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THE DEBATE ON SONG IN THE ACCADEMIA FIORENTINA

For James Haar on his 70th Birthday

The sixteenth century in Italy was a time when academies of all kinds flourished as venues, and often as arbiters, of literature and high culture. A casual look at the academies might give the impression that they were mostly social in nature, that they functioned as a pastime for bored aristocrats and ambitious *letterati*. As originally constituted, the Accademia degli Umidi, founded 1 November 1540, indeed fitted this description, but with one difference characteristic of Florentine society – it was organised by twelve men of various social classes with a common interest in poetry and language.¹ The academy expanded considerably under the patronage of Duke Cosimo I de' Medici and on 25 March 1541 was reconstituted as the Accademia Fiorentina. Its avowed purpose was to promote the Tuscan language as an instrument of literature and knowledge, in an age when mastery of Latin was required of any educated man. In advancing the cause of

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¹ The initial members were Giovanni Mazzuoli, Cynthio d'Amelia Romano, Niccolò Martelli, Filippo Salvetti, Simon della Volta, Pier Fabbrini, Bartolomeo Benci, Gismondo Martelli, Michelangelo Vivaldi, Antonfrancesco Grazzini, Baccio Baccelli and Paolo de Gei, known as Pylucca Scultore. See A. De Gaetano, *Giambattista Gelli and the Florentine Academy: The Rebellion against Latin* (Florence, 1976), p. 101, citing Florence, Biblioteca Marucelliana, MS B III 52, fol. 1^r. All three volumes of the original *Atti* survive in the Biblioteca Marucelliana: MSS B III 52, B III 54, B III 53, in chronological order. Many other documents from the Accademia Fiorentina have been lost, but were recorded or cited in the eighteenth century.

vernacular literature, the Accademia Fiorentina, like other academies of the time, greatly extended the programme of Italian humanism, making available the fruits of humanist thought and enquiry to a larger public.

In the presentation of poetry, the Accademia inherited a set of practices that were in process of change. The performance of poetry to music *all'improvviso* followed a long-standing and powerful cultural tradition on the Italian peninsula, one that was fostered especially in humanist and courtly circles. Yet by 1540, the polyphonic madrigal had become the dominant secular genre of the age, one that owed much of its early development to Florence and Rome. The madrigal of the 1540s, influenced by the poetics of Pietro Bembo, strongly reflected the nuances and rhetoric of the poetic text.² As a result, it claimed intellectual legitimacy as a powerful new medium for Italian poetry.

In 1543, a furious debate broke out in the Accademia Fiorentina, bringing two competing visions of Italian song into sharp definition: one based on oral conception in the performance of accompanied song, the other based on musical composition and the notation of mensural polyphony. At the centre of the debate stands the figure of Alfonso de' Pazzi, an aristocratic satirist, academician and defender of the improvised tradition. In literary history, Alfonso de' Pazzi has all but been forgotten, and none of the satires or letters to be discussed has ever been cited in the musicological literature.³ The controversy took place in terms of both cultural values and musical practices. The debate on song in the Accademia Fiorentina illuminates, in microcosm, the relationship between music and poetry at a crucial point of expansion in Italian humanist culture.

² On the influence of Bembo, see D. Mace, 'Pietro Bembo and the Origins of the Italian Madrigal', *Musical Quarterly*, 55 (1969), pp. 65–86; J. Haar, 'The Early Madrigal: A Re-appraisal of its Sources and Character', in I. Fenlon (ed.), *Music in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Patronage, Sources, and Texts* (Cambridge, 1981), pp. 175–7; J. M. Miller, 'Word-Sound and Musical Texture in the Mid-Sixteenth-Century Venetian Madrigal' (Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1991); M. Feldman, *City Culture and the Madrigal at Venice* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1995), ch. 5, pp. 123–55.

³ The only biography is G. Pedrotti, *Alfonso de' Pazzi, accademico e poeta* (Pescia, 1902), which says nothing concerning Alfonso's musicianship. G. Manacorda, *Benedetto Varchi: l'uomo, il poeta, il critico* (Pisa, 1903), pp. 46–9, offers a brief account of the poetry as well.

THE PERFORMANCE OF POETRY

The original statutes of the academy refer to the writing of ‘o Epitaffj o madrigali o sonetti o altra qualsivoglia composizione’, and the production of poetry became a major preoccupation of the Accademia Fiorentina.⁴ New poems were undoubtedly presented at the regular Thursday evening banquets, especially the satirical verse known as *cicalate* (literally, ‘prattlings’). Private lectures, which usually took a work by Petrarch or Dante as their starting point, were delivered as well. Public lectures were presented on Sundays, the first in Italy open to the general public, and attracted large crowds.⁵

Flexibility of presentation may well have been characteristic of poetic performance at this period, as attested by a chapter of Antonfrancesco Doni’s *I marmi*, published in Venice in 1552.⁶ Doni, a wandering writer and printer of Florentine birth, was elected among the *statuarij* or official recorders of the Accademia Fiorentina on 11 February 1546, and shortly after was named secretary.⁷ He is the probable compiler of a manuscript of ten madrigals dedicated to Duke Cosimo I de’ Medici.⁸ In 1546–8, while still in Florence, Doni also printed a small number of books officially connected with the Accademia, under licence from Cosimo I.⁹ The chapter in *I marmi* is introduced with the comment that in Florence ‘it was customary on occasion to sing *all’improvviso* to the lira rhymes of every sort, so that it seemed they were raining down from that cupola’.¹⁰ The five interlocutors, including Giovanni

⁴ M. Maylender, *Storia delle accademie d’Italia*, 3 vols. (Bologna, 1926–30), iii, p. 364.

⁵ De Gaetano, *Giambattista Gelli*, pp. 109–12; S. Salvini, *Fasti consolari dell’Accademia Fiorentina* (Florence, 1717), p. 2; E. Cochrane, *Florence in the Forgotten Centuries, 1527–1800* (Chicago and London, 1973), p. 68. I am indebted to Russell E. Murray, Jr., for providing a photocopy of Salvini’s work.

⁶ A. F. Doni, *I marmi*, 2 vols., ed. E. Chiòboli (Bari, 1928), i, pp. 105–28.

⁷ Florence, Biblioteca Marucelliana, MS B III 52, fols. 34^v–35^r. According to Salvini, *Fasti consolari*, p. 63, Doni was the first Secretary of the Accademia Fiorentina.

⁸ J. Haar, ‘A Gift of Madrigals to Cosimo I: The Ms. Florence, Bibl. Naz. Centrale, Magl. XIX, 130’, in *The Science and Art of Renaissance Music*, ed. P. Corneilson (Princeton, 1998), pp. 300–22, originally published in *Rivista italiana di musicologia*, 1 (1966), pp. 198–224.

⁹ On Doni’s recruitment as a printer and his rapid displacement by Lorenzo Torrentino, see Cochrane, *Florence in the Forgotten Centuries*, p. 69.

¹⁰ Doni, *I marmi*, i, p. 108: ‘so certo che a questi Marmi si soleva talvolta cantare all’improvviso su la lira, e d’ogni sorte rime, che pareva che le pioveassin giù da quella cupola’. The cupola is the Brunelleschi dome of the cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore.

Mazzuoli and Niccolò Martelli, two founders of the Accademia, have come together for just this purpose. They present a series of five eight-line *stanze*, two sonnets, two *capitoli* in terza rima, a *canzone*, two sestinas, a pastoral *ballata* and two madrigals.

The evening begins with the words ‘Retune that lira’ (‘Ritempera cotesta lira’), a probable reference to the lira da braccio.¹¹ Despite the quicksilver nature of the conversation, specific performance details emerge for four of the poems. Varlungo, a shoemaker, begins with the first comic *stanza*, then Nuto, a fisherman, and Visino, a stationer, join in, stringing improvised verses together.¹² The exercise takes on aspects of a literary game. At one point Nuto sings ‘The lira’s out of tune, tum, tum, tum, and tinted’.¹³ Afterwards, Mazzuoli comments ‘That string afforded me the great pleasure of breaking, because I didn’t like your tune, and your rhymes even less.’¹⁴ Martelli reads a Venetian sonnet, and since he later asserts ‘I don’t want to sing, because I am not a musician’, a declaimed rendition is likely.¹⁵ For the lyrical *canzone*, written by the *improvvisatore* and violist Maestro Iacopo de’ Servi, Mazzuoli asks for a rendition ‘In the bowed style’ (‘In modo d’archetti’).¹⁶ As the group is breaking up, the last madrigal is given by Visino, one of his own composition. He rushes off before anyone can render criticism, but Mazzuoli exclaims, ‘How, in his bizarre musical composition, he would make water and fire combat in notes, and then make those two contraries unite! I wish Adriano [Willaert], Cipriano [di Rore] and [Vincenzo] Ruffo had sprinkled me; oh, what beautiful music would he hear!’¹⁷ Despite Mazzuoli’s outburst, the Florentines never do sing from parts. Visino performs

¹¹ *Ibid.*, i, p. 109. On the lira da braccio, see the discussion below.

¹² As documented in Salvini, *Fasti consolari*, 39, the real Niccolò Martelli created improvised *stanze*, subsequently recorded in a manuscript, *Giardino di Prato*, dated 1534. In a letter to Girolamo Amelonghi, dated 20 April 1546, Martelli mentions ‘VISINO Setaiuolo che tien Cancellaria à tutti gli Accademici & altri amici suoi’. See Niccolò Martelli, *Il primo libro delle lettere* (Florence, 1546), fols. 88^v–89^r.

¹³ Doni, *I marmi*, i, p. 111: ‘(Lira scordata, um, um, um, e tinta).’ The word *tinta* may refer to the common practice of colouring the strings.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, i, p. 111: ‘Quella corda m’ha fatto il gran piacere a rompersi, perché non mi piaceva questo tuo suono e manco le rime.’

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 112, 115: ‘Non vo’ canti, ché io non son musico.’

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 115.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 126: ‘Come vi si farebbe sopra il bizzarro componimento di musica e far con le note combattere quell’acqua e quell’ fuoco, e poi unire quei due contrarii! Adriano, Cipriano, e il Ruffo vorrei che me spolverizzassino. O che bella musica s’udirebbe egli!’

the madrigal by himself, from written music ('con le note'); the lute would have been the instrument of choice to accompany such a performance.

Doni's *Dialogo della musica* of 1544, which he published in Venice just before returning to Florence, offers the contrasting portrait of a literary academy in northern Italy, and sheds particular light on the musical practices of such gatherings: the first part is set in Piacenza, the second (by implication) in Venice.¹⁸ Unlike the Florentine gathering, most of the activity revolves around the performance of madrigals from parts, which Doni includes in the publication. During the second day's entertainment, which consists both of informal *ragionamento* and the singing of madrigals, one of the company, Ottavio Landi, sings several *ottave rime* by Madonna Virginia Salvi, a 'bella donna virtuosa'.¹⁹ He accompanies himself on the *viuola* (vihuela da mano or possibly viola da gamba); unlike the madrigals that preceded them, the stanzas are published without music. At the end of the same day, the lady of the company, Selvaggia, turns to Landi, saying 'Ottavio, take up your lira, and I will commence; and later we will say farewell.' Then follows the singing, no doubt *ex tempore*, of four sonnets in praise of one Madonna Isabetta Guasca, with instrumental accompaniment on the lira da braccio. Once again, the sonnets appear without music.²⁰

The music for singing sonnets *all'improvviso*, as portrayed in the *Dialogo della musica*, most likely consisted of standard *arie di cantare* such as those printed in Venice decades before by Ottaviano de' Petrucci.²¹ Gioseffo Zarlino testifies to the continued use of *arie* in

¹⁸ See J. Haar, 'Notes on the *Dialogo della Musica* of Antonfrancesco Doni', in *The Science and Art of Renaissance Music*, pp. 271–99, originally published in *Music & Letters*, 47 (1966), pp. 198–224.

¹⁹ A. F. Doni, *Dialogo della musica*, ed. G. F. Malipiero and V. Fagotto (Vienna and Milan, 1965), pp. 209–11. The musical performance is followed by a discussion of contemporary women poets.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 315–17: 'Ottavio, pigliate la lira, che io incomincio; e poi diremo a Dio.'

²¹ *Arie* appear in RISM 1505⁵, fol. 14^r, 'Modo di cantar sonetti' (textless) and RISM 1505⁶, fol. 9^r, 'Per sonetti. Più volte me son messo'. Other works in RISM 1505⁵ are labelled 'Sonetto' and provided with partial text, at fols. 15^v, 16^r and 18^r. See the detailed study by F. Brancacci, 'Il sonetto nei libri di frottole di O. Petrucci (1504–14)', *Nuova rivista musicale italiana*, 25 (1991), pp. 177–215; 26 (1992), pp. 441–68. A Neapolitan collection from mid-century is *Aeri raccolti insieme con altri bellissimi aggiunti di diversi, dove si cantano Sonetti, Stanze e Terze Rime*, ed. R. Rodio (Naples, 1577); discussed and inventoried in H. M. Brown, 'The Geography of Florentine Monody', *Early Music*, 9 (1981), pp. 147–68.

Venice at mid-century, referring to ‘a certain *modo* or, as we say, *aria di cantare*; since those are the *modi di cantare* on which we now sing the sonnets and *canzoni* of Petrarch, or the *rime* of Ariosto’.²² They could be performed by solo voice with one of several instruments. Benedetto Varchi, in his lecture ‘Delle parti della poesia’, read before the Accademia Fiorentina in 1553, cites the lira, lute and gravicembolo under the category of *Citaristica*, or the music of string instruments, which also comprehends the category of *Lirica*, or lyric music.²³

A keyboard manuscript of the later sixteenth century, now housed in the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze, preserves both an ‘Aria di Sonetti’ (Example 1) and two versions, closely related to each other, of ‘La 3^a rima’. The textless ‘Aria di Sonetti’ may have been intended for a singer to accompany herself at the harpsichord, doubling the top line. Similar settings of textless *arie* appear in lute manuscripts of the period.²⁴ The texture is crudely homophonic, the harmony reminiscent of the *passamezzo antico*. If sung to a sonnet text, the setting is entirely syllabic, except for ornamental flourishes on the beat before a cadence, correspond-

²² G. Zarlino, *Le istituzioni harmoniche* (Venice, 1558; facs. New York, [1965]), pt. 3, ch. 79, p. 289: ‘un certo Modo, overo Aria, che lo vogliamo dire, di cantare; si come sono quelli modi di cantare, sopra i quali cantiamo al presente li Sonetti, o Canzoni del Petrarca, overamente le Rime dell’Ariosto’. On the *aria*, see J. Haar, ‘The “Madrigale Arioso”’: A Mid-Century Development in the Cinquecento Madrigal’, in *The Science and Art of Renaissance Music*, pp. 222–38, originally published in *Studi musicali*, 12 (1983), pp. 203–19; *id.*, *Essays on Italian Poetry and Music in the Renaissance, 1350–1600* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1986), pp. 44–6, 84–9, 169–70; J. W. Hill, *Roman Monody, Cantata, and Opera from the Circles around Cardinal Montalto*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1997), i, pp. 57–66.

²³ B. Varchi, ‘Delle parti della poesia’, in *Opere*, 2 vols., ed. G. B. Busini (Trieste, 1859), ii, pp. 698–9. The specificity of the term ‘lira’ can be seen from the full passage, which compares ancient and modern instruments: ‘Il suono è di due maniere, perché si fa o mediante le corde, o mediante il fiato o spirito umano, come anticamente nelle tibie e nelle fistole o vero zampogne, ed oggi nei flauti, pifferi, tromboni, cornette ed altri stromenti somiglianti; e questa sorte di musica, la quale si chiama dai Greci Auletica, è manco nobile di quell’altra maniera, che si fa mediante le corde, come anticamente nelle cetere, onde si chiamava Citaristica, sotto la quale si comprendeva ancora la Lirica; ed oggi si vede nelle lire, nei liuti, nei gravicembali e in tutti gli altri strumenti così fatti.’

²⁴ V. Coelho, ‘Raffaello Cavalcanti’s Lute Book (1590) and the Ideal of Singing and Playing’, in *Le concert des voix et des instruments à la Renaissance: actes du XXXIV^e Colloque international d’études humanistes, Tours, Centre d’études supérieures de la Renaissance, 1–11 juillet 1991*, ed. J.-M. Vaccaro (Paris, 1995), pp. 423–42. In Magliabechi XIX, 115 the two works called ‘La 3^a rima’ appear on fols. 1^v and 6^r. The music provides four phrases, of which the first two are rhythmically parallel, each setting one line of text. The third phrase is harmonically parallel to the first, to accommodate the poetic rhyme (*aba*). The fourth, more florid phrase probably constitutes an instrumental *ripresa*, played between stanzas, as Coelho suggests, pp. 438–40.

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The image displays a musical score for a piece titled 'Aria di Sonetti'. It consists of four systems of music, each with a treble and bass staff. The music is written in a style characteristic of the early modern period, featuring block chords and simple melodic lines. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is common time (C). The notation includes various chordal textures and some melodic flourishes, particularly in the later systems.

Example 1 Anonymous, *Aria di Sonetti*, Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS Magl. XIX, 115, fol. 15^r

ing to the strong, penultimate syllable of Italian verse. Given the length of the flourishes, underscored by dashes in the manuscript, the chord would be drawn out as long as necessary to accommodate all the notes. The four phrases of the 'Aria di Sonetti' cadence in the bass on D, B \flat , G and G, corresponding to the four lines of the quatrains. The first three phrases could be repeated for the two tercets, with the most elaborate ornamentation reserved for the third, rather than fourth, cadence, since that would represent the close of the poem. While commitment to paper in effect freezes the *aria* in place, a skilled musician would vary melody, ornamentation and harmony in accordance with the content and structure of the poem.

The *lira da braccio* (often referred to only as the *lira*) was played specifically to accompany lyric song *all'improvviso*; only two pieces of music written for it have ever been recovered.²⁵ It appears in

²⁵ H. M. Brown and S. S. Jones, 'Lira da braccio', in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd edn. On Pesaro, Biblioteca Oliveriana, MS 1144, which contains the two works for the instrument, see the manuscript facsimiles and discussion in S. S. Jones, *The Lira da Braccio* (Bloomington, Ind., 1995), pp. 98–9, 108–14.

numerous Cinquecento paintings, such as Dosso Dossi's 'Apollo and Daphne' of the 1520s (Figure 1). The lira da braccio was considered the equivalent of the classical lyre, and its characteristic flared peg box may have been symbolic of the sun, associated, like



Figure 1 Dosso Dossi, *Apollo and Daphne*. Rome, Galleria Borghese.
Photo courtesy of Scala Istituto Fotografico, Florence

poetry and music, with the god Apollo.²⁶ Its venerable lineage may be judged by its employment for the *stanze* of Angelo Poliziano's *Orfeo*, staged probably at Mantua in 1480.²⁷ Dossi's allegory emphasises the quality of divine inspiration, with bow lifted high towards the skies. Antonfrancesco Grazzini, in an epitaph on Giovanni Mazzuoli, specifically mentions the *lira da braccio* in its classical associations, so clearly portrayed in 'Apollo and Daphne'. He writes of the Muses:²⁸

E come amor le spira,
 Cantando il bel concetto in su la lira,
 Lodar tutti i suoi gesti all'improvviso,
 E di poi se ne andaro in paradiso.
 And how love inspires them,
 Singing the fine conceit upon the lira,
 To praise all his [Mazzuoli's] deeds *all'improvviso*,
 And thus they betake themselves to paradise.

As for the lute, its versatility as a contrapuntal instrument allowed it to accompany both improvised song and solo madrigals. Howard Mayer Brown writes that we have 'every reason to believe that sixteenth-century musicians arranged virtually every sort of madrigal for solo voice and lute'.²⁹ In 1536 Adrian Willaert published a volume of madrigals by Verdelot for lute and solo voice, but without the vocal part.³⁰ Manuscripts with madrigals for lute and voice are also found in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris and the Biblioteca della Società Filarmonica of Verona.³¹ The

²⁶ R. Brandolini, *On Music and Poetry (De musica et poetica, 1513)*, ed. and trans. Ann Moyer (Tempe, 2001), pp. 28–9, writes of the *Lyra* that 'Apollo himself may be allowed to use it – Apollo who, as the poets imagine, loved Daphne the daughter of Peneus, and at times lamented with his lyre his own love and the girl's cruelty; it may be allowed, then, to imitate diligently that greatest god of poets' ('liceat usurpare et Apollinem ipsum, quem poetae fingunt Daphnem Penei filiam adamasse atque interdum lyra et suos amores et puellae saevitiam deplorasae, liceat, inquam, praecipuum poetarum numen studiosissime imitari').

²⁷ On *La fabula d'Orfeo*, see N. Pirrotta and E. Povoledo, *Music and Theatre from Poliziano to Monteverdi*, trans. K. Eales (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 3–25.

²⁸ A. F. Grazzini, *Rime burlesche, edite ed inedite*, ed. C. Verzone (Florence, 1882), pp. 149–52; 'Al Magnifico M. Giovanni Cavalcanti nella morte del Padre Stradino' (ll. 88–92).

²⁹ H. M. Brown, 'Bossinensis, Willaert and Verdelot: Pitch and the Conventions of Transcribing Music for Lute and Voice in Italy in the Early Sixteenth Century', *Revue de musicologie*, 75 (1989), pp. 25–46, at p. 29 n. 13.

³⁰ *Intavolatura de li madrigali di Verdelotto da cantare et sonare nel lauto, intavolati per Messer Adriano [Willaert]* (Venice: Ottaviano Scotto, 1536). See the discussion in Brown, 'Bossinensis, Willaert and Verdelot', pp. 28–32.

³¹ Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Res. Vmd. MS 27; Verona, Biblioteca della Società Filarmonica di Verona, MS 223.

latter manuscript contains separate sections for soprano, tenor and bass, each inscribed with a vocal staff and a lute intabulation, with the poetic text placed in between. It includes the succinct comment, 'He who knows not how to play and sing, should not trouble his head over this book.'³² Full transcriptions of madrigals for lute may have been sung as solo songs as well, with the instrument doubling the soloist's melodic line. Composers, of course, set not only original madrigal verse, but sonnets, *ottave rime* and Petrarchan *canzoni*. Since settings of Petrarch were standard fare, three- or four-voice intabulations were appropriate for use and reuse by poet-singers, such as Visino, with their own poems.

At the same time, the madrigal could also incorporate elements of the unwritten tradition. Two of Francesco Corteccia's madrigals from the *Libro Secondo de Madriali a quatro voci* of 1547, *Io dico et diss' et dirò* and *S'io potessi voler*, are built upon tunes that may have been used by *improvvisatori* to sing *ottave rime*, the eight-line stanzas of Italian epic poetry.³³ *Io dico et diss' et dirò* (Example 2) sets a stanza from Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*.³⁴ The *aria* remains in the soprano, sung four times, each time setting two lines of poetic text. Around it the other voices move in free, vigorous counterpoint. A five-voice, cyclic setting by Jacob Arcadelt of Petrarch's *canzone Chiare fresche e dolci acque*, published in 1555, likewise contains an *aria* in the soprano, which is varied in the same manner a singer would employ in a series of stanzas.³⁵ According to James Haar, such embedded melodies became common in the mid-sixteenth century.³⁶ Another madrigal by Francesco Corteccia, *Liet' et beati spirti*, from the *Libro Primo de Madriali a quatro voci* of 1547, sets a sonnet text in such a way that the two quatrains and two tercets each end with extensive musical rhyme, a schematic

³² 'Chi non sa sonare e cantare non s'impazza in questo libro', inscribed on the first rear guard leaf, verso, of the first fascicle (Soprano); cited in F. Rossi, 'Manoscritto di opere italiane per liuto', *Il Fronimo*, 9 (1981), pp. 28–37, at p. 29. Rossi, pp. 28–30, provides a description and inventory of the three surviving sections of the manuscript: Soprano, Tenore and Basso (the Alto book is missing).

³³ *S'io potessi voler* is published in F. Corteccia, *The Second Book of Madrigals for Four Voices*, ed. F. A. D'Accone (Music of the Florentine Renaissance, 9; Neuhausen–Stuttgart, 1981), pp. 104–5.

³⁴ A. Einstein, 'Ancora sull'aria di Ruggiero', *Rivista musicale italiana*, 41 (1937), pp. 167–9.

³⁵ Haar, 'The Madrigale Arioso', pp. 225–6.

³⁶ Haar, *Italian Poetry and Music*, p. 99. Haar, p. 90, comments that 'Our failure to recognize this practice is one of the many things separating our rather abstract knowledge of Renaissance music from the multiple resonance it actually had.'

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Io di - co et dis - s'et di -
 Io di - co et dis - s'et di - rò fin - ch'io
 Io di - co et dis - s'et di - rò fin -
 Io di - co et dis - s'et di - rò fin -

5
 rò fin - ch'io vi - va, Che chi si truo - va in de - gno
 vi - va, Che chi si truo - va...che chi si truo - va in de - gno
 ch'io vi - va, Che chi si truo - va in de - gno lac -
 ch'io vi - va, Che chi si truo - va in de - gno lac -

lac - cio pre - so, Se
 lac - cio pre - so, Se ben di sè ve - de suo
 cio pre - so, Se ben
 - - cio pre - so, Se ben di

10
 ben di sè ve - de suo don - na schi - va, S'en tut -
 don - na schi - va... suo don na schi va, Se'n tut - t'av - ver - sa... se'n
 di sè ve - de suo don - na schi - va, Se'n tut - t'av
 sè ve - de suo don - na schi - va... suo don - na schi - va, Se'n

Example 2 Francesco Cortecchia, *Io dico et diss'et dirò*, bars 1–11, from *The Second Book of Madrigals for Four Voices*, ed. D'Accone, p. 86

pattern that could be adopted to other texts.³⁷ The tercets, in fact, rhyme *cde ecd*, so that textual and musical rhyme do not correspond, as they would in the pattern *cde cde*.³⁸ These works might represent the sort of music favoured by academicians such as Benedetto Varchi: a more contrapuntally refined version of the improvisatory style, but conceived and performed with musical notation.

THE PASQUINATA OF 15[44]

The prime evidence for the debate on song in the Accademia Fiorentina, and its most extended document, takes the form of an open letter signed ‘Pasquino Patritio Romano’ (Document 1). Hundreds of anonymous poetic satires and letters of the age were attributed to this mythical personage. The practice began in Rome early in the sixteenth century, when satirical verses began to be posted on an ancient statue popularly called ‘Pasquino’, hence the term *Pasquinata*. The letter, with a probable date of 30 September 1544, survives in a single, elegant, seventeenth-century copy.³⁹ It begins:

Reverend and Magnificent Musicians with the Notes

So that you may be aware of how much I regret that rare and perfect things are subjected to the censure of every foolish judgement (such as is your own), I have not wanted to fail to write you the present, so that for those who will read it, it may be the paragon of truth, to you the signature of shame, and to me only the satisfaction of refuting with reason the great number of you who, beyond all good custom and manners, lacerate the most noble Maestro Alfonso de’ Pazzi, Governor of the Staff of the Sicilia, and foremost creator of that harmony that makes you go mad with anger, green with envy, and expire of jealousy: to whom all the praises, all the dignities, and all the honours are more befitting than to that idiot Josquin, to that ignorant [castrated lamb] Gombert, or to that ill-bred sheep in a green field [Verdelot,] held by you in such esteem and veneration;

³⁷ Edited in F. Corteccia, *The First Book of Madrigals for Four Voices*, ed. F. A. D’Accone (Music of the Florentine Renaissance, 8; Neuhausen–Stuttgart, 1981), pp. 28–31.

³⁸ The disparity between musical and textual rhyme suggests that Corteccia’s madrigal was originally composed to a different sonnet, one with a different rhyme scheme. The text, by Corteccia’s fellow academician Giambattista Gelli, dates from 1541, on a political subject; see De Gaetano, *Giambattista Gelli*, 37.

³⁹ The manuscript is a miscellany in which the *Pasquinata* comprises a single fascicle, physically distinct from the surrounding material. The date is written as ‘MDxiiij’, with the first two letters ligated. The most likely explanation for the error is that the seventeenth-century copyist inadvertently omitted the letter ‘l’ after the ‘x’, so that it should have read ‘MDxliij.’

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since from the fountain of his rare talent is poured the perfection of sweet music without notes, in which so many elevated and generous spirits have toiled in vain, without ever having been able to penetrate so far as his continuous fancy has pierced.

The document is unprecedented in that it combines a spirited attack on the practice of written polyphony with a simultaneous defence of the unwritten tradition of Italian song. The letter launches a broadside against the entire polyphonic tradition, whose representatives it names as Josquin, Gombert and Verdelot. Josquin is chosen as the figure of near-mythic stature to whose standard every composer of the age is compared. Gombert is invoked as a pre-eminent living composer of Latin polyphony and Verdelot is the musician most closely identified with the early madrigal in Florence. Josquin and Verdelot are French in origin, if not in culture, while Gombert figures as a Flemish master at the court of Emperor Charles V. Against these musicians the author counterpoises one Alfonso de' Pazzi, master of 'la perfezione della dolce Musica senza Note'.

In addressing the letter to 'Reverendi, et Magnifici Signori Musici con le Note' the anonymous author decries above all the quality of *writtenness* in polyphonic music. He makes his argument primarily against the artificiality of polyphony. Artificiality inheres in the act of writing, which interposes itself between composer and musician, between musician and audience. The discussion plays on one of the broad fault lines of the Mannerist period of the mid-sixteenth century, the distinction between natural and artificial in works of art and literature.⁴⁰ Improvised music is not calculated, but relies on the immediate fancy (*ghiribizzo*) and skill of the singer, who is also its creator:

Nor do you consider how rare are those things of nature that yield to art. Therefore, music with the notes being an artificial thing, and discovered in this world by that philosopher, thanks to those drunken blacksmiths, it will have to yield to the natural one invented by God in the other [world], which without notes, without lines and without rests moves the sky in such order; and just as this is ruled in the air, being a celestial thing, so this Alfonsale is ruled with the air [*aria*] of his counterpoint and miraculous judgement.

⁴⁰ J. Shearman, *Mannerism: Style and Civilisation* (Harmondsworth, 1967), pp. 37–38, 98–100. Shearman, pp. 21, 140, 151, enumerates other qualities of mannerism that might apply to the madrigal: 'complexity', 'density of motif' and 'the exaggerated pursuit of variety'.

The letter turns the tale of Pythagoras and the blacksmiths on its head. It also employs the double meaning of the word *aria* – as a physical body and as melody – to connect the music of the spheres with the singer's *aria* or characteristic melodic line and manner of performance. The singer creates his *aria* directly from experience and imagination, hence the song is ruled by him in the same way that the heavens are governed by cosmic harmony. To judge from the *Pasquinata*, counterpoint itself does not arouse animosity, only its manner of production. The lack of ability to create in song, or in counterpoint, upon the moment becomes a serious drawback for any singer 'con le note', who is lost without the piece of paper or parchment before his eyes or fixed in his memory.

In the same vein, the letter comments on the practice of skilled instrumentalists who work entirely without notation:

Do you not play the trombone by ear? Do you not create upon four notes of a cantus firmus, via fantasy, an endless sea of notes? Have you not heard four or six trumpeters [*Trombetti*] harmonise, operating without notes or keys [*tasti*], but via breath alone, with admirable sweetness and union, often varying their voices, now high, now low?

The passage constitutes a rare attestation to improvised music as practised by instrumental ensembles. The phrase 'un Mar di Note senza fondo' suggests progressive variation or division against the cantus firmus, appropriate to the civic *pifferi*, whose services were, on high occasions, requested to accompany dances.⁴¹ In Siena, the *pifferi* in the mid-sixteenth century were much in demand at 'diners, banquets, weddings, university ceremonies, and other kinds of festivities'.⁴² The *Pasquinata* emphasises the role of fantasy in the performance of such music, a point also underscored in the creation of song. Heraldic trumpet ensembles, the *trombetti*, are likewise able to vary both harmony and texture by ear in the creation of a unified counterpoint.

Yet the most effective and revealing passage describes the problems that arise in the production and singing of written

⁴¹ Timothy McGee, 'The Ademari Wedding Cassone', *Imago Musicae*, 9–12 (1992–5), pp. 139–57, at pp. 148, 154. McGee describes the practice, however, only to the end of the fifteenth century. In his 'Giovanni Cellini, piffero di Firenze', *Rivista italiana di musicologia*, 32 (1997), pp. 201–21, at p. 217, McGee comments that 'I componenti dei pifferi di Firenze erano musicisti molto abili ed esistono buoni motivi per credere che essi partecipassero all'esecuzione di un repertorio molto vasto per il piacere delle nobili famiglie fiorentine.'

⁴² F. A. D'Accone, *The Civic Muse* (Chicago and London, 1997), 588.

polyphony. The *Pasquinata* takes dead-level aim at everything that can go wrong in a performance:

[Alfonso de' Pazzi] can, with the miracle of nature, with the gift of heaven and the influences of the planets, ascend to the level of perfection of music without notes; in which one does not spend so much coin, does not throw away so much time (to us so dear), nor do so much scoring [*spartimenti*] of notes. One does not spin like a top, when right after *B fa–B mi* comes *C sol fa ut*. You do not deny Christ in ruling so many books with rastrals, wasting the ink, and throwing away the varnish. You do not lose patience in copying *canzoni*, you do not knock yourself out going up and going down in *crome* and *semicrome*, you do not go crazy trying to find the key [*Chiave*] and the keyhole, keeping in mind whether or not *B molle* is entered from the natural, acute hexachord. Breathing does not give you trouble, torments do not suffocate you in keeping count during the rests. You do not beat with your hands, with your feet behind the beat; you do not rack your memory in the invention of airs and counterpoints. You do not sweat blood rehearsing a song ten times, and singing it badly eleven, you do not start again from the top at the request of those who get lost and blame it on you. You do not wear spectacles like Corteccia, but only with mastery, with the manner and the Brief Rules of Alfonso become a partaker of the beneficence of heaven.

The wealth of detail suggests that the author himself had undergone training in *canto figurato*.⁴³ He demonstrates how the copying of music books involves a great investment of time and money, besides requiring immensely painstaking work to do the job right, even down to the application of varnish to the finished pages. He implies that the clerical scribe neglects his Offices ('si rinnega Christo') in order to finish the work. In fact, since the entire letter is addressed to 'Reverendi, et Signori Musici con le note', the author emphasises the clerical status of polyphonic musicians. The composer himself has no easy time of it, trying to come up with new ideas while at the same time keeping in mind the precise relationship of one voice to another; the *Pasquinata* specifically cites the role of memory in the process of composition, an important consideration when composing in parts rather than in score.

Performance problems arise from the complexity of the music, which starts with the traditional bases of music theory: the

⁴³ The metaphorical usage of the word *chiave*, for example, is explained in Zarlino, *Le istituzioni harmoniche*, pt. 3, ch. 2, p. 148: 'Le quali Cifere si chiamarono sempre Chiavi; stando in questa similitudine, che si come per la Chiave si apre l'uscio, & si entra in casa, & ivi si vede quello, che si trova entro; Così per tali Cifere si apre la modulatione, & si conosce ciascuno delli nominati intervalli.' ('These signs were always called clefs after the key with which one opens a door and enters a house and then sees what is within. So by means of a clef one opens a melody and recognizes each of the designated intervals.') English version in G. Zarlino, *The Art of Counterpoint: Part Three of Le Istituzioni Harmoniche, 1558*, trans. G. A. Marco and C. V. Palisca (New Haven, 1968), p. 5.

application of both clefs (*chiavi*) and solmisation syllables (*voces*), hexachord mutation, and by extension, *musica ficta*. Rhythmic complexity of independent parts gives rise to a comical lag between the leader's hand and the singer's foot, not to mention intense worries over wrong entrances. The same inherent characteristics create purely vocal challenges as well, namely breath control and the strain to keep the eyes and voice moving fast in *crome* and *semi-crome*. It gives us some comfort to discover that the difficulties of singing sixteenth-century polyphony have not changed much in four hundred years. Most tellingly, in the *Pasquinata* the musicians rehearse (*provare*) the music ten times through, without ever getting it right. The passage offers clear confirmation that written polyphony was by this time routinely performed with rehearsal. On the eleventh time, during performance, the singers get lost and have to start over again, making nonsense of the poem. We are left with the image of the composer Francesco Cortecchia, member of the Accademia and *maestro di cappella* of Florence Cathedral, fumbling with his spectacles.

THE LETTER OF NICCOLÒ MARTELLI

A letter of 30 January 1546 (modern style), addressed to Alfonso de' Pazzi by Niccolò Martelli (Document 2), in large measure corroborates the *Pasquinata* in its defence of 'la dolce Musica senza note'. Martelli, as one of the founders and an early consul of the Accademia, commanded considerable respect. The letter was published by Antonfrancesco Doni in Martelli's *Il primo libro delle lettere* (1546), under the aegis of the Accademia Fiorentina. Although literary in intent, it lacks the extravagant language characteristic of the *Pasquinata*. Martelli begins by praising Pazzi's choice of academic name, Etrusco, for its brusqueness and grandeur:

all other names, Heroic, Greek or Latin, sound lesser by far and would have to yield completely, because – whether in antiquity or in Fiesole, whichever it may be – no others have ever known how to appropriate it, except you, with the workings of your mind; which found the way back to music without notes, leaving to Carpentras and Josquin and to the others who are in error their solfeggio. Whoever first took this name [Etrusco] never dreamed, however, that they would go fishing for voices in the air using [musical] scales. And in truth the harmony of song is nothing else than the delightful sweetness that expresses through the corporeal organs, with a certain grace and celestial air, the tempered unity of our soul; concerning which the great sages (who perhaps knew less) would want

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us to partake of that quality and manner, so that whoever today sings with the signs for *B quadro* and *B molle* is more foolish than he whom you cite in your great capricious Sonnets.⁴⁴

As in the *Pasquinata*, the quality of writtleness, and the complexities it invites, remain at the centre of the distinction between two competing forces. Martelli specifically identifies the attributes of vocal polyphony, especially solfeggio, the overlapping system of hexachords and the attendant operation of *musica ficta*. The phrase ‘e’ pescon con le scale le voci in aria’ employs puns on the words *voci* and *aria*. The first occurs in the technical, Latin usage of *voces*, the relative placement of a pitch within the hexachord, as well as in the implied, ordinary sense of ‘voices’. As in the *Pasquinata*, the second word is meant in the physical sense, the air we breathe, besides its connotation of ‘melody’. Martelli cites Josquin des Prez, together with Carpentras, the famous composer under the Medici pope Leo X, who earlier in his career had sung in the French Royal Chapel. The trope on the name ‘Etrusco’, Alfonso’s academic sobriquet, makes the point that Alfonso has, in a sense, revived the ancient ideal of singing without notation. Reference to ‘i gran Savi’ reinforces the idea that the ancient Greeks and Latins would have approved of Alfonso’s manner of song, and underscores the humanist qualities of his endeavours.

Later on, the letter strengthens its bias against the essentially foreign culture of written polyphony:⁴⁵

However, gradually finding the door again, let us leave them their notes around their [clerical] collars (which in our language sound like mistakes) and let us adhere to song only if it is truly that of your lineage, and you will see that in relation to them, we will have a large following by mid-August [the feast of the Assumption]. And without telling you anything more for the moment, I will end. . . . And if such imaginative work did not produce a subsequent effect, it was nonetheless a fine honour to attempt it, if for no other reason than to make yourself known as being without equal; even the great Portio Napoletano, known beyond the skies, praises you, exalts you, and says that you are the rarest among the rare, because you tread upon a path with your imagination, no longer in the vicinity of any mortals, that you realise how to become more than a man; and between your fame and that of Mona Honesta da Campi, there will be no difference of any sort.

⁴⁴ Translated by Edita Nosowa, to whom I am also grateful for translations of several poems from the circle of the Accademia Fiorentina.

⁴⁵ Trans. Edita Nosowa.

Martelli expresses an anti-clerical stance, enjoining ‘lasciamo lor le lor nuote intorno al collaretto (che in lingua nostra suonon macchie)’.⁴⁶ The passage reiterates the identification of polyphony with sacred music and musicians, already implicit in the *Pasquinata*. It suggests that Italian song, taking on the musical manners of the *oltremontani*, like a priestly collar, constricts the Tuscan tongue. For one hundred and fifty years, foreign singers in Italy overwhelmingly had been in holy orders. Martelli’s argument thus bears on the question of language, in that he advocates musical means that are endemic to and congruous with Tuscan poetics.⁴⁷

Martelli also takes an enthusiastic, directly expressed position with respect to Alfonso’s abilities as a musician and poet. He reports the opinion of the philosopher Simone Portio (Porzio) Napoletano in support of his judgement, though it remains ambiguous whether the reference encompasses Alfonso’s singing or his poetry. Portio was a fellow member of the Accademia and a lecturer at the Studio di Pisa, to whom Alfonso addressed two of his sonnets.⁴⁸ A clear sense of opposition or faction informs this portion of the letter. Martelli cites another name in conjunction with Alfonso, that of one Mona Honesta da Campi: ‘et dalla fama nostra à quella di Mona Honesta da Campi, non ci sarà vantaggio alcuno’. No trace or explanation of the latter figure has yet appeared. To judge from the jocular context, she may been a fellow *improvvisatore*; if so, like many proponents of the unwritten tradition, her name and fame have been lost.

ALFONSO DE’ PAZZI AND THE ‘SONETTI CONTRO IL VARCHI’

Alfonso de’ Pazzi, addressed in the *Pasquinata* as the master of ‘il Grado perfetto della Musica senza Note’, was a scion of the wealthy

⁴⁶ In this context, the word *collaretto* specifically refers to the clerical collar, as a diminutive of *collare*, or in the sense of *colletto*.

⁴⁷ A letter by Alfonso contained in Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale, Banco rari 71, fols. 62^r–68^v, signed ‘L’Etrusco’, appears likewise to deal with the relationship of music and poetry, but the autograph hand is all but indecipherable.

⁴⁸ Sonetto XII, ‘Mandovi, Porzio, certe melegrane’, and Sonetto XIII, ‘E’ non sarà questa volta menzogna’, in *Opere burlesche del Berni, del Casa, del Varchi, del Mauro, del Bino, del Dolce, del Firenzuola, Ricoretto*, 3 vols. ([Rome], 1771), iii, p. 312. Seven of Portio’s books were published in Florence, all by Lorenzo Torrentino. The phrase ‘davanti che e sia mezzo Agosto’, may allude to Sonetto LXI, ‘Tanci, se tu ordinavi a mezzo Agosto’, in *Opere burlesche*, iii, p. 341, addressed to Leonardo Tanci.

Pazzi family of Florence (Figure 2).⁴⁹ He held only one official position in his life, as *podestà* ('chief magistrate') of nearby Fiesole, from May to September 1548. The *Pasquinata* also calls him *Governatore* of the Company of Sicilia, or Cicilia, an organisation for which Antonfrancesco Grazzini wrote the texts for seven masquerade songs, or *mascherate*.⁵⁰ Since at least one of these was intended for performance in Fiesole ('Cantato alla Cicilia a Fiesole'), and a character in Doni's *I marmi* mentions that 'on Friday evening I had a headache, because we spent the whole day in Fiesole at the Cicilia', the academy may have been situated there.⁵¹ By the time Alfonso de' Pazzi was elected a member of the Accademia Fiorentina in September 1543, at age 34, he was known as one of the most eccentric men in all of Florence.

Antonfrancesco Doni, in his *Libreria*, describes Alfonso de' Pazzi as a formidable adversary:⁵²

This is one of the most admirable intellects in all of Tuscany today, keen, quick of riposte, lively and, in short, he makes the most beautiful flowers and good fruits of the operations [of the intellect]. Moreover, he delights in writing, to pass the time, some sonnets, rather in the manner of Burchiello, and he calls these his most capricious fancies.

Doni's sketch helps explain the impact Alfonso made within the Accademia Fiorentina, as a debater quick on his feet and pointed in response. Alfonso also appears as an interlocutor in Doni's *I marmi*, in a startlingly modern discussion of the Tuscan language. The comparison to Burchiello, the fifteenth-century satiric poet,

⁴⁹ The source of the engraving is unknown. Although the execution dates more than two centuries later, its style raises the possibility that it derives from an original portrait.

⁵⁰ *Canti carnascialeschi, trionfi, carri e mascherate, secondo l'edizione del Bracci* (Milan, 1883), pp. 298–304. The edition is a reprint of *Tutti i trionfi, carri, mascherate, o canti carnascialeschi andati per Firenze dal tempo del Magnifico Lorenzo de Medici, fino all'Anno 1559*, 2nd edn., 2 vols., ed. R. M. Bracci ([Lucca], 1750). Grazzini, who edited the first edition, omitted the seven of his own poems published by Bracci.

⁵¹ Doni, *I marmi*, i, p. 231: 'venerdì sera non mi sentivo troppo in cervello, perché eramo stati il giorno a Fiesole alla Cicilia . . .'. On a similar organisation in the early sixteenth century, see A. M. Cummings, 'The Company of the Cazzuola and the Early Madrigal', *Musica disciplina*, 50 (1996), pp. 203–38.

⁵² Doni, *La libreria del Doni divisi in tre trattati*, ed. V. Bramanti (Milan, 1972), p. 342: 'HE-TRUSCO FIORENTINO: Questo è un dei mirabili intelletti che abbi oggi tutta la Toscana, arguto, presto nelle riposte, pronto e, brevemente, fa bellissimi fiori e buoni frutti d'operazione. Poi si diletta scrivere per passare il tempo alcuni sonetti più che alla burchiellesca, e chiama questi suoi ghiribizzosi capricci.' Doni avoids controversy by not mentioning either Alfonso's musicianship or the *Sonetti contro il Varchi*, using instead the title *Rime in ghiri*. A second title attributed to Alfonso, *Fanfalucole del Piloto*, is unknown and may be fictitious.



Figure 2 Engraved bust of Alfonso de' Pazzi, in Antonfrancesco Grazzini, *Tutti i trionfi, carri, mascherate, o canti carnescaleschi* (1750), opposite p. 720. Courtesy of Special Collections Library, Duke University

banished from Florence for his sharp tongue, is made in reference to the native burlesque tradition.⁵³ As a poet, Alfonso's best-known work was the two volumes of the *Sonetti contro il Varchi*, also called *Il Varcheida*. The first book of the *Sonetti contro il Varchi* runs to sixty-one sonnets and one *capitolo* with a series of shorter poems and epigrams, while the second has forty-four sonnets.⁵⁴ Poems from the first book, in particular, were copied into multitudinous poetry collections of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Although it is difficult to credit, these sonnets singlemindedly attack, in terms both personal and professional, Benedetto Varchi, official historian and pre-eminent man of letters to Duke Cosimo I de' Medici.

In consequence of his early association with the patrician Strozzi family, Varchi, a native Florentine, had lived in exile since 1537, first in Venice, then from 1540 in Padua, where he helped found the Accademia degli Infiammati.⁵⁵ In the Veneto, he became a friend and follower of Cardinal Pietro Bembo. Varchi eventually moved on to Bologna, whence Cosimo I and his emissaries convinced him to return to Florence to enhance the status of the ducal court. His acceptance into the Accademia Fiorentina in March 1543 aroused feelings of envy and resentment, however, and tended to polarise sentiment within an already contentious group of men. His wide learning and cosmopolitan ideas stood in contrast to figures such as Antonfrancesco Grazzini, the apprentice of an apothecary, who had received a limited classical education.⁵⁶

⁵³ Domenico di Giovanni, called il Burchiello (1404–49), was the most famous fifteenth-century Italian satirist, renowned for his *sonetti caudati*, which inspired the adjective *burchiellesca*. A barber in Florence, and a thorn in the side of the Medici, he was exiled from the city for the last ten years of his life.

⁵⁴ The first book is published in *Opere burlesche*, iii, pp. 306–55. The second book is contained in Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Capponi 85, titled 'La Varcheida D'ALFONSO DE' PAZZI (detto l'Etrusco), Accademico et gentilhuomo Fiorentino'. The manuscript contains forty-four sonnets from Book II, interspersed with forty sonnets from Book I, followed by twenty-five shorter poems and epigrams. For a manuscript inventory, see G. S. Cozzo, *I codici capponiani della Biblioteca Vaticana* (Rome, 1897), pp. 82–4.

⁵⁵ R. S. Samuels, 'Benedetto Varchi, the *Accademia degli Infiammati*, and the Origins of the Italian Academic Movement', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 29 (1976), pp. 599–633. Samuels demonstrates that Varchi took on many of the same roles in the Accademia degli Infiammati as he did later in the Accademia Fiorentina, and that their programmes had distinct similarities.

⁵⁶ See R. J. Rodini, *Antonfrancesco Grazzini: Poet, Dramatist, and Novelliere, 1503–1584* (Madison, Wis., 1970), pp. 4–5. Grazzini lamented on more than one occasion that he was a poor Latinist.

The forces aligned against Varchi scored a triumph when a young girl was raped nearby his country villa in February 1545, at a time when Varchi was in residence. The girl's father was encouraged to press charges, and Varchi was arrested and thrown in prison. There he wrote letters to several patrons, including Pietro Bembo, requesting them to intercede on his behalf. Although his gardener seems a more likely culprit, Varchi confessed to the crime, made a monetary restitution to the girl (as dowry for marriage or a convent) and obtained a pardon from Cosimo I on 25 March 1545.⁵⁷ Within weeks, on 12 April 1545, Varchi was inducted to a six-month term as consul of the Accademia Fiorentina. His standing within the Accademia was never threatened again.

When Alfonso de' Pazzi was elected to the Accademia Fiorentina in September 1543, six months after Benedetto Varchi, his entrance was greeted with outright derision. Grazzini, the most talented satirist and playwright in the group, addresses a *sonetto caudato*, 'Dell'Accademia or ben sperar si puote', to Giovanni Mazzuoli, known as 'Lo Stradino' or 'Il Consagrata' (lines 1–14):⁵⁸

Dell'Accademia or ben sperar si puote
 Cose di fuoco, di ghiaccio e di vento,
 Poi ch'Alfonso pazzissimo vi è drento
 Che la musica vuol senza le note.
 Queste, padre Stradin, son le carote
 Che vi son fitte dietro a tradimento:
 L'Accademia basisce, e voi contento
 Ne state a boca chiusa, ed a man vote.
 Gridate ad alta voce, o Consagrata,
 Poi che gli Scribi iniqui, e' Farisei
 L'hanno si stranamente profanata.
 Gridate e dite: o cari Umidi miei,
 Or l'Accademia vostra è doventata
 La burla, e 'l passatempo de' plebei!
 Now in the Accademia you can well hope for
 Things of fire, or ice or wind,
 Since Alfonso, the craziest [Pazzi] is here within,
 Who wants music without notes.
 These, father Stradino, are the carrots
 Stuck behind you in treachery;
 The Accademia is astounded, and you remain content
 With closed mouth and empty hand.

⁵⁷ The incident has been variously understood; see U. Pirotti, *Benedetto Varchi e la cultura del suo tempo* (Florence, 1971), pp. 25–7, and Manacorda, *Benedetto Varchi*, pp. 157–61.

⁵⁸ Grazzini, *Rime burlesche*, p. 9.

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Cry aloud, O Consagrata,
Because the iniquitous Scribes and Pharisees
Have so strangely profaned it.
Cry out and speak: O Umidi, dear to me,
Now your Accademia has become
The joke and amusement of plebians.

Poetic satire, as employed here, or poetic burlesque, works by thrust and parry, the cut of the pen falling where it may. Although the language often contains a second, coded level of scurrilous or obscene import, it still operates principally on a localised basis, which allows us to compare texts in the search for specific subjects, attitudes or points of argument. For present purposes, the distortion or ironic inversion inherent in satire will be studied not so much with comical, or even aesthetic ends in mind, but with a view to tracing cultural associations.

Alfonso's eccentricities made him an easy target for such lampoons, especially since his surname, de' Pazzi, comes from the word *pazzo*, meaning 'crazy' or 'mad'. The inversion of social class that Grazzini introduces became a common point of ridicule, since Alfonso's clan ranked among the best-known and wealthiest in Florence. Grazzini's phrase, 'Il passatempo de' plebei', suggests an association between Alfonso's music and the improvised music of the *cantimbanco*, the poet-singer of the city piazzas.⁵⁹ The dual character of the unwritten tradition, as one that belonged to the common people, as well as one practised by courtly or humanist poet-singers, for want of a better term, comes into sharper definition. Indeed, it is Alfonso's advocacy of music *all'improvviso* that immediately attracts the attention of his opponents. On another occasion, Grazzini compares Alfonso to a swan.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ On the history of the *cantimbanco* or *canta in panca* (literally, 'bench singer') see E. Levy, 'I cantari leggendari del popolo italiano nei secoli xiv e xv', *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana*, supplemento 16 (1914), pp. 1–22; B. Becherini, 'Un canto in panca fiorentino: Antonio di Guido', *Rivista musicale italiana*, 50 (1948), pp. 241–7; Haar, *Italian Poetry and Music*, pp. 77–85; and F. Luisi, 'Minima fiorentina: sonetti a mente, canzoni a ballo e cantimpanca nel Quattrocento', in I. Alm *et al.* (eds.), *Musica Franca: Essays in Honor of Frank A. D'Accone* (Stuyvesant, NY, 1996), pp. 79–95. Singers of epics (*cantastorie*) were active in Italy from the late medieval period through the early twentieth century.

⁶⁰ Grazzini, *Rime burlesche*, p. 222.

Chi cerca d'imitar l'altero stile
O 'l dolce canto vostro,
Gitta via 'l tempo, la carta e l'inchiostro,
Riuscendo snervato, basso e vile;
Però che presso a cigno alto e gentile
Par, cantando, ogni uccello
Corbo, assiuolo, gufo, o pipistrello.

Whoever seeks to imitate the high style
Or that sweet song of yours,
Free yourself from measure, paper and ink,
Becoming enervated, base and mean;
Because next to the swan, sublime and noble,
All other birds, singing, appear
As a crow, horned owl, small owl or bat.

Grazzini portrays the imitators of Alfonso as birds that try to sing, but only manage to squeak or croak. Grazzini's third line confirms that Alfonso viewed the quality of writtenness as a clear impediment to the *altero stile*. Such *ad hominem* attacks on Alfonso largely bypass or ignore larger points of engagement, as elaborated in the *Pasquinata*. This kind of discourse results from the elite, enclosed nature of the academy, in which there was little separation between professional opinion and personal character. At the same time, Grazzini's poem suggests that Alfonso was dictating the terms of debate.

Another poem, headed 'Capitolo del Gobbo da Pisa ad Alfonso de' Pazzi', by one Girolamo Amelonghi (using his academic name, 'The Hunchback of Pisa'), treats Alfonso in a rather gentler manner than Grazzini's typically hard-edged satire. The poem begins, 'One day, Etrusco, I want to set you down in a chronicle'.⁶¹ It adds, in passing, a different voice to the debate, one that ironically acknowledges Alfonso's musical skill (lines 19–27):⁶²

Voi avete più ghiri e più chimere,
Più capricci, più stratte strafizzeche,
Che non ha 'cetera, o contratti un sere.
Voi siete l'inventor delle bacheche,
Poeta Etrusco, e per dir in progote
Straccate giorno e notte le ribeche.
Musico raro e di quei senza note
E ciurmador ne' cerchi a cicalare
Ficcando a quest'e quel dreto carote.

⁶¹ Edited in Pedrotti, *Alfonso de' Pazzi*, pp. 18–22; original in Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, MS 1199, fols. 90^v–93^v: 'Io voglio, Etrusco, un di mettervi in cronaca'.

⁶² I am indebted to the late Nino Pirrotta for his help with this translation.

The Debate on Song in the Accademia Fiorentina

You have more fancies and more wild illusions,
More caprices, more banquet witticisms,
Than a notary has etceteras or contracts.
You are the inventor of the Bacchic verses,
Etrusco, Poet, and to speak in *progote*
You wear out the rebecs night and day.
Rare musician, and of those without notes,
And charlatan, to chatter in the circles,
Poking your carrot behind someone or another.

Amelonghi offers a portrait of the poet-musician at work, practising ‘giorno e notte’. He comically associates Alfonso with the rebec, a peasant instrument by the mid-sixteenth century, though we might suppose the use of the traditional *lira da braccio*, as attested by the writings of Doni and Grazzini. Amelonghi mentions the composition of *Bacheche* or ‘Bacchic verses’, which may refer to a particular style or manner of poetic satire.⁶³ Details of the extravagant vocabulary (including the unknown word *progote*) help set the scene for Alfonso’s performance. The adjective *straffizzeche* in the first tercet refers to the dinner banquets at which satires were pronounced, by means of *stratte*, or ‘brusque jerks’, hence the phrase, *stratte straffizzeche*. The third tercet portrays Alfonso as a musical charlatan (*ciurmadore*) who hawks his wares in front of (or behind) his potential customers.⁶⁴ The verb *cicalare* (‘to chatter’) refers specifically to poetic satires. The word *carote*, besides its phallic connotation, carries the meaning of ‘lies’, as it does also in Grazzini’s poem, ‘Dell’Accademia or ben sperar si puote’. Amelonghi’s association of music, banquets and satire helps solidify the conclusion that Alfonso sang his own sonnets before the Accademia Fiorentina.

Further amplification of the issues delineated in the *Pasquinata* comes from the preface to ‘Gigantea’, a long, mock-heroic poem also by Girolamo Amelonghi, under the name ‘Il Forabosco’

⁶³ The word *bachecha* likewise appears in Grazzini’s ballata ‘Pianga ognuno a capo chino’ (ll. 38–42) in *Rime burlesche*, pp. 159–61:

Sendo morto quel cavallo,
Che faceva tanto onorallo
Dalle gente folle e cieca:
Gli è rimasto una bachecha
Da comporre allo Stradino.

⁶⁴ Haar, *Italian Poetry and Music*, p. 78, notes that *ciarlatano* also could be used in reference to a poet-musician: the different terms available ‘warn us that we are dealing not with a single category . . . but with a range of careers’.

(‘White-throat Warbler’). The preface is addressed ‘Al Famoso et Etrusco de’ pazzi’ (Document 3):

If you recall, the sweet music without notes was the first thing you made me learn with such facility. You and none other taught me to mix at random and to compose in the manner that you see [below], swearing to me that a sonnet must be begun with the tercets and finished with the quatrains; demonstrating to me by philosophical arguments that to poetise via fantasy [*à ghiri*], beyond the pleasure it carries in itself, is desired by everyone, in not being subjected, like other styles, to gravity of judgement, to elegant language, to sophistic argument, and finally, to poisonous, muttered censure. You made me capable, like those whose job it is, to recite comedies and to adorn them, and you gave me the inventions of the carnival songs, with the masquerades *de le buffole*.

The passage offers an overview, via rhetorical sarcasm, of the issues Alfonso raised within the Accademia Fiorentina. First and foremost comes the idea of improvised music. Closely allied to this is the composition of poetry *à ghiri*. The comments concerning the pleasures of such poetry, according to Alfonso de’ Pazzi, emphasise its immediate impact, in contrast to the sober criticism that values poetic elegance, sophistication, careful craftsmanship and linguistic or psychological complexity. The preface evokes the academic qualities by which poetry was a subject for commentary as well as performance. Alfonso, in contrast, juxtaposes imagery and ideas with a brusqueness that can only be enhanced in performance as song.

Surprisingly, Amelonghi also refers to the recitation of comedies. Like other academies of the period, the Accademia Fiorentina produced plays, especially those written by its members. Comedies and ancient dramas, given in the vernacular, typically interposed intermedi between the acts, and these were the occasion for musical performance. The preface attributes to Alfonso the facetious suggestion that carnival songs, filled with sexual double meanings, and normally conceived without written music, would be appropriate for singing in the production of a comedy. On the other hand, only one sonnet by Alfonso, ‘E ci hanno recitato letanie’, addresses the subject of comedies, deploring the use of polyphony, emblematised once again by the music of Josquin (lines 12–14): ‘Antique farces and modern tragedies, / For an intermedio the hymns of Josquin, / And in place of a proem, a lantern.’⁶⁵ The

⁶⁵ Sonetto XXXIII in *Opere burlesche*, iii, p. 324: ‘Antica farsa, e tragedia moderna, / Per intermedij gl’inni di Josquino, / Et invece di proemio una lucerna.’ One source, Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS Magl. VII, 271, fol. 31^r, titles the poem ‘Sopra la

lantern is needed, of course, to read sheet music, written in a style akin to sacred polyphony.

The fate of the carnival song is the subject of Grazzini's 'Sopra il compor canti moderni'.⁶⁶ Although Grazzini ridiculed Alfonso's views in a number of poems, directly or in passing, his opinions took a sharp reversal after the latter's death in November 1555. Grazzini decries how the high-flown and often incomprehensible madrigal has supplanted the traditional Florentine *mascherata* or *trionfo*. Carnival songs were worked out ahead of time, rather than improvised, then performed and transmitted by ear.⁶⁷ Grazzini's poem emphasises their popular character and ready availability to everyone in the city (ll. 33–40):

Io mi ricordo già quando gli andava
Un canto, prima che fusse riposto
Che tutto quanto a mente s'imparava,
Tant'era bello e chiaro e ben composto;
Ma or non pure un vero se ne cava,
E non s'intende il nome che gli è posto,
Ché quei madrigaluzzi a i lor soggetti
Tropo stitiche sono e troppo gretti.

I remember a time when, before a song
Was performed a second time,
Everyone had learnt the whole piece by heart,
Because it was so beautiful and clear and well composed;
But nowadays, not a single good one can be extracted from the lot,
And one cannot even understand the title placed upon it,
Because these lousy madrigals in their choice of subjects
Are too stingy and mean.

The ideal carnival song possesses an easy memorability, with an attendant clarity of text and music. Quoting a satirical sonnet by Alfonso de' Pazzi, Grazzini adds that current *mascherate* are even

comedia del lasca'. Consequently, the likely candidate for the play is the one by Grazzini performed at the Sala del Papa during carnival 1550. It was published in the following year together with six madrigal texts for the intermedii, but without music, as *La Gelosia. Comedia d'Antonfrancesco Grazzini fiorentino detto il Lasca* (Florence, 1551).

⁶⁶ Grazzini, *Rime burlesche*, pp. 407–9; A. Grazzini, *Opere*, ed. G. D. Bonino (Turin, 1974), pp. 399–400. Grazzini had a vital interest in the carnival song, not just as a poet, but as the first editor of the texts, in *Tutti i trionfi, carri, mascherate, o canti carnascialeschi andati per Firenze dal tempo del Magnifico Lorenzo de Medici, fino all'Anno 1559* (Florence, 1559). See also the later editions cited in n. 50.

⁶⁷ A number of composed songs survive from early in the century, however. A central source is Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS Banco rari 230, published as Renaissance Music in Facsimile, 4, ed. F. A. D'Accone (New York, 1986). For a comprehensive discussion of two songs from the manuscript, see A. M. Cummings, *The Politicized Muse: Music for the Medici Festivals, 1512–1537* (Princeton, 1992), ch. 2, pp. 15–41.

harder to understand. He admits that ‘Now I know, even though I am truly embarrassed to say so, / We could do with a thousand Alfonsos.’⁶⁸ Music ‘with the notes’ affects not just musical style, but the social position of the song and the poetic text itself. Like Alfonso de’ Pazzi, Grazzini addresses the changes wrought by the adoption of written composition and finds it wanting.

In two of his *Sonetti contro il Varchi*, Alfonso de’ Pazzi draws a sharp distinction between the tradition of written polyphony and the tradition of improvised song, a distinction that also touches upon larger cultural issues. The first of these, ‘Tu canti con le note, et con gl’occhiale’, portrays Benedetto Varchi as a singer of sheet music:⁶⁹

Tu canti con le note, et con gl’occhiale
 Varchi, et vedi il riflesso, et non la luce;
 Fai come quel, che con le nocche sdruce
 Al lume della Luna gli Aiuali.
 Tu se’ uno Strion da carnovali
 Immitator di Castor, et Polluce;
 Noi ti darem’ un caval’ con le muce
 À te, et tutti gli altri manovali.
 Tu canti per B quadro, et per B molle,
 Et usi di di chiaro la lanterna
 Come altre volte ho detto alla fraterna.
 La coltricie è tua vita; et la taverna
 Et vorresti i responsi nell’ampolle
 Et non credi, che Argo cio discerna.

You sing with the notes and with eyeglasses,

⁶⁸ Lines 15–16: ‘Or so, se ben di dirlo mi vergogno, / Di mille Alfonsi ci saria bisogno.’ Alfonso de’ Pazzi’s sonnet most likely refers to a known text by Giovan Battista Strozzi, the ‘Trionfo delle furie’, edited in *Canti carnascialeschi* (Milan, 1883), p. 160. The sonnet appears in Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Capponi 85, p. 65:

Per M. Gio. Batista Strozzi, quando fece la mascherata
 E sarrano veduti et non intesi,
 Batista, questi vostri mascherati,
 Et per vostra cagion sien lacerati,
 Et gittati e danari et non ispesi.
 Al primo lo diss’ io, quando l’intesi
 Che già sei volte al meno erano andati,
 Diavoli, furie, et spiriti beati
 Questa l’ottava sia co’ loro arnesi.
 Un gran rumore el fine, un gran fracasso
 Un guazzabuglio, una confusione
 Un dar di se à tutto il mondo spasso.
 Un carro con le note, un drappellone
 Che non l’harebbe fatto il Varchi o ’l Tasso
 Senza fine, senza arte, o inventione.

⁶⁹ Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS Magl. VII, 272, p. 47; trans. Edita Nosowa.

The Debate on Song in the Accademia Fiorentina

Varchi, and you see the reflection, but not the light;
You do as he, who with his knuckles
Rips bird nets by the light of the moon.
You are a carnival player,
An imitator of Castor and Pollux;
We will give you a horse among the cows,
To you and to all the other manual labourers.
You sing with the signs for *B quadro* and *B molle*,
And use a lantern in broad daylight,
As I have mentioned other times to the brotherhood.
The mattress and the tavern are your life,
And you would like to find the answers in the bottle;
And you don't believe that Argos discerns all this distinctly.

'Tu canti con le note' ridicules the more practical aspects of singing from written music – the eyeglasses, the lantern, the thrashing about with the voice. It also calls attention to the use of *musica ficta*, which employs the signs for *B quadro* (♯) and *B molle* (♭). Varchi acts here as a figurehead, a stand-in for poets who favour song 'con le note'. Moreover, the sonnet advances a distinction concerning the practice of music by professionals – *manovali*, those who work with their hands – and its practice by the highly educated or sophisticated connoisseur.⁷⁰ On this view, the act of singing from writing reduces music to the status of a craft, rather than a liberal art, with attendant social overtones. In the relatively open social milieu of Florence, music *all'improvviso* was nonetheless practised by shopkeepers, such as Visino, as well as by patricians, treated with the same seriousness and enthusiasm as poetry.

A second sonnet by Alfonso de' Pazzi, 'In terra non potendo conseguire', mounts a lyrical defence of the tradition of orally conceived and performed song against its detractors, Varchi and Corteccia. It takes the form of an epitaph for Baccio Moschino (d. 1552), organist in Florence Cathedral and a singer under Francesco Corteccia.⁷¹ Cosimo Bartoli, in his *Ragionamenti accademici*, set c.1552, writes of sometimes hearing Moschin improvise in synopated counterpoint on the organ for an hour together, 'with

⁷⁰ I am obliged to Tim Carter for this reading of the poem. The line 'Noi ti darem' un caval' con le muce' alludes to Varchi's position as an aristocrat who, having run through his inheritance, worked of necessity as a tutor and court historian.

⁷¹ J. Haar, 'Cosimo Bartoli on Music', in *The Science and Art of Renaissance Music*, pp. 58, 60, originally published in *Early Music History*, 8 (1988), pp. 37–79. The article quotes and discusses all those sections of Cosimo Bartoli, *Ragionamenti accademici sopra alcuni luoghi difficili di Dante* (Venice, 1567), that directly relate to music.

few listeners and solely for his own study'.⁷² Yet as the modest composer of two madrigals, and a leading member of the choir of Santa Maria del Fiore and the Baptistery of San Giovanni, Moschin was involved in the production of part-music, hence the sonnet's attribution of imperfection:⁷³

In terra non potendo conseguire
 Il Moschin con le note almo, e perfetto
 Quell'armonia che ciba l'intelletto,
 Costretto è suto di quaggiù partire.
 Il Varchi presto il doverrà seguire
 P'el camin noto provo di diletto
 E sovra 'l cerchio ch'a volgari è tetto
 Oserà forse l'alma sua nodrire.
 O felice colui ito nella spoglia
 Sedendo sopra se poggiando vola
 Ove 'l [d]iletto regna senza doglia
 Qui il *Corteccia* non haverà scuola
 Und'il *Moschin* saria l'ardente voglia
 In tempo che la chiave eterna [invuola].

On earth, not being able to equal with the notes
 That divine and perfect harmony
 That feeds the intellect,
 Moschin was compelled to leave this world.
 Varchi will no doubt be following him soon,
 Taking the well-known path, leading near to delight;
 And above the heavenly circle that serves the common
 folk as a roof,
 He will perhaps dare to nourish his soul.
 O happy is he who has left his mortal remains
 And seated, resting upon his body, flies
 To where delight reigns without sorrow.
 Here *Corteccia* will have no school,
 Which would be *Moschin's* ardent desire
 For all the time that flees the eternal key.

The association of the oral tradition with heavenly music on the one hand, propagated in the *Pasquinata*, and with the common people, *i volgari*, on the other, finds a subtle expression with 'In terra non potendo conseguire', one that depends more on imagery

⁷² Cited in Haar, 'Cosimo Bartoli', p. 57: '[I]o ho sentito talvolta sonare per suo piacere senza molti uditori, solamente per suo studio, & durato una hora a pigliare un vaga di sonare in contrabattuta, che mi hà fatto deporre ogni fastidio, ogni dispiacere, & ogni amaritudine che io havessi qual si voglia maggiore nello animo.'

⁷³ Trans. Edita Nosowà; text from Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS Palatino 245, fol. 20^v. The last line is emended by reference to Sonetto XXXII in *Opere burlesche*, iii, p. 323.

than logical argument. Yet the connection is an important one, for the aim of the Accademia in creating a Tuscan poetics that was both artistic and accessible demanded a style of song that was flexible, immediate and responsive to poetic form. As we have seen, formulaic *arie* were invented or fashioned to individual texts on the spot, balancing strophic repetition with ornamentation or variation. Solo song was able to project the words clearly at all times, unlike the polyphonic madrigal – an argument that resonated through the end of the sixteenth century.⁷⁴ The citation of Francesco Corteccia in the last tercet pulls the hook, since his name invokes the high status of the Florentine madrigal and Latin motet. As chief musician of Cosimo I, Corteccia represents an official policy weighted towards polyphonic music.

‘In terra non potendo conseguire’ attacks Varchi in large measure because of his particular position in the cultural politics of the age, as a leading voice and representative of the Medici state.

⁷⁴ See C. V. Palisca, *Humanism in Italian Renaissance Thought* (New Haven, 1985), ch. 13, pp. 369–407. In a remarkable passage, Zarlino, *Le istituzioni harmoniche*, pt. 1, ch. 9, p. 75, writes ‘But when music is recited with judgement, and approaches more nearly the usage of the ancients, namely in a simple manner, singing to the sound of the lira, the lute or other similar instruments subjects that may treat of comedy or of tragedy, and other similar things with long narratives, then their effects may be seen: because truly those songs can little move the heart in which a brief subject is related in a few words, as is the custom nowadays in some *canzonette*, called madrigals, which, though they may delight greatly, do not, however, have the aforesaid power. And that it is true that music delights more universally when it is simple than when it is made with so much artifice and sung in many parts one can realise from this, that one hears with greater delectation someone sing solo to the sound of an organ, of the lira, or of the lute, or of other similar instruments, than one hears many [voices]. And yet if many singing together move the heart, there is no doubt that generally those songs whose words are pronounced together by the singers are heard with greater pleasure than those learned compositions in which the words are heard interrupted by many parts.’ (‘Ma quando la Musica è recitata con giudicio, & più si accosta all’ vso de gli antichi, cioè ad vn semplice modo, cantando al suono della Lira, del Leuto, o di altri simili istrumenti alcune materie, che habbiano del Comico, ouer del Tragico, & altre cose simili con lunghe narrationi; allora si vedeno li suoi effetti: Percioche veramente possono muouer poco l’animo quelle canzoni, nelle quali si racconti con breue parole vna materia breue, come si costuma hoggidi in alcune canzonette, dette Madrigali; le quali benche molto diletino, non hanno però la sopradetta forza. Et che sia il vero, che la Musica più diletta vniuersalmente quando è semplice, che quando è fatta con tanto artificio, & cantata con molte parti; si può comprendere da questo, che con maggior diletatione si ode cantare alcuno solo al suono di un’ Organo, della Lira, del Leuto, o di altri simili istrumenti, che non si ode molti. Et se pur molti cantando insieme muoueno l’animo, non è dubbio, che vniuersalmente con maggior piacere si ascoltano quelle canzoni, le cui parole sono da i cantori insieme pronunciate, che le dotte compositioni, nelle quali si odono le parole interrotte da molte parti.’) Zarlino focuses on the effects created in the listeners by musical style and the delivery of text, comparing them to the testimony of the ancient Greeks, rather than on the issue of notation.

His own poetic production consists primarily in scores of epistolary, pastoral and spiritual sonnets.⁷⁵ Earlier in his career, he had been commissioned by Ruberto Strozzi to write a madrigal text for one ‘Pulisenà’, quite possibly the famous singer Polissena Pecorina who was a collaborator of Adrian Willaert in Venice.⁷⁶ Varchi was instrumental in the Accademia’s programme to bring humanist knowledge and science – so long the province of an educated elite – to the population at large, and in the efforts to revitalise Tuscan literature. In so doing, he remained indelibly associated with the poetics of Pietro Bembo, as represented by the edition of Petrarch’s *Canzoniere*, and especially the *Prose della volgar lingua*. Bembo, a Venetian, propagated a set of grammatical rules for Tuscan, based on and idealising the fourteenth-century usage of Petrarch and Boccaccio. To Alfonso, as to other members of the Accademia Fiorentina, including Antonfrancesco Grazzini and Giambattista Gelli, learning based on *lettere*, the written word, rather than on speech, falsified Tuscan, and presented the very real danger of manufacturing an artificial, literary language, severing the creation of literature from its roots in the life of Florence and Tuscany.⁷⁷ This is one reason that the performance of poetry, in declamation, recitative or song, takes on added importance, as the true projection and manifestation of the poetic voice.⁷⁸ With the ascendancy of the polyphonic madrigal, influenced by Bembo’s theory of *piacevolezza* and *gravità* in the rhythm and sound of poetic lines, qualities of writtenness and artificiality threatened to destroy the normative processes of social and artistic endeavour.

In a dialogue from Doni’s *I marmi*, the character of Alfonso de’ Pazzi puts forth several sophisticated arguments in favour of

⁷⁵ The Italian poetry is edited in Varchi, *Opere*, ii.

⁷⁶ R. J. Agee, ‘Ruberto Strozzi and the Early Madrigal’, *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 36 (1983), 1–17 at 1–3. I am indebted to Philippe Canguilhem for this reference.

⁷⁷ De Gaetano, *Giambattista Gelli*, p. 144, writes that Gelli ‘believed that languages were not a stable phenomenon which should be kept in their original state, but that they evolved constantly according to the environment. Therefore, he was anti-archaistic and rejected forms used even by the best models of the *Trecento* period.’ On Grazzini’s views of language, see Rodini, *Antonfrancesco Grazzini*, pp. 12–13, 17–18, 89–91.

⁷⁸ Pirrotta and Povoledo, *Music and Theatre*, p. 22, observe that ‘The humanist poets . . . regarded the musical performance of their verses as a natural extension of the process by which language becomes poetry.’

Tuscan as a living language.⁷⁹ Alfonso's interlocutor is Count Fortunato Martinengo of Brescia, a patron of Pietro Aaron's and the dedicatee of his *Lucidario in musica* of 1545.⁸⁰ Ironically, the dialogue does not concern music, at least not directly. If we can accept the arguments as representative – and they are more powerful than anything Doni is likely to have engendered on his own – they place Alfonso de' Pazzi in a position diametrically opposed to Bembo. Alfonso touches on the importance of idiomatic expressions and their aptness to different contexts; the necessity of learning the Florentine language by hearing it in the streets, not by piecing it together from books; the degree to which Florentine orthography follows pronunciation, rather than abstruse rules; the way Boccaccio places different vocabularies and even grammars in the mouths of his characters, high, middle and low, according to social significance; and how the purpose of different books requires differential use of language. Overall, Alfonso stresses the specificity of the spoken language in its various manifestations. In underscoring the importance of orality as the essential background for literature, he takes a stance parallel to his views on song: in both cases, art should be grounded in oral practice and the communal life of the city. As for grammatical rules such as Bembo's, he avers that 'It was enough that one wrote well and not too much.'⁸¹

Varchi did not respond directly in the face of Alfonso de' Pazzi's verbal onslaught, which apparently continued until the latter's death in November 1555. He complains in a 1548 letter to Pietro Aretino, 'Not being able to get me out [of the Accademia], or not wanting to, they leave me in the company of Alfonso de' Pazzi and Niccolò Martelli, and get rid of all my friends.'⁸² Varchi's feelings can also be gauged indirectly from his remarks on the poets that

⁷⁹ Doni, *I marmi*, i, pp. 129–34.

⁸⁰ *Lucidario in musica* (Venice, 1545; facs. repr., Bologna, 1969). Aaron spent a month in Brescia in 1539 as the guest of the Martinengo and da Cavriolo families, whom he describes as 'all good singers'; see *A Correspondence of Renaissance Musicians*, ed. B. J. Blackburn, E. E. Lowinsky and C. A. Miller (Oxford, 1991), letter 64, pp. 715–25.

⁸¹ Doni, *I marmi*, i, p. 130: 'Bastava uno che scrivesse bene e non tanto.'

⁸² Pirotti, *Benedetto Varchi*, p. 114 n. 1: '[Gli Accademici Fiorentini], non potendo cavarne me [dall'Accademia], o non volendo, per lasciarmi in compagnia di Alfonso de' Pazzi e di Niccolò Martelli, ne cavarono tutti gli amici miei.' The comment probably refers to the expulsion of several members from the Accademia in 1547, most notably Antonfrancesco Grazzini.

he calls *maledici* in the lecture ‘Della poetica in generale’ of October 1553.⁸³ His commentary, invoking the authority of Aristotle, illustrates the underlying seriousness with which even jesting words were held within literary circles:⁸⁴

Maledici are all those who, not to reprove vices, as the satirists do, or for another worthy end, but either from their bad nature, or from hatred, or by request, or for money, or for amusement, malign others in writing; and those, Aristotle says, must be expelled from the well-ordered republic, because whoever becomes accustomed to speak evil, becomes accustomed also to do it, and whoever offends someone with words would also, if he could, offend him in deeds.

Neither did Varchi participate directly in the debate on song. He believed that the effect of mensural music could be extraordinary, as a remark in the lecture ‘Della tragedia’ of February 1554 demonstrates: ‘What greater delight can one find, what more useful and laudable refreshment, what more honest and honoured solace to a well-composed soul, than a concordant consort [*concerto*] of several diverse voices united, or else truly of several instruments, or of one and the other together?’⁸⁵ The word *concerto*, or *concentus* in Latin, is a music-theoretical term used to denote counterpoint, while the combination of several voices with instruments alludes to the madrigal or motet. Varchi touches on one of the classic arguments in defence of music, namely that it creates or restores ‘un animo ben composto’. He exposes his prejudices against the unwritten tradition, however, in the lecture ‘Delle parti della poesia’, during the course of an encomium on the dignity and powers of poetry. Varchi realises that, historically speaking, poetry

⁸³ In *Opere*, ii, pp. 681–94, the first in a series of six lectures that Varchi delivered before the Accademia Fiorentina between October 1553 and February 1554. ‘Della poetica in generale’ is a prefatory survey, followed by ‘Lezione prima delle parti della poesia’ (ii, pp. 694–701), ‘Lezione seconda dei poeti eroici’ (ii, pp. 701–9), ‘Lezione terza del verso eroico toscano’ (ii, pp. 709–20), ‘Lezione quarta della tragedia’ (ii, pp. 720–7) and ‘Lezione quinta del giudizio e de’ poeti tragici’ (ii, pp. 727–35). Varchi, an expert on classical Greek, takes as his starting point Aristotle’s *Poetics*, explicating both what Aristotle meant and how his analyses relate to the sixteenth century.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 691: ‘Maledici sono tutti quelli, i quali, non per riprendere i vizii, come fanno i satirici, o ad altro buon fine, ma o per loro cattiva natura, o per odio, o per preghi, o per danari, o per sollazzo, scrivono male d’altrui; e quelli, dice Aristotile, s’hanno a scacciare dalle repubbliche bene ordinate, perchè chi s’avvezza a dir male, s’avvezza anco a farlo, e chi offende uno colle parole, l’offenderebbe anco, se potesse, co’ fatti.’

⁸⁵ Varchi, ‘Lezione quarta della tragedia’, *ibid.*, p. 720: ‘Qual diletto può trovarsi maggiore, qual più utile e più lodevole ristoro, qual più onesto e onorato ricreamento a un animo ben composto, che un concordevole concerto di più voci discordevoli unite, o veramente di più suoni, o dell’une e degli altri insieme?’

was sung, even though he disparages the itinerant poet-singers who continue to practise music *all'improvviso*.⁸⁶

It is not, therefore . . . that someone either should be able to judge poetry contemptible, as I have heard that many do, because of its having had a mean and weak beginning, being born from those, who, drawn by the desire to imitate and by the sweetness of the harmony, used to proceed *ex tempore*, or, as we say, singing improvisatorily; or that someone should marvel, that poetry from such humble origin and ignoble commencement should rise to such great heights and to such manner of excellence, that no greater nor better prize can be bestowed upon the praiseworthy works of valorous men, than to be sung by some poet and made immortal.

Varchi turns the weapons and values of humanist discourse decidedly against the practitioners of improvised song. Yet he is hardly alone in his low estimation of the unwritten tradition. His colleague Cosimo Bartoli, in the *Ragionamenti accademici*, discusses a long series of composers, singers of polyphony and instrumentalists, while omitting all mention of singers *all'improvviso*.⁸⁷ Only the instrumentalists, like the organist Baccio Moschini, who are expected to work with or without musical notation, receive praise for their skill at playing by ear. Among the composers, Verdelot is singled out for special treatment, on the basis of personal friendship, and as one whose madrigals achieve a great variety of effects in their projection of the poetic text, rivalling even Josquin.⁸⁸ Bartoli places direct and explicit emphasis on the practice of written polyphony. He praises, indeed, each of the composers mentioned in the letter of Niccolò Martelli and in the anonymous *Pasquinata*. At the same time, he confirms the difficulty of that music in performance, for a speaker in the *Ragionamenti accademici*, Lorenzo Antinori, complains of 'voices out of tune, ungraceful and most of the time not together'.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ Varchi, 'Lezione prima delle parti della poesia', *ibid.*, p. 695: 'Non è dunque, non è, discretissimi ascoltatori, che alcuno o possa riputar vile la poesia, come ho sentito, che molto fanno, per lo avere ella picciolo p[r]incipio e debile avuto, essendo da coloro nata, i quali dal desiderio tratti dell'imitare e dalla dolcezza dell'armonia, andavano *ex tempore*, o, come noi diciamo, improvvisamente cantando: o debba maravigliarsi, che ella da sì basso inizio e ignobile cominciamento a tanta altezza salisse e a così fatta eccellenza, che niuno guiderdone può nè maggiore venire, nè migliore all'opere lodevoli degli uomini valorosi, che l'essere da alcuno poeta cantate e fatte immortali.'

⁸⁷ Haar, 'Cosimo Bartoli', p. 58.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 49, 52.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 53: 'A me piace piu il sonare, perche nello udir Cantare io sento talvolta certe voci stonate, sgarbate, & il piu delle volte disunite che mi danno un fastidioso maraviglioso.'

It is difficult to estimate the effectiveness of Alfonso de' Pazzi's campaign against written polyphony. The relative dearth of madrigalian composition in Florence after 1540 might be taken as a sign of success, the result of a rear-guard action that, because of the Accademia's stature and influence, slowed down the pace of change. Only two composers of note, Francesco Corteccia and Giovanni Animuccia, practised the madrigal in Florence between 1540 and 1560. Corteccia was only 45 when he published his three books of madrigals in 1547, all dedicated to Duke Cosimo I de' Medici (the *Libro Primo de Madriali a quatro voci* of that year was a second, corrected edition), and he composed few madrigals thereafter. It appears that the patronage for madrigalian composition followed the lead of Cosimo I, whose interest in song extended only to celebratory or dramatic works:⁹⁰ of Corteccia's 108 published madrigals, as many as forty are theatrical in origin, one is a *mascherata* and six are political in nature.⁹¹ In contrast, Animuccia's *Primo Libro de Madrigali a quatro a cinque et a sei voci*, published that same year, consists predominantly of settings of Petrarch. Only *Il Secondo Libro de i madrigali a cinque voci* of 1551 sets four poems by a member of the Accademia, the refined madrigalist Giovanni Battista Strozzi. Animuccia soon left Florence for Rome, probably in early 1550.⁹² Even though the Accademia Fiorentina staged comedies such as Francesco D'Ambra's *Il furto* of 1544, for which Corteccia composed the intermedii, the academy

⁹⁰ I. Fenlon and J. Haar, *The Italian Madrigal in the Early Sixteenth Century: Sources and Interpretation* (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 85–6. The authors note that 'Cosimo I was interested in the arts as they might serve to glorify his rule and his family, hardly the kind of sympathetic concern that would keep alive the madrigal as we have described it.'

⁹¹ H. M. Brown, 'A Typology of Francesco Corteccia's Madrigals: Notes towards a History of Theatrical Music in Sixteenth-Century Italy', in J. Caldwell *et al.* (eds.), *The Well Enchanting Skill: Music, Poetry, and Drama in the Culture of the Renaissance* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 3–39. I place one of the theatrical madrigals listed by Brown, *Di strani e vari luoghi d'ogn'intorno*, in the category of *mascherata*, following the edition in *Feste musicali della Firenze medicea (1480–1589)*, ed. F. Ghisi (Florence, 1939), pp. 39–43, headed 'Mascherata d'astrologi'. The work is also published in Corteccia, *The Second Book of Madrigals for Four Voices*, pp. 78–80.

⁹² The time of Animuccia's departure from Florence can be determined from a *capitolo* by Antonfrancesco Grazzini, 'In lode degli Spinaci', addressed 'A M. Giovanni Animuccia Musico' (*Rime burllesche*, pp. 566–9). The poem, written during Lent (l. 2), contains a dinner invitation to Animuccia. Grazzini mentions the death of Giovanni Mazzuoli, 'il nostro Consagrata' (l. 40), which happened on 5 June 1549. Animuccia must therefore have left Florence after 19 February 1550, the start of Lent the following year. Two other allusions to the Accademia Fiorentina, including Benedetto Varchi (l. 85) and the group known as the Aramei (l. 94), suggest that Animuccia was well familiar with the academy.

probably contributed to the neglect of the polyphonic madrigal in Florence.⁹³ Two related sets of madrigal partbooks from the 1550s, of Florentine provenance, mitigate the situation, however: they were copied by Giovanpiero Masaconi, a known clerical music scribe, and contain fashionable *note nere* madrigals.⁹⁴

THE DEBATE ON SONG

The particular historical moment of the debate on song results from the collision of two powerful traditions that had coexisted on the Italian peninsula for over a century. In Nino Pirrotta's thesis, the musical performance of serious poetry in the fifteenth century, both Italian and Latin, became the province of the educated humanist and courtier, as well as of the professional *improvvisatore*.⁹⁵ Yet throughout the fifteenth century and the first half of the sixteenth, northern-trained singers and composers, especially those from France and the Low Countries, practised the art of musical composition in Italy, largely in the form of Latin masses, motets and French chansons. It was the northern-trained masters – Verdelot, Arcadelt, Willaert, Rore – who were most responsible

⁹³ The texts of the intermedi were by the poet Ugolino Martelli, a long-time friend of Benedetto Varchi. On the three performances of *Il furto* by the Accademia Fiorentina, see De Gaetano, *Giambattista Gelli*, p. 120.

⁹⁴ The manuscripts are the subject of a study by Philippe Canguilhem, titled 'The "Libri di Lorenzo Corsini" and the Madrigal in Florence in the Middle of the Sixteenth Century'. The first set of four partbooks, Civitanova Marche, Biblioteca Comunale, Mus. MS 1, lacks only the Basso. As reassembled by Canguilhem, the second, related set includes the Tenor partbook at Civitanova Marche, Biblioteca Comunale, Mus. MS 2, two partbooks in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (Soprano and Basso) and one at the Newberry Library in Chicago (Alto), lacking only the Quinto. I am most grateful to Dr Canguilhem for discussing his work in progress. On Masaconi, see Fenlon and Haar, *Sources and Interpretation*, pp. 123–6. See also J. Haar, 'The *Note nere* Madrigal', in *The Science and Art of Renaissance Music*, pp. 201–21; originally published in the *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 18 (1965), pp. 22–41.

⁹⁵ See especially N. Pirrotta, 'Music and Cultural Tendencies in 15th-Century Italy' and 'The Oral and Written Traditions of Music', in *Music and Culture in Italy from the Middle Ages to the Baroque* (Cambridge, Mass., 1984), pp. 51–71, 72–9. Recent contributions include Haar, *Italian Poetry and Music*, ch. 4, pp. 76–99; F. A. Gallo, *Musica nel castello: trovatori, libri, oratori nelle corti italiane dal XIII al XV secolo* (Bologna, 1992), pt. 3, pp. 95–140, published in English as *Music in the Castle: Troubadours, Books, and Orators in Italian Courts of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Centuries*, trans. A. Herklotz and K. Krug (Chicago, 1995); A. M. Cummings, 'The Sacred Academy of the Medici and Florentine Musical Life of the Early Cinquecento', in I. Alm *et al.* (eds.), *Musica Franca: Essays in Honor of Frank A. D'Accone* (Stuyvesant, NY, 1996), pp. 45–77; Brandolini, *On Music and Poetry*.

for the development of the polyphonic madrigal. The predominance of the madrigal, influenced in the course of its later development by the poetics of Pietro Bembo, derived in its turn from the study of Petrarch's *Canzoniere*, was apparent across Italy by 1540. Alfonso de' Pazzi raised the issue of 'la dolce Musica senza Note' within the Accademia Fiorentina because he wished to revive the older tradition of poetic performance, one that had been so strongly associated with Italian poetry and humanism at the turn of the century. As Martelli remarks, Alfonso 'ritrovò anchora insino alla Musica senza note'. And the *Pasquinata* calls him 'Primo inventore di quella Armonia', which may be translated as 'the foremost creator of that harmony'. In other words, the tradition was so weakened that extraordinary efforts were required to revive it. The controversy in the Accademia Fiorentina corroborates Pirrotta's view because it demonstrates not only that the two traditions were viewed as very different from one another, but that writers on either side saw them in the light of their cultural origins. More broadly, the mid-sixteenth century was a time in which literate culture of all kinds threatened to supplant ways and means of creation that depended on orality. One has only to think of the contemporaneous rise of instrumental notation to realise the profound significance of the changes.

Writing towards the end of his life, even Benedetto Varchi presented a different view of music *all'improvviso* in the unfinished dialogue *L'Hercolano*, c.1565:⁹⁶

I never heard anything that moved me more inside and seemed more wonderful (and I am old and have heard a few things) than the singing extemporaneously to the lira of M. Silvio Antoniano, when he came to Florence with the Most Illustrious and Excellent Prince of Ferrara, Don Alfonso d'Este, son-in-law of our Duke, by whom he was not only kindly recognised but most generously compensated.

The passage illustrates that the practice of performing poetry via the medium of improvised song did not die out in the second half of the sixteenth century, at least among professional singers. The tradition remained especially strong in Naples, among celebrated

⁹⁶ B. Varchi, *L'Hercolano, dialogo di Messer Benedetto Varchi, nel qual si ragiona generalmente delle lingue, & in particolare della toscana, e della fiorentina, composto da lui sulla occasione della disputa occorsa tra 'l commendator Caro, e M. Lodouico Castelletto* (Florence, 1570), pp. 272–3; cited and trans. in Palisca, *Humanism in Italian Renaissance Thought*, pp. 375–6.

performers such as Luigi Dentice and the Sienese singer Scipione del Palla, teacher of Giulio Caccini.⁹⁷ But we need to ask why *improvvisatori* like Silvio Antoniano, Alfonso de' Pazzi and Scipione del Palla elicited such praise, and further, why the issue of music notation became the focus of debate.

Reinhard Strohm writes of the fifteenth century that 'The audience – patrons and humanists – were not interested in knowing whether the tune had been learned from a written copy or not, and to a musician this made no difference either.'⁹⁸ This hypothetical indifference to music notation certainly did not hold true in Florence of the 1540s. The *Pasquinata* focuses on the writing of music because it denotes a different process – musical, social and physical – than that employed by the *improvvisatori*. When the singer also functions as creator, even as he adapts common or standard musical materials to each performance of a poem, a direct, physical communication results between the performer and audience. In the formulation of literary theorist Paul Zumthor, orality enables 'the reciprocity of relationships that are set up between interpreter, text, and audience member during performance, and that provoke the interaction of each of these three elements with the other two in a common game'.⁹⁹ As a result, the performance embodies the poetic voice and generates social meaning. Even though the music Iacopo de' Servi sang before Pope Leo X is irrecoverable, any virtuoso would have developed his own manner and style of musical creation, relying perhaps as much on his virtuosity with the viola da gamba or other instrument as on the voice. The intensity of experience for the audience would only be increased when, as in the case of Iacopo, the performer-creator also acted as poet. In Italy, the figure of the poet-singer dates at least as far back as Francesco di Vannozzo in the late Trecento, who wrote several sonnets in colloquy among the poet, his lute and his harp.¹⁰⁰ The immediacy of creative power as much as their virtuosity helps explain the acclaim bestowed on such musicians.

⁹⁷ See D. G. Cardamone, 'The Prince of Salerno and the Dynamics of Oral Transmission in Songs of Political Exile', *Acta musicologica*, 67 (1995), pp. 77–108; Brown, 'Geography', pp. 147–68; Pirrotta and Povoledo, *Music and Theatre*, pp. 197–201.

⁹⁸ R. Strohm, *The Rise of European Music, 1350–1500* (Cambridge, 1993), p. 550.

⁹⁹ P. Zumthor, *Oral Poetry: An Introduction*, trans. K. Murphy-Judy (Minneapolis, 1990), p. 185.

¹⁰⁰ Edited in *Le rime di Francesco di Vannozzo*, ed. A. Medin (Bologna, 1928), nos. xxix, xxx, xxxiii–xxxvii.

Moreover, virtuosity itself can lead to marked differences of musical style, in the form of highly embellished melodic lines that, like the ornamentation of a Corelli violin sonata, change with each performance.

Musical notation, on the other hand, offers unsurpassed contrapuntal, harmonic, motivic and structural control, especially in four or more voices. Such characteristics lead the *Pasquinata* to call 'la Musica con le Note cosa artifitiosa' (fol. 177^v). It requires heavy investment of time and resources, and the end result oftentimes is poor. But the criticism goes further. The *Pasquinata* focuses on the matter of ink, rastrals and varnish, on the fact of notation itself, because it breaks the link between performer and audience. Notation erects a barrier between singers and listeners, for composition appropriates the act of creation to itself, confines it to another time and place. The singing of a notated work thereby acquires a different social and musical significance; hence the opposition to any form of song, even *arie*, dependent on notation.¹⁰¹ The song becomes an object, symbolised by the spectacles of Varchi and Cortecchia. It takes on the nature of hermetic display rather than communal experience. Moreover, according to Alfonso de' Pazzi and Niccolò Martelli, notation falsifies the Tuscan language, rendering poetry unintelligible in part because it engenders a complexity of musical relationships, at the expense of the poem. Criticisms of the artificiality of the madrigal find echoes in other writers, notably Gioseffo Zarlino, who defends the humanist values of accompanied song, and Vincenzo Galilei, who advocates simpler styles of song as models for a new art.¹⁰²

Despite the survival of the art of the *improvisatore* into the later sixteenth century, in one respect the debate on song marks the end of an epoch. After 1555, the figure of the poet-singer seems to have vanished from literary circles. Though his poetic output is almost

¹⁰¹ Zumthor, *Oral Poetry*, p. 197, observes that 'The oral text, from the very fact of its modes of preservation, is less appropriable than the written text; it constitutes a common good within the social group wherein it is produced.' The process is illustrated by the widespread currency of stock bass harmonies such as that in Example 1, where the bass is combined with another stock element, the 'Aria di Sonetti'.

¹⁰² On Zarlino, see the quotation in n. 74, above. On Galilei, see C. V. Palisca, 'Vincenzo Galilei and Some Links between "Pseudo-Monody" and Monody', in *Studies in the History of Italian Music and Theory* (Oxford, 1994), pp. 346–63, originally published in *Musical Quarterly*, 46 (1960), pp. 344–60; and I. Cavallini, 'Sugli improvvisatori del Cinque-Seicento: persistenze, nuovi repertori e qualche riconoscimento', *Recercare*, 1 (1989), pp. 23–40 at pp. 26–7.

entirely satirical in nature, Alfonso de' Pazzi counts as one of the last Italian poets to improvise settings of his own works, apart from such entertainers as in the *commedia dell'arte*.¹⁰³ The shift signals a broadening chasm between music and poetry: each was entrusted to specialists whose understanding of the corresponding art was potentially minimal, or at least significantly different. As a character remarks in Doni's *Dialogo della musica*, 'Perhaps singers who know as little of facts as they do of words (for them *sol mi fa re* would be words enough) are just satisfied with singing.'¹⁰⁴ The attribution of skill, rather than artistry, to singers of polyphony arises from the traditional distinction between *cantor* and *musicus*, a distinction based on different levels of priority and understanding in the relationship between the two arts. The known *arie di cantare* are formulaic, highlighting poetic structure and rhythmic flexibility rather than, as in the madrigal, the expressive and mimetic potential of individual lines, words, or word sounds. Even Corteccia's *Io dico et diss' et dirò* (Example 2), with an *aria* in the soprano, underscores the structural integrity of the poem. Again, the humanist ideal of the singer to the lute or lira da braccio was to create a unity of word and tone, which could be most fully realised (even in satire) by the performance of the poet himself.

The clash of ideals and values within the Accademia Fiorentina thus plays itself out in a number of different, primarily satirical ways. Only afterwards did the professionalization of roles help to sever the ties between two arts that, as Varchi remarks, 'have the greatest amity, or rather they are relatives, the one with the other'.¹⁰⁵ Still, the high regard in which song was held shows itself on both sides of the controversy. The conflicting views of that relationship bring us back to the point that far more and varied music-making went on than we have ever been aware of. In Florence, the seriousness, and the humour, of the debate demonstrate that the unwritten traditions did not fade quietly.

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¹⁰³ On the prominence of musical entertainers, including the *ciurmadori* and *cantimbanchi*, see Cavallini, 'Sugli improvvisatori del Cinque-Seicento', pp. 27–32.

¹⁰⁴ Doni, *Dialogo della musica*, p. 82; trans. Haar, 'Notes on the *Dialogo della musica*', p. 292: 'forse i Cantori che non sanno più di fatti, che di parole (a lor basta a raggiare sol mi fa re), restano sodisfatti a questo e non cercano più là.'

¹⁰⁵ Varchi, 'Delle poetica in genere', in *Opere*, ii, p. 690: 'Hanno la musica e la poetica grandissima amistà, anzi più tosto parentado l'una coll'altra.'

Document 1. Anonymous, *Pasquinata*, in Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS II.I.107 (Magl. VIII, 48), fols. 177^r–179^v

Reverendi, et Magnifici Signori Musici con le Note

Acciò che voi siate consapevoli quanto me dolga, che le cose rare è perfette siano sottoposte al biasimo d'ogni folle giuditio come è il vostro, Non hò volsuto mancare scrivervi la presente, perche à quelli che la leggeranno sia il paragone della Verità, à voi la stampa della Vergogna, et à mè solo la contentezza d'abbattere con le ragioni la caterva di voi tutti che, fuor' d'ogni buon costume, et creanza, lacerate il Nobilissimo Messer Alfonso, De Pazzj, Governatore à Bacchetta della Sicilia, et Primo inventore di quella Armonia, che vi fà ire Pazzi di Rabbia, crepare d'Invidia è morire di Gelosia: Al quale più si converriono tutte le lodi, tutte le dignità, et tutti gli honori, che à quel Babbuasso di Josquino, à quel Castrone di Gomberto, et à quella pecoraccia di verde lotto da voi tenuti in tanto pregio, et veneratione; Dipoi che dal Fonte del suo raro ingegno s'è versato la perfetione della dolce Musica senza Note, nella quale si sono in vano affaticati tanti elevati, et generosi spirti senza havere mai possuto penetrare quanto hà penetrato il suo continuo ghiribizzo. [C]osa certo meritevole di porgergli Sacrificij, è incensi, et consecrarli mille, et mille statue d'oro, et d'Arcento per fare l'in immortale. [O]nde si puote ben gloriare la presente, et dolersi la passata etade; l'una d'essere alzata à tanto honore, l'altra d'essere stata priva di tanto bene; percioche in quella, senza dubbio, non gli mancavano le vere lodi; come in questa è falsi biasimi, poi che malevoli, et invidiosi che ci ne vadia altero, cercate lacerarlo, et affogarlo nella vera sciocca, et arrogante opinione: Mà questo come saggio Nocchierj con la Nave della sua Musica, et con i remi de [177^v] I rari concetti, s[']è ito schermendo talmente dalla tempesta delle vostre frenesie, che à mal grado di voi hà ritrovato il porto. Ne vi basta questo, Ne la dolcezza di quella, Ne le tante varie comparatione che lui in difesa del vero vi hà allegat[o]; che ancora star' volete ostinati nella Babbuaggine che vi mostra à dito, ne potete, ne dovete negarlo, mà come presaghi che cedendo cascherete nel centro del Vituperio, contrafatti coloro che vogliono più presto consumarsi à poco, à poco nella passione de Tormentj; che confessar[e] il furto che li torrebbe la Vita, tal che essendo di poi vinti dalle passionj confessando più de quello havevon fatto si muoiano disperatj. Tal avverrà à voi, che doppo l'haver negato il fondamento et la dottrina della Musica Alfonsale, rinnegherete IDio cedendoli, domandandogli venia, et pregandolo vi faccia partecipi

di tal dote. Onde egli che si vorrà giustamente, vendicare, vi terrà in sulla Cruccia di Compiacervi[;] ne potendo cantare la sua per non la sapere ne la vostra per Vergogna, vivendo in speranza vi morrete cacando, riportandone la fama, et l'honore che meritate: Mà sè con dritto Giuditio discoressi quanto, è, quale sia l'ingegno humano, non vi parria difficile che lui fusse stato, sia et possa essere in questa, et in maggiore cosa perfetta. Ne considerate che rare sono quelle cose della Natura che cedino all'Arte: Adunque essendo la Musica con le Note cosa artificiosa, et trovata in questo Mondo da quel Filosofo, mercè di quei Fabbrij imbrachi, doverrà cedere alla naturale trovata Da Dio nell'altro, la quale senza Note, senza rigli, et senza pause muove il cielo con tanto ordine, et così come essa si regge in Aria per essere cosa Celeste[.] [178^r] Così questa Alfonsale si regge con l'Aria del suo contrappunto, et Giuditio miracoloso, è quando tal Ragione non fussi bastante che è senza Dubbio, à empiervj l'orecchie, le quali turate per non udire il vero, Guardatene le migliaia che vi si parono innanzi le quali per fuggire la fatica; non allego, Voi non sentistj mai dir', ne sentirete che la Musica con le Note habbia contro all'loro natura le costume mosso è [i] montj, ne fermati i fiumi dal corso loro, come sentirete dire di quella che è in Cielo: la melodia che sparse il Trace mitigando le furie infernali, non hariano fatto il profitto, è la maraviglia che fecero se vi fussi stato una sol Nota: Nè erà la natura dei Sassi andare per l'Aria da loro stessi veloci; niente dimeno alle Thebane mure si raunorno al concerto dell'Armonia Alfonsale: Non sapete voi che, i Greci anticamente usorno, et hoggi usono per più Brevità cantare in sulle dite? [E]t i Turchi nelle loro Mosche intuonono gli hinni di Macometto con certi segni che fanno nel Muro? Vegnjamo alli Animali Brutti. Non si vede egli tutto il giorno fare infinite, è nuove Musiche à quattro ò sei Uccelletti, solo con l'istinto naturale seguendosi l'un' l'altro? che direste voi se un' Pecoraio che non sentì mai ricordare la Musica, Rusticamente, come gli porse la Natura havessi imparato, à sonare un' zufolo tanto bene che per suo piacere insegnava ballare à una Pecora la quale, sentendo quella vera, et naturale Musica, movendosi à tempo faceva mille Giuochi? è lui hà insegnato cantare à Grilli? che alle Ranocchie che ne Pantani fanno si risonante Coro? chi alle Cicate, et Draganelle? chi alla serena che fà addormentare i Balordi che da lei si lassono sommergere? [C]hi Pubblicassi che uno Stornello dicessi l'Ave Maria, et una Ghiandaia [178^v] Cantassi la bella Franceschina, sarebbe lapidato[.] Mirate le zanzare che mai ti pugnerebbono prima se non ti facessino una serenata di Musica Alfonsale intorno à gli orecchi, con tanta dolcezza che ti con[s]tringe à dormir' perche esse ti possino poi à l'hor' mondo mascherar' il Viso, et però quell'Arfasatto del Burchiello non senza Misterio, disse nel principio d'un' suo Sonetto le zanzare cantavano

il Teddeo, ò benedetta, et recolenda memoria di Grifone Tamburino, che congegnasti una Musica si bella d[i] Cani constringendoli à cantare Alfonsalmente, e portar le voci piu alte tal hora, che essi non harian voluto. Pigliamo hora l'Instrumenti. Non sonate voi con la pratica dell'orecchio il Trombone? Non fate voi in su quattro Note di Canto fermo, con la fantasia un Mar di Note senza fondo? Non havete sentito accordarsi Quattro, ò sei Trombetti senz' oprari Tasti o Note, ma col fiato solo con mirabil dolcezza, et Unione variando sovente le voci hor alto, hor basso? chj è quello che, per grosso che ci sia, n[on] sappia son[a]re il Cembolo, le Staffetti, la Zampogna, il Guscio di Tellina, le Nacchere[,] el Tamburo sopra qual si voglia suono, senza scordare una Dramma oprando solo il tempo, et l'Orecchio? chi narrassi havere veduto un' horiuolo in Avignone con Dodici Campane è Campanelli sonar[e] senza contrapesi in Musica di molte Canzone saria tenuto heretico. Non havete mai visto sonare senza Musica il Dabbuddà con le Cascagne? et chi sta in Dubbio che frà voi la Maggiore parte non lo suoni per Eccellentia? Non mi pervenne mai all'orecchie di quel Contadino che stridere faceva si dolcemente un' Cacapsensieri? ò se queste, et infinite altre cose che io lasso in dietro Maggiori, vedete, sentite, è toccate perche non volete Credere [179^e] Che uno Alfonso, de Pazzi, che tiene nel Capo à level di Chiesa, le Girandoli, i Ghiribizzi, le Soffisticherie, i Capigiri, le Frenesie, i Bisquizzi, i Frinfri, i Castellui a i Capricci, e le Strafizzateche, possa col miracolo della Natura, con le doti del Ciel è con l[']influssi de['] pianeti ascendere al Grado perfetto della Musica senza Note[;] nella quale non si scambiccherà tante piastre, Non si getta via tanto tempo à noi si caro, Non si fà tanti spartimenti di Note. Non s'aggira com' un Arcolaio dietro à Beffabemi, è Cessolfaut. Non si rinnega Christo à rigare con pettini tanti Libri, logorando l'inchiostro, è gettando via la Vernice: Non si perde la pazienza à copiar Canzoni[,] Non si spezza il Capo per salire, è scendere dietro alle Crome, è semiCrome, Non s'impazza per cercare dove sta la Chiave, et la Toppa; ponendo mente se[']l Bimmolle è entrato in corpo à Natura acuta: Non ti dan briga i Sospiri, non t'affogano i tormenti nel fare conto delle pose. Non ti dibatti con le Mani, è con piedi dietro alle Battute, Non si stilla la memoria nell'inventione dell'Arie et de contrappunti: Non si caca il Sangue à provare una Canzon' x volte, è cantarla male Undici[,] Non si ricomincia da Capo à petitione delle rimesse che ti son fatte addosso. Non s'adopera gli occhiali come il Cortecchia, Mà solo con la Maestria, con la maniera è con la Breve Reg[o]la Alfonsale diventi partecipe del ben del Cielo: et che sia la stessa Verità sè la Cecilia, come Santa, et Donna dà bene, vorrà dire il vero non hebbe mai dopo la sua Edificatione maggiore honore, più gran pompa che il contento che gli hà fatto gustare la Musica: Alfonsale, et di qui

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puote ogn'uno comprendere che sia nato [179^v] la Benivolentia di quei fratelli eleggendolo per le sue Virtuti et lodevoli costumi per governatore, sottomettendosi col freno de suoi discorsi à tutte le sue voglie, et voi stessi ne potreste fare fede, mà per usurparli quella grandezza che se li pervenne, et alla quale potrebbe, come si spera in breve, salire, fate S. Pietro, non volendo approvare la Verità, non volendo cederli alle sue ragioni, et non volendolo amare riverire, et adorare per vostro maggiore, privandolo di quelli honori, et di quelle debite reverentie che si li converrebbero, mà Vostro fia il danno con la Vergogna insieme, sue le glorie, et mia la fatica; et facendo fine aspetterò che questa habbia à fare in voi quel frutto che io desidero, non meno per suo honore; che per buon zelo del debito et benificio che vi s'aspetta—Di Roma il di 30 di 7embre MDx[1]iiij

Pasquino Patritio Romano —

Document 2. Niccolò Martelli, letter to Alfonso de' Pazzi, 30 January 1545, in *Il primo libro delle lettere* (Florence, 1546), fols. 71^r–72^r

ALL'ETRUSCO

Io che non hò altre lettere che quelle ch'io m'arrecai dalla fossa del peccato, e insomma non sono altro che capricci, penna, e inchiostro. Scrivo à voi che componete à ghiri, etrusco galante; che vi havete saputo procacciare (oltr' al bel nome proprio d'Alfonso) un cognome, che non hà il triviale o 'l dappoco; perche quello Etrusco, hà un certo che di brusco, che apporta grandezza mirabile: tal ch'ogn'altro nome Heroico, Greco, ò Latino, suona meno assai; & gli doverrian ceder tutti di gran lunga; che per antico ò Fiesolano che e sia, non se l'è saputo mai appropriare altri che lo stratagemma del vostro cervello. Il quale ritrovò anchora insino alla Musica senza note; lassando à Carpentras & à Iosquino, & à gli altri erranti la lor zoffa; che chi prima tal no[71^v]me gli pose, non sognava; però che e' pescon con le scale le voci in aria. Et nel vero l'harmonia del canto, non è altro che la soavità d'una dolcezza che proferisce per gli organi corporei, con una certa gratia & aria celeste la temperia unita dell'anime nostre, della quale vogliano i gran Savi (che forse manco sepono) che noi tegniamo parte di qualità, di modo, che chi canta hoggi per b quadro & per b molle, & più borgio che colui che voi citate ne i vostri gran Sonetti à ghiri. Dove vorreste saper Se le Cipolle, son dolci ò forti ò di mezzo sapore, E qual fu prima Abate ò ver Priore, Che chiamasse le Tonache Cocolle. Con quel che segue, & similmente in quell'altro mirabile, havendo un capo à ghiri, et considerando insino à gli An[i]mali che vanno co i suon grossi diceste: Che se 'l nome di colui

arrivi & suoni Dove le genti à noi volgan le piante Dica di gratia perche il Liofante Camina con le nacchere et co i suoni Et che anchor vi dica perche i tuoni Non son' un tempo in Ponente e 'n Levante Et che vi mostri il testo dove Dante Abborrisce le Prediche e i Perdoni. Et sic de singulis, dicono i Privilegi & gli stazzoni. Ma noi parlavamo della Musica et siamo entrati in un'altro Mondo. I hò paura che andando per questa via, il mio scrivere, non sia come il vostro comporre à ghiri. Pure ritrovando alquanto l'uscio, lasciamo lor le lor nuote intorno al collaretto (che in lingua nostra suonon macchie) et attegniamoci al canto, se e fosse ben quello del vostro casato, & vedrete gran seguito che noi haveremo à petto à loro, davanti che e sia mezzo Agosto. Et senza dirvi altro per hora, farò fine. Ma innanzi ch'io faccia cotal punto; non voleste voi gia riformare il Zodiaco? o mirabile Etrusco; chi è quello che insino à qui, habbia havuto mai tal'animo? Taccia lo impiumarse d'Icaro & di Dedalo, & forse ancho l'audacia di Phetonte? poi che 'l vostro molto piu bello humore, alzato da i ghiri ha voluto por mano insino à i Cieli, & non hà volsuto stare contento, come sono stati tanti Secoli, & pappatosi tanti età à quei primi che tai segni nel Zodiaco posero: parendovi che'l vostro AMBRAINO, col quale benche e fosse Cavallo, poetavi per eccellenza, vi stesse cosi bene come quella Pecora del Montone, o 'l Granchio ò lo Scarpione: trovando mille altre piu belle inventione, che non trovaron quelle genti grossi. Et se tal ghiri non hebbe dipoi effetto, vi è stato pur bello honore il tentarlo; se non per altro, per farvi conoscere senza pari: che insino al gran Portio Napoletano super ethera notus vi predica, vi loda, vi essalta, & dice che sete in tra i rari rarissimo; perche caminate per un sentiero co i vostro ghiri, non presso piu anchora da alcuno mortale; si che vedete in che modo si diventa piu c'huomo, & dalla fama nostra à quella di Mona Honesta da Campi, non ci sarà vantaggio alcuno; & io mi v'offerò per terzo, col mio comporre ladammente, piu tosto che lambiccando le stitiche, superstitione della lingua nostra; sapendone il mal grado & la mala gratia à i Cacastecchi, se mai le leggerano. Di Fiorenza a di XXX di Gennaio MDXLV Nicolò Martelli.

Document 3. Girolamo Amelonghi, Il Forabosco, excerpt from letter 'Al Famoso et Etrusco de pazzi', 15 April 1547, in Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS Magl. VII, 678, fols. 2^v-4^v

Dicano adunque quel vogliano perche a me basta solamente satisfar' a voi famosissimo et stravagantissimo Etrusco a cui non debbo meno che alla fortuna che mi vi fece esser' vicino percioche prima non cominciai a praticarvi che il mio cervello quasi a sembianza del vostro divento labe-rinto di girandole Umbicco di strattagemme, è guarda robba di chimere

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voi, se vi ricorda, foste il primo ch'apprendere mi feste con tanta facilità la dolce musica senza note, voi et non altri m'insegnaste promis[cu]are à catafascio et comporre nel modo che vedete, giurandome che un sonetto haveva à essere cominciato con Interzetti et finito con i quadernali, mostrandomi per ragioni filosofiche che il poetare à ghiri, oltre al piacere che porta seco è bramato da ogn'uno, per non essere sottoposte come gl'altri stili a gravità di sentenze, à forbite lingue, à sofisticchi argomenti et finalmente, à velenose, et masticate censure, voi me feste capace, come si havev[a]no affare le comedie recitarle, et ado[r]narle dandomi l'inventioni de i canti carnoaleschi con le maschere de le buffole, voi mi persuadesti che a non volere perdere giamai gli speroni facessi, mettere due punte à miei si come voi à i vostri stivale voi mi deste ad intendere che a volere star' caldo il verno tenessi nel letto tutta notte i zoccoli à calcagnini et portassi il giorno per casa come voi sopra la camicia una certa guarnacciaccia de albagio che mettendola per il capo sino à i piedi agiugnessi, voi mi disegnaste ancora et mi faceste apparare à giucare con le nuove, et strogiloti pochitissime carte che volete se adoperino à primiera dove In vece di quadri, cuori, picche, Et fiori hanno à dipignersi Ranochi, Pappagalli, Ghiri et pipistrelli; et tante altre fantasie che io per breuita lasso à dietro di raccontare.