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Caccini's Two Bodies: Problems of Text and Space in Early-Baroque Monody

Two Spaces: Composerly/Performerly[1]

In recent years, the concept of a "context" for a musical work has usefully expanded beyond the old sense of cultural, intellectual, and biographical background (background to the score, of course) to include elements that might at one time have been called "ethnomusicological". These include the interactions, in the moment of performance, between participants (composer, performers, audience) and the referential resonance of the performance venue itself. It has been a profound shift, redefining the object of musicological study as the interaction of bodies in space, a conception in which the textual residue (the score, of course) and its intellectual background are only two components.

Perhaps not surprisingly, this has been most forcefully pronounced in the clearly collaborative sphere of musical theater and opera. The choice put forward nearly a decade ago by Carolyn Abbate between "drastic" and "gnostic" conceptions of music no longer seems so urgent nor so difficult, as the discipline has become more comfortable seeking and finding meaning in the «huge phenomenal explosion» that exists «between the score as a script, the musical work as a virtual construct, and us».[2] Even Wagner has been allowed once again to be the collaborative artist that it turns out he always was – a choreographer of bodies in space, and a negotiator between those bodies, who now stand before us as co-creators of musical meaning.[3]

[1] Thank you to Richard Wistreich for his many helpful suggestions.

[2] Carolyn Abbate, *Music: Drastic or Gnostic?*, «Critical Inquiry», XXX, 3 (2004), pp. 505-536: 533.

[3] See for example Mary Ann Smart, *Mimomania: Music and Gesture in Nineteenth-Century Opera*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2005; David Levin, *Unsettling Opera: Staging Mozart, Verdi, Wagner, and Zemlinsky*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2007; Michelle Duncan, *The Operatic Scandal of the Singing Body: Voice, Presence, Performativity*, «Cambridge Opera Journal», XVI, 3 (2004), pp. 283-306.

This should be a particularly happy turn of events for those who study the music of the early seventeenth century. The early-Baroque repertoire of *virtuoso* solo singers occupies an ambiguous space between the performerly and the composerly; between, in other words, music that exists exclusively within the embodied moment of performance and music that can in some way be claimed to exist in more or less "readable" form on the written page. My central project outside of this essay has been to place early-Baroque monody among a group of emblematic aristocratic repertoires, musical and non-musical, which lead multiple, separate existences – an oral-traditional existence inside the court, and a print-cultural existence outside of it. The main suggestion of this essay is that there is still much to be learned about the varied cultural functions of early-Baroque solo song from an acknowledgment and theorizing of the problematic relationship between text, body, and space as it applies to the songs of Giulio Caccini.

It is a textbook truism now to locate the symptoms of an important music-stylistic transitional phase at the turn of seventeenth century. Central to this style narrative is the printed music associated with solo Italian court singers, a repertoire that appears to be in a state of flux, moving away from the performerly, improvisatory traditions of solo music-making that characterized the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and toward a more composerly view after 1600. The most important reflection of this change takes the form of a new type of musical edition, which appears to apply either a transcriptive level of accuracy to solo-song notation, utilizing figured bass and attempting to produce an accurate, at times note-by-note, representation of the ornamental and free-rhythmic style of improvisatory singers.

However, Baroque music studies have not yet emerged at the forefront of the new methodology of music, the body, and space. The problematic nature of these song prints, which have often seemed lacking in one or another measure of composerly complexity or cohesiveness (in the words of Tim Carter, they can appear to lack «compositional integrity»), has allowed them to function rather unambiguously as simple (and expected) agents of instability in an unfolding style transition.[4] They have become an important link within a prevailing history of compositional style that depicts the breakdown of equal-voiced *ars perfecta* counterpoint and the emergence of a new, freer aesthetic of soloistic audacity between the Renaissance and the Baroque.

[4] See Tim Carter, *Music in Late Renaissance and Early Baroque Italy*, Portland, Amadeus Press, 1992, p. 93.

A glance at the history of most any field since Heinrich Wölfflin's 1888 *Renaissance und Barock* shows how historical narratives were developed specifically to define an independent and unified style following and in contrast to the so-called high Renaissance.[5] The principal means of establishing such a period break plays on similar tropes in all disciplines: those of decline, crisis, transition, and finally re-codification. In the standard narrative as related to music, the decline and crisis came in the form of composers' and theorists' rejection of the contrapuntal foundations of Renaissance polyphony in favor of the improvisatory soloistic textures of the monody, the *stile moderno* instrumental sonata, the keyboard toccata, and the early opera – all of which have been viewed as prototypical versions of the more settled forms that would dominate the later Baroque.[6] Such shifts in musical style have, in turn, been tied to a general sense of epistemological transition around 1600, the "emergence" of solo song becoming an inherently progressive step in a more general narrative of the emergence of modernity.[7] Thus, the appearance of the new notational style of monody prints following Giulio Caccini's *Le nuove musiche* (1601) marks an important moment of cultural transformation that is mirrored by a moment of compositional crisis.

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[5] See Heinrich Wölfflin, *Renaissance and Baroque*, transl. Kathrin Simon, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1964. For the state of the concept in the mid-twentieth century see René Wellek, *The Concept of Baroque in Literary Scholarship*, in *Concepts of Criticism*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1962, pp. 69-127. Since Wellek the concept and defining its boundaries have continued to dominate humanistic studies, see John M. Steadman, *Redefining a Period Style: 'Renaissance', 'Mannerist', and 'Baroque'* in *Literature*, Pittsburgh, Duquesne University Press, 1990; Robert Harbison, *Reflections On Baroque*, London, Reaktion, 2000; *Italy In the Baroque. Selected Readings*, ed. Brendan Dooley, New York, Garland, 1995; and James C. Sheppard, *Mannerism and Baroque in Seventeenth-Century French Poetry: The Example of Tristan L'Hermite*, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2001.

[6] This textural shift at the heart of the monody, the concertato style, and the continuo madrigal was the central agent of change in what Riemman characterized as the Generalbaßzeitalter, see Hugo Riemann, *Das Generalbaßzeitalter und Besonderes zur Affektenlehre*, in *Handbuch der Musikgeschichte*, 2 vols., Leipzig, Breitkopf & Hartel, 1904. A cursory glance at such standard surveys as Manfred Bukofzer, *Music in the Baroque Era: From Monteverdi to Bach*, New York, Norton, 1947, and Claude V. Palisca, *Baroque Music*, Englewood Cliffs, Prentice Hall, 1968, confirm a sense of a generalized textural shift as a stylistic factor that used to unify style shifts in disparate repertories and to act as an agent of stylistic devolution from the "high" Renaissance. More recently, the advent of the continuo in the madrigal provides the agent of transition "From Madrigal to Cantata", in Tim Carter, *Music in Late Renaissance and Early Baroque Italy*, cit., pp. 239-255. Lorenzo Bianconi shies away from attempting to unify the "Baroque" based on stylistic principals. He does, however, name the basso continuo and a series of early continuo publications as «truly extraordinary innovations, at least in printing», see Lorenzo Bianconi, *Music in the Seventeenth Century*, transl. David Bryant, Cambridge [etc.], Cambridge University Press, 1987, pp. 1-2.

[7] Following Foucault, the monody and early opera have come to stand as a predictable musical symbol for an epistemological turn away from "resemblance" and toward "Cartesian representation", see Daniel Chua, *Absolute Music and the Construction of Meaning*, Cambridge [etc.], Cambridge University Press, 1999, pp. 29–39; Karol Berger, *Bach's Cycle, Mozart's Arrow: An Essay on the Origins of Musical Modernity*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2007, pp. 19–42; Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, *Production of Presence, Interspersed with Absence: a Modernist View on Music, Libretti, and Staging*, in *Music and the Aesthetics of Modernity*, eds. Anthony Newcomb and Karol Berger, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2005, p. 350.

As in most narratives of style-transition, the emphasis has been on where we are headed. It has, therefore, been a history of composers and texts, rather than a history of performers and spaces, that has emerged around these early prints.[8] The music that emerges from this compositional and epistemological crux remains "spaceless", in a sense, its aesthetic domain still framed by the requirements of an autonomous style history achieved through the analysis of scores and theoretical texts. At the center of this text history have been the documents originating around the so-called Florentine Camerata. Informal as its actual meetings may have been, the paper trail left by members of this group – part experimental performance venue, part theoretical think tank – provides a clear sense that patrons, composers, and performers were all quite aware of advocating for something revolutionary.[9] The various letters and treatises produced by members of the group are some of the first to treat soloistic music, in particular solo song, seriously, thus bringing it into the literate realm. Even as the centrality of the group itself has been challenged,[10] it remains a given that any "textbook" description of the "new Baroque style" will begin with some account of the theoretical documents associated with the Camerata. For a discipline like musicology, which for much of the twentieth century had been heavily weighted toward the history of compositional style, the Camerata filled an almost talismanic function, giving permission, in a sense, to treat solo song at the turn of the new era as part of a forward-looking composerly revolution.

The Camerata, however real and embodied its meetings may have been, has come to be seen more as an abstract entity – a conclave of thinkers churning out texts – than a corporeal meeting of speech acts and performed debate. Its history as now commonly understood is a documentary one, its residue a series of ideas to be put into practice

[8] Predictably, it has been in the later Baroque form of commercial opera seria that issues of audience, space, and body (in particular the body/voice of the castrato) have come to the forefront. Once again, opera scholarship has been at the forefront of these issues.

[9] See Claude V. Palisca, *The Florentine Camerata: Documentary Studies and Translations*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1989; Id., *Girolamo Mei: Mentor to the Florentine Camerata*, «The Musical Quarterly», XL, 1 (1954), pp. 1-20; John Walter Hill, *Oratory Music in Florence I: Recitar Cantando: 1583-1655*, «Acta Musicologica», LI, 1 (1979), pp. 108-136; Nino Pirrotta and Nigel Fortune, *Temperaments and Tendencies in the Florentine Camerata*, «Musical Quarterly», XL, 2 (1954), pp. 169-189; Claude V. Palisca, *The Camerata Fiorentina: A Reappraisal*, «Studi musicali», I, (1972), pp. 203-36. As with many perceived "style revolutions" much of the initial musicological work surrounding the early monody was in seeking sources that might establish where or with whom the revolution truly began. The various letters and treatises associated with the Camerata have formed the main body of evidence in these debates.

[10] See Nino Pirrotta - Elena Povoledo, *Music and Theatre from Poliziano to Monteverdi*, transl. Karen Eales, Cambridge [etc.], Cambridge University Press, 1982, p. IX, p. 201, pp. 238-250; John Walter Hill, *Review of Music and Theatre from Poliziano to Monteverdi*, «Journal of the American Musicological Society», XXXVI, 3 (1983), pp. 519-526.

eventually through acts of composition on paper. On one level, of course, there is nothing wrong with this. It is in line with a very real text fetishization prevalent within Renaissance Italian academies, many of which included complex rules for the submission, adjudication, correction, resubmission, and presentation of "works" to be read, discussed, published, and eventually enshrined within the academic record.[11] And so this is not to say that the Camerata and its thick paper trail of theoretical treatises should not remain core documents in the history of late sixteenth-century musical thought. Nor should its importance to the emergence of solo song from the unwritten tradition and into the written be diminished. The acceptance of an oral tradition of soloistic performance by a class of literary cultural caretakers who served as arbiters of taste – their deeming it worthy of written debate and theorizing at all – is a necessary step toward (or symptom of) its becoming primarily a literate tradition in the ensuing decades of the seventeenth century.

The ease of this process, however, is overestimated in the canonic tale of style transition. Solo song is pulled prematurely out of its performance arena and into the literate arena of the author-composer. The transformation seems self-evident given the involvement of important historical agents from both spheres. On the one hand is the participation in the Camerata of a figure as key to late-Renaissance court song as the Medici court singer Giulio Caccini, and on the other, is the Camerata theorists' endorsement of some kind of solo song generally, and Caccini's own singing specifically, as a theoretical ideal. Add to this, Caccini's own claim that his move into print was at the instigation of his academic patrons, and it was inevitable that his career and works would now appear as "virtually literary". The problem that results is similar to that noted by John Miles Foley in which the analysis of oral-traditional, improvisational repertoires normalizes them to the standards of textual composition:

> In an effort to restore these poets to their proper position, in effect to put the performer back in charge of the performance, they have often argued for a de-emphasis of real or supposed differences between 'oral' and 'literate' composition and have not seldom posited a poet so masterfully in control of his or her tradition that the envisioned process of artistic creation closely resembled the written, post-traditional activity with which Western cultures are both more familiar and more comfortable.[12]

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[11] See Eric Cochrane, *Tradition and Enlightenment in the Tuscan Academies: 1690-1800*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1961, p. 19; Edmond Strainchamps, *New Light on the Accademia Degli Elevati of Florence*, «The Musical Quarterly», LXII, (1976, 5), pp. 507-535.

[12] John Miles Foley, *Immanent Art: From Structure to Meaning in Traditional Oral Epic*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1991, pp. 4-5.

While Foley is writing of oral-traditional verse forms, the problem of literary normalization is also acute in the musicology of the early Baroque, where soloistic and improvisatory repertoires are forced to function within a stylistic timeline based on documentary and score analysis.

The reason that Caccini, in particular, remains a known canonic figure today at all is his relationship to print. He is essential to the music-historical timeline regardless of the compositional qualities of his songs because, by pushing them into print, he provides a necessary link in the story of solo song's legitimation. This side of Caccini's work, however, has often been amplified, turning his songs into the composed manifestation of a theoretical ideal, «the main musical product of the Camerata's speculations».[13] These "works", however, were secondary to the professional "work" of Caccini the singer, whose songs existed originally and primarily outside both the academic and print spheres. For most of Caccini's career, and of most professional value to him, they existed within the interior chambers of the Medici *palazzi* as examples and evocations of secretive oral traditional performance rituals – a day-to-day reality in which Caccini's music-making was speech-act long before it was re-imagined as composition.

The problem is compounded by Giulio Cesare Monteverdi's inclusion of Caccini in his list of *seconda pratica* composers, another abstract space that implies compositional prerogative.[14] This seemed to invite direct comparison between the two of them, and the musicological reception history of *Le nuove musiche* has borne this out.[15] Thus Caccini's songs have been viewed as symptomatic of the same compositional/theoretical crisis on display in the emblematic Artusi-Monteverdi paper war. This places them among the works

[13] Tim Carter, *'An Air New and Grateful to the Ear': The Concept of Aria in Late Renaissance and Early Baroque Italy,* «Music Analysis», XII, 2 (1993), pp. 127-145: 136.

[14] Giulio Cesare Monteverdi, *Dichiaratione della lettera stampata nel quinto libro de' suoi madrigali*, in Claudio Monteverdi, *Lettere, dediche e prefazioni*, edizione critica con note a cura di Domenico De' Paoli, Roma, De Sanctis, 1973, p. 399.

[15] This pattern of negative comparison goes back at least as far as Charles Burney, see Michael Markham, *Sarrasine's Failure, Campaspe's Lament: Solo Song and the Ends of Material Reproduction*, «The Opera Quarterly», XXVI, 1 (2010), pp. 4-41: 7-9. Victor Coelho has surveyed the shifting fortunes of Caccini's collections in *The Players of Florentine Monody in Context and in History, and a Newly Recognized Source for Le nuove musiche*, «Journal of Seventeenth-Century Music», IX, 1 (2003), http://sscm-jscm.press.uiuc.edu/v9/no1/coelho.html. For negative comparisons of Caccini's compositional skills with those of *seconda pratica* polyphonists see Tim Carter,*'Sfogava con le stelle' Reconsidered: Some Thoughts on the Analysis of Monteverdi's Mantuan Madrigals*, in *Claudio Monteverdi: studi e prospettive*, a cura di Paola Besutti, Teresa Gialdroni, Rodolfo Baroncini, Firenze, Olschki, 1998, pp. 147-70; Id., *New Songs for Old? Guarini and the Monody*, in *Guarini: la musica, i musicisti*, a cura di Angelo Pompilio, Lucca, Libreria Musicale Italiana, 1997, p. 71; and Id. *Music in Late Renaissance, cit.*, p. 193. Also see *Alfonso Fontanelli: Complete Madrigals, Part 2* 'Secondo libro di madregali a cinque voci', ed. Anthony Newcomb, Madison, A-R Editions, 2000, pp. XXI-XXIII.

of other, "truer" *seconda pratica* composers.[16] The comparison has proven unfortunate for Caccini and his few direct followers. The radical Monteverdian gesture of contrapuntal rule violation, so often depicted as the opening shot in the new Baroque's assault on Renaissance ideals is, by definition, a composer's game. It is defined by choices that are best described as compositional license: shocking deregulations of dissonance, unpredictable textural shifts, complicated motivic connections, breakdowns in the contrapuntal musical fabric. Caccini's songs do not often exploit such compositional techniques. In short, they do not do many of the things that we expect *seconda pratica* composers to do when confronted with an evocative text.[17] Instead of a composer's "reading" of the words, they exhibit the oral-traditional techniques of improvised solo song with its formulaic repetitions rooted in the lighter forms of the Neapolitan *villanelle*.[18]

The formulaic nature and imprecise notation of Caccini's scores has led many to see them on the page (and hear them as they are typically performed) as somehow incomplete. They are, as Nino Pirrotta described them, fragments of a lost voice and an entire oral tradition, missing «the remarkable, though ephemeral, attraction of his powers as a singer», or as Tim Carter has more recently and evocatively called them «frozen improvisations».[19] Thus we must first accept that, while the texts that Caccini produces in *Le nuove musiche* are in some way a residue of his creative work, they are not the central bearer of its meaning. He then becomes a prime example of the "performerly" at precisely the moment when we are looking for examples of the "composerly".

The traditional, canonic view of the early Baroque resolves this by fusing together the Camerata's attack on polyphony with Monteverdi's attack on the *ars perfecta* as part of

[16] Richard Wistreich has recently noted two separate skill sets recognized among singers in late sixteenth-century Italy: that defined by the improvisatory application of ornamentation, and a newer form of "reading" skill that enabled performers to deal with the more "directive" or "prescriptive" ornamental detail that begins to appear, for instance, in Monteverdi's Fifth Book of Madrigals (1605) (see Richard Wistreich, *Using the Music: Musical Materials and Expert Singers' Practices in Monteverdi's Time*, «Basler Jahrbuch für Aufführungspraxis», forthcoming). It may, perhaps, eventually emerge that some scores, like Caccini's, assume as their point of reference the former type of skill set, while others, like Monteverdi's, demand the latter.

[17] Glenn Watkins defines the seconda pratica in starkly Hegelian terms that emphasize the efforts of composition, as a synthesis between the «pioneering textural or dramatic perspectives and the valuable and hard-won techniques of the Mannerist polyphonists», see Glenn Watkins, *D'India the Peripatetic*, in *'Con che Soavità': Studies in Italian Opera, Song, and Dance*, 1580-1740, eds. Iain Fenlon and Tim Carter, Oxford, Clarendon, 1995, p. 45.

[18] See Claude V. Palisca, *Vincenzo Galilei and some Links between "Pseudo-Monody" and Monody*, in *Studies in the History of Italian Music*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1994, pp. 356–358; T. Carter, *An Air New and Grateful*, cit.

[19] N. Pirrotta and N. Fortune, *Temperaments and Tendencies*, cit., p. 182; Tim Carter, *Printing the 'New Music', in Music and the Cultures of Print*, ed. Kate van Orden, New York, Garland, 2000, p. 28.

the same general aesthetic shift. In so doing, it underestimates how different are the implied performance contexts associated with each movement. The Camerata, while not officially attached to the Medici court, was still an essentially courtly environment – in effect a kind of "starter court" for those seeking entry to the court proper. Claude Palisca put forward the idea two decades ago, citing the account of Giovanni Bardi's son Pietro that «thus the noble Florentine youth was raised with great advantage, occupying themselves not only in music but in discourses and instruction in poetry, astrology, and other sciences, which brought mutual profit to such beautiful conversation».[20] Pietro also makes specific mention of Caccini's youth at the time of those meetings.[21] Bardi's own close connections to the court proper before 1587, and in particular to the purse strings during the planning of large-scale court functions, made the Camerata a logical gateway to the lucrative Medici cultural machine.[22] This must have been a good part of its attraction to young nobles and artisans alike and if we can move beyond its normal canonic place as a music-theoretical think tank we can see it also as a sort of staging ground for both young courtiers and artists wishing to make the transition toward the center of the court circle. Giuseppe Gerbino has discussed this emerging class of paid sprezzaturists, noting of Vincenza Armani, *comica* and courtesan, that

> she was trained in music, sculpture, poetry, Latin (and possibly Greek), and rhetoric. But above all she was trained in the performance of these disciplines, in the arts of poetic and musical improvisation, choreography, rhetoric disputation, erudite conversation (*dotta conversazione*) [...] *Her education summarized all humanistic virtues. But she was not a humanist. She performed, staged humanism.*[23]

Thus when Caccini claims in his preface that «[I truly] can say that I gained more following along with their learned discussions than I did in more than thirty years of counterpoint»,[24] we may be able to infer more than even Caccini realized. Remembering that Caccini arrived in Florence not as a polished improvisatory singer and courtier, but as a fourteen-year-old boy hired to memorize the ornaments for one song, we can remind

[20] The passage is translated in C. V. Palisca, *The Florentine Camerata*, cit., p. 4. The letter from Pietro de' Bardi to Giovanni Battista Doni, dated 16 December, 1634 is reprinted in Angelo Solerti, *Le origini del melodramma,* Torino, Bocca, 1903 (reprint Hildesheim, Georg Olms, 1969, pp. 143-145).

[21] «At that time Giulio Caccini, then very young, was in the Camerata of my father», *ibidem*.

[22] Palisca notes that the decline and cessation of the Camerata coincided with Bardi's fall from power within the Medici court, beginning with the succession of Ferdinando de' Medici in 1587 (see C. V. Palisca, *The Florentine Camerata*, cit., pp. 6-7). By 1590 Bardi's influence at court had waned and he had been replaced by Emilio de' Cavalieri as primary director of courtly festivities.

[23] Giuseppe Gerbino, *Music and the Myth of Arcadia in Renaissance Italy*, Cambridge [etc.], Cambridge University Press, 2009, pp. 199–200 (emphasis mine).

ourselves that he had a lot more than counterpoint to learn before he was prepared to claim himself the true inheritor of a century-old tradition of improvisatory court song (and, in fact, that given this goal, counterpoint would have been among the least relevant skills he might acquire).[25] Among the things that he learned at Bardi's academy, we must also number the courtly arts of *conversazione*, of presentation, and of bodily display. As someone who would eventually become a paid enactor of nobility, clearly it was important to Caccini to prove his courtly authenticity. That Caccini made a study of *Il Cortegiano* is obvious from his frequent misprision of *sprezzatura* claiming it as a tool of professional rather than amateur performance.[26] In this pursuit, as in his professional singing, it may well have been an education of the body, control of posture, of the voice, and of rhetorical projection of nobility itself that Caccini gained from these learned discussions, all of this adding up to a native understanding of his noble audience and the ritual spaces they inhabited as he sought to enter into them. This aspect of the Camerata was a replication of the same sort of performative practices that made up the oral culture of the court, a simulation of the Castiglionian privy chamber. This practical, performative side of the Camerata would have been most appealing to Caccini whose "experiments" however they fit in with the literary-theoretical speculations of Bardi and Galilei, had at the same time, to be pointed ultimately toward the practices of the oral tradition and the court.

Two Times: Past/Future

Consequently, Caccini's songs appear to be somewhat two-faced. They are future-oriented notationally and technologically, through their existence in print as pioneering exemplars of the new notational style. Caccini's own self-conscious and repeated

[24] «Posso dire d'havere appreso più da i loro dotti ragionari, che in più di trent'anni non ho fatto nel contrappunto», see Giulio Caccini, *Le nuove musiche*, facsimile edition, Firenze, S.P.E.S., 1983, preface, p. 4. For the most part my translations differ only slightly from those found in Professor Hitchcock's modern edition (see Giulio Caccini, *Le nuove musiche* [1602], ed. H. Wiley Hitchcock, in *Recent Researches in the Music of the Baroque*, IX, 9, Madison, A-R Editions, 1970).

[25] See Tim Carter, *Giulio Caccini (1551-1618): New Facts, New Music*, «Studi musicali», XVI, (1987), pp. 13-31. I discuss Caccini's transtion further in Michael Markham, *Caccini's Stages: Identity and Performance Space in the late-cinquecento court*, in *The Music Room in Early Modern France and Italy: Sound, Space, and Object*, eds. Deborah Howard and Laura Moretti, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012, pp. 195-210.

[26] As these passages are by far the most often quoted and discussed in Caccini's various writings, I will not rehearse the complete bibliography. Caccini uses the term almost obsessively. It makes at least one appearance in the prefaces to all three of his printed editions (*Le nuove musiche* [1602], *Nuove musiche e nuova maniera di scriverle* [1614], and his printed edition of *L'Euridice* [1601]). Conscious of Castiglione, he writes always of the nobility of sprezzatura: «una certa nobile sprezzatura di canto» (*Le nuove musiche*, preface, p. 4), «nella qual maniera di canto ho io usata una certa sprezzatura, che io ho stimato, che habbia del nobile» (*L'Euridice*, preface). However, the passages in which Caccini inserts the term re-fit it not back into its proper realm, that of the 'unpracticed' noble amateur, but into technical discussions of the practiced application of singing techniques within the virtuoso sphere of «la professione».

claims to have successfully brought improvisational solo singing into the realm of print culture, most famously on the title page of his 1614 collection («all the delicacies of this art can be learned without having to hear the composer sing») exhibit either his own optimism or anxiety about the growing role of the composer in the fashioning of soloistic music.[27] However, the songs themselves also appear past-oriented in their actual musical language and in the fact that, whatever his claims, his notational system fails to completely contain much of what is essential to his creative style. In this sense, Caccini was already behind the times in 1602 when his first collection was published. By then the "future" of solo song was already toward an increasingly explicit division of labor between composition and performance.

In the now iconic Preface to his 1602 collection, Caccini himself informs the reader, if somewhat cryptically, that what he is revealing is not a *new manner of composing*, but an *old manner of singing*. In the opening line, he describes what is contained in the volume as «la maniera di cantare dal famoso Scipione del Palla mio maestro».[28] In doing so he labels himself in two ways. In describing his "works" through reference to a «maniera di cantare» he self-identifies himself as part of a singing rather than a composing tradition. And in naming the Neapolitan Scipione del Palla (who died in 1569) as his teacher, he places himself squarely within a tradition of improvisatory singers that stretches back across the sixteenth century.[29] This is a claim of both spatial and stylistic peerage, for the tradition of *improvvisatori* with which he aligns himself is central to the experience of that most particular of spaces, the Italian court chamber. Caccini thus places himself stylistically within del Palla's singing ancestry, and contextually within the environment of the court.

From this perspective, the failure of Caccini's scores to function adequately as complete texts – the fact that all the delicacies *cannot* be learned from them without hearing the composer sing – is in itself meaningful. As I have pointed out elsewhere, Caccini himself draws attention to this failure, falling back often on the need to experience the embodied voice («experience is the teacher of all things» and «there is no better proof than experience itself»),[30] as when he references, apparently oblivious to the irony, that experiencing

[27] The passage is on the title page of *Nuove musiche e nuova maniera di scriverle* (1614), facsimile edition, Firenze, S.P.E.S, 1983.

[28] G. Caccini, *Le nuove musiche* (1602), cit., preface, p. 4.

[29] See Howard Mayer Brown, *The Geography of Florentine Monody: Caccini at Home and Abroad*, «Early Music», IX , 2 (1981), pp. 147-168.

[30] G. Caccini, *Le nuove musiche* (1602), cit.

the perfection of his wife's singing is the best evidence that all the beauties of his art may be learned from his writings:

> That the tremolo and trill were executed according to the above rule with great excellence by my late wife I leave to the judgment of those who in her time heard her sing, as also I leave to the judgment of those who are able to hear with what excellence they are done by my present wife.[31]

The printed record of courtly monody contains numerous such frustrating proclamations, such as that of Marco da Gagliano describing the singing of Caccini's courtly rival Jacopo Peri in the preface to the printed score of *La Dafne* (1608): «I will say that no one can fully appreciate the sweetness and the power of his airs who has not heard them sung by Peri himself[...]». [32] If there is a message in the medium, it is that those who rely on the book in order to access the privileged interior rituals of the court are doomed to only a fragmentary view of the real thing.[33] These scores, then, flaunt a kind of refusal, becoming deliberate and provocative reminders of their own incompleteness.[34]

Roger Chartier, drawing on the claims of Florence Dupont, has defined the readable literate work according to three such obligations: 1) the work exists in a fixed, stable, written form, 2) the stability of the written form is designed so that an individual silent reader can experience it in a way that is complete, and 3) the act of silent reading is capable of producing a direct confrontation between the reader and the meaningful layer of the text.[35] While the always problematic element of recreative performance (much rehearsed in musical aesthetics) requires alteration of this scheme, the most important of the Chartier/Dupont criteria is perhaps the idea that a text, whether a painting, a play, or a score, convey some layer of meaning that is complete and "readable" on its own, without

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31 *Ibidem*.

32 Marco da Gagliano, Preface to *La Dafne*, Mantua, 1608, translated in Carol MacClintock, *Readings in the History of Music and Performance*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1979, p. 189.

33 I have elsewhere attempted to reconstruct something of the meaningful layer of this ritual, which drew much of its power from the framing of the performer's body: its entrance as an outsider into the space of the courtier, the initiation of the singer's voice into that space through a formulaic opening melodic gesture, and the transformation of the courtly audience from a fragmented collection of political combatants into a collective, unified class of spectators marked as "noble" precisely by their relationship to the "professional" who now holds the center of the room, see M. Markham, *Sarrasine's Failure, Campaspe's Lament*, cit.

34 For more on such contradictions in Caccini's writings see M. Markham, *Caccini's Stages*, cit., pp. 195-196.

35 See Roger Chartier, *Publishing Drama in Early Modern Europe: The Panizzi Lectures 1998*, London, The British Library, 1999, p. X; Florence Dupont, *The Invention of Literature: From Greek Intoxication to the Latin Book*, transl. Janet Lloyd, Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999, p. 8.

necessitating either the presence of its creator at the moment of use, or the presence of the viewer, listener, or consumer at the moment of its creation.

Throughout the sixteenth century soloistic music wandered between what Nino Pirrotta called «the unwritten tradition» and what might be called a "barely written" tradition.[36] Drawing on Dupont's ideas about reading and recitation in Ancient banquet songs, however, it may be more accurately thought of as an "Un-readable" tradition – an un-readable text being one for which the ritual event contributes much of the meaning of the text itself.[37]

Such an amplification of social interactions requires an enclosing space. Steven Feld has noted that the potential meaning of certain especially potent and gender-exclusive songs sung by the Kaluli of Papua New Guinea remain unrealizable outside the context of a particular performance venue. They can only be "heard" at all in the right place at the right time, «only by men, at night, in the dark longhouse».[38] This social amplification is a common and accepted part of the Kaluli notion of work identity. It is not, however, a matter of either textual or interpretive style. It is dependent instead upon the presence of the correct set of participatory agents and the capacity of the performance venue itself to resonate with meaning only once precisely those agents are gathered within it.

Similarly in the practice of Caccinian song, the court privy chamber itself produces value. It acts as a metaphorical resonating chamber through its containment of the correct performative agents. Its value comes not from a projected future dissemination of the notational residue, but rather from the secrecy and proprietary exclusivity of the originating event. The court's power came, as Kenneth Burke has observed, from the sacrilization of its separate sphere, the paralleling of celestial mystery, understood in terms of the lower and higher, and a social mystery, symbolized by spatial separation, «set by any pronounced social distinctions, as between nobility and commoners, courtiers and king, leader and people, rich and poor, judge and prisoner at the bar, 'superior race' and underprivileged 'races' or minorities».[39] Secretive "privy" events, such as the communal rituals at the center of *Il Cortegiano* (the one self-conscious attempt to notate them) make up a ritual space that

[36] Nino Pirrotta, *Novelty and Renewal in Italy: 1300-1600*, in *Studien zur Tradition in der Musik: Kurt von Fischer zum 60. Geburtstag*, hrsg. von Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht und Max Lütolf, München, Katzbichler, 1973, pp. 49-65.

[37] See M. Markham, *Sarrasine's Failure, Campaspe's Lament*, cit.

[38] Steven Feld, *Sound and Sentiment: Birds, Weeping, Poetics, and Song in Kaluli Expression*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982, p. 131.

[39] Kenneth Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives*, New York, Braziller, 1955, p. 115.

was deliberately kept alive throughout the sixteenth century as a powerful image of identity and separateness.

The reliance on improvisatory solo song in nightly sixteenth-century court entertainments thus served as a mechanism by which such distinction could be maintained. In Dupont's terms, the residual text "work" is un-readable. The idea has been further explored by Paul Zumthor in discussing oral-traditional poetry:

> There are two series of forms through which the work originates. One of these series is made up of linguistic forms whose totality equals the text, and the other comprises somewhat summarily, what I have called the corporeality of the participants and their social existence as members of a group and as individuals within that group [...]. The orally produced text, more so than the written, resists, to the extent that it relies on a physical voice, any perception that might sever it from its social function from its place within a real community, from an acknowledged tradition, and from the circumstances in which it is heard.[40]

Applying this formulation to Caccini's songs, they are non-transferable beyond the boundary of the court chamber – bound not just to a general "intellectual context" of either an academic or courtly audience, but to a specific traditionally resonant space.

Within the field of oral-traditional studies, John Miles Foley has decried a creeping textualization that, as he sees it, has focused too much on residual texts of oral-traditional works through the cataloging of formulas, allusions, and tropes. In response, he shifts the idea of "tradition" in "oral tradition" away from textual matters like catalogable *topoi*, and toward the tradition and meaning of the gathering itself.[41] He centers his search for expressive potential around the "performance arena", a resonating space similar to the darkened longhouse in the compositional process of Kaluli ritual song. A basic premise of oral-formulaic theory since Albert Lord's *The Singer of Tales* is that every individual version of a story is both a unique utterance and a branch of the collective history of that poetic archetype. Foley extends this collectivized work identity to the performance venue by reading the event of storytelling or singing as similarly connected to the historical or mythical context of the first or "original" singers. This always-present historical construction, which Foley calls «the enabling referent of tradition», produces an underlying layer of meaning fundamental to each performance, but not able to be reproduced textually

[40] Paul Zumthor, *Body and Performance*, in *Materialities of Communication*, eds. Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht and K. Ludwig Pfeiffer, transl. William Whobrey, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1994, p. 221. I am grateful to Richard Wistreich for directing me to this essay.

[41] Foley's argument unfolds across three studies: *Traditional Oral Epic: The Odyssey, Beowulf, and the Serbo-Croation Return Song*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1988; *Immanent Art*, cit. (see note 12); and *The Singer of Tales Resumes the Performance*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1995.

– a tradition of bodies (participants) and spaces, «a context that is enormously larger and more echoic than the text or work itself, that brings the lifeblood of generations of poems and performances to the individual performance or text».[42]

This sense of authority stemming from the lifeblood of generations provides a particularly strong connection with the Cinquecento court. The identification of the performer with a pastness felt by the audience relates well to the idealized images of a shared collective past among the Italian nobility. At court, the chamber-in-performance becomes a sacrilized space in which mythological-traditional referents of idealized identity are resurrected. Performance from this perspective is a closing of distance between the now and then, temporarily filling a communal space with the spiritual presence of who we imagine ourselves to have been once. Gumbrecht has termed this "re-presentation", a process by which a soloist's performance, particularly of improvisatory works, becomes nostalgically bound to the ancient mythic archetype of The Singer of Tales. Oral tradition, then, is never enactment but always reenactment and resurrection of the lost. The effect, when amplified within a gathering space that is itself a marker of class identity and shared tradition, is a kind of transubstantiation of a lost ideal that can be made temporarily present again.[43] Despite his own assurances, the songs of Caccini similarly cannot be claimed by literature as complete, readable works. They also tell of the engineering of a situation, the entrance and engagement of the professional soloist with the bodies and space that make up the sacrilized space of courtly performance, if not religious at least ritual and deliberately withheld from the view of outsiders.

The composerly "gaps" in Caccini's scores thus serve a twofold purpose. On the one hand, when viewed from the perspective of Caccini, the professional singer, they are invitations to the improvisatory gestures of court song, a series of not-fully-composed musical spaces inside of which skilled singers could create what they wished. On the other hand, when viewed from the perspective of Caccini, the professional courtier, they serve as a reminder of exclusivity. If what appears is the residue of a performance – of a voice among bodies in a space – then the lack of "compositional integrity" becomes a reference to the conspicuous absence of all three of those agents of meaning. It is, then, a brand of musical work that is only complete when experienced in the presence of its creator (Caccini the *singer*) and while being present within its original ritual context (that of Caccini the

[42] J. M. Foley, *Immanent Art*, cit., p. 7.

[43] See H. U. Gumbrecht, *Production of Presence*, cit., p. 345.

courtier). Thus we are faced with two separate challenges in confronting Caccinian monody: first, reimagining Caccini's songs within their originating *milieu*, and second, theorizing the relationship between his "work" (as either/both singer/courtier) and his surviving texts. Caccini's scores claim to bridge this gap themselves, but they do not. Instead, by making the claim («all the delicacies») they merely call attention to the very aspect of his scores that insure their failure *as objects*. They are mere glimpses, tantalizing and incomplete, into a performance tradition and a courtly ritual.

Two Bodies: Noble/Professional

Caccini' s language, as sloppy and imprecise as it may often seem, is calculated to tread a fine line between these numerous and contradictory spaces by bridging the identity claims of a professional with those of one attempting to survive among the nobility. Throughout his preface to *Le nuove musiche* he makes claims for what he calls his *nobile maniera di cantare* that center it at once and contradictorily in the natural realm of inborn *grazia* and the professional realm of learned artifice:

> And so *in the profession of the singer* (in its excellence), those who do it well do not take account only of particular details, but of the entirety.[44]
>
> [...] Provided that after studying theory and the said rules, one carries them into practice by which one becomes more perfect in all the arts, *but particularly in the profession, that of the perfect singer* (both male or female).[45]
>
> This art does not suffer mediocrity [...] the love of [the art] has moved me (seeing that it is by writing that we are enlightened to every science and every art) to leave this little glimmer in the notes and discourses that follow, intended to demonstrate *how much is required to of those who make a profession of solo singing* to the accompaniment of the chitarrone. [Emphasis mine][46]

It is a *maniera* that, while it is noble, is repeatedly placed not in the possession of the courtier or noble amateur, but only of the professional. Yet just as often, as in the leadup to the peroration of his preface, his *nobile maniera di cantare* stems from natural *virtù* rather than artifice:

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[44] «E perché nella professione del cantante (per l'eccellenza sua) non servono solo le cose particolari, ma tutte insieme la fanno migliore», G. Caccini, *Le nuove musiche*, preface, p. 6.

[45] «[...] Pur che dopo lo studio della teorica, e regole dette, si ponga in atto quella pratica per la quale in tutte le arti si diviene più perfetto, ma particolarmente nella professione, e del perfetto cantore, e della perfetta cantatrice», preface, p. 6.

[46] «Quest'arte non patisce la mediocrità [...] il quale amore ha mosso me (vedendo io, che dalli scritti habbiamo lume d'ogni scienza, e d'ogni arte) à lasciarne questo poco di spiraglio nelle note appresso, e discorsi intendendo io di mostrare quanto appartiene à chi fa professione di cantar solo sopra l'armonia di Chitarrone», preface, p. 6.

> But from the falsetto voice can come none of the nobility of good singing. That comes from a natural voice, comfortable in its entire range, which one can control with his skill, without making use of the breath for any reason other than to demonstrate mastery of all the best affects required to produce a most noble manner of singing. *The love of this, and for all music generally, burns in me though an inclination of nature* and from the studies of many years, and excuses me if I have been carried too far than is perhaps suitable for one who no less esteems the learning of [music] than the passing on of what he has learned and [for] the reverence that I carry for all those teachers of this art. [Emphasis mine][47]

Here he expands on the modifier «nobile» which he typically appended to his own *maniera*, locating a kind of inborn *grazia* in all who possess it («l'amor della quale, e generalmente di tutta la musica acceso in me per inclinazione di natura»). The learned authority of the artisan who enters into court by way of meritorious mastery and conspicuous display of artificial skill is joined with the noble amateur ideal of innate grace and unlearnable virtue. Caccini in his preface consistently attempts to relocate such terms of nobility as *grazia* and *sprezzatura* into the body of the professional, producing a creature that Castiglione could not have recognized to exist, the noble *virtuoso*. Thus, two contradictory sets of privileged insider knowledge contained within separate performative spheres, that of the privy chamber within the court and the theatrical stage outside of it, are offered within the same body:

> [this art or *nobile maniera di cantare*] arousing the minds of its listeners then becomes admirable and gains the love of others wholly *when those who possess it*, and by teaching it and exercising it to the delight of others, *display it and reveal it as an example and a true image of those boundless heavenly harmonies* from which are derived all good things on the earth. [Emphasis mine][48]

It is a matter of possession, the ownership of a proper style, a mastery of *maniera*, that is tied here to a physical practice to be exercized and revealed only by those who are already born with it, who pre-possess it as a natural Platonic element a kind of *musica humana*, the same natural force from which is derived the *grazia* of the nobleman. The singer, marked as both necessarily possessing the professional and necessarily possessed by

[47] «Ma dalle voci finte non può nascere nobiltà di buon canto; che nascerà da una voce naturale comoda per tutte le corde, la quale altrui potrà maneggiare à suo talento, senza valersi della respirazione per altro che per mostrarsi padrone di tutti gli affetti migliori, che occorrono usarsi in sì fatta nobilissima maniera di cantare, l'amor della quale, e generalmente di tutta la musica acceso in me per inclinazione di natura, e per gli studi di tanti anni, mi scuserà se io mi fosse lasciato trasportar più oltre, che forse non conveniva à chi non meno stima lo imparare, che il comunicar lo 'mparato, & alla reverenza, che io porto à tutti i professori di quest'arte», preface, pp. 11-12.

[48] «Allora si fa ammirabile, e si guadagna interamente l'altrui amore, quando coloro, che la posseggono, e con lo 'nsegnare, e col dilettare altrui esercitandola spesso, la scuoprono, e appalesano per un esempio, e una sembianza vera di quelle inarrestabili armonie celesti, dalle quali derivano tanti beni sopra la terra», preface, p. 12.

the noble, becomes capable of a Ficinian sort of projection of an ideal consciousness. Such is what the solo singer offers *on display*, through the *exercise* of his or her profession. Such is the heart of Caccini's "work", denied inevitably to the reader of his "scores".

It is an ambitious claim of ownership on behalf of solo musical performers, of both meritorious virtuosity and inborn *virtù* into one body, Caccini's body, and the experienced voice. As such it is also a declaration of belonging to a space, a claim to the same benediction of *grazia* bestowed upon the nobility themselves through their presence within those private spaces and rites of institution of the court. And so in order to deal with Caccini's work (rather than his "works") on his own terms (rather than Monteverdi's) we must reorient our view away from its supposed future within the abstract space of authorship and back toward its past in the spaces of traditional, courtly ritual entertainments to which he claims to belong. From this perspective, even Caccini's famous genuflection toward the Camerata is yet another example of his propensity to space (and name)-drop, that is to say to place his body into its proper ritual space:

> At the time when the admirable Camerata of the most illustrious Signor Giovanni Bardi, Count of Vernio, was flourishing in Florence, with not only many of the nobility but also the foremost musicians, intellectuals, poets, and philosophers of the city in attendance, *I too was present* [...] For these most knowledgeable gentlemen kept encouraging me [...] the warm approval with which these madrigals and airs were heard in the Camerata, and the exhortations to continue in the same direction toward my chosen goal, led me to go to Rome for a trial of them there also. The aforesaid madrigals and the air were performed in Signor Nero Neri's house for many gentlemen assembled there (and notably Signor Lione Strozzi), and everyone can testify how I was urged to continue as I had begun. [Emphasis mine][49]

More importantly, serving as his justification for going to print at all, it is a sign of Caccini's unwillingness to cede his hard-won position within a valuable and real political space in favor of the more abstract space implied by the modern notion of authorship. As with all presence-based rites, it was Caccini's *place*, his *presence* within these academies and private chambers, rather than the works that resulted, that was still his chief claim to meritorious *virtù*. This places Caccini's songs within a patrician sanctuary that valued secrecy

[49] «Io veramente ne i tempi che fioriva in Firenze la virtuosissima Camerata dell'Illustrissimo Signor Giovanni Bardi de' Conti di Vernio, ove concorreva non solo gran parte della nobilità, ma ancora i primi musici, & ingegnosi huomini, e Poeti, e Filosofi della Città, havendola frequentata anch'io, [...] imperò che questi intendentissimi gentilhuomini mi hanno sempre confortato. [...] I quali Madrigali, & Aria uditi in essa camerata con amorevole applauso, & esortazioni ad eseguire il mio presupposto fine per tal camino mi mossero a trasferirmi à Roma per darne saggio anche quivi, ove fatti udire detti Madrigali & Arie, in casa del Signor Nero Neri à molti gentilhuomini, che quivi s'adunavano, e particolarmente al Signor Lione Strozzi, tutti possono rendere buona testimonianza quanto mi esortassero à continovare l'incominciata impresa», preface, p. 4.

and ephemerality over publication and materiality – the performer's body over the composer's score.

It also presents us with new and interesting problems of space. As I have discussed elsewhere, the range of spaces in which Caccini's courtly performances occurred has been underestimated, as has the impact each different such performance arena had on the "meaning" of the works performed there.[50] The court chamber exists within a continuum of courtly performance spaces ranging from the large public spaces used for processions and royal entries, to the semi-public venues used for large-scale events like the plays and *intermedii* accompanying wedding festivities, to banquet chambers to which access was granted to a fairly wide range of courtiers, to the most exclusive evening conversations held in small privy chambers. While Caccini's performances ranged across this spectrum, almost the entire paper trail of his performance life directs us toward a few large-scale, publicized, and carefully choreographed events such as the famous theatrical entertainments of 1589 and 1600, events that represent the most deliberately public displays of courtly life.[51] Frustratingly, it is his performances in private chambers, which would have made up the bulk of his life's work, for which little evidence survives. In fact, despite what must have been thousands of regular, "after-dinner" performances given by Caccini in small private chambers of the Palazzo Vecchio or the Palazzo Nuovo in Florence, we have not a single diary entry, letter, or description of such a performance.[52] This absence of information is, in itself, instructive, for it reminds us of the secretive nature of evening rituals taking place within the court privy chamber, and of the proprietary hold which the nobility maintained on certain cultural practices.[53]

Precisely for this reason, Caccini and his songs may be our most useful window onto a particularly important and quickly passing moment in the history of Italian nobility, when

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50 See M. Markham, *Caccini's Stages*, cit.

51 Though it takes place in another type of border space outside the court, the performances given under the auspices of the Compagnia dell'Arcangelo Raffaello are some of the best-documented of Caccini's career, see W. Hill, *Oratory Music in Florence I*, cit. Many of the documents mentioning performances by Caccini have been compiled in Warren Kirkendale, *The Court Musicians in Florence During the Patriciate of the Medici*, Firenze, Olschki, 1993.

52 The only account of Caccini's private performances comes from a letter that he wrote while visiting the court of Ferrara, see Anthony Newcomb, *The Madrigal at Ferrara 1579-1597*, 2 vols., Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1980, I, pp. 191-203.

53 It is telling that the only account of Caccini's chamber performances comes from Ferrara. As Richard Wistreich has pointed out, the attempt by Alfonso d'Este II to remake the court chamber as a space for professionalization and spectatorship was both novel and, to some, threatening (Richard Wistreich, *Warrior, Courtier, Singer: Giulio Cesare Brancaccio and the Performance of Identity in the Late Renaissance*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2007).

the tension between the past and future of the Italian court culture produced an anxious re-emphasis or drive back toward oral traditional forms. In this case, the past is that of the courtly *improvvisatori*, a past in which it was understood that the meaning of solo song did not carry into any process of textualization.[54] While at times, throughout the sixteenth century, courtly solo song was transcribed for amateur print audiences, the results are simplified and reflect little of the performance styles being referenced. Its nuances remained unnotatable, or in Dupont's terms "un-readable".[55]

Thus, following the trail of Caccini's professional identity claims leads us back to Foley's «enabling referent of tradition», namely the closed spaces of the court in which solo performances acted as the resurrection of a past ideal. The trail of this thought intersects with concepts of tradition, nostalgia, and identity that emerge when approaching the past-oriented rituals and spaces inhabited by diasporic ethnic enclaves. There is at least a heuristic value in treating the cultural practices of the Italian nobility as analogous to those of other "displaced" or segregated ethnic groups, if it allows access to Paul Gilroy's powerful assertion about forms of ethnic performativity, which «produce the imaginary effect of an internal racial core or essence [...] through the specific mechanisms of identification and recognition that are produced in the intimate interaction of performer and crowd».[56]

Caccini's work as court singer was an especially strong example of an «intimate interaction of performer and crowd» that allowed the nobility to reenact a traditional authority, recapturing a nostalgized and mythic past through a reified, but non-literate, set of practices. The resulting differentiation of spaces works as one of Gilroy's «mechanisms of identity and recognition», for the projection of an essence or «internal racial core» imagined to be carried in the blood. For Gilroy it is trans-Atlantic "blackness", an ethnic identity produced by an imaginary place: that is projected through cultural practice.[57] While for the

[54] See N. Pirrotta, *Novelty and Renewal*, cit.; James Haar, *Improvvisatori and Their Relationship to Sixteenth-Century Music*, in *Essays on Italian Poetry and Music in the Renaissance: 1350-1600*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1986, pp. 76-99.

[55] I discuss these earlier prints in M. Markham, *Sarrasine's Failure*, cit., pp. 7-12. The prints up to 1536 are few enough to be cited individually here: *Tenori e contrabassi intabulati col sopran in canto figurato per cantar e sonar col lauto*. Francisci Bossinensis opus, 2 voll., Venezia, Petrucci, 1509-1511; *Frottole de Misser Bartolomio Tromboncino & de Misser Marcheto Cara con tenori & bassi tabulati & con soprani in canto figurato per cantar & sonar col lauto*, Venezia, Antico, 1520; *Intavolatura de li madrigali di Verdelotto da cantare et sonare nel lauto intavolati per Messer Adriano*, Venezia, Scotto, 1536. For the prints of the 1570s, see Kevin Mason, *Per cantare e sonare: Accompanying Italian Lute Song of the Late Sixteenth Century,* in *Performance on Lute, Guitar, and Vihuela: Historical Practice and Modern Interpretation*, ed. Victor Anand Coelho, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997, pp. 72–107.

[56] Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*, London, Verso, 1993, p. 102.

[57] *Ibidem*; see also *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack: The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation*, London, Hutchinson, 1987.

Italian nobility it is not a racial difference, it is nonetheless an *essentialized* one, the difference between those with natural inborn *grazia* and those without.

The image of the blooded nobility as a self-perceived ethnic enclave, or a besieged group of *temporal* refugees, redefines the performance space of the court as an arena of cultural rituals not unlike that found in the religious processions of immigrants in the Italian quarter of London, «constituted out of particular claims about the history and geography of the original settlement. It is part of the communal project of recovery, of the 'rediscovery' of a past, of a place, a grounding which [...] is grasped through reconstruction».[58] This recovery and reconstruction, or at least maintenance of an ideal perceived to be lost, is achieved through the continued practice of types of performance that are rooted in the past. The same phenomenon has been noted in the cultural constructions of Cuban immigrants in Florida, devoted to maintaining a past that unifies them culturally and politically. Musically, this produces a reified analog of musical styles in Florida today that has more affinity with the musical scene in Havana in 1959 than in the present.[59] The Italian nobility were, of course, not a geographical diaspora. However, viewing them as temporally displaced from the mythic past by which they claimed their authority places renewed power in the rituals of noble performance that were withheld from the public sphere.

In Caccini's case the "referent of tradition" includes the Homeric ideal of recitation – the soloistic, virtuosic, and improvisatory "singing" of verse privately for princes and patrons – that had defined a general mythology of noble patronage from the beginnings of epic poetry. The maintenance of an oral-traditional practice of solo musical recitation within Italian courts reenacted a collective memory felt even in fully literary sixteenth-century works like *Orlando furioso*, in which the implied author/narrator alternately (and confusingly) sings, writes, writes of singing, and sings of writing, sometimes before an audience and sometimes alone at his writing desk.[60] As well, it implies more than just the placement of text into context, particularly at court, where the context itself was

[58] Anne-Marie Fortier, *Re-Membering Places and the Performance of Belonging(s),* in *Performativity and Belonging*, ed. Vikki Bell, London, Sage, 1999, p. 47; see also Stuart Hall, *The Local and the Global: Globalization and Ethnicity*, in *Culture, Globalization, and the World-System*, ed. Antony D. King, London, Macmillan, 1991, p. 36.

[59] See Gema R. Guevara, *"La Cuba de ayer/La Cuba de Hoy": The Politics of Music and Diaspora*, in *Musical Migrations: Transnationalism and Cultural Hybridity in Latin America*, eds. Frances R. Aparicio and Candida Jaquez, New York, Palmgrave Macmillan, 2003, pp. 33-46.

[60] See Patricia Parker, *Inescapable Romance: Studies in the Poetics of a Mode*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1979, p. 23; Robert Durling, *The Figure of the Poet in Renaissance Epic*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1965, p. 113.

one of constant theatrical display. Musical performers did not turn a court into a performance venue, but only became new agents in a space already rife with performances, enactments of class or social status, struggles, dissimulations, and posturings. It is the same space that produced Burke's mystery and contained Foley's "referent of tradition", the great mythic improvisatory poet whose songs, body and voice, belonged to his patron and were bound within the castle walls.

Restoring meaning to Caccini's songs requires us to reorient them toward this (oral-traditional, performerly, mythological) past rather than their (textual, composerly, "Monteverdian") future. Replaced within the context of this past, Caccini's songs were part of a ritual of courtly audience/performer engagement that was designed to refuse, or to be withheld, from notation and publication.

All of this suggests again the sort of memorializing function that Castiglione had in mind in his own textualized portrait, «come un ritratto di pittura», of the bodies and spaces of the court of Urbino. *Il Cortegiano* provides, perhaps, the most glaring exception to the invisibility or unnotability of courtly ritual, seeming to serve as a memorial not only to a particular performance of courtliness, but to an entire mode of performance, and an arena of performativity. The desire for *scrittura* to succeed as a monument of *parlare* was central to both Castiglione's and Caccini's projects. It is also their central problem, proving inadequate to the task time and again.

The discussions among Castiglione's interlocutors about *scrittura* and *parlare* mirror quite closely the friction between composerly and performerly introduced at the opening of this essay. Castiglione struggles to rectify his own stated desire to capture the performed reality of the event with the limitations of writing that make this impossible. Here, in the voice of the Count:

> Writing is simply a form of speaking which endures even after it is uttered, the image, as it were, or better, the soul of our words. Hence, in speech, which vanishes as soon as it is uttered, some things are permissible; but not so in writing, because writing preserves the words and submits them to the judgment of the reader, giving them time to consider them at length.[61]

The Count (apparently an early linguistic deconstructionist!) captures the heart of the matter in his self-contradiction. Writing is never "simply" a form of speaking. Indeed, it is better, from the standpoint of cohesiveness required by the Florence Dupont's definition

[61] Baldassare Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, transl. Charles S. Singleton, New York, Anchor, 1959, I, p. 29.

of print culture. What endures is distilled, perfected, clarified and perhaps most important from the perspective of those left outside of the performance arena, accessible. For this very reason, however, it is also worse, from the standpoint of the oral-traditional event: that which is not allowed or cannot filter into writing is precisely what makes speech, speech; what gives performative speech its power in performance; and what allows the event, in oral rituals bounded by the noble *camera*, to bestow the benefice of *grazia* upon those present.

And so, even as his characters speak of writing, Castiglione cannot help but to write of speaking. It is frequently devil's advocate Pallavicino who answers, reminding the reader that the court is a venue first and foremost for performance:

> Certainly, this discussion about writing is well worth listening to; and yet it would be more to our purpose if you would teach us the manner the Courtier should observe in speaking, for I think he has greater need of that, since he has to use speech more often than writing.[62]

Caccini would have been most comfortable in such a space. As a professional courtier, and paid enactor of nobility, he would have been well aware of these words. It is on such a claim of the predominance of *parlare* over *scrittura* that Caccini staked his professional identity and his perfomerly reputation before his move into print in 1601; and it is against it that his solo song prints should be understood. Because of the preponderance and stubbornness of its notational gaps, *Le nuove musiche* will remain among the most difficult of these early collections to theorize or critique through analysis, reading, even performance. Precisely for this reason, however, it will also remain our clearest window onto the unwritten, unreadable past of the oral-performative world of the late sixteenth century and will remain essential for writing the culture history of the early seventeenth.

[62] *Ivi*, p. 31.