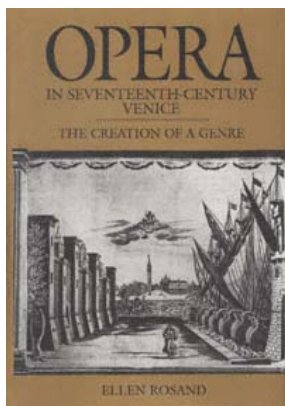


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Opera in Seventeenth-Century Venice

The Creation of a Genre

Ellen Rosand

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For my parents,
Gertrude Fineman and Lester Fineman

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Acknowledgments

This book represents the culmination of research carried out over the past two decades. At every stage of its elephantine gestation, I have benefitted from the encouragement and criticism of friends and colleagues. Nino Pirrotta inspired my earliest attempts to understand opera in Venice and has remained a guiding spirit, a model of passionate and humane scholarship for my work ever since. Over the course of innumerable miles in Riverside Park, and then by post and phone, my erstwhile jogging companion Piero Weiss listened to ideas, read and reread drafts, translated, edited, and bore with me. Joseph Kerman was the first to recognize the book implicit in my disparate studies and ideas on Venetian and operatic topics, and he was also the first to read through the completed manuscript (no footnotes), which he subjected to the full treatment of his characteristic critical, but always responsive, pencil.

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This book could not have been completed without the sustenance, forbearance, and considerable intervention of my family: my sons Jonathan and Eric, who grew up tolerantly—and too fast—in the company of a sibling more demanding than any sister or brother, and their father, my husband David Rosand, whose passion for and knowledge of things Venetian nourished mine, and whose professional skill as a writer, editor, artist, and critic and intuition as an opera lover have had their impact on every page of this volume. Finally, I wish to express publicly my immense private gratitude to my parents for having waited patiently and supportively through many difficult years for me to finish this book, and to whom I lovingly, and thankfully, dedicate it.

Editorial Procedure

Editorial intervention has been kept to a minimum. Clefs have been modernized for voice parts only; the original clefs are indicated at the outset of each piece, along with the original key signature and meter, if any. For ease of reading, key signatures have usually been added when they are implied by the sources. Original note values have been maintained. An attempt has been made to regularize the barring. Thus, while pieces are generally barred according to the source, where additional bar-lines are required these are dotted. Changes of meter are provided where maintaining the same meter would produce measures of irregular, inconsistent length. Editorial accidentals as well as notes missing in the sources are enclosed in brackets. All expression and tempo markings are original and are indicated in italics. Figures are generally those in the sources. Occasionally a figure is added in brackets where the harmony might otherwise be ambiguous.

Poetic texts in the musical examples follow those of the manuscript sources; they have not been altered to conform to the texts quoted from the librettos. Punctuation has been clarified, however, and abbreviations have been expanded. In addition, the beginning of each poetic line has been marked by capitalizing its initial letter. In quoting from librettos and manuscript documents, I have chosen to retain the original capitalization and punctuation as well as spelling. Occasionally, however, punctuation and accents have been added to clarify the meaning.

Abbreviations

AcM	Acta musicologica
AMw	Archiv für Musikwissenschaft
CM	Current Musicology
DBI	Dizionario biografico degli italiani
JAMS	Journal of the American Musicological Society
JM	Journal of Musicology
Mf	Die Musikforschung
ML	Music and Letters
MQ	The Musical Quarterly
MR	Music Review
MT	The Musical Times
NRMI	Nuova rivista musicale italiana
RIM	Rivista italiana di musicologia

RMI	Rivista musicale italiana
StOpIt	Storia dell'opera italiana

Library sigla are those used in RISM (Répertoire international des sources musicales) and listed in The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians (London, 1980).

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Introduction

Opera in Seventeenth-Century Venice rather than "Venetian Opera in the Seventeenth Century": the difference is significant. My concern is with the development of a particular art form in a very particular place. Opera did not originate in Venice, but, as with so many inventions that flourished on the lagoon (printing, for example), what was conceived and born elsewhere found a most nurturing environment in the Most Serene Republic. With the political stability of its oligarchic structure and the economic democracy that sustained it, Venice offered a unique situation for the elaboration of others' inventions. The opening of the Teatro S. Cassiano in 1637 marked the beginning of an important new phase in the history of the young art. What happened to opera in Venice during the seventeenth century was fundamental to the art itself: there and then, opera as we know it assumed its definitive identity—as a mixed theatrical spectacle available to a socially diversified, and paying, audience; a public art.

Born in Florence, and further developed in Rome, opera essentially defined itself as a genre in Venice. There, and only there, three conditions existed that proved crucial for its permanent establishment: regular demand, dependable financial backing, and a broad and predictable audience.

Regularity of demand was guaranteed by the Venetian calendar. Carnival season had been a major tourist attraction in Venice for at least a century. Traditionally hospitable to extravagant entertainments of all kinds, it readily accommodated the latest fashion, music-drama, to display before an audience that was already prepared by the carnival atmosphere to enjoy it.

Dependable financial backing derived from the Venetian sociopolitical structure: competition among patrician families, essentially a self-ennobled merchant class, encouraged investment in theaters as a means of increasing wealth and status. A few powerful families sustained the major expenses of constructing new theaters or adapting old ones for operatic productions. But a broader aristocratic base supported these theaters as annual leaseholders of

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boxes. Indeed, a list of such subscribers from any season in any theater offered a who's-who of Venetian society.

The audience for opera, drawn from the carnival crowds that annually swelled the population of the city, was unusually large; it was also unusually diverse. Carnival was a time of masks, social license, the blurring of class distinctions. When foreign tourists took their places in the theaters, they were surrounded by the full spectrum of Venetians, from the patricians in the boxes to the volgo in the stalls. The significance of this varied audience cannot be overestimated. It was responsible for the breadth of opera in Venice and the range of its appeal. It also provided the basis for the celebration of the myth of Venice that formed such a significant aspect of the public message of opera in the Serenissima: the spectacle of opera mirrored the spectacle of miraculous Venice herself.

Nourished by these particular conditions, opera took quick and healthy root on the lagoon: the first historic spectacle at S. Cassiano in 1637, *Andromeda*, spawned another in 1638, three more in 1639 (in two theaters), five in 1640 and 1641 (in three and four theaters respectively), and as many as seven in 1642.^[1] Success begat success. The more they saw of this spectacular new art form, the more audiences wanted, and what they wanted had to be (or seem) new. The need to supply such a steadily expanding and increasingly demanding market placed great pressure on the muses of librettists and composers. They sought to develop procedures that would speed up the creative process, maximizing the appearance of novelty, of brilliant invention, while allowing them, as efficient craftsmen, to draw on their own—and others'—previous works. Their efforts soon resulted in the establishment of a conventional poetic and musical language and a conventional structural core for plots, one that could support a variety of superficial modifications — a change of setting, an extra complication, or some new topical allusions.

This conventional core not only sustained infinite variation in Venice; it was portable elsewhere. Indeed, just this portability was one of its essential features. For even as it offered hospitality to the new art, a permanent home, Venice sent it out again to the rest of Italy and, eventually, Europe. The troupes responsible for the first Venetian performances of opera were traveling companies ema-

[1] The chronology of the first five years is as follows: 1637: *Andromeda* (S. Cassiano). 1638: *La maga fulminata* (S. Cassiano). 1639: *Le nozze di Teti e di Peleo* (S. Cassiano); *Delia* (SS. Giovanni e Paolo); *Armida* (SS. Giovanni e Paolo). 1640: *Gli amori d'Apollo e di Dafne* (S. Cassiano); *Adone* (SS. Giovanni e Paolo); *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria* (SS. Giovanni e Paolo); *Arianna* (S. Moisè); *Il pastor regio* (S. Moisè). 1641: *Didone* (S. Cassiano); *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria* (S. Cassiano or SS. Giovanni e Paolo); *Le nozze d'Enea e Lavinia* (SS. Giovanni e Paolo); *La ninfa avara* (S. Moisè); *La finta pazza* (Novissimo). 1642: *La virtù de' strali d'Amore* (S. Cassiano); *Narciso ed Ecco immortalati* (SS. Giovanni e Paolo); *Gli amori di Giasone e d'Isifile* (SS. Giovanni e Paolo); *Sidonio e Dorisbe* (S. Moisè); *Amore innamorato* (S. Moisè); *Alcate* (Novissimo); *Bellerofonte* (Novissimo).

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nating from Rome—Venice was initially only a stop on their tour. They found a stable base of operation in Venice, but only during Carnival; off season they still earned their livelihood elsewhere, carrying with them the products of the Venetian stage. Elsewhere, however, the product had to be modified to appeal to different audiences and to suit different performing conditions: topical and local Venetian allusions, for example, would hardly be effective in, say, Bologna or Milan, and temporary theaters in such cities often lacked the possibility of sophisticated stage effects available in Venice. The conventional core, however, which comprised the basic features of the genre, could be adapted accordingly.

The chronological coverage of this book is less than the full seventeenth century promised by its title. Rather, it deals with the forty-year span between the opening of the first and last opera houses of the century: S. Cassiano in 1637 and S. Giovanni Grisostomo in 1678. This limitation is not arbitrary. By 1650 all of the important elements of opera had been laid out, and the next two decades were a period of consolidation. The opening of S. Giovanni Grisostomo, however, marked a change in attitude toward the art, the end of what we can now see as the first of the cycles (all of them of about forty years) that were to shape and reshape opera during the course of its subsequent history: an arc moving between the extremes of aesthetic principle and extravagant over-ripeness. The 1680s heralded the beginning of a new cycle: the development of the so-called reform movement that culminated in the enthronement of Metastasio. The opening of S. Giovanni Grisostomo also coincided with a general increase in operatic activity outside Venice, much of it in public theaters, and, consequently, of the definitive establishment of opera as a pan-Italian—indeed, fully European—phenomenon. The developments of the final decades of the seventeenth century thus belong to a new chapter in opera history.

Between 1637 and 1678, in nine different theaters, Venetian audiences saw more than 150 operas. These were the work of some twenty composers and nearly twice that many librettists. Several individuals stand out among them, for different reasons: the composers Claudio Monteverdi and Francesco Cavalli and the librettist Giovanni Faustini, to name the most prominent. Each of them had a shaping influence on the developing genre. But that influence is not always easy to measure. Monteverdi, for instance, was fully recognized as the greatest composer of his time, and his reputation lent enormous aesthetic prestige to the new genre in Venice. He was also an experienced opera composer, and his lessons to his various librettists in the writing of operatic poetry had important consequences for the future. The influence of his musical style, in particular his approach to text-setting, can be traced in the operas of Cavalli as well as those of other composers, such as Giovanni Antonio Boretti and An-

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tonio Sartorio. But the impact of his operas themselves is less evident. *Il ritorno d'Ulisse* and *L'incoronazione di Poppea* are masterpieces of the genre—the latter is the only opera of the period to enjoy any real place in the twentieth-century repertory—but they were not typical of their time. They represent the culmination of Monteverdi's own development as a madrigalist and interpreter of dramatic poetry, but they did not serve as models for the future: no subsequent opera in Venice quite matches the rich musical elaborations of *Ritorno* or the mimetic and ethical force of *Poppea*.

Closer to providing such models were the works produced almost yearly by the collaboration of Cavalli and Faustini over the course of the decade 1640-50. It was essentially through them that opera in Venice assumed its characteristic physiognomy. But these works made their impact more through repetition than as individual aesthetic objects, demonstrating and reinforcing their successful formulas season after season. High as the quality of some of these operas may have been, it was the regular rhythm of their production that was most significant historically—and their replicability.

For the formula assured its own continuation, at once instigating and permitting its adoption and expansion by other librettists and other composers, who devoted their energies to supplying the market. However powerful, the impact of all individuals—Monteverdi, even Cavalli and Faustini—was relative. Their particular contributions were absorbed, swept up by a general tide of accumulating convention. The product that emerged, opera, was in this respect a group effort.

The complexity of the sources of the developing genre is reflected in the shifting focus of this book, which approaches the material from a variety of critical perspectives: from focus on a single individual (Monteverdi in chapters 1 and 9, Giovanni Faustini in chapter 6, and particularly Cavalli in the chapters devoted to the developing conventions), an intellectual movement (the *Accademia degli Incogniti* in chapter 2), or a theater (the *Teatro Novissimo* in chapter 3, S. Giovanni Grisostomo in chapter 13) to particular works that embody different stages of the development. *La finta pazza* (1641) at the beginning, the first operatic hit, exemplifies the confluence of the local and traveling companies (in chapters 3 and 4); *Giasone* (1649), in the middle, represents a moment of equilibrium in the cycle, a perfectly adjusted meeting of music and drama, the model of the genre to future generations (in chapters 9 and 11); *Orfeo* (1673), in its highly attractive, explicit way, displays the symptoms of decadence that had been gradually infecting the genre since midcentury (in chapter 13).

Other topics involve broader, more general issues that are critical to the history I am writing: the aesthetic soul-searching involved in trying to define

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a bastard genre seeking to combine music and drama (in chapter 2), the emergence of the professional librettist (in chapter 6), the rise of the prima donna (in chapter 8). Most significant of all, and the subject of four full chapters, is the emergence of conventions within the works themselves, the enabling structural units that unified all the individual efforts of composers and librettists. Those conventions are of various kinds and sizes, affecting the several aspects of the works, from the relationship between text and music (in chapter 9) and formal structures for arias (in chapter 10) to dramatic situations suggesting particular musical settings (in chapters 11-12).

The shifting focus of this approach has resulted in a book whose structure might best be described as bipartite (perhaps "rounded binary" would be more accurate). The first eight chapters constitute an A section that is primarily concerned with extramusical issues: the aesthetic definition of opera, the chronology of theater openings and productions, the publication and contents of librettos, the iconography of Venice, and the changing roles of librettist, composer, and singer. The B section (chapters 9-12), attending more precisely to the works themselves, analyzes the development of musical, musico-textual, and musico-dramatic conventions in some detail. And the concluding chapter returns once more to the level of cultural and historical generalization, a final *sententia* on ripeness and decadence—with implications of eventual renewal.

Although the contributions of most of its individual members were anonymous, and difficult to distinguish from one another, the group responsible for the creation of opera in seventeenth-century Venice left a large body of commentary on what they were doing and why. Their letters, contracts, and libretto prefaces not only provide the documentary basis for our reconstruction of the past, they lend a personal, individual dimension to institutional history. To suggest the vitality of the ambience in which opera developed, I have quoted abundantly from this wealth of contemporary commentary, particularly in the A section of this study. The B section is embedded in a documentary context of another kind: a large number of musical examples, mostly complete pieces, drawn from the full range of works produced during this period. Here, for the first time, composers like Ziani, Boretti, and Sartorio take their place alongside Monteverdi, Cavalli, and Cesti as full participants in the development and confirmation of operatic conventions.

Venetian opera was established as a field for study relatively early in the history of musicology, with important steps taken before the end of the nineteenth century. Chief among the pioneers, most appropriately, was a Venetian, Taddeo Wiel, whose primary research facilitated the early efforts—by several German scholars (Hermann Kretzschmar and Hugo Goldschmidt, then Egon

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Wellesz), and a Frenchman (Henry Prunières)—to place the music of Cavalli and Cesti in historical perspective.^[2] That perspective was broadened in 1937 by Helmut Christian Wolff's dissertation on the later seventeenth century, which focused on Venetian works by composers other than Cavalli and Cesti. A new era of Venetian studies was initiated in the 1950s, when the burgeoning literature on Monteverdi yielded a significant monograph on the composer's Venetian operas by Anna Amalie Abert. And in that same year, 1954, Simon Towneley Worsthorne published the first substantial monograph on Venetian opera, in which he considered the librettos and staging of the operas as well as their music. The 1950s also saw publication of the first of Nino Pirrotta's and Wolfgang Osthoff's many contributions to the field,

which approached the material from a variety of special angles, all of them with profound implications for our understanding of the larger phenomenon of opera in Venice. Both Pirrotta and Osthoff expanded the study of Venetian opera to include its social context, which, they demonstrated, offered significant insight into aspects of the creation, function, and meaning of the art.

The literature continued to grow in the course of the following decades with the publication of documentary studies that focused on the history of the theaters, by Remo Giazotto and Nicola Mangini, and a number of monographic dissertations, articles, and books on various figures and topics: William Holmes and Carl Schmidt on Cesti, Thomas Walker (a dissertation unfinished but nonetheless valuable), Martha Clinkscale, Edward Rutschman, and myself on aspects of Cavalli, and Jane Glover on Cavalli and on the Teatro S. Apollinare and the 1650s. More recent dissertations have continued to expand the field of study: Peter Jeffery on the manuscripts in the Contarini Collection, Beth Glixon on recitative, and Harris Saunders on the Teatro S. Giovanni Grisostomo. These recent contributions have clarified our understanding of the role of individual figures and institutions in the history of opera in Venice. At the same time there have been important advances in the definition of the repertory itself. Claudio Sartori's libretto census, in particular, has finally made it possible to clarify the chronology of operatic activity in Venice, and to measure it against that of other centers.

In the past decade or so, however, the most important work in the field has been in the realm of social history. In a series of major publications Lorenzo Bianconi, Giovanni Morelli, and Thomas Walker have enriched and refined our view of these operas by uncovering the social and political matrices in which they were formed, the external forces that helped to shape the works of art; and their interpretations have been based upon the richest foundation of primary

[2] For the specific publications of these scholars, and those mentioned in the following paragraphs, see Bibliography.

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documentation. My debt to these scholars—and to their students in Italy—can be read in the frequency with which they are cited in the footnotes to the following pages.

Opera in Seventeenth-Century Venice builds on this previous scholarship. Although it aims to survey the entire field, from a variety of perspectives, its particular agenda is signaled by its subtitle: *The Creation of a Genre*. Its thesis, as already suggested, is that opera received its most lasting theoretical, as well as practical, definition in the public theaters of seicento Venice. I have used the words of the librettists themselves, and the message they convey through their often jocular, ironic, and defensive tone, as indications of contemporary attitudes toward the phenomenon of opera. And I consider their words a critical framework for discussion of the repertory. This has been done for the Arcadians who followed, and for the Florentines who preceded, but never for the seventeenth-century Venetians, precisely because their voices were never taken seriously. What they offer, in fact, is nothing less than an aesthetics of opera, as relevant today as it was then.

Just as their theoretical discussions can be applied to opera in general, so the practical realization of their ideas, the conventions they developed, continued to shape the operas with which we are most familiar. Modern opera-goers will recognize in those conventions the roots of favorite scenes: Cherubino's song, Tatiana's letter, Lucia's mad scene, Ulrica's invocation, even Tristan and Iseult's love duet, all trace their lineage back to seventeenth-century Venice. There, too, is the beginning of another phenomenon that modern opera-goers will recognize: the hedonistic contract between audience and singers, and its first concrete manifestation, in the *da capo* aria.

One reason that modern audiences may initially fail to appreciate the relationship of these conventions to their own experience is that they were created with disarmingly simple materials. Although the techniques of baroque scenographic spectacle were far from simple—in fact they have hardly been equaled since—the musical means of seventeenth-century opera were comparatively limited; the orchestra was small, the chorus virtually nonexistent. Voices were for the most part accompanied by continuo instruments; arias were short, ensembles few and far between. The forces, in other words, were not overwhelming. But the creators of these operas exploited their resources fully and subtly. Contrast, though on a comparatively small scale, was of the utmost importance: between speech and song, vocal and instrumental sound, string and continuo accompaniment, high and low voices, and between serious and comic moments. A couple of chords on the harpsichord might thus have been sufficient to create the impression of a fierce battle (*Il ritorno d'Ulisse*), three soloists singing together the effect of a chorus of followers (*L'incoronazione di*

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Poppea), and a single juxtaposition of two unrelated tonal realms a fundamental conflict of personalities (*Seneca and Nerone in Poppea*).

Given a chance to speak for themselves, to instruct us in their ways, seventeenth-century operas appear less archaic, less distant than, until recently, we have been led to believe. Not only were they made of the conventional units that have continued to shape opera to our own time, but they appealed to audiences in ways that remain essential to operatic experience. Their plots, however apparently exotic and gratuitously intricate, confronted fundamental realities, universal human passions—love, jealousy, ambition. They dealt with social issues and moral dilemmas—honor, fidelity, deception. Self-conscious from the beginning, the art that combined drama and music continued to make the most of its inherent implausibility by testing it constantly against a standard of verisimilitude. Even as it created depths of mimetic chiaroscuro, drawing an audience into the reality of its fictional pathos, it inevitably found moments in which to reinvoke disbelief: the singer directly addressing the audience, the text directly addressing the art, the topical allusion to life outside the theater. Perhaps the most obvious legacy of Venetian opera to modern practice is the phenomenon of the *prima donna*, the star singer who comes to outshine all else, who makes of the composer's art a vehicle for herself. But that perversion of original values, too, was part of the very vitality of the art, part of its dynamic rapport with its audience.

In witnessing the development of opera on the Venetian stage, we recognize an art we already know. Opera in seventeenth-century Venice is the art of opera itself.

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1— Far recitare un'opera a Venezia : Origins and Sources

This night, having . . . taken our places before, we went to the Opera where comedies and other plays are represented in recitative music by the most excellent musicians vocal and instrumental, with a variety of scenes painted and contrived with no less art of perspective, and machines for flying in the air, and other wonderful motions; taken together it is one of the most magnificent and expensive diversions the wit of men can invent. . . . This held us by the eyes and ears till two

in the morning.
John Evelyn, Diary

The experience that so delighted the English visitor to Venice in 1645—and for which he purchased tickets in advance—was a type of entertainment that had been established in that city for only eight seasons, since 1637: public commercial opera.^[1] The history of its origins in Venice is the story of the beginning of the art as we still know it.

Opera is a mixed theatrical genre, a combination of drama, music, and scenic spectacle, and the balance of those constituent elements has always been a source of its vitality. That same balance is also the source of its problems as an art, raising aesthetic dilemmas that have challenged every generation since its creation. Nevertheless, whatever its uneasy sense of itself as a genre, opera has survived because it is essentially a popular art, because it has managed for nearly four centuries to pack houses, to marshal all its contributing forces to entertain audiences from a broad range of society. With all its expensive magnificence, its fantastic illusion of sound and sight, its glitter of talent and temperament, opera is public spectacle.

Opera has been spectacular from its beginning—but it has not always been public. The birthdate of opera is traditionally set at about 1600, its birthplace Florence. But the art that was created in Florence at the turn of the seventeenth century is in many ways unlike the sung drama we have come to recognize as

[1] *Memoires of John Evelyn*, ed. W. Bray (London, 1819), 1: 191. The opera was *Ercole in Lidia* (Bisaccioni / Rovetta), performed in 1645; according to Evelyn, the performance took place during Ascension week. But see ch. 3, n. 101 below.

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opera. Indeed, in many respects the earliest operas—from Mantua and Rome as well as Florence—were more closely linked to the past than to the future. They manifest a closer kinship with such theatrical predecessors as humanist plays with music or the intermedi of the sixteenth-century courts than with the subsequent development of the genre. What we regard as opera was fundamentally an urban development, created with the tastes of a large, cosmopolitan, and varied audience in mind.^[2]

The first operas, *Dafne*, *Euridice*, *Orfeo*, *Arianna*, like the intermedi before them, were courtly entertainments; the earliest of them, *Dafne*, even shared its subject matter and poet with an intermedio of 1589.^[3] They were commissioned and created to celebrate specific political or social occasions, and were performed before an invited patrician audience. Productions enjoyed the relatively unrestricted budget of aristocratic patronage, and the music and poetry were subject only to the patrons' taste and the exigencies and decorum of the occasion.^[4] The collaborators in these productions—poets, composers, scene and costume designers—were essentially servants of the court, and their works were conceived as celebration. Verbally and visually, iconographic conceit and allegorical allusion extolled a ruling dynasty—Medici, Gonzaga, or Barberini—besides marking the specific occasion.^[5] The splendor and lavishness of the productions reflected further glory on the ruler, brightening his image at home and abroad.

Usually these works were produced only once, though court chroniclers were charged with preserving them for posterity through detailed descriptions that appeared in print. We learn a great deal about Peri's *Euridice* and Caccini's *Il rapimento di Cefalo* from the account by Michelangelo Buonarroti the Younger, a Medici courtier who was a poet and dramatist in his own right as well as the first editor of his famous grand-uncle's poetry.^[6] And Monteverdi's *Arianna* is brought to life through the chronicle of the Mantuan court reporter

[2] See Lorenzo Bianconi's eloquent treatment of the distinction between courtly and public opera in *Il seicento* (1982), translated as *Music in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, 1987), 163-66. All citations are to the English edition.

[3] The third of the five intermedi for *La pellegrina* celebrated Apollo's victory over the serpent Python. The text was by Ottavio Rinuccini: librettist not only of *Dafne* but of *Euridice* and *Arianna* as well. The relationship between the two treatments of Apollo's victory is discussed in Barbara Russano Hanning, "Glorious Apollo: Poetic and Political Themes in the First Opera," *Renaissance Quarterly* 32 (1979): 485-513. On these intermedi in general, see Nino Pirrotta and Elena Povoledo, *Li due Orfei* (1969, 1975), translated as *Music and Theatre from Poliziano to Monteverdi* (Cambridge, 1982), 212-36. All citations are to the English edition.

[4] Although *Orfeo* (Striggio/Monteverdi) was not written for a specific political occasion, but as a carnival performance under the auspices of a Mantuan academy, it shares most of the distinctive features of the other works.

[5] For Medici iconography in the first Florentine operas, see Hanning, "Glorious Apollo."

[6] *Descrizione delle felicissime Nozze della Cristianissima Maesta di Madama Maria Medici Regina di Francia e di Navarra* (Florence: Marescotti, 1600), partly transcribed in Angelo Solerti, *Gli albori del melodramma* (Milan, Palermo, and Naples, 1904), 2: 113. See L. Rossi, "Michelangelo Buonarroti, il Giovane," *DBI* 15 (Rome, 1972): 178-81.

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Federico Follino.^[7] The early Florentine and Mantuan operas find analogues in Barberini Rome, where for more than a decade operatic entertainments enhanced the image of the papal court. They also find an echo later in the Paris of Louis XIV, where each one of Lully's and Quinault's tragédies lyriques began and ended with an encomium to le roi soleil.

This kind of opera, "performed in the palaces of great princes and other secular or ecclesiastic lords" ("*fatta ne' palazzi de' principi grandi, e d'altri signori secolari o ecclesiastici*"), was the first and most praiseworthy of the three categories of musical spectacle distinguished by the Jesuit Giovan Domenico Ottonelli in his moralizing treatise *Della Cristiana moderazione del teatro* (1652).^[8] This category he labeled the princely. The second category, the academic, linked to the first and of nearly equal status, was the kind "put on sometimes by certain gentlemen or talented citizens or learned academicians" ("*che rappresentano tal volta alcuni gentiluomini o cittadini virtuosi o accademici eruditi*").

Opera in Venice, however, was of an entirely different order. Ottonelli called it "*mercenaria*." Musically and conceptually, of course, this "*mercenary*" opera was indebted to the earlier models produced at Florence, Mantua, and Rome. The idea of wholly sung drama would have been unthinkable without the first experiments of Rinuccini, Peri, and Caccini. Nevertheless, opera in Venice was more profoundly affected by other factors. Above all, it responded to the unique sociopolitical structure of the Republic and its distinctive urban fabric. Opera as we know it, as an art appealing to a broad audience, had its origins in this special environment. Venice nurtured opera's development in a variety of ways and for a variety of reasons.

Venetian Foundations

The Most Serene Republic of St. Mark had long enjoyed a distinctive reputation as a haven of freedom and stability, a state with its own special position in the world and in history. What modern historians have come to know as the "myth of Venice" played a role not only in preparing the ground for the establishment and subsequent flourishing of opera there, but also in the actual substance and message of what was mounted on stage.

[7] *Compendio delle sontuose feste fatte l'anno MDCVIII nella città di Mantova* (Mantua: Osanna, 1608); see Solerti, *Gli albori*, 2: 145-46. Orfeo, not being politically inspired, was not accompanied by such a description.

[8] The topic is treated in book 4, n. 3 of Ottonelli's treatise: "Delle commedie cantate a nostro tempo, e di quante sorti, e di che qualità si rappresentino." The relevant passages, as cited in Ferdinando Taviani, *La commedia dell'arte e la società barocca: La fascinazione del teatro* (Rome, 1969), 509-13, are given in Appendix II.3 below. See also Lorenzo Bianconi and Thomas Walker, "Dalla 'Finta pazza' alla 'Veramonda': Storie di Febiarmonici," *RIM* 10 (1975): 406-10.

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Unique among the Italian states, Venice could not boast a Roman foundation. Rather, it owed its origins, as a haven for those fleeing the invading barbarians, to the fall of the Roman empire. Claiming to have been founded on the day of the Annunciation, 25 March 421 (according to the dominant legend), Venice promulgated itself as the first republic of the new Christian era, and therefore as the only legitimate successor to fallen pagan Rome. The greatness of the Venetian state was to be seen in its longevity and its political continuity; by the seventeenth century it had already lasted longer than ancient Rome. On a more practical level, the famed stability of Venice was said to depend on two special factors: its site and its constitution. The governmental structure of the Republic was celebrated for being a regimen temperature, a perfectly balanced state. Venice, according to its own myth, had realized the classical ideal of mixed government. The Doge represented the monarchical component, the Senate the aristocratic, and the *Maggior Consiglio* the democratic. As a constitutional oligarchy, Venice concentrated political power in a relatively restricted patriciate; within the nobility, however, that power was distributed in a way that precluded any individual or clan from assuming an undue share. This harmony of power was the prerogative of perhaps 2 percent of the population. That the disenfranchised majority seemed content, that patrician Venice suffered no serious internal dissension, appeared only to confirm its privileged state of grace. And that sanctified state was further manifest in the very image of this splendid city, founded miraculously upon the waters; unwalled, yet unconquered for more than a millennium. The physical city itself stood as proof of its uniqueness.^[9]

The Venetian ruling class, although restricted and hereditary, was actually more open than that of other states. It comprised a large number of families of equal rank—equal in theory, that is, if not in practice. What especially distinguished the Venetian nobility was its active and privileged involvement in commerce. The ruling patrician was also a merchant of Venice, and his economic enterprise extended beyond investments in trade and banking to include all the arts—and so, eventually, opera. The Tron, Vendramin, Grimani, Giustiniani, and Contarini were among the leading families of the Venetian patriciate, and they were the most important backers of opera in Venice. Beyond the obvious desire to enhance family prestige, their interest in the art was largely commercial; they invested in opera houses primarily for financial gain, and the

[9] For literature on the myth of Venice, see Ellen Rosand, "Music in the Myth of Venice," *Renaissance Quarterly* 30 (1977): 511-37, n. 1; and, more recently, David Rosand, "Venetia figurata: The Iconography of a Myth," in *Interpretazioni veneziane: Studi di storia dell'arte in onore di Michelangelo Muraro*, ed. David Rosand (Venice, 1984), 177-96, and James S. Grubb, "When Myths Lose Power: Four Decades of Venetian Historiography," *Journal of Modern History* 58 (1986): 43-94.

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profit motive could not help but affect the product. Expenditures were carefully limited, imposing strictures on librettists, composers, and scene designers. The spectacle of the courts could hardly be indulged. In Venice, opera was a business.^[10]

Venice had its own traditions of elaborate public pageantry, its own expanding calendar of annual politico-religious festivals: the Marriage to the Sea celebrated on Ascension Day, victory at Lepanto on the Feast of Sta. Giustina, and the Feast of St. Mark, to name only a few. It celebrated special occasions as well, its ducal coronations and royal visits. And all of these celebrations involved elaborate entertainments featuring music, spectacle, processions, and theatrical presentations.^[11] But opera did not emerge in Venice from such a background of occasional or ceremonial spectacle; it had different progenitors. Its roots were, and remained, in the carnival season, with its established tradition of theatrical performances by troupes of itinerant players, performances for which tickets were sold.^[12] These activities became especially intense after the crisis of the Interdict (1605-7), when, with the expulsion of the Jesuits from Venice, the *comici*, who had been excluded by them, returned to the city with impunity.^[13]

Crossroads of east and west, Venice was a port city characterized by a lively cosmopolitan and even exotic atmosphere. Its carnival celebrations earned in-

[10] For three contrasting models of opera patronage in the seventeenth century, in Rome, Venice, and Reggio Emilia, see Lorenzo Bianconi and Thomas Walker, "Production, Consumption, and Political Function of Seventeenth-Century Opera," *Early Music History* 4 (1984): 209-96.

[11] Perhaps no series of events could match those mounted by the *Serenissima* in honor of the visit of Henry III in 1574. For a documentary history of that visit, see Pier de Nolhac and Angelo Solerti, *Il viaggio in Italia di Enrico III re di Francia e le feste a Venezia, Ferrara, Mantova e Torino* (Turin, 1890); also Angelo Solerti, "Le rappresentazioni musicali di Venezia dal 1571 al 1605," *RMI* 9 (1902): 554-58; and Margaret Gilmore, "Monteverdi and Dramatic Music in Venice, 1595-1637" (MS).

[12] A vivid picture of the flourishing theatrical life of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Venice is provided by Maria Teresa Muraro, "La festa a Venezia e le sue manifestazioni rappresentative: Le compagnie della Calza e le momarie," in *Storia della cultura veneta dal primo quattrocento al concilio di Trento*, 3.3 (Vicenza, 1983): 315-42; see also Elena Povoledo, "Scène et mise en scène à Venise: De la décadence des compagnies de la Calza jusqu'à la représentation de L'Andromeda au Théâtre de San Cassian (1637)," in *Renaissance, Maniérisme, Baroque*, Actes du XI Stage International de Tours (Paris, 1972), 87-99. For a concise discussion of the traditional Venetian carnival activities, see Edward Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice* (Princeton, 1981), 156-81; and, more recently, with emphasis on its sociological implications, Peter Burke, *The Historical Anthropology of Early Modern Italy* (Cambridge, 1987), ch. 13, "The Carnival of Venice."

[13] The return in full force of the comedy troupes in 1607, just after the Interdict, is documented in the diary of Gerolamo Priuli, who reports the presence of three different companies of actors at the same time (quoted in Nicola Mangini, *I teatri di Venezia* [Milan, 1974], 34). See also Mangini's discussion of the relationship of the *comici* and *teatri stabili*, 33-35; and Pompeo Molmenti, "Venezia alla metà del secolo XVII descritta da due contemporanei," in *Curiosità di storia veneziana* (Bologna, 1920), 313, 317. By the late 1620s the actors were performing at the same theaters that would soon host operatic

entertainments: S. Cassiano, S. Moisè, S. Salvatore, and SS. Giovanni e Paolo. See Elena Povoledo, "Una rappresentazione accademica a Venezia nel 1634," in *Studi sul teatro veneto fra rinascimento ed età barocca*, ed. Maria Teresa Muraro (Florence, 1971), 119-69; also Mangini, *I teatri di Venezia*, ch. 2. "Il seicento."

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ternational renown and made the city, long a necessary stop for travelers, a special attraction for tourists. The population of the city, which hovered around 50,000 during most of the seventeenth century, swelled to nearly twice that number each year for the approximately six to ten weeks of Carnival (from 26 December, the Feast of St. Stephen, to Shrove Tuesday).^[14] That season of liberation, of the dropping of social barriers and distinctions, was celebrated by fireworks, ballets, masquerades, bull chases, fights. Much of the excitement was provided by the dramatic entertainments performed throughout the city, indoors and out, by resident groups as well as visitors, bands of *comici dell'arte* who arrived in Venice in time for Carnival and dispersed when it was over. Just such a group, a traveling company of musicians, headed by Benedetto Ferrari and Francesco Manelli, brought opera to the lagoon for the first time. It was during the carnival season of 1637 that opera in Venice began.

Almost exactly the same company had appeared in Padua the previous year. It returned to Venice in subsequent seasons, along with other similarly constituted groups inspired by its success.^[15] These groups were responsible for producing operas of Ottonelli's third and least respectable category, for which the Jesuit reserved most of his admonitory passion: "the mercenary and dramatic musical representations, that is, the ones performed by those mercenary musicians who are professional actors, and who, organized in a company, are directed and governed by one of their own, acting as authority and head of the others" (Appendix II.3b).

Such traveling companies soon yielded to more permanent, locally based troupes and a more stable structure as the impact of the new entertainment made itself felt and began to be exploited by Venetian entrepreneurs. Nevertheless, many of the distinctive qualities of the first operas in Venice, those produced by Ferrari's company, survived. Since opera remained confined to carnival season, its potential audience remained essentially the same: a heterogeneous mix of patricians and *cittadini*, tourists and travelers, Venetians and foreigners, all of whom paid for the privilege of being entertained.^[16]

[14] On the fluctuating population of Venice, see R. T. Rapp, *Industry and Economic Decline in Seventeenth-Century Venice* (Cambridge, Mass., 1976), 176-77.

[15] Such traveling opera companies, most of them from Rome or trained there, had appeared elsewhere in Italy before 1636. See Nino Pirrotta, "Commedia dell'Arte and Opera," in *Music and Culture in Italy from the Middle Ages to the Baroque*, henceforth cited as *Essays* (Cambridge, Mass., 1984), 353-54; and id., "Tre capitoli su Cesti," in *La scuola romana* (Siena, 1953), 28-34; also Bianconi and Walker, "Dalla 'Finta pazza,'" 395-405.

[16] Although diverse social classes were represented in the audience, the proportion of seats reserved for gondoliers and courtesans has probably been exaggerated; see Bianconi, *Seventeenth Century*, 184. Lower-class opera-goers may have been irrelevant for the economic structure of the theater, as Bianconi claims, but, as I argue below, they had an impact on the aesthetic character of the works that were performed.

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Commercial success was of primary concern, and that could be achieved only by creating works with broad audience appeal. Opera in Venice was distinguished from that in Florence and other courts of Italy by the nature of its audience and by its socioeconomic base. Public approbation was important not only to the financial backers; it affected composers, librettists, and scenographers as well. These were independent professionals, who were themselves often involved financially as well as artistically in their own productions. The aim was to turn a profit. The success of an opera depended on its appealing to a large and varied audience; it had to play for a season, to keep the house filled night after night.

Although initiatives of the private sector, the opera houses, like every other Venetian institution, were regulated by the government. An enterprise as public as the theater, attracting crowds of *forestieri* as well as Venetians, obviously required responsible scrutiny. Regulation involved various magistracies, including the *Provveditori di comune* and, more gravely, the Council of Ten; it was designed to ensure the well-being of the public as well as of the state as a whole. Theater buildings were regularly inspected for safety hazards and had to be licensed each season before productions could even be advertised. Opening and closing times, and even the price of librettos sold at the door, were established by government decree.^[17]

Monteverdi in the Wings

The Venetian experiment of Ferrari and Manelli took immediate root. Their return with a new production the following season affirmed and confirmed the existence of opera in Venice as a seasonal occurrence. Ferrari and Manelli were not, however, the first composers of opera to reach Venice, though they may have been the first to bring opera to the Venetian stage. Claudio Monteverdi, undoubtedly the most celebrated opera composer of his day, had been living in Venice since 1613, when he assumed the position of *maestro di cappella* at San Marco (fig. 1). Monteverdi was the composer of numerous theatrical entertainments in addition to the two famous Mantuan operas *Orfeo* and *Arianna* of 1607-8. Most recently his "favola pastorale," *Proserpina rapita*, had been performed in Venice, in the Palazzo Mocenigo, in 1630. Yet the seventy-year-old composer remained aloof from the new operatic activities. Perhaps it would have been unseemly for the *maestro di cappella* to express overt interest in the public theater;^[18] possibly, too, his advanced age discouraged him from under-

[17] See Cristoforo Ivanovich, *Minerva al tavolino* (Venice: Pezzana, 1681), 405-7 (Appendix II.6s).

[18] The same factor probably restrained his San Marco colleague, Giovanni Battista Rovettino, from participating in opera. For Monteverdi's reluctance, see Nino Pirrotta, "Early Venetian Libretti at Los Angeles," *Essays*, 321-22.

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Giovanni Battista Marinoni, *Fiori poetici raccolti nel funerale del molto illustre e molto reverendo Signor Claudio Monteverde* (Venice, 1644), title page.

taking so large-scale a project as an opera. Whatever the cause, his silence is remarkable not only to us. It was noticed by several of his contemporaries. One of them, probably in late 1637 or 1638, commented expectantly that Monteverdi might surprise everyone and produce an opera for Venice after all: "God willing, one of these nights he too will step onto the stage, where everyone else

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is about to appear, with the production of a musical drama," to which the appreciative response was: "Even if he doesn't actually appear, he'll be there in spirit, since he was so powerfully behind the whole business."^[19] Clearly Monteverdi's participation was expected; and it was missed. In 1640 the librettist Giacomo Badoaro claimed to have written the text of *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria* for the express purpose of encouraging his friend Monteverdi to enter the operatic arena:

From the author to the Most Illustrious and Reverend Signor Claudio Monteverdi, Great Master of Music. Not to compete with those inspired minds, which in these very years have published their compositions in the Venetian theaters, but to stimulate the virtue of Your Excellence to make known to this city that in the warmth of the affections there is a great difference between a true sun and a painted one, I dedicated myself, as a matter of principle, to compose *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*. (Appendix I. 7a)

It was not until 1640, then, after three seasons of observing the operatic activities of younger musicians from the sidelines, that Monteverdi finally—and, it would seem, still reluctantly—made his move. He first revived an old opera, *Arianna*, which ostensibly required little of his time or energy. Then he produced a new one, *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*, which obviously must have required a great deal of both.^[20]

Although *Arianna* was one of Monteverdi's favorite works,^[21] reviving it in Venice, thirty years after its creation, would seem to have been an unlikely, even unworkable, enterprise. The conditions of opera production, not to mention the aesthetics of opera and Monteverdi's own style, had changed radically. To be sure, some revisions were made in the work, apparently to suit new, Venetian conditions. These included the cutting of many of the choruses and the alteration of some passages specifically linked to the original performance in Mantua, as well as elimination of the designation *tragedia* from the title

[19] "Dio voglia non se avanzi anco sopra delle scene dove tutti li altri sono per capitare una di queste sere con una Comica, et musicale rappresentatione." "Se non vi sarà in atto vi potrà essere in potenza perche haverà consigliato forte il tutto" ("Satire, et altre raccolte per l'Academia de gl'Unisoni in casa di Giulio Strozzi," I-Vnm, It. X, 115 [7193], fifth satire, f. 61 ; quoted in Ellen Rosand, "Barbara Strozzi, virtuosissima cantatrice : The Composer's Voice," JAMS 31 [1978]: 251 n. 34).

[20] Two librettos of Arianna were printed in Venice, one in 1639, the other in 1640. The earlier, L'Arianna: Tragedia del Signor Ottavio Rinuccini . . . rappresentata in musica (Venice: Salvadori, 1639), appeared without the composer's name—and very possibly, therefore, without his approval. It surely did not correspond to a Venetian performance, but merely reprinted the original text of 1608 verbatim. The 1640 libretto, however, L'Arianna del Sig. Ottavio Rinuccini, posta in musica dal Sig. Claudio Monteverdi, rappresentata in Venetia l'anno 1640 (Venice: Bariletti, 1640), clearly corresponded to a performance in that year. Monteverdi had already expressed a desire to alter Arianna for a performance in Mantua in 1620, which apparently never took place (cf. letters of 17, 21, and 28 March 1620 in Claudio Monteverdi: Lettere, dediche, e prefazioni , ed. Domenico de' Paoli [Rome, 1973]).

[21] See Gary Tomlinson, "Madrigal, Monody, and Monteverdi's via naturale alla immitatione," JAMS 34 (1981): 86-96.

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page.^[22] Despite such adaptive changes, the opera remained very different in tone, structure, and content from any of its contemporaries on the Venetian stage. Clearly, however, Monteverdi's reputation must have been more than sufficient to compensate for the inevitable stylistic incongruities.^[23] The dedication of the libretto to one Bortolo Stacio, signed by the printer, gives some sense of the composer's exalted status:

Now that Arianna, the most praised of dramatic compositions in Italian theaters, returns to the stage in Venice, the work of Signor Claudio Monteverdi, most celebrated Apollo of the century and the highest intelligence of the heaven of harmony, I take the occasion to no longer keep my [respect] hidden from you, but, by offering it in the name of Your Excellency, to manifest [that respect] to the world by means of its new reprinting. (Appendix I.6a)

And this is reinforced by Benedetto Ferrari's oft-mentioned sonnet of homage to the older master, whom he addressed as "l'Oracolo della musica" (Appendix I.6b).

Arianna was a monument to Monteverdi's past glory; *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria* boldly affirmed his present powers. Any hesitation on the composer's part must have been dispelled by the success of the new work, which ran for ten performances in Venice and was produced in Bologna as well.^[24] For he wrote two more operas before his death in 1643. *Le nozze d'Enea e Lavinia* was produced in the 1640-41 season and *L'incoronazione di Poppea* in 1642-43.^[25] Three new operas in four years: an amazing creative spurt for a 75-year-old composer whose operatic career had long seemed finished.

The radical differences between these late works of Monteverdi and his first opera, *Orfeo*, have been noted by every student of the subject.^[26] The evolution

[22] The choruses are placed between virgolette (inverted commas), the standard means of indicating textual cuts in performance. The prologue, originally addressed to Carlo Emanuele of Savoy, was revised and addressed to the Venetian doge. See Nino Pirrotta, "Early Venetian Libretti," *Essays*, 320-21. The differences between the two librettos are briefly mentioned in Domenico de' Paoli, *Claudio Monteverdi* (Milan, 1979), 455-56.

[23] Despite its anachronistic appearance, Pirrotta regards Arianna as having encouraged a new interest in classicizing themes among Venetian operas ("Monteverdi and the Problems of Opera," *Essays*, 251).

[24] Pirrotta (*ibid.*) claimed that the Bologna performance of *Il ritorno d'Ulisse* was its premiere, another indication of Monteverdi's initial reluctance to participate in Venetian operatic life; but this was convincingly disputed by Wolfgang Osthoff ("Zur Bologneser Aufführung von Monteverdis 'Ritorno di Ulisse' im Jahre 1640," in *Mitteilungen der Kommission für Musikforschung* [Vienna, 1958], 155-60). Osthoff's source for his dating of the Bologna performance, *Le glorie della musica celebrate dalla sorella poesia, rappresentandosi in Bologna la Delia, e l'Ulisse nel teatro de gl'Illustriss. Guastavillani* (Bologna: Ferroni, 1640), identifies some of the performers: Madalena Manelli played the role of Minerva (and Venere in *Delia*), while Giulia Paoletti was Penelope (and *Delia*). On the dating of *Ritorno*, see ch. 3, no. 36, below.

[25] The title *Le nozze d'Enea in Lavinia* is given in the only printed document for the performance of the work, the *Argomento e scenario* (1640); I have adopted the more conventional form of the title from some of the manuscript librettos.

[26] Those differences prompted Nino Pirrotta to propose, for an essay attempting to explain or account for them, the whimsical title "Opera from Monteverdi to Monteverdi" ("Monteverdi and the Problems of Opera," *Essays*, 248).

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of Monteverdi's own style would be enough to account for the major differences between the works. But, although *Orfeo* and *Poppea* do indeed exemplify two important points in his development, they also serve to illustrate vividly the distinctions between court and public opera. These distinctions can be brought into relief by a comparison of the surviving sources.

Orfeo and Poppea

The score of *Orfeo*, like those of its operatic predecessors in Florence and most of its successors in Rome, was published, although not until two years after the work was performed.^[27] Dedicated by the composer to the patron of the Mantuan production, the publication was commemorative, its purpose to preserve the event for posterity.

The fable of Orpheus, which has already been represented in music under the auspices of your Highness on a small stage at the Accademia degli Invaghiti, now having to appear in the great theater of the universe to show itself to all men, there is no reason that it should allow itself to be associated with any other name than that of Your Glorious and Fortunate Highness. To you therefore I humbly consecrate it, so that you, who as a benign star were propitious at its birth, with the most serene rays of your grace, will deign to favor the progress of its life.^[28]

Indeed, the edition, using the past tense, records a number of details of the original performance, particularly regarding specifics of orchestration, not fully indicated in the music itself. For example, a song at the beginning of act 1 "fu concertato al suono de tutti gli stromenti" ("was accompanied by the sound of all the instruments") and a ballet shortly thereafter "fu cantato al suono di cinque Viole da braccio" ("was sung to the sound of five viole da braccio").^[29] There are even occasional references to staging, such as this near the beginning of act 2: "Questo ritornello fu sonato di dentro da un Clavicembano [sic], duoi Chitaroni, & duoi Violini piccioli alla Francese" ("This ritornello was played from within by a clavicembalo, two chitaroni, and two small French violins").^[30] And, at the beginning of act 5: "Duoi Organi di legno, & duoi

[27] L'Orfeo: Favola in Musica da Claudio Monteverdi Rappresentata in Mantova l'Anno 1607. & novamente data in luce. Al Serenissimo Signor D. Francesco Gonzaga, Principe di Mantova, e di Monferrato, . . . In Venetia appresso Ricciardo Amadino. MDCIX (facsimile published by Adolf Sandberger, Augsburg: Benno Filzer, 1927; henceforth cited as *Orfeo*). Atypically, the score was reprinted in 1615 (facsimile published by Denis Stevens, Westmead, Farnborough, Hants, England: Gregg International Publishers, 1972).

[28] "La favola d'Orfeo, che già nell'Academia de gl'Invaghiti sotto gl'auspiti di V.A. fu sopra angusta Scena musicalmente rappresentata, dovendo hora comparire nel gran Teatro dell'universo a far mostra di se a tutti gl'huomini, non è ragione che si lasci vedere con altro nome signata, che con quello dell'Altezza V. glorioso, & felice, A lei dunque humilmente la consacro, affinch'ella che a guisa di benigna stella le fu propitia nel suo nascimento, con i Serenissimi raggi della gratia sua, si degni di favorir il progresso della sua vita" (*Orfeo* , composer's preface).

[29] *Orfeo* , 8, 10.

[30] *Orfeo* , 27.

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Chitaroni concertorno questo Canto sonando l'uno nel angolo sinistro de la Sena, l'altro nel destro" ("Two wooden organs and two chitaroni accompanied this song, one of them playing in the left corner of the stage, the other in the right corner").^[31] But several directions are given in the present tense, suggesting that the purpose of the print may have been somewhat broader: to serve not only as a historical document but as a practical one as well, a kind of generic score providing the basis for future performances.^[32] In fact, the score offers several choices, such as that for the opening toccata "che si suona avanti il levar da la tela tre volte con tutti li stromenti, & si faun tuono piu alto volendo sonar le trombe con le sordine" ("which is played three times with all the instruments before the curtain rises, and if one wishes to use muted trumpets, this piece should be played a tone higher").^[33] Perhaps the most striking, most curious choice is offered for *Orfeo*'s central number, "Possente spirito," where the singer is directed to perform only one of the two lines, the first unadorned, the second a highly elaborated version of the first: "Orfeo al suono del Organo di legno, & un Chitarone, canta una sola de le due parti" ("Orfeo, to the sound of the wood organ and a chitarone, sings only one of the two parts") (fig. 2).^[34]

The libretto of *Orfeo* was also printed, two years earlier, presumably shortly before the first performance of the opera.^[35] It matches the printed score quite closely, with the single major exception of the ending; the score alters the original myth so that the opera ends happily.^[36] Although published by the ducal

[31] *Orfeo* , 89.

[32] However, we have no reliable records of later performances of *Orfeo* ; see Iain Fenlon, "The Mantuan 'Orfeo,' " in Claudio Monteverdi: *Orfeo* , ed. John Whenham (Cambridge, 1986), 18. The revival of scores that were published was somewhat exceptional, but Peri's and Rinuccini's *Euridice* (1600) was apparently performed in Bologna in 1616; Loreto Vittori's *Galatea* , published in 1639, served as the basis for a performance in 1644 (see Bianconi, *Seventeenth Century* , 170); Domenico Mazzocchi's *La catena d'Adone* (1626) was performed in Bologna in 1648 and Piacenza in 1650 (see Bianconi and Walker, "Dalla 'Finta pazza,'" 426 n. 194, 433 n. 219); and Stefano Landi's *Sant'Alessio* (1632) was performed in Reggio Emilia in 1645.

[33] On the transposition of the toccata, see Wolfgang Osthoff, "Trombe sordine," *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft* 13 (1956): 77-95.

[34] *Orfeo* , 52. A contemporary publication by Bartolomeo Barberini, *Secondo libretto delli motetti* (Venice: Vincenti, 1614), which provides two versions of each of its pieces, may shed some light on this. As Barberini explains in his preface to the reader, the first version, unornamented, is for those singers lacking "disposizione di passeggiare," that is, those unable to perform the embellishments, and for those with "disposizione," who already know the rules of embellishment and can do it themselves; the second, ornamented, is for those unschooled in the methods of embellishment but technically able to perform them. Pirrotta (*Music and Theatre* , 277), suggests that the unadorned version may have been intended to be sung as written. It is hardly likely, however, that a singer engaged for the title role of an opera would have lacked "disposizione di passeggiare." The most reasonable explanation, suggested to me by Lorenzo Bianconi, combines the function of documenting the past (this is how Francesco Rasi, the original *Orfeo* , sang the piece in 1607) with concern for the future (here is the skeleton, ornament it as you wish).

[35] *La favola d'Orfeo: Rappresentata in musica il carnevale dell'anno M. D. CVII nell'Accademia de gli Invaghiti di Mantova, sotto i felici auspizij del Serenissimo Sig. Duca benignissimo lor protettore, In Mantova, per Francesco Osanna stampator Ducale. . . 1607* . There were probably at least two performances (see Fenlon, "Mantuan 'Orfeo,'" 9-18).

[36] There is a full literature on this alteration. Pirrotta was the first to suggest that the apotheosis preserved in the score was part of the original ending, which had to be modified because the performancesite was too small ("Theater, Sets, and Music in Monteverdi's Operas," *Essays* , 258-59, and "Monteverdi's Poetic Choices," *Essays* , 291 n. 44) and was then restored for a second performance. Fenlon ("Mantuan 'Orfeo,' " 16), although agreeing with Pirrotta that the apotheosis did not take place at the first performance, holds to the more traditional view that the bacchic finale was the original one.

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2.

Claudio Monteverdi, *L'Orfeo*, favola in musica
(Venice, 1615), p. 52.

printer, this libretto was not designed primarily as a commemorative document. Thus it fails to mention either the composer or—and this is more unusual—the poet. It was used by the audience as an aid to following the action.^[37]

[37] See *Orfeo*, ed. Whenham, appendix I, letter 9: "The play has been printed so that everyone in the audience can have a copy to follow while the performance is in progress."

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In contrast to the score of *Orfeo*, that of *Poppea* was never printed. It survives in two manuscript copies, neither of which can be linked with its initial performance. Documentation for that first performance is slim indeed, resting solely on a scenario — a scene-by-scene synopsis of the action that was printed not for commemorative reasons but, once again, for the practical purpose of helping the audience in the theater to follow the performance.^[38] The scenario mentions neither the composer nor the poet. In fact, there is no printed documentation whatsoever for Monteverdi's authorship of the music. Two librettos eventually appeared in print, but not until 1651 and 1656. The latter, published along with his other librettos by the poet himself, Gian Francesco Busenello, mentions the original date of performance on its title page but fails to include the composer's name.^[39] As for the 1651 libretto, published in conjunction with a Neapolitan revival, it lacks the names of both the composer and the poet, as well as the original date.^[40]

The two manuscript scores of *Poppea* might best be described as performance scores.^[41] They memorialize expedients adopted for one or several specific performances after the premiere (figs. 3a, 3b). Transpositions, cuts, rearrangements, not all of them fully worked out or reconciled with one another, are indicated in various strata throughout both manuscripts. Preserved, it would seem, by chance, these scores owe their survival to the fact that the opera was revived; both are probably connected with the revival that took place in Naples in 1651.^[42] Evidently, despite Monteverdi's enormous reputation, there was no interest in preserving the music of the first performance of *Poppea*.^[43] That music per se had no practical value except as a basis for subsequent

[38] Scenario dell'opera reggia intitolata La Coronatione di Poppea. Che si rappresenta in Musica net Theatro dell'Illustr. Sig. Giovanni Grimani, In Venetia, 1643, presso Gio: Pietro Pinelli; the scenario is available in a modern edition in Claudio Gallico, *Monteverdi* (Turin, 1979), 92-96. For a full discussion of scenarios, see ch. 2 below; also Ellen Rosand, "The Opera Scenario, 1638-1655: A Preliminary Survey," in *In cantu et in sermone: For Nino Pirrotta on His 80th Birthday*, ed. Fabrizio della Seta and Franco Piperno (Florence, 1989), 335-46.

[39] See *Delle hore ociose di Gio: Francesco Busenello. Parte prima. All'Eminentissimo Principe Il Sig. Cardinal Ottoboni* (Venice: Giuliani, 1656).

[40] *Il Nerone overo L'incoronatione di Poppea, Drama musicale dedicato all'Illustriss. & Eccellentiss. Sig. D. Inigo De Guevara, et Tassis* (Naples: Molli, 1651).

[41] I-Vnm, It. IV, 439 (19963), facsimile ed. by Giacomo Benvenuti (Milan: Bocca, 1938), and Forni reprint (Bologna, n.d.); and I-Nc, Rari 6.4. 1.

[42] Wolfgang Osthoff was the author of two classic articles on the sources of *Poppea*: "Die venezianische und neapolitanische Fassung von Monteverdis 'Incoronazione di Poppea,'" *AcM* 26 (1954): 88-113, and "Neue Beobachtungen zu Quellen und Geschichte von Monteverdis 'Incoronazione di Pop-pea,'" *Mf* 11 (1958): 129-38. More recently, the origin and provenance of these scores have been discussed and extensively reevaluated by Alessandra Chiarelli, "L'incoronazione di Poppea o 'Il Nerone': Problemi di filologia testuale," *RIM* 9 (1974): 117-51; see also Peter Jeffery, "The Autograph Manuscripts of Francesco Cavalli" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1980). The most recent reexamination of the sources, by Alan Curtis ("La *Poppea* impasticciata, or Who Wrote the Music to L'incoronazione [1643]?"

functions. In its successive strophes, for instance, "Possente spirito" displays first violins, then cornetti, then double harp, and finally violins again, the variety enhancing the moving power of Orfeo's prayer.^[44]

The *Poppea* scores, on the other hand, contain considerably fewer instrumental movements, and the voice is invariably accompanied only by a bass line. Furthermore, they contain no instrumental specifications. This notational reticence is more than a matter of expediency. It reflects an actual difference in instrumental practice between the Mantua of 1607 and the Venice of 1642. The chief components of the typical Venetian opera orchestra, as attested by a few widely scattered documents, were a large continuo group (several harpsichords and several theorbos), which was evidently deployed in various combinations to accompany the voice. The two treble parts written out in most ritornelli and sinfonie were taken by two violins.^[45]

The different orchestral requirements of *Orfeo* and *Poppea* underline the distinctions I have been making between court and urban opera. The instrumental display of *Orfeo* formed part of the court spectacle in Mantua. The reduced band of *Poppea* satisfied the economic conditions of a commercial en-

[44] On the typical intermedio orchestra, see Robert Lamar Weaver, "Sixteenth-Century Instrumentation," *MQ* 47 (1961): 363-78; id., "The Orchestra in Early Italian Opera," *JAMS* 17 (1964): 83-89; and Howard M. Brown, *Sixteenth-Century Instrumentation: The Music for the Florentine Intermedi*, *Musico-logical Studies and Documents* 30 ([Rome], 1973).

[45] The two violins were sometimes joined by alto and tenor instruments, the viola da braccio and the violetta. The chief documentary evidence for the makeup of the Venetian opera orchestra is found in two different sets of pay records, which date from 1658-59 (in the account book for Antioco, I-Vas, Scuola grande di San Marco, busta 194: unnumbered) and 1665 (for a revival of *Ciro*, b. 194, c. 268): that is, considerably later than *Poppea*. Nevertheless, it seems unlikely that the orchestra changed much until late in the seventeenth century, when trumpets were introduced. For a discussion of these documents, see Denis Arnold, "Performing Practice," in *The New Monteverdi Companion*, ed. Denis Arnold and Nigel Fortune (London, 1985), 319-33, esp. 329-31; also Jane Glover, *Cavalli* (London, 1978), 106-12; and Edward Tarr and Thomas Walker, "'Bellici carmi, festivo fragor': Die Verwendung der Trompete in der italienischen Oper des 17. Jahrhunderts," *Hamburger Jahrbuch für Musikwissenschaft* 3 (1978): 143-203.

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terprise. It allowed theaters to function without large stable orchestras. It also tended to focus greater attention on the singers.

A Mantuan opera of 1607 could be fixed, commemorated in print as a rare, even unique, object, a jewel in the crown of a ruling prince. Not so a Venetian opera of 1643. It was but one of a succession of similar events that would be remembered only as long as the season lasted, and then discarded—unless subsequently revived. Whereas we owe our knowledge of the music of Monteverdi's *Orfeo* to the desire to preserve a moment of dynastic celebration, our knowledge of *Poppea* depends upon a more professionally utilitarian motive, the appropriation of a past event for the purposes of the present. Only because *Poppea* was revived, given renewed life on the stage, do we know anything of its music. *Orfeo*, although immortalized by the act of publication, embodied a tradition of court entertainment that was essentially over. The very survival of *Poppea*, imperfect as it is, testifies to its continuing vitality, to its function within a living tradition of public opera.

The Documents of a History

As the case of *Poppea* attests, the distinctive and cohesive character of the Venetian operatic tradition is exemplified by the nature of its surviving documents. These fall into two general categories: manuscript and printed, categories that themselves implicate a set of further distinctions, between the musical and the textual, the professional and the public. The manuscripts, that is, the scores, representing the professional side of things, are preserved, if at all, largely by accident, by virtue of the fact that they were reused. Relatively few have, in fact, survived. The nature and purpose of the printed sources, the public documents, primarily librettos, were very different. Quite apart from their practical function of serving the audience during performances, librettos were deliberately created for the purpose of documenting the individual work. Published in large enough numbers to have ensured the survival today of several complete sets, they record the chronological development of Venetian opera from year to year. The sheer accumulation of librettos—there were nine after four seasons, thirty-five after ten, and over one hundred by 1667—provides concrete evidence of the momentum of opera mania in seventeenth-century Venice.

In addition to appealing to the collectionist tendencies of a number of letterati, such as Apostolo Zeno, whose complete sets have come down to us,^[46] the

[46] The Biblioteca Marciana in Venice possesses three such sets. The most nearly complete, containing a number of second editions, and possibly from the collection of the eighteenth-century bibliographer Antonio Groppo, is *Dramm.* 907-1126, which covers the years 1637-1796. The others are *Dramm.* 3448-3578 (1637-1750), from Zeno's collection; and *Dramm.* 1127-1418 (1637-1836), from the Rossi legacy. Another virtually complete series is the Cicogna Collection at the Casa Goldoni. There are several others outside Venice, including I-Rig, I-MOe, US-Wc Schatz, and US-Lau. The most comprehensive listing of librettos, which includes the location of multiple copies, is found in Claudio Sartori, "Primo tentativo di catalogo unico dei libretti italiani a stampa fino all'anno 1800" (MS in the Ufficio Ricerca Fondi Musicali, Milan).

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librettos inspired another type of historical record: the operatic chronology, for which they supplied the basic source material. The earliest of these publications, neither yet a chronology nor devoted exclusively to operatic or Venetian texts, was explicitly designed to take stock of the rapidly growing genre of the libretto. Leone Allacci's *Drammaturgia*, published in Rome in 1666, declares its purpose in the printer's preface: to preserve an undervalued and therefore highly perishable product:

It often happens that, after being read, librettos are rejected, and they are no longer valued, because of the silly things that are found in most of them, so that copies are lost, and not only is the memory of those obscured, who with great effort and study made some name for themselves, but also their countries and families. Since, in the opinion of some, [librettos] are in no small part derived from antiquity, and indistinguishable from one another in invention as well as subject matter, there having been no new discoveries [of ancient plays], they have become so tediously similar in subject matter, usually concerning the disappearance of babies or children during the taking or sacking of a city, that readers assume they have already read them, and they intentionally abstain from seeing them, clearly recognizing them, as Burchiello said, to be patchworks of old rags, twisted and pilfered from here and there, without beginning or end, head or tail. (Appendix II.4)^[47]

Allacci's volume, which underwent an ambitious revision in the eighteenth century,^[48] was soon followed by the first true chronology. This was the work of the Dalmatian Cristoforo Ivanovich, himself the author of several librettos. "Le memorie teatrali di Venezia," published in Venice in 1681 (2d ed. 1688), formed an appendix to Ivanovich's *Minerva al tavolino*, a collection of letters on the subject of the wars against the Turks.^[49] By providing a list of the dramas performed in Venice, Ivanovich, like Allacci before him, hoped to rescue them from oblivion: "From the reading of the dramas cited in the

catalogue of the present 'Memorie,' posterity, for various reasons, will heap greater praise upon the authors than they received when their works were first performed" (Appendix II.6ff). Ivanovich's catalogue forms the climax of a lengthy essay on the

[47] Although he lived in Rome, Allacci maintained close connections with operatic life in Venice. He belonged to the operatically important Venetian Accademia degli Incogniti (see ch. 2 below).

[48] *Drammaturgia di Leone Allacci accresciuta e continuata fino all'anno MDCCL V* (Venice: Giambattista Pasquali, 1755).

[49] On this important publication, see Thomas Walker, "Gli errori di Minerva al tavolino : Osservazioni sulla cronologia delle prime opere veneziane," in *Venezia e il melodramma nel seicento*, ed. Maria Teresa Muraro (Florence, 1976), 7-20; see also Miloš Velimirović*¹, "Cristoforo Ivanovich from Budva, the First Historian of the Venetian Opera," *ZVUK [Yugoslav Music Review]* 77-78 (1967): 135-45.

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origins and contemporary practice of opera in Venice, which draws, in large measure, upon the prefaces of the printed librettos. His discussion of Venetian operatic practice remains by far the most explicit and reliable we have; and his chronology served as the foundation of all subsequent chronologies, notably those of the eighteenth-century writers Giovanni Carlo Bonlini (1730) and Antonio Groppo (1745).

These chronologies, generally trustworthy with respect to titles, authors, theaters, and dates of performances, are less dependable for information not regularly available in printed librettos—most crucially, composers' names. Indeed, Ivanovich, particularly for the years preceding his arrival in Venice in 1657, tended to attribute music rather haphazardly (especially to Cavalli). Many of his attributions, repeated by Bonlini and Groppo, have remained unexamined, unchallenged, and uncorrected until recently.^[51]

Another still insufficiently acknowledged shortcoming of all three volumes is their failure to recognize the inconsistent application of dates in the librettos they catalogued. That is, they ignored the whole problem of more veneto, dating Venetian style. Because the Venetian year traditionally began on 1 March, Carnival (and the opera season coincident with it), generally over by the end of February, was considered to belong to the previous year. Thus a libretto dated 1640 m.v. actually belonged to 1641, modern style (or 1640-41 if it appeared before 1 January). But not all Venetian dates were given more veneto. This is made clear in some cases by a discrepancy between title page and dedication date; the libretto of Cavalli's *Giasone*, for example, bears the date 1649 on its

[50] [Carlo Bonlini], *Le glorie della poesia e della musica contenute nell'esatta notizia de teatri della città di Venezia* (Venice: Bonarigo, [1730]) both acknowledged his debt to Ivanovich's catalogue and recognized its shortcomings: "Il primo, anzi l'unico, che fino ad ora abbia dato al Pubblico qualche succinta notizia in tal genere [dei drammi], fu il Dott. D. Cristoforo Iwanovich . . . il quale se ben Schiavon di natali, é andato del pari in dottrina, ed eruditione a i più fioriti In-gegneri Italiani della sua età. Questo famoso Autore sul fine del Primo Tomo della sua *Minerva al Tavolino*, pone un breve Trattato, a cui da il nome di *Memorie Teatrali della Città di Venezia*, e quivi dopo aver dato in ristretto qualche contezza de' Teatri noti sino a nostri giorni, va tessendo un Catalogo de' Drammi in Musica sino a' suoi giorni parimente in quelli rappresentati, e s'estende nella seconda Edizione delle sue virtuose fatiche sino all'Anno 1687. Ma questo Catalogo in alcuni Drammi riesce non poco fallace, ed in altri ancora mancante, cósicchè non é giunto a quella perfezione, che sarebbe desiderabile in una tale materia. E per verità fattone un rigoroso rincontro con i Libretti ch'abbiamo in stampa, vi si scorgono circa quaranta sbagli di non poco rilievo, particolarmente nella notizia non ben esatta de' veri Maestri di Musica" (preface, 4-5). Antonio Groppo, *Catalogo di tutti i drammi per musica* (Venice: Groppo, 1745), referred to all three of his predecessors, Allacci, Ivanovich, and Bonlini, but without criticizing them (preface, 5-6). A more recent chronology, largely based on the others, is Livio Niso Galvani [Giuseppe Salvioli], *I teatri musicali di Venezia nel secolo XVII, 1637-1700* (Milan, 1879). See also the chronology in Francesco Caffi, "Storia della musica teatrale in Venezia" (MS I-Vnm, It. IV, 747-49 [10462-65]).

[51] On Ivanovich's shortcomings, see Walker, "Errori." Walker's corrections resulted in a substantial reduction in the number of works ascribed to Cavalli, from forty-two (nearly a third of them missing) to the much more reasonable number of thirty-three (only five missing); the definitive list is given in Thomas Walker, "Cavalli," *New Grove* 4: 24-34.

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title page, but the dedication is dated 30 January 1648. Clearly, then, the date on the title page should be read in modern style, that of the dedication more veneto; the work was performed during the 1648-49 season, not that of 1649.^[50] Other cases are not so clear and can be resolved only through triangulation, using evidence external to the librettos themselves.^[52]

In contrast to the librettos, whose preservation is virtually complete, the proportion of surviving scores is small. In particular, very few scores remain from the first—and, arguably, the most decisive—decade of operatic activity in Venice. Of the nearly fifty operas performed there between 1637 and 1650, music has survived for only thirteen, and by only three of the dozen or so composers known to have been involved: Monteverdi, Cavalli, and Saccati.^[53] No music at all survives from the operas of either Ferrari or Manelli, two of the most important composers of the decade, who were largely responsible for creating the musical style that came to be associated with opera in Venice.^[54]

Through various circumstances, a number of the surviving scores were dispersed among libraries throughout Europe—including those in Modena, Florence, Naples, Oxford, Paris, and Vienna. Most of them duplicate scores held in the primary repository for this music, the Contarini Collection of the Biblioteca Marciana in Venice.^[55] The 113 opera scores in the Contarini Collection (the period covered extends to 1684) owe their preservation to the efforts of two individuals: in the first place to Francesco Cavalli (1601-76), the com-

[52] Such confusion has affected the dating of works as important as Monteverdi's late operas. According to Ivanovich, three operas by Monteverdi were performed in 1641: *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria* (S. Cassiano), *Le nozze d'Enea e Lavinia* (SS. Giovanni e Paolo), and *Arianna* (S. Moisè); and one in 1643, *L'incoronazione di Poppea*. Bonlini, who tried to take more veneto into account by introducing what he called the autumn season (for those operas that began before the first of January but continued to be performed until the end of Carnival), revised Ivanovich's chronology, ascribing *Arianna* to 1640, *Il ritorno* and *Le nozze* to 1641, and *Poppea* to autumn 1642. In fact, however, the coordination of various kinds of evidence permits a still more reasonable chronology, the one assumed on p. 18 above, which allows for the effort involved in readying a production for the stage. *Arianna* and *Ritorno* were performed in 1639-40; *Le nozze* (and *Ritorno* revived) in 1640-41 (the preface to the scenario of *Le nozze* mentions *Il ritorno* as having taken place the previous year); and *Poppea* in 1642-43 (scenario dated 1643). In the present study, all dates are given in modern style unless otherwise indicated.

[53] Saccati joined this elite group only very recently, with the important discovery by Lorenzo Bianconi of a score of *La finta pazza*, which will be published shortly in facsimile in *Drammaturgia musicale veneta*.

[54] We can, of course, extrapolate some knowledge of their style from their non-operatic music, as Alessandro Magim did in his thesis at the University of Bologna, "Indagini stilistiche intorno *L'incoronazione di Poppea*" (1984): esp. ch. 3; see also id., "Le monodie di Benedetto Ferrari e *L'incoronazione di Poppea* : Un rilevamento stilistico comparativo," *RIM* 21 (1987): 266-99; and Curtis, preface to *L'incoronazione di Poppea*.

[55] The only two scores from before 1650 not duplicated in the Contarini Collection are *Il ritorno* (A-Wn 18763), which may have been brought to Vienna by Benedetto Ferrari, and *La finta pazza* at the Isola Borromeo (see Lorenzo Bianconi, preface to Giulio Strozzi and Francesco Saccati, *La finta pazza*, ed. Lorenzo Bianconi and Thomas Walker, *Drammaturgia musicale veneta* 1 [in press]).

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poser best represented in the collection. Near the end of his career, probably about 1670, Cavalli apparently arranged to have his operas recopied with a view to preserving them for posterity.^[56] He clearly regarded them as important property, a significant part of his legacy, and made special provision for them in his will.^[57] These fair copies, plus some of his autographs (which, we may assume, would also have been copied had he lived longer), eventually found their way into the Contarini Collection.^[58]

The other collezionista responsible for the preservation of the scores was Marco Contarini himself, patrician and patron of opera, who built two theaters for private operatic performances at his villa at Piazzola, just northwest of Venice. Between 1679 and sometime before his death in 1689—probably in 1684—Contarini gradually and purposefully amassed a collection of scores.^[59] Most of the scores in his collection date from earlier than 1679, the year his operatic productions began, and so cannot be connected with his own performances. Indeed, we should regard the entire Contarini Collection, fair copies as well as autographs (figs. 4, 5), as commemorative rather than functional documents, reflecting the desire of both Cavalli and Contarini to preserve a musical heritage.

Imperfect and incomplete as the musical sources may be, they far exceed those for the visual component of these operas. For an idea of what the works

[56] His latest scores were apparently copied first; and then the scribe seems to have started at the beginning and worked forward as far as 1650. On the copying of Cavalli's manuscripts, see Glover, Cavalli, 65-72. The matter is exhaustively treated in Jeffery, "Autograph Manuscripts," *passim*.

[57] Cavalli's will distinguished between specially bound volumes (the fair copies) and some other scores, which were left to his student Caliarì. The document is transcribed in Taddeo Wiel, "Francesco Cavalli (1602-1676) e la sua musica scenica," *Nuovo archivio veneto*, n.s., 28 (1914): 142-50. The details are summarized in Glover, Cavalli, 31, and in Jeffery, "Autograph Manuscripts," 81-86. Cavalli's library must also have included the Contarini copy of *Poppea*, which shows evidence of his hand (see Jeffery, "Autograph Manuscripts," 114). Osthoff's suggestion that Cavalli directed the Naples revival of *Poppea* ("Neue Beobachtungen," 137-38) has not been substantiated. The presence of his hand and some of his music in the manuscript merely indicates that he was involved in some way with the version of the opera that was eventually performed in Naples.

[58] The Contarini Collection, which included material other than opera scores as well, was acquired by the Marciana from Contarini's distant heirs in 1839; see Taddeo Wiel, *I codici musicali contariniani del secolo XVII nella R. Biblioteca di San Marco in Venezia* (Venice, 1888; repr. Bologna: Forni, 1969). Some clue to the order in which Contarini acquired the manuscript scores is provided by a handwritten list of operas found on the inside cover of a printed volume of Frescobaldi keyboard toccatas now in the Biblioteca Marciana (I-Vnm Musica 39). According to that list, dated 14 June 1681, which includes none of the Cavalli autographs, most of the scores were acquired in 1681 and 1682, and a few in 1683. (The list also includes a number of works not in the present Contarini Collection.) See Glover, Cavalli, 67-68. The most complete discussion of the development of the Contarini Collection, including a list of its contents, is found in Giovanni Morelli and Thomas Walker, "Migliori plettri," preface to Aurelio Aureli and Francesco Lucio, *Medoro*, ed. Giovanni Morelli and Thomas Walker, *Drammaturgia musicale veneta* 4 (Milan, 1984), CXL-CXLVI.

[59] Contarini apparently employed his own copyist for some of them, in particular, those in Hand A (according to Morelli and Walker, "Migliori plettri," CXLV).

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4.

Francesco Cavalli, *Gli amori d'Apollo e di Dafne*, I-Vnm, It. IV, 404 (= 9928), f. 85v (copy).



5.

Francesco Cavalli, *Oristeo*, I-Vnm, It. IV, 367 (=9891), f. 41 (autograph).

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actually looked like on stage, the historian is forced to rely primarily on descriptions in librettos and to extrapolate from the few published engravings of scene designs.^[60]

Beyond the primary source materials—the librettos and the scores—other kinds of documents bearing on the history and development of opera in seventeenth-century Venice are preserved in various archives. The most substantial and important are two large buste in the Archivio di Stato, Venice, known by students of the period as 188 and 194.^[61] Comprising hundreds of folios each, they are the papers of Marco Faustini, who served as an impresario at various theaters from 1651 to 1668, working with every important composer, librettist, and singer of the period. His papers, which cover earlier years as well, include a wide variety of documents: from correspondence with agents, singers, and composers (Cesti, Cavalli, and Ziani) to contracts and theater budgets. Collectively, they supply the basis for a richly detailed history of opera during the period of his activity.

Other notable and more recently discovered Venetian archival sources include two buste of Cavalli documents from the Archivio S. Lorenzo^[62] and one from the Monastero di Sta. Maria dell'Orazion a Malamocco in the Archivio di Stato,^[63] and the theater documents in the Archivio Vendramin, now housed at the Casa Goldoni.^[64] Still to be fully mined is a cache of documents found in the State Archives in Hannover among the correspondence of Johann Friedrich, duke of Brunswick-Lüneburg. The duke was an important political ally, sup-

[60] The stage designs for Venetian productions of this period were rarely published; but those that were are frequently reproduced. See, for example, Per Bjurström, Giacomo Torelli and Baroque Stage Design (Stockholm, 1961); Simon Towneley Worsthorpe, *Seventeenth-Century Venetian Opera* (Oxford, 1954, rev. ed. 1968); Ludovico Zorzi, Maria Teresa Muraro, Gianfranco Prato, and Elvi Zorzi, eds., *I teatri pubblici di Venezia (secoli XVII-XVIII)*, exhib. cat. (Venice, 1971); Franco Mancini, Maria Teresa Muraro, and Elena Povoledo, eds., *Illusione e prattica teatrale*, exhib. cat. (Venice, 1975); Héléne Leclerc, *Venise et l'avènement de l'opéra public à l'âge baroque* (Paris, 1987).

[61] Scuola Grande di S. Marco, buste 188 and 194, henceforth cited as b. 188 and b. 194. They were first mentioned in 1887 by Bartolomeo Cecchetti, "Carte relative ai teatri di S. Cassiano e dei SS. Giovanni e Paolo," *Archivio veneto* 34 (1887): 246. See also Wiel, "Francesco Cavalli," 135-36 n. 2, and Henry Prunières, *Cavalli et l'opéra vénitien au XVII siècle* (Paris, 1931), 305-6 n. 3. Hermann Kretzschmar, to whom Wiel sent transcriptions, published an article about them in 1907: "Beiträge zur Geschichte der venetianischen Oper," *Jahrbuch der Musikbibliothek Peters* 14 (1907): 71-81. They were inventoried, somewhat inexactly, by Remo Giazotto, "La guerra dei palchi," *NRMI* 1 (1967): 245-86, 465-508; 3 (1969): 906-33; and quoted extensively in Bruno Brunelli, "L'impresario in angustie," *Rivista italiana del dramma* 3 (1941): 311-41; Remo Giazotto, "Nel CCC anno della morte di Antonio Cesti: Ventidue lettere ritrovate nell'Archivio di Stato di Venezia," *NRMI* 3 (1969): 496-512; and Carl Schmidt, "An Episode in the History of Venetian Opera: The Tito Commission (1665-66)," *JAMS* 31 (1978): 442-66.

[62] I-Vas, Archivio S. Lorenzo, buste 23 and 24. These are discussed in Glover, *Cavalli*, ch. I, as well as elsewhere.

[63] Busta 3; formerly part of the S. Lorenzo archive. These documents contain important information on Cavalli at S. Cassiano; see Giovanni Morelli and Thomas Walker, "Tre controversie intorno al San Cassiano," in *Venezia e il melodrama nel seicento*, ed. Maria Teresa Muraro (Florence, 1976), 97-120.

[64] I-Vcg, Archivio Vendramin 42 F 1-16.

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plier of arms, and frequent visitor to Venice during this period.^[65] These papers include letters and reports from the duke's agents in Venice, among them the composer Sartorio and the librettists Pietro Dolfin and Nicolò Beregan, who were entrusted with hiring musicians for him. A particularly rich source of operatic gossip is provided by the letters of the duke's secretary in Venice, Francesco Maria Massi.^[66]

Travelers to Venice, who formed an important component of the operatic audience, were occasionally stimulated to comment on the operatic scene in their letters or diaries. Few as they are, these comments shed considerable light on the place of opera in the life of the city.^[67] Somewhat more formal are the weekly avvisi reporting the news from various cities that circulated around Italy and abroad in manuscript and, eventually, printed form, from the late sixteenth century on. Several series of manuscript avvisi from the late seventeenth century have been preserved, in which information about opera is part of the detailed description of everyday Venetian events.^[68] A number of issues of the Parisian journal *Le Mercure galant*, from the same period, contain lengthy reports of opera in Venice.^[69]

All of these sources, taken together, allow us to assemble a history of opera in Venice. The most fundamental of them, however, are the printed librettos. In regularly supplying dates and names—of patrons, theaters, librettists, sometimes of composers, singers, and stage designers—as well as the actual texts that were sung, they provide the foundation of that history. But they provide much more. Their prefaces and dedications are rich in information. Their form and

[65] Niedersächsisches Haupt-Staatsarchiv Hannover, Aktes-Korrespondenzen italienischer Kardinäle und anderer Personen, besonders Italiener an Herzog Johann Friedrich, Cal. Br. vols. 1-6 (624-29). On the importance of the dukes of Brunswick-Lüneburg to Venetian political—and operatic—life, see Bianconi and Walker, "Production," 269-70; also, in passing, Craig Monson, "Giulio Cesare in Egitto from Sartorio (1677) to Handel (1724)," *ML* 66 (1985): 313-37.

[66] There were similar correspondences with other foreign princes interested in Venetian opera, such as the duke of Modena and Mattias de' Medici (archival material in I-MOs Particolari and I-Fas); also I-Rvat (Archivio Chigi), I-Vmc (correspondence of Polo Michiel), I-R (Archivio Colonna).

[67] Such figures include John Evelyn (quoted on p. 9 above), Sir Philip Skippon (Journey through the Low Countries, Germany, Italy, and France [London, 1682; repr. 1752], 520-21); and Francesco de' Pannocchi-eschi; see Molmenti, "Venezia alla metà del sec. XVII," 313, 317. See also Alexandre-Toussaint de Limojon, Sier de Saint-Disdier, *La Ville et la République de Venise* (Paris: Barbin, 1680).

[68] A number of series are preserved in Venice at the Biblioteca Marciana and the Archivio di Stato. For a summary of these, see Eleanor Selfridge-Field, *Pallade veneta: Writings on Music in Venetian Society, 1650-1750* (Venice, 1985), chs. I and 2.

[69] Written anonymously by Chassebras de Cremailles during the 1680s, they were collected and republished by Pierre d'Ortigue de Vaumorière in *Lettres sur toutes sortes de sujets* (Paris: J. Guignard, 1690). These descriptions are quoted extensively in Harris Sheridan Saunders, Jr., "The Repertoire of a Venetian Opera House (1678-1714): The Teatro Grimani di San Giovanni Grisostomo," Ph.D. diss. (Harvard University, 1985), ch. I. The earliest surviving sources of this kind reporting on opera in Venice date from the early 1660s; they appeared in *Il rimino*, a newsheet published in Rimini that was a compilation of avvisi from various cities. See Nevio Matteini, *Il "Rimino," una delle prime "gazette" d'Italia: Saggio storico sui primordi della stampa* (Bologna, 1967).

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content change with the developing genre. Carefully read (on and between the lines) and considered in their entirety—from their actual poetic content (form, subject matter, and organization) to the layout of their title pages, from the publishers' and authors' prefaces to the dramatis personae and last-minute addenda—they offer a precise record of public opera at the most important period of its development, just as it was taking shape. It is against the facts and running commentary provided by the librettos that all the other sources, including the music, yield their full historical meaning.

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2— Dramma per musica : The Question of Genre

"Drama for music": this was the term by which opera librettos were generally known in the seventeenth century. The subtitle under which they were usually published, *Dramma per musica*, expresses quite effectively, even eloquently, the ambiguous nature of the libretto as a genre. Alone, these little books were but shadows, texts needing music (and staging) to endow them with life. Never intended to stand on their own, they were admittedly, glaringly, and self-consciously incomplete. Evaluation of their quality could not rest on their merits as literature or drama—the elegance of their poetry, the tautness of their plot structure, the verisimilitude of their action. Librettos had to be judged by the efficacy of the musical setting they inspired, the dramatic conviction of the combination: libretto plus music, a combination that, ideally, would exceed by far the simple sum of its parts.

Although every writer of librettos was aware of the extent to which the definition of his work depended on another artist's efforts, that awareness was not always shared by literary critics. Lacking appropriate instruments for evaluation, they often tried to judge librettos by purely literary standards, without considering them in the proper context, that of the opera house.^[1] From the beginning of their history, librettos suffered abuse from critics for their failure to measure up as literature. The issue was most urgent for the earliest and most sensitive of these critics, those who had the most to lose—or gain: the librettists themselves, the inventors or creators of the genre. Critical abuse began as critical self-abuse.

[1] Some writers, such as Ludovico Antonio Muratori, displayed an acute ambivalence in their attitude toward opera: as literary critics they condemned it, but as members of the audience they applauded it enthusiastically. See Sergio Durante, "Vizi privati e virtù pubbliche del polemista teatrale da Muratori a Marcello," in *Benedetto Marcello: La sua opera e il suo tempo*, ed. Claudio Madricardo and Franco Rossi (Florence, 1988), 415-24. These critics lacked appropriate categories for judging theatrical works. See also Lorenzo Bianconi, "Il cinquecento e il seicento," in *Teatro, musica, tradizione dei classici*, *Letteratura italiana* 6 (Turin, 1986), 356-63.

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It is worth noting that *dramma per musica* did not suggest itself immediately as a designation for operatic texts. It emerged only after librettists had wrestled for some time with the question of defining just what it was they were producing; and it developed not in the occasional operas produced during the first decades of the century in Florence and Rome, but later, in Venice, where the operatic experience was constant and intense. Ottavio Rinuccini's first two operatic texts, the mythical dramas *Dafne* and *Euridice*, bear no generic subtitle at all, while his third libretto, *Arianna*, is labeled a *tragedia*; Striggio's *Orfeo* is called a *favola in musica*; and in Rome librettos were variously referred to as *dramma musicale*, *commedia musicale*, *opera musicale*, or *attione in musica*.^[2] The first Venetian librettos, too, exhibited a striking variety of generic designations, some of them borrowed from the past, others obviously invented ad hoc: *favola*, *opera scenica*, *fiesta teatrale*, *dramma*, *opera drammatica*, *favola regia*, *opera regia*, *tragedia musicale*, *opera tragicomica musicale*, *dramma musicale*, and others. One notable feature of this list is that only a few of the terms allude to the absent, yet central, ingredient, the music; the others imply self-sufficiency and could have been—and were—applied to any kind of dramatic work. The familiar and curiously neutral term *opera* appears in several of these subtitles. Originally