this as evidence that Zingarelli conceived of the entire scene as a single unit or "number." See Malnati, "'Ombra adorata,'" 34.

[5] "Ombra adorata aspetta/ teco sarò indiviso […] e l'eco a noi d'intorno/ risuonerà d'amor." Giuseppe Foppa, *Giulietta, e Romeo* (Venice: Valvasense, 1796). I use the libretto from the La Fenice performance for quotations here..

[6] "Serpeggiar nelle vene/ Un freddo del di morte…"; and, in his duet with Giulietta a few lines later: "Sappi, che un rio veleno/ Già mi serpeggia in seno."

her sleeping draught and, now, actually calling for him from within her sepulcher. As Romeo suffers the same symptoms of love-death as Sappho's lyric "I," Giulietta is reanimated as an unseen voice from within the tomb: together, they stage the Sapphic replaying and disavowal, respectively, of their love-deaths. When Giulietta emerges from the tomb, the lovers sing a duet and merge their voices together, "indivisible." Romeo then dies onstage, but the opera does not end with a double suicide, as we would expect based on the Shakespeare. Instead, Giulietta is discovered alive by the other characters, and, after confronting her cruel father, she faints into the arms of her waiting-women. This might have been staged as her death, but the 1796 Venetian libretto stage directions cast it as a swoon ("cade svenuta"), in clear contrast to Romeo's death ("muore"). Giulietta lives to carry on Romeo's memory; by shaming her father for his violent actions, with her last onstage utterance she turns that memory toward healing Verona's political wounds.

The role of Romeo was composed for Crescentini, castrato of sensibility and presumed heir to Pacchierotti; we last encountered him in chapter 3 as the Orphic-inflected Faone in Mayr's *Saffo* (Venice, 1794). Giulietta was sung by the soprano Giuseppa (*ossia* Giuseppina, Josepha) Grassini, who had recently appeared as Euridice in a revival of Bertoni's *Orfeo* (Venice, 1795). The premiere of *Giulietta e Romeo*, on February 3, 1796 at La Scala in Milan, was a huge success. Most of the praise was reserved for the third act and the lead singers' "unique" and "rare" singing.[7] We do not know for certain what the tomb scene consisted of for the La Scala performances, however, as there are two versions of "Ombra adorata" in Zingarelli's autograph score. A more vocally virtuosic setting of the text is included in the manuscript as an appendix; Malnati suggests that the latter was

[7] Crescentini's mode of singing was described by one reviewer as "peregrino," singular or unusual, but with the valence of refinement (as opposed to oddity or grotesqueness). The same writer described Grassini's voice as "rara." For these and other quotations from, and interpretation of, the opera's reviews, see Malnati, "'Ombra adorata,'" 32–4.

probably requested by Crescentini and performed in lieu of the "original."[8] Still, neither of these versions is the one that became "canonical" by the Ottocento. The first time that the opera was performed outside of Milan, in Modena later that same year, the aria had undergone yet another setting, composed by none other than Crescentini himself. It was through his very own "Ombra adorata" that audiences across Europe heard his voice.[9] We might expect the singer's composition to be flashier and showier than Zingarelli's second attempt, but it is quintessentially cantabile, with simple harmonies and sentimental dotted rhythms that created space for the singer to embellish *ex tempore*. Malnati and Feldman have (separately) examined a transcription of what are purportedly some of Crescentini's improvised embellishments, made by the violinist Heinrich Eppinger; the embellishments are impressive and varied, stretching up to a B5, striking a major contrast to the sentimental simplicity of Crescentini's autograph.[10] Yet Feldman convincingly emphasizes that the kind of extemporized ornamentation associated with Crescentini's performance was not about showing off, as it perhaps had been only a few generations earlier, but about vocal "nuance, and *accento.*"[11]

As we have seen throughout the present study, the Orphic powers of enthusiasm and expressive immediacy were understood as necessarily transfused by a sounding voice, unfettered by musical notation. This was true even in instances of vocal virtuosity, as we saw with Todi's "Trionfa o ciel tiranno" (see chapter 4). By the end of the century, a voice recognized as singing in the lyric

[8] Malnati, "'Ombra adorata,'" 37–8.
[9] He performed it in eight different productions, the last of which was in 1809. Malnati, "'Ombra adorata,'" 40.
[10] Malnati includes an appendix with a comparison of Eppinger's version set above Crescentini's autograph, along with others (Pasta's and Manuel Garcia the younger's); pp. 69–84. Feldman also considers Eppinger's and Garcia's versions, among others, though she takes a somewhat more skeptical view as to how closely they document performance practice.
[11] Feldman reads Crescentini's own ethos of voice, from his singing treatise (published in a bilingual Italian/French edition, as *Raccolta di esercizi per il Canto all'uso del Vocalizzo con Discorso Preliminare,* Paris: Imbault, c.1811) against the "Ombra adorata" embellishments here; see *The Castrato,* 248.

mode could spin out astonishing melismas and still be heard as originating in authentic expression. Even as composers began exerting ever-more control over the score—Zingarelli wrote in the embellishments for version two, rather than leaving gaps for Crescentini to fill in—the so-called "Orfeo italiano" marked the opera with the indelible traces of his own (musical and material) voice.[12]

Acousmatic Orpheus, apotheosized Sappho

Like Orpheus's lyre, Crescentini's "Ombra adorata" did not fall silent when its creator left it behind: it conveyed lyric inspiration to a new voice. After Crescentini turned to teaching (even publishing a vocal treatise, c. 1811, in Paris), his tomb aria was revoiced by his erstwhile Giulietta, Grassini. She had appeared in the role alongside Crescentini's Romeo in the 1796 performances in Milan, Venice, and Modena, as well as in Paris in 1809 for Napoleon, and had very possibly learned "Ombra adorata" from Crescentini's own voice.[13] A huge star in her own right, Grassini later sang the scene as a kind of chamber cantata in various concert performances (definitely in 1817 in the salon at La Scala, and in 1822 in Vienna, as Malnati shows, but there is also evidence that she had been performing it this way as early as 1803).[14] The choral sections were cut, and the addressee made

[12] Sources both scholarly and historical frequently dub Crescentini "l'Orfeo italiano," yet so far, none I have seen has credited the origin of the appellation. Instead, they claim that "all of Europe" knew him as such, as if he had always been so—no "Orfeo act" necessary. With regard to the claim that composers were asserting more control over the score: this is the precise period, the turn- and early years of the nineteenth century, to which scholars trace the notion of the "composer's voice"; Edward T. Cone's *The Composer's Voice* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1974) is the foundational study here. More recently, Richard Taruskin considers the interplay between composition and performance in such constructs of creative agency in "The Composer's Voice," vol. 2, ch. 11 in *Oxford History of Western Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), <oxfordwesternmusic.com>, accessed 10 March 2019. This was also discussed through the figure of the god Amore/Imeneo in Calzabigi's/Gluck's/Bertoni's *Orfeo* settings in chapter 1, above.

[13] Malnati, "Ombra adorata," 46–7. Feldman delves into the 1809 Paris performance in her reading of the aria's ghostly resonances in nineteenth-century France and beyond.

[14] Malnati only discusses the 1817 and 1822 performances in his article, but I have found a manuscript copy of the aria that refers to Grassini's performing it much earlier, for Carnival 1803 in Genoa. The MS title page reads: "Sposa adorata aspetta/ Scena, cavatina e Rondò/ nella Giulietta e Romeo / Musica/ Del Signor Nicola Zingarelli [sic!] / Cantato/ Dalla

explicitly male ("Sposo adorato"), but otherwise the music sung by Grassini matched Crescentini's setting rather than either of Zingarelli's.[15] The aria was typically attributed to Zingarelli, as evidenced in an 1803 MS copy from Genoa, which long had the effect of concealing Crescentini's voice as the composer. Yet his voice, or the sonic materiality of it, resounded in the echo of Grassini's own: when she took on the aria, their voices merged together, "indivisible," as Romeo had promised Giulietta in "Ombra adorata." Orpheus's voice became acousmatic, heard but no longer seen onstage; Sappho eluded death and was instead apotheosized into a figure for the Ottocento prima donna.[16]

It was Grassini and her singing of "Ombra adorata" that transmitted the neoclassical lyric mode of voice to the famous "singing-actress" Giuditta Pasta, at least according to interlocutors like Giuseppe Carpani and Stendhal.[17] Stendhal cast Pasta as the spiritual heir to Todi and Pacchierotti

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Signora Giuseppa Grassini/ Nella sera del lei beneficio/ In Genova/ Il Carnevale dell'anno/ 1803," I-Gl, D. 3. 49. 6. The copy appears to reproduce Crescentini's setting, though it is attributed to Zingarelli on the cover page. This would indicate that Grassini did not wait for Crescentini to retire from performance before adding the scene to her concert repertoire, and that she possibly worked on it with him *viva voce* as well.

[15] Malnati, "'Ombra adorata,'" 46–7.

[16] There are two cantatas from this period that stage the same shift, but in a different manner: not through a scene shared by invocations of the two figures, as in *Giulietta e Romeo,* but with the same singer playing both roles in separate but coeval works. The cantatas, *Orfeo* (1814) and *La poetessa Saffo al salto di Leucade* (1810–17), featured the contralto Marietta Marcolini, famous for creating the title roles in two Rossini operas (*Ciro in Babilonia,* 1812, and *L'italiana in Algeri,* 1813), and with no other singers but the chorus. In *Orfeo,* composed by the "dilettante" Marchese Francesco Giovanni Sampieri on an anonymous libretto, Marcolini performed a crucial moment in the drama entirely offstage, relying on her vocal inflection alone. In Orfeo's reunion with Euridice in the Underworld, "Orfeo's unseen voice is heard from far away, as if from a [hidden] underground cave" (si ascolterà di lontano come da un sotteraneo la voce di Orfeo non visto, che parla con Euridice); in Anon., *Orfeo, cantata ad una sola voce con cori* (Bologna: Fratelli Masi, 1814), sc. 2, p. 7, n. 2. Francesco Morlacchi's *Saffo,* a "lyric scene" (scena lirica), went through several versions throughout the 1810s, but in the 1817 Rome libretto it ends with Saffo being saved after her leap by Apollo himself, god of music and lyric song. The chorus sings her praises as "Saffo is brought to apotheosis by Apollo's hand as a reward for her celebrated poems" (Frattanto che il Coro canta, si vede da una Scena trasparente l'Olimpo, e per mano di Apollo appare l'Apoteosi di Saffo in premio delle di lei cotanto celebrate Poesie); in Giuseppe Alborghetti and Francesco Morlacchi, *La poetessa Saffo al salto di Leucade, scena lirica per musica* (Rome: Puccinelli, 1817), p. 5. On the different versions of Morlacchi's *Saffo,* see Bianca Maria Antolini, "Attività e fortuna di Morlacchi a Roma," *Quaderni della rivista italiana di musicologia* 11 (1986): 95–106. My thanks to Prof.ssa Antolini and Prof. Nicola Lucarelli for their kind assistance in helping me gain access to Morlacchi's autograph at I-PEl, shelfmark A. IVB. 26. On Sappho as a figure for the Ottocento prima donna, via Germaine de Staël's novel *Corinne* (Paris, 1807), see Esse, "Encountering the *Improvvisatrice.*"

[17] Carpani compared Grassini's singing to Canova's neoclassical sculptures in his *Rossiniane* (1824), qtd. Malnati, 47–8. We might think back to Canova's work on Alfieri's tomb and the statue of the beautiful woman as "Italy," as discussed in chapter 3, above.

(see chapter 4), but acknowledged that Pasta had been born too late to have ever heard either. She had nevertheless "inherited their style," he argued, through Grassini, Pasta's "only teacher."[18] Grassini performed the role of Romeo to the young Pasta's Giulietta in 1817 in Brescia, but before long Pasta transitioned into singing Romeo herself. She made it one of her signature roles, performing it in at least twenty different productions.[19] For her commitment to verisimilar expression, Pasta is often held up as a revolutionary figure in operatic performance. Susan Rutherford, for instance, argues that Pasta was unique in her physicalization of dramatic expression, and that this made her famous despite having based her career on singing "old" operas written for other singers (among them *Giulietta e Romeo*).[20] This may well have been true, yet the discourse that surrounded Pasta's vocal performance style is reminiscent of what we have seen with regard to Todi in Venice. Pasta was noted for her timbral shifts, which included tones that were "veiled" and "suffocated," even "discontinuous," so much so as to become a "defect."[21] Also like Todi's, Pasta's personal life was connected to her capacity for conveying emotion through performance: she had learned to act from "her own sensitive reactions to the most delicate nuances of human passions," as Stendhal put it, similar to notions of Todi's "sensible soul."[22] Finally, in his twenty-first-century study of Pasta's singing, Paolo Russo points up an intriguing trend in Pasta's reception. Her performances, he notes, particularly in Donizetti's *Anna Bolena* (Milan, 1830), underwent processes

[18] Stendhal, *Life of Rossini,* 386.
[19] Malnati, "Ombra adorata," 48.
[20] Susan Rutherford, "'La cantante delle passioni': Giuditta Pasta and the Idea of Operatic Performance," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 19, no. 2 (2007): 110, 112.
[21] Rutherford cites various sources, including Stendhal, on Pasta's timbre and performance practice, in "'La cantante,'"passim. Paolo Russo writes of Pasta's "uneven timbre, imperfect intonation, discontinuous vocal quality," and makes reference to writings about her vocal "defect"; see his "Giuditta Pasta: Cantante pantomimica," 498, 520.
[22] Qtd. in Rutherford, 119. "Sensible soul" (anima sensibile) comes from chapter 4, above, and was a term commonly used in Venice to describe Todi.

of "fragmentation" (frantumazione), in that critics broke down each role and performance into an array of moments and phrases of "expressive sublimity."[23] Decades after the antiquarian Sappho craze, a female voice capable of "expressive sublimity" was still heard through and marked by metaphors of discontinuity, multitudes, fragmentation, and suffocation.

If Crescentini was the first singer to be known widely by the moniker "Italian Orpheus," he was nonetheless only a branch in a genealogy of lyric voice. We might envision this family tree as having deep roots in the Orphic self-fashioning of Millico and Guadagni, a trunk bolstered by fantasies of Todi's and Pacchierotti's envoiced subjectivities, and branches propagating the new growth of nineteenth-century prima donnas like Grassini, Pasta, and Malibran. Thus "Ombra adorata" may be read as the culminating tomb scene of the lyric mode of voice, not merely because it takes place inside a tomb, but because the aria itself in its myriad iterations became a repository for the material remains of voices. Those voices inhere as a set of imbricated lyric narratives, captured imprecisely within various copies and transcriptions, as the materiality of their bodies and the sonic practices they performed remain only as residues.

Toward a plurality of voices

How can voice be at once individual and universal, as the now-ubiquitous association between voice and liberal subjectivity would have us believe? Aren't individual voices inescapably material, and the universal voice merely a utopian fantasy, such that never the twain shall meet? In the preceding pages, I have engaged the voices of individual singers on the one hand, and writers' fantasies of universalizing song on the other, and for the most part they have lain in tension with one another.

[23] Russo quotes from various sources, including the *Corriere delle Dame* and *La Minerva*; see his "Giuditta Pasta," 527.

Yet both sides of those discourses and practices were bound up with attempts to neutralize unsettling manifestations of difference and resistance under the guise of an Enlightenment teleology of perfectability. In seeking to naturalize the castrato voice into an Orphic agent of subjectivity, singers like Millico, Guadagni, and Pacchierotti asserted that their voices were not dependent on mutilation and artificiality: being a castrato was incidental to their vocal power, not the cause of it. In coopting the Orphic narrative for civilizing purposes, literati like Rezzonico, Bettinelli, and Verri looked to erase cultural differences within an idealized "empire of humanity and friendship."[24] Sappho fragment 31 became beautiful despite its mutilation: once narrativized by Verri, Imperiale, and de' Rogati, its sublimity became a patriarchal tool for ratifying (male, literate) subjectivity. Todi's defective voice was granted cultural power by being contained within two intertwined paradigms of female subjectivity. Taken all together, these cases show how, once properly framed with ideology, an individual, material, sounding voice was permitted to make audible the subjectivity of whoever wielded it. That individual, subject-oriented voice engendered feeling in those who heard it, proclaiming with its sounds the existence of a feeling self. The resulting voice-self matrix ultimately civilized, edified, domesticated, or enculturated its listeners as good citizens, in turn allowing them subjectivities of their own.

Through individual voices comes universal subjectivity: Q. E. D.

But such narratives are a bit too tidy, for always subtending them is the implicit presence of others in need of being civilized, and the question of what it meant to be "civilized" through the ears. Who, exactly, needed to be civilized—and why? To what ends? What threats did they, these

[24] This was previously cited in chapter 1, above. "Orfeo divien padre e signore di popoli mansuefatti al suo canto, e fonda il più bello imperio, che fosse mai, l'imperio della umanità e dell'amichevole vita." Bettinelli, *Dell'entusiasmo,* 327–8.

unnamed modern-day "barbarians," pose, politically and culturally? And how might we excavate, recover, and amplify their voices? One of the reasons I have engaged in feminist readings and incorporated threads from disability analysis in this study is because they intersect with my interests in their attention to how the materiality of bodies has been politicized. In what is now a foundational essay bringing together feminist- and disability theory, Rosemarie Garland-Thomson traces "taxonomies of bodily value" in Western culture back to their Greek origins in Aristotle's *Generation of Animals,* in which the female body is rendered (in the language of disability) as "monstrous," a "mutilated male."[25] Similar constructions of non-normative and marked bodies have appeared in the preceding chapters of my study, but I wish to emphasize that those were not the only bodies and subjectivities at stake in the notion of civilizing song. If I have barely touched on race, ethnicity, or social- and economic status in this dissertation, it is not because such "taxonomies of bodily value" are not implicated in it, but rather that their intersections and implications await the next stage in my project.

These future developments will include another new set of case studies, anchored by a third lyric figure: Ossian, the ancient Caledonian "blind bard." Forged by Scots writer James Macpherson in the mid-eighteenth century, Ossian's poetry offered a glimpse into a "northern" cultural history, purportedly untouched by either Greco-Roman or Judeo-Christian influence.[26] Language professor Melchiorre Cesarotti, one of the dominant literary figures of the late Settecento, translated Macpherson's English "prose poetry" into Italian mixed verse beginning in the 1760s, and his *Poesie*

[25] Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, "Theorizing Disability: Feminist Theory, the Body, and the Disabled Figure," ch. 2 in *Extraordinary Bodies: Figuring Physical Disability in American Culture and Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 20–21.
[26] Of course, "Ossian" is quite obviously a Gaelic-accented composite of Homer and the biblical King David.

di Ossian (1763, 1772) became so popular that they inspired multiple operas into the early nineteenth century—and famously accompanied Napoleon on his military campaigns, with the Italian-language volume tucked into the pocket of his coat. Voice is central to the myths of Ossian, functioning as guarantor of the bard's cultural authority—he can sing of the past because he was there, no need for the Muses' intervention—and, through the numerous "choral" scenes, as the collective agency of a displaced people seeking a homeland. The lyric voice of Ossian also served as the faux-vernacular conduit of an essentialized, northern ethnic identity. According to Cesarotti and his interlocutors, Ossian and the ancient Caledonians had been primitive, barbarians even. Yet they had nevertheless been noble and pure of heart, implicitly because of their untainted northern (i.e., white) origins. Reading the Italian musical and literary reception of Ossianic voices against contemporary representations of the singing of "non-northern," and non-European, cultures, I will ask which "barbarian" songs were fetishized, which were exoticized, and how the lyric voice was racialized.[27]

At stake in my scholarship writ large is the challenge of opening up cultural narratives about sound in a pre-phonographic age, and understanding why and how particular narratives became naturalized into historical "facts." In this study and beyond, I work to unpack the discourses surrounding historical voices and sonic practices, in order to uncover the still-relevant ideologies they inspired, and articulate how interlocutors and practitioners rendered sound as cultural and political power.

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[27] Another new case study will read Orpheus as a colonizing figure, growing out of my work on the popular Orphic-themed opera buffa (*Li tre Orfei,* anon. librettist, comp. Marcello Bernardini; mentioned briefly in chapter 2). The action of the opera is set in a Venetian café, and it features, among other things, a Leporello-esque aria listing all the places (Eritrea! Morocco!) and objects (coffee! perfumes!) the basso buffo has eagerly plundered in his travels. When delivered as a joke amid onstage piazzas and coffeehouses, in the theaters of port cities like Venice and Genoa, Orpheus's civilizing song modulated into a celebration of commodification and consumption.

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