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City University of New York, 1987

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THE EMERGENCE OF THE ROLE OF THE SOLO VOCALIST AND THE POSITION OF WOMEN AS SINGERS

by

JUNE RIESS GOLDNER

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Sociology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York.

1987

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INTRODUCTION

This study will examine the emergence of the role of the female virtuoso singer from the earliest appearances of solo vocalists until their establishment as a central and prominent role within the organization of the opera at the beginning of the seventeenth century. It will entail an analysis of the creation and early development of the singer's role in the West,[1] describing how it came into existence and how it began to evolve in its definition and articulation as an artistic occupational role. Moreover, it will attempt to explain how, at times, women attained positions as singers in the occupational world -- historically a realm of life overwhelmingly dominated by men.

Musicological Literature on Singing and Singers

Though one finds numerous collections of biographical sketches of star singers, there exist few comprehensive analytical histories dealing with such singers. In a review of a new book entitled Contemplating Music, Challenges to Musicology, by Joseph Kerman, Erich Leinsdorf (1985:19) summarizes the author's major premise: ". . . music is surrounded by explicators and commentators, scholarly specialists and complete dilettantes, but not by a corps of writers whose critiques could match interpretive studies in literature and the visual arts." He (1985:19) further elaborates on this theme, quoting from Kerman: "Much less attention was paid to the interaction of music history with political, social, and intellectual history. . . . less attention yet was devoted to the attempt to understand music as an aspect of and in

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relation to culture in the large."

Furthermore, most works on singing and singers commence with the dawn of opera. In Ellen Creathorne Clayton's Queens of Song (1863:x), the author naively assumes that "[t]o write a series of memoirs of the great female opera singers, would be almost equivalent to writing a history of the opera itself, . . . as well as of the constantly changing aspects of social life in the countries where the opera has flourished." Henry Pleasants (1966:14) "traces the line of the singers farther back than has been the custom" in his work on the historical continuity of objectives, techniques and criteria in singing. His beginning, however, is with the opera. Kurt Pahlen's (1974) history of the art of singing starts in the seventeenth century also.

William J. Henderson's Early History of Singing (1921:1) focuses on a more distant vocal art -- "The modern art of singing began with the establishment of schools for the study of the correct manner of delivering the liturgical chants of the Roman Catholic church" -- but this is still somewhat late. In A History of Song ([1960] 1961:15), edited by Denis Stevens, the Middle Ages is also chosen as the earliest representation of the patterns, styles and fashions of European music (although it is admitted that "[t]he history of song is obviously as old as the history of mankind") because of the collective authors' dependence on musical notation to decipher the oldest known songs. Included in Alfred Sendrey's scholarly work Music in Ancient Israel (1969) are extensive sections on singing. These cover, of course, only Israel during ancient times. Finally, the ethnomusicological literature of anthropologists touches on even more remote ages and places and

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offers, at least, some clues as to the importance of song to the human species, the variety of uses to which the voice has been put and the primary participants in the vocal musical sphere, by age and gender.

Comprehensive histories of music (some, exceptions to Kerman's generalization, i.e., Henry Raynor's A Social History of Music from the Middle Ages to Beethoven [1972]), on the other hand, offer only scattered information on singing. Historically continuous and comparative studies of the development of vocal art and its artists are lacking. Donal Henahan (1984:25) has just recently summarized the situation in the New York Times: "Certainly, a comprehensive and reliable book about singers dead and alive would fill a tremendous gap . . ."

Women's Studies Literature on Female Musicians

In spite of the proliferation of research in women's studies, the role that women played in the history of music receives a rather poor accounting. Investigation into this field of women's accomplishments is described by Jane Bernstein in the "Report of the 19th Annual Meeting" of the College Music Symposium (1977:183) as "still in its formative stages." This remains regardless of the fact that women excelled as singers when they were missing in most other occupations. In a review (Walker, 1985:13) of a new book -- Prima Donna, by Rupert Christiansen -- the critic mentions the author musing over the question of why feminist writers have shown no interest in prima donnas, despite the fact that by definition they have been successful.

Elizabeth Wood (1980:284) shows that there has been a steady flow of checklists, editions, catalogues, handbooks, dictionaries,

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discographies and bibliographies of both published and manuscript sources that have touched upon female musicians, but that few are of scholarly substance. She (1980:286) maintains that studies of women in western European music that have been recently published in journals cover a broad chronology -- medieval sacred and secular music; music in sixteenth-century Italian courts, nunneries and academies; in eighteenth-century aristocratic circles and nineteenth-century urban, intellectual groups and conservatories -- but lists only seven sources from 1966 to 1980.

Inaccessibility is offered by Bernstein in the CMS Proceedings (1977:183-4) as reason "why we are one of the last fields to take up the subject of women's studies." She (1977:184) then goes on to explore methodologies for approaching the history of women in music:

> In the past the most traditional approach for the music historian has been biography, the life and work of great composers [but singers and instrumentalists also]. From this the history of music then became a series of connective links from one composer to another. In applying biography to women in music the basic question we should ask ourselves is: Who are the women missing from this progression . . . The result of this line of inquiry, . . . , is a compensatory history of notable women. It does not, however, tell us much about the whole of women's activities nor give us an understanding of the underlying theme.

At the same time, Wood (1980:286) points to the fact that the revival of the lives and works of exceptional women musicians (most typically composers) is indeed the primary goal of much recent scholarship, four out of seven of the sources she applauds being just such research.

Bernstein's discussion (1977:184-5) continues, with suggestions for more productive pursuits:

> The next methodology, contribution history [women's contribution to, their status in, and their oppression by male-defined society], does supply us with a unified topic. The oppression of women yields very valuable information

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> concerning the social history of music. It also gives a focal point to follow through music history. . . .
>
> A third approach is the history of social ideas, or ideology. This is based on prescriptive literature, . . . , literature written to inform contemporaries how they should conduct their lives.
>
> One of the most successful paths which might help us develop a total picture of women in music is social history. What social classes, castes, and sub-groups did musicians come from? What proportion of musicians, male and female, had fathers or close relatives in the field? How many great composers emanated from the aristocracy? . . . We could explore what it was like to be a woman at various times in music history, how women in music came to terms with their societal role, and what their responses were to their environment. . . . ; rather, the sociology of music might best define our field.
>
> . . . By delving into sociological issues -- the actual experience of women -- we can, . . . , enrich this new subject as well as the field of musicology in general.

Sociological Literature on Roles, Work and Professions

Although the concept of role has been fundamental to the field of sociology -- "frequently . . . a central term in conceptual schemes for the analysis of the structure and functioning of social systems and for the explanation of individual behavior" (Gross, Mason and McEachern, 1958:3) -- and despite the sizeable outpouring of material since systematic study of role phenomena was begun in the 1930s, work in this area has consisted mainly of the theoretical development, elaboration and refinement of a technical role language[2] and has been "devoted to the identification and conceptualization of previously unrecognized phenomena of role" (Biddle and Thomas, 1966:14). Few studies have said anything about how new roles come into being.[3] Although there are many studies in the occupational literature on work roles, these mostly deal with socialization of new members into existing roles. The essential issue of the construction and establishment of a role has consistently been left unaddressed by the

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literature in the field.

Perhaps this weakness can be understood by looking at the history of role theory. The earliest contributors to the "role perspective" were social philosophers and early behavioral scientists who employed such concepts as self, habit and conduct, mores and folkways, social type, personality, and interaction to explain human behavior. Biddle and Thomas (1966:7) state: ". . . the implication that positions and the attending roles were elements of societies suggested new possibilities for analyzing social structure; and the idea that an individual's behavior could be construed as role performance implied that role was one linkage between individual behavior and social structure."

Anthropologist Ralph Linton (1936:113-14) offered what turned out to be the classic distinction between status (position) and roles:

> A status, as distinct from the individual who may occupy it, is simply a collection of rights and duties. . . . A role represents the dynamic aspect of a status. The individual is socially assigned to a status and occupies it with relation to other statuses. When he puts the rights and duties which constitute the status into effect, he is performing a role.

Linton's emphasis, Michael Banton (1965:26) explains, was on role as "a concept for discovering the relationship of individuals to their culture . . ." Robert Merton ([1949] 1957:370-1) is an example of a contemporary sociologist who has spent much time attempting to identify structural sources of stability and instability for individuals occupying particular role sets and for the society in general -- "social mechanisms which operate to produce a greater degree of social order than would obtain if these mechanisms were not called into play." The concept of social role has been given attention by historians also:

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"Much of the value of history, . . . , depends on assumptions or generalizations regarding anticipated uniformities in role-playing" (Cochran, 1963, as quoted in Lipset, 1968:29).

Throughout the literature, then, are attempts to understand already existing roles and to explain their functions in the social structure. The "whys" of human behavior could then be understood in their relationship to roles, with an emphasis on human conduct as in part a function of expectations. This literature, however, discusses the expectations that go to make up roles "as if a role-incumbent has but to step into any position to find already established expectations" (Goldner, 1967:245-6). Though the succession of inhabiters of statuses constantly recreate occupational roles in their performance of them, we recognize that they also continually create the roles they occupy. To summarize, we quote Daniel J. Levinson (1957:293-4):

> Clearly, individual role-conception and role-performance do not emanate fully formed, from the depths of personality. Nor are they simply mirror images of a mold established by social structure.

Regardless of this shared understanding, Goldner (1967:246) claims that lack of discussion in sociological literature about emergent roles has resulted in "little if any acknowledgment of the active part played by an incumbent in shaping his own role."

A final consideration of the role theory literature involves the socialization process by which individuals come to play their roles -- learning the cultural content (the skills, knowledge, behavior, rules and expectations associated with the role) and acquiring self-identification with the role (internalizing the values and goals). Numerous examples of socialization research in occupations can be found in the collected works in that field in the bibliography (Cf., for

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example, Bryant, 1972; Nosow and Form, 1962; Stewart and Cantor, 1974). Relevant topics in these studies include discussions of such features as occupational choice; anticipatory socialization; the influence of reference groups; formal and informal socialization; occupational networks, communities and subcultures; status passages and career patterns; occupational commitment; and occupational change. Such studies of occupational groups are interesting for purposes of comparison on these features, especially those concerning the professions and the arts.

The Role of the Virtuoso Singer

Studying the emergence of the role of the virtuoso singer, therefore, involves first looking at the early history of the singing tradition in the West, examining how singers came to their positions, and then how their expectations, attitudes, values, abilities and personalities contributed to the way in which this new role came to be organized and defined and how it continually changed, over time, in its organization and definition. Most studies of social roles are synchronic. What is different here is the emphasis on the development and operation of the role of the singer through time, for it was an historical phenomenon.

Musicians may form a special caste or class, they may or may not be regarded as professionals, their role may be ascribed or achieved, their status may be high or low or a combination of both (Merriam, 1964:123). In addition to these themes, we must ask what were the expectations that developed in singers' relationships with relevant role partners -- notably composers, teachers, sponsors, other singers and the audience -- which further delineated the role? Who the singer

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was, how he/she behaved and what society thought of him or her add to our understanding of music as human behavior.

Occupational behavior is both conditioned by societal expectations and individual personality and expressive of both.

> . . . the artist is born into a society possessing a particular culture. He is socialized by his society in ways that affect his personality and, in particular, his attitudes toward and entrance into the art world via formal training, apprenticeship, or his individual efforts. (Barnett, 1959:210)

Anne Roe (1964:198) evokes, in addition, a host of other influential factors which are independent of these: the position of the individual's family, the labor market, wars, depressions. Therefore, in tracing the beginnings of this artistic role, we are concerned furthermore with the various social, political, economic, religious and musical determinants that influenced its creation and growth -- conditions (cordial and uncordial) out of which musical styles arose and musical artists were conceived. These societal processes and cultural ideologies influenced conceptions of the social position and function in society of vocal music generally and the singer specifically and affected beliefs about who should "belong" within that particular position and how those individuals should be trained. In this respect, we are aiming at a history that attempts to account for music and its practitioners as, in Raynor's (1972:6) words, "an aspect of European thought." This means taking vast amounts of historical, in addition to musical, specificity into account in order to develop sociological generalizations.

Barnett (1959:210) suggests that this can be accomplished by "conceiving of art as a process in which the artist, the work of art, and the art public are interacting elements." Raynor (1972:1) maintains

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that "[m]usic can come to life only in society; it cannot exist . . . merely as print on a page, for it presupposes both players and listeners. . . . , open to all influences that society and the changes in social beliefs, habits and customs, can exert." Music-making -- both the development of the performer and the nature, quality and style of the music itself -- occurs in a social situation, functioning as a contributing element to the social structure and, at the same time, mediated by social institutions and ideologies -- teaching institutions, systems of sacred and secular patronage, mythologies and realities about the gifted artist and mythologies and realities about the power of music. Rosanne Martorella (1979:89), however, notes the weaknesses of sociological studies of artists in this respect: that American studies of the arts have failed to give credit to the macrocultural and institutional context within which art is expressed and that sociologists of music have focused on the aesthetic requirements of the form itself to the neglect of the individual doing art and the institutional setting within which they work.

In addition to this study's investigation into the dynamics of the emergence of an aesthetic role through the history of its occupants and their position and relationships in the organization of music in society, it will be central to this paper to note the position -- or nonposition -- of females as singers. The history of singing and the history of the status of women as singers will be considered in relation to one another. It is this introduction of gender as the focus for analysis which distinguishes this work from simple social history. Feminist Gerda Lerner (1979:172) maintains:

> Gender must be added as an analytical category to history. Where gender is considered with race, class, ethnicity, and

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> religious affiliation in analyzing any given period or event, an entirely new dimension is added to social history.[4]

The social variable gender helps to order the historical materials and enhance the interpretive explanations about singers. This perspective will be a focal concern in interpreting both the history of vocal art and the developing role of the vocal artist within that story.

We are, in effect, then, addressing an occupational development that took place concurrently with and linked to certain musical developments; both of which were affected by political events, economic viability and class structures, religious beliefs, social norms, forms of patronage and the nature of audiences, architectural considerations, etc.; and involved what we will find to be a unique position for women.

The Position of Women as Singers

In regard to the latter, we are focusing on two issues: (1) the ability of certain women to learn the necessary skills and acquire the identity and self-concept of a professional singer, while adjusting to problems at various stages of their careers; and (2) the social context, in particular the structure of opportunities and patterns of discrimination, in which women have had to attempt to put these talents and ideologies to work and how the most successful ones went about this. At any point in the history of vocal music men and women came to it from different sociological experiences: ". . . because of the economic, social and ideological effects of sexual difference in a western, patriarchal culture, women," Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock (1981:49) proclaim, "have spoken and acted from a different place within that society and culture." In addition, Cynthia Epstein (1974:26) speaks of a social control system, a system of rewards and

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punishments that "sifts recruits" and "undermines the motivation and participation of persons who possess statuses viewed as negative by the gatekeepers." This brings us to an exploration of the ways in which individual women negotiated their situations within the boundaries, social controls and gender-specific restrictions of their cultures in order to generate options for themselves within the world of vocal artistry and become exceptions to the rule, or, as Wood (1980:290) puts it: "the conditions women have had to create, exploit, defy, deny, or succumb to, in order to have their music heard . . ."

There is no question that many women sang. Fictional portraits, works of art, historical accounts of contemporary chroniclers, their own and others' correspondences provide evidence. Information concerning training on their parts for such activities is generally lacking, however. In order to produce a comprehensive study of the position of women as singers and the structure of opportunities (or lack of them) for women as vocalists over time, we are often, therefore, forced to rely on allusions to their participation in musical practice supplemented by the actual music. From this we can frequently deduce what they sang and how.

Musical style, then, is the final factor to be considered in this attempt to re-create the evolution of the role of the singer in the West and the status of women with regard to that role. In particular, we will be concerned with the relationship between certain physiological characteristics of the human voice and musical style, specifically the desired vocal range at any particular point in time. This biologically-dictated aspect of musical performance is, of course, directly connected to the gender of the singer. Women, in general, have

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higher voices than men; furthermore, ". . . an untrained male voice is usually stronger on the bottom while a female voice is stronger on the top of the range" (Rose, [1962] 1971:212).

The reverse correspondence is, of course, also true: "The investigation of music history is a live and fruitful pursuit only if the changes in musical style and in the conception of music are seen as integral parts of a general history of ideas" (Bukofzer, 1947:394).

The Trials and Tribulations of Vocal History

Any history of vocal art is difficult to construct. Only fragments of music survived prior to the twelfth century. Examples of the musical composition of songs only become plentiful around 1500, when advances were made in musical printing. Even after that time masses of important music have been lost -- much of the first operas, for example. In addition, there are, of course, no sources of actual singing and singing styles through most of this art's long development -- not until only recently with the invention of sound recording in the late nineteenth century. We are, therefore, dependent upon deductions made from the remaining portions of compositions sung and upon the hearsay of contemporaries for descriptions of the voices of the past. Henderson (1921:19) asserts that ". . . when we view them from the distance of the present, the various threads of the early story of singing seem inextricably tangled, . . . a strictly chronological account of the progress of the art is formidably difficult, if not impossible."

In order to piece together the major developments and changes in singing and singing styles, including characteristics of singers, characteristics of their songs, expectations surrounding singers, their

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social relationships and the social position of this specialized role as it developed into an occupation, we will rely on the following: period-specific histories of singing; general histories of song and histories of singers; comprehensive histories of western music in general; social and cultural histories of various times and places; personal correspondences, chronicles and memoirs; a whole chronology of musical treatises and performance manuals; official records of singers at sacred and secular institutions; and actual musical compositions; in addition to other musicological and sociological studies of this art and its artists. To some degree, then, we must depend upon music historians' accounts of events:

> . . . sociologists must inevitably rely extensively on secondary authorities, without going back to the original sources. They do this partly because life is too short to do anything else when using the comparative method and they need data assembled from a wide historical field, and partly because original sources are very tricky things to use. . . . It is the business of the historian to sift this miscellaneous collection of dubious authorities and to give to others the results of their careful professional assessment. (Marshall, 1964, as quoted in Lipset, 1968:50)

In order, at all times, to focus on the analysis by gender differentiation, we need also include a whole host of cultural and literary documents representing (and perhaps perpetuating) the prevailing perceptions, ideologies and actualities concerning the status of women in society in general over time. Such prescriptive literature supplies us, in addition, with what Bernstein in the CMS Proceedings (1977:186) refers to as a social grammar -- the language applied to particular groups in a society. At the same time, we must be mindful of Lerner's (1979:149) warning:

> To use ideology as a measure of the shifting status of women, it must be set against a careful analysis of social structure, economic conditions, institutional changes, and

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> popular values. With this caution society's attitudes toward women and toward gender-role indoctrination can be usefully analyzed as manifestations of a shifting value system and of tensions within patriarchal society.

This methodological admonition is in line with Lerner's (1979:148) general contention that the true history of women is "the history of their ongoing functioning in [a] male-defined world on their own terms" and other feminist scholars' beliefs that one cannot simply add women to fields where they had previously been ignored, for scholastic paradigms have not only left women out but have not permitted satisfactory explanations of women's experiences (Watkins, 1983:81).

All our sources are fairly unsuitable to statistical treatment and pose the problem of not being able to talk back -- we cannot ask questions of the data but must deal with what information is available. Also,

> Since historical cases can best be compared in only some of their aspects, and practically never in all of them, any comparison means the sacrifice of a great deal of detail, much of it important information. Yet to draw limited comparisons from only partly comparable data is of the essence of human thought. (Deutsch et al., 1957, as quoted in Lipset, 1968:52)

Documents do lend themselves, however, to textual analysis of a range of features for exploratory and descriptive purposes. In this case the set of research questions stated earlier represent the elements to be applied as basic categories, themes or features to sensitize us in confronting these documents and in our organization and selection of materials. In attempting to gather together the various pieces of this large and rather unexplored history, we must recognize, for all the reasons cited above, that one, there will be gaps where information is not reliable or simply not available; two, "historical situations are determined by a multitude of factors," and "it is

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impossible to perform the methodological operation of holding other factors constant" (Lipset, 1968:51); and three, findings will be of the kind that "cannot be demonstrated but can be recognized" (Stark, 1973:3). Although historical sociology is an imprecise science, no discipline, as Lipset (1968:52) says, "can select its research problems solely from those which are easy to study with extant methods."

Although detailed progress in the art of song is poorly documented prior to the advent of opera around 1600 and although only a few names of singers before that time have come down to us, we know that singing has been part of human society since its beginning. Talking of the "considerable army" of singers already "equipped with a brilliant technic" available around the time of the birth of opera, Henderson (1921:64) asks what we might ask at almost any time during the progress of vocal art: "Whence came these artists? Whence came their art? . . . The subject has been dismissed curtly in musical histories . . . Who were the masters of voice?" Furthermore, although the point in time at which professional women singers "made their debut on the highway of vocal progress" (Henderson, 1921:76) is difficult to determine, we can be certain that they flourished long before 1600, for by that time both historical chronicles and musical pieces demonstrate the influence and fame of numerous women. Thus, Henderson (1921:71) asks also: ". . . whence came the women singers whom we find in a full blaze of glory at the close of the sixteenth century[?]"

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Notes to the Introduction

[1] "History," Stevens ([1960] 1961:7) declares, "is a bottomless pit, and even geography has its limitations." For reasons of space, he excludes music of the ancients and of non-western countries in his and others' tracing of the changing art song from medieval Europe to contemporary Europe and the Americas. Neither in our more distant chronological endeavor can we possibly undertake the vast repertory on Eastern music, an exploration in and of itself.

[2] Discriminable role language begins with Ralph Linton's The Study of Man (1936). Gross, Mason and McEachern (1958:17) note the three basic ideas which commonly appear in most conceptualizations of the concept role: individuals (1) in social locations (2) behave (3) with reference to expectations.

[3] Among the few exceptions are Carr-Saunders and Wilson (1962) and Goldner (1967). More recently, work on the development and explication of artistic occupational roles include Couch (1979), on the decelopment of the orchestra musician into a full-time occupational role; Kamerman (1979), on the genesis of the occupation of the symphony orchestra conductor; and Ridgeway (1975), on the emergence of the avant garde artist as a distinct role in the arts.

[4] The lack of such an approach in the field of art history is criticized by Vogel:

> "The art world has traditionally ignored the issues of sex, class, and race, at most acknowledging them as background or context. Moreover, it originally assumes that a single human norm exists, one that is universal, ahistorical, and without sex, class or race identity, although in fact it is quite clearly male, upper-class, and white." (Quoted in Peterson and Wilson, 1976:7)

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CHAPTER I

MUSIC IN PRIMITIVE SOCIETIES

Robert Rushmore (1971:4), discussing "hearsay voices," states that though we have no knowledge of when human beings evolved the ability to sing or how primitive man actually sang, there are indications of the subject matter of the first songs (which, he adds, "hasn't varied, with the exception of perhaps a greater preponderance of love songs, from what we feel the need to sing about today"). Magical-religious, heroic and tragic songs, songs of man and nature, these serve the purposes which Charles Hughes ([1948] 1970:50) contends have always existed -- music which expressed individual emotion and music which was ceremonial in character.

> . . . from the date of the earlier forms of organization and civilization, it is probable that singing in some form has had its place as an individual solace or as a convenient means of expressing a common sentiment, either in war-cries (afterward war-songs) or in addresses to the deities or idols (afterward chants and hymns). (Deacon, 1910:363)

> Among primitive peoples joy, grief, love, triumph, and the inexhaustible gamut of human emotions manifest themselves in crooning, shouting, impassioned speech, and somewhat later, in more or less regularly accented declamation which modern scholars consider to be the archetype of artistic singing. (Sendrey, 1969:159)

The Role of Women in Noncomplex Vocal Music

Rushmore (1971:6) states that anthropologists have found that the female maintained an equality with the male in most tribes in fulfilling these functions of song. Sophie Drinker (1948:12) proposes that hunting and gathering peoples regarded woman as "particularly

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fitted by nature to think in terms of music" because her natural bond with the life force (through bringing forth life) stimulated the development of her creative imagination and because her daily activities allowed for the cultivation of the art of song. These resounded with the story of birth, love, work, death and rebirth -- "the liturgy of woman's religion" (Drinker, 1948:7).

The birth of a baby was an occasion for which women would sing in order to ward off evil spirits and ease the labor of the mother. "Once delivered, women have of course sung to their babies from time immemorial" (Rushmore, 1971:6).[1] Their joyous expressions Drinker (1948:27-8) finds to have involved most commonly the sound of the letter "l," phrases like al-al-al, la-la and lu-lu occurring with peculiar frequency (and hence our words "lullaby," "alleluia" and "ululate" [meaning "to wail"]). Wedding music was also women's music -- made by the bride, her maids, female relations and/or professional singers. Primitive (and peasant) women, along with their male counterparts, sang at their work to ease the burden and perhaps make the work go more quickly.

> In the African community of M'Konis, women are known to be poor and inefficient workers if they do not sing. . . . Tibetan women work harder and longer when they lighten their labor with songs. In Lithuania, . . . , a young man in search of a wife will spy upon the girls while they are working to find one who can sing especially well, so fixed is the idea among these people that a good singer is also a good worker. (Drinker, 1948:42)

Women were called upon to wail and sing the dirges of death. In many places men were even excluded from death rites. Finally, many primitive communities expected a priestess rather than a priest, or a priestess and a priest together, to serve in the musical religious ceremonies and to pray for the future, the life hereafter and the

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rebirth.

Examples of societies in which women excelled in both the quantity and quality of musical activities are listed by Drinker (1948:15):

> . . . in the north, the women of Kanchatka, of other aboriginal Siberian tribes, of the Eskimo peoples, . . . , are outstanding musicians as compared to the men of their groups. In the Pacific islands, the Dyak women in Borneo . . . The Trobriand Islanders, the Fiji Islanders, and many of the Maoris belong in this category. Among the black people of Africa the woman musician is in her element. Bushwomen, Pygmies, the Bavenda, the Ba-Ronga, the Valenge, Dahomeans, Ashantis, Wanyamwezi, the Tuareg, . . .

Because such women were recognized as having authority to make music for important ends, Drinker (1948:14) concludes that training, organization and incentives adequate for the kind of music expected of them must have been provided. They functioned as successful, authoritative and creative musicians -- "Because the group demands [or, in descending order of importance: 'benefits from,' 'allows'] music from her, she can assert and develop her native musical imagination" (Drinker, 1948:12).

Richard Wallaschek ([1893] 1970), who along with Cecil Bowra (1962) attempts to speculate about the nature and function of primitive song and primitive singers through the analysis of anthropological studies on primitive peoples in the modern world, also finds that in such cultures women generally took a prominent part in musical activities. For example,

> The young women of the Yaribs, who have loud clear voices, are selected as wives or concubines of the monarch. They lull the king to sleep, play instruments, and whistle together. . . . The women of the Sudan are famous for their singing; they accompany themselves on the "Erbab". Gardiner remarks of the Zulu women that they perform their parts with such a degree of sustained effort . . . In Tanga (East Africa) women are the chief propagators of songs, of which some know an incredibly

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> great number. In Madagascar the female voice is usually much more suitable for training than the male, and the women sing much more frequently. On Hervey Island (Friendly Isles) the women often amused Cook with their songs. Their voices were very extensive in compass, and their music as well as their voices sounded very harmonious. They accompanied themselves while singing by snapping their fingers. . . .
>
> By far the greater number of Japanese songs are sung by girls; men would make themselves ridiculous by singing, . . . in New Zealand the women write poetry, and probably also compose . . . The greater part of the Chinook songs (North America) that Mr. Boas collected was composed by women. . . . The Nishinam women (Indians) have a sort of musical contest which is won by the woman who sings loudest and longest. . . .
>
> Among the Apache Indians the women dance and sing; the Samacneca in Chili, too, is performed only by women, as is the music which accompanies it. . . . On the Marianna island Radack, Chamisso heard a song by women only. The song of the Botocudo (Amazon) men resembles an inarticulate war-cry; the women, however, sing less unpleasantly, but only a few notes, which they constantly repeat. (Wallaschek, 1970:71-3)

Sex Differentiation in Singing

Although the role played by women in song among these primitive groups is fairly extensive, the literature on primitive singing contains references to a number of distinctions between males and females. For example, female vocalization is often a service or entertainment for others or centered in the home. In the Orient female singing (and dancing) were left to prostitutes. "In Fiji a man of position deems it beneath him to sing, and he leaves it to his wives and children, so that women sing with women only, and children with children" (Wallaschek, [1893] 1970:75). Other contrasts are stylistic:

> Boat songs of the Eskimo rest on the third; when women row, they sing the same melodies with infixes to avoid the masculine stride. . . .
>
> . . . the [Northwest Siberian Vogel] men do almost all the singing, and their melodies are free in rhythm and structure; the women, confined to the so-called Songs of Fate, arrange their melodies in simple and regular verses . . .
>
> . . . examples confirm an innate tendency in women to neatly regulate the songs of domestic life also, . . .[2] (Sachs, 1943:40-1)

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Taboos often surround the musical practice of women -- taboos against certain classes of women singing, against women performing certain kinds of songs or on certain kinds of instruments. In societies where women are lacking in authority or responsibility we even find them prevented from creating and/or performing music altogether. North American Indians, in general, regarded music as the function of men. The Caraja of Brazil are another example of a group for whom it was the custom for women not to sing at all -- even children's lullabies:

> The Caraja word parallel to our word "sing" is used for the singing of men and of songbird. Occasionally when women are working in the fields they attempt to imitate the men singers, but generally end by joking and granting that women cannot sing. . . . Simply because they live in a society that does not expect them to be musicians and that deliberately discourages them from receiving training in music, they are forced by custom to pretend that music is outside women's sphere. (Drinker, 1948:57)

In general, the data seem to show that there existed a musical division of labor -- "Women have their own dance steps, their own rhythmic patterns, and their own melodic lines" (Drinker, 1948:14) -- and that while it may have varied by group, it seems to have been maintained in most. Among the Thlinkcet Indians the men danced while the women sang; female Australians had mourning songs which they alone sang, while men only performed the war songs (Wallaschek, [1893] 1970:75,74). There are examples offered in the literature of males and females in a tribe engaged in the same musical activity, but these are mostly of children.

Technical Specialization

The first songs seem to have been mainly communal rather than individual, and singers and other musicians in nonliterate primitive

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societies were not at first specialists. Early music parallels early art, then, in terms of Arnold Hauser's ([1974] 1982:243) identification of the latter's inseparable unity of practical and aesthetic interests. The typical primitive group is described in Merriam (1964: 123) as having no specialization or professionalization, its division of labor depending almost exclusively on sex and occasionally on age; ". . . only rarely are certain individuals proficient in any technique to a distinctive degree." As singing evolved, however, ". . . it was natural that certain individuals among the group should be discovered to have superior voices and musical talent," and so solo singing on a very limited scale slowly developed (Rushmore, 1971:6). Information concerning the requirements for becoming a musician, the actual duties of such vocalists and the expectations held by others of them is limited. Such individuals, whose skill at making music was recognized as in some way superior, were either called upon or took their "rightful" place in musical situations (Merriam, 1964:124). Among the Flathead Indians, for example, good singers were "known, recognized, and appreciated" (Merriam, 1964:128) and were expected to lead the singing and play the drum, but they were not paid for their performances. Specialists in the broadest sense, they were not yet an occupation, i.e., economic specialists supported by their skills.[3] Sachs ([1961] 1962:203-4) speaks of a semi-professional stratum of central Asian bards who rarely earned their living by singing and formed no special group but who made appearances in connection with certain festivals, after which resuming their usual way of life.

We begin to approach professionalism with occasional gifts for

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specific acts to complete economic support through music, such payment symbolizing the acceptance and acknowledgment of the individual as a professional. Although among North American Indian groups gifted musicians practiced their skills for no other reward than perhaps a "slightly increased prestige," says Merriam (1964:130), information from other world areas concerning specialization without payment is meagre. Sachs ([1961] 1962:201) describes the trend in Asia and Africa: ". . . persons with a gift for music gave time and energy to study and performance at the cost of other work, and men of lesser talent stepped back."

Magic, Religion and Emotion

Solo singers functioned in the magical-religious rituals that were integal to primitive man's life. Power was attributed to use of the voice to communicate thoughts and feelings and to record facts and events. Bowra (1962:270) nevertheless feels that primitive songs ". . . do not often convey much information, and their main strength lies in their emotional impact, in the overriding and obsessing mood which they create in those who hear them, . . ." Musical sound "appeals to something in our inmost nature which responds as directly to it . . ." is how Deacon (1910:363) puts it. The authority of singer-musicians was founded on their charismatic talents in these respects. Sachs (1943:23) explains:

> A primitive singer behaves in different ways. He often refrains from utmost pitch and power; but when frenzy pushes him to extremes, his singing is strained: it is, and is meant to be, unlike the performer's speech voice; it is expected to be superhuman; indeed, supernatural.

Music, along with alcohol, tobacco and narcotics, was used frequently among some groups to induce a state of ecstasy (Weber, [1922] 1964:3)

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but also as a means of exorcism or to ward off evil (Weber, [1915] 1946:341).

> As he sings and dances, man discovers in himself an all-pervading element whose intensifying, liberating, or healing power is unknown to him in everyday life. Music which has such an intensifying effect grows to the point of ecstasy. (Schneider, [1957] 1966:4).

The Ambivalent Status of Singer

Singers, accordingly, were held in awe but, at the same time, were often feared, for in the minds of superstitious primitive peoples ". . . the magical effect of the singing voice seemed to be linked in some way with the terrifying spirits themselves" (Rushmore, 1971:6-7). Something of this superstitious awe seems to still exist -- in our worshipful attitude toward singers today. Hauser ([1974] 1982:243-4) maintains that although the connection between artistic talent in general and charismatic authority has grown looser, it has never been completely dissolved. The aura that surrounds the persona of the artist still retains some of the charismatic quality which surrounded his ancestors.

Status ambivalence is a complex aspect of the behavior of the early singer. Merriam (1964:136) points out the African Basongye as one example. Their expectations about the singer-musician and his behavior indicate a low social status:

> Musicians are the butt of jokes in the society; they are considered to be lazy, heavy drinkers, debtors, impotents (an extremely disgraceful and humiliating state), hemp smokers, physical weaklings, adulterers, and poor marriage risks. The Basongye feel that musicians exist only for music and that other aspects of life are not important to them. . . . but a single individual reported that he wished his child to become a musician.

One reason for this negative attitude is that these soloists were

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considered to be people who could be ordered about because they worked for others. Another is that many of their behaviors were deviant and their values did not conform. But musicians were necessary to life in a Basongye village -- ". . . without musicians a village is incomplete; people want to sing and dance, and a number of important village activities simply cannot be carried out without musicians" (Merriam, 1964:136). From this example and other literature on primitive groups, there is a definite question as to "whether musicians [in general] may not in fact occupy a special situation in which behavior not tolerated by others is considered acceptable, or is at least tolerated, for them" (Merriam, 1964:134). The ambivalent attitude toward this role -- "of low status and high importance, coupled with deviant behavior allowed by the society and [often] capitalized upon by the musician" (Merriam, 1964:137) -- is perhaps a characteristic of behavior common to the musician's role, and of entertainers and artists in general. Studies of jazz musicians (Becker, 1963; Merriam and Mack, 1960; Stebbins, 1964, 1968) are the most obvious modern examples.

Though the "Griots" of Senegambia in Africa formed one of the lowest castes, their importance was also high, their deviant behavior pronounced and their power in daily life strong.

> Griots are by tradition attached to families; they are family jesters and buffoons . . . whose duty it is to keep the company amused; they are the family bards, who learn and recite the family and national history . . . ; they are family magicians, who must be present at all ceremonies and whose advice must be taken; they are the first to hold the newborn baby and the last to touch the corpse; they are the actual recipients of most gifts given to their patrons; they are the spiritual mentors and guides of the young . . . ; they console the mourner and comfort the downcast with music and song; they are the family's official boosters, singing their merits, triumph and wealth on public occasions; they are lower than

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> the meanest servants and often richer and more powerful then the master. (Gorer, 1935, as quoted in Merriam, 1964:138-9)

They too were allowed to behave in ways not permissible for others and were free to speak as they pleased. "If a reward for their praises was not forthcoming or was considered insufficient, they were liable to switch to outspoken abuse, in consequence of which they were greatly feared and normally amassed considerable wealth" (Gamble, 1957, as quoted in Merriam, 1964:139). Their song was powerful and dangerous, for, even if the singer was punished for a particular song, its effect could still not be checked. In such a case, the musician's ability to impose his own will, his power as defined by Max Weber ([1925] 1978:I:53), prevailed by virtue of the musician's monopoly over a valued musical commodity which, in its use, afforded the user even more power.

The Griots illustrate another aspect of the musical role -- its position in a society in which singers form a definite social group apart from the rest. Separation serves to insulate the questionable role activities from observability, a social mechanism which Merton ([1949] 1957:374) enumerates as providing a degree of articulation among roles in a role-set. Jazz musicians are again the foremost modern example of this phenomenon, but the vocal organization of the levitical singers of Ancient Israel, the singing schools of the early Christian Church and the famous music conservatories of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries -- all institutions in which students trained for years in relative isolation -- produced similar environments of separateness.

Lastly, Wallaschek ([1893] 1970:66) discusses the wandering minstrel who appeared over almost the entire continent of Africa. Much

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like the medieval minstrel we will discuss later, their vocation was "the glorification of the mighty chief in whose service [they] may be, and to demonstrate for the spreading of his fame the inexhaustible power and beauty of art" (Wallaschek, [1893] 1970:66) and in being "the sounding memories of their peoples" (Sachs, [1961] 1962:202). In return for this, the first wandering minstrels were highly rewarded, and thus were renowned for their great wealth. Nevertheless, they were considered disreputable, or even as "untouchables" (the Wolof of the French Sudan, according to Sachs [(1961) 1962:205]), and were denied the common rite of burial.

Here we find an early example of art that is practiced for economic purposes being despised (while the artists were bowed down to in fear or awe or out of necessity) at the same time that the condemned economic motivation was encouraged by contributions. Like the Griots, these prototype minstrels were feared because, if the expected gifts were not received, they would retract all that they had previously said in praise of their protectors, or, as Sachs ([1961] 1962:205) describes Labouret's (1941) picture of the caste-bound Griots, they could importune the rich with insults instead of glorification. Schneider ([1957] 1966:41) summarizes the incongruous status of the primitive musician and the mixed emotions of others towards him:

> In general the musician is highly esteemed while practising his art, because he is regarded as the possessor of a higher power. But he is also feared, or despised. He is honoured in public but avoided in private. That he is able to traffic with the world of spirits makes him a somewhat sinister figure, and the more intensely a community feels his power the more it tries to keep him at arm's length. Since it also needs him, it cannot banish him completely; so it acknowledges him secretely or openly, yet it rejects him because it cannot forgive his superior powers.

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The Results of Specialization and Professionalization for Females Singing

In the scant literature on solo song and solo vocalists, we note much less discussion about females as musicians than in that covering earlier communal singing. As this specialized role becomes ecomically rewarded and gains in status in at least some ways, we find it increasingly occupied by males. Lerner (1979:179) argues, however, that, since in a male-centered value system we only call work that which is performed for wages, we thereby obliterate from consideration and from view the same work performed by many women. This sensible, measurable and supposedly reliable indicator of "occupation" espoused by so many sociologists (see n.3, Sect. 1) has perhaps blinded historians, their distorted vision keeping them from recognizing the extent and importance of female participation. Here is only one example of Lerner's (1979:158,160) claim that men have defined their experience as history, making man the measure and leaving women out as a consequence. "At what point," asks Gaye Tuchman (1975:192), "are unpaid activities that form a career in art to be spoken of as an occupation, rather than as an expenditure of leisure time?"

Although we are admittedly dealing with the poorest of information and can make no direct implications in terms of singers during later, better documented periods, and although this literature covers all areas of the world and our focus is on western cultures and societies, basic patterns in the singer's role have been discovered here, which we will see repeated.

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Sex and Vocal Range

Before proceeding chronologically, it will be important to pursue briefly one further line of thought -- the desirable height of the voice among primitive singers -- as this is critical to tracing the position of the female as singer over time. It is often noted that male singers sang unusually high for what we know to be their normal range, more so than the women. Mention is frequent of high tenor and baritone voices compared to basses. Reviewing studies of Abyssinia and Madagascar, Wallaschek ([1893] 1970:76) states that the song is pitched as high as possible and performed amid the greatest excitement.

It is, of course, possible that the male voice was formerly higher than now. Reasons offered for voices being pitched so high generally go back to the origins of music -- nature's instruments, like "the cleft in the rock, the hole in the cabin, the distant trickling water, or the wind blowing into a reed" (Deacon, 1910:364) and nature's bird and other animal vocalists (Cf. Drinker, 1948:4; Engel, [1909] 1970:20-1) -- which the human voice imitated. Frederick Dorian (1942:88) even speaks of Darwin's interpretation of the singing of birds as the prime factor in their natural selection, with only the best singers among the males standing a chance of winning the favor of the females, thus leading to the astonishing "technique in bird songs that human beings admire so much." Deep tones, according to Horace Bowman (1951:24), were considered grotesque or mirth-provoking.

Finally, falsetto voices[4] are also frequently noted as common to primitives of both sexes. Holding his hand before his mouth, a blind singer in East Africa is described as having produced "a quite

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pleasing tone which could be heard at a great distance, and everyone was delighted, especially with the peculiar shrill falsetto notes" (Wallaschek, [1893] 1970:68). Clearly, a relationship between the high voice and vocal pleasure can be traced from the very beginning.

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CHAPTER II

SONG IN THE ANCIENT WORLD

Singing among the Early Civilizations

In the early centers of civilization, we also find documentation of the use of falsetto. Numerous sources (Gradenwitz, 1949:36; Rushmore, 1971:7; Sendrey, 1969:45; Farmer, [1957] 1966:238) mention a seventh-century B.C. Mesopotamian bas-relief in the British Museum in which there are a group playing musical instruments and a choir of women and children. One of the women has her hand on her larynx, squeezing it so as to produce the thin, whiny high notes favored in the East. This vocal practice was supposed to not only produce sharp and shrill high-pitched sounds but also increase mechanically the natural vibrato (vibration or tremolo) of the voice. Sachs (1943:98) speaks of pictured Egyptian singers "bring[ing] their left hands to their left ears in a gesture familiar to many Oriental singers of ancient and modern times; the wrinkles, particularly between the eyebrows, indicate nasal singing from a compressed throat and probably at a high pitch." And Drinker (1948:28) comments on the "high trilling tone" produced by ancient Jewish women "pressing their hands on their throats."

Among these civilizations, singing played a varied and important part --

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> The power of music increases the effectiveness of speech, exalting it, and making it worthy of the throne of God. Even a spell has more potency if the magic words are sung. (Burkhalter A/O, [1966] 1968:25)

-- but few details are known about singers in the millenniums B.C. A brief survey of our sources finds information on music in religious rituals and secular festivities, accounts of musical instruments, and some specific mention of women as singers during these early times. Material evidence for female singers has been found on domestic pottery vessels and mortuary urns and among the small statues of men, women and children that have been excavated from the once fertile river basins that supported the early tribes.

Sendrey (1969:36,37) notes examples of Sumerian women as both secular and sacred vocalists:

> On the famous standard of 'Ur (ca.2700 B.C.E.) we see the reproduction of a royal banquet with court dignitaries; a female singer accompanied by a harpist (or lyre-player) entertains the revelers.
>
> In the temple of Ningirsu at Lagash, a special officer . . . had the function of supervising the thorough preparation of the choir, consisting of male and female singers.

Historical records of Egypt show that besides temple priest and priestess singers (the human voice having been "the instrument par excellence of the priest and enchanter" [Sayce, 1913, as quoted in Farmer, (1957) 1966:259]), soloists and choral groups took part in musical performances at the court and in the houses of the nobility, with the mention of both men and women in this sphere also (Cf. Farmer, [1957] 1966:263). Burkhalter (A/O, [1966] 1968:31) claims, in addition, that musical art was pursued in all classes of society.. Women are frequently illustrated with instruments and engaging in singing and dancing in art remains -- in wall, tomb and vase

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paintings. Women and girls entered the service of the deities as singers and musicians, constituting the "harem of the gods" (Erman and Ranke, 1923, as quoted in Quasten, 1941:149). Depictions of religious ceremonies show processions of revered men and women postured in relationships of equality. Secular musicians, however, were not necessarily held in great respect. In fact, the majority were probably slaves, whose accomplishments in music enhanced their value. Sendrey (1969:40) explains that some of this secular class of musicians, nevertheless, "made successful inroads into the heretofore exclusive art of the privileged temple musicians," the main feature of their musical practice being external display -- or what he terms "virtuosity."[5] But what we know of such virtuosic displays Sendrey (1969:41) describes negatively but also quite vaguely:

> . . . artificiality won a higher recognition than the intrinsic quality of musical art. Virtuosity in musical performance was not only favored, but frankly requested. Slowly, the sublime art of a great epoch degenerated and became the servant of a society addicted exclusively to luxury and the pleasures of an easy and carefree life.

Crete's women were not only the chief ministrants of the spiritual life but also its inspirers (gods were rare and inconspicuous, goddesses numerous and important, according to Drinker [1948:84]), to the extent that "[w]hen the men attendants carried musical instruments, they dressed like women," and "[w]hen youths joined a choir, they were led by a priestess and imitated the dress of maidens, as if to deceive the spirits . . ." This superiority of women Drinker (1948:84) finds manifested also in the production of small images of musicians -- invariably female -- for the purpose of accompanying the dead in their graves.

Babylonian and Assyrian pictorial representations include

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processions of male, female and boy-child singers and instrumentalists. In the above-mentioned bas-relief, men play instruments only and boys only sing, whereas "[f]our women play upon large harps, another blows a double-oboe; still another beats a small drum . . . , we see six singing women, one of them applying [the aforementioned] pressure to her throat and cheeks, . . ." (Sendrey, 1969:45). The words in several of the languages of the area for "chanter" -- zammertu, nartu -- are of the feminine gender. What also becomes clear from the composition of singers and instrumentalists -- the use of nine singing boys and six female singers as opposed to only eleven instrumentalists -- is that "the singing must have been of a dominant volume" (Sendrey, 1969:45), the main feature of musical practice, therefore, having been vocal.

Female singing in the early history of the Jewish people was also fairly prominent and varied, but this will be discussed later when we look in more depth at the influence of Jewish singing and Jewish singers on the role of the singer as it developed in the West. It differed, as we shall see, from that of the other peoples of a common region and time, one reason for which being a change in religious emphasis. The soul of the Babylonian universe was an all-encompassing mother -- Ishtar, the teeming life of the rich plain -- Drinker (1948:82) says, and women's song played an important part in this "heathen" worship. On the other hand, the Jewish monotheistic image was that of a male god with all the attributes of a warrior.[6]

The Musical Motif in Legends and Mythology

In the legends, epics and myths of the ancient world, the supernatural origins of music and the magical quality of singing

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reappear. Orpheus, the first great solo singer, sang to his lyre:

> . . . there was every kind of bird brought under the spell of the singing, and all beasts of the mountains and whatever feeds in the recesses of the sea, and a horse stood entranced, held in control, not by a bridle, but by the music . . . You could see . . . the rivers flowing from their sources toward the singing and a wave of the sea raising itself aloft for love of the song . . . (Quoted in Rushmore, 1971:8)

Orpheus protected the Argonauts from the deadly dangerous singing of the Sirens (against whose vocal temptations Odysseus had himself tied down and his crew put wax in their ears) by the greater enchantment of his own vocal art. "With the vanity characteristic to vocalists," Rushmore (1971:9) proclaims, "the Sirens could not bear being outsung by a rival and threw themselves into the sea and became rocks" (Rushmore, 1971:9). Melodies of the East Indians were attributed to having caused singers to be "consumed by fire, others had the power of eclipsing the sun, others, again, produced rain, of which latter kind one [singer], on the occasion of a drought in the ricefields of Bengal, delivered the people from a famine" (Langhans, 1886:2). Horand, a German hero who charmed everyone with his songs, learned the loveliest of them from a mermaid who sang more sweetly than all human kind (Pahlen, [1971] 1974:9). These are only a small selection of the many legends emanating from different cultures which demonstrate the theme that the voice in song is capable of performing wonders, of influencing the mind and curing the body, and of overcoming obstacles of all kinds.

The Homeric hexameters (believed to have been sung) tell us a bit more about the poet-musician -- specifically the professional kitharoedic bard.[7] Semi-divine beings sing, Henderson ([1957] 1966:377) observes, but music is otherwise monopolized by the

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resident, "self conscious ornament of noble households," minstrel. In Book VIII of Homer's Odyssey the blind court bard Demodocus sings of war and legendary stories. During the meal, Odysseus offers him a cut of meat from the main table, noting that in every nation of mankind minstrels have honor and respect since the Muse "teacheth them the paths of song, and loveth the tribe of minstrels" (Homer, [11th-8th century B.C.?] 1909:117). (Some singers, however, "possessed of a mood of insolence and haughtiness" [Lang, 1941:6], challenged the gods and met with miserable ends or enduring afflictions, such as the fate of some of the numerous blind bards.) Although other legendary singers were illustrated in supernatural feats and in other-worldly places, a certain reality can be gleaned from these classics of the society's view and expectations of the singer's role and the place of singing as an improvisatory art that are reflected in them. In general, outstanding vocal skill was most highly regarded and rewarded.

The Muses at first were three -- Invention, or "she who invents the words and musical phrases," Song, "the one who sings" and Memory, or "she who remembers" (an important quality in an age when song and story were passed orally from singer to singer). They were female representations -- one with the idea of musical activity and musical creation in the imagination. In the beginning, Drinker (1948:120) surmises that they reflected the musical activities of real women, later to become "glorified" as representations of idealized general functions. They survive -- singing, dancing and playing -- in painting and literature (males pictured as their consorts), but with this change to idealization, they came to be viewed more as the inspiration for musical creation, which is carried out by specific

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mortal men. This relationship is reflected in the arguments and rationalizations put forth by scholars (Cf. Clarke, 1895; Elson, 1904; Fay, 1900; Seashore, 1940; Smyth, 1933; Upton, 1880) concerning the question of why there have been so few women composers. For instance, connections of women to musical creation frequently get viewed in terms of their supportive role -- "Women . . . help by their interest and their enthusiasm, . . ." (Keefer, 1976:vi) -- in the process as it is accomplished by men -- their husbands most commonly.

In the ancient world, an individual's ability to sing was assumed. (Singing was defined, however, as broadly as: "infusing into the voice an inflexion proper to the meaning of the words" [Fleischer. 1895, as quoted in Sendrey, 1969:161].) Accounts of banquets demonstrate where "the accompanying instrument, lyre or harp, was passed from hand to hand until each guest had sung" (Hughes, [1948] 1970:91-2). The skolion was a drinking song, the name meaning "zigzag": ". . . the guests lay crosswise at either side of the table so that the lyre was passed zigzag from the singer just finishing to the next one at the opposite side" (Sachs, 1943:269). Quintilian ([1st century] 1921:I:169) related that "when on such an occasion Themistocles confessed that he could not play, his education was . . . 'regarded as imperfect.'" Athenaeus 2nd-3rd century] 1937:377) reported that ". . . it is no disgrace to confess that one knows nothing, but it is deemed a disgrace among them to decline to sing."

This broad level of individual musical accomplishment (which was revered both by the Greeks of Homer's time, in the later years of Plato's ideal state and ultimately in Rome also) is shown, however, to have been surpassed by professional musicians with special gifts. "It

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is difficult not to see in the legends of Amphion, Arion, and Orpheus," Marc Pincherle (1963:17) concludes, "a reflection of those ancient glories that were acquired by particularly inspired singers and players at a time when music and magic were still closely linked." Vocal virtuosity was amply illustrated in ancient mythological literature.

Music and Education in Classical Greece

Music and Morality

Music became a chief element in the education of the Greek youth of the Golden Age. For the most part, this education was of Greek boys. As a society that cherished the heroic ideal, ancient Greece was essentially masculine in character. The general pattern at first was that women moved freely among men but took no part in war or public affairs and were excluded from government. They did take part in local and religious ceremonies and there contributed to song and dance. The male, however, was the one to make the utmost of his body and mind; thus women did not generally receive formal educations, including studies in music.

With the organization of the Greek states, ". . . music," Lang (1941:12-13) explains, "which exerted such an influence on the mood and spirit of the Hellenes, could not be left to the discretion of performing artists; it had to follow rules laid down by statesmanship." Sparta followed Crete, where the practice of music is said (Lang, 1941:13) to have "caused a remarkable devotion to the gods and made the Cretans into law-abiding people." Spartans of every age, sex and rank were included in regular and supervised musical exercises.[8] The Arcadian laws called for compulsory musical education

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-- ". . . it trains character, and tames the hot-tempered" (Athenaeus [2nd-3rd century] 1937:363) -- for every citizen up to his thirtieth year.[9] Athens as well attempted to promote "moral sturdiness and responsible citizenship" (Lang, 1941:13) through musical instruction to free Athenian youth.[10] Neither of the latter two included women. Participation in the chorus was one of the most important duties. Official celebrations, processions, sacrifices and missions to oracles abroad were accompanied by choirs, states Sachs (1943:267), with rivaling townships boasting of sending as many singers as possible.

The primary function of music was pedagogical -- to build up character and morals. Its practice was, therefore, public and communal. Lang (1941:2) points out that an educated and distinguished man was called a musical man in the Greek, whereas an inferior and uncouth person -- "unmusical" or a man without music. There was prestige in being musical in that one's artistic abilities embodied, and often helped express, the goals of the state. Grosse (1914:311) theorizes a change in the function of art -- that while among primitive men its main purpose was to promote unification, among more civilized peoples it also served to enrich and elevate the mind and the emotions.

As with athletic ability, skill in music became competitive,[11] and musical accomplishments were presented at the agones -- contests in athletics, chariot and horse racing, music, literature, drama, poetry recitation, etc. ". . . some Persian general made the census of conquered Greek towns simply by counting the listeners when a noted kitharodos performed in the arena" (Sachs, 1943:271). Games consisted of poetical, vocal and instrumental competitions. It should be noted

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here that the style of the nomos (the main art form -- an established repertoire of melodies or musical motives -- for soloists), as described by Sachs (1943:269-70), was likely to have required a tenor voice: "We indeed learn from Suidas (tenth century A.D.) that two well-known nomoi, . . . , were high in pitch and euphonious."

The Greeks, as Lang (1941:2) describes them, had, however, a second soul in their breast besides the one striving for "clarity, temperance and moderation." The other supposedly drove them towards the fantastic and orgiastic, the cult of Dionysus.

> In general, the attitude of the Hellenistic philosophers showed a Janus-Head. One side viewed music as a science, like any other, to be taught by rational methods. It has certain links with the order of the universe and with its microcosmic reflection, the human soul. This is the Pythagorean conception. The other side emphasized the more elemental, emotional forces of music in connexion with its supposed magical powers. This is the Orphic-Dionysiac ideology. (Werner, [1959] 1963:360)

In moderation, controlled and for specific purposes (those of the state), music was good; unleashed and emotional it was frowned upon: ". . . those songs which are noble and beautiful produce noble and beautiful souls, whereas the contrary kind produce the contrary" (Athenaeus [2nd-3rd century] 1937:389).[12] (Such a divergent approach to song, as we shall see, is close to that held by the Catholic Church during the Middle Ages and will be discussed at length in Chapter III.) Out of fear of their susceptibility to the Dionysiac tendency, the Greeks preached control and moderation with great fervor. Because of this, Rushmore (1971:7-8) feels that it is probable that in ancient Greece the singing voice and its art -- the attractions of which come down fully on the side of Dionysus -- never approached the range and power of the other performing arts.

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There was communal and religious singing. Reese (1940:13) notes that the Dorian culture of Sparta, having a strong community life, favored choral music generally, while the Ionian culture of Attica, with its greater stress on individualism, favored music employing soloists. Vocal entertaining at feasts and banquets also occurred.[13] But the most "acceptable" role of secular music seems to have been to accompany the oratory. Aristotle called this song making (melopoeia) the most delightful of all the pleasurable accompaniments and embellishments of the tragedy (Quoted in Duey, 1951:26). Music played an important role in the drama, but its function and practice there is not very clear. What is known is that the chorus had vocal functions in prefacing and accompanying scenes and that individual actors also broke into song (Lang, 1941:11). According to Ulrich and Pisk (1963:15), dialogues and monologues were probably spoken or declaimed, while dramatically elevated passages were most likely sung.

Rushmore (1971:8) notes one authority as concluding that Greek vocal music ". . . was not music in our sense of the term at all, but a special way of reciting poetry, determined by nuances of expression which had been steadily and continuously refined . . . but . . . more akin to the method of speaking than of the singing voice." This complements Silva's (1922:55) description of Plato's ideal for Greek music in which rhythm and the words were of principal importance, the tones -- the melodic succession of the tones -- the least, being only decorative.

Professionalization of Singers

In the sixth century B.C., Hauser ([1974] 1982:257) encounters "an artist of a type unknown up to that point, ambitious

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and emphasizing individuality [and signing his works] . . . an expressly individual style, private artistic goals, and unconcealed, self-revelatory, individual artistic ambition." Ulrich and Pisk (1963:15) claim that by about the middle of the fifth century B.C. the nature of musical activity seems to have changed, with male professional musicians and virtuoso performers becoming active and dominating the fields of vocal and instrumental music. "Rhapsodes as well as pipers and lyrists degenerated to boastful, inflated virtuosos, applauded by ten thousands with thunderous cheers and pampered by hysterical ladies" (Sachs, [1961] 1962:206). As for musical subject matter, we find a correspondence to changes in art:

> works . . . have . . . no magic or healing function to fulfill, and even if they serve divine purposes, they no longer claim to be holy themselves. The process of the emancipation of art from religion has begun. (Hauser, [1974] 1982:258)

Athenaeus ([2nd-3rd century] 1937:417) offers an explanation for the musical shift:

> It happened that in ancient times the Greeks were music-lovers; but later, with the breakdown of order, when practically all the ancient customs fell into decay, this devotion to principle ceased, and debased fashions in music came to light, wherein every one who practised them substituted effeminacy for gentleness, and licence and looseness for moderation.

As the aesthetic aspect achieved greater importance, "at which point pleasure in the beautiful form [was] accompanied by an indifference to content" (Hauser, [1974] 1982:263), indictments are issued against this "dangerous opiate." Plato and Aristotle (fifth and fourth centuries B.C.) show a distaste for and fear of these professional musicians. Although in Plato's system music occupied the leading position among the arts (he saw an analogy between the

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movements of the soul and musical progressions), he nonetheless complained of the deterioration of music in the hands of professional musicians (in large measure singers, according to Duey [1951:25]) because of their "'disorderly tastes' . . . , since they must cater to the prevailing vulgarities of the multitude." His charge was not lack of musical genius but that such talents were used in a virtuosic and showmanship way in the pursuit of "sensationalism" and "pleasure" (Henderson, [1957] 1963:395). Once,

> . . . authority . . . was not a pipe nor, as now, the mob's unmusical shoutings, nor yet the clappings which mark applause: in place of this, it was a rule made by those in control of education that they themselves should listen throughout in silence, while the children and their ushers and the general crowd were kept in order by the discipline of the rod. . . . ; but later on, . . . , there arose as leaders of unmusical illegality poets who, . . . , were ignorant of what was just and lawful in music; and they, being frenzied and unduly possessed by a spirit of pleasure, . . . unwittingly bore false witness against music, as a thing without any standard correctness, of which the best criterion is the pleasure of the auditor, be he a good man or a bad. . . . they bred in the populace . . . the effrontery of supposing themselves capable of passing judgment on it. Hence the theatregoers became noisy instead of silent, as though they knew the difference between good and bad music, and in place of an aristocracy in music there sprang up a kind of base theatrocracy. (Plato, [5th century B.C.] 1926:245,247)

Aristotle ([4th century B.C.] 1932:667-9) describes the state of musicians:

> . . . the performer does not take part in it for his own improvement, but for his hearers' pleasure, and that a vulgar pleasure, . . . , and indeed performers do become vulgar, since the object at which they aim is a low one, as vulgarity in the audience usually influences the music, so that it imparts to the artists who practise it with a view to suit the audience a special kind of personality, . . .

Music had lost its earlier prestige for embodying intellectual capacities, its character having become that of entertainment and artifice:

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> From the fourth century B.C. onwards the musician thought of himself as actor rather than creator or "discoverer" (as Greeks preferred to put it). His patrons no longer wanted new music for themselves and their children to sing, but exhibitions to applaud . . . (Henderson, [1957] 1966:400)

This was the same time that Elliott Krause (1971:257) dates the division of labor in other creative occupations between the "'pure' or theoretical elite and the applied practitioner mass": ". . . the aristocratic mathematical and humanistic philosophers were a privileged elite, the architectural and sculptural craftsmen and the engineering experts part of the working mass."

Though we know little more about the Greek public's attitude toward and tastes in music, we might, from all of this evidence, assume that the more passionate, unrestricted and perhaps embellished voice in song, despite attacks upon it (Plato [(5th century B.C.) 1963:291] warned about "the warblings and blandishments of song"), had great public appeal.[14]

Aristotle also complained of the undesirable effects of elaborate performance technique. While he recommended that young boys learn to sing, in order to keep them out of mischief and teach them to judge good music, this practice of music, he felt, should not interfere with the original goal of becoming a good citizen. ". . . this would come about in respect of their study if the pupils did not go on toiling at the exercises that aim at professional competitions, nor the wonderful and elaborate performances which have now entered into the competitions and have passed from the competitions into education, . . ." (Aristotle, [4th century B.C.] 1932:663-5). What this philosopher ([4th century B.C.] 1932:665) suggests instead is that the young pursue their musical studies "until they are able to

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enjoy beautiful tunes and rhythms, and not merely the charm common to all music, which even some lower animals enjoy, as well as a multitude of slaves and children."[15] Implied in Aristotle's thoughts is also the debasement of the individual in his use of the art for lucrative, practical and personal purposes -- "'mercenary musicians' to entertain dinner guests" (Henderson, 1921:21) -- that we discovered among some primitive groups.[16]

Despite complaints, Aristotle's comments on vocal technique (in De Audibilibus and The Problemata) indicate the existence, indeed, of a high degree of virtuosity: ". . . it is easier for one person alone to execute variations than for a number, . . . For the actor is a professional artist and imitator, . . ." (Quoted in Duey, 1951:28). Musicians' unions had come into being. So, while in the past songs had been sung by citizens, by Aristotle's time there existed numerous professional artists who continually varied their songs. Lang (1941:8) cites the example that before Archilochus (seventh century B.C.) ". . . each note of the music was closely allied with the words . . . , while after him there were all sorts of short embellishments.

Concern for the well-being of the voice becomes evident in contemporary writings. References to hygienic practices of public orators were already to be found, and Duey (1951:19) shows where sources indicate that singers engaged in or refrained from similar activities and made use of the same medicinal devices, or were at least encouraged to do so. Voice and throat emollients and medicines in use were: tragacanth, squill, turpentine, styrax, horehound, myrrh, poppy seeds, pepper, frankincense and cassia (Duey, 1951:19). Rules for health and dietary regulations are found in detail in Book XI of

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Aristotle's Problemata, entitled "Problems Connected with the Voice," in which the following questions are posed and answered:

> Why is the voice rougher with those who suffer insomnia?
>
> Why does the voice crack most easily after food?
>
> Why does it spoil the voice to shout after food? We can see that all who practise voice production, such as actors, chorus-singers and the like, perform their exercises in the morning and fasting.
>
> Why do men speak in a lower key after drinking, . . . ?
>
> Why is the voice of the drunken more cracked than that of the sober?
>
> (Aristotle, [4th century B.C.] 1936: 259,261,267,265,285)

Winter and cold weather were connected with negative effects on the voice; leeks garlic and partridge were recommended for producing smoothness and cleaning out the larynx (Aristotle, [4th century B.C.] 1936:265,289,276). A variety of sources that Duey (1951:20) surveys urged some foods and shunned others as beneficial or detrimental to the state of the throat. Singers, he (1951:20) says, were called "bean eaters," because the pulse of leguminous vegetables was considered salutary to the voice.

Women's Status in Ancient Greece and Their Relationship to Its Music

The musical activities of women in the Greek city-states are difficult to determine because the position of women in the polis presents a very complex picture. James Donaldson (1973:49) states that in Athens there existed two classes of women who were not slaves: the citizen women -- the females of the favored social class, the "ladies" as Emily Putnam ([1910] 1970:xxvii) labels them -- who "could scarcely move a step from their own rooms, . . . were watched and restricted in

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every possible way," and another class, "on whom no restrictions whatever were laid" and about whom we will discuss later.

The citizens of a Greek city-state were thought of as all connected by ties of blood and all having the same divine ancestry, thus possessing rights, properties and priviliges in common. Of supreme importance for the continuation of the state then was that the citizenship be kept "pure": ". . . none could become citizens but those whose fathers and mothers had been the children of citizens" (Donaldson, 1973:50). The moment had come when men were, as Drinker (1948:127) puts it, "determined to know who their own children were . . ." O'Faolain and Martines (1973:xxi) state, more specifically, that men needed "to be assured that the heirs to their property were truly the heirs of their own bodies . . ." Thus, Putnam ([1910] 1970:21) concludes that "[e]ach step upward, the building of the hut, the kindling of the fire, the permanent attachment of the man to the mother and her child, was a step towards the social subordination of woman, a move made at her expense for the benefit of the child."

Since it was assumed that women were weak and that it was natural for them to love, means were devised to prevent the possibility of anything going wrong. Men's idea of "making sure their children were their own," says Drinker (1948:127), was to "shut the women up from the moment they could bear a child, out of sight and hearing and contact with any man but a predestined father."

> Woman's role was to provide heirs who might continue the collective endeavour -- who must be incontestably legitimate. To ensure this, women must be pure and be seen to be pure. The double standard had no other basis and neither had the practice of keeping women in relative seclusion and subjection. (O'Faolain and Martines, 1973:xvi)

This occurred to the extreme in India (where color prejudices

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increased determination not to mingle blood and where, in addition, woman came to be viewed as wicked and malignant -- spiritually inferior to man) and in China (where high-born women were so crippled by foot-binding they could not move beyond their own homes unless carried). In the Greek city-state,

> . . . the citizen-women had special apartments assigned to them, generally in the upper story, that they might have to come downstairs, and men might see them if they ventured out. Then they were forbidden to be present at any banquet. The men preferred to dine by themselves, rather than expose their wives to their neighbour's gaze. And in order to defy all possibility of temptation, the women must wrap up every part of their bodies. (Donaldson, 1973:50)

A citizen woman had, then, little relationship with a citizen other than marriage, which occurred around the age of fifteen or sixteen. "Up to this time she had seen and heard as little as possible," writes Donaldson (1973:51), her acquaintance with the outside world having been made almost exclusively in religious instruction, ceremonies and processions.

> She lived in a house among a people that lived out of doors. . . . Among a people who gave great importance to physical training she was advised to take her exercise in bedmaking. At a period when the spirit was at its freest she was enclosed on all sides. Art and thought and letters were reaching the highest development . . . , but for her they hardly existed. (Putnam, [1910] 1970:13)

Drinker (1948:136) illustrates this transition with instances of men taking over women's functions -- porters at an annual food festival, for example, where (as was demonstrated when Cretan men coopted women's rites [see p.34]) the men at first dressed as women. Education, politics, art, recreation and even religion had become, for the most part, masculine activities. Therefore, again musical history comes to us "refracted through the lens of men's observations; refracted . . . through values which consider man the measure"

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(Lerner, 1979:160). Since the male-oriented system valued "educated" music, the musical activities of (uneducated) women do not even fit the cultural definition.

When the high-born Athenian maid married, her life was not much more varied. Her duties Donaldson (1973:52) sums up as "to remain inside and to be obedient to her husband." She was, therefore, perpetually a minor and, as Simone de Beauvoir ([1949] 1970:76) puts it, "form[ed] a part of the patrimony of a man" -- first subject to her father, then to her husband -- and with no political standing. For example, Aristotle, Donaldson (1973:53) notes, always classes women and children together. She could not be dispensed with altogether, however, because "[s]he was the necessary mechanism for producing heirs and could conveniently combine with this function the direction and management of her husband's house" (Putnam, [1910] 1970:3).

"Formerly," states Marylin Arthur (1973:36), "women's inferiority was merely implied by the fact that the cultural ideal (the hero) was male." The major concern of heroic Greek society, Sarah Pomeroy (in Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves: Women in Classical Antiquity, 1975:18) explains, had been defense: ". . . military preparedness and strength were vital for survival. Men served their families and citadels as warriors; women were expected to bear and rear future warriors." There had been powerful female figures -- Clytemnestra, Hecuba, Andromache, Penelope and, of course, Helen -- but their emotional influence did not mean that there had also been equality. Even the political power of royal women had often proved transient. Indeed, the attitude toward women already appears to be full of contradictions:

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> Penelope wins the highest admiration for her chastity, while Homer entrusts the ghost of Agamemnon to describe Clytemnestra's infidelity in reproachful terms. Even the virtuous members of the sex are to be forever sullied by Clytemnestra's sin. This generalization is the first in a long history of hostility toward women in Western literature. (Pomeroy, 1975:21-2)

Finally, women were viewed as property -- "the prizes of contests and the spoils of conquest" (Pomeroy, 1975:25). Nevertheless, although Bronze Age women suffered such disabilities, they were not universally considered inferior or incompetent.

The music of preclassical Greek culture remained in a primitive milieu -- in the religious rite; revolving around the home, work and recreation; and for entertainment -- and women of this era danced, sang and played. ". . . early Greek women had opportunity and occasion to use music, and incentive to compose it," Drinker (1948:91) declares. Priestesses were respected noble women holding hereditary offices and being assisted by sacred women and girl choristers. But there also existed a substantial number of renowned poetess-musicians -- Megolastrata of Sparta, Telesilla of Argos, Corinna of Boetia, Praxilla of Sicyon and, of course, Sappho of Lesbos.

In Classical Athens, however, ". . . the social and legal structure of the state specifically endorse[d] and prescribe[d] the subservience of women to men" (Arthur, 1973:36): "It is better for a woman to stay inside the house instead of showing herself at the door: for a man, on the other hand, it is a disgrace to be concerned with household matters instead of outside ones" (Xenophon, ca.430-ca.355 B.C., as quoted in O'Faolain and Martines, 1973:16). In addition, Donaldson (1973:53) feels there is no reason to believe that the Athenians were very fond of their wives -- liking them if they managed

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their houses economically and had healthy children (especially sons) but, being absent from them most of the day, not discussing with them subjects of importance nor sharing with them their thoughts and aspirations. Pomeroy (1975:74) adds that a discrepancy in educational levels between husbands and wives -- adolescent boys being educated while adolescent girls were married off to older husbands -- coupled with the age difference, resulted in "feelings of condescension and paternalism on the part of the husband, and a marriage characterized by a lack of friendship in the modern sense . . ."

Charles Seltman (1956?:114) complains, however, that romantic nineteenth-century scholars had their own private concepts of Attic society, overemphasizing the sheltering of the female and the aloofness of the male. He (1956?:114-15) cites the works of the great tragic poets as "strong meat" that only adult males and females could stomach and lists the powerful characters of Clytemnestra, Electra, Antigone, Alcestis, Medea, Phaedra, Iphigenia, Hecuba, Andromache, Helen and many others as created and understood "because there were living Athenian women of whom these characters were types." (This argument is weakened, however, by the recognition by Pomeroy [1975:93] that many of the tragic plots were derived from myths of the Bronze Age -- when epic women were more powerful -- and by her explanations [(1975:94-7)] for the various possible psychologies of the classical dramatists.)

Seltman (1956?:116), in contrast to Donaldson, feels that ". . . the women who held in Athens the deepest respect, regard, trust, and affection of a man was usually his wife, the mother of his children, the keeper and manager of his home," ancient monuments

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supplying evidence for his case. Putnam ([1910] 1970:13-14,20) concurs concerning his evidence:

> Any one who studies . . . the art of the Greeks becomes aware of the existence at this period, as at every other in their history, of a deep seated, omnipresent feminism. If we can imagine Athens . . . revivified and inspected by a modern visitor, we can safely say that after a week's sojourn he would record . . . his strong impression of the reverent and admiring interest taken in women. . . . Wherever he went he would find the same powerful feminine motive in art, . . .
> . . . if all the ladies they say were prisoners, nevertheless all the ladies they thought about were free.

Putnam and Seltman are, perhaps, focusing on a somewhat later time period, when the absolute cloistering of females and their nonemancipation became impossibly contradictory to and collided with the aspirations toward human freedom and dignity that were given expression by Plato and in the middle-class democracy of the city-state. In addition, Pomeroy (1975:59-60) concludes that opinions about the representations of women in classical Greek literature generally vary according to the genre of evidence consulted:

> The scholars who consider Antigone and Electra, for example, as "real" evidence for women of the fifth century B.C. will believe that the status of women was high. On the other hand, evidence from orators and other prose writers points usually to a low status, while comedy and Euripides give ambiguous testimony.

Finally, Putnam ([1910] 1970:20) offers another, more distant explanation for the fact that "though in practice the Greeks had shorn the lady of all but negative qualities and left her hardly any room for unrestrained action, their art and their literature were nevertheless full of the tradition of a lady whose characteristic was freedom." She ([1910] 1970:20) refers to the "shadowry vision" from far in the background of civilization (and to which Drinker continually alludes), "when women were in a very different relation to

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society" and when their prestige was reflected in the cults of primitive humankind. Putnam ([1910] 1970:33) concludes: "Literature never ceased to take its women from the early legends; philosophers and satirists were always attracted by the hypothesis of social equality between the sexes," and, so, visitors to Ancient Greece might have "easily . . . come upon a sculptor modelling a magnificent young creature on horseback, who, in spite of what he saw about him, persisted as his idea of woman."

In support of his position, Seltman (1956?:149-50) describes a kaleidoscope of life for women in ancient Greece: besides the "secluded and despised" Athenian women, there were the landowning women of Sparta, "assertive and bold"; the country gentlewomen of Elis; the socialites of Epheus; the young matrons of Caria, Lydia and Tuscany, "famed for their beauty and light-hearted promiscuity." Outside the Athenian state, female choirs in honor of the gods and goddesses still existed, according to Quasten (1941:149-50) -- in Delos, Olympia, Elis, Ionia and on the islands of the Aegean. Pomeroy (1975:55-6) too provides examples of societies that more highly valued females and the effects of such for female-female perceptions and relationships in two particular ones:

> The most important factor, both in Sparta and at Lesbos, in fostering female homoerotic attachments was that women in both societies were highly valued. . . . Women did not, as has been suggested, turn to other women in desperation, due to men's disparagement of them. Rather, it appears that they could love other women in milieux where the entire society cherished women, . . .[17]

Arthur (1973), on the other hand, in her attempt to correlate various aspects of the political, socioeconomic and cultural position of women in ancient Greece through an analysis of cultural documents.

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focuses on Golden Age Athens as what she maintains to be the best-documented example of developments that were taking place throughout Greece, only Sparta and Crete evolving in radically different ways.[18] Her thesis (1973:7-9), entitled "Early Greece: The Origins of the Western Attitude toward Women," aims at presenting a whole picture "which will not force us to choose whether women in ancient Greece were despised or revered, but will enable us to understand how they could seem to be both simultaneously" -- a complex picture involving the emergence of the Greek city-state, "in which various and sometimes contradictory forces were at work and in which the position of women and the social attitude towards her were correspondingly diverse." For example, apart from the fear-producing perspective about their sexuality already discussed, hostility toward women, Arthur (1973:24) discovers, was also produced by the perception that women had no concrete stake in any particular social or political order, or even any particular family. "The liability of women to be transferred from one family to another [from father's to husband's or from deceased husband's to new husband's] and their freedom from any of the major social and political responsibilities, caused fears about the fickleness of their allegiances" (Arthur, 1973:24).

The Hesiodic model for the cosmos, one of the principal cultural documents of the Greeks, provides an early glimpse at male-female roles and relationships in Greek civilization. Hesiod's (ca.700 B.C.) views of gods and humankind, Pomeroy (1975:1) feels, not only shaped but probably corresponded to the ideas held by the population as a whole. Based on a polar tension between male and female, the Theogony details divine evolution: "progression from

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female-dominated generations, characterized by natural, earthy, emotional qualities, to the superior and rational monarchy of Olympian Zeus" (Pomeroy, 1975:2).

Woman appeared at first "not only as hostile to civilization, in that she is allied with the monsters and beasts who wreak chaos, but . . . as well as a being without moral dimension, as a force which needed direction and control to become truly human" (Arthur, 1973:25).[19] Subject to such regulation by the patriarchal authority of the male, however, she came to be associated with a moral order bringing peace and progress -- she became beneficent.[20] "Not only did many of the powerful old goddesses become subservient to the gods," states Drinker (1948:142), "but more than a few suffered degradation of character." As far as music is concerned, Orpheus usurped the power of the Sirens; Apollo assumed the leadership of the Muses and took the lyre from Artemis. We are witnessing once more a two-sided and ambivalent Hellenic philosophy. This perspective on women runs somewhat parallel to that on music: In moderation, controlled and for specific purposes, women were good; free and emotional they were frowned upon (see p.41).

This ambivalent sentiment that woman is both a great good and a great evil is frequently encountered in the literature. She is both idealized and depricated, her position is celebrated and deplored. Medea's and Ariadne's betrayals of family and state for the love of a visiting stranger were, according to Arthur (1973:26), renderings of this typical Greek awareness of her potentiality coupled with fears about her allegiances in a social order in which her role was crucial and integral but in which her rights, in both the family and the

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state, were minimal.

Finally, Arthur shows that the different philosophies and life views of the earlier aristocratic versus the later bourgeois poets produced different portrayals of women also:

> Aristocratic poetry, . . . , romanticizes women and the love-relationship as part of its idealization of an age prior to the one of chaos and struggle in which aristocratic domination of society was swept away. . . . , the seemingly higher status of the women of this period was, . . . , an incidental benefit accruing to them from their class position . . . (Arthur, 1973:42-3)

> The mutability of fate, the caprice of fortune, life's frustrations and the constant necessity of toil are the themes of [the] bourgeois poets. . . . , the attitude toward women . . . is quite different . . . , it is far more complex. . . . Bourgeois poetry both praises and condemns women, and for a variety of reasons. The picture of women which this poetry offers is full of contradictions -- but they are contradictions which correspond with ambivalences in the world view and in the social philosophy of the bourgeois poets. (Arthur, 1973:43-6)

We need now to consider the other class of free women which Donaldson (1973) describes -- the strangers. Neither a man nor a woman stranger had any rights or privileges in any of the ancient states, and it was important that they did not corrupt the purity of the citizen blood. Spartans prohibited strangers from residing in their city, but Athens, a commercial city, could not exclude this group. Athenian laws, though, prohibited marriages between citizens and strangers; otherwise, they were unrestricted.

Stranger women might form, therefore, any other temporary or permanent connections with citizen men except marriage (as it was inconceivable and considered unnatural to the Greek mind that this class of women would accept perpetual virginity). In addition, a function lay open for them to fill. With citizen women confined to their houses and men refusing to limit their associations with women

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to their homes, a stranger woman or hetaira served as a companion.

> Wherever women as childbearers have been locked up at puberty and kept out of male social life, the musical and highly educated courtesan has flourished. In Japan she became the geisha. In China she is the singsong girl, hostess of the gaily decorated floating restaurants, . . . In Greece she was the hetaera. (Drinker, 1948:141)

Prostitution was acceptable, and prostitutes were either slaves or stranger women. "A society which demands chastity from one section of its female population is likely to demand the opposite from another." O'Faolain and Martines (1973:26) explain. At the top of the social scale of courtesans were the hetairai, at the bottom dicteriades. but there were also the auletids or auletrides -- dancers and flute players -- who were "engaged at . . . banquets, festivals, and suchlike entertainments, public and private" (Scott, 1936:79) and who often became rich because of their talents as musicians.

"Mistresses [hetairai] we keep for the sake of pleasure," wrote Demosthenes ([4th century B.C.] 1939:445-6), "concubines [pallages] for the daily care of our persons, but wives to bear us legitimate children and to be faithful guardians of our households." The citizen women had to be mothers and housewives and nothing more. whereas the stranger women discharged the duties of companions but had to remain outside the pale of the privileged and marriageable class (Donaldson, 1973:58). Donaldson (1973:58-9,72) describes hetairai as

> the only educated women in Athens. They studied all the arts. became acquainted with all new philosophical speculations. and interested themselves in politics. . . . Women who thus cultivated their minds were sure to gain the esteem of the best men in Greece. Many of them also were women of high moral character, temperate, thoughtful, and earnest, and were either unattached or attached to one man, and to all intents and purposes married. . . . Some were renowned for their musical ability, and a few could paint. They cultivated all the graces of life; . . .

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De Beauvoir ([1949] 1970:83) adds: "Free to make disposal of themselves and of their fortunes, intelligent, cultivated, artistic, they were treated as persons by the men who found enchantment in their company," thus confirming her theory that by virtue of escaping from the family woman also escapes from the control of man and, therefore, appears to him to be a fellow being, almost an equal. Donaldson (1973:71,59) states that practically all of the great men of Athens had such a companion -- "Plato had Archeanassa, Aristotle Herpyllis, Epicurus Leontium, Isocrates Metaneira, Menander Glycera" -- and goes so far as to claim that hetairai were "almost the only Greek women who exhibited what was best and noblest in woman's nature." To this Seltman (1956?:115-16) again objects -- that pedants have dwelt wistfully on the topic of hetairai in ancient Athens -- but he too describes a similar framework of Athenian social life that, he adds, was not far different from that of Paris up to 1939:

> There were brothels, mainly for foreigners of all sorts, licensed under the laws of Solon as far back as the early 6th century B.C. . . . Later street-walkers living under the care of a "Madame" began to appear. All this, of course, is the same as in any Mediterranean city today, . . . But hetairai were certainly in a very different class; often highly educated women, foreigners from other Greek states and cities, earning a living sometimes in commerce, business girls, bachelor girls, models. . . . These women were betimes invited by men to parties at which wives did not appear. Paris and many a modern city will provide the social parallel.

Aspasia, acquainted with the statesman Pericles, is frequently mentioned as the most famous, her house having become the resort of all the great men of Athens. ". . . Indeed, never had any woman such a salon in the whole history of man. . . . , the grandest man of all antiquity, philosophers and poets, sculptors and painters, statesmen and historians, met each other and discussed congenial subjects in her

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rooms" (Donaldson, 1973:61). In addition, she is credited with having attempted to uplift the state of women:

> The cultivated men . . . brought their wives to the parties of Aspasia, and she discussed with them the duties of wives. She thought that they should strive to be something more than mere mothers and housewives. She urged them to cultivate their minds, and be in all respects fit companions for their husbands. (Donaldson, 1973:62)

It would not be until the city-states would yield to the Empire of Alexander that the position of women (their legal and economic, if not their political, position) would, under the influence of Egypt and Rome, change. (Or, it might just seem so, owing to the fact that for the Hellenistic period data exists about many different areas, while in Classical Greece the view of women's position is monopolized by the situation at Athens.) The spread of the Egyptian cult of the goddess Isis is also credited (O'Faolain and Martines, 1973:29) with having raised women's status. But even these changes would ultimately be carried out under the rule of Rome. As a result, women did not take an active role in ancient Greek society, and we find little to lead us to believe that they, unlike the men, incorporated public singing into that role. "The city whose men would be responsible for the most notable artistic creations in Classical Greece," Pomeroy (1975:56) concludes, "produced no female artists." ". . . women's authority for music making," Drinker (1948:139) summarizes, "waned at the same time that it weakened for emphasizing her special way of life."

Summary of Ancient Greek Ideology As Related to Music

The Greek ideal conceived of music as, and only as, a moral force, controlled and subservient to the idea. From the very

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beginning, then, ". . . vocal music," Henderson (1921:6) observes, "was in its life-long effort to reach a perfectly artistic equipose of the two fundamental elements, the literary and the musical." The argument as to which had precedence, which was superior, which was more important -- the music or the idea (or music or the words of the text) -- was one that would permeate almost all forms of later sacred and secular singing. The direction of subservience will prove essential to our understanding of the singer's role, his/her prestige and power, and his/her relationships with others involved in making music.

Reese (1940:11) explains the difficulty in attempting to define Greek music any more specifically than we have:

> The history of the old Greek music is so interwoven with myths that strands of historical truth can be unraveled only with difficulty. . . . Our knowledge of this music -- fragmentary as it is -- spans about nine centuries (c. seventh century B.C. - second century A.D.), and it is therefore important to bear in mind that its nature must have changed from time to time, and that no cut-and-dried description of any phase of the art is likely to be applicable to the entire period.

What we can be sure of is that while the basic conception of music was two-fold -- intellectual versus emotional, uplifting versus demoralizing -- and the balance was not always unequivocal, the Greeks idealized music in intellectual terms. Furthermore, this perspective on music intersects with Attic conceptions of male and female as moral versus corrupt, exalted versus intellectually and spiritually inferior.

Since this philosophical disposition -- logical consideration and intellectual construction -- is at the origin of Greek music,[21] Sendrey (1969:550) says that for all its loftiness, it is ultimately

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"a scheme without blooming life." Stemming from reflection, it is unemotional. The Greeks regarded music as "a placator of passions not a stimulant to them as an unrestrained voice lifted in song can so easily be"; it was meant to "enoble the character and perfect the soul" (Rushmore, 1971:8). (These may be possible clues to the reason for the elimination of females from the Greek stage.) In such a moral climate, music historians claim, the art of singing was not likely to develop. ". . . the Greeks, with all their boundless love for, and appreciation of, the beautiful, and their power of its reproduction. cannot be supposed to have gone far in the cultivation of music," writes Deacon (1910:364).

The Roman Empire and Music as Entertainment

The Evolution of a Musical Rome

In contrast to the Greek spirit of control and restraint, the Roman ideal was pleasure and surrender to the senses. Greek music, as adopted by Romans, quickened and gained rhythm and was influenced by elaborate oriental music brought back to Rome from the Egyptian campaigns (Rushmore, 1971:9).

> With the increase of the grandiose element, Roman music gradually abandoned the last vestiges of the lofty ideals which had once dominated it in its original Hellenic home. The simple dignity of Greek melodies gave way to complicated rhythmical tunes which went through veritable contortions of modulation. . . .
>
> If with the Romans the art of music degenerated to a means for the mere gratification of the senses, it must be admitted that they saw to it that all of its possibilities were exploited. . . . their objective was to enhance the enjoyment of life. (Lang, 1941:32)

This elaboration of music was aided by the institution of slavery, which permitted the training of musicians and professional entertainers on a large scale. Gifted individuals could always be

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found among the masses of slaves. Lang (1941:32) offers the following example: "Chrysogonus, Sulla's rich freedman, had among his own slaves such a number of musicians that the vicinity of his residence reverberated day and night with the sound of instruments and voices." Musicians accompanied their masters when they travelled: ". . . Caligula enjoyed the music of choruses and instruments while his galley rode the waves in the Gulf of Naples" (Lang, 1941:32).

Music was in universal demand; it accompanied feasts as well as public religious and theatrical events. Romans also attended concerts of massed choirs or instruments which filled the new large theaters: ". . . as early as JULIUS CESAR'S time SUETONIUS narrates that once during a public solemnity twelve thousand male and female singers and players sojourned in the city; . . ." (Langhans, 1886:13).[22] ". . . the stage flourished; the temples were crowded; festivals frequent; and banquets splendid; so that we may suppose it [music] to have been very much used both upon public and private occasions, . . . (Burney, [1789] 1957:I:376). Women were also mentioned, by Horace and Livy, in connection with religious processions of choirs.

As early as the middle of the second century B.C., the Roman public had been described as vulgar and uneducated, ignorant and with "rude ears" (Burney, [1789] 1957:I:377), but a century later ". . . it was not uncommon for musical virtuosi, accompanying their songs on the cithara, to win the plaudits of the populace," Lang (1941:33) claims. Cicero was impressed by musical connoisseurs "who were able to identify a composition after the 'first flute tone'," and testified that ". . . the public exercised critical scrutiny over artists and

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gave vent to its disapproval if the singer or player made mistakes" (Quoted in Lang, 1941:33). Scott ([1957] 1966:417) agrees that competition was keen and audiences critical and that, as a result, standards of performance were high and technique elaborate: "Not even the hired claque, so commonly employed, would cover up poor playing or indifferent singing." Such audiences could discern distinctions among singers and, therefore, created stars. Sachs (1943:58) remarks that the upper classes in ancient "high" civilizations, which paid for their musical entertainments, fostered the formation of a class of well-trained professional singers and players "able to provide both amusement and splendor and anxious to outdo their competitors."

Ancient Virtuoso Soloists

"[I]t was the soloist and, above all, the brilliant virtuoso who caught the fancy of the Romans," J. E. Scott ([1957] 1966:416) exclaims. There were those singers, generally male, who accompanied themselves on the cithara, dramatic singers performing in costume and mask and lyrical singers of hymns and short songs -- advanced virtuosi about whom we know more than any previously. The Greek scholar Dionysius of Halicarnassus ([1st century B.C.] 1910:127), who studied in Rome from approximately 30 to 10 B.C., mentioned the high degree of skill demanded of professionals and the great variety of intervals used in vocal music and stated: "Music, further, insists that the words should be subordinated to the tune, and not the tune to the words." This performer-biased approach is in direct contradiction to our earlier comments on Plato's philosophy and again foretells the battle that will be fought throughout vocal history.

Dionysius' treatise ([1st century B.C.] 1910:269,283)

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discusses the necessity of long training to effect a "perfect mastery" and achieve results "with the utmost ease from sheer force of habit" and warns "No rules . . . can suffice to make experts of those who are determined to dispense with study and practice." These are observations about this occupational role that we find repeated to the present day. They indicate that at that time a highly specialized technique must already have existed which would have required such arduous training for its mastery. There are no accounts, however, of the quality of these voices, nor of their range, nor the vocalizations they performed. Quintilian ([1st century] 1921, IV:255), comparing orators and singing masters, declared that the orator "needs a strong and enduring voice rather than one which is soft and sweet, while the singer mellows all sounds, even the highest, by the modulation of his voice, . . ." In addition to practicing scales and exercises and avoiding straining the voice, singers were expected to live healthy, temperate and well-regulated lives, for the good of the voice, for:

> The good qualities of the voice, like everything else, are improved by training and impaired by neglect. . . . physical robustness is essential to save the voice from dwindling to the feeble shrillness that characterises the voices of eunuchs, women and invalids, and the means for creating such robustness are to be found in walking, rubbing-down with oil, abstinence from sexual intercourse, an easy digestion, and , in a word, in the simple life. (Quintilianus, [1st century] 1921, IV:253)

Quintilian (1st century] 1921, IV:257) relates how singers protected their throats by holding handkerchiefs before their mouths when speaking and how they avoided the sun, wind, rain and parching heat. whereas some singers overexerted themselves to such a degree that they suffered ruptured blood vessels (due, supposedly, to the large proportions of the theaters and rooms which demanded loud singing).

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The essential qualities for the care of the voice -- careful diet, regular physical exercise, a modest life style and avoidance of vocal strain, all of which were supposed to have resulted in a strong, healthy body -- were, therefore, understood to some degree (though frequently taken to extremes) by the ancients.

Many of the virtuosi, of whom we now find a few specific names -- Tigellius (one of the most famous singers of his day), Menecrates and Mesomedes -- sang their own compositions. As with the brilliant instrumental virtuosos, the successful were "mobbed by the crowd, paid fantastic engagement fees, and allowed to indulge in any amount of artistic temperament off stage or on stage" (Scott, [1957] 1966:416). They undertook concert tours, and ". . . communities which were the scenes of their triumphs erected statues in their honor and gave them honorary citizenship" (Lang, 1941:34). Lang attributes the "supercilious and temperamental" attitudes of these artists to the adulation and often scandalous worship they enjoyed. Rushmore (1971:10) relates that Tigellius, characterized as capricious and temperamental, was "quite capable of refusing to sing even when commanded by the emperor, if the mood was not upon him; equally he might perform throughout an entire banquet whether bidden or not." Music teaching was also lucrative -- figures from 500-700 drachmas a year compared admirably with that of workmen at about one drachma a day and the doctor, who received the highest remuneration of about 1000 a year (Scott, [1957] 1966:419) -- and renowned singing teachers existed.

Jealousy among musical artists resulted at least partially from agone competitions (reintroduced by Nero) and the Capitoline

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games (founded by Domitian toward the end of the first century A.D.), where poets, musicians and singers from the empire and far countries competed every fourth year. "Owing to the presence of the emperor and the select audience of nobles," Lang (1941:33) explains, the games lent "considerable dignity and fame to the competing artists," a winner being considered the foremost artist in his domain and his fame spreading even beyond the limits of the empire. In their jealousies and rivalries, singers often resorted to claques and even bribery for attention and applause.

In these ancient singing specimens are found glimpses of many of the characteristics that persisted in this role. Sachs (1943:271) complains that in Rome ". . . the singer lost his hieratic dignity and became a virtuoso, who in his caprices, professional jealousy, phantastic fees, and hired claque was the equal of his brethren in the nineteenth century." This transition in the role of the singer is a reflection of the difference between the societies of Greece and Rome. The changing expectations surrounding the role can be used as an indicator of those ideological differences: ". . . whereas the Athenian nobleman had been proud to sing and dance in the chorus of a Greek dramatic presentation, conscious that he was carrying out a civic duty, the upper-class Roman felt it was beneath his dignity to appear in public as a performing musician, . . ." (Burkhalter A/O. [1966] 1968:113). They abandoned musical performance first to their slaves and later to a social class of musicians. Roman singers were indeed professional virtuosi, lauded by the public, disciplined in their art but often not in their personalities, who engaged in battle with other singers for fame and fortune.

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The Equivocal Status of Singing

Though free Romans were themselves uncomfortable with a role that had come to be considered an unmanly and unseemly pastime or an occupation for slaves, Rome over time came to contain numerous schools for music and dance where patrician families sent their children for instruction. A number of emperors themselves -- Hadrian, Caracalla, Commodus, Antoninus Pius, Heliogabalus and Alexander Severus, for example -- became amateur singers. "All Rome was shocked by the Emperor Nero, not because he was obsessed by music but for appearing as a professional singer and actually competing in contests, . . . ," Rushmore (1971:10) exclaims. He trained hard and practiced diligently:

> . . . lessons went on late into the night. He endured bodily discomfort, lying on his back with a metal weight on his chest, taking purges, refraining from various fruits and meat that were supposed to injure the voice, indeed trying all the tricks of the profession to develop his voice. At one time he refused to address his soldiers in person so as to rest his voice, and he would have a singing teacher present to see that he never strained it. (Scott, [1957] 1966:418)

Langhans (1886:13) maintains that his voice was unmusical and his delivery abominable, but Scott ([1957] 1966:418) feels that there is every reason to believe that he had considerable, though not exceptional, abilities. Whatever the case, he toured Greece and collected prizes, and he possessed a claque of 5,000 who had been instructed in three ways of making applause -- bombi, like the buzzing of bees; imbrices, like rain on the roof; and testae, like the crashing of pots together (Scott, [1957] 1966:418). Rushmore (1971:11) points to this as an early instance of the rich and powerful buying public appearances as a singer.

As in most time periods, anti-virtuosity forces were also prevalent in Rome. The complaint ". . . day and night, the slaves of

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the wealthy reduce the neighbors to despair with their singing voices and instruments; at table, nobody can talk for music; and an intolerable host of virtuosi, capricious, insolent, intriguing, strut the stage" appears in Sachs (1943:272). In the previously assumed Plutarchian (first century) De Musica (no longer accepted as his), music is shown to have undergone a notable regression, and bitter complaints are voiced about this degeneration from its once high and noble state:

> . . . our men of art, condemning its ancient majesty, instead of that manly, grace, heaven-born music, so acceptable to the Gods, have brought into the theatres a sort of effeminate musical tattling, mere sound without substance.
> . . . they became "bewitched with the theatre's new fangles and the innovations of multiplied notes," and "were most depraved with diversity of notes and baneful innovations." (Quoted in Duey, 1951:29)

Its transference from the Greek literati to the Roman populace, Burkhalter (A/O, [1966] 1968:113) claims, accounted for music's decline: ". . . music lost much of its ethical character, and became for the first time simply an entertainment for the masses." Quintilian ([1st century] 1921, I:175), protesting against the tastes of the age, presented a similar argument in Institutiones oratoriae: ". . . the music that I desire to see taught is not our modern music, which has been emasculated by the lascivious melodies of our effeminate stage and has to no small extent destroyed such manly vigour as we still possessed." And Athenaeus ([2nd-3rd century] 1937:409) concurred: "In olden times the feeling for nobility was always maintained in the art of music, . . . popularity with the masses was a sign of bad art; . . . And yet the musicians of our day set as the goal of their art success with their audiences."

Finally, Quintilian's ([1st century] 1921, I:175) demand --

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"Give me the knowledge of the principles [emphasis mine] of music, which have power to excite and assuage the emotions of mankind" -- reminds us of the purist statements of Plato and Aristotle and looks forward to the philosophy of the early Catholic Church toward music. "Unheard music is better than heard" was a Greek proverb that Henderson ([1957] 1966:401) quotes from late antiquity, the idea of music being so much holier than music itself.

The moralists, Reese (1940:52) maintains, considered most of the contemporary songs indecent, the dancing immodest and the melodies effeminate. Sachs (1943:273), however, opposes subscribing to such judgments, "which we hear throughout the history of music whenever a style abandons academic standards," finding it hard to accept the idea of a permanent state of decadence that was supposed to have lasted for more than five hundred years. But Pincherle, in The World of the Virtuoso (1963:27), finds it understandable "that in all times the exaggerations and divagations of virtuosity have made it susceptible to violent hatreds, . . . ," explaining such severity by the disproportion existing between the quality of the art of popular virtuosos and the adulation they aroused, "an adulation blind, without nuances, and no less revolting than that awarded today to movie stars. boxers, and accordion players, who are taken up by the masses as brusquely as they will be rejected and forgotten."

Women in Rome and Roman Women as Singers

Our discussion of Roman music so far has focused upon the practice of singing as limited to men. Although women's abstract legal rights under the Roman Republic placed her, theoretically, in a position of incapacity and servitude similar to the Greek maid and

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maiden, these did not ultimately define her situation in practice, which depended in large part on her economic role. There she was more powerful and respected. Thus, though "[l]egally more enslaved than the Greek, the woman of Rome was in practice much more deeply integrated in society," de Beauvoir ([1949] 1970:86) concludes. She sat in the atrium, the center of the home, instead of being hidden away as in Athens; she directed the domestic work and guided her children in their education; she shared the labors and cares of her husband as his companion; she was not restricted to her quarters but was present at meals, at celebrations, at the theater and walked and drove in the public thoroughfares. De Beauvoir ([1949] 1970:88) describes all this. however, as "negative" freedom (women being offered no concrete employment of the new liberty) and resolves that woman's economic freedom remained abstract, since it produced no political power. Furthermore, with the institution of slavery, Putnam ([1910] 1970:50) feels that what occupation the lady had was gone, and that she came to fill her time with "the pseudo-activities of the nouveau riche," resulting in the appearance of "society."

Women under the Roman Empire attained a legal status more in agreement with her freedom, power and influence. Seltman (1956?:174-6) attributes these changes to: one, the influence of neighboring perspectives on women's status, like the emancipation of females among the Etruscans to the north and the cult of femininity in the many cities of South Italy (or Magna Graecia); and two, the frequency of war, which conferred more power and responsibility on women in the absence of their husbands. Thus, Donaldson (1973:153-4) resolves, "[t]radition was in favour of restriction, but by a concurrence of

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circumstances women had been liberated from the enslaving fetters of the old legal forms, and they enjoyed freedom of intercourse in society; . . ."

As in Greece, prostitution was officially permitted in Rome. where there were two classes of courtesans -- those living in brothels and those known as "good prostitutes." Many of the latter had considerable influence on art, fashion, etc. but were never thought of as highly as the hetairai. In this category women were also trained to work as actresses and entertainers of all types (and some of these were not invariably employed sexually). These "professional" women -- some actresses, singers and dancers, as well as doctors, midwives, dressmakers, masseuse, -- were generally Greeks. Pomeroy (1975:192-3) describes a young performer Eucharis, who performed at public games and is characterized as "learned" and "skilled" in her epitaph.

The vogue of music among Roman women is noted in the writings of Lucian (second century A.D.), who praised the singing and cithara playing both of aristocratic women and of courtesans (Lang, 1941:35). But even though Roman domestic conditions admitted more freedom than those of Greece, it has been concluded (Elson, 1904:30) to be doubtful that women took any important part in musical composition or in public musical performance. Amateur musicians flourished during the empire, and it appears that respectable females who sang were confined to such levels as part of their domestic position. In Rome, as in most of antiquity, professional female singers and musicians were generally to be found only among women of lower rank and/or poor repute -- slaves and prostitutes or courtesans. Drinker (1948:141) describes the latter as, in some respects, the happiest survival of the free woman-musician

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of antiquity:

> She had a certain liberty, status, and inspiration to do well [that] which women immured in homes completely lacked. As entertainers everywhere, . . . , women retained and even developed a fine musical art of their own. But the courtesans were nevertheless artificial creatures. . . . Beautiful as the singing courtesan's music might be, intelligently as she might serve as the transmitter of the social and cultural traditions of her race, she could never bring music to the highest point of her culture because she was denied a normal relation to life.

One further point concerning the desirable pitch of vocalizations should be made at this time. Although male singers are frequently mentioned as striving for the higher, more desirable vocal ranges (and even imitating female singers to the extent of copying their dress), condemnations of singing and singers in both Greece and Rome often took the form of attacks on the same for their "femaleness" in singing, more precisely using adjectives denoting the feminine to serve as derisive descriptions (see pp.43,65,69[2]). These illustrate the contradictions involved in having as an ideal -- high pitch in song -- qualities inherently associated (in this case, biologically or physically) with a status of low value, an issue to which we will return again.

The Vocal Inheritance from Ancient Israel

After the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt (1200s B.C.), forty years of wandering in the desert and the founding of a permanent home in Canaan, the Jewish people soon developed a substantial musical culture. Having kept alive their musical knowledge from Egypt (the success of which Sendrey [1969:480] attributes to their leader Moses), everyone in ancient Israel sang:

> In the earliest history of Israel singing was not restricted to certain classes, social strata or professions;

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> it was the possession of the entire community. When great historical events have taken place and the people's emotions were remorselessly tightened, it sufficed for a leader to start the liberating song in order to release the tension through common singing. (Sendrey, 1969:160)

The close affinity between musical terms and moral, religious and philosophical thinking in Israel is a motif found in the Scriptures and one similar, as illustrated in the following quotes, to the importance of singing as a quality in man to the Greeks (see p.40):

> And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument . . . (Ezek. 33:32)

> There are three things through which God distinguished men from each other, through the voice [meaning language], through the melody [meaning the ability to sing], and through the appearance. (Rabbinical statement, as quoted in Sendrey, 1969:217)

In contrast to the Greeks (and other ancients), however, Sendrey (1969:55) feels that the Israelites became musically creative not so much through their intellectual capacities as through "the emotional power of their soul." The music that resulted was not the product of reflection but of inspiration.

> For the Hellenes, music was a rigid theoretical discipline, while the Hebrews have discovered a new and purely spiritual approach to tonal art: they experienced it as a cosmic phenomenon, as a transcendental gift. Therefore, music never could become a science for them; it was art in its fundamental manifestation and, beyond that, heavenly grace, divine revelation. (Sendrey, 1969:552)

Old Testament references to music as an accompaniment to the praise of God are abundant (Cf. Sendrey, 1969:72-92). Also, forgiveness, acceptance, salvation and thanksgiving evoked breaking forth into song (Sendrey [1969:90-1] cites 20 examples). In addition, an existence without song was perceived to be a most dreadful

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punishment: "And I will cause the noise of thy songs to cease; and the sound of thy harps shall be no more heard" (Ezek. 26:13) and Jer. 7:34, 25:10; Isa. 16:10; Amos 8:3, 8:10; Job 30:31; Lament. 5:14,15. The Book of Psalms, in which one finds repeated passages such as "I will sing unto the Lord," "Sing praises unto the Lord" or "Sing unto the Lord a new song," demonstrates the continuation of songs of praise (Ps. 145,147,148,150), of petition (Ps. 44,74,79,80,83) and of thanksgiving (Ps. 30,66,116,118,138) into later times and organized public devotion. All of these reflect the spiritual attitude of the Jewish people to music, Sendrey (1969:91) writes -- the universal dispenser of joy, the epitome of life's bliss, an indispensable element of human existence" -- and are "the outstanding proof of the ethical loftiness of music in the concept of Ancient Israel." Finally, the supernatural beauty of singing is documented in the book of the Mystics (Tikuni Zohar): "There are in heaven sacred places, which open only by song and chant" (Quoted in Sendrey, 1969:218).

Professional Musical Organizations

The earliest specialized musicians were poet-composer-performers who were considered as having insight and who were capable of influencing the people. A prophet or prophetess in the early history of the Jews was, in the ancient folkbard (not necessarily divine) sense, a man or woman who:

> feels, suffers, speaks for the masses, an eloquent interpreter of the beliefs and sentiments of the people and who, in addition, possesses all the qualities of a national leader. These qualities embrace a specific oratorical talent as well as mastery in music, or at least in singing. In biblical parlance, "prophet" or "seer" has often the same meaning as "musician" or "singer." The early history of Israel knows chosen men, who were masters in musical art. They are nearly always called "prophets" by the chroniclers. (Sendrey, 1969:481)

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Nabi originally meant a speaker, or more particularly a spokesman of God (and is used in that sense by the Christian Church Fathers also), the concept having no relationship to music. Yet, in comparing two categories of prophets, Sendrey (1969:508) demonstrates that there was no radical difference between the great national prophets -- the champions of Jehovah -- like Isaiah and Amos and the less articulate singer-prophets, overcome with religious emotion: "The latter pour out their enthusiasm in harmonious sounds; the former clothe their visions into a spoken form, a language which is elated by ecstasy, having a specific melodious undercurrent. . . . a form of 'poetry' or 'song'." The etymology of the term nabi took many turns. Its earliest meanings, as illustrated in biblical textual examples, include: a spokesman of God (Deut. 18:18); a seer who predicts the future (Deut. 13:1-2); a singer, musician, poet (Moses and Miriam in Exod. 15:1-20, Deborah in Judges 5:3, and the musically religious enthusiasts described above in 1 Sam. 10:5). Over time, the function of predicting the future became the prerogative of the seer, and later prophets who stressed visionary qualities were called hozeh (a term tainted, however, by the "false" prophets who were to fraudulously attribute to themselves such qualities). The affinity between prophecy and music was what became conspicuous; "to prophesy with harps, with psalteries, and with cymbals" is language used by David (ca.1000 B.C.) in assigning tasks to musicians of the holy sanctuary (1 Chron. 25:1).

Although there are only scanty reports about and indirect allusions to musical education and music organization, widespread and systematic instruction and control, Sendrey (1969:482) feels, had to have existed, considering the fame of Ancient Judaism's music. During

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the time of the Judges (ca.1225-ca.1020 B.C.), when the national and political structure of Israel was taking form, the artistic disposition of the people came to the fore also. There was demand for musical art and, in turn, most likely some forms of music instruction and organization of musicians.[23] On Samuel's retirement from statesmanship, he vowed to the people "I will teach you the good and right way" (1 Sam. 12:23). In order to accomplish the intellectual education of the nation, more specifically to bring the arts of music and poetry (already cultivated by a single tribe -- that of Levi) into general use, he was supposed to have founded an institution to prepare a staff of "enthusiastic and capable disciples" (Sendrey, 1969:483) -- the school of prophets in Ramah and elsewhere.

"They were simply assemblages of young men, or those of maturer age, practising themselves under the direction of Samuel"; and "[t]hey dwelt in simple cottages . . . incorrectly translated schools" are how they are described by Herder (1833, as quoted in Sendrey, 1969:483-4). We meet them in the aforementioned passage in 1 Samuel: "a company of prophets coming down from the high place with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp, before them; and they shall prophesy." Pupils were admitted who exhibited a wish and aptitude for learning, devotion to religious and national ideals and the willingness to submit to the common discipline. Sons of prophets in the wider sense, they sometimes carried messages to the people but possessed no divine prophetic gifts. Sendrey (1969:485), therefore, considers these associations to represent the first public music schools in history. Instruction in the Law, in the Scriptures and in psalm singing and instrumental accompaniment was supposed to have been

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done through proverbs, riddles, parables, rhythmic recitations, chanting sacred and secular poems, and singing songs, according to Sendrey (1969:485).

Indirect evidence for the existence of such schools or "brotherhoods" (other prophets organized schools on Samuel's model) is found by Sendrey (1969:484) in the biblical text in the form of a "sudden and unexplained upsurge of large choirs and orchestras, . . . of thoroughly organized and trained musical groups, . . ." These associations and the training they afforded served as a bridge, he (1969:530) concludes, between the earlier class of unorganized musicians and that of later organized professional artists. Although most of the prophet-pupils (like the numerous singers and instrumentalists among the people at large) were amateur in the sense that they were lovers of music ("dilettanti") from all sections of the population, singing and playing for the sheer delight of it, and although professional musicians (making a living exclusively or mainly by music) probably existed only in restricted numbers, provision had been made for the possibility of professional musicians as an occupational group.

The future organization of the temple music under David, designed to provide the sacred service with highly qualified professional musicians, is referred to by Sendrey (1969:234) as the "logical sequel" to Samuel's concentrated pedagogical efforts in religious musical instruction. In fact, the school at Ramah probably served as the prototype or, at least, the unintended test of a system that would be applied on a larger scale in the forthcoming sacred music organization of the Davidic and Solomonic eras (ca.1004-ca.965

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B.C.). The institution to be created would be, however, "higher" and "loftier":

> . . . music was planned to be not merely a subordinate element in the ritual, not merely the stereotyped tonal background for sacred ceremonies. It was to be elevated to an integral part of the divine cult and co-ordinated with the other sacred actions. Music was planned to be associated inseparably with the sacrifice; . . . The creation of liturgical music as an equal partner with all other ritual ceremonies is the most important turning point in the history of Jewish music. (Sendrey, 1969:488)

Moreover, another basic difference is observable between the two musical setups. The first was ". . . not an end in itself, did not represent a profession in the proper sense; it was a part of a curriculum, which aimed at a well-rounded education of religious leaders of the nation. . . . music played an important part in this curriculum" (Sendrey, 1969:531). The second would be a clear-cut profession affording the musicians their subsistence. Two new highly important factors had been added, therefore, to the ritualistic and artistic aspects: economic and social ones. How had this all come about?

The Levites, or sons of Levi (son of Jacob by Leah), formed a sacred caste in Ancient Israel dating supposedly from the institution of priestly worship by Moses (Exod. 28:1, 29:9). The Levites take their place in the history of Israel as the tribe set apart for sacred duties:

> Bring the tribe of Levi near, and present them before Aaron the priest, that they may minister unto him. And they shall keep his charge, and the charge of the whole congregation before the tabernacle of the congregation, to do the service of the tabernacle. And they shall keep all the instruments of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the charge of the children of Israel, to do the service of the tabernacle. (Num. 3:6-9)

All Levites by descent, then, could be ministers of the sanctuary or

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guardians of the sacred service, but the true priesthood was confined to the sons of Aaron only.

As early as Saul's reign (ca.1020-ca.1004 B.C.) we find evidence of the Levites' (their names listed in 1 Chron. 6:1-30) cultivation of music as one of their charges: "And they ministered before the dwelling place of the tabernacle of the congregation with singing" (1 Chron. 6:32). In addition, even before David's time it appears that the role of some was exclusively that of providing music for the house of God, their being exempted from other duties: "And these are the singers, . . . , who remaining in the chambers were free: for they were employed in that work day and night" (1 Chron. 9:33). Finally, the development of a royal residence and court in Jerusalem attracted musicians there. The schools of prophets were, then, surplanted by a regular school for liturgical education with religious music at the heart of its curriculum. Hundreds of students were continuously trained for careers as religious musicians in what was a levitical music school.

In the ceremonies for the transfer of the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem, music played a prominent role (2 Sam. 6:5,14,15; 1 Chron. 13:8). Also, this marked, as Sendrey (1969:534) puts it, "the birth-hour of the organized and permanent Temple music." King David "spake to the chief of the Levites to appoint their brethren to be the singers, . . . , lifting up the voice with joy" (1 Chron. 15:16). 1 Chron. 15:17-22 names Heman, Asaph and Ethan (Jeduthun), and their brethren, citing (15:22) Chenaniah as presider (conductor), "because he was skilful." Leaders of the song and other singer-musicians -- 288 of the most competent choir singers -- were ultimately appointed by

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David (1 Chron. 25:7) from some 4,000 levitical singers (1 Chron. 23:5). (If there were 4,000 singers and musicians among the Levites, a single tribe of Israel, then Sendrey [1969:534] feels that it is logical to assume that in the entire nation the number of those well-versed in musical matters must have been proportionately higher.)

The magnitude of the numbers cited provides, again, indirect evidence that "the levitical organization must have passed a previous extended stage of development, enabling David to select the most qualified men out of the multitude of trained singers" (Sendrey, 1969:532). (These were from then on elected for permanent service by representatives of the musicians themselves.) Another indication of the already existing artistic and technical competence of the Levites is the sophisticated composition of this newly established organization: conductor, solo singers, leaders of individual choirs -- the large choir was divided into 24 "wards" consisting of groups of twelve singers each under the leadership of a precentor (all 24 of whom are listed in 1 Chron. 25:9-31, a sign of the importance of the office) -- the twelve choral groups, and instruments both to carry the melody and for the accompaniment.[24]

The service of the levitical musicians within the Temple erected as a sanctuary became strictly regulated, with both the composition of this newly-established organization of singers and the permanent routine of daily musical performances firmly established. The total 288 singers in the various wards constituted

> a closed corporation or guild, which had its own rules, its own precepts and the members of which, united by a pronounced class-consciousness, guarded jealously their special privileges. [Only close relatives were admitted into this caste; non-Levites were kept out.] . . . , they represented a prominent and privileged class.

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> . . . a secluded professional group, guarding strictly their prerogatives, enjoying great esteem and gradually acquiring considerable power. (Sendrey, 1969:535)

The order of sequence in which each of the 24 wards participated in the three daily sacrificial services of the Temple was determined by lot -- "And they cast lots, ward against ward, as well the small as the great, the teacher as the scholar" (1 Chron. 25:8) -- by which procedure, Sendrey (1969:535) comments, "all disputes for precedence and all personal or professional sensibilities have been eliminated from the very outset." Furthermore within the guild, there were no priorities of the senior or more experienced members -- "the small as the great, the teacher as the scholar" indicating equal rights -- for all those admitted were masters and had been chosen among many to begin with.

Alternating in the performance of the ritual singing, singers therefore had ample time and opportunity to learn new music, rehearse and prepare themselves for the services; to develop their technical and compositional skills; and to pass their art onto the upcoming generation. In addition, they engaged in agricultural duties on their own settlements in order to maintain themselves. Through unrelenting practices and, according to Sendrey (1969:537), the fanatical zeal of the music leaders, "an artistic perfection, unmatched until then in Antiquity, was achieved in a relatively short time." The account of the musical coordination of the complete levitical guild of singers at the consecration of Solomon's new Temple (or, as Sendrey [1969:538] interprets the following, the first musical criticism in history) gives evidence of this perfection:

> Also the Levites which were the singers, . . . being arrayed in white linen [the garb of the priests], having cymbals and

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> psalteries and harps, stood at the east end of the altar, . . . It came to pass, as the trumpets and singers were as one [emphasis mine], to make one sound [emphasis mine] to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord; . . . that then the house was filled with a cloud, . . . So that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God. (2 Chron. 5:12-14)

The emphasized words signify an extraordinary precision of performance considering the number of those involved. This musical achievement supposedly created a mystic transport among the worshippers (an "audience" in the critic's terminology) who saw or imagined seeing a cloud -- identified with God's presence -- filling the house, or, at least, the chronicler was led to describe the reaction to the musical event in such a way.

After Solomon's death, the Jewish state passed through political and religious convulsions that threatened the future of the nation, its religion and its religious music. "Good" and "bad" kings succeeding one another. "Each time an idolatrous king abandoned the religion of the fathers," Sendrey (1969:540) writes,

> . . . the Temple music was condemned to silence and threatened with extinction. Ordinarily, a few years, even a few months of inactivity suffice to jeopardize the stability of musical tradition. . . . from this state until complete destruction is only a relatively short way. [And] [i]t must be remembered that the ancient Jewish musical art was based exclusively on oral tradition, which could be preserved only if maintained without interruption.

Sendrey (1969:540) attributes to the professional musical organization and the artistic consciousness of its members the preservation of the musical heritage during such times of adversity: ". . . after each period of idolatry the music continued to function as though there had been no interruption at all."

At one point, the musicians succeeded in impressing King Hezekiah (end of the eighth century B.C.) with their skill to the

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extent that he "commanded the people that dwelt in Jerusalem to give the portion of the priests and the Levites" (2 Chron. 31:4), securing for them dependable livelihoods through voluntary tithes. "And as soon as the commandment came abroad, the children of Israel brought in abundance . . ." (2 Chron. 31:5) demonstrates the people's acknowledgment of the singers' achievements so much so that the king had to build new chambers for the storage of "this great store of gifts" (2 Chron. 31:10-11), appointing officers for their administration (2 Chron. 31:12-15).

With the destruction of the Temple and the downfall of the Jewish state in the sixth century B.C., the musical organization of singers was again forced to attempt to preserve the musical tradition underground -- under suppression and in secret -- during the 48 years of the exile of the population of Judah to Babylon. New generations had to be instructed; music had to be transmitted from mouth to mouth. "Without forseeable hope for return into the old homeland, a complex art discipline was kept alive, for which there was apparently no immediate use in the exile, and which was virtually meaningless for Jews deprived of their santuary" (Sendrey, 1969:541). What happened, in fact, was that music that had originally been the tonal background for and later an integral part of the sacred sacrificial ceremony came to function, at that point in time, as the spiritual substitute for the animal sacrifice, of which the people were deprived. The offering of the sacrifice symbolically, through music, became the basis of the ceremony in the synagogue, an institution and a practice that would continue, along with the temple, in the period after the captivity.

After the return from exile (the Persian king Cyrus declared

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"Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, . . . [Ezra 1:3]), testimony to the success of the maintenance of the levitical tradition is the fact that the prominent position held by the musicians in the First Temple rose to an even higher social and economic level in the Second. They were elevated to the status of state functionaries and were supported by the royal treasury. Granting the requests of Ezra, on his leading back from exile a second colony of captives, King Artaxerxes not only reconfirmed the guaranteed salary for singers (Neh. 11:23), but also exempted musicians (among others) from all "toll, tribute or custom" (Neh. 7:24). In addition, out of gratitude, ". . . all Israel . . . , gave the portions of the singers . . . and they sanctified holy things unto the Levites; . . ." (Neh. 12:47).

Post-Babylonian temple singers (now tax-exempt ministers of the sanctuary) gained, along with wealth, authority and influence, leading slowly to a rivalry between the priests and singers as the singers' status approached the privileged situation of the priests. The first trial of strength ended in victory for the singers, who had held a "strike" or work stoppage when they were denied their rightful salaries by the priest overseers. Sendrey (1969:547) points out that the excuse of lack of subsistence on the part of singers was most likely a pretext:

> It is far more logical to assume that this strike represented a pure and simple contest of power between the priests and singers. . . . obvious [fiscal] abuse carried on by [the administrator] Eliashib -- apparently in connivance with his priestly colleagues -- induced the musicians to take the law into their own hands. What no other class could afford to venture, the musicians dared to do, relying upon the power of their organization. . . .
>
> . . . The fact that the musicians of Israel succeeded to

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> fight it out victoriously is the proof of the external and internal strength of their professional organization.

But "ever increasing esteem" and "overemphasized class-consciousness," Sendrey (1969:548) says, caused their ambition to go even further:

> They aspired to more external honors. Conscious of their own influence, and filled with an exorbitant self-reliance, they wanted to be equal in attire and in rank with the immediate ministers of God, the priests. So they demanded of king Agrippa II [reigned 49-70 A.D.] the privilege to wear, while in function, the white linen garments of the priests.

Reactions to this, as outlined by Sendrey (1969:548), describe the singers as presumptuous, insolent, arrogant and infringing upon the existing divine order. This demand, against opposition, was eventually granted also, but the success of the singers in this venture was turned ultimately against them and their caste-like organization:

> Encouraged by the success of the singers, some other functionaries of the Temple have likewise ventured an attack against the traditional order with regard to rank. The levitical helpers in the sacrifices, . . . , belonging to the lowest class of the Levites, asked permission to learn psalm-singing . . . in actual practice . . . to be instructed in the art of singing by the Levites so as to be accepted eventually into the ranks of the Temple singers. This request, too, has been granted by the king, . . . (Sendrey, 1969:548-9)

In addition, retaliation on the part of the priests consisted of withholding from the singers the portion of the voluntary tithes due to them, as the priests were the stewards of the tithes offered by the people.

However, it was with the destruction of the Second Temple by the Romans (70 B.C.), that the significance of the levitical singers decreased. With the annihilation of the Jewish state, the musical organization of Ancient Israel disappeared.

Women's Music

In the oldest parts of the Bible, women appear as chieftains.

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judges, prophetesses, magicians, etc., many of them exhibiting musical talents and abilities. Women's music was of a variety of kinds. They are frequently found rejoicing collectively over victories. When Moses and Aaron led the Hebrews out of Egypt and after the parting of the Red Sea, Miriam -- sister of the two men, prophetess and leader of the women -- "took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances" (Exod. 15:20). She also answered the chorus of Moses and his men, "Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously" (Exod. 15:21). Songs of triumph involve women receiving returning victors. For Barak's victory, Deborah was asked by the people: "Awake, awake, Deborah: awake, awake, utter a song" (Judges 5:12). The victorious David was received by the women "of all cities of Israel, singing and dancing, . . . , with tabrets, with joy, and with instruments of musick. . . . And the women answered one another as they played, and said, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands" (1 Sam. 18:6,7). Finally, Judith, after herself defeating the enemy, led the women in dancing and singing (Jud. 15:13) and began a song of thanksgiving "before all Israel" (Jud. 16:1-2).

A special profession of female musicians was composed of mourners, who provided the wailing at private funerals. Called "wise women," "cunning women," "skillful women" and "well-skilled in dirges" in different translations of the Bible (Sendrey, 1969:168), their wailing function constituted an art, as these terms testify. But women also sang the wedding songs and performed at family gatherings. Judges 21:12 shows them singing and dancing as part of the yearly solemn feast of the Lord in Silo.

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Although everyone continued to sing in Ancient Israel (see pp.73-4), women's music came to exist separately from men's in style, in performance and in measure of importance. Drinker (1948:133) attributes this to psychological domination by the two prominent images of the ancient Jewish male god -- his superiority in physical strength, necessarily emphasized and developed for aggressive warfare, and his representation as the omnipotent Father-God, without mother or mate. Whatever, women came to be excluded from the priesthood and barred from the inner temple. The importance of the role of women in the dance is obvious from biblical sources; their role as singers, however, appears to be one of subordination; as instrumentalists, they hardly appear to have existed. All of this is surmised from a rather blurred picture in the Biblical Scriptures, which historians of Jewish music attribute to repeated and extensive purificatory revisions that these underwent. Particularly, anything alluding to or recalling the primitive, "pagan" rites of the pre-Yahweh Hebrews (into which category women's musical activities fell) were deleted. Developing anti-feminine attitudes of the priestly caste would have had her early part in the sacred rituals erased as well.

It is now thought that women had regularly participated in the ritual as singers and instrumentalists prior to the establishment of the organized musical service of the First Temple and even in its beginnings. The Bible contains no direct indications of this, but allusions to singing women in the sacred service remain. Exod. 38:8 refers to the assembly and entrance of the women into the tabernacle and the ritual functions they performed. An obscure passage in Amos (8:3) translates: "And the songs of the temple shall be howlings [or

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wailings] in that day." On the death of King Josiah, who had been an ardent patron of levitical musical art, women are included among the musicians mourning the monarch that had meant so much to them that they managed to have established a national day of mourning: ". . . and all the singing men and the singing women spake of Josiah in their lamentations to this day, and made them an ordinance in Israel" (2 Chron. 35:25). Finally, girl choirs existed for the antiphonal singing of psalms. 'Alamot, found frequently in the Book of Psalms and elsewhere in the Bible, is a controversial term having a variety of possible translations: a kind of high-pitched double pipe, "soprano," "falsetto," but more literally "in the vocal range of maidens."

Scholarly sources reviewed by Sendrey (1969:517-18) discuss the possibility of young, widowed maidens, recruited from among the wives and daughters of the levitical singers and from the priestly families, devoting themselves to the religious service; wives of the Levites forming a part of the choir; and the probability, too complicated to document for our purposes, that a large proportion of the 200-245 "singing men and singing women" repatriates counted by Ezra (2:65) and Nehemiah (7:67) were trained in liturgical singing and did not wholly represent secular singers, women therefore having participated in the levitical choir during and even after the Babylonian exile. Sendrey (1969:521) concludes:

> It is beyond doubt, . . . , that women and maidens participated as singers in the Davidic and Solomonic music organizations. Even after the return from the Babylonic exile, at least in the first period of the Second Temple, they might have held the same functions, until they were removed and replaced by singing boys.

Although elimination of women from the sanctuary service certainly had much to do with associations of women's music with the

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pagan dieties and women's voices with sensuousness -- "The harps where to they (the women) sing . . . are susceptible to uncleanness; but the harps of the sons of Levi . . . are not susceptible" (Mishnah, Kelim XV:6) -- it must also be attributed to the levitical guild's viewing women singers as dangerous potential competitors to their closed. male organization. Later editions of biblical books, then, suppressed most of the information pertaining to female participation in and also training for (one opinion holds that a special music school had existed to train women [Sendrey, 1969:490]) early levitical music.

Drinker (1948:133-4) concludes: "Exclusion from the intellectual life of their times, exclusion from the spiritual life of men, identification with the unwanted, the undesirable, and the inferior, all contributed to the establishment of a diametrically opposed relation of men to music and of women to music."

The Liturgical Artist

Established daily temple music came to include levitical choruses of a minimum of twelve singers -- men between thirty and fifty years of age (1 Chron. 23:3) who had passed five years of training (Tal. Bab., Hullin 24a) before becoming members of the levitical guild of singers. Boys were also allowed to join the choir in order to add sweetness to the singing. Though never mentioned in the Bible, this is attested to in the rabbinical literature:

> None that was not of age could enter the Temple Court to take part in the service save only when the levites stood up to sing; and they (the boy children) did not join in the singing with harp and lyre, but with the mouth alone to add spice to the music. R. Eliezer b. Jacob says: They did not help to make up the required number, nor did they stand on the Platform: but they used to stand on the ground so that their heads were between the feet of the levites; . . . (Mishnah, 'Arakin II:6)

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The Hebrew terms used to describe the boys have been interpreted as "the little ones" of the Levites, "helpers" of the Levites and also the Levites' "tormentors," giving rise to the notion that they may have annoyed the adult singers or, more specifically, made them jealous. The levitical singers may have considered the vocal quality ("sweetness" or "spice") as competition. In addition, the fact that the adults accompanied themselves while the boys sang "with the mouth alone," Sendrey (1969:71) takes to imply that the youth "had the lead in singing or at least that they doubled up the melody in the upper octave."

The individual chanter, Sachs (1943:61) remarks, was supposed to have had a sweet, expressive voice rather than a strong one -- tenors being preferred. The tessitura[25] of the singing of the aforementioned boys (doubling up the melody in the upper octave) was, of course, similar to that of the female voice. In fact, it is generally accepted that they probably replaced women after the latter were eliminated from the levitical choirs because of the growing anti-feminism among the priesthood. If, indeed, the boy replacements who inherited the upper range from women were jealously viewed as competition by the adult male singers, then our postulation that females were likely removed from choir positions because of male levitical attitudes of self-preservation seems all the more to have been the case.

Beautiful singing, with its psychological or emotional effect upon the soul of the listener, was produced by a fine voice. The possession of such a voice obligated one to serve God with it -- "Honour the Lord with thy substance" (Proverbs 3:9). Rabbinic

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literature names two teachers -- Hiyya Bar Ada and Rab -- as having had fine voices and accordingly, having served as leaders of prayers (Sendrey, 1969:216). Hygros ben Levi is mentioned (Mishnah, Shekalim V:1) as having had a special sweetness in his voice, but he was also considered a brilliant virtuoso at a time when the musical leaders desired the form and expression of the sacred song to be as plain and dignified as possible. The gradually evolving predilection for virtuosity on the part of individual singers threatened that purity and dignity. On the one hand, the Mishnah (Yoma III:11) says that the memory of Hygros ben Levi was kept in dishonor for not teaching his special art (for not divulging the secret of the new singing technique he supposedly invented)[26], the most elementary duty of the levitical singers being to teach their art to the coming generation. On the other hand, the musical educators held it more important to keep up a uniformly high standard of knowledge among their students than to breed outstanding virtuosos.

Singers were thought, in fact, to have been abusive in their virtuosity, to have practiced bad habits (nasal tone production and the artificial tremolo of the voice called vibrato being two common mannerisms that were frowned upon), and to have developed all sorts of personal vanities. "As a result of the exaggerated importance attributed by the singers to their own accomplishments and of the admiration bestowed upon them by the worshippers," Sendrey (1969:257) declares, "they began to put their own person more and more into the forefront at the expense of the sacred service." This became possible, he (1969:257-8) feels, because the ancient Jewish community had come to manifest by then an aesthetical attitude toward the accomplishments

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of the religious levitical singers -- to music as an art form. Furthermore, he (1969:258) attributes the rapidity with which this occurred to the importance of tonal art in the life of the Jewish people and the impregnation of the individual as well as the community with music in all its aspects.

The very music "which had once been the possession of the broad masses, which had expressed their spirit and served their life" (Gradenwitz, 1949:50) we have seen develop into an art reserved for a chosen few. Playing and singing had once been common knowledge and practiced by all, but the kings of Israel introduced professionals into their temples who, in turn, "elevated music to an art and subjected it to a system" (Gradenwitz, 1949:50). Sacred singing had become the exclusive prerogative of professional, levitical singers -- both soloists and choristers.

Passive listening on the part of worshippers left unsatisfied, however, an inner craving for a "more raptuous communion with the ritual," Sendrey (1969:172) guesses, which, in turn, probably brought forth the congregation's joining the Levites in the sacred songs of praise. First came the interjection of single words (acclamations) and then the repetitions of entire verses (refrains). But the common people, being unable to perform to perfection the highly artistic structure of songs designed for the trained choir members (they could, actually, perform better than what might be expected, considering some of the melodic patterns of their communal, secular songs), had to sing, comparatively, in a more or less recitative[27] manner.

Secular Vocal Activity

Aside from the musical institutions of the prophets, there

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existed at an early time independent secular music practice, which was rooted in the daily life of the people. Sendrey (1969:84-5) lists the following species of secular songs mentioned (if not actually quoted, then referred to) in the Old Testament, including more than 60 citations: war songs, songs of triumph, marching songs, work songs, songs of various particular kinds of laborers, love songs, wedding songs, drinking songs, dance songs, songs of the palace, songs of the courtesan, songs of derision, songs of mourning and lamentation. Numerous sources testify to the joy which such singing dispensed.

In general, the religious leaders did not hinder the people's pleasures in singing. In fact, an instance of a policy of repression is shown to have brought forth all kinds of horrible consequences, as recounted from the Talmud (Tal. Bab., Sotah 48a):

> R. Huna abolished singing [and feasting ceased, for singing was an indispensable part of such festivities], and a hundred geese were prices at a zuz and a hundred se'ahs of wheat at a zuz and there was no demand for them (even at that price); R. Hisda came and (ordered R. Huna's edict to be) disregarded, and a goose was required (even at the high price of) a zuz but was not to be found.

This complete permeation of private and public secular life with a "leitmotif" of popular song paralleled, Sendrey (1969:85) concludes, "the most important feature of Jewish musical culture" -- the singing in connection with religious ceremonies. Although the bulk of these songs were religious, Marion Bauer and Ethel Peyser (1932:18) explain that "[b]ecause the line between the religious and the secular was often thin it occasionally was difficult to tell them apart."[28]

Accounts of the procession accompanying David's bringing of the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem (approximately 1002 B.C.) suggest, says Sendrey (1969:489), a broad musical culture scarcely

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conceivable without the preparatory work of musical educators. He (1969:489) surmises that the prophet-students, "apart from the instruction of professional musicians . . . , also took zealous care of the musical education of the people itself." Even under the most oppressive circumstances -- during the Babylonian exile -- popular music is also found to have been cultivated through several generations of secular musicians. Among the first group of expatriates returning to the homeland were, besides levitical singers, supposedly "two hundred singing men and singing women" (generally considered household singers, but probably including some sacred singers as well) quoted in Ezra 2:65, two hundred forty-five according to Nehemiah's (7:67) subsequent census. The numbers increased with successive groups of repatriates.

The Jewish community's "insatiable craving" for and thrilling in the joys of music provided "a ceaseless demand" for creators and performers of secular, as well as sacred, music (Sendrey, 1969:544). Evidence for the services of such persons at festive occasions is available in The Apocrypha (writings generally regarded as sacred scripture though excluded ["hidden"] from the canonical collection of the Bible because of their dubious authenticity and/or their questionable subject matter) -- in the seventh book, The Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach (called Eccesiasticus):

> A ruby seal in a setting of gold is a concert of music at a banquet of wine. A seal of emerald . . . is the melody of music with good wine. (32:5)
>
> Wine and music gladden the heart, . . . (40:20)
>
> The flute and the harp make pleasant melody, but a pleasant voice is better than both. (40:21)

And in Eccl. 2:8, the writer lists among his prized possessions --

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houses, vineyards, gardens and orchards, water, trees, servants and maidens, cattle, silver and gold -- also the "peculiar treasure of kings and of the provinces: I got me men singers and women singers, and the delights of the sons of men as musical instruments, . . ." This excerpt points to slaves.

Members of the secular class of musicians were what Sendrey (1969:544) refers to as (and what we might today call) free lance artists, working for remuneration. These poet-musicians lost their earlier political significance but gained in popularity as entertainers. From where did they come? -- not from any particular family or tribe or class like the levitical singers. Again, anybody having the desire and the aptitude could partake in instruction from the professional organization or guild of secular musicians that emerged probably out of the school of prophets (as did the levitical guild).

Aptitude or talent, then, as opposed to a musical caste, was the key concept in the achieved status of the secular sphere. The prime and perhaps earliest example of the importance of musical talent was that of David. His extraordinary career (eventually becoming the second king of Israel) was largely due to his shepherd's skill as a player on the harp or kinnor. "By music, . . . , he had first found access to the person of the king" (Herder, 1833, as quoted in Sendrey, 1969:539), who needed such a musician to dissipate his melancholy:[29] "The erstwhile shepherd boy as future extolled hero and ruler of his nation, . . . all this turned out to be the immediate consequence of his artistry" (Sendrey, 1969:530). David's qualifications as an artist had opened to him the possibilities of higher social status, honor and

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fame. "The free lance profession and the free competition became from then on," Sendrey (1969:540) concludes, "the main criteria of the [secular] musical artist's career."

Although lower in social and economic status than the sacred singer, secular entertainers did not resemble the often poor and to various degrees despised, itinerant minstrels of either primitive cultures or medieval Christian times. These were free men who belonged to a respected and well-liked class and who had fairly secure livelihoods. Sendrey (1969:544-5) describes the type: ". . . he was the recognized representative of popular art, conscious of his mission, and sure of his influence upon his audience. . . . he was a giver, like the folkbards of heroic times, . . . , there was a crowd of enthusiastic and grateful receivers." He was, as we shall see, ahead of his time.

The Role of Women in Secular Music

Much less offense seems to have been taken towards the role of women in secular music. They participated in social entertainments -- weddings, banquets and festivals -- and are continuously listed as important parts of royal courts -- of David (2 Sam. 19:35), of Solomon (Eccl. 2:8) and of Joshuah (2 Chron. 35:25), for examples. Such musical activities on the part of women were "presentable" (if not totally "acceptable") and thus remained in the Holy Scriptures.

But warnings about and criticisms of the sensational nature of secular songs (which supposedly had deteriorated under Hellenic-Roman influence), the questionable morals of women performers and the sensuous charm of the female singing voice --

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> A woman's voice is a sexual excitement . . . (Tal. Bab., Berakoth 2a)
>
> Take an harp, go about the city, thou harlot . . . ; make sweet melody, sing many songs, . . . (Isa. 23:16)
>
> When men sing and women join in it is licentiousness . . . When women sing and men join in it is like fire in tow. (Tal. Bab., Sotah 48a)
>
> Do not associate with a woman singer, lest you be caught in her intrigues. (Ecclus. 9:4)

-- connected professional female singers and instrumentalists with the tradition of the ancient courtesan.

A woman's singing was thought to arouse sexual passion in men. His arousal, more particularly his willful act of listening to the arousing female voice, was the more serious, however. If both could not be suppressed, the more important goal was to abolish the latter -- seen in the third and fourth quotes above and the following prophetical warning to the women themselves: "And I will cause the noise of thy songs to cease; and the sound of thy harps shall be no more heard" (Ezek. 26:13).

An early appreciation of the beauty of the singing of women in the rabbinical writings gradually shifted (because of the associations of women's music with lust and seduction) to castigation of the female voice. At the same time, the rabbinic sages imposed, more generally, a sharp distinction between "good" religious and "evil" secular singing: "The ear which listens to song should be torn off . . . When there is song in a house there is destruction on its threshold; . . . ." (Tal. Bab., Sotah 48a). As a consequence, regulations restricted the secular artist-singer from performing solo songs in public. This lasted for almost 400 years (300 B.C.-100 A.D.), but the labelling of the beauty and strength of the female voice "lustful," "licentious,"

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"voluptuous," "seductive" -- and, therefore, dangerous -- would continue for centuries.

Conclusions Concerning the Earliest History of Female Singing

Women from time immemorial have evidenced both musical talent and ability and an interest in practicing their musical prowess. At the simplest communal level, they are found to have been active in song. Although we frequently find a sexual division of labor in the exercise of vocal functions, women have generally sung on an equal basis with their male counterparts. In fact, the female voice has often been considered special in regard to its range. We might consider women singers, therefore, to be somewhat favored biologically in that they are the natural possessors of voices of high pitch -- the kind of voices continuously sought after as the ideal. In this respect, we are likely dealing with a deviant case analysis, for women's natural voices helped mitigate against discrimination -- at certain times, at least.

It is with increased specialization, professionalization and institutionalization, however, that women, in the earliest history of man, are found to have been squeezed out of singing (or restricted outright). It is with such changes that her voice came to be associated in Ancient Greece, Rome and Israel with the devalued side of music -- the emotional, passionate, magical, fantastic, sensational, and ultimately corrupting, demoralizing and even evil (see pp.41,44,56,61,98) -- and that aspect of music came to be represented in terms derogatory of femaleness -- "emasculated." "lascivious," "effeminate," "sensuous," "licentious" (see

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pp.43,65,69[2],98).

Men took over as the artistic occupational role of singer gained in prominence and influence and in rewards and entered the sphere of "high" culture. This was accomplished by natural male voices -- top of the range tenors -- but also through artificial manipulation of the masculine vocal chords -- by falsettists. This was because, in contradiction to all that has just been said, it was indeed the high-pitched tone, the very same tone as that vocalized by women singers, that was most desired. It seems, therefore, that it was not the music of women, their style or particular sound that was devalued but rather their singing that music with their particular vocal equipment. Later, more drastic steps would be taken by men to achieve the end of imitation, or better reproduction, of the female sound.

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Notes to Section 1

[1]This function of song is commented upon by the early Christian preacher St. John Chrysostom ([4th century] 1950:67): "To such an extent, indeed, is our nature delighted by chants and songs that even infants at the breast, if they be weeping or afflicted, are by reason of it lulled to sleep."

[2]In so doing, Sachs (1943:41) proclaims, they preserved archaic traits that the men lost.

[3]Occupations may be defined as:

> "the mode of specialization, specification, and combination of the functions of an individual so far as it constitutes for him the basis of a continual opportunity for income or for profit" (Weber, [1925] 1950:250)
>
> "that specific activity with a market value which an individual continually pursues for the purpose of obtaining a steady flow of income" (Salz, 1962:58)
>
> "relatively continuous patterns of activities that provide workers a livelihood and define their general social status" (Form, 1968:245)

Furthermore, Friedson's designation of the market criterion as not only important but also relatively easily measured (Kamerman, 1979:3) suggests its usefulness as an indicator of an occupation's beginnings -- its transition from avocation to vocation, from amateur to professional. Titles attaching to such positions -- symbols for sets of work activities and status relationships -- are another tangible indication of the occupation's existence, states Kamerman (1979:6).

[4]Falsetto is an artificially produced singing voice (weaker and somewhat nasal) used, generally by males, to obtain notes above the normal range of the full voice. Not everyone agrees about how it is accomplished, beyond the fact that it shuts off chest resonance and requires a high larynx position.

[5]The Italian word <u>virtu</u> means

> "not only that propensity of the soul which renders us agreeable to God and makes us act according to the rules of right reason; but also that superiority of talent, skill, or ability which makes us excel, be it in the theory or be it in the practice of the Fine Arts, beyond those who apply themselves as much as we do. It is from this word that the Italians have formed the adjectives <u>virtuoso</u> or <u>virtudioso</u>, to name or praise those to whom Providence has granted this excellence or superiority. . . . they more commonly and more especially give this beautiful name to the best musicians

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. . . than to those who excel in the other arts, . . ." (Pincherle, 1963:16)

[6]The derivation of Yahweh (the modern mispronunciation being Jehovah) from hāwāh, one accepted by many scholars, interprets the name as "He (who) falls . . . ; or causes (rain or lightning) to fall (storm god); or casts down (his foes, by his thunderbolts)" -- representing early Israelite conceptions of the nature of Yahweh (Encyclopedia Brittanica, 15, 1926:312).

> "The association of Yahweh with storm and fire is frequent in the Old Testament; the thunder is the voice of Yahweh, the lightning his arrows, the rainbow his bow. . . . as the god -- or the chief god -- of a region and a people, the most sublime and impressive phenomena, the control of the mightiest forces of nature are attributed to him. As the God of Israel Yahweh becomes its leader and champion in war; he is a warrior, mighty in battle; but he is not a god of war in the specific sense." (Encyclopedia Brittanica, 15, 1926:313-14)

[7]This was a player of a harplike stringed instrument -- the kithara -- as an accompaniment to his singing.

[8]It was not in any of the democracies, but in conservative Sparta, that women possessed privilege and exercised influence. Aristotle, according to Pomeroy (1975:39), theorized that the physical absence of men, abroad fulfilling military obligations, was largely responsible for the freedom enjoyed by Spartan women.

[9]In the urban and cosmopolitan city-states, in particular, a minority constituted the community proper. The majority included the non-citizens, the slaves and the women, who were generally not formally educated.

[10]In the Greek democracies, women of the respectable class enjoyed far less freedom than in the Homeric Age, and Athens, especially, was known for the seclusion and subjection of its women (Bowra, 1957:39). This will be discussed at length later.

[11]". . . when the art of singing or playing some instrument had barely taken shape, a rivalry arose among the most gifted performers, and that certain of them excited an admiration which served as a stimulant and contributed in the highest degree to progress in their primitive technique" (Pincherle, 1963:17).

[12]The ideas associated with a view of the twofold power of music -- both to soothe and to stir the mind -- Sachs (1943:254) declares "were by no means Hellenic; they had existed in China and Egypt. . . . But it was a Greek trait . . . to organize them in a pedagogical system."

[13]"In our modern Western civilization we are accustomed to speaking of musical art in a dual sense; we deal with popular or folk

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music and with 'art' music. There is not enough material at our disposal to enable us to make this distinction in Greek music." (Lang. 1941:4) Reese (1940:13) states, however, that folk art is mentioned in "literary remains which tell us of all manner of work songs -- songs for stamping barley, treading grapes, spinning wool; songs for rope-makers, drawers of water, watchmen, shepherds," which may have inspired the lyric (music sung to the lyre) works of the later poet-musicians.

[14]Lang (1941:18), discussing the sudden popularity of instrumental dexterity in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C., notes: "The serene and simple melodies disappear. Contemporary critics found the melodies overloaded with embellishments, tonalities too frequently changed, and the instrumental accomplishments noisy and thick."

[15]Sachs (1943:58) describes a similar gradation according to knowledge and ignorance, and to art and folk music, reflected in the ancient social order of Japanese musicians:

> ". . . , the highly respected first class comprised educated musicians who read notation and specialized in spiritual music. The second class, formed by players of secular music who were uneducated and, . . . , ignorant of notation, was on the social level of the merchants. The third class embraced the blind singers for folk music. Women were, as a rule, confined to the lowest style of music, and this was true also for girls of society who performed music as a part of their education."

About the women, Gradenwitz (1949:27) adds more detail:

> ". . . women were not permitted to sing or play the religious music of the educated musicians, nor could they join in the music making of the less educated merchant classes; they were confined to the lowest style of music and forbidden to use the tunes and styles of higher classes even if they had enjoyed a higher education."

[16] In Ancient India too a singer was expected "to know the science of music, to have a sweet voice," but it was insisted that he sing exactly as taught "without any ingenious attempts to improve the master's composition or supplement it by flourishes," and it was forbidden for him to take money or any other remuneration (Sachs, 1943:183).

[17]Sexual attraction between males was common and accepted (and even recognized in myth). Pomeroy (1975:114) refers to ". . . the famous male prostitutes of Athens, the youthful slaves reserved for the pleasures of men."

[18]De Beauvoir ([1949] 1970:82) assesses the situation of women in Sparta in accordance with her theory that the oppression of women has its cause in the will to perpetuate the family and to keep the

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patrimony intact:

> "In Sparta the communal regime was in force, . . . The girls were raised like boys; the wife was not confined in her husband's domicile . . . all children belonged in common to the city as a whole, and women were no longer jealously enslaved to one master; or, inversely, one may say that the citizen, possessing neither private wealth nor specific ancestry, was no longer in possession of woman."

[19]This hostility is also to be found in the writings of the poets Semonides (seventh century B.C.) -- he catalogued women's vices -- and Phocylides (sixth century B.C.), both of whom compare women to species of livestock.

[20]The goddesses, it should be noted, are archetypal images of human females as envisioned by male writers. Desirable characteristics -- knowledge and wisdom; virginity and chastity; warmth; physical beauty, sexuality and fertility; wifeliness and motherliness -- are distributed among a number of females -- Athena, Artemis, Hestia, Aphrodite, Hera -- rather than being concentrated in one. The gods, on the other hand, enjoyed a wider range of activities. Pomeroy (1975:8) offers the following explanation: "A fully realized female tends to engender anxiety in the insecure male. Unable to cope with a multiplicity of powers united in one female, men from antiquity to the present have envisioned women in 'either-or' roles."

[21]The Greeks developed a complex harmonic, or acoustic, theory, with a coordinate system of notation.

[22]The mania for novelty and large-scale entertainment, Scott ([1957] 1966:416) contends, "was encouraged by those in authority, who saw in this a means of distracting the attention of the masses from action in the political field."

[23]The talents for instrument construction offer the strongest reasons for such assumptions.

[24]The author (or authors) of The Book of Chronicles I and II is generally considered to have belonged to the levitical guild himself. These detailed accounts, a major source of knowledge about the sacred musical culture of Ancient Israel are, therefore, taken by some scholars as exaggerated or, at least, not totally reliable histories.

[25]Tessitura is the prevailing compass of a vocal or instrumental part in relation to the total range of that voice or instrument.

[26]The Jerusalem Talmud describes Hygros ben Levi when he turned his voice to a trill:

> ". . . he would put his thumb into his mouth and place his finger [on the division line] between the two parts of the

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> moustache, so that his brethren, the priests, staggered backward with a sudden movement [enchanted with the beauty of the singing, or startled by the power of his voice]." (Tal. Yer., Shekalim V:2 [48d], as quoted in Sendrey, 1969:257)

[27]Recitative is a vocal style for the speechlike declamation or narrative, its main characteristic being a syllabic treatment of the text. More elaborate were the congregations' renditions of the acclamations.

[28]In addition, Jews did not refrain from adapting music of the outside world to psalms of worship.

[29]By this time, music had already lost its primitive function as an element of magic. Yet, as the attributing of Saul's healing to the effects of music demonstrates, it did not cease to be considered a potent means for subduing and exorcising evil spirits.

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CHAPTER III

SACRED SINGING: THE INFLUENCE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

By the fourth century A.D., a force had grown in the world that was to have the greatest possible effect on the singer and his song. Although the ancients sang in the home, at labor and in their temples and theaters,[1] "our own art is the child of the Catholic Church," asserts Henderson (1921:2). He states that its history can be traced in greater detail when that church became a single organization (in 324 A.D. with the unification of the Roman Empire, and consequently the Roman Church, under Constantine) -- its functions centralized under the dominion of one monarch and its musical style informed by a well-defined purpose.

Developing in the all-encompassing musical environment of the Romans and the Jews, it was inevitable that the early Church would adopt some of the practices already discussed. The disciples sang after the Last Supper, and Paul carried on the Hebrew tradition by exhorting the Ephesians to be "filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Eph. 5:18,19).

The first leaders of worship, according to Lang (1941:51), were recruited from the ranks of educated laymen, occupied no official position and were not ordained, but were respected people whose status was honorary. Many were cantors, an office taken over from the

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synagogue. In fact, many were probably musicians who had received their education in Jewish musical practice, introducing their art into the new Christian liturgy. Official positions began around the year 150. A century later lectors took on clerical status, while the cantor or psalmista seems to have remained a layman. As the liturgy developed, the duties of singers became more strictly defined.

> Owing to the number of lessons that had to be read, there were several lectors attached to a church, and the larger churches often had a considerable staff. Under the Emperor Justinian the choir of the Cathedral of Constantinople numbered one hundred and eleven lectors and twenty-five cantors. (Lang, 1941:51)[2]

The Lure of Song

In keeping with Weber's contention ([1915] 1946:343) that religions that have wished to be universalist mass religions have been directed to emotional propaganda and mass appeals and have entered into alliances with art because of its psychological affinity with religion. we find that the Catholic Church realized the power of music to stimulate belief, attract converts and conquer souls (Rushmore, 1971:12; Rolland, [1915] 1948:14):

> . . . when the Holy Spirit saw that mankind was ill-inclined toward virtue and that he were heedless of the righteous life because of our inclination to pleasure . . . He blended the delight of melody with doctrines in order that through the pleasantness and softness of the sound we might unawares receive what was useful in the words, . . . (St. Basil, [4th century] 1950:65)

> When God saw that many men . . . came unwillingly to Scriptural readings and did not endure the labor this involves, . . . , He blended melody with prophecy in order that, delighted by the modulation of the chant, all might with great eagerness give forth sacred hymns to God. For nothing so uplifts the mind, giving it wings and freeing it from the earth, releasing it from the chains of the body, affecting it with love of wisdom . . . , as modulated melody . . . (St. John Chrysostom, [4th century] 1950:67)

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> . . . our minds are more devoutly and earnestly elevated into a flame of piety by the holy words themselves . . . when they are . . . sung, than when they are not; . . . by the delights of the ear the weaker minds may be stimulated to a devotional frame. (St. Augustine, [5th century] 1948:172)

St. Basil ([4th century] 1950:65) saw the virtue of singing's power in uniting the people in "the symphony of a single choir." The congregation was encouraged in singing psalms and hymns[3] to the glory of God, and by the third century ". . . it had become customary to hear at a service the men of the congregation singing out a verse of the psalm, the women and children replying with another, and both joining in the refrain . . ." (Rushmore, 1971:12). Egon Wellesz ([1954] 1967:3) regards this repetition of musical phrases as evidence, even in the earliest Christian chant, of a tendency toward emphasizing the music over the words.

Similar examples are found throughout Jewish history and in the sacred writing: After the people had walked on land in the midst of the Red Sea and were saved from the Egyptians, "[t]hen sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord," (Exod. 15:1) . . . "And Miriam . . . , and all the women went out . . . with timbrels . . . And Miriam answered them, . . ." (Exod. 15:20-1). This antiphonal pattern, in which the basic thought of a verse was stressed through exchanges and repetitions of text, existed in the Jewish ceremonies as well and is the setting for many of the psalms (i.e., 13,20,38,68,89,118,136), but can be traced also to the Greek chorus and the Roman citharoedic chants.[4] Legend attributes its beginnings to the appearance of choirs of angels singing to the fourth-century martyr Ignatius (Ferand, [1956] 1961:6).

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Woman's Place in the Tradition of Christianity and Its Early Song

The participation of women in the Christian liturgy met with mixed feelings. At the time when Christianity dawned on the world women in the Roman Empire had attained, as we have seen, both more liberty and some share in the power structure.[5] At the same time, however, they began to lose ground in their overall prestige or status: ". . . it was just when woman was most fully emancipated that the inferiority of her sex was asserted," states de Beauvoir ([1949] 1979:87-8); ". . . when women's rights as daughter, wife, or sister are no longer limited, it is her equality with man, as a sex, that is denied her; the 'imbecility, the weakness of the sex' is alleged, . . ."

One might have expected to find women making even more progress under Christianity -- revolutionary itself.

> Jesus' nature itself had none of the overmasculine characteristics, such as physical strength and aggressiveness. Rather it reflected qualities common to civilizing motives in men and women. Jesus clearly intended his commandments to be accepted by both sexes. He never intimated in any way that he considered woman less able than man to understand his message. (Drinker, 1948:147-8)

Women had accompanied Jesus and, at first, women were welcomed in establishing the struggling faith and took part in the activities and spread of the doctrine. In particular, Elson [1904:36] relates that when the earliest meetings occurred in the catacombs, female members of the congregation took their part in singing the hymns. Within a short time, this appears to have ceased, however, for there is little mention of female participation in the singing of the congregation during the succeeding two centuries (Quasten, 1941:151). ". . . a long farewell to happiness for almost all girls and women was fated to come, for real hostility to women was on its way," Seltman (1956?:183) proposes. It

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turns out that, as he (1956?:184) puts it, "Jesus was a feminist to a degree far beyond that of His fellows and followers."

Seltman (1956?:185) points to Paul of Tarsus as the figure frequently observed as beginning a "somewhat nonsensical anti-feminism" -- and one that affirmed the Jewish tradition of the religious and legal incapacity of women. The fact that Jewish women had reached a low state at the time of the birth of Christian culture had direct bearing on the status of women under Christianity and their relation to the music of their group. Other reasons for the ignobling of woman are based directly on the premises of Christian thought. Man's belief that the final judgment was coming led to a disregard for the material world, especially the bodily world, on the grounds that procreation was useless and that sexual intercourse bound the body to the earth. ". . . the more comprehensive and the more inward the aim of salvation has been, the more it has been taken for granted that the faithful should ultimately stand closer to the savior, the prophet, the priest, the father confessor, the brother in the faith than to natural relations and to the matrimonial community," Weber ([1915] 1946:329) has written.

An ascetic ideal of chastity and continence, emphasis on the spiritual life and denial of the flesh, a negation of life, naturally left women (connected to these denied and devalued functions as the bearers of life), henceforth, lower in status: ". . . the strength inherent in woman was distorted into a weakness -- worse than a weakness, a menace. . . . giver of mortal life became the withholder of the spiritual life, . . ." (Drinker, 1948:167). The latter is illustrated by Clement of Alexandria: "By no manner of means are women to be allowed to uncover and exhibit any part of their person, lest

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both fall -- the men by being excited to look, they by drawing on themselves the eyes of men" (Quoted in O'Faolain and Martines, 1973:133). De Beauvoir ([1949] 1970:90) agrees, summarizing this issue for us: "In a religion that holds the flesh accursed, woman becomes the devil's most fearsome temptation." This is obvious in a description by St. Chrysostom of her as "a necessary evil, a natural temptation, desired indeed, but bearing calamity with her, a domestic peril, a deadly fascination" (Quoted in Boulting, 1910:8).

From Ephesus, Paul wrote of the freedom enjoyed by women and denounced it, ruling instead: "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak . . . And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church" (I Cor. 14:34-5). As the Church grew in numbers and influence, it continued to embody the corpus of Pauline writings, including the implicit subordination of the female. Others, subsequently taking up this theme, wrote even more ungraciously about women and, according to Seltman (1956?:188), "[t]he dislike, even the hatred, of women grew to be pathological." De Beauvoir ([1949] 1970:155-6) agrees:

> It is Christianity which invests woman anew with frightening prestige; fear of the other sex is one of the forms assumed by the anguish of man's uneasy conscience. . . . the flesh is sin. And, of course, since woman remains always the Other, it is not held that reciprocally male and female are both flesh: the flesh is for the Christian the hostile Other -- precisely woman. In her the Christian finds incarnated the temptation of the world, the flesh, and the devil. All the Fathers of the Church insist on the idea that she led Adam into sin. We must quote Tertullian [ca.150-230]: "Woman! You are the gateway of the devil. You persuaded him whom the devil dared not attack directly. Because of you the Son of God had to die. You should always go dressed in mourning and in rags." . . . Christian literature strives to enhance the disgust that man can feel for woman. Tertullian defines her as "a temple built over a

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> sewer" . . . St. Augustine [354-430] called attention with horror to the obscene commingling of the sexual and excretory organs . . .[6]

Donaldson (1973:183) quotes passages from others:

> . . . the gentle Clement of Alexandria [first century] hits hard when he says: "Nothing disgraceful is proper for man, who is endowed with reason; much less for woman, to whom it brings shame even to reflect of what nature she is." Gregory Thaumaturgus [213-270] asserts: "Moreover, among all women I sought for chastity proper to them, and I found it in none . . ." The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs . . . adds: "By means of their adornment they deceive first the minds of men, and they instil poison by the glance of their eye, and then they take them captive by their doings," and therefore "men should guard their senses against every woman. . . . The angel of God showed me, . . . that . . . from the king they take away his glory, and from the valiant man his strength, and from the beggar even that little which is the stay of his poverty."

Although Arthur (1933) explores negative images of women in Greek literature, she discovers positive ones as well. Although there were certainly examples of anitifeminism in Imperial Rome, they were offset, Seltman (1956?:189) observes, by Horace, Tibullus and Ovid. In the early writings of the Church, however, the latter finds no antidote to the phobias of Tertullian and Saint Augustine. "Even those men who appreciated the value of womanhood to Christianity failed to take a militant stand against the profaners of women," states Drinker (1948:197). And there is no evidence to lead us to believe that women themselves put up any fight for their honor and their rights.

> Very rarely, before the sixteenth century, do we pick up the faint, uncertain whimpers of complaint. What we pick up instead is the voice of the male, a voice often tremulous with anxieties that go back at least to the makers of the Eve myth and probably beyond, to memories of matriarchies and female aspirations after power. These memories seem to have persisted less in female rebellion than in male suspicion of it. (O'Faolain and Martines, 1973:xv)

With such as St. John Chrysostom fulminating, "[a]mong all savage beasts none is found so harmful as woman" (Quoted in de

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Beauvoir, [1949] 1970:90), woman became an outcast. What, then, became the way to treat such a creature? "Surely the best plan was to shut her up. . . . to stay at home, and not let herself be seen anywhere. . . . this duty the Christian writers impress upon her again and again" (Donaldson, 1973:183). This answer is reminiscent of descriptions of the Athenian wife. The good Christian woman, too, was

> . . . not to go to banquets, . . . She is not to go to marriage feasts, . . . Of course, she is not to wander about the streets in search of sights, nor to frequent the theatre, nor the public baths, nor the spectacles. . . . During the only occasions on which she may quit her own house . . . visiting the sick or going to church -- she must be veiled. (Donaldson, 1973:183-4)

In a short time, then, we find women to be without representation in the governing body of the organized Church in the West and limited to functioning in only two capacities -- as martyrs and as widows (or, later, deaconesses), the latter providing services to the poor and needy and looking after the places of worship. The entire exclusion of women from any sacred ecclesiastical function, Donaldson (1973:63) comments, stands in striking contrast with both heathen and heretical practices. And contrary to age-old combinations of male and female deities, the Christian godhead became a trinity of male power -- Father, Son and Holy Ghost.[7] Sections of written accounts of Christ's contacts with women were, as was the case in the sacred Jewish writings, "methodically expurgated to suit the ideas of the ecclesiastical authorities" (Drinker, 1948:171).

Although Paul's rule that the women should be silent in the holy assemblies (I Cor. 14:34) was in strict conformity with the practices of the synagogue and the rabbinic warning that the voice of woman leads to licentiousness (Tal. Bab., Sotah 48a), it was not,

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however, unanimously accepted in the Christian Church. Women did come to function as Christian singers in roles similar to those in early Judaism -- both as members of the congregation and in liturgical choirs -- with the encouragement and sponsorship of Church leaders, into the fourth century. Their exclusion would have stood in sharp contrast to the early Christian ideal of the community of souls, which was embodied in congregational singing where "all sing as with one mouth," "all . . . should be made into one choir" (Ignatius of Antioch, as quoted in Quasten, 1941:152). It also would have gone against the acknowledgment of the spiritual equality of women, an assumption which led to many contradictions in the thinking of the great Christian writers.

Clement of Alexandria, Drinker (1948:161) shows, had expected to simply receive women's rituals into Christian ceremony: "This is the mountain beloved of God. . . . there revel on it, not the Maenads, the sisters of Semele, the thunderstruck, but the daughters of God, the fair lambs who celebrate the holy rites of the word, raising a sober choral chant." St. John Chrysostom urged fathers to sing with their wives and children: ". . . you should not only sing praises yourselves, but . . . you should also teach your wives and children to sing canticles, . . . psalms and hymns, . . . (Quoted in Drinker, 1948:159). Mention of the beautiful singing of young women (the rich, low-pitched voices of mature women being particularly tabooed), causing churches to become renowned and helping to draw converts, occurs in connection with the heretical Arian sect church parishes of Bardesanes and Harmonius; the Bishop Paul of Samosata, leader of the Marcion sect at Antioch; and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem (Quasten, 1941:153-5). A description is offered of the latter: "Every day . . . , all the monks

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and virgins, or as we say [in Jerusalem] the monozantes and parthenas descend. . . . , not merely they, but lay people, men and women as well . . . until the break of day, hymns and Psalms are chanted in alternate chant" (Aetheria, as quoted in Quasten, 1941:155). Girl choirs and their training of women to sing had become well-established institutions in numerous regions of the Church's influence by the fourth century. Choirs in important churches -- in Edessa, Antioch, Jerusalem and Alexandria -- from the second century onward, were composed of nuns.

The Nature of Christian Chant

The elementary form of syllabic chant -- "mainly Jewish, using one or at most two notes to a syllable and having melodic sequences but no rhythm or measures" (Rushmore, 1971:12) -- were adopted and intoned by the congregations of the first Christian churches. It was this form in which the simple communications of the liturgy were set forth.[8] But even at the outset, "when the fathers of the church had no thought of vocal or musical art," Henderson (1921:6-7; 1916:339,42) illustrates that

> . . . the art principle was present, unrecognized by them. The element of floridity, which passed into the service of the church even as early as St Paul's time, was the agent of musical freedom. . . . soon after the singing of several notes to a syllable became permissible the purely musical expressiveness and decorative quality of that style became patent to the fathers. . . . they found that the beauty of the chant could be heightened in this way . . .
>
> . . . the florid element has a firm and clearly planned aesthetic basis. It began in the regions of spiritual utterance. . . . From this time, . . . , we may trace the progress of floridity in vocal music and determine its two-fold quality of emotional expression and artistic decoration.

There evolved three types of plainsong or plainchant melody:[9]

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(1) syllabic, in which each note is set against a syllable of the text; (2) neumatic or group, in which a small group of notes are generally sung to one syllable; and (3) florid or melismatic, in which extended groups of notes are set to one syllable. The first type is used when the text is regarded as most important, whereas the third is common when the music is more important than the text and the performers and performances of such music -- the singers and their presentations -- are deemed important too.

Robert Lach (1913, as quoted in Werner, [1959] 1963:167) offers six possible origins for melismatic music:

1. infantile expression of sensual pleasure
2. imitation of the singing of the birds
3. primitive magic incantation
4. imitation of musical instruments
5. virtuosity of professional singers
6. expression of religious ecstasy

We have already seen connections between the first three of these and functions and styles of singing among primitives. We will now focus on the sixth as the reason for the presence of this form in the organization of Catholic chant, with the existence of number five enabling the desire for such floridity to be carried out. The change from syllabic to melismatic chant is an example of the "wave-theory" of art, as described by Alec Harman (1958:4): ". . . the crests representing (in this case) a high degree of conscious elaboration and the troughs simplicity, either natural when the artist is unsure of or experimenting with his medium, or deliberate when he is pruning excessive ornamentation or trying to achieve a balance of expression."[10] This cycle of evolution and reform -- increasing ornamentation and reverting back to simpler forms -- is one that recurs repeatedly throughout the development of vocal music and, again, can be

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used as an indicator of the relative freedom and power of singers at any particular time period.

The melismatic mode was reserved for the expression of the higher emotions. The congregation, for example, in its ecstatic praise of God, sang rich, florid and soaring phrases, called jubilus, in their responses within the antiphonal service -- in their "alleluias," "kyrie eleisons" and "amens" -- while the plainchant was displayed in the liturgical utterances of the priests. Although these jubilations, with their long flourishes on a single syllable, their melodic extensions of vowel sounds and their artistic passage work -- the first examples of singing for its own sake in Christian chant -- contradicted the official ruling that music was only permissible if associated with devout words, the attitude of the church toward such vocalizations was, at first, one of acceptance. Social cohesion was produced through a shared musical experience, and the cohesion and emotional experience that resulted from singing together were connected to and thoroughly associated with the religious act.

The position of the Church was expressed by St. Augustine in his Exposition of the Ninety-Ninth Psalm: "He who jubilates does not utter any words, but a joyous sound without words: for it is the spirit lost in joy, expressing it with all its power, . . ." (Quoted in Henderson, 1916:342), a "free pouring forth, on the spur of the moment, of the feeling of a limitless joy and thankfulness . . ." (Quoted in Ferand, [1956] 1961:6). Cassiodorus (6th century) described the lengthy alleluia-jubili: "The tongue of the singers rejoices in it; joyfully the community repeats it; and . . . it is renewed in ever varying melismata" (Quoted in Sendrey, 1969:199). And at the turn of the ninth

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century, Amalarius is found to be stressing still that it was not necessary to have recourse to words if souls could communicate, without reflection, what they felt (Quoted in Ferand, [1956] 1961:6). Melismatic chant was welcome because it praised God in a way words could not express (or perhaps because words did not get in the way). The Church, through St. John Chrysostom, categorized it as the song of the angels (Burkhalter B/A, [1966] 1968:7), its performance therefore an imitation of the angelic hymns,[11] but further qualified these ideas: "It is allowed to sing psalms without words, as long as the mind resounds within" (Quoted in Sendrey, 1969:201).

The soloistic element came to predominate, moreover, as the melismas became more complex, and solo singers, in a kind of religious ecstasy, dropped consonants. Although their singing acquired "a mystic implication which suited very well the intentions of the early Church" (Sendrey, 1969:201), the florid passages often became "not by-products but the goal itself," with the melodic core "only a pretext, so to speak, a logical justification" for the jubilant melismas (Ferand, [1956] 1961:6). Also, the emotional experience became individualistic -- and therefore different for performers and listeners -- rather than the interactive and somewhat socially-shared experience of singing together.

Such vocal execution came to be applied in varying degrees in two other directions besides the wordless hymns termed jubili, as Reese (1940:61) summarizes: in the solemn reading portion of the Gospels, etc., for which cantillation[12] was used in accordance with established formulas; and in psalm and hymn singing, which ranged from simple cantillation to full-fledged song. From the first centuries of the

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established Church, then, sacred melodies were decorated by singers improvising direct, spontaneous, inventive melismas. (Performance, Stark [1973:i] emphasizes, is essentially "instinctive or at least intuitive," and instinct "by nature spontaneous.") Later these would acquire more established and stable forms and finally be written down.

Hazards of Vocal Pleasure and the Dangers of Female Vocalization

It was soon realized, however, that besides raising religious exaltation, singing also brought out other emotions and impulses in direct contradiction to Christian teachings. Music was capable of not only enobling but also debasing man's moral fiber (Harman, 1958:2). ". . . the warm, sensuous tones of the singing voice, particularly of a woman, evoked all too powerfully the earthiness of man's nature," explains Rushmore (1971:12). His description (1971:12) of this situation is reminiscent of the Greek controversy over singing: "Within an orthodoxy of obedience and self-denial, the free, exhilarating expression of singing sat most uncomfortably." Later, St. Augustine ([5th century] 1948:172) wrote about this dilemma: ". . . when it happens to me to be more moved by the singing than by what is sung, I confess myself to have sinned criminally, and then I would rather not have heard the singing." If music was to be the servant of religion -- "Only that music is worthy to be heard in church which by means of its charms opens the mind to Christian teachings and disposes it to holy thoughts" (Grout, [1960] 1973:25) -- then one answer was to enforce the requirement that it be associated only with holy words.[13]

> God established the psalms, in order that singing might be both a pleasure and a help. From strange chants harm, ruin, and many grievious matters are brought in, for those things that are lascivious and vicious in all songs settle in parts

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> of the mind, making it softer and weaker; from the spiritual psalms, however, proceeds much of value, much utility, much sanctity, . . . , for the words purify the mind and the Holy Spirit descends swiftly upon the mind of the singer. (St. John Chrysostom, [4th century] 1950:67)

Concerned over the perils of vocal pleasure, the Church moved first against the disturbing power of the female voice, forbidding the voluptuous song of women to be heard in church, in an order (Didascalia) of 318: "It is decreed that women shall not speak in church, not even softly in an undertone, nor should they sing alone or take part in the responses, but they should be silent and pray to God" (Quoted in Quasten, 1941:157). "Their taking part in the singing of the mass was unwelcome and repeatedly forbidden; . . . ," states Sibylle Harksen (1975:47). For instance, Cyril of Jerusalem (ca.318-386) taught that women were to read and pray softly and only with the lips, without sound therefore, in order that they not speak in church, and Gregory Nazianzen (ca.329-ca.389) wished that virgins know how to sing the divine canticles with the heart rather than the voice (Quasten, 1941:162). In the Synod of Antioch (379), women were forbidden to join with men in chanting the psalms. Choirs came to be defined in the liturgy of Catholic Church music as groups of male singers who rendered vocally-prescribed parts of the Mass (Hayburn, [1960] 1961:10).

Isidore of Pelusium (fifth century) explained this sequence of events: "Perhaps women were permitted to sing along with men in the early ages to prevent their gossiping in church. . . . later the permission had to be withdrawn since it was learned that they did not derive any salutary fruits of penance . . . from divine song, but used the sweetness of melody for every kind of disturbance, . . ." (Quoted in Quasten, 1941:157). It was because woman was regarded as a menace to

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the spirit and as interfering with the quest of men for salvation, because they had "disturbed the austere contemplation of anchorites and tortured them with solicitations to forfeit their heavenly prize" (Boulting, 1910:8), that they were forbidden both the priesthood and the chorus. For example, St. Jerome warned,

> No pleasure should be taken in a friend [of female gender] who with "practiced throat sings a sweet song," for "through the sweetness of the voice the soul is wounded through the ear." (Quoted in Quasten, 1941:160).
>
> Repel a singer as you would some bane. Hurry from your house women who live by playing and singing, the devil's choir whose songs are the fatal ones of sirens. (Quoted in Henriques, [1963] 1965:16-17)

Finally, this saint added that there was an arrogance in the singing of women that could not be harmonized with the Christian idea of the position of woman (Quasten, 1941:159).

This attitude toward women singing originated in her connection with the flesh (see p.110), in her ancient participation in heathen worship and with her representations in antiquity as flutists, harpists, singers at banquets -- courtesans and harlots. This attitude was, of course, similar to that held by the Jews (see pp.90,97-8) and resulted in prohibitions of like intent (see pp.89-90,97-8).

Throughout the fourth and fifth centuries, however, numerous authorities continued to champion the psalm singing of women in the services. St. Ambrose of Milan (339-397), after whom the early and popular form of melodic chant that developed at the Cathedral of Milan was named, referred to responsorial singing of psalms by men, women, maidens and children and countered the early objections to female disqualification:

> The Apostle commands the women to be silent in Church; yet they sing well the psalms. For the psalm is sweet and

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> appropriate to every age and either sex . . . and even tender girls chant the psalm without detriment to their female modesty, and the virgins can sing the hymn to God . . . sweetly, but in all respectability. (Quoted in Werner, [1959] 1963:323)

Ambrose was one among others who were interested in the artistic musical effect resulting from the advantageous use of voices with a variety of timbre. (Higini Anglès [(1954) 1967:69] sees Ambrosian chant as quite original in general, the text often having been treated with much freedom and "more elasticity in the use of intervals and in modality.") St. Jerome (ca.340-420) attacked such transgressions:

> You are not satisfied to set a knowledge of the Scriptures before your fair admirers, you also wish to enjoy their voices and their singing. So you continue with your prescriptions, "Women too should sing praise to the Lord." You . . . allow what is not permissible, namely, you allow them to sing out what should be performed by them secretly and without any witnesses, . . . (Quoted in Quasten, 1941:159)

Female choirs were most rigorously encouraged, according to Quasten (1941:163), after the heretical sects had established such groups, as well as ranking women as prophetesses, lectresses and deaconesses. Of these Tertullian wrote: "How bold and wanton the women of the heretics are. . . . bold enough to teach; they dispute, they attempt exorcisms and cures, perhaps they even go so far as to baptize" (Quoted in Quasten, 1941:158). St. Ephraem of Edessa (306-373), who decided to "fight heretic beauty with orthodox beauty" (Werner, [1959] 1963:211) is one who taught choruses of virgins (his "Daughters of the Convent") to sing his hymns on Sundays and on feast days. Quasten (1941:154) quotes an anonymous contemporary on this subject: "When St. Ephraem saw how all were being torn away through their [the heretics] songs, and as he wanted to keep his own people from worldly and dishonorable plays and concerts, he himself founded choirs of

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consecrated virgins; he taught them the hymns and responses which were so rich in doctrine . . ." At the same time, therefore, that the voices wishing to forbid the song of women in church were becoming louder, the example of the heretics also prompted "true" Christian imitations of female choirs for tactical reasons -- to usurp a powerful weapon in the fight for souls.

Choirs that mixed the sexes were forbidden; but even in this, compromises were sought and occasionally attempted. An example is the fifth-century Syrian Testament of the Lord, "which would tolerate a female response, if the psalm itself was intoned by a male singer" (Werner, [1959] 1963:324). (Werner [(1959) 1963:324] speaks also of an analagous utterance by a Babylonian rabbi, who was inclined to be lenient to responses by women but sharply condemned their leading activities in singing.) Harksen (1975:47) claims evidence that antiphonies took place between nuns and monks placed on galleries facing each other and that, in general, "[i]n the convents of canonesses the rules were not kept so strictly; . . ." A final example is that of Theodoret (fifth century) who ordered men and women of all ages to sing psalms and hymns (Sendrey, 1969:197). It must be noted that these are only the first instances we will cite in which the Church overlooked Christian dictates in order to obtain the voices it desired.

The general rule, Werner ([1959] 1963:324) speculates, is that in the western regions, where licentious ceremonies had not been very popular theretofore, the authorities were considerably sterner against female singing -- ". . . women's songs, especially connected with the spring, were an immemorial part of folk-culture, . . . the church had

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steadily condemned all such cantica, . . . , as obstinate returns to diabolical paganism and devil-worship" (Lindsay, 1976:190) -- while in provinces where female participation in folk festivals and ceremonies had been an age-old custom, they were more liberal. Drinker (1948:207) accuses Christian priests of being "the implacable foes of women and women's music," such activities still being more prevalent in regions where the population remained pagan longer.

The Cloistered Voices of Women Singers

The only female singing condoned became that of nuns (and their tones were supposedly trained to sound sexless and devoid of human expression). In fact, the terminology which now designates women's voices (more exactly, voices higher than the normal range of men's voices) -- "alto," "soprano" -- have masculine endings, having referred to male (often boys') voices -- "high" and "above" or "highest," -- and having developed from such male usage. Forbidden to sing in the public churches, some females pursued music within cloistered religious institutions restricted to women -- the convents.

Those who chose this life of the "spirit" gained in prestige over other women. And aside from the benefits to their souls, Drinker (1948:157,195) holds that "women were undoubtedly attracted to the monastic ideal by reverence to their persons," finding in this alternative "a counteraction to the growing tendency to exclude them from the governing group" and a rise from the status of Jewish women, in addition to an escape from "the rude dominance of some unloved man." Putnam ([1910] 1970:71-2,76-8) decides that many "exceptional" women ("of good birth, strong character and independent ways") were willing to eliminate marriage and motherhood from their lives "for the sake of

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a free development" that they could find in the convents:

> She was treated as an equal by the men of her class, . . . had the stimulus of competition with men in executive capacity, in scholarship and in artistic production, . . . relieved . . . of the ceaseless competition in common life of woman with woman for the favour of the individual man. . . . At no other time . . . of the cloister have the rewards so preponderated as to carry her over in numbers.
>
> . . . we must regard the immense popularity of the convent in Europe in early times as largely due to the uneasiness of women under a patriarchal regime. We think today of the cloister as a refuge from the distracting liberty of secular life; it seems paradoxical and yet it is apparently true that the women of early Christendom fled from the constraint of home to the expansion of the cloister. . . . The impulse toward leadership which kept the men in the world sent the women out of it.

The early nun was not, therefore, a little sister of the poor, the conventional representation of that role, but a product of a social movement that came about with the lady abbess. Attractions of asceticism for early cloistered females included practical advantages provided by the convents:

> the best working conditions, training, material, and support for the talented and educated women of the times. (Petersen and Wilson, 1976:11)

> . . . a career outside of marriage for the bold. Women found scope for energy and talent, opportunity to cultivate intellectual, spiritual, and especially musical tastes. It was here in the convents, where women and girls assembled in the name of the Lord, that they participated in the evolution of the ritual and music of the new culture. (Drinker, 1948:157)

The importance and pervasiveness of music in a fourth-century convent headed by Saint Macrina is offered by Carol Neules-Bates (1982:6-10) as evidence for the scope of training in singing possible in such places. In a letter of St. Jerome to the virgin Eustochius, he ruled that no sister of the convent of St. Paula might remain if she did not know the psalms (Sendrey, 1969:198). From about the sixth century, the rule of St. Benedict advocated monks and nuns spending a

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major part of the day in the practice and performance of liturgical songs. A seventh-century synod required an order of nuns to learn to recite the Psalms, care for the divine worship and take notice of the time at which they were expected to sing (Quasten, 1941:155).

In time, a few women's monasteries acquired enough wealth and power and enough of a tradition of skill and learning that many abbesses were virtually baron overlords in close relations with the courts and politics, and certain individuals were able to assert some degree of artistic independence. For examples of the latter, Drinker (1948:198-201) names the ninth-century Byzantine nun Kassia, the tenth-century canoness Hrosthwitha and the German Mechthild for their musical talents but adds that these reputations were generally by-products of other achievements -- "On account of the stigma of inferiority cast upon women collectively, only those few nuns who were outstanding in some other way won a recognition that was accorded to many men of no greater ability."

Abess Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179) (the lone woman composer of sacred music from the Middle Ages for whom a significant body of chant remains intact [Neules-Bates, 1982:14-20; Yardley, 1986:25,28-8]) and her repertory intended for the trained voices of her own convent support the belief in a continuation of these trends. Opportunities for musical education, training, development and performance in such institutions were meagre, however, compared with those that became available to male musicians within the Church proper. In addition, the total number of women from whom music might issue was far lower than the total number of potential men musicians. As for their compositional capabilities, male musicians in the Church were in positions in which

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they could exchange ideas, test thoughts and try out creative efforts on sympathetic, skilled and authoritative others. Women generally lacked such opportunities, in addition to being psychologically restrained by the emphasis on humility and abnegation characteristic of their religious life. "Like Hroswitha, Hildegard declared that she was merely a vessel for divine revelations" (Yardley, 1986:30).

The Evolution of a Professional Choir

Going beyond forbidding women to sing in the churches, the Christian community of Rome came to adopt a general attitude against ecstasy. "In no instance did this community accept on its own initiative any irrational element, . . . , into the religion or the culture," Weber ([1922] 1964:180-1) declares. By the middle of the fourth century, neither men nor women of the congregation were permitted to lift their voices in praise of God. Response singing and other parts of the service were designated to specially trained choirs of canons, or singing men, by the Council of Laodicea. The Council forbade active participation by the congregation -- ". . . no one should sing in church other than the singers appointed to do so from their pulpit" (Quoted in Langhans, 1886:20) -- defending "rightful singers against the encroachment of undesirable people" (Lang, 1941:52). It is also possible that the jubilations and supplications sung by the people had become too difficult for them. In addition, the Church's adherence to Latin, coincident with the decline of that language as a vernacular among the people, further contributed to the termination of participation by the laity in the church song (Langhans, 1886:20).

Early in the century, Pope Sixtus (432-440) reportedly had

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founded a school -- "its purpose the singing of the chant" (Quoted in Hayburn, 1979:3) -- in Rome "devoted solely to the training of male voices" (Elson, 1904:36). This would have made possible the transfer of the musical service to the choir. Later popes established monasteries for the daily practice of psalmody, which furnished the prayers and songs for the papal church services. The Ordo Romanus IX stated: ". . . in whatever school shall be found boys who sing, they are fetched out and brought up in the singing-school, and later on become papal officials" (Quoted in Angles, [1954] 1967:94-5). Leo the Great, Pope from 440-461, built the monastery of St. John and St. Paul near St. Peter's, its members performing liturgical prayers and chants for the papal basilica. Pope Leo asked that "everything in the chant be suitable to the holiness of the holy place" (Quoted in Hayburn, 1979:3). Hayburn (1979:3) lists successive Popes who attempted to upgrade and aggrandize the chant: Hilary (461-468), who founded two monasteries for its care; Symmacus (498-514); Hormisdas (514-523); John I (523-526) and Boniface II (530-532). Near the end of the sixth century, Benedictine monks, in order to escape the Lombard invaders, settled in Rome under Pope Pelagius II (579-590), thereupon to perform the chant functions for the Papacy (Reese, 1940:119). Angles ([1954] 1967:95) concludes that historical testimony shows that "a vigorous musical evolution took place in Rome from the fourth century onwards, though its phases cannot be exactly determined."

Henderson (1921:17) suggests that, in the beginning, the purpose of such schools was for learning the chants themselves (committing them to memory was one of the most difficult and lengthy tasks of the church singer), rather than teaching vocal technique. But

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since unity in delivery had to be attained -- the Rules of St. Paul and St. Stephen (first century) required that psalmody be executed by the choir "as if it were one voice; none of the singers would sing faster or louder than the others" (Quoted in Lang, 1941:53)[14] -- schools of chant had to address themselves to stylistic rudiments as well. Chant is a smooth and flowing kind of melody. Its singing required a perfect legato[15] (which in turn demanded excellent breath control) united with clear enunciation of the words.

> And so from the endeavor to form a style of delivery for the church chant must have come the discovery of the fundamental elements of vocal technic. . . .
> . . . All that remained to be added was a moderate amount of facility in the florid passages, a facility which was destined to develop into unexpected and amazing brilliancy. (Henderson, 1921:17-18)

Whether this happened or not is not agreed upon in the literature. Henderson (1921:20) feels that the erroneous belief that modern singing was born somewhere near the close of the sixteenth century has obscured the facts. "Chief of all mistakes," he (1921:23) says, "have been that which represent the art as without any substantial body of technic and that which depicts the method of delivering the chants as entirely choral, . . ."

Duey (1951:30), on the other hand, claims that the medieval centuries -- an era in which the Church made the subservience of the performer to the music philosopher complete -- did not offer much evidence of vocal virtuosity. Performers, he says, were unflatteringly described by several theorists as blind and ignorant beasts of habit, the philosopher (according to Boethius [ca.480-524]) being the real musician, the composer second -- ". . . the true musicus is not the executant but the one who understands the theory, as superior to

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practice as soul is to body" (Boethius, as quoted in Chadwick, 1981:87) -- and the proper object of intellectual inquiry being the science, not the art, of music. (This disparagement of actual music-making and of performers follows from a similar perspective held by the ancients [see pp.43-5,69-70.) Duey (1951:30) concludes:

> When we read, "But he is a musician who, in the light of reason, has acquired the science of singing not through the servitude of performing, but through the command of contemplation," it is clear why the not inconsiderable vocal art and virtuosity of later antiquity passed into limbo. Any art ruled over by such a dictum must wither.
>
> And it did. Nearly a thousand years passed before the singing artist regained his position of importance. For at least half this time nothing worthy of the name of virtuosity is evident.

How seriously these philosophies were taken and how completely the Church was able to control the performer is questionable, however. And perhaps the heart of the controversy resides even moreso in the definition of a "performer" for these authors. Would Duey have included the canons in this class? Was church singing considered a performance? (It certainly had been in the Jewish community [see pp.92-3].) Forming answers to these questions requires looking at performers outside the Church.

Secular Song As a Nonentity

We have not yet spoken about secular music at this time beyond its use to make more pleasant the laboring of varying professions (see n.1, Sect.2). Despite Pope Clement's (93-101) negative precept forbidding the use of the psalms and hymns outside of the services themselves ("In the pagan festivals, let us not sing the psalms" [Quoted in Hayburn, 1979:2]), secular singing often consisted of psalm melodies, showing how closely religious and secular singing were

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interwoven in Christian as well as Jewish daily life. Our sources expound on vocal music within the Church but hardly mention such other manifestations of vocal art. But there evidently existed a considerable vogue of profane music and entertainment, as evidenced in a passage Lang (1941:53) quotes from St. Basil: "There are towns where one can enjoy all sorts of histrionic spectacles from morning to night. . . . . we must admit, the more people hear lascivious and pernicious songs, which raise in their souls impure and voluptuous desires, the more they want to hear."

The Church, aware of the sensual attraction of a fine voice (especially woman's), whether within or outside the Church, attempted to keep the people away from such professional singers with threats such as: ". . . those who delight their eyes and ears on such spectacles commit adultery" (Quoted in Lang, 1941:53). It also aimed its warnings at the singers. A fifth century bishop, Hippolytus, declared the following edict: "A woman who attracts people with her beautiful but deluding sweetness of voice (which is full of seduction to sin) must give up her trade and wait forty days if she is to receive communion" (Quoted in Drinker, 1948:179 and Rushmore, 1971:14). The attitude was not a particularly new one. Female musicians of inferior moral character were mentioned by the prophet Isaiah (see p.98). It was at such musicians that the Old Testament admonition "[d]o not associate with a woman singer, lest you be caught in her intrigues" (Ecclus. 9:4) was aimed.

Most secular music was connected either with social occasions upon which the early Church looked with horror or with pagan religious exercises which the Church wanted exterminated. In 542, Bishop

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Caesarius of Arles complained about the numbers of peasants and women who "kn[e]w by heart and recite[d] out loud the Devil's songs, erotic and obscene" (Quoted in Drinker, 1948:178). The Romans' coarser and more spectacular adoption of Greek forms of entertainment caused such music to be associated with "debauchery and immorality," according to Harman (1958:1-2), who concludes: "Small wonder, then, that the Church authorities were in a quandry and felt it imperative to draw the line somewhere, . . ." "Every effort was made," Grout ([1960] 1973:2) claims, "not only to keep out of the Church music which would recall such abominations to the minds of the faithful, but, if possible, to blot out the very memory of it." How much may have slipped in and been preserved and how much could have survived outside the Church is not known. Except for religious canticles voiced in the home, Christian song was supposed to exist only in the churches and monasteries. In spite of the concern of medieval society with the afterlife, Hauser ([1974] 1982:273) makes clear that the natural forms of society and the supernatural bonds of faith were separate from one another, and so their respective musics would have to be also. "Church doctrine of the unity of the two orders . . . never went so deep that political groups or an association of kinsmen achieved any religious significance" (Hauser, [1974] 1982:273).

Forbidding such a popular means of expression was naturally unrealistic. The frequency of warnings and threats against musicians and listeners alike is an indication of the extent of the failure on the part of the Church to eliminate the desire the people maintained for such music. Secular singing, though suppressed, undoubtedly continued, but what it was that was sung and played we do not know, for

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no records have survived. ". . . next to nothing is known of European popular song during the first thousand years of the Christian era" (Angles, [1954] 1967:93). And what little we do know comes mainly, Grout ([1960] 1973:23) points out, from incidental references, usually hostile, in contemporary clerical writings. Perhaps this is the reason for Duey's claim that vocal virtuosity was absent during these years.

Sacred Virtuosity and Solo Chanters

Contrary to Duey's assertions, Henderson (1921:20) contends that, almost in its inception, the chant was touched by the luxurious taste of professional singers and decorated with "those flowers of song which the Italians call 'fiorituri'." His argument is inseparable then from the question: what determined the presence and extent of melismatic, rather than syllabic, chant?

Werner ([1959] 1963:171) postulates three possibilities: the type of rendering, the character of the text and the liturgical occasion, all of which he finds to have influenced chant composition and its vocal delivery.[16] Considered an embellishment of the worship in both church and synagogue, "the greater or lesser amount of ornate chant stands in direct proportion to the degree of liturgical solemnity of the respective occasions" (Werner, [1959] 1963:170). And, with exceptions, the ornate style is found in laudatory and supplicatory prayers but less in proclamatory, dogmatic, didactic or narrative parts of the liturgy. This positioned it, as we have seen, more on the side of the congregation and, later, more strictly, the choir than on that of the clergy. Even more important to our study, its practice in soloistic forms seems to have been a governing principle:

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> In the Roman Church very few texts are sung by a soloist, however, outstanding among all of them is the Tract, a form richly embellished with melismata. . . . The same holds true for the Offertory which developed melismata when the choir had relinquished its rendering to a soloist; certain soloistic Graduals followed the same rule. (Werner, [1959] 1963:171)

Harman (1958:39) offers examples for the variety of performance possibilities: for the full choir, a solo voice, or a select choir, making the generalization that "[i]t is probable that the full choir sang only the simple chants such as psalms, 'Credos', hymns, sequences, the less simple ones being performed by a 'select choir' of not more than six singers."

Henderson (1921:20) outlines three major influences that he finds to have served to quickly obliterate the chant's original simplicity. We might view them more as prerequisites for complex, elaborate vocal music: (1) the employment of professional singers in the Church; (2) the existence of a considerable store of vocal technique dating from antiquity and ready to be adapted; and (3) the development and preservation of vocal skill by the schools of chant (scholae cantorum). Chants, the author thus demonstrates, were not dull and monotonous but filled with richness and variety by trained singers.

> In the first Christian churches and up to about the eighth century the singing of the chants was improvisatory: not, of course, "free" spontaneous improvisation, but performance in which traditional melodic structures or "melody-types" (associated with particular parts of the liturgy or particular seasons of the church year) furnished a basis on which the singer embroidered, . . .[17] (Grout, [1960] 1973:43)

Such ornamentation not only offered great latitude to the singer but also demanded of him "skill, taste and sound musicianship," thus obliging singers "to make serious studies and to exercise their imaginations" (Henderson, 1921:26).

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These were solo chanters who, Henderson (1921:24) emphasizes, assumed the right to "give freedom to their fancies" and introduced into their singing the ornaments that had existed since antiquity. Albert Seay (1965:14) too refers to them as "professional singers" who turned to "elaboration and extension," and Werner ([1959] 1963:168), as "trained artists." The latter ([1959] 1963:168) agrees with Henderson, stating that it is plausible that some melismatic forms owe their musical adornments to the desire of men to exhibit their skill, and comparing this demonstration of virtuosity to that of the synagogue, where "the hazan's [the cantor's] vanity and wish to let his voice resound in all its glory has become proverbial, . . ."

Henderson (1921:22) demonstrates, further, that chanters quickly acquired "the self glory that has clung to singers," that we saw exhibited in ancient Rome, and ". . . began to swell with vanity, a product of their position, and soon showed a fondness for certain personal adornment. . . . cultivated long hair, of which the luxuriance, displayed on the soft silken tunics, . . . , added without doubt, as they thought, to the effect produced by the voice, . . ." To this can be added an injunction by St. Jerome, accusing church choirs of "bedewing their mouths and throats with sweet medicaments as if they belonged to a theatrical company" (Quoted in Duey, 1951:19). "The caprice of the artist has always existed" is a comment directed by Henderson (1921:24) at the role of the early Christian singer. But long before these professional church singers, one finds examples -- in ancient Greece (see pp.42-3), in ancient Rome (see p.66) and among the early Hebrews (see p.92) -- to which this statement already applied.

Choral singing had been the vehicle of a simple syllabic music

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(and representative of tradition), but ". . . solo singing, with its delight in melismatic ornamentation, naturally challenged tradition and became the organ of progress" (Einstein, [1937] 1947:18-19).[18] Werner (n.d.:128) describes this situation as two pairs of antithetic principles: "objective representation versus subjective expression; traditional chant versus art music." Solos (whether individual or group), Hayburn ([1960] 1961:15) explains, were not excluded, but they were expected not to predominate but rather to have the character of emphasis and melodic accentuation and to be bound up closely with the rest of the choral composition (Hayburn, [1960] 1961:15).

The early singing schools, having deteriorated during the overthrow of Rome and the fall of the empire (476), were reorganized during the early Middle Ages, culminating soon after Gregory I (590-604) became Pope with his founding of the Schola Cantorum in 590. This school for singers "established the authoritative delivery of the musical liturgy for all Europe" (Henderson, 1921:32) and provided singers for the Sistine Chapel Papal Choir. Its prestige increased with the centuries, and Gregorian chant (as it came to be called) made inroads into most European countries, eventually supplanting other (Gallican in Gaul, Ireland and Britain; Mozarabic in Spain and Ambrosian in Milan) western chants. "In spite of having been composed in a highly sophisticated idiom, in spite of running counter to the musical impulses of the people it sought to enthrall, ['divine law and the Roman chant', as Peter Llewellyn (1970:191) refers to it] eventually conquered all its opponents and became the fundamental artistic expression of the entire Christian world" (Ulrich and Pisk, 1963:26) -- "the pillar and foundation of the Roman musical tradition"

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(Angles, [1954] 1967:96).[19]

Standards of style were set and singers' careers controlled in the Church's attempts at procuring a monopoly on musical style. Singers educated at the Schola Cantorum were frequently sent to other countries in order to teach the liturgical melodies. By 630, Canterbury, for example, had a Gregorical chant school. "For the next seven or eight hundred years," Rushmore (1971:14) concludes, "the Church held the curious position of building and maintaining a technical and aesthetic standard of singing by presenting to the public, so to speak, fine professional vocalists, while at the same time trying to prevent the public from singing themselves."

Two buildings were set aside, one housing the singers and clergy of the papal church, the other an orphanage (the scholae were often synonymous with orphanages) to undertake training and educating future members of the choir. Pupils with good voices were selected from various church-directed scholae and obtained pensions (except those of noble birth) during their nine years of studies. In addition to their studies, they took an active part in the church services. This exacting training, Henderson (1921:26) says, "made almost every singer a composer," and "facility in invention acquired through constant practice prevented their vocal virtuosity from becoming cold and dull."

Based on the scrupulous care in selection and the rigorous and lengthy training that was involved, Henderson (1921:33-4) surmises that these voices must have possessed the power and flexibility which have long been associated with the best Italian singing: "The supreme test of vocal progress in the epoch making school was ability to sing solo music of a type elegantly, . . . , florid."[20] O'Brien (1950:87)

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concurs:

> That the Roman choir acquired great vocal skill is evident from the difficult passages which occur in many of the medieval musical MSS they used; only highly-trained singers could have attempted the intricate grace-notes and elaborate fioriture with which the early chant became ornamented. The Schola Cantorum executed this music with such technical perfection that they were recognized as unrivalled virtuosi.

And the origin of pure melody, O'Brien (1950:86) contends, can be found in these ornamental passages, these lyrical cantillations, these independent melodic phrases or melismae. They lightened the severity of the plainchant and were to play an important role in art music. This style's far-reaching influence has been related to various other, later vocal art forms:

> Gregorian chant is much more in harmony with the Bel canto of Milan than with pointed arches. . . . Gregorian art is never more at home than in the setting of baroque architecture, for it is meant for the soloist; it is an art of vocalizations and trills, . . . (Cingria, as quoted in Burkhalter B/M, [1966] 1968:28)

> Certain pieces were meant for solo-singing and when these were vocalized they must have been very like that intoxicating virtuosity of voice which was to be, much later, and in a different form, a feature of Italian opera. (Burkhalter B/M, [1966] 1968:28)

Embroideries were sometimes longer than the chants themselves. Many writers, Henderson (1921:41) states, complained of the prominence accorded to "this kind of vocal fantasia." At the stage when singers became more proficient and ". . . vocalises bec[a]me more frequent and more difficult, till the most developed monody require[d] the skill of an able coloratur[21] singer" (Frère, 1929:143), protests arose on behalf of the words -- in danger of being obscured by the elaboration of the chant. One means used to minimize this danger was limiting the fioriture to the first or last word or words of a phrase. Grout ([1960] 1973:63) also mentions the occasional appearance in manuscripts of

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admonitions to singers against self-display. Here again we see the status and function of the Jewish cantor paralleling that of the Christian lector, the hazan too having been often at odds with his superiors. But despite various kinds of attacks, the Church did not, on the whole, object to these new musical developments, Harman (1958:70) informs us, as long as they did not make a mockery of the service. It is important also to realize here that all such evidence is in sharp contrast to certain music historians' notions about an absence of vocal virtuosity and a disregard for the performer's or interpreter's role during this age.[22]

The Height of the Voices

Though only a few names of such singers can be recorded (Gregory himself, the deacons Leon, Redemptus and Sabinus; the English James; Theodore and Benoit, two famous papal singers sent to France at the request of Charlemagne; popes such as Sergius I, Gregory II, Stephen II, Paul I, Leo III and Sergius II) and though we have no actual descriptions of how these men sounded, preference for the high voice -- particularly the high voice that is flexible and capable of the elegant delivery of melismatic lines -- is evident in the repertory of ecclesiastical chant, states Owen Jander (1980:339).[23] Inherited from the synagogue, where the hazan had established an almost monopolistic influence with his brilliant coloratura singing, "[t]he virtuoso singer (presumably almost always with a high voice) was the performer-composer of the most ornate music of the church liturgy, . . ." (Jander, 1980:339).

Falsetto voices were common, though condemned by some: "Sometimes [the voice] is enforced into a horse's neighings, sometimes

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the masculine vigour being laid aside, it is sharpened into the shrillness of a woman's voyce" (Aelred, Abbot of Rievaulx, d.1166, as quoted in Harman, 1958:69). The role of boys (pueri of voci bianche [white voices]) of the scholae (who had most likely been brought in, at first, to replace nuns in the church service) is touched upon by Rembert Weakland (1966:860) in his discussion of Milanese Ambrosian chant of the twelfth century:

> The function of the pueri in services was an important one. They are frequently indicated . . . as singing solos -- especially on ferial [nonfeast] days. It cannot be assumed that they sang easier chants then the lectors since the psalmellus (Roman Gradual) of the Mass was always assigned to one of them and they sang the most difficult melismas of the Alleluja. They sang as a group quite frequently and sometimes in alternation with the lectors. In fact, one can see a certain rivalry between the two groups. One can assume that the pueri were spending more time rehearsing and thus capable of the more difficult chants.

Isidore of Seville, writing in the seventh century, lists numerous types of voices (most of which he considered offensive), comparing their characteristics: (1) acuta, sharp, i.e., high and thin; (2) dura, hard, i.e., one which emits sound violently; (3) aspera, harsh, raucous, and not smooth; (4) cocca, blind, i.e., it stops as soon as it is sounded (and thus dull and unresonant); (5) vinnola, delightful or pretty, i.e., sweet, soft, and flexible; and (6) perfecta, high, sweet, and clear. "The perfect voice," he ([7th century] 1950:96) wrote, "is high, sweet, and loud: high, to be adequate to the sublime; loud, to fill the ear; sweet, to soothe the minds of the hearers." This preference, demonstrated in much early vocal composition, seems to have been a fairly universal opinion and one that persisted. Women, the archetypical possessors of such voices, were, however, restrained from using them in religious song for about a

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thousand years.

Performer Creativity in a "Fixed" Medium

While the Golden Age of Gregorian Chant lasted until about the ninth century, and although Gregory's codifications and controls may have curbed the urge of even later composers to write new chants or embellish old ones, "the creative spark," declares Harman (1958:8), "takes little account of officialdom." The practice of inserting melismatic passages at certain places had been tolerated before Gregory and even after, but from the ninth century onward (when the plainsong began to be written down), not only new melodies were added but new texts as well.[24]

Alone among the arts, church music was continuously cultivated during the worst days of medieval disorder and upheaval. To the Schola Cantorum was "largely due the preservation of musical tradition and the development of the art during the Middle Ages," Grace O'Brien (1950:88) asserts. But to the monasteries, which had become not only places of learning but also centers of creative activity,[25] goes the credit for the new melodies and texts -- called tropes -- which ultimately became "no longer a prolongation of a liturgical chant, but an addition to it, or a paraphrase of it, or sometimes, an interpolation into it," engendering a repertory used to "fill in the 'blank' moments of the service" (Burkhalter B/M, [1966] 1968:49,65). Plainchant, with its allowance for textual portions to be embellished by the solo (male) singer, dominated church music into the thirteenth century. But before continuing with the history of the virtuoso singer in the Church, we must turn to the secular side of vocal art, which was finally making serious advances.

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CHAPTER IV

SECULAR SONG AND ITINERANT SOLOISTS

At the time that vocal art was being cultivated and refined in the Church, itinerant singers of popular song were recording the life of the times: of the peasant and noble, lover, warrior. The origin of the itinerant entertainer goes back to Roman times, when "mimes," "ioculatores" and "histriones" followed the conquering Roman legions, appearing everywhere with the expanding Roman civilization. ". . . their knowledge of literature and their musical ability were a remainder of the public theatrical performances and other festivities of antiquity," Lang (1941:109) reminds us.[26] Others were distant descendants of the Asian shaman -- a wandering combination of healer, clairvoyant and singer similar to African medicine men.

They were active during the early Middle Ages -- in folk song and folk dance; ". . . in the market-place and by the fireside the old popular music must have persisted," Hughes ([1948] 1970:95) feels. Bauer and Peyser (1932:89) show that they came from every rank, "gay scions who had spent their wherewithal, impoverished craftsmen, and even monks, tired of the discipline of the monastery, . . ." However, the memories and traditions they reflected were those of the pagan past. And, though increasingly considered indispensible as secular entertainers to a society without books or newspapers, "welcome and respect are not necessarily one." Sachs ([1961] 1962:204) says this of primitive African minstrels, drawing a parallel between their misery

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and that of these itinerant musicians (sometimes called minstrels), who were not socially acceptable and were generally regarded as vagabonds and notoriously immoral persons:

> The word had notoriously disreputable associations, both on account of the violent anathemas with which [minstrels] were visited by the Church, and by reason of the rabble of mountebanks, vagrants and rapscallions which it included. . . . "Which is the more shameful calling, to be a jongleur [one type of minstrel] or a thief?" [asked a later musician of more noble rank] (Briffault, 1965:90)

> "Can a minstrel be saved?" asked a theologian, . . . , and answered himself categorically: "No; minstrels are ministers of Satan. They laugh now, but God shall laugh at them on the last day." They were condemned more or less out of hand by the church authorities, . . . (Raynor, 1972:47)

The Church saw "in the minstrel's instinctive and genuine love of life and its pleasures the gravest threat to the spiritual welfare of the people" (Lang, 1941:109). The songs of the goliards (students and young men in minor ecclesiastical orders who wandered over Western Europe -- hence clerici vagantes) covered a wide range of subjects, favorites being wine and women or satire of ecclesiastical authority: "They include drinking songs, spring songs, rehashings of ancient classic poems, love-songs, songs moral and immoral . . . writings were frothy, sometimes obscene; their conduct was in accordance" (Reese, 1940:200). Some wandering entertainers were also soothsayers, fostering another connection between their songs and old mystic traditions and further explaining the hostility of the Church. Because of their often coarse renditions of gay and romantic songs, minstrels were banned by the Church and were refused communion and the sacraments.[27] "Such is the figure we can picture to ourselves, his viele [fiddle] slung across his shoulders, and his wallet of songs in his girdle, tramping through town and village on his way to a neighbouring castle, in search of food

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and housing; but we can also imagine that his visits prompted mothers to hide their daughters and old folks their purses" (Aubry, 1969:137).

Most information concerning early minstrelsy, therefore, consists of acts and decrees against it -- part of what Sachs ([1961] 1962:206) describes as an excessive "contempt, segregation and outlawry" that lasted one thousand years. The Council of Avignor, for example, decreed in 1209 that "at the vigils of the saints [held on the eve of important religious festivals] there should not be, in the churches any of this theatrical . . . rejoicings, . . . singers with their worldly songs, which incite the souls of those who hear them to sin" (Quoted in Burkhalter M/M, [1966] 1968:18). Minstrels were ignored by most chroniclers and pious writers. Therefore their music, lacking the skill of the church clerics to record it and custodians such as the choirs to preserve and pass it on to succeeding generations, hardly survived. Nevertheless,

> . . . people were reluctant to give up an art that had for ages past provided pleasure, spiritual recreation, and also a magic weapon. There was never a whole-hearted, complete acceptance of the restrictive rulings. If there had been, the continuous repetition of prohibitions would not have been necessary. . . .
>
> . . . Throughout the period known as the Dark Ages and throughout the Middle Ages, the majority of people continued to sing and dance and play upon instruments of music with the intention of influencing their environment. (Drinker, 1948:205)

How much secular music influenced what was heard in religious services cannot be ascertained either, as has already been noted, because its growth is so difficult to document.

The Jongleur

Of the various types of wandering musicians and singers that existed in every part of western Europe during the eleventh century,[28]

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the jongleur [latin joculator] -- the French example of "the tough, bawdy, traveling entertainer of his day, a one-man vaudeville show with his songs, dances, funny stories and tricks" (Rushmore, 1971:15) -- was often a master at his craft and a sound musician. Robert LeMains stated, "I can play, . . . , the lute, the violin, the pipe, the bagpipe, the syrinx, the harp, the gigue, the gittern, the symphony, the psaltery, the organistrum, the regals, the tabor and the rote [types of instruments]" (Quoted in Bauer and Peyser, 1932:89). In medieval Germany, regulations by and for the guildance of the wandering entertainer musician (the Gaukler) stated that one had to

> know how to invent, to make rhymes, to acquit himself well as a swordsman; to know how to play drums, cymbals . . . ; to know how to throw up little apples and to catch them on the point of a knife; to imitate the songs of birds, perform tricks with cards and jump through hoops; to play the cittern and the mandoline, to handle the clavichord and the guitar, . . . , to accompany well with the fiddle, and to speak and sing pleasantly. (Quoted in Raynor, 1972:45)

Jongleurs were often initiated into their trade by following and serving a master.

Female Minstrels

Lindsay (1976:188-9) claims that this class of musicians included many female jongleuses, "whom the texts show to have been dancers, acrobats, singers, musicians; but we do not hear of any composing poems."[29] Aubry (1969:131) speaks of "girls, half strumpet, half musician, who sang and piped when they were not turning somersaults." The wandering life of the jongleur often forced those that were married to take their wives and children along with them, a possible means, Arthur Elson (1904:56) and John Rowbotham ([1895] 1969:191) postulate, by which women became accustomed to taking part in

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performances. Drinker (1948:220) demonstrates that as early as 1378, what she calls the first professional women singers had appeared -- chantresses paid by Philip of Burgundy.

Iconography, literary sources and specialized terms in language are all shown by Neules-Bates (1982:28) to attest to the activity of women as minstrels. The first she (1982:29-33) documents with a sampling of five pictorial illustrations of women making music, from manuscripts dating from the tenth through the fifteenth centuries. The second is based on women's informal music-making as demonstrated in French romances of the twelfth through the fourteenth centuries.

> La clef d'amors . . . states that singing is a beautiful and noble thing for a young woman and that playing the psaltery, the timbre, the guiterne, and the citole are highly desirable skills. Chrétien de Troyes's . . . heroine Philomena knew how to read and write, how to compose poetry, and how to play the psaltery, the lire, the gigue, the rote, and the vielle. Frêne, the heroine of . . . Galeran de Bretagne, was educated in an abbey, where she was also trained well in music. . . . In the medieval romances, traveling French jougleresses are relatively common characters. Perhaps 5 to 10 percent of the traveling minstrels mentioned in the romances are female. (Coldwell, 1986:41,44-5)

The third source of evidence, specialized terms in the language for women singers, is apparent in the example "jongleuse" above and will become more evident as we proceed (see "jongleresse," p.147; "trobairitz," p.161; "ménestrelle," p.173; and "gliewmeden," n.33, Sect. 2). The fact that "women's songs," those in which the speaker is a woman, occurred in all the regional love-lyric traditions, lends additional support to Neules-Bates arguments.

Although many women and men sang songs, enlivened weddings and often behaved scandalously -- "the despair of the clergy" -- there were also among them those who "approached their work seriously and were

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sufficiently talented and cultured to perform in good society" (Reese, 1940:202-3). Regardless of the contempt in which secular musicians were held by the Church, it is noted (Bauer and Peyser, 1932:90; Dent, 1929:202; Westrup, [1954] 1967:222) that they -- at least the more reputable ones -- were welcomed everywhere without "benefit of clergy." Again we see that desired artists and entertainers were obtained despite the objections of the dominant institution -- the Church:

> Frowned upon and despised, they strove nevertheless, and even jongleresses were known to be admitted to public performances. Ecclesiastical dignitaries had them in their households,[30] princes and nobles harbored them in their castles, and even the monasteries called occasionally on their services. Remarkable as it seems, there is ample evidence to prove that whenever a church council was held the jongleurs congregated there in great numbers. (Lang, 1941:109)

That English clerics were accustomed to being entertained with music in their residences and that women were included as performers in such entertainments is evidenced in the following decree by the Roman Council held on British affairs in the year 679: "We also ordain the decree that bishops, and all whosoever profess the religious life of the ecclesiastical order, do not . . . keep musicians of the Female sex, nor any musical concerts whatsoever; . . ." (Quoted in Hawkins, [1853] 1963:265).

Some were lucky enough to find a position in a feudal household; others travelled from court to court, rendering selections from their repertoire. (This they replenished, Burkhalter [M/M, (1966) 1968:36-7] and Reese [1940:203] inform us, at "schools" of minstrelsy, which convened during Lent when the services of the jongleurs were not in demand.) In the isolated, fortified settlements, such wandering entertainers provided a diversion from medieval battle and a relief

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from the monotony of feudal existence. They were rewarded by both rich and poor in proportion to their musical skill and their popularity or power of pleasing and can be viewed as somewhat independent singer-entertainers. A jongleur or jongleuse might appear

> at court festivals and in the castles of the highest nobility; but they were also in evidence at the noisy feasts of the citizen class, at tournaments and warlike assemblies, and were not averse to furnishing the music for peasant weddings. . . . their activities embraced, besides singing and fiddling, the recitation of legends, acrobatic stunts, and magic tricks. They went from town to town, saw many things, and always interested people with their stories, thus fulfilling the role of the modern newspaper.[31] (Lang, 1941:109)

Courtly Society, Courtly Singers, Courtly Love and the Glorification of Woman in Song

Music, reflecting the times during which it evolves, was bound to be influenced by the political changes sweeping Europe. With the constant danger of war, "[t]he man of God had to step into the background and cede precedence to the man of arms. . . . knighthood came into being" (Pahlen, 1949:33). In the twelfth and thirteenth century ideology of the knight, worldly matters were coming to the fore: "friendship, warlike adventures, experiences in far-off lands, and, especially, love. . . . they sang of them, and wanted to be told of them as they sat round the campfire or in the lofty halls of their castles . . ." (Pahlen, 1949:34). As a consequence of the Crusades, Langhans (1886:41) proclaims, lengthy separation from home and family brought about a deepening of an emotional life till then unknown.

Until this time, music outside the Church had been practiced by lower-class musicians (jongleurs, etc.) and middle-class poet-composers (goliards), but it was from the upper classes that artists were produced who would improvise songs of the heroic (chansons de geste)

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and the amourous (of l'amour courtois, or courtly love).

The first known troubadour, the aristocrat Guilhem (William) IX, Duke of Acquitaine and Count of Poitiers (1071-1127), "wrote about love in a way that was destined to give woman a new place in the imagination" (Bogin, 1976:38). In his poetry, he declared himself a servant and took a lady as his master, exalting this obedience to woman as "the pathway to an almost mystic joy" (Bogin, 1976:38). It was this feature -- homage to the lady -- that was taken up by his successors and designated as fin' amors ("fine love" as opposed to the lustier variety) or, more generally, courtly love.

> The idea of courtly love -- a woman on a pedestal, flirtatious but demure, adored by a man who performs for her in tournaments, conversation, poems, and other chivalric services -- was presumed to furnish men and women with a constant, exquisite torture, giving their lives a safe piquancy, and lending society a set of tantalizing worldly rituals far more complex than anything the Church ever had to offer. (Mee, 1975:66)

It became "the moving spirit of a new poetry" of the troubadours, according to Bogin (1976:44), and lived on as chivalry -- the obligatory deference to women as the weaker, but purer and more virtuous, sex, as she (1976:10) defines it. Its history was recorded around the close of the twelfth century by Andreas Capellanus (The Art of Courtly Love). And with this development, the cleric ceased to be the representative of culture (Hauser, [1974] 1982:275). Troubadour lyric poetry's "conception of love, the intellectualization, romanticization, and mystification of eroticism, the metamorphosis of the joy of love into a cult of suffering and languishing, of dominion over the beloved into a humble service of love, is the most immediate and most fascinating form of that sensibility which becomes the source of the whole of modern emotional poetry" (Hauser, [1974] 1982:275).

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Minnesang as a social function of feudal society, Elias ([1939] 1982:84) reminds us, can only be understood in conjunction with an awareness of the situation and relations of the people who express themselves in it and the genesis of that situation. For example, the question of why the troubadours wrote in praise of women evokes many theories, for

> The elevation of the lady in the poetry of courtly love was a distinct reversal of the actual social status of women in the Middle Ages, and there has never been agreement among scholars as to just how seriously the troubadours meant their conceits of woman-worship. Throughout the Middle Ages women were the pawns of men. Depending on their class, they lived in varying degrees of comfort and misery. Only in the most exceptional cases did they have any say in their own destiny. (Bogin, 1976:10)

Elias ([1939] 1982:80) explains that the social basis which produced the inferior status of women and the corresponding contempt of man for her was her exclusion from professional (in this case military) life: "Go to your ornamented chambers, lady, our business is war." In fact, it was still a time of widespread misogyny: "The Church regarded women as so many incarnations of Eve, . . . the gate of the devil, the patron of wickedness, the sting of the serpent . . . virginity alone could truly detoxify the female sex" (Bogin, 1976:11).

The obsessive fear and hatred on the part of church male celibates of Eve and what she represented in the persons of girls and women found relief in the concept of a mother-goddess -- in the cult of the Virgin Mary, Mother of God. Here was the opposite of the sinner Eve. However, it was only in woman's association with Mary's role as a docile servant of the Lord that she could be redeemed. "As a servant, woman is entitled to the most splendid deification," states de Beauvoir ([1949] 1970:160), but this glorification comes only in her accepting a

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subordinate role. So we see that this image of woman, fostered by the Church, was also laden with contradictions: "For the first time in history the mother kneels before her son; she freely accepts her inferiority. . . . the supreme masculine victory, . . . the rehabilitation of woman through the accomplishment of her defeat" (de Beauvoir, [1949] 1970:160).[32]

For our purposes, we need only mention a few of the explanations discussed in Bogin (1976:44-47) for the rise of the status of women in this genre of secular poetry and song -- that the veneration of the lady was a "natural" development out of the vassal-lord relationship; that it was the expression of a deep psychological need left unmet by the unrelenting masculinity of feudal culture (and knightly love was a "compensation for the barbarism of the official mores" [de Beauvoir, (1949) 1970:93]); or that it was substantially derived in its form and content from the imported love poetry of Arabia and Andalusia, "where Arab poets had been worshipping their ladies for at least 200 years." Provence

> . . . had been overrun in the tenth century by Saracens. Saracen women, as courtesans and entertainers of men, were creative musicians, fashioning both words and melody in a sort of social and artistic ritual to the glory of love between men and women. It was a kind of love that had nothing to do with marriage and mating. It was a celebration of the free spirit and its defiant right to love according to its own laws. (Drinker, 1948:210)

Yet, it also included a contradiction to this freedom in that it was, in the end, love unattainable. "The lover pines, deploring the severity of the lady of his thoughts," Briffault (1965:82) explains, ". . . a commonplace current in the love-poetry of Moorish Spain." Arab poets had already declared themselves sari 'al-ghawani -- "victims of the fair."

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Another possibility was personal motivation. The troubadours had to please three different groups:

> the lord himself, upon whose grace they most directly counted, and his peers; his wife and her female attendants; and all the petty noblemen and court appendages, who were men of somewhat unclear status . . . It was a difficult assignment, but by using words deliberately layered with multiple meanings, the troubadours were able to address all three at once. (Bogin, 1976:49)

The model for the lady was often the wife of the employer. But the atmosphere of secrecy drawn about her in this covert poetic romance permitted every woman in the audience, including the patron's wife, to think that it was she. And making her his "lord" (midons) gave her an aggrandized image of herself, "a fresh estimate of her own importance" (Putnam, [1910] 1970:127). Finally, the word friendship (amistat) is used to describe the troubadour's relation to his lady. The poetry, Bogin (1976:53) demonstrates, is "so ambiguous, so cautious, that almost anything can be read into it and, indeed, almost everything has." Some read this kind of amors as platonic love, others as a cover for adultery (or more likely a legitimized fantasy of adultery) and still others as religious allegory -- "an upsurge of emotion, where desire, though recognized, becomes transcendently spiritual, raisng the beloved out of the ordinary world" (Belperron, 1948:60). The latter is connected with the enhanced reverence paid to Mary, who in this new worship of ladies became "the purest, sweetest and noblest figure in the whole heavenly host" (Boulting, 1910:13).

Bogin (1976:53) feels that these interpretations were probably all, to varying degrees, intended to be there. On this point, Arthur (1973:47) adds that, as in the opposition of the ancient Greek aristocratic poem to the bourgeois lyric, such medieval romances were

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contrasted by writings of contemporary bourgeois inspiration which attacked women. Fables, comedies and lays charged them with laziness, coquetry and lewdness -- attacks to which the court poets had perhaps left them open, in a society where the Christian life demanded the spirit as opposed to the flesh and placed so much value on marriage.

With the image of the noble lady receiving the lower-born poet as her vassal and Our Lady (Mary) receiving the knight as her sworn servant, the troubadour extended to the petty noblemen and other court appendages -- the "men of somewhat unclear status" (landless sons of nobles, sons of former serfs, bourgeoisie offspring and some troubadours themselves) -- the possibility of membership in a new aristocracy, one based "not on noble birth or feats of arms, but on nobility of spirit," as Bogin (1976:51) describes it.

> The knights created a cultural form which did not destroy the courtly idea of reserve but which created a true intellectual communion between the lord of the court, the courtiers, and the poets. The poetic courts which thus came into being not only serve to display possessions, power, and prestige, not only wish to impress, to win over, and to bind people, no longer are subsidized places of learning or mere instruments of public patronage, but are communities in which those who invent beautiful forms of life and those who realize and care for them belong to the same groups of people. Yet such communities come into being only where the social and intellectual elite is not divided or where access to the upper classes is immediately available to the poet striving to rise up from below. . . . where it is not birth and blood that make a man "courtly" a priori, but education and outlook which make him so. (Hauser, [1974] 1982:275)

Medieval Reorganization of Societal Relationships

This new social order, with its increased interdependence of human relationships, came about partially as a result of a gradual transition of the warrior society "from a more mobile phase with relatively large opportunities for expansion and social betterment for

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the individual, to a phase with increasingly closed positions, in which everyone tries to retain and consolidate what he has" (Elias, [1939] 1982:66). The few richer and larger lords gained in social power relative to the many smaller ones. Elias ([1939] 1982:67-8) explains the economic and sociological reasons for this having come about:

> At courts of the great lords, by virtue of their direct or indirect involvement in the trade network, whether through raw materials or in coined or uncoined precious metal, a wealth accumulates that the majority of lesser lords lack. And these opportunities are supplemented by a growing demand for opportunities from below, a growing supply of services by the less favoured warriors and others driven from the land. The smaller society's possibilities of expansion become, the larger grows the reserve army from all classes, including the upper class.

Many of this class contented themselves with finding lodging, clothing and food at the courts of the great lords through performing some function. Others opted for the alternative:

> . . . while the courts of the great feudal lords became more populated, while their chambers filled and goods began to pass in and out, the bulk of the small knights continued to lead their self-sufficient and often very restricted lives. They took from the peasants whatever was to be got out of them; they fed as best they could a few servants and their numerous sons and daughters; they feuded incessantly with each other; . . . War, rapine, armed attack and plunder constituted a regular form of income for the warriors in the barter economy, . . . And the more wretchedly they lived, the more dependent they were on this form of income. (Elias, [1939] 1982:69)

There were, therefore, three forms of knightly existence distinguishable during the eleventh and twelfth centuries: the smaller knights ruling over not very large estates, the great and rich knights -- terretorial rulers, and the knights without land (or with very little) who placed themselves in the service of greater ones.

It is, as we have stated above, from this last group that the knightly noble troubadour singer came. Singing and composing in the

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service of a great lord and noble lady had become one means of mobility and aggrandizement for those driven from the land. This applied to the urban and rural lower-class jongleur-minstrel as well, however. And, Elias ([1939] 1982:76) adds, ". . . the higher the lord and lady, the higher and better the bard." As for the lady, her importance had increased with men's renunciation of physical violence. Both resulted in the establishment, in the great feudal courts, of a common sphere of life and a common social life for men and women (Elias, [1939] 1982:81). This whole reorganization of human relationships and development of systems of integration resulting from economic inducements on men to cooperate (Mannheim, [1934-1935?] 1957:125) went "hand in hand," Elias ([1939] 1982:231) goes on to say, with corresponding changes in men's manners and their personality structure, the provisional result of which was our form of "civilized" conduct and sentiment.

This "civilizing process" and the sociogenesis of the corresponding social controls expressed in the courtly forms of conduct are described in Elias's book ([1939] 1982:232,5) of that title:

> From the earliest period of the history of the Occident . . . , social functions have become more and more differentiated under the pressure of competition. The more differentiated they become, the larger grows the number of functions and thus of people on whom the individual constantly depends in all his actions, . . . as more and more people must attune their conduct to that of others, the web of actions must be organized more and more strictly and accurately, if each individual action is to fulfil its social function. The individual is compelled to regulate his conduct in an increasingly differentiated, more even and more stable manner. . . .
>
> The peculiar stability of the apparatus of mental self-restraint which emerges as a decisive trait built into the habits of every "civilized" human being, stands in the closest relationship to the monopolization of physical force and the growing stability of the central organization of society.

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This more rigid convention in behavior and regulation of manners became the polished, noble conduct to which society gave the name courtoisie in French, "courtesy" in English, cortezia in Italian. All these terms refer, moreover, to the particular place in society -- the upper strata, courtly circles -- that based its differentiation from the rest on the code of behavior of the same name. Social distance could no longer be attained through spatial distance or through limiting or excluding interrelationships between different groups. A more complex type of mental distancing emerged: "a sophisticated system of usages which accentuate[d] distance between the different strata" -- "a very sophisticated system of dress and manners, speech, deportment and conventions" (Mannheim, [1934-1935?] 1957:52). Courtoisie came to represent a refinement and a mark of distinction. "The ideals of chivalry (heroism, courtesy, large-mindedness) elevate and isolate certain behaviour patterns and raise demands which cannot be satisfied by the average man" (Mannheim, [1934-1935?] 1957:53).

Although strata interelationships were "not as strict and continuous, or as inescapable" as in the later, larger, absolutist courts, Elias ([1939] 1982:87,77,81) concludes that they were considerably greater at the larger feudal courts than at the small or in the warrior society at large, and that they already acted in the direction of stricter drive control:

> Here, for the first time in secular society, a large number of people, including men and women, lived together in constant close contact in a hierarchical structure, under the eyes of the central person, the territorial lord. This fact alone enforced a certain restraint on all dependents . . . created a somewhat more peaceful atmosphere. (Elias, [1939] 1982:81)

The relative license for acting out instinctual and affective impulses

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corresponded to the form of integration -- the degree and kind of mutual dependence -- under which people lived together (Elias, [1939] 1982:86), changes in medieval behavior and in the medieval psyche, therefore, relating to changes in the social structure. Within the restricted court circle, and encouraged especially by the presence of the lady, more peaceful forms of conduct became obligatory: "The sword still hangs loosely, and war and feud are close at hand . . . But the moderation of passions, sublimation, is unmistakable and inevitable in feudal court society" (Elias, [1939] 1982:77).

For aspiring knights, "courtly love proclaimed itself a patrimony any man could have if he was 'courtly'." (Bogin, 1976:51). The lady was the means; her love enhanced the value of her "lover." Valors was a vague concept with the double sense of spiritual and financial worth, and the noble woman (the noble married woman, that is) had valors -- through her husband. The knights, according to Bogin (1976:56), were "'courting' women to reach their men," the lady being the mediator in a symbolic transference of status between two men of different social classes. Marianne Shapiro (1978:568) observes that the poems liberally employed terms that derived from contemporary codes of mercantile economics, further connoting the status of the love relation as "a kind of pact and a means of exchange." The love about which the troubadours sang, whether real or fictional or simply a matter of convention, mirrored the system of vassalage that governed the social culture at the time.

There is, in addition, the view of man indulging in visions of the unattainable that results for him in other benefits: a "passion that leaves the earth for the skies," a sense of mystery and

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transcendence, an ever-varying mood -- a Romantic spirit, according to Boulting (1910:17). Therefore, the extent to which the veneration of the lady was a veneration for her sake is, indeed, questionable.

Drinker (1948:211) outlines the four characteristics inherent in the social aspects of the new musical genre concerning both women and the utility of a musical form that would direct the orientation of women to music in the future:

> One was a kind of woman worship, artificial, without roots in any real function or value of women and without much effect at the time on their actual status. The second was the establishment of wooing as a complicated art, to be humbly performed by men, with the women in a passive position on a pedestal. The third was the limitation of the woman to the position of being the object of men's music, instead of the creator of her own. The fourth was the exaltation of the woman as the inspirer and sponsor of men's music.

And even at this, it must be remembered that this courtly, courteous attitude towards women was still the exception in feudal circles:

> In the great majority of domains the old, less respectful, brutal tendency still prevailed, transmitted and, perhaps, exaggerated in the majority of the "chansons de geste." One should not be misled by the love theories of the Provençal Troubadours and a few "Trouvères" from Flanders and the Champagne; the feelings they expressed were, we believe, those of an élite, a very small minority . . . (Lucaire, 1909, as quoted in Elais, [1939] 1982:79)

Troubadours, Trouvères and Female Trobairitz

Noble poet-composer singers, the troubadours of Provence and their later northern French trouvère imitators were among the earliest trained secular musicians for whom we have adequate documentation. Having been educated in abbeys where their courses of instruction included ecclesiastical songs, their creations demonstrate an art that was the child of a marriage of sacred and profane music, with the language of the people as the uniting agent (Henderson, 1921:49-50):

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> In spirit their art derived from the popular music of the wandering minstrels . . . , and the ideals of the period of the Crusades supplied it with new sources of inspiration; but it borrowed its actual form from the monastic sequence" (Einstein, [1937] 1947:33).
>
> . . . a piece of troubadour composition . . . exemplifies . . . music written by a nobleman educated in an abbey and composing under the influence of church music, but to secular text with clearly definite rhythm. (Henderson, 1916:343)

This art also represented the first penetration of European folk music into artistic music, "an unconscious reaction against Gregorian chants," Pahlen (1949:38) asserts. Dent (1929:218), however, clarifies its relationship to folk music: ". . . in spite of certain points of contact with popular music, . . . , it was an aristocratic and intricate art with none of the haphazard characteristics of folk-music." Harman (1958:77) agrees that the common factor running through this secular art was the refined (adopted from the sacred) way in which the sentiments were expressed.

The troubadours (400 of whose names are known) and trouvères (200 of whose names have come down to us) held a higher and unequivocal rank compared to the jongleur and were considered as "following a more regular and respectable profession than men whose qualifications were confined to vocal and instrumental execution" (Busby, [1819] 1968:322-3).[33] They "exercised their art for art's sake" Lang (1941:102) declares, receiving no remuneration, but were treated with great respect at the courts of munificent royal patrons. Among them were noblemen, princes, kings and, Bauer and Peyser(1932:93) claim, seventeen women (Coldwell [1986:47], about twice that). Hawkins ([1853] 1963:195) denotes an even broader composition: "Some were men of quality, such as counts and barons, others knights, some lawyers, some

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soldiers, others merchants, nay some were mechanics, even pilgrims."

Briffault (1965:88) makes clear, however, that although twelfth-century lords, kings and emperors "were proud of parading their poetic talents" as accomplishments of their noble births and fine educations, "scarcely one . . . has left a lyric that rises above the level of mediocre doggerel." Linda Nochlin (1971:492-3) puts forth as reason for the aristocracy's having contributed only rarely anything but amateurish efforts of artistic creation (even though it was historically that class that attained more than their share of educational advantage and possessed the leisure time to use it) that the demands and expectations placed on aristocrats -- the amount of time devoted to social functions and the kinds of activities demanded -- made total devotion to professional production out of the question.

Richard Hoppin (1978:281-2) further qualifies the ascriptive/achieved nature of the aristocratic component in the descriptions of these poets:

> . . . it is true, we find kings, princes, counts, even bishops. Yet most of these men were no more than gifted amateurs. Really significant contributions to the art came primarily from professionals, men who placed their talents at the service of powerful and wealthy patrons. Numbers of these men too belonged to the aristocracy; but they were often younger sons, and therefore without inheritance, or lesser nobles with no fiefs, and therefore without income [the "men of somewhat unclear status" of whom Bogin speaks (see p.153)]. . . . Some of the best and most famous . . . were men of humble birth. By their poetic and musical gifts these men gained an entry to the aristocratic society that fostered and enjoyed their art.

with Hauser ([1974] 1982:276) and Briffault (1965:89-91) offering more detail in further explaining this theory:

> These poor déraciné, or subaltern elements rising up from below were evidently the most progressive representatives of the chivalric poets. Without running the risk of losing prestige, they could risk making innovations which, in the

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> case of a more firmly rooted class, might well have come up against strong internal resistance.
>
> From the very outset, the troubadours who raised Provençal song to the high summit of its influence were jongleurs of low birth. Cercamon was a vagabond, . . . ; Marcabru was a foundling "left at a rich man's door"; Perdigon was the son of a fisherman; Bernard de Ventadorn was the son of a hind and a kitchen wench; Guiraut de Bornelk was a jongleur of low birth. Not a few troubadours were poor knights, who availed themselves of the convention that a poet's status was a noble one to attach themselves in that capacity to the service of some powerful lord and thus cloak their penury without forfeiting their rank.
>
> The term trobador (inventor), a fairly close equivalent of "poet" (maker, composer), honored the noble dillettante . . . applied with equal propriety to the itinerant jongleur who invented and composed his songs. . . . it is idle to seek precise distinctions . . . The term overlapped. The princely troubadour was not, of course, a jongleur; but the jongleur who composed his songs was a troubadour [emphasis mine].
>
> From the moment, . . . , that he plucked the chords of his lute and lifted his voice in song, the courtly jongleur-troubadour stepped into the part of the ideal minstrel-knight [emphasis mine]. It was in that character that he paid his poetic homage.

The only other mentions found of women troubadours in the musical histories surveyed are in Reese (1940:205), who includes among the rank occasional "ladies of high position;" in Elson (1904:50), who asserts that although there were no woman trouveres, "there were plenty who were well able to hold their own in the shorter forms of the Troubadours"; and in Drinker (1948:211), who enumerates thirteen who left us their poems. Histories of the troubadour movement, moreover, discuss some of these women. Both Bogin (1976:11) and Lindsay (1976:184) count some twenty known women troubadours or trobairitz (Hueffer [1878:281] a more modest fourteen) -- poetesses, as the latter calls them. Neules-Bates (1982:21) determines that since the Provençal language includes this designation for the female, "undoubtedly numerous other women were active." It is hard to determine whether they

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composed and/or sang music and, if so, how much. Only their poems have been preserved, and few of them at that. Nevertheless, Harksen (1975:44) hypothesizes that ". . . considering the close connection which existed in the Middle Ages between poetry and music, we have to assume that the women set their poems to music."

"[L]adies of more or less noble birth, accepted in their world," the trobairitz, states Lindsay (1976:189), "cannot be considered as moving about like the Troubadours." They were, in fact, "the very ladies at whose skirts the troubadours had knelt, the wives and daughters of the lords of Occitania," writes Bogin in The Women Troubadours (1976:63). We can assume that many such medieval women, living in feudal households and spending much time with one another and separated from men, sang together in their leisure hours, with some going on to compose.

The troubadour-like females all knew male troubadours, to whom some were related by blood or marriage. About a third of them were also patrons. "Their lives spanned the full development of courtly poetry, from its first flourishing to its decline," and, living in the centers where the art was practiced and refined, they were "in the unique position of being women in a world where women were officially [poetically, that is] adored," (Bogin, 1976:64). Bogin (1976:65) goes on to guess that the "fresh estimate of her own importance" that a lady heard in fin' amors poetry might have given these trobairitz the confidence to write. "It was the first good word for women in a long time," she (1976:65) states, yet despite the rapid spread of this artistic movement to neighboring countries, only in its birthplace -- Occitania -- were women troubadours found. And, the "good word for

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women" would be shortlived.[34]

Secular Changes and the Role of Women in Southern France

As women poets are practically unheard of during the Middle Ages, "to find twenty . . . living in one small area and within the brief span of a century is cause for some astonishment," Bogin (1976:13) declares. She asks what it was about twelfth-century Occitania that permitted such a flourishing of women poets. Her answer involves tracing the rise of commerce, the effects of the Crusades and changes in inheritance laws, all of which were special circumstances that together were relevant for the tiny group of propertied women to which the trobairitz belonged.

Bogin (1976:20-36) speculates that the laws and customs of the medieval south of France, the old Roman Gaul, were more favorable to women than those of the rest of the masculine feudal hierarchy of Middle Ages Europe, which were based on military prowess and designed to safeguard the interests of individual men and their sons. The Roman Code of Justinian had given women the right to inherit land and, in a limited sense, to own it. The Theodosian Code had given sons and unmarried daughters an equal share in their father's estate when there was no will. These were generally only important as "on the book" factors, the impact of which, however, grew with various historical shifts that, though they were not meant to alter women's status, were positive for women. Increased population led to increased demand for land, increased settlement and increased carving up of family fiefs. This, along with the Crusades and throngs of pilgrims criss-crossing Europe, led to increased commerce, which in turn led to a move from a

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barter to a cash economy and the rise of a new class of people in the towns. This new bourgeoisie was derived from monetary wealth, but their freedom became a territorial privilege inherent in urban soil.

Another result of the Crusades was eventual reductions in the male population. In the North, which was more densely populated and which maintained the strict principles of male inheritance and even primogeniture, firm male control of property was retained. In the South, on the other hand, many fiefs came under the direct control of women. What this meant, usually, was that the woman was a stand-in for her husband, all women being wards under the official guardianship of a man. Although there were countless examples of such women who governed in their husband's name, in Occitania in particular women took control and reigned.

> The ladies of Provençal manors were not Burgundian princesses surrounded by monks [nor their secluded Spanish sisters]. They were usually rich heiresses and played the chief part in the social circles over which they presided . . . already semi-divinized. . . . If the songs of the troubadours were mainly addressed to the women, the reason was that the latter were to a great extent the protectors and inspirers of the poets' art, which some of them actually practiced . . . They were well-versed in matters of love -- of "courtly" love, that is, such as was thought beseeming for a lady of high lineage whose marriage had been nothing more than a diplomatic act resting almost exclusively on political motives. (Briffault, 1965:85)

Underscoring the unintentional nature of these positive effects on women is a statement in Putnam ([1910] 1970:130): "These ladies were almost by accident furnished with great power by a system devised for a society of a different character altogether." Seltman (1956?:177), comparing this situation to that of the women of early Rome, also emphasizes the resistance to such occurrences: ". . . in the Middle Ages, even the splenetic misogyny of the Church could not prevent

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chatelaines of castles from gaining a most improper control of affairs while their lords went off to Outremer to redeem the Holy Sepulchre from the Infidel."[35] But whatever the motives, together these factors enhanced the position of noble women in the south of France and seem to have encouraged some to voice their feelings as trobairitz.

The Art of the Trobairitz

In their art, the women are taken to have been more positive, straight forward, clear and candid than the men. They wrote about love in a very different way from their male counterparts. For instance, the women

> do not idealize the relationships they write about, nor do they use the lover and the lady as allegorical figures. The women write about relationships that are immediately recognizable to us; they do not worship men, nor do they seem to want to be adored themselves. (Bogin, 1976:13)

They concentrated on human aspects, some on a new subject -- equality in love. Two themes that recur in their quests for love relationships are a desire to be acknowledged for who they are (as women and as individuals) and to have a determining voice in how the relationship is conducted (Bogin, 1976:68). Shapiro (1978:569) adds that the male poetry's parallel between acceptance by the beloved and the achievement of courtly ideals had no meaning for the female poet. "The lover must beg for what he desires humbly, and the lady must accord it to him, but watch her timing carefully; and the lover must serve her as his lover and his lady; but a lady must honor her lover only as a friend, never as a lord" (Quoted in Shapiro, 1978:568). This hierarchical imbalance was necessary for the lady to mitigate the disadvantage arising from her sexuality. A relationship of equality, or worse subjection, would have left her vulnerable sexually and vulnerable to accusations of

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mercenary ambitions (although males were not accused of the latter for their aspirations). Finally,

> Unlike the men, who often wrote in the persona of the knight, the women wrote in no one's character but their own. . . . The language is direct, unambiguous and personal. . . . Unlike the men, who created a complex poetic vision, the women wrote about their own intimate feelings. . . . they were writing in a true first person singular at a time when almost all artistic endeavor was collective. (Bogin, 1976:65-8)

Many of these differences Bogin (1976:68) attributes to the fact that women wrote for personal more than professional reasons, allowing them to break away from, or ignore, "the more ritualized aesthetic" and, instead, to use their poems as a vehicle of self-expression. Hueffer (1878:282) states the same: "With them poetry was not an employment, but an inward necessity." We conclude, therefore, that the trobairitz were not professionals in the way that many of the troubadours were, but instead, cultured women whose poetry was the immediate outgrowth of their feelings.

The Composer and Performer

Because of the troubadour's rank and relationship to court life, ". . . the ethical code of the knightly artists . . . forbade their being subjected to unnecessary contact with the populace" (Lang, 1941:108). They therefore became more exclusively poets and composers (for which they had received the literary and technical training), or frequently just poets (some poems appear with different tunes in different manuscripts), and left the vocal and instrumental performance of the verses of their lays or ballads to jongleurs (and jongleuses, according to Lindsay [1976:188] and Lang [1941:109]), generally more skilled in these areas, whom they employed. ". . . the joglars were

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principally, though by no means exclusively, musicians and executants. the converse ratio of the creative and executive faculties obtaining amongst the superior class of poets" (Hueffer, 1878:64). Thus, Ian Parker (1977:195) comes to the following distinction: "While the terms jongleur and menestrel and their derivations denote a profession, the terms troubadour and trouvère refer simply to the activity of composing songs or verse whether the practitioner was a professional musician or not."

Most of the troubadour music that has survived reveals that the singer was required to have a compass of no more than an octave (Rushmore, 1971:16). Simple forms of floridity, adopted from ecclesiastical music, were used for both expressive purposes -- endeavors to employ graces to convey a thought (Henderson, 1921:50,52) -- and for decoration. While exact details of performance are not known, it is not likely that songs were fully accompanied. Ulrich and Pisk (1963:51) and Westrup ([1954] 1967:229) surmise the possibilities of instrumental preludes, interludes between stanzas or postludes, because jongleurs are often pictured with instruments. There is little pictorial evidence for actual instrumental participation in either troubadour or trouvère songs, however. An approximation of accompaniment in unison (heterophony) may have been attempted (Westrup [(1954) 1967:228-9] cites a literary text that states: "The jongleurs stood up, took fiddles and harps, and sang to us songs, lais, tunes, verses, and refrains, and chansons de geste"), but the art was primarily vocal. ". . . although instruments may be mentioned, they are not specifically said to have accompanied the singers," Parker (1977:188) concludes.

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". . . [C]ompanions of some noble trouvère and interpreters of his works, or . . . journeymen on his behalf, hawking their musical wares from castle to castle" (Aubry, 1969:130), the jongleurs received "a new lease of life," as Harman (1958:77) puts it, from such vassal (the professional)/lord (the amateur) associations, but this composer-performer relationship originated in the Middle Ages a new sort of antagonism -- "that which opposed the creator to the interpreter, the composer to the singer" (Pincherle, 1956:28):

> This rancor runs through all ages. In all times the creator, who has worked in solitude, ignored by the public and in a sense sacreficed, will have reason to envy those who present themselves to the crowd and gather to themselves its applause and remuneration. (Pincherle, 1956:28)

The jongleurs' inclinations to "distinguish themselves when performing the songs entrusted to them by their masters" led to embellishments of the music which "sometimes reached proportions in which the original melody was almost unrecognizable" (Lang, 1941:111). Warnings by troubadours against such distortions may have been of limited success. For instance, Lang (1941:111) contends that the strong musical initiative of the jongleur minstrels was responsible for the richer melodic wealth of French aristocratic lyric poetry than that of the music of the German minnesingers, who sang and accompanied themselves in performances of their own compositions. (The minnesingers did not belong exclusively to the knightly order as the troubadours did. In their art the union of poet and musician was the rule, thus limiting the independent minstrel's activity and contribution.) By the thirteenth century, Elson (1904:59) finds Guirant Riquier (often called the last of the troubadours) requesting of King Alfonso X of Castille the formation of a classification of jongleurs, with titles for the

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best, in order to prevent the "indiscriminate mixing of high and low musicians in the public mind."

The Social Organization of Musicians in Post-feudal Europe

The troubadour movement spread from the south of France to Spain and Portugal and from northern France to Flanders and England. Four generations of trouvères spanned the period from the end of the twelfth to the end of the thirteenth century (Einstein, [1937] 1947:35). Approximately 2,600 troubadour poems and over 260 melodies and about 4,000 trouvère poems and 1,400 melodies have been preserved. (A number of the melodies were adapted from chants and are among the earliest examples of what is called contrafacta -- songs in which the original sacred words are replaced by secular ones, or vice versa [Harman, 1958:83].)

The movement had no direct counterpart in Italy, where French influence was confined to the poetic forms but not the music. Of the surviving melodies, none of them is of Italian origin. Yet, it can be expected that such songs were known in central Italy, especially Tuscany -- the area around Florence -- where "dancing, singing, masquerades, and feste of every sort followed close one upon another," de Robeck (1928:9) observes. Leonard Ellinwood ([1960] 1964:37) comments that most of the best known Provençal troubadours had visited Italy. It is also clear that the art in performance was adopted in many parts of the peninsula, as is evident from the names of Italian troubadour poet-singers: Alberto Malaspina of Lombardy, Rambertino Bulavelli of Bologna, Bartolo Zorzo of Venice, Sordello of Mantua, Cigala of Genoa (Burkhalter B/M, [1966] 1968:78; O'Brien, 1950:17).

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Still, in Italy, the feudal system and its concomitant chivalry had never taken root deeply: "The city, not the castle, was the seat of social life, and the rapid absorption of the feudal lords into the cities rendered Italian life from the very beginning very different from life in Provence or the North of France" (Crane, 1920:99). Weber ([1925] 1978:II:1322) describes the circular path of the Italian cities: "from a stage in which they were component parts of patrimonial or feudal structures, through a period of independence obtained by revolution with a government of local notables and then of the craft guilds, followed by the signoria and finally again by a position as component parts of relatively rational patrimonial associations." The most important aspects of these changes to the work at hand are first, the destruction of patrician rule through the sworn confraternity of entrepreneurs and handicraft workers and the resulting separate political communities of the knightly families and the economic popolo; next, the consolidation of power in one wealthy family (with its legitimization as a princely court, with papal recognition) which, however, safeguarded the "livings" of the small burghers who shared vested economic interests in the existence of the court; and, finally, the economic emphasis of such cities -- "from the viewpoint of the founders primarily a business undertaking, the creation of opportunities for money revenues" (Weber, [1925] 1978:II:1332), with the popolo's encumbent rejection of extra-urban status differences (Weber, [1925] 1978:1359).

What were found in Italy instead of knightly troubadour songs were simple, religious (but not liturgical) folk hymns or "laudi" sung by Franciscan monks and the populace. The art of the Provençal

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minstrels had "fired the imagination of Saint Francis," de Robeck (1928:8) surmises, who, after having had a vision in which he heard "a heavenly melody, intolerably sweet," sang and made his companions sing in praise of God (de Robeck, 1928:7). It is interesting to note that laude singers were called joculatores Dei in Latin, giullari di Dio in Italian -- jongleurs of God (Lang, 1941:113; Westrup, [1954] 1967:267).

As feudalism waned, the people flocked to walled towns for refuge against robbers and for the advantages of a trade economy. Warring nobles had "espoused conquest to the neglect of music," Bauer and Peyser (1932:95) assume, adding that the common people were "hungry for it." Although the minstrel-singers' associations with the troubadours had lent legitimacy and prestige to their secular craft to the point that they could switch from epic to lyric poetry and express their feelings unreservedly, they still embodied a somewhat ambivalent popularity reminiscent of the primitive minstrels discussed previously: ". . . people flocked to hear him and loved him for his fantastic nature and dexterity," yet "they feared him because of his multiple abilities, which seemed sinister . . ." (Lang, 1941:110).

Despite this questionable aspect of their occupation (or sometimes because of it), they were able to obtain from nobles, urban-dwelling burghers and peasants what they wanted, lived in relative comfort and plenitude and laid claim to their own works.

> His luxurious, carefree life fascinated many people and great was the desire to take up this marvelous metier. Their number grew constantly, and toward the end of the century and in the fourteenth century the chronicles deal with veritable armies of minstrels. . . . The days of the bedraggled, hunted beggar minstrels were over. (Lang, 1941:110)

Hawkins ([1853] 1963:190-4) demonstrates examples of "favour to

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Minstrels, and of privileges enjoyed by them" in the history of English law, which, he claims, "affords a remarkable instance of favour shewn to this vagabond profession of a minstrel."

Nevertheless, the wandering singer became once again actor, musician, dancer, even clown, acrobat and conjurer. This reversal Hauser ([1974] 1982:271) sees as "one of the most fundamental turning points in the history of the social role and reputation of the artist":

> The court poet becomes a universal clown; there is no longer any question of distinction and worth. However much recognition and honor the artist may earn in the future, he will never be able to recover fully from the shock, with which his degradation is now linked. He is déclassé, like vagrants and camp followers, charlatans and ne'er-do-wells, runaway monks and students expelled from the university -- the ancestors of that problematic society of the modern age, the Bohème.

Although Hauser's accusations are rather strong, there is no question that singers would face, once again, an uphill struggle for social acceptance, higher status and greater rewards.

Thirteenth-century western man became more economically, intellectually and artistically independent in the post-feudal fourteenth century. He became also more skeptical of the Church's ordering and controlling his life. Alfred Von Martin ([1932] 1944:18) maintains that religion lost its position as a power and its function as the common bond of all to the same extent as the ruling nobility of the Middle Ages was undermined by the bourgeoisie.

> . . . the thirteenth century was an era of stability and unity, the fourteenth one of change and diversity. The chief symbol of the contrast was the state of the Papacy: in the thirteenth century the authority of the Church, centered in the Popes at Rome, was generally respected and acknowledged as supreme, not only in matters of faith and morals but also to a great extent in intellectual and political affairs; in the fourteenth century this authority, and especially the supremacy of the Popes, began to be widely questioned. (Grout, [1960] 1973:116)[36]

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The Crusades having opened new channels of trade, having brought new wealth and new ideas, and having ultimately broken the bonds of feudalism, ". . . a favorable climate for artistic development existed during the Gothic," Milo Wold and Edmund Cylder ([1963] 1977:30) describe, "in contrast to the rather severe asceticism of earlier times."[37] The Church ceased to be very successful in controlling (or at least limiting) the composition and performance of music. Art too assumed a more secular character in order to "meet private need, playful taste, and the general tendency toward rationalization" (Hauser, [1974] 1982:279). The link between religious and secular life is readily demonstrated in the 43 trades represented in the stained glass windows of the thirteenth-century French Cathedral of Chartres.

The growing new bourgeois class of burghers began to imitate the manners of the feudal lords, whose minstrels had carried their fame far and wide:

> The burgher, once his material needs were satisfied, started dreaming of great works which were to launch his glory into space and time. . . . His power was based upon the spirit and upon money. The arts began to flourish as they had not flourished for long epochs. Not only had the material foundations been provided, but the intoxication of grandeur provided a powerful stimulus . . . (Pahlen, 1949:40)

The musical themes of the towns were an affirmation of worldly things. Itinerant musicians -- necessary at balls and and other festive functions, to serenade and for theatrical performances -- required board and lodging and soon demanded to be paid. Several permanently employed artists could be depended upon and would be cheaper in the end. Attached to a court or community, these minstrels (ménestrel or ménétrier), the general term now used, occupied an intermediary position between troubadour or trouvère and jongleur, with backgrounds

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of a jongleur but composing their own songs. Archives, chronicles and paintings from all of Europe demonstrate, Lowinsky (1954:519) illustrates, that town musicians were "a universal social institution rooted in the Middle Ages." For example, "[o]ne Italian town is said to have entertained a gathering of 1,500 jugglers in 1324. . . . four hundred at the court of Mantua in 1340; in 1460, of Vienna's population of about 25,000, five hundred were classed as Jews and jugglers" (Quoted in Burkhalter M/M, [1966] 1968:38).

As emphasis was placed more and more on vocal and instrumental skills rather than mere amusement and news-carrying, we find greater distinctions being made among individual performers. Following the example of the Middle Age's guilds of craftsmen and merchants, musicians formed protective associations to organize their ranks and set standards for secular music. Merton ([1949] 1957:378) sees the formation of such organizations and normative systems among those occupying the same social status as having a double function: providing one, professional codes "designed to state in advance what the socially supported behavior of the status-occupant should be"; and two, social support to the individual status-occupant by constituting a "structural response to the problems of coping with the power structure."

The Nikolaibruderschaft St. Nicholas Brotherhood), founded in Vienna in 1288, was probably the first musical union. In medieval Zurich, a decree was issued allowing only regularly organized musicians to play. In the Germanies, municipal trade groups controlled musical output and stimulated its production by prize competitions. They created grades of membership, the highest of which was the meistersinger -- burghers of varied vocations who in the evenings

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became (reminiscent of the semi-professional primitive bards of whom Sachs [(1961) 1962:203-4] speaks [see p.23]) ambitious amateur artists, devoting themselves to the poetical and musical cultivation of vocal art.[38] In France and England such organizations possessed the power to license performers. The French Confraternity of St. Julien des Ménétriers, organized in 1321, included jongleurs and jongleuses -- the ménestrel and ménestrelles. By 1407 the guild reached a more professional level, and a musician had to pass an exam and be pronounced "suffisant" by the head of the Confraternity -- the roi des ménétriers (Reese, [1954] 1959:7). In 1355 the Holy Roman Empire had also named a Rex omnium histrionum -- king of the minstrels. Although some Italian musicians organized small, private associations for self help, and church singers were members of a guild-like organization -- the cappella, Italy, in contrast to the northern regions, shows no evidence for the existence of musical guild systems.

Guild documents demonstrate the acceptance of women members. "The statutes of the guild of minstrels in Paris, dating from 1321, have eight women among the thirty-seven signers" (Coldwell, 1986:46). Tax records and individual household accounts, Coldwell (1986:46) lists also as containing examples of payments to female minstrels in France.

The rise of towns also stimulated centers of learning -- the newly established universities, where an intellectual proletariat came into existence and music became an integral part of education. "The real leaders and innovators of . . . music," Wold and Cylder ([1963] 1977:30) tell us, "were either at the universities or associated with the courts, where music was given great importance." Other musicians, then, entered the service of lords and princes, seeking protection,

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employment and security in the European seats of power.

> These . . . were at first primarily establishments [choral chapels] for the performance of religious music. To these were added performers on various instruments, composers, and whatever musicians there were who gave promise of adding lustre to the fame of the ruler. (Hughes, [1948] 1970:97)

By the fourteenth century, no court was without its musicians and no noble without his singers. Music, Raynor (1972:75) explains, naturally assisted ostentation -- "Just as it added pomp and splendor to the ceremonies of a king's court, the nobility glorified their lives by surrounding themselves with a similar magnificence." Philip the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, a lord of the fourteenth century, was said to have glorified in his ménestrels de bouche -- "singers of both sexes, as well as boys for his chapel at Dijon, and players . . ." (Dent, 1929:203). Gaston Phebus, also a fourteenth-century nobleman, recorded his schedule on an average day: "Hunting; after the hunt, Mass; after Mass, the womenfolk and the minstrels" (Quoted in Burkhalter M/M, [1966] 1968:25).

With the rise of the princely chapels and the higher nobility endeavoring to have the best musicians attached to their courts (often paying fortunes for artists), there began a new phase in the history of the cultivation of music and a new market for musicians. This pattern of support for music making became, from the middle of the fourteenth century, normal European practice. Princely institutions, "where violent rivalries were established as to who had the best lute player . . . , heaped with honors and gifts" (Pincherle, 1956:19-20), were to become for centuries "the most important bearers of musical culture," according to Karl Nef ([1935] 1964:68). Small wonder, writes Harman (1958:122), that so many composers would find incentive and

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satisfaction in writing for royal courts and their aristocracies, "where new ideas and experiments were encouraged and no clerical authority hampered their creative faculty," than for a Church "discredited by corruption and split by rival factions and which actively discouraged the new developments in music."

A major change had occurred during the Middle Ages in the role of the professional musician.

> From a social point of view the troubadours are important, because their art gradually led to the acceptance of music as an independent art, to its cultivation among the leisured classes, and so to a wider sphere of influence than could ever be permeated by an art of music which remained subservient to ecclesiastical ritual. (Dent, 1929:205)

Although the Church remained the great school for musicians, ". . . it now was possible to be a musician and a composer of secular music," states Hughes ([1948] 1970:97). Secular composing and singing had become, by the fourteenth century, a legitimate and somewhat prestigious occupation. Hauser ([1974] 1982:271) describes the sociohistorical process as having taken the following form:

> The development proceeds from the knightly troubadour and the popular minstrel as two completely different types and leads first to a rapprochement of the two and then, probably near the end of the thirteenth century, to their alienation. For then we have the permanent court singer, the minstrel on the one hand, and the wandering jongleur, now [again] the outcast [the sacrifice of the loss of balance caused by the dynamism of the towns and by the shift of broad groups of the population], on the other.

This marks the starting point of the modern musician's role on the eve of the Renaissance.

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CHAPTER V

THE INTRODUCTION OF POLYPHONIC STYLE AND ITS IMPACT ON THE CAREERS OF SINGERS

The songs of the troubadours and their imitators were not only "the first great flowering of secular art," but also "the last spontaneous outburst of monophony" (Harman, 1958:94).[39] During the late Middle Ages, technical aspects of music underwent critical changes, brought about by the introduction of polyphonic music.[40]

> In Greek music and its successor, the Gregorian style, the one desire was for a single melodic outline to enforce and beautify a verbal text. All music was a specialized outgrowth or derivative of poetic speech. A new era came in when it was seen that music might have beauty and meaning more or less independent of its words, being built up into a fabric or edifice of tones by massing and interweaving two or more voice-parts like strands or threads. (Pratt, [1907] 1935:77)

Reasons for the advance from monophony to many-voiced music are offered by Pahlen (1949:42-4):

> Primitive life produces a primitive art; . . . pious life a pious art; knightly life a knightly art. The Gregorian chant could be, had to be, homophonic, for it expressed a collective ideal: precisely the same for everybody. The new town life became more complicated . . . by the growing demands upon life, . . . and by the multiplicity of human interrelations. Above all, it became complicated by a growing individualism, by ever mounting specialization . . . No longer did a solitary person tell of heroic deeds to the accompaniment of a lyre, while the others listened breathlessly. Hardly anyone in the congregation of burghers had ever travelled far or had had experiences which differed essentially from those of the others. Nobody wanted to take a back seat, nobody wanted to be inferior to the others. If they had all sung the same thing like the monks in the Gregorian chant, it would hardly have satisfied their individualistic tendencies. And so they invented a number of vocal lines running a parallel course and assigning to each executant an individual and

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> interesting task. It may be that the technical foundations of polyphony were laid at an even earlier time,[41] but the psychological moment . . . had come only now. The middle classes were bound to find their way to polyphonic music.

For the composer, "artistic instinct was especially attracted by the fascinating effect of diverse movement, controlled into the unity of a perfect flow of harmony," and for the singers, it was "essential that each individual voice part should be pleasurable to sing"; the hearer, then, could be "excited by the sound of successive crises in different qualities of tone, sometimes tenor, sometimes treble, sometimes bass; each of which seemed successively to rise into prominence within the smooth texture of the harmonious flow of sound, and then to be merged into it as another voice took its place" (Parry, as quoted in de Robeck, 1928:26).

This new music first developed "where the currents of intellectual and political activities met" (Pahlen, 1949:45) -- first in Paris (capital of France; famous for her university; the location of the Notre Dame School of the Cathedral of Notre Dame, where the principles of a modal rhythm system in which notes had definite values was formulated and put into practice; the intellectual center of the world during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries) and then Flanders.[42] In the north, Lang (1941:126) reminds us that plainchant had remained a foreign and unfamiliar idiom, introduced from the East and forced on the people by the Church. Pleasure in harmonic consonance, on the contrary, is cited by Einstein (1947:26) as indigenous to the folk music of the northern races. Lang (1941:126) claims, therefore, that a latent conflict of musical taste had existed in the northern regions throughout the Middle Ages, eager for an opportunity for change. (It was also from the north that pressures for musical expression would

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force the Church to compromise, around the thirteenth century, and reintroduce congregational singing.)

From these parts the new style -- "The dissolution of compact masses into moving rhythms, the mystical expansion of space, the pleasure in ornamentation, in fine details [found in architecture as well as in music]" (Pahlen, 1949:45) -- spread throughout Europe and ultimately reached its apex in Italy. Travel by the northern nobility (who took their musicians with them) to southern courts or towns where church and municipal music flourished was a "powerful way of accelerating the spread of new works and the internationalisation of the new style," Raynor (1972:83) illustrates, helping to explain the domination of northern music over Italy.

De Robeck (1928:17) argues, however, that trecento Florentine ars nova[43] composers (influenced by the French originator of the new art -- Philippe de Vitry [1291-1361]) had already written songs for two or three voices (349 of which are preserved in the manuscript known as the Squarcialupi Codex, in the Laurentian Library[44]) that were rhythmically simple and melodically smooth. The Florentine ars nova, Silva (1922:58) says, was "a clear assertion of Italianism as contrasted with the Parisian ars antiqua . . . which exclude[d] simple vocal expressiveness in favor of artificial mechanical invention." Such songs had proven immediately and overwhelmingly successful as music that all could enjoy. The flourishing musical life of Florence during the fourteenth century -- the "brilliant period of the trecento ars nova" (Helm, [1960] 1964:381) -- was "without parallel in the whole of Italy," O'Brien (1950:21) claims. Raynor (1972:84) adds that in this city, the cradle of the ars nova style, ". . . secular music, tied to

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civic ceremonies and the annual carnival, was perhaps more consciously cultivated . . . than in any other European city of the time."[45]

De Robeck (1928:17) maintains, therefore, that the southern developers of polyphonic song have been overlooked by music historians because their reputations (Landini -- the blind organist, poet and composer -- being the most famous) were probably overshadowed by the "imposing music of the next generation" -- the Flemish and English musicians who "carried the art of counterpoint to a new pinnacle." Harman (1958:153), we should add, notes that the Italian system of notation was less subtle and more cumbersome than the French, therefore contributing to its (and music written in it) having become obsolete. Finally, the anarchic conditions of the Italian peninsula, under which Italian music was developing, contributed to a history different from the French (with a powerful and stable monarchy) of the same period. Indeed, the early Italian "school" did not survive the northern musical invasion. "[I]ts enfeebled condition," Silva (1922:59) says, "laid it open to the infiltration of foreign arts, . . ." For whatever reasons, "[t]he Italians soon assimilated the northern contrapuntal science, . . . overwhelmed by the superior skill and numbers of the highly-trained foreign musicians" (O'Brien, 1950:26). Despite these outcomes, de Robeck (1928:18-19) contends that since Florence in the trecento had risen to a position equal to that of countries far above her in importance and possessions, and since her merchants were in every capital as ambassadors of the Republic and as traders, a good possibility exists that the Italian ars nova songs "trickled through,"[46] becoming "the great school of counterpoint in foreign hands, though often on Italian soil."

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It is generally agreed, however, that Italy lacked a native tradition of polyphony. "So far as can be ascertained, all music in Italy up to the fourteenth century and the bulk of it even then," Grout ([1960] 1973:128) relates, "was monophonic." The Italians (even at the time about which de Robeck argues) Grout ([1960] 1973:128) adds, "seemed allergic to erudite styles of composition," the Italian spirit expressing itself rather in "spontaneous, flowing melodies and comparatively simple textures." It did, however, as we shall see, start importing polyphony.[47]

Comparing the two, Harman (1958:157) feels that the French have always been more interested in the intellectual side of artistic creations (rhythm and design) and the Italians in the emotional (melody and color).[48] Ulrich and Pisk (1963:99) maintain that for centuries music composed north of the Alps had been, in most cases, more reserved, more formalized and more "contrived" than that of the south, the latter being, in general, more melodious, more spontaneous and simpler in form and texture. And Paul Bekker (1935:21) adds that in all Mediterranean cultures song has dominated, determining the nature and fundamental concepts of music, whereas in the north, language, climate and natural endowment have been less favorable to the voice, which loses its leading position and becomes part of a total apparatus, thereby also losing its shaping force.

Despite these differences, in the fourteenth century, the large commercial cities of the north (in Belgium, Holland and a large portion of northern France) and also of Italy supported this new (or renewed) polyphonic art form dominated by musicians from the North. Nef ([1935] 1964:67) explains: "The degree of culture which sprang up as a result

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of centuries of commerce is well known. ... living together in large cities necessarily furthered the art of music. ... a social art; it has never flourished in the open countryside."

Polyphonic music was also associated with the movement called ars nova due to the necessity of each note's having a definite time value in order to coordinate the increased rhythmic complexity of this many-voiced style. Such notation responded to not only the processes and purposes of composers but also reflected the practical difficulties experienced by performers in the performances of increasingly complex works, e.g., several performers in an ensemble work could scarcely stay together if they had no means of relating their individual performance speeds (and the relationships between longer and shorter notes) to each other.

Singers of Sacred Polyphony

Toward the end of the fourteenth century, music in Italy truly reflected the contemporary French style. This was partially brought about by the intercourse among artists that occurred during the long residence of the popes at Avignon, France (the Babylonian Captivity, 1307-1377) and became obvious after the return of the papal court to Rome. Raynor (1972:83) lists the papal choir, the cathedral and the court of the Sforzas of Milan, the court of the d'Estes at Ferrara, the Gonzaga court at Mantua, the cathedral and city of Venice, and Bavarian Munich as centers of the new style by the beginning of the fifteenth century.

Flemish or "Burgundian" singers and composers, most of whom were both, came into great demand in the next century. Burgundy at this time included Flanders and parts of France, Belgium and Holland -- more

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a cultural (mixed Gallic and Germanic) than a national unit. The court and chapel at Dijon of Philip the Good, ruler of Burgundy from 1419 to 1467, were the most resplendent in Europe. His influence as a patron of music was so extensive that the name "Burgundian" was given to both the style of music and the composers during the period of his reign (Grout, [1960] 1973:161). The pride he took in his chapel singers and the fastidious way in which he supervised their selection is illustrated in the following instance: "It was only after appraising Robinet de la Magdalaine . . . for the whole of Easter week in 1448 that the Duke engaged this singer, who had been admired in Rome and Rouen; . . ." (Reese, [1954] 1959:48). When Charles succeeded his father in 1467, Burgundy's chapel consisted of "twenty-four singers, child choristers, an organist, a guitarist and several viol and oboe players" (Burkhalter M/M, [1966] 1968:84) to perform both the mass and outside the divine service -- at table and to embellish the entremet of entertainments (pantomine, dance, tableaus) that occurred between dishes. In addition to the ducal influence on music, the bourgeoisie in these regions were rich and powerful and also contributed to its development. A school of Burgundian musicians therefore arose. Having adopted style elements from the earlier French school, they began to make their own vital contributions in progressing toward "a musical texture in which the parts not only became independent but achieved equal importance" (Ulrich and Pisk, 1963:102).[49]

It was the first time that singers of one nationality were sought after to perform for audiences in another country (Jander, 1980:341). During the absence of the papal court from Rome, the Schola Cantorum had remained in that city, attached to the service of the

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Lateran Basilica. As the French exile of the popes became prolonged, however, a new papal choir was recruited at Avignon from among the best French and Flemish singers. On the papal court's return to Rome, the choir that followed could not be considered "Italian," according to Giulio Cattin (1981:27), either in a strict legal sense or from the point of view of the nationality of its members, it being composed entirely of northern male musicians. Nonetheless, the influence of this institution was great: "Its efficiency, its cosmopolitanism, and the quality of its repertory stimulated imitations by courts, towns, and churches, . . ." (Cattin, 1981:27).

Frank D'Accone (1976), having investigated archival documents, has determined the make-up of various northern and north-central Italian chapels from 1430 to 1540. Collapsing several of his tables (1976:603,6,8-9) into one, we can see the increasing emphasis on sacred singing demonstrated by the increasing number of staff for the performance of sacred music over this time period in the musical establishments in the capitals of the great political powers (Rome, Milan, Florence, Venice) and in smaller political entities and subject cities of the Italian peninsula (Siena, Mantua, Modena; and Verona, Treviso, Padua, Bologna):

Singers of Polyphony in Italian Churches from 1430-1540

Milan Cathedral	1430	4 adults, ?# boys[50]
	1459	6 adults, ?# boys
	1460-80	7 adults (average), ?# boys
	1483	9 adults, ?# boys
	1484	10 adults, ?# boys
	1491	13 adults, ?# boys
	1496	15 adults, ?# boys
	1504	12 adults, 7 boys
	1507	12 adults, probably 6 boys

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Milan (cont'd)	1516	14 adults, 6 boys
	1521	12 adults, probably 6 boys
Florence		
Baptistry	1439-69	4-6 adults
Cathedral	1478-81	5-6 adults, 4 boys
Cathedral	1481-84	4 adults, 4-8 boys
SS. Annunziata	1484	18 adults
Cathedral	1485	10 adults
Cathedral	1487-88	13 adults (average)
Cathedral	1493	18 adults
Cathedral	1498-1501	4 adults, 8 boys[51]
Cathedral	1502	11 adults, 5 boys
Cathedral	1507	10 adults, 5 boys
Baptistry	1510	8 adults, 5 boys
Cathedral	1512	8 adults, 4-6 boys
Cathedral	1513-26	6 adults (average), 4-6 boys
Baptistry	1515	13 adults, 4 boys
SS. Annunziata	1526	12 adults, 3 boys
Cathedral & Baptistry	1540	20 adults, 4 boys
Rome, St. Peter's	1457-58	3 singers
	1465	5 singers
	1478	7 singers
	1485	9 singers
	1491	10 singers
	1497	8 singers
	1501	7 singers
	1506-7	8 adults, 2 boys
	1514	5 adults, 3 boys
	1515	6 singers
	1525	11 singers
	1534	7 singers
Modena Cathedral	1456-70	3 adults
	1472-77	4 adults, ?# boys
	1494	6 adults, ?# boys
	1505-13	9 adults, ?# boys
	1513-20	11 adults, ?# boys
Padua Cathedral	1443	3 adults
	1466,1470	5 singers
	1469,1472	6 singers
	1484,1488	4 adults, ?# boys
	1497-98	9 adults, ?# boys
	1511-12	5 adults, ?# boys
	1523,1529	6 adults, ?# boys
	1532-33	7 adults, ?# boys
Treviso Cathedral	1463	3 adults
	1472-76	4 adults (average), ?# boys
	1488-91	8 adults, probably 5 boys
	1509-13	5 adults, probably 5 boys

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Treviso (cont'd)	1527-28	9 adults, 4 boys
	1532	6 adults, probably 6 boys
Bologna, San Petronio		
	1479	5 adults
	1505-6	7 adults, ?# boys
	1512	9 adults, ?# boys
	1513-21	10 adults, ?# boys
	1525	13 adults, ?# boys
	1540	15 adults, ?# boys
Venice, St. Mark's	1486	10 adults, 12 boys
	1487	12-17 adults, 10-15 boys
	1490	15-17 adults, 12 boys
	1492	14-15 adults, 12 boys
Siena Cathedral	1481	6 adults
	1508	6 adults
	1513	10 adults
	1517	14 singers
	1520	17 singers
Verona Cathedral	1524	7 adults, ?# boys
	1527	11 adults, ?# boys
	1530	7 adults, ?# boys
	1533	9 adults, ?# boys
Mantua Cathedral	1500	4 adults, ?# boys
	1505	5 adults, ?# boys
	1509	8 adults
	1511-19	probably 15 adults, 10 boys, with court singers included as having participated
	1523-26	15 singers
	1528	18 singers

Through the mid 1470s, most chapels rarely employed more than six or seven adult singers. (The papal choir in Rome already had ten singers in 1442 [Lowinsky, 1954:510].) In smaller ones polyphony may have been performed by one singer to a part, whereas in the larger, more than one voice might take each (or at least the higher) part. During the late 1480s and 1490s the number of singers in the churches of some of the wealthier cities increased and began to approach that of the Italian courts of the time, important musical establishments that we shall study in conjunction with Renaissance musical activity (see

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Section 3). This may have been due to their desire to emulate the courts but also resulted from the requirements made by the new musical repertories. Supply and demand, financial capacity and the acoustics of the individual churches also exerted influences over the size of choirs.

For the early sixteenth century, data are incomplete and even lacking for some of the cities. As for the chapels for which reliable figures are available, the trend established during the late 1480s and 1490s is generally still discernible. The papal choir of the new Sistine Chapel (the private court chapel of the Pope), however, maintained greater numbers of singers, those employed ranging from sixteen to twenty-one (Haberl and Schuler, as quoted in D'Accone, 1976:607), but numbered at twenty-four in 1483 by Lowinsky's (1954:511) reading of Haberl's 1882 German account of the papal choir. On the basis of expenditures, D'Accone (1976:609) finds calculations that under Leo X the personnel rose to about thirty in 1516 and to thirty-one in 1521. Lowinsky (1954:511) adds that the membership fluctuated but held more closely to twenty-four, the number which came to be regarded as the ideal size for that choir. Whatever the exact numberical composition, "[s]eldom if ever did the number of singers in other Italian churches approach that of the Sistine Chapel" (D'Accone, 1976:609).

"The chief ambition of the best Flemish musicians," O'Brien (1950:28) claims, "was to belong to the Papal Choir for which their country continued to supply singers, choirmasters and composers from the fourteenth century until the middle of the sixteenth . . ." It must be remembered that the major functions -- composing and singing -- were

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usually performed by most of the choir members. Almost all of the most famous composers were singers (and were listed as the latter in the papal choir records and those of the various court choirs). Exceptions to this rule are pointed out by Reese ([1954] 1959:48,456): "Vide was that rarity for his time -- a composer who was not a singer"; and, later (in 1555), Pope Julius III appointed Palestrina a singer in the pontifical choir, "although tradition says that his tenor voice was poor," because Julius wished to obtain new works for the choir. In this second case, it is remarked that the appointment was made, moreover, "without either an examination by the other singers or their consent, both of which were normally considered necessary." Finally, there were still other musicians who were considered "primarily singers and merely tried their hand at composing once in a while." (Reese, [1954] 1959:38).

Journeying to Rome, northern musicians discovered, O'Brien (1950:28) relates, that music was appreciated at the courts of all the Italian nobles, who welcomed "anyone who was a skilled performer on the organ or lute or who, in addition to church music, could sing the new songs -- half-folk, half-art songs -- that were becoming popular." Compared to other countries, the wealth of opportunities for musicians, especially singers, in Italian churches and aristocratic establishments (Italy could boast a large "cultivated class," including munificent patrons, according to Reese [(1954) 1959:184]) attracted an array of foreigners. Despite the lack of any Italian genius or school of composition, states Harman (1958:233), most of the leading composers from the north visited Italy at least once, although few stayed any length of time.

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A long line of Netherlandish, French and English (and even some German and Spanish) -- foreign or oltremontani -- musicians flocked to Italy in the course of the fifteenth century and the early part of the sixteenth. They soon held all the highest positions in the cathedrals, schools and princely households, O'Brien (1950:28) observes. For a hundred and fifty years, polyphonic music was supreme all over Italy, and ". . . practically every important musical post in that country was held by a foreigner" (Grout, [1960] 1973:134).[52]

Lewis Lockwood (1981:237-8), looking at the rosters of the leading cappelle in the 1470s, finds, however, that although the leading figure in each of the principal new or strengthened cappelle was from the north, the number of native Italian singers was "by no means negligible," with the exception of the papal cappella and the choir of St. Peter's in Rome. In Milan, for example, there were seven in 1474, and in Ferrara, the proportion of Italians rose from almost one-fourth in 1472 to two-fifths in 1477. And D'Accone (1976:602) concludes that the northern and north-central Italian cities and courts "played host to the leading Franco-Netherlandish composers of the day (Obrecht, Isaac, Agricola, Compère, Ghiselin, van Weerbecke, Martini, de la Rue, de Orto, and Josquin . . .) as well as to a younger generation of native composers (Coppini, Festa, Layolla, Gaffurio, Ruffino d'Assisi, Spataro, and Fogliano)."

Cattin (1981:29) points out that in large cities, where local singers were available, the presence of these foreigners was resented, and ". . . their habit of leaving as soon as more rewarding conditions were offered elsewhere was openly criticised." Nevertheless, such comings and goings are documented throughout Italy, since local talent

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could not compete with their skill. Besides vocal ability, a thorough knowledge of counterpoint was essential, for choristers were expected to extemporize polyphonic parts to a Gregorian theme and often compose as well. Lowinsky gives us an idea of the early opportunities for the professionalization of singers in the north in his description of the Cathedral of Our Lady in Antwerp, Belgium. This church far surpassed similar institutions in Italy (even the papal choir) in both size and magnificence -- and that a generation earlier (the number of singers was also greater than was customary for most northern churches):

> In an edict of 1410, Pope John XXIII [a Schism pope, later deposed] granted the chapter's request to have the revenues of 12 prebends reserved for singers and the distribution made solely on the basis of musical merit. This edict paved the way for the engagement of lay singers, . . . the admission of the professional musician . . . , this gave rise to a great improvement in the musical services. In 1443 the Cathedral boasted 51 singers; in 1480, 63; in 1549, 69. Adult males sang not only the bass and tenor parts, but also, through special training in falsetto singing, the alto part. The soprano was sung by choir boys, whose number grew from six to twelve between 1401 and 1445. (Lowinsky, 1954:511-12)

Cattin (1981:32) does note, however, that the presence of the northerners in Italy gradually encouraged native singers to adopt the formers' professional approach and to develop their own compositional skills. Lockwood (1981:238), in fact, suspects that Tinctoris' programmatic series of treatises of the 1470s of being intended to teach principles of composition and notation "to a newly established and visibly inexperienced generation of singers, of whom only a very small minority [were] also known as composers."

In the sixteenth century, compared to the earlier period, native singers were becoming available in greater numbers while the outstanding musicians from across the Alps were settling in the

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peninsula permanently. (Reese (1954) 1959:380] blames unfamorable political conditions in the Low Countries for more Franco-Netherlanders' leaving home without returning.) James Haar (1981:164) emphasizes the distinction between these "thoroughly Italianised musicians" and the earlier "visitors to Italy." How was the music they wrote influenced by what they heard and learned in Italy?

> If their work became more lyrical, more openly melodious, lighter in style and texture while preserving its technical mastery and strength, we notice that they were working in conditions where such lyrical freedom and lightness were not merely encouraged but actually expected of them. The fact was that the Burgundians and Flemings -- whatever name we like to apply generally to them -- were taking their technical revolution into a musical culture which was developing along quite different lines from those in which they had grown up, and that most of them were stimulated by the new atmosphere. (Raynor, 1972:86)

Grout ([1960] 1973:212) concurs that the Netherlanders in Italy "undoubtedly learned . . . some of the potentialities of harmonic writing and simple syllabic text setting; . . ." Reese ([1954] 1959:184) states, more generally, that the art impulses of Franco-Netherlandish and Italian music -- "Flemish counterpoint, with its technical possibilities, intellectual appeal, and serious purpose; and Italian spiritedness, with its harmonic color, flexible rhythms, and charming directness" (Ulrich and Pisk, 1963:132) -- interpenetrated one another.

The Italian contribution, though important, was indirect, however, for no native Italian composer of first rank arose in the fifteenth century. (There were, though, plenty of vocal and instrumental performers.) ". . . Italian music -- in the sense of a distinctive national style such as existed in the trecento -- might be said to have gone underground for a hundred years, to emerge once more

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into the light of history only at the beginning of the sixteenth century" (Grout, [1960] 1973:134).[53]

Summary of the Pervasive Appeal of Polyphonic Song

Within a brief period of time polyphony had developed to an amazing degree; what had begun as an evening's entertainment of the burghers grew to be the highest and most complicated of all musical forms (Pahlen, 1949:45). At the same time, this secular musical culture had a parallel growth in sacred music, where polyphony was being reconciled with the practice of Gregorian church art, the Church realizing that "its monopoly on music was being seriously challenged as the development of polyphony went forward on a more universal basis than strictly liturgic . . ." (Lang, 1941:140). The list of churches where harmonized music is known to have been sung, Hughes ([1954] 1967:314) declares, is "so long . . . , that we should be justified in saying that the practice was universal." Its greatest potential existed here because of the availability of well-trained choristers and soloists.

> . . . we again see an ecclesiastico-historical event coincide with the evolutionary course of music -- the emigration, necessitated by the political dismemberment of Italy, of the papal see from Rome to Avignon (1305). Here, in music-loving Provence, the need of utilizing for the service of the Church also the musical advances made in the course of the ages could not but find rich nourishment. In particular, the till then only timidly practised art of "Organating" . . . is now, under the name of Discantus . . .[54] , studied by the church-singers with more and more freedom and zeal, . . . (Langhans, 1886:45)

Virtuosity in Polyphonic Singing

While, on the one hand, the powerful body of the clergy endeavored to preserve intact in public worship the chant's simple

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expression of the congregational spirit, "[o]n the other hand were the composers and descantors, . . . becoming by degrees more and more preocupied by the artistic problem, and employing more and more in their enrichments of the service material essentially different in character from plain song" (Wooldridge, 1932:293-4). Hughes ([1954] 1967:314) agrees: "The unadorned Gregorian chant, however protracted the melismata . . . , was not enough . . . they sought new ways of enlarging the opportunities of the singers." Seay (1965:5), similarly, talks of "the continual urge of the practical musician to indulge his interest in his art as a technique and his obvious delight in the exploration of the purely tonal, . . ." Hawkins ([1853] 1963:384) describes the mass sung by "a numerous choir, composed of men and boys, sufficiently skilled . . . , to music of a very elaborate and artificial context; in the composition whereof the strict rules of the tonal melody were dispensed with, and the greatest latitude was allowed for the exercise of the powers of invention." And Cattin (1981:36) concludes that the attitude on the part of the Church be seen as one of "healthy pragmatism, a flexibility in adapting to the tendencies and needs of the time. . . . the trend was toward polyphony, the Church trained polyphonists and adapted its services to polyphonic music."

Inside the churches, vocalists, who nourished by secularism "saw and felt music primarily as an art" (Duey, 1951:35), seized new opportunities to indulge themselves in various types of vocal display. Pincherle (1963:20) considers the Church to have been "albeit paradoxically, the chosen field of virtuosity," supporting his contention with the rhetorical question: "Are not the calls to order that one finds in such numbers in the parish archives testimony to the

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skill of performers who were too brilliant?" Harman (1958:65) describes a scene: ". . . some of the choir stood round a lectern or reading desk on which was placed a large MS. chant-book, and while some sang the melody others improvised one or two parts above it . . ." Jander (1980:339), Lowinsky (1954:531) and Reese ([1954] 1959:23) make clear that when such passages of organum were interpolated in medieval performances of plainsong the purely monophonic plainsong passages were sung chorally, but the polyphonic organum insertions were sung by a group of soloists of the kind Harman describes. Though we might expect the opposite, the old practice, Reese ([1954] 1959:23-4) says, makes sense since

> Part-music was new . . . Dealing with the unaccustomed and comparatively difficult was an undertaking for superior soloists; . . . There is nothing to show that choruses took part in the performance of polyphonic music prior to c.1420. The old MSS of such music are only big enough for three or four people to sing from. Large MSS, such as were set on a lectern for all choristers to sing the plainchant from, begin to be repositories of part-music only in the early 15th century.[55]

And so, examples of truely choral polyphony are not seen until that time.

Harman's description illustrates one of the possible types of contrapunctus a mente about which Pietro Cerone (in El melopeo y maestro, 1613) would be one of the last to write. In one species an individual singer decorated his part with such ornaments as his imagination suggested, while the rest sang the music as it was written; in the other variety everyone varied his part, immense skill being needed to prevent confusion. Cerone noted of the latter kind that chanters of the different parts were expected to take turns at embroidering but that "the rule was often broken and some singers made

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it a point of honor to vocalize in ensemble" (Quoted in Henderson, 1921:61). Lodovico Zacconi's 1622 additions to his 1592 treatise Prattica di musica also describe choir soloists as "improvising on a plainchant, not only sing[ing] all kinds of strict counterpoint (with obligazioni), but also challeng[ing] other fellow-singers to follow suit in many different ways of imitations and canons" (Quoted in Ferand, 1956:165). The criticism of individual singers made in 1640 by Pietro della Valle (author and composer) reflects the continued distinction between trained singers and more amateur choristers: "I do not consider it to be good singing, . . . , when he who has an optimum disposition of the voice always wishes to make all the passaggi, without keeping in time with the others who cannot do it . . ." (Quoted in Stark, 1973:134).

Duey (1951:34) lists continuous ecclesiastical complaints about the corrupt practices of solo singers from the tenth century onward: overdone suaveness, the introduction of extraneous elements or elaborations and wanton voices eager for ostentation. (Werner [n.d.:96] summarizes similar criticisms of the Jewish cantor: "The emphasis on the solo vocalist, who at the same time had to perform a priestly function, led inevitably to the idolization of certain outstanding singers, improvisation led to anarchy, brilliance to empty showmanship; . . .") For example, John of Salisbury (1115-1180), Bishop of Chartres and a well-known philosopher, in a long protest against the age, wrote: "Bad taste has, . . . , degraded even religious worship, luxurious and lascivious singing, full of ostentation, which with female modulation astonishes and evervates the souls of the hearers" (Quoted in Hayburn, 1979:18). And the twelfth-century Johannes Gallicus, writing about the

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execrable singers of his day, said that they were committed to vain practices and did not "catch the sweet and angelic strains with the ear of the mind" (Quoted in Duey, 1951:34). Blamed for these abuses was the use of descant in the divine service. Duey (1951:35) qualifies this statement: "Not that simple descant was objected to, but the elaborations of these opposing melodies -- elaborations that were to reach unexpected complexities."

Ecumenical councils attempted to prescribe the limits of music and proscribe many of these malpractices. A papal pronouncement of Pope John XXII in the 1320s ("Docta Sanctorum Patrum") complained that music of the divine offices was "pestered" with notes of small value. It described singers as occupying themselves with the measured dividing of time and "preferring to devise methods of their own rather than to continue singing in the old way, . . . voices are incessantly running to and fro, intoxicating the ear, not soothing it, . . ." (Quoted in Wooldridge, 1932:295). They were also accused of stuffing the melodies with upper parts made out of secular song and even of not standing "devout, humble and erect" but bending and extending themselves and looking around to see if people were looking at them (Wooldridge, 1932:295).

Singers were ordered to desist or undergo penalties -- "And if any be disobedient, let him, . . . , be punished by a suspension from office of eight days" -- but even the Church wanted to retain some of the elaborate practices that "heighten the beauty of the melody," ruling that such intervals were to be sung "above the plain cantus ecclesiasticus, yet so that the integrity of the cantus itself may remain intact, and that nothing in the authoritative music be changed

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. . ." (Quoted in Wooldridge, 1932:296).

Circumscriptions were apparently short-lived. "Far-reaching as this papal bull was," state Ulrich and Pisk (1963:87), "it seems not to have had any lasting effect." Henderson (1921:42) relates that the British art historian W. S. Rockstro attributes the short lifetime of John's decree to the fondness of elaborate ceremonials on the part of his successor, Benedict XII. Ulrich and Pisk (1963:87) cite examples of French, English and Italian liturgical polyphony as evidence. Determining opposition to have been impotent, Duey claims not only the continuation but the expansion of the vogue of vocal ornamentation and its increased demands on the skill of performers. For example, writing about the time of Pope Urban V (around 1362) August Ambros says: "The singer could no better display his art than, when asked to improvise a descant to a tenor[56] at sight, to render it as richly and as expensively as he was able" (Quoted in Duey, 1951:36).[57]

The ability to improvise had become essential, with the amount of attention paid to such improvisations by later musical theorists attesting to the prominent role it would continue to play. By the time of the theorist Johannes Tinctoris (ca.1435-1511), such practices had become sufficiently stylized for him to define, explain and offer examples in his Liber de arte contrapuncti. "Even the might of the Church," Duey (1951:36) declares, "could not withstand [this] stronger power." Harman's (1958:8) comment that the creative spark takes little account of officialdom applies here again (see p.141) to singer's "governed" by the powerful institution of the Catholic Church.

The Italian influence centering on melodic emphasis led composers to transfer more and more the principal interest in a piece

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from the tenor to the even higher superius. This accompanied, as we have seen, the trend toward a liberal use of ornamentation, in that part especially. The added upper voice now moved in a lively manner over the lower melody; for every note in the lower voice there were a greater number of shorter notes in the upper voice. Hawkins ([1853] 1963:237) offers a more complicated example: "Let there be four or five men, and the first of them begin the plain-song in the tenor; let the second begin in the fifth, the third in the eighth, and the fourth in the twelfth; and let all continue the plain-song in these concords to the end, observing this, that those who sing in the eighth and twelfth do Break and Flower the notes in such manner as best to grace the melody."

Diminution (this kind of embellishment with rich florid passages) and the "running" of diminutions, became an outstanding characteristic of polyphonic music, further obliterating the text: ". . . set the first part of the music as best you can and thus proceed to the end. . . . sometimes it is necessary to extend many notes over few words . . . until they are all used up" (Magister Aegidius of Murino, 14th century, as quoted in Lowinsky, 1954:535-6). The words of the text were treated by the Netherlandic composers, "in their one-sided contrapuntal zeal," Langhans (1886:49) shows, "with almost no consideration; it sufficed to write down, in a Mass, for instance, the initial words, leaving it to the singer to adapt, in the farther course of the piece, the syllables to the tones as best he could."

The fact that this art demanded proficient musicianship on the part of the singer in order to extemporize successfully suggests again the high degree of technical competence of these church singers.

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O'Brien (1950:79) quotes a dictum of the day: "qui canit quod non sapit appelatur bestia" (he who sings what he doesn't understand is a fool). The liberty afforded the singer in improvised counterpoint compelled him to give serious attention to his musicianship, Henderson (1921:62) concludes. Nevertheless, Langhans (1886:47) suggests that the contrapunctus a mente "must indeed have satisfied higher artistic requirements in exceptional cases only as the severe criticisms of it by writers on music attest." A stern rebuke to incompetent singers by fourteenth-century Jacob of Liege (formerly attributed to John de Muris), under the heading "What sort of errors arise in singing and in how many ways they arise," is an example. Two classes of offensive singers are categorized: incompetent performers, who ignore the nature of consonance and dissonance and create a constant cacophony; and those

> who although they contrive to sing a little [descant] in the modern manner, nevertheless, they have no regard for quality; they sing too lasciviously, they multiply voices superfluously; . . . breaking, cutting and dividing their voices into too many consonants; in the most inopportune places they dance, whirl and jump about on notes, howling like dogs. They bay and like madmen nourished by disorderly and twisted abberations, . . . (Quoted in Hayburn, 1979:17)

But even this castigation of particular singers and other critical objections to the way vocal music was performed illustrate the abilities that were necessary for such performances and at least expected of, if not found in, the performers as early as the twelfth century:

> . . . you would think yourself listening to a concert of sirens rather than of men, and wonder at the power of voices, which the nightengale or the mockingbird, or whatever is most tuneful among birds, could not equal. Such is the facility of running up and down the scale; so wonderful the shortening or multiplying of the notes, the repetition of the phrases, or their emphatic utterance . . . (John of Salisbury, as quoted in Hayburn, 1979:18)

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We find no evidence that vocal standards were not high. "That all did not attain the summit of perfection is hardly surprising," Joseph Dyer (1976:489) writes in a letter on the universality of the voice, "but the documents that have come down to us prove that the ideal was recognized."

For all of this, medieval writers on music are lacking in references to care of the voice. De Muris is the only one in Duey's (1951:21) survey of vocal hygiene before 1600 to suggest the effects of health on singing: "It is from incapacity that old people, boys, and those who are sick sing badly, . . . to carelessness, drunken people sing badly. . . . from indifference if they are wearied by some labor." But even these are such casual comments compared to the precise advice and instructions found in Aristotle and Quintilian (see pp.46-7,65).

With the development of even more complex polyphonic compositions, the singer's individually-created descant was forced to retire from its prominence, inevitably giving way to the written text, for

> . . . only in recorded form could the splendid masses of the Netherlands masters and their disciples be offered for habitual repetition in the services of the church. The improvisation of the singer ultimately confined itself to the decoration of the written text. (Henderson, 1921:65)

A treatise by Nicola Vicentino (1555) indicated this trend from improvisation toward written counterpoint composition. It is evident in the obvious contradiction in his chapter heading "How to Compose Extempore upon a Plainchant" and explained in the text: "It is pleasant to listen to the singing upon a plainchant in church if the group is well prepared . . . , if all the voices make their proper [passages] . . . and in each voice the right progressions . . . are kept. . . . it

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will be a difficult thing that no errors should occur, . . . ," after which Vicentino concluded that ". . . the true counterpoint, or rather the true composition, on a plainchant will be one in which all the voices that are sung alla mente are written down" (Quoted in Ferand, 1956:147-8).

These a penna decorations were, however, compositions created by vocalists. And singers also taught the art they practiced. Henderson (1921:62,66,70) reminds us repeatedly that nearly all of the great masters of church counterpoint were singers and teachers of singing, and concludes that, fortunately for the art, the most distinguished singers were competent to improvise artistically, their being theoreticians or composers.[58] Finally, the persistence of improvisation, adapting itself to further embroidery of the already embroidered (written) texts, invites Henderson (1921:62) to believe that the medieval music lover was quite as easily mastered by vocal virtuosity as were his successors.

The Use of Boys and Falsettists Simultaneous with Condemnation of the Feminine

In early sacred polyphony, strict discrimination among the various ranged male voices had not yet occurred -- ". . . the slightly higher range of the upper voice is merely the result of the harmonic construction 'on paper', by which one voice is reckoned as 'above' the other . . ." (Hughes, [1954] 1967:301). The comfortable, natural lower register has a range only slightly in excess of an octave, adequate to sing music of limited range. Men usually sang the higher parts added to polyphonic composition in the so-called "artificial" register termed falsetto (also called vox capitis [head voice]). The use of boys'

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voices for these new high (descant) parts is mentioned as early as the ninth century. D'Accone (1976:603,6,8-9) demonstrates the preponderance of boys in his lists of chapel staff from 1430 through 1540 (see pp.185-7). Despite their availability, "[p]ictorial evidence seems to indicate, . . . , that throughout the . . . centuries the top lines of polyphony were most often performed not by boys but by men, singing falsetto where necessary," Jander (1980:339) observes. These voices were stronger than those of boys. Many chapels, the Sistine for example, preferred adult sopranos for other reasons as well: the quality of the sound, the quality of the technique, the continuity of service (Boys voices mutated at about the same time as they became both technically adequate vocally and capable of leadership) and the solemnity of the liturgy. In addition, capable boys were scarce in many regions. All of these factors are included in a comment by della Valle: "The most one could do was to have a good boy; but these, when they began to know something, lost the voice; and while they still had it, as typical with persons of that age they had not judgment, they also sang without strength and without grace, they learned to sing mechanically by heart, which at times made it unbearable to listen to them" (Quoted in Stark, 1973:121).

Nonetheless, choir schools were crucial to training later singers, and the young residents needed to practice their skills in church performances. Boys, therefore, were most frequently used to augment the male falsettists. And their employment offered an added advantage -- they could be paid far lower compensations. The German courts of the early sixteenth century (the country that felt the full effects of the northern musical revolution latest) still listed

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numerous choirboys in their service. And several sources recount the famous kidnappings of the Flemish choirboy Roland de Lassus (b. ca.1532) (later to become Orlando di Lasso, Kapellmeister at Munich):

> His extraordinary gifts were recognized from early boyhood, when he was kidnapped three times from the choir school on account of the beauty of his voice; . . . (Bauer and Peyser, 1932:74)

> Such was the beauty of his voice that he was thrice kidnapped, the last abduction resulting in his entering at the age of twelve, the service of Ferdinand Gonzaga, Viceroy of Sicily. (Reese, [1954] 1959:390)

Information on actual distributions of voices is poor. D'Accone (1976:603,6,8-9) offers an idea of the precise composition of a few of the chapel choirs during some years:

Rome, St. Peter's	1465	5 singers:	3 sopranos 1 contratenor 1 tenor
	1478	7 singers:	4 sopranos 2 contratenors 1 tenor
	1485	9 singers:	3 sopranos 2 contratenors 2 tenors
	1491	10 singers,	including: 4 sopranos 3 contratenors 1 tenor 1 bass
Siena Cathedral	1481	6 adults:	3 sopranos 2 contratenors 1 tenor
Treviso Cathedral	1527-28	13 singers:	2 maestri 3 altos 2 tenors 2 basses 4 boy sopranos
	1532	12 singers:	6 adults, 2 each for the lower parts; 6 sopranos, most probably boys

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Florence Cathedral	1478-81	9-10 singers:	2 adults each for the lower parts; 4 boys
	1481-84	4 adults:	chapelmaster 1 alto 1 tenor 1 bass
		4-8 boys	
	1502	16 singers:	2 sopranos 2 altos 4 tenors 2 basses 1 teacher 5 boys
	1507	15 singers:	1 soprano 3 altos 3 tenors 3 basses 5 boys
	1512	8 adults:	1 soprano 2 altos 3 tenors 2 basses
		4-6 boys	
Florence Baptistry	1510	13 singers:	1 soprano 2 altos 3 tenors 2 basses 5 boys
	1515	17 singers:	2 altos 5 tenors 2 basses 4 boys
Florence, Cathedral and Baptistry	1540	24 singers:	chapelmaster 7 sopranos, 4 of whom were boys 7 altos 4 tenors 5 basses[59]

It must be remembered, of course, that the numbers of boys appearing in our earlier presentation of D'Accone's findings see pp.10-11) likely reflect additional sopranos in the other choirs, for which there are no

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distribution figures.

From these figures, we see the practice of using one or two voices for the lower parts but a somewhat larger number of sopranos. This pattern is evident in all cases in which D'Accone has a distribution for the various voices and can be presumed for most others, considering the fact that "unspecified number of boys" ("?#") is such a common feature of the chapels for which the researcher has documentation. That more sopranos were required, D'Accone (1976:604-5,12) attributes to both the amplitudinal weakness of the male falsetto range ("a matter of decibels, which falsettists were evidently uncapable of producing in an equal amount") and the trend toward a treble-dominated style. The latter point finds corroboration in the fact that the pitch of choir organs "was raised, year after year" (Praetorius, 1619, as quoted in Mendel, 1948:202).

Early mentions of the falsetto range appear to have been negative (see pp.139-40) but one notes that such comments were frequently incorporated into more general anti-virtuosic accusations relating to the singing of the plainchant:

> References exist that Saint Bernard (1091-1153) said to sing "not with high, lax voices in a womanish fashion, but, masculine in sound and feeling" ["Regulations of the Chant at Citeaux"]. His contemporary, Saint Raynard, Abbot of Citeaux, 1133-1151, writes to the same end: "It becomes men to sing with a masculine voice, and not in a feminine manner, with tinkling, or as is popularly said, with false voices to imitate theatrical wantonness." Gerbert reports a dialogue between the Cistercian and the Clunian in which the former censures the latter for having emasculated voices at Cluny; he says that these voices are too light and effeminate and make for luxury . . . (Duey, 1951:40-1)

Duey (1951:41) also offers later, more positive references to the use of the falsetto in connection with the demands of the polyphonic repertoire range: descant as "harmony which must be produced with a

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voice like a girl's," descant sung "with a light and penetrating voice," and descant as "the highest voice, melodiously turned to the very high sounds, and consequently light and childlike." Hawkins ([1853] 1963:312) specifically denotes descant as the uppermost part of each song, "to be song with a child's voyce." Numerous mid sixteenth-century musical theorists (Finck, Maffei and Vicentino, for example) advocated the use of falsettists for the upper parts if for no other reason than that, with women eliminated and boys dasadvantageous, it was what was left.

In the history of singing in the Church, attacks on singers and singing styles as "womanish" (see pp.41,196,200,206); "vain" and "ostentatious" -- negative characteristics frequently imputed to women (see pp.196,197); and "emasculated" and "effeminate" (see p.206) echo those leveled against ancient singers (see p.73). John of Salisbury likens them to the captivating vocal enchantresses of mythology (see p.200). At the same time, the highest part of the male vocal range was still deemed most desirable (Jander [1980:339] writes of voices described as "high, sweet, and strong") -- to the point of "lengthening" that range upward through resorting to the falsetto, with its likeness to the female voice. (Again, it was not simply the female range that was sought after, however, but that of the girl or young woman -- a voice "like a girl's," "light" and "childlike.") But with these attempts would come also renewed accusations (Cf. Vicentino, 1555; Zarlino, 1558; Maffei, 1562; Zacconi, 1592) of yelling, neighing and shrillness, likely results associated with males' trying to carry their lower register beyond its natural limits: ". . . many have voices called voci di testa [head voices], which are produced by the singer

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with a certain kind of brittle sound, and the brittleness is something which ought not to be heard too often; for this reason I advise them to moderate it, so that they do not dominate the others, and also because this so-called head voice [which Zacconi deems a "false" voice] most often offends" (Zacconi, 1592, as quoted in Foreman, 1969:110).

What got injected into criticisms anew were also references to those tempting, sexual/sensual, "fleshy" traits (considered unsavory, offensive and dangerous) that had come to be associated with woman and the products of her vocal apparatus, both among the Jews (see pp.89-90,97-8) and in the early Catholic Church (see pp.110-11,119-21). "Intoxicating" (see p.197), "lascivious" (see pp.196,200,214[2]) and "sensuous" (see p.214) became part of the nomenclature of clerical charges made against high-voiced male singers. What was desirable was, in some ways (or, better, when part of the role repertoire of a "certain" [i.e., female] class of singers), also derogatory. And when accusations were voiced, there was no keeping the accusers from using such disparagements against any individuals or groups performing that vocal role.

The Sacred and Profane in Church Music: Music versus the Text

The ultimate stage of the development of polyphony appeared when the textual connection between the contrapuntal part and the cantus firmus melody was dissolved, "the upper voice becoming as independent textually as it had become melodically" (Nef, [1935] 1964:60). First, no unequivocal Textunterlegung (correct fitting of the words to the music) existed, the underlying of the text having been done extempore also (the text simply having appeared beneath the notes

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in a general way),

> with all the difficulties hazards, and uncertainties involved in such a procedure. . . .
> . . . The lack of any indication, in many manuscripts and prints . . . of how words and music should go together was attributable not so much to the "negligence" or "carelessness" on the part of composers, scribes, or printers as to the very natural indifference to the handling of the text [in] the improvisatory stages, in which anything like a standardization was a contradiction in itself. (Ferand, 1956:172-3)

Second, vocal compositions might have one set of words of sacred and one of secular character, many times the latter in the vernacular rather than in Latin. This came about because the Church, having prescribed for each festival a special melody, opposed the use of a different church tune as the corresponding counter voice. Thus, for every kind of sacred composition, the melody of a folk song was preferably employed. If at the same time the text was left untouched, Langhans (1886:49) explains that the reason for this lay entirely, as we have already seen (see p.25 and above), in the indifference of composers with regard to the text in general, it having had to fit itself as best it could into music with which it may not have been in consonance. An example is the combination of three texts by Nisard:

> One is the Greek Kyrie eleison [part of the Mass], a second is the Latin [hymn] "A love which wounds the heart, which springs from a human source can never be without flaw." A [secular] third in French is . . . "Many there are who often by their envy speak against love. But there is not a better life than to love loyally, because from love comes all courtesy, all honor, and all good instruction." (Hayburn, 1979:17)

Whereas in the Bull of the 1320s Pope John XXII had protested against the intrusion of secular song into the music of the liturgy, this new mixture of the spiritual and the secular belonged to the spirit of a new age (and appeared in painting also) -- "the sacred was

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not profaned by contact with the secular, rather, on the contrary, . . . the latter was through the former lifted up and enobled" (Langhans, 1886:49).[60] Also likely was what Lowinsky (1954:541) theorizes -- "that the religious experience embodied in the Mass was no longer enough to compensate for the lack of drama and variety in its texts." By the fifteenth century, the technique of "parodying" a plainchant (converting it into mensural, regularly rhythmic music), also forbidden by the Papal Bull (which expressly prohibited any tampering with existing chants and condemned the whole ars nova as "having no rest and distorting all Plainsong" [quoted in de Robeck, 1928:17),[61]

> began to obliterate the differences between the traditional music of the church and the songs which musicians created outside it. . . . concentration upon secular music and the attractiveness of regular rhythm and tonality not only added melodic simplicity and a rhythmic sense of direction to plainsong; they modernised it in the sense that they gave it the qualities which were most admired in the music of the world outside. (Raynor, 1972:87)

Imitation also appeared -- several voices treating the melody in a somewhat different way.

Vocal Domination in Sacred Music

Finally, it became common for numerous parts to group themselves around the melody, "the treble, tenor, high tenor, melody, concordant, vagrant, contratenor, base, year and more than these" (Quoted in Hawkins, [1853] 1963:312). An even more detailed description comments on the functions of all these voices:

> This man sings a base, that a small meane [i.e., middle part], another a treble, a fourth divides and cuts asunder, as it were certaine middle notes [i.e., improvising]. One while the voyce is strained, anon it is remitted, now it is dashed and then againe it is inlarged with a lowder sound. (Aelred, Abbot of Rievaulx, as quoted in Harman, 1958:69)

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From three-voice motets, masses with double choirs of twenty or more voices had become nothing out of the ordinary. There is a thirty-six voiced Deo gratias ascribed to Ockeghem (ca.1420-ca.1495), and other works are said to have been composed with more than ninety different voices. In order to facilitate the performance of these many-voiced works, Pahlen (1949:56) shows that Venice went so far as to build, in 1490, a second organ, "so that each of the two main naves now had its own organ and its own choir with orchestral accompaniment, affording the opportunity for magnificant combined effects."

The early Renaissance produced popes who were "passionately devoted to scholarship and the arts," Raynor (1972:96) declares. Cattin (1981:27) considers the most propitious years to be the pontificates of the famous fifteenth-century humanistic Popes: Eugenius IV, Nicholas V, Pius II, Paul II, Sixtus IV and Alexander VI.

As the staff of the papal choir grew in number, their security, salaries, gratuities and privileges also increased -- "a steady rise in the economic and social position of the singers . . ." (Lowinsky, 1954:512):

> Pope Eugenius IV created the economic foundation for the Papal Choir with his bull Et si erga of 1444 in which the income of the singers from benefices, prebends and canonries, as distinguished from their monthly salaries was stabalized. The Papal singers were to be preferred in their claims on such ecclesiastical benefices to any other claimants. Under Pope Nicholas V . . . their salary was increased from five to eight ducats monthly. Under every new incoming Pope the privileges of the Papal singers were confirmed in a new bull and substantial amplifications were added. (Lowinsky, 1954:511)

But it was Sixtus IV "who began to show how far a Pope might go," Machiavelli (Quoted in Lockwood, 1981:228) wrote. By 1473 he had begun construction of what would be the Sistine Chapel, was establishing a

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new cappella fo singers for St. Peter's and, during that year, issued the first of four bulls that would confer new provisions for benefices on the papal singers as well as extend existing privileges.

Cathedral schools, where particularly able children were still being educated and trained until they were admitted as members to the choirs after their voices had broken, were also enlarged and strengthened or established where they were lacking, with their continuation ensured through stipulated sources of income. Cattin (1981:23) offers confirmation of such backing:

> . . . St. Mark's school in Venice . . . , the source of patronage in this case being the Venetian government since St. Mark's basilica was a ducal church. . . . could well have influenced . . . , Pope Eugenius IV . . . , when through Papal directives he established or regulated similar schools in Turin in 1435 . . . , in Bologna and Florence in 1436, in Treviso in 1437-8 . . . , in Padua and Urbino in 1439, and in Verona in 1440-2 . . .

The purpose of reorganizing and aggrandizing such institutions -- the papal choir (see p.188 and above), other great church choirs (see pp.185-8), and their feeder training schools -- does not seem to have been merely revived encouragement of liturgical services with Gregorian chant, as the presence of a variety of singers with specific vocal roles for polyphonic performance (see pp.204-5, for example) testify.

By the sixteenth century, Leo X, the Medici Pope, Raynor (1972:96) says, "formed round him a body of musicians greater than any of his predecessors had bothered to maintain" (see p.188). Minor and Mitchell (1968:51-2) find (in a conversation related in Libro terzo of the Ragionamenti Academy of Cosimo Bartoli [Venice, 1567]) the names Carpentras, Consiglion, Bidon and Biaseron offered as "graceful" singers of that era capable of "captivating listeners for a year." But Leo's death in 1521, followed by the coronation of Adrian VI (who was

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committed to the reform of the Church), cut into this line of art-loving popes. Reformation in the north followed, and the Papacy was faced with war and siege and poverty (Cf. Raynor, 1972:97; de Robeck, 1928:31-2). Social and church-political reasons -- the threat of losing England, the Netherlands, Germany, Austria, Bohemia, Poland and Hungary -- made urgent such measures as those sanctioned by the Council of Trent (1545-1563) for purging the Church of abuses and laxities (Grout, [1960] 1973:262). This became the work of the Counter Reformation.

The question of church music came before the Council (Sessions XXII and XXIV). Some of its members were in favor of simply reforming polyphony and its performers, while others were intent on renewed supressions of any but Gregorian chant:

> These princes have their cappelle of singers which are a great confusion, because there stands one singer with a big voice who sounds like a calf, and the others howl around him like dogs, and no one understands what they are saying. So let these canti figurati go and sing instead the canti fermi ordered by the church . . . (Savonarola, as quoted in Lockwood, 1981:243)

The principal complaints were about the employment of melismata for purely musical rather than textual reasons (as Weber [(1915) 1946:343] puts it: "Art becomes an 'idolatry', a competing power, and a deceptive bedazzlement . . ."); the frequently secular spirit of sacred music (". . . the terrestrial had encroached upon the celestial" [Dorian, 1942:37]); and the complicated polyphony which often made it impossible to understand the words. Luther argued rightly that the melodies had become secular and the words profane, reflecting a widespread feeling that had been present for some time, as is evident in this comment by Erasmus (in his discourse on the first letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians) a generation before the Council met:

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> We have introduced an artificial and theatrical music into the church, a bawling and agitation of various voices, such as I believe had never been heard in the theatres of the Greeks and Romans. . . . Amorous and lascivious melodies are heard such as elsewhere accompany only the dances of courtesans and clowns. The people run into the churches as if they were theatres, for the sake of the sensuous charm of the ear. (Quoted in Reese, [1954] 1959:448)

In 1555, Vicentino, who championed the cause of the text, complained similarly of worldly tunes inserted into the masses, so that "the temple of God resembles a place where lascivious and ridiculous things were recited, just as on a stage" (Quoted in Anthon, 1943:165). Ulrich and Pisk (1963:145) conclude that the purists felt that the sanctity of the liturgy had lost ground and that music had become more attractive to the mind and the ear.

Additional criticism was voiced against bad pronunciation, carelessness and the generally irreverant attitude on the part of church singers. On Good Friday of 1555, for example, Pope Marcellus II criticized the vocal improvisations of his papal choir -- the perfunctory and light way in which they had sung the service -- and instructed them to perform in the future "with properly modulated voices, and so that everything could be both heard and understood properly" (Quoted in Coates, 1949:41). The Venetian religious confraternity Scuola della Midericordia dismissed its entire choir in 1540 for similar reasons, explained in an excerpt from the Scuola's record book:

> There is no money of our Scuola that is spent with less result and more shame and disgrace to the ministers than the payment made to the cantadori nuovi, because of their bad manner of singing, without any harmony and sweetness, singing in contempt of all rules, and with great dishonour in general to all; and more so in that they are unprincipled in conduct, behaving as they please and not as they should, [despite] having had courteous payment from us . . . (Quoted in Glixon, 1981:203)

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Numerous musicologists note, however, that the Council's final pronouncements did not touch on any of these technical points, stating very generally that (1) the aim of liturgical music was to be to promote a greater sense of worship in the congregation ("The whole plan of singing in musical modes should be constituted not to give empty pleasure to the ear, but in such a way that the words may be clearly understood by all, and thus the hearts of the listeners be drawn to the desire of heavenly harmonies, in the contemplation of the joys of the blessed" [Council of Trent general session, Sept. 10, 1562, as quoted in Hayburn, 1979:27]); and (2) everything "lascivious or impure" (Sept. 17, 1562, as quoted in Hayburn, 1979:28) must be avoided. "What the Council of Trent did, was not to negate the whole musical development of the previous five centuries, but to lend the stamp of approval to the prevalent contemporary church style, after surpressing certain impurities and abuses" (Anthon, 1943:167). Thus, secular material could not be introduced nor could the sacred words be interfered with. Implied again was that virtuosic and theatrical displays by performers were prohibited.

Roman taste in sacred vocal music developed, in accordance with the Council of Trent, conservatively and was not given to sensuous display. But the Tridentine decrees do not otherwise seem to have had substantial effects on musical practice. For instance, ornamentation flourished more than ever, and Bottrigari still wrote in 1594 that there was no difference between church and secular music, a trend that he considered one of the greatest abuses on the part of musicians (Quoted in Anthon, 1943:168).

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The Socioeconomic Situation of Church-Employed Singers

Conditions of employment by the Church (the greatest employer of musicians) were somewhat similar from church to church compared to those in the various courts --

> The organization of the cappella di musica, after centuries of development, was fairly uniform throughout Italy and was a stabilizing factor in musicians' employment. Moreover, almost all churches had one common feature: they were all anxious to save money and tried to get their musicians as cheaply as possible. Consequently, complaints . . . about their low salaries form an ever-recurring refrain in sixteenth-century Italy. (Anthon, 1946:112)

Anthon (1943:1946) has managed to present a fairly comprehensive picture of the lot of the average church musician.

From a table he (1943:315-32) has compiled of all available salary figures in northern Italy during the sixteenth century is concluded (1946:113) that salaries decreased from the choirmaster down, with instrumentalists (excluding organists) on the whole with the lowest salaries. In addition, from 1475 to about 1555, salaries are found to have remained more or less constant, with a gradual increase during the latter half of the century which became marked during the last two decades. Even with this, salaries lagged sadly behind prices[62] -- brought out by the mounting cost of living theme exhibited in musicians' letters of supplication. However, musicians' incomes rarely consisted of just a salary but also fees from lessons, compositions and outside performances. In addition, in the case of clerics, "their main income was derived from ecclesiastical benefices while their salaries as singers were supplementary" (Anthon, 1946:113). Various insundry items might be attached to such basic salaries, as, for instance, is illustrated in an offer of a choirmaster's post in Udine in 1560: "Your salary will be 70 ducats at L.6 s.4 [6 lire, 4 soldi, with slight

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variations in local value of currencies] each, 18 bushels of wheat, 12 bushels of millet and oats for horses, 2 kegs of wine, and 30 ducats for general expenses" (Quoted in Anthon, 1946:120). Clerics were provided with frugally furnished lodgings; married singers usually received rent allowances. Finally, old age pensions were assigned to most church musicians.

Salaries by themselves, then, can mean very little unless related to other salaries and with prices. As for the latter, Gino Luzzatto (1961:129) asserts that "it would be pure illusion to suppose that we could ever compile a series of index numbers, to illustrate variations in the purchasing power of money during the later Middle Ages." Concerning the former, let us look to some of Anthon's (1946:114-20) attempts to compare compensations of church musicans over time and in different parts of northern Italy and to contrast them with other professions:

> At S. Petronio in Bologna, which, by the way, had the largest choir in Italy, singers started out with a mere pittance of about 3 lire a month. After thirty years of service they might reach to 10 or 15 lire a month. Its choirmaster around 1540, [Giovanni Spataro], received only 10 lire. . . , but by the end of the century the . . . salary was 24 . . . These surely are not impressive salaries, but about half of the musicians, including most of the choirmasters, were clerics, and most of them had free lodgings. In addition, the Church's officials from time to time bestowed rather handsome gifts on their musicians. . . . the choirmaster in 1573, was given no less than 30 scudi (120 lire) representing about half a year's salary. In subsequent years he received further gifts, each equal to about a month's salary. Even his heirs were remembered . . . His successor, . . . , was given 40 lire in 1581, and when he disappointed his superiors by resigning the following year, he nevertheless received a farewell present of 70 lire.
>
> How low the salaries at S. Petronio were can be seen by a comparison with the salaries received by some professors at the University of Bologna. . . . , three or four times as high as those of choirmasters, emphasiz[ing] the exalted position of erudition over the lowly craft of the musician.

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[It also becomes obvious in considering Luzzatto's (1961:130) estimate of the yearly cost of subsistence (food and petty expenses) of an adult in the higher ranks of fourteenth-century Venetian society nearly two centuries earlier at 15 to 20 ducats -- or over 90 to 120 lire.] . . .

. . . some musicians, at least, did not depend entirely on their church salary for a livelihood. Giovanni Spataro could hardly have bequeathed 400 lire to S. Petronio, another 100 lire to a convent, and a small life pension to his housekeeper, if he had had only 120 lire a year to live on. He did not even avail himself of the free lodgings that were due him. Spataro's successor, . . . , was apparently even more comfortably situated. . . . the owner of several pieces of property outside of Bologna. In 1571 he bought two, one for 2875 lire and another for 1200 lire, and in the same year he sold one for 1734 lire. . . . [etc.] . . . These sundry transactions denote a certain degree of bourgeois prosperity which some musicians enjoyed. . . .

A comparison of musicians' salaries with other occupations and professions almost invariably leaves the musicians at a disadvantage. In Milan during the sixteenth century a doorkeeper of the cathedral or a driver of a cart earned as much as some singers. Al blacksmith earned about four times as much as most singers. Architects, sculptors, and engineers employed by the cathedral received salaries which were twice as large as that of the choirmaster. . . .

At the sumptuous basilica di S. Antonio in Padua, situated in Venetian territory, singers were paid even less than in Bologna. This is surprising in view of the high musical standards prevailing in Venice, . . . Extreme parsimony characterizes the policy of its administration, and several times -- in 1541, 1560, 1563, and 1593 -- the church simply dismissed all musicians in order to save money. . . .

Venice was, . . . , the Mecca of musicians in Northern Italy, and a post at St. Mark's was the aim of all. . . . We have no detailed statistics on the pay given to singers, but during the latter half of the sixteenth century the average salary for singers ranged between 50 and 70 ducats a year.

Again it might be illuminating to compare these salaries with others in the same locality. In 1561 the Venetian Senate appointed six professori di humanita at 200 ducats a year (i.e. the choirmaster's salary), while six maestri di grammatica to assist them were paid only 60 ducats. The salaries paid to Venetian magistrates in subject towns were around the same level, . . . A captain in the army was paid . . . 180 a year, a sergeant had [96 ducats], and a drummer [84 ducats a year]. . . . in Venice at least the musicians' salaries were not so completely out of line as in Milan, Bologna, Padua, and other cities. . . . Since Venice was generous to its musicians it was able to attract the best in the country and keep them there. It is surely not without significance that the only notable musicians who did leave St. Mark's . . . went, not to other churches, but to a duke,

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king, or emperor who were in a position to reward even more lavishly.

The Triumph of Sacred Polyphony and its Downfall

Palestrina (ca.1525-1594), the most important musician of his day, "in whose work all the loftiness of medieval music was embodied for the last time," (Pahlen, 1949:57) came out of Rome. According to Pahlen (1949:58), Giovanni Pierluigi (called Palestrina) was still able to fill medieval polyphony "with the breadth of real life" at this late date, whereas works of other polyphonic composers of this century "remained mere theory and paper music." About his Missa Papae Marcelli, it was said that the impression it made was "so profound and lasting that renewed attacks on the use of [polyphonic] music in the churches were silenced" (Pahlen, 1949:57).[63] This was because a sacred piece by Palestrina was supposed to have "worthily fulfilled its spiritual purpose[s], namely, to 'lift and form the minds of the faithful to all sanctity'," (de Robeck, 1928:33) by making it possible again "for the relatively unmusical to regard it as an undistracting and emotionally pleasing way of treating the text of the Mass" (Raynor, 1972:7) and to express the collective, "catholic" spirit of the community, excluding the aspect of individual feeling from such musical performance (Dorian, 1942:37). Henry Coates and Gerald Abraham (1968:314) find it easy to understand why his music has been regarded as a model of church style, so perfectly did it fit and adorn the sacred text: "His art has its roots deep in liturgical soil, the Gregorian chant which is used not merely as a canto fermo against which to weave elaborate counterpoint: its contours are infused into every one of the contrapuntal strands."

But it was in uniting at last the Italian sense of beautiful

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sounds for their own sake and the singableness of the voice parts with the technical ability of the Flemish school that made the works of Palestrina so remarkable, de Robeck (1928:29) asserts. O'Brien (1950:85) concurs:

> . . . Palestrina's works expressed the artistic ideals of the Middle Ages, and contributed no novel elements to the science of music; yet his native Italian instinct for melody and clarity infused into the classical contrapuntal forms such a rich, new beauty that his art represents the last glorious climax of modal polyphony.

Silva (1922:60F) mentions the sixteenth-century composers Anerio, Gabrieli, Marenzio, Nannini, Vecchi and Vittoria, in addition to Palestrina, as having maintained, in the polyphonic form of the Flemmings, "the soverign might of the lyrical and emotional expression of the singing voice . . . characteristic of Italian musicianship." This was the direction in which secular music was going as well, as we shall see. In that sphere, a major difference, however, would be in the singer of the florid, high parts of secular part music. Given the opportunity, the trained voices of particular females would reign supreme.

In the masterpieces of Palestrina, then, sacred polyphonic music again reached a summit -- "those endless complicated voice parts rise and fall, and cross each other, in the most intricate patterns, and yet the whole design emerges large and natural" (de Robeck, 1928:29-30) -- but its decline was imminent. "[T]he less gifted," Pincherle (1963:32) claims, were "maladroit in imitating the masters, and there follows a decline, from which there is a reaction, a counter-offensive in the direction of purity."

The complex polyphonic trend involving large choirs and many parts had outlived itself. Generally, it lacked balance (due to the

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obsession with voice differentiation and rhythm), and technical details had grown to gigantic proportions. ". . . like a child with a new toy, composers wanted to, one could almost say were bound to, exploit the possibilities of this kind of music in which the more the parts are dissociated from each other the less like monophony they become" (Harman, 1958:153). And "the more they made the parts move, the more artful composers thought themselves" (de' Bardi [ca.1580] 1950:294). Such compositions created the impression of being the product of the mind of an arithmetician rather than an artist, Nef ([1935] 1964:68) describes. This was especially noticeable in the often exaggerated counterpoint of the canon, a contrapuntal musical composition in two or more voice parts in which the melody is imitated exactly and completely by the successive voices. For example, ". . . a second voice does not merely repeat what the first one has sung, but . . . it sings backwards . . . or . . . the second voice so alters the intervals that they are sung as they appear in a mirror; . . ." (Nef, [1935] 1964:68-9). There were also the 48-part, twelve-choir masses "and other such monstrosities," as Pincherle (1963:32) calls them. About the less grandiose compositions that existed in the secular sphere, de' Bardi, in his "Discourse on Ancient Music and Good Singing" ([ca.1580] 1950:293-4), tried to demonstrate anthropomorphically the ills of counterpoint's combining several melodies and several modes at the same time: ". . . Messer Bass, soberly dressed in semibreves and minims, stalks through the ground-floor rooms of his palace while Soprano, decked out in minims and semiminims, walks hurriedly about the terrace at a rapid pace and Messers Tenor and Alto, with various ornaments and in habits different from the others, stray through the rooms of the

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intervening floors."

"Polyphony," Pahlen (1949:59) concludes, "had grown to be less of an art than a mechanical ability . . ." Socio-political reasons for this "sterility and formalism" are offered by Seay (1965:168-9): "With such a state of affairs" -- he is speaking of the decay of the medieval world, including an inability of its institutions (the Catholic Church especially) to cope, and the political disruption evident all over Europe by the fifteenth century, due to the splintering of the Holy Roman Empire --

> . . . it can be no surprise that the music . . . has little artistic validity or inspiration. . . . the goals of a previous civilization and its social stability have been discarded, but without the introduction of new ideals and functions or an established social order, . . . Feeling no aesthetic goal for his creations nor a secure place in a stable society, the composer . . . retreated into technical complexity, . . .

The goals of medieval part music had been reached; alongside it was developing a movement in the opposite direction, one which had begun with the first generation of Italian composers and, as Harman (1958:173) describes it, aimed at "a greater simplicity of rhythm, a smoother melodic line, and a more unified texture." Pincherle (1963:32) sees the abuses of contrapuntal virtuosity as the catalyst which provoked what he terms quite strongly -- "a brutal revolt." In addition, a waning interest in sacred music and increased emphasis on secular vocal performance paralleled this stylistic trend. Polyphony had become so complicated that the people turned away from it; ". . . reaction set in and carried to victory the very opposite principle" (Pahlen, 1949:59).

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Notes to Section 2

[1]Sendrey (1969:159) shows that, with the advance of civilization, a variety of causes prevailed in releasing song from the human soul: festival events, sorcery, exorcism, healing, ritual, work and religious rites. In a commentary attributed to the early Church writer St. John Chrysostom ([4th century] 1950:67-8), there is a passage about music in daily life: about nurses who, walking to and fro singing, cause the babies in their arms to close their eyes; about travelers who, driving their animals, lighten the hardships of the road with their songs; about peasants who sing while tending their vines and gathering and treading the grapes; about sailors who do likewise while pulling at the oars; about women singing as they weave. One theory for the origin of secular singing (Bucher, 1909, as quoted in Sendrey, 1969:161) is that it sprung from some specific extra-musical rhythmic actions of everyday working procedures.

[2]The earliest architectural arrangements for the accomodation of a choir in a church date from this period.

[3]Psalms are lyrical prose songs taken from the Bible. Hymns are songs of praise or adoration of God (originally of the Greek god Apollo) which are not Scriptual. These terms were not too clearly distinguished, and the Church Fathers often used them rather indiscriminately.

[4]"This term means, in a narrower sense, the alternate singing of the two parallel lines by two half-choruses, and in a wider sense, the alternate singing of a soloist and an answering chorus, which in the Roman Church has been called responsorial singing" (Sachs, 1943:92). Features contained in the three ancient forms of the Hebrew chant exerted an influence on Christian chant:

> "In one form the leader intoned the first half-verse, which the congregation repeated, the leader singing each succeeding half-line, with the congregation always repeating the same first half-line which thus became a refrain throughout the entire song. [These refrains consisted of either a single word such as Amen or Hallelujah or a phrase, for example: 'For His Mercy endureth forever'.] In another, the leader sang a half-line at a time, and the congregation repeated what he had last sung. The third was responsive, i.e., the leader would sing the whole first line, whereupon the congregation would respond with the second line of the verse." (Reese, 1940:10)

The Christian use of the word antiphonos occurs for the first time about the middle of the first century, when Philo, in his De vita contemplativa, described religious practices of the Therapeutae and Therapeutides near Alexandria (Anglès, [1954] 1967:94).

[5]Since the second century, the family was based upon conjunctio sanguinis, the mother taking a place of equality with the

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father in her relationship with her children and the daughter inheriting like her brother.

[6]On surveying the appearance and shapes of medieval women painted during that period of art, Seltman (1956?:167-8) finds these representations quite different from the developed and healthy physiques of the classical and modern worlds. Denouncing the female body as something shameful, he (1956?:167-8) says, affected a change in perceptions of the physical as well as the mental characteristics (or at least portrayals of them) of European women: "peeky-faced, tubercular types, sloping of shoulder, pigeon-chested creatures with little piggy paps for breasts . . ."

[7]Mary, the Mother of God, was never a "goddess" nor even a creator of life in her own right. Her part in bringing the Saviour into the world was a passive one; God the Father alone begot his Son. Mary herself refers to her role as "the handmaid of the Lord" (Luke 1:38).

[8]Henderson (1916:340) recalls:

> "More than two centuries before the Christian era, Demetrius Phalereus had noted that the Egyptian priests did this. . . . Nichomachus . . . informs us . . . that the priests in their worship invoked their divinities with inarticulate tones and without consonants. . . .
> . . . The Greeks borrowed the custom of carolling in honor of the gods, . . ."

Although Greek was the accepted language in most of the early churches and although the Church Fathers were greatly influenced by Greek thought, "Christian chant," Harman (1958:5) contends, "owes more to the Jewish synagogue than to the Greek temple." Wellesz ([1954] 1967:1) agrees: "It was from the Synagogue that the early Christians took over the cantillation of lessons, the chanting of psalms, and the singing of hymns."

[9]These names come from the Latin cantus planus. They were used by later (thirteenth-century) theorists to distinguish between the "plain notes" of these melodies (which had no time value) and the later musica mensurata, in which the notes were measured, i.e., they had exact time values or meter.

[10] Early Christian chant was simple, as it was secret, also out of "political" necessity.

[11] Angel-musicians were a favorite theme in contemporary paintings.

[12] Borrowed from the synagogue, cantillation is chanting on a monotone or one note, with the introduction of a few ascending or descending notes (inflections) at the beginning, middle or end of the phrase.

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[13]This is one reason for the rejection of instruments.

[14]St. John Chrysostom describes the psalms, "which unite all the voices in one, and the canticles arise harmoniously in unison" (Quoted in Elson, 1904:36-7).

[15]Legato is a smooth and connected passage from one note to another.

[16]Some melismata serve only to lead up to the end of a melody.

[17]This principle originated in the early Eastern (Byzantine) Church, where the melodies were not wholly original but constructed out of a group of given short motives, from which the singer was expected to choose and combine to form his melody. There were also standard ornamental formulas (melismas). "The singer's originality consisted in the way he combined the motives and varied them with ornamentation," states Grout ([1960] 1973:14).

[18]It is Hughes' ([1948] 1970:41) contention that the whole development of music has been a series of successful revolts against an established tradition.

[19]Some authorities, according to Ulrich and Pisk (1963:29), call attention to evidence which suggests that "Gregorian" chant developed in France and Germany in the eighth and ninth centuries; and that this Gallican form spread to Rome, displaced the indigenous chant, became the standard and was thus subsequently identified with the Gregorian tradition and name. Hayburn (1979:4) names Gussanville, von Echkart and Gevaert as questioning the authenticity of Gregory's contributions. Nevertheless, most authorities (Dom Morin, Cagin, Brambach and Frere, according to Hayburn [1979:4]) conclude that the traditional linking of Pope Gregory's name with the Roman repertoire will most likely endure, in spite of continuing historical research on the subject.

[20]"It was not brilliant or sparkling as later music was, but smooth, graceful, aristocratic in character, and frequently decorated with . . . effects, . . ." (Henderson, 1921:41). Ornaments of the chant were to be executed in a light voice and without words.

[21]"Coloratura" in vocal performance involves the use of rapid scales, arpeggios (the singing of the notes of a chord in succession), trills (the rapid alternation of a given tone with the adjacent one above) and other passage work of a virtuoso character.

[22]In The History of Music in Performance, Dorian (1952:23) examines the art of musical interpretation:

> "Between a musical work and the world stands the interpreter who brings the score to life by his performance. . . . This situation in music, as compared to the other arts, is unique. Paintings in the gallery speak to the

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> visitor without the help of a mediator; this is true similarly of the works of sculpture and architecture. In reading poetry or prose, we act, as it were, as our own interpreters. . . . Thus it becomes obvious that in music, in contrast to the other arts, the interpreter is of paramount importance -- a factor sine qua non."

[23]The timbre of the high male voices that predominated in Western music until the fifteenth century can only be surmised. The liturgical chant of the Catholic Church, prevailingly sinuous in character and with its origins in Mediterranean culture, was probably performed in a manner that would now be considered distinctly oriental (Jander, 1980:339).

[24]"This renewed creative impulse," states Harman (1958:8),

> ". . . was no isolated event, but simply the result of a general flowering of the human mind and spirit that affected all human activity, and which manifested itself in the four Crusades, . . . the struggles for and against authority . . . , the final separation between the eastern and western Churches (1054), the Norman Conquest of England (1066), the organizing of communities into towns, the formation of guilds of craftsmen, the intensive study of classical literature and philosophy, the establishing of universities (Paris and Bologna, c. 1140; Oxford, early thirteenth century), the increasing use of various vernaculars . . . , the beginnings of western science . . . , Romanesque and Gothic architectural styles, the birth of European drama, . . .
>
> In all these different branches of human learning and action the Church was the dominating influence; . . ."

[25]Harman (1958:11) describes these functions of the monasteries:

> "At first the monasteries were poor and the monks spent most of the daylight hours in manual labour. Later, however, as the result of rich endowments, the intensive study of both Christian and classical authors was made possible and many monasteries became centres of learning; indeed, they were the only centres before the universities came into being. Here most of the more important earlier manuscripts were copied, annotated, or translated, a fact which disproves the common belief that interest in classical culture was first shown in the Renaissance, . . ."

This learning was not completely approved of by the Church leaders, especially in Italy, yet the two men who most strongly advocated such study -- Cassiodorus (ca.477-570) and Boethius (ca.480-524) -- were Romans.

[26]We know even less concerning the attitudes and values toward

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singers of the early peoples of the North. As in Homeric times, among the ancient Celts the bards of early Britain and Brittany were "heartily welcome," according to Bauer and Peyser (1932:90), because there was no Christian Church to combat the influence of 'pagan' story and instrumental frivolities. In Ireland and Wales, "[t]heir function of unifying their countrymen and calling to mind the deeds of the past was long carried on by a race of blind harpers and wandering minstrels" (Hughes, [1948] 1970:93), the reciting poets (called ollamhs) who, Sachs ([1961] 1962:202) maintains, were "painstakingly prepared" for their art during more than twelve years of study. In the martial music of the Celtic and Gaelic races women had no place. "Even among the early English minstrels, who devoted their powers to the milder art of love-songs and Christmas carols," Elson (1904:37) notes, "no women are to be found." As for the Nordic groups, Hughes ([1948] 1970:92) says we are told that of all his hirdmen the viking King Olaf valued his scalds (or saga-men) the most. They were placed on the second high-seat bench at a banquet and might marry a king's daughter. They too functioned to give praise and to record and keep brave deeds in mind.

[27] The disreputable conduct of the goliards and their satires against the Church resulted in their being denied the "privileges of clergy" (Reese, 1940:200). They died out in the early thirteenth century, when the great medieval universities grew, and students became residents instead of wandering from one teacher to another.

[28] The Crusades supposedly spurred the desire and ability to travel, providing contact with the richly ornamental singing method of the East and hitherto unknown instruments, such as the lute and the guitar.

[29] Elson (1904:57-8) and Rowbotham ([1895] 1969:191-2) discuss briefly English gleemaidens, who wandered about the English countryside and entertained in castles, monasteries, villages and towns with voice and violin. Among the famous gleemaidens, they name Adeline, Josiane, and Marie de France, the latter having composed.

[30] As explained by Burkhalter (M/M, [1966] 1968:22):

> "It is to be remembered that many senior members of the clergy were at the same time aristocrats and of noble birth. When they moved to their abbeys or to their official palaces, they were loth to leave behind them all the trappings of the court. From the time of Charlemagne there is ample evidence of rich and powerful princes of the Church maintaining musicians to add splendor and status to their offices."

[31] Fragments of these bards form the principal materials for the history of this "dark" period: "Without their aid, the annals of Europe would have been very defective; and the light they served to throw upon some important events, greatly sanction Bayle in saying that a collection of old ballads is not an unprofitable companion to an historian" (Busby, [1819] 1968:323).

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[32] The "rehabilitation of woman through the accomplishment of her defeat" is what we saw in the Greek conception of woman's place in the hierarchy of the gods, as represented in Hesiod's Theogony (see p.28).

[33] In England, a distinction was made between a "scop" (perhaps a noble and frequently a court retainer), who was higher in social status, and the "gleeman" -- a professional musician who performed for pay. (Old English also differentiated between the male gligmann and the female gliewmeden.) This distinction between "higher" and "lower" musicians appears to go back to the very beginnings of musical history. For example, in the primitive community of the Andaman Islands, Schneider ([1957] 1966:40) says that everyone was allowed to compose his own song, but not everyone was authorized to recite the tribal legends.

[34] Bogin (1976:57-8) summarizes the downfall of Provençal culture:

> "In 1209 Pope Innocent III proclaimed a new Crusade: the target was Occitania. The Albigensian Crusade, as it came to be called, was ostensibly an attack on heresy; but when the French king threw his weight behind the effort, . . . it fast became a war of annexation. . . .
>
> Within fifty years of Innocent's first call to arms, the great cities of the South would lie in ruins. . . .
>
> Troubadour poetry was one of the first casualties . . . the poetry was found subversive; its seems to have been taken as a symbol of the whole southern way of life which the north, and the Vatican, found so offensive."

Adoration of the lady turned then to adoration of the Virgin Mary, with the poems strikingly similar to those of courtly love. A lady was essential, but she did not need to be real. Through Dante's Beatrice, she was passed on to the Renaissance: "My lady is desired in highest heaven: now would I tell you of her excellence. . . . Love says of her: 'How can a mortal thing be so adorned with beauty, and so pure?'" (Quoted in Bogin, 1976:61).

[35] Bogin (1976:35) notes also that northern lords more often took their families with them to some of the Crusades.

[36] The disrespect with which the Church came to be regarded

> ". . . started near the end of the eleventh century, when a succession of popes began to claim complete supremacy in the realm of Church and State . . . the amount of blood that the Church shed . . . coupled with the widespread torture and death inflicted on those she regarded as heretics . . . and the shocking corruption of most of her clergy, caused her prestige to sink rapidly until the crowning scandal of the Great Schism (1378-1417) was reached during which two Popes, one at Avignon (France) and one in Rome, simultaneously

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> claimed to be God's highest representative on earth . . . all this happened while the so-called Hundred Year's War (1339-1453) was ravaging France . . . and it followed shortly after the virulent plague known as the Black Death (1348-50) had swept over Europe . . . At the very time when the Church should have been a source of hope and inspiration, she was found lacking; small wonder, therefore, that her hitherto unassailable position began to crumble and the seeds of religious revolt and secular power began to germinate; . . ." (Harman, 1958:121-2).

[37]Grout ([1960] 1973:116-17) outlines the characteristics of the new age:

> "The increasing independence and importance of secular interests were shown in the continued growth of vernacular literature . . . The same period saw the beginnings of humanism, . . . , which was to be one of the most important influences in the later Renaissance. . . . Literature, education, and the arts alike participated in a movement away from the relatively stable, unified, religiously centered viewpoint of the thirteenth century toward absorption in the varied and changing phenomena of human life in this world.
>
> The change, of course, was slow; it was a gradual shift in emphasis, not a sudden reversal of values."

[38]Though they regarded themselves as heirs of the minnesinger, Harman (1958:222-3) judges their art as somewhat inferior because they, unlike the earlier wandering professionals, had social ties. And, having become highly organized in their spare time singing endeavors, these bodies drew up a system of strict rules which, as they spread and grew in complexity and importance, impaired melodic spontaneity: "To be a 'mastersinger' you had to compose both words and music of at least one song, but on no account had the melody to be reminiscent of any other 'master song', with the result that many of the songs are forced and artificial in their deliberate striving for originality" (Harman, 1958:223).

[39]Monophonic music is that consisting of a single melodic line, without additional parts or chordal accompaniment.

[40]Music is said to be polyphonic if it is composed of two or more voice parts developed in a parallel manner and producing a harmony. When each voice has individual melodic significance (or is melodically independent) the combination is designated as counterpoint (punctus contra punctum) -- from the placing of note against note, part against part or melody against melody in the setting up of one voice against another. At first, voices were added which would sing in intervals (octaves, fourths or fifths) above or below the melody. Then simple melodies were combined with the original one.

The two or more tones sounding together form "intervals" -- the relation of two tones in regard to pitch -- perceived not merely as the

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sum of two tones but as a new integrated tonal phenomenon, and attention is diverted from the flow and contour of the first melody to the effect of the vertical sound-complex (Ulrich and Pisk, 1963:59). Tones sounding simultaneously are said to be consonant or dissonant, depending on whether they produce a pleasant (the ear perceives them to agree with one another) or an unpleasant effect respectively. Consonances are said to provide stability and repose, while dissonances produce tension and motion.

Polyphonic counterpoint is either written by the composer (contrapunctus a penna [penned] or scriptus [written], in cartella [paper], a mano [manual], osservato [strict]; or called res facta -- where all parts are connected with respect to eachother) or mentally supplied by the performer. The latter contrapunctus a mente or contrapunctus vocalis is popularly said to be singing "over the book," in which the singers are not necessarily subject to one another. All Western European languages had a word for it -- in Latin, cantus or contrapunctus a mente or super librum; in Italian, contrapunto alla mente; in French, chant sur le livre; in German, Verzierungskunst.

[41]In a musical treatise De harmonica institutione written by Hucbald (840-930), a Flemish monk, there appeared the first vocal polyphony, called by him diaphony or, more generally, organum. (Burkhalter [B/M, (1966) 1968:101], in contrast to most other music historians, attributes this work rather to the ninth-century Ogier's Musica enchiriadis; Hughes, moreover, separates information in Hucbald from what he claims to be the anonymous Musica enchiriadis.) In its simplest and earliest manifestation, it consisted of a chant sung at one pitch level by one singer or group (the vox principalis or principal voice) and the same chant sung simultaneously at a fifth below by another (the vox organalis or organal voice). Each of these "voices" might be doubled, the principalis an octave below and the organalis an octave above, resulting in a texture comprising four parallel lines.

In addition, the troubadours verged on polyphony, with the accompanying instrument sometimes providing another part.

Sachs (1943:48), however, maintains that "the deep-rooted prejudice that harmony and polyphony have been a prerogative of the medieval and modern West does not hold water." He (1943:48) describes the "heterophony" of primitives as a somewhat negative and uncooperative mix, however:

> "When in musical ensembles several singers or players perform the same melody, either successively or simultaneously, they actually claim the freedom of varying in minor details. Repetition of a melody seldom agrees with its first form, nor do the voices of a chorus or the parts of an accompanied song agree with each other. Each participant realizes the melodic idea according to personal taste and ability . . . Nobody minds the chance collisions that result from such discrepancies, . . ."

Ulrich and Pisk (1963:57) point out that the Greeks sometimes sang two different versions of a melody together, "with a consequent dissolution

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of the unison at the points where the versions differed; . . ." And Victor Belaiev (quoted in Reese, 1940:249), writing on the folk music of Georgia, U.S.S.R., contends that the understanding that polyphony was invented in Europe is radically wrong because "Georgian polyphony (which . . . dates back to ancient times) will reveal . . . methods characteristic of the various periods of the early European polyphony . . . under the names of organum, diaphony . . ." Finally, Burkhalter (B/M, [1966] 1968:104) adds the possibility that polyphonic singing had ancient roots in northern England and Wales, where it had perhaps been imported from Denmark and Norway.

[42] The commercial prosperity brought to Flanders during the fourteenth century by the successful trade in wool, resulting in a rapid increase in the wealth and population of the towns, "stimulated Flemish art that it quickly surpassed that of the rest of Europe both in expressive quality and technical perfection" (O'Brien, 1950:27).

[43] The "new art" or "new technique," this title applied to works written as early as about 1250 in mensural (measured) or metrical notation -- an abstract theory of systematic time measurement.

[44] The chief composers (from Florence, Bologna, Perugia, Padua) mentioned in the manuscript are: Giovanni de Cascia, Ghirardellus di Firenze, Jacopo di Bologna, Lorenzo di Firenze, Donato, Monaco Benedettino, Abate Riminese, Niccolo Pontificio, Francesco Landino, Vincenzo Fiorentino (de Robeck, 1928:13).

[45] De Robeck (1925:3-4) outlines the political, economic, artistic and intellectual flowering of Florence during the fourteenth century:

> "The Florentine Republic was the chief political power in Central Italy. The great guilds were organized, trade flourished, education was valued -- there was money to spare. Florentine art was starting on its triumphant career . . . Great palaces were in building; . . . The State was served by philosophers . . . the first Italian history was being written . . . a whole group of poets . . . were delighting their fellow citizens . . ."

[46] "That the old Italian composers were known and appreciated in other countries can be seen," states O'Brien (1950:25), "by the fact that numbers of these songs [in the Squarcialupi MS] are included in other ancient MSS of this period now preserved in Paris and London libraries." She (1950:25) notes two: Paris Bib. Nat. MS 568; London Br. Mus. Add. MSS 29987.

[47] French influence was not confined to music. In society and in learning and literature, French customs, ideas and forms of expression played a considerable part in Italian life and culture (Harman, 1958:155), as it did in many European countries.

[48] Harman (1958:157) feels that the French preoccupation with

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rhythm (the duration [long-short] quality of musical sounds) and the metric framework was perhaps a necessary first step, and that the melodic aspect of part music could not be developed until the more fundamental characteristics had been worked out.

[49] It must be mentioned also that during the early fifteenth century, the English conductus -- with its interest in the consonance of the third, its increased sonority and its greater equality (and decreased independence) of part writing -- accomplished mainly by the composer John Dunstable (ca.1370-1453), influenced current and future polyphonic composition as well.

[50] The term "adults" is used not to imply the inclusion of females but to differentiate between boys and the adult male choir members. "?#" refers to an unspecified number of boys.

[51] The ecclesiastic reformer Savonarola's (1452-1498) conservative influence probably led to the disbanding of the chapel in 1493. It was re-established in 1498 with considerably fewer singers.

[52] By 1474, the Duke of Milan had Weerbecke, Martini, Compère, Agricola and Josquin des Prez at his court. At Ferrara, among the many northerners were: Obrecht, Martini, Josquin des Prez, Collinet, Brumel, Ghiselin. Agricola, Collinet, Ghiselin, Stokhem and Isaac had spent time in Florence also. The Papal Chapel in Rome boasted Josquin des Prez, Weerbecke, Marbriano, Prioris, Bruhier and Genet, among others.

[53] Helm ([1960] 1964:381) ponders about the first-rate painters and architects of fifteenth-century Italy in comparison to her ineffectiveness in music but adds that in the more closely connected field of literature an interesting parallel occurred: "The bright promise which Italian literature held during the time of Petrarch was not fulfilled in the immediately succeeding generations; the freshness of the trecento gave way to a quattrocento antiquarianism which drained the red blood from Italian poetry for nearly a hundred years."

[54] The highest voice in part music, descant is a somewhat florid melody sung by a few high voices as a decorative addition in hymn singing. The art of descant (or discant or discantus), as distinguished from the practice of singing from the written polyphony of composers, is the kind of florid improvisation (or ornamentation, coloration, embellishment, decoration, figuration) that singers provided themselves. Donington (1974:152) defines this phenomena as "everything in the music which can be changed without affecting the basic progressions."

[55] Harman (1958:212) explains that it is likely that the practice of copying each part onto separate pieces of paper or parchment became common, based on the fact that the huge choir books are generally found in remarkably clean condition and that the high treble part (where there was one) was found at the top of the page, "where it must have been very difficult for boy choristers to read, especially in the semi-darkness of the churches." Einstein ([1949]

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1971, I:58) says further that not all of the MSS of ecclesiastical music were intended for practice but served rather for codification and preservation, with the separate parts having been copied out but since lost.

[56]The voice which was added to a given ecclesiastical song -- the vox organalis -- now lay above the cantus firmus (fixed song), or principal chant melody -- the vox principalis -- the latter of which was sung by the voice termed "tenor." Henderson [1921:59] comments that since the melody had, in the beginning, been generally entrusted to the highest natural male voice, the word "tenor" acquired its modern meaning. Derived from a teneo ("to hold"), the term referred to this voice's "holding" all the parts or "carrying" the tune. Below prolonged, rhapsodic melismas, however, each tone was often stretched out and sustained to inordinate lengths -- long pedal tones, as Wold and Cylder ([1963] 1977:41) describe them. Ulrich and Pisk (1963:80) mention pictorial and written evidence of tenor parts being performed instrumentally, or of instruments used to support the soloist who sang the tenor. And Einstein ([1937] 1947:30) concludes that the tenor was ultimately driven into "comparative obscurity in the background" by the decorative melismatic new upper part.

[57]An important exception can be found in Wooldridge (1932: 297). In the beginning of the fifteenth century, at the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris (the home of the oldest school of descant), florid descant was still forbidden. This case is confusing, however, for a code of rules that governed the choir school did allow for the children (boys, that is) to be taught complex counterpoint and descants.

[58]Among the most famous were: Franco of Cologne and Perotin (eleventh - twelfth centuries); Philip de Vitry, Jerome of Moravia, Marchetto of Padua, Johannes de Muris, and the English Walter Odington (thirteenth century); Simon Dunstede and Glareanus and Franchimus Gaffori (fourteenth - fifteenth centuries).

[59]This distribution is almost the same as that found in the papal Sistine chapel in 1533, when 24 adults were listed, among them 7 sopranos, 7 altos, 4 tenors and 6 basses (D'Accone, 1976:612).

[60]In Jewish music, songs used in religious ceremonies were often sung to secular tunes; not even all of the texts were religious.

> "Because of the regimentation of their lives the bulk of their songs were religious. Because the line between the religious and the secular was often thin it occasionally was difficult to tell them apart." (Bauer and Peyser, 1932:18)

We might also recall that many thirteenth-century composers, and craftsmen alike -- Gothic architecture, for example -- "saw nothing incongruous or irreverent in associating things secular with things sacred, and both sculpture and motet [the most important form of early polyphonic music] represented what might well be called the 'art of analogy', in which the experiences and wonder of this world were used

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to help understand and partially reflect the glory of God; . . ." (Harman, 1958:110).

[61]Plainchant music of the Church was, therefore, preserved untouched during the intervening century.

[62]The price revolution of the sixteenth century, a consequence of increased production of European silver mines and the influx of gold and silver from the New World, resulted in prices rising roughly 100 to 150%.

[63]Legend tells that when the Council of Trent was being urged to abolish polyphony, Palestrina composed this mass for six voices to demonstrate the compatability of the musical style with a reverence for the sacred text. Harman (1958:307), however, avers that, contrary to popular belief (and reports in numerous histories of music), this particular work was not composed for this reason, although Palestrina and others did write "demonstration" masses for the Council.

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CHAPTER VI

THE MUSICAL CULTURE OF THE RENAISSANCE IN ITALY

The Renaissance Defined

The period from about 1450 to 1600 in the history of music is generally considered the "Renaissance," a term borrowed from art history's designation of fifteenth- and sixteenth- century style. Some consider its beginnings to date to the late 1200s, for (1) the social changes that were occurring during the late Middle Ages (see pp.172-3 and Sec. 2, n.37) were precursors of this era, and (2) around 1300 "a clear and unmistakable break occurred in the development of music, a turn so obvious that the musicians of that time themselves felt compelled to speak of an 'ars nova'" (Lowinsky, 1954:510). However, the fall of Constantinople (the capital and last stronghold of the eastern Roman Empire) to the Turks in 1453 marks a definite departure from the Middle Ages.

Historians usually mark the period's end in the middle of the sixteenth century, when the Reformation had gained strength and the Catholic Counter Reformation was imminent, but important musical developments associated with Renaissance ideals occurred still later in that century. For vocal music, the sixteenth century was a critical era -- an age of transition, or perhaps more correctly conflict, between artistic principles. Both improvisatory southern song and refined northern polyphony existed side by side, so "[f]rom the beginning of the century every composer had to . . . resolve in himself the struggle

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between homophony and polyphony, between the differing claims of vocal and instrumental expression, between melody as the servant of language and as the vehicle for ornament" (Einstein, [1937] 1947:79).

Grout ([1960] 1973:179-80) distinguishes two main overlapping musical periods: up to and well into the sixteenth century the prevailing style being "international, relatively uniform, and largely dictated by composers from northern France and the Lowlands"; during the sixteenth century diverse national styles arising and becoming dominant after about 1550. Burkhalter (M/M, [1966] 1968:113) adds another distinction: "Music, which until then had been an integral part of the quadrivium [the mathematical disciplines] moved . . . into the trivium [the literary disciplines]." In breaking away from numbers and their overriding symbolism, it became a means of expression and an instrument of emotion. In other words, music was still medieval during the Early Renaissance, while the style that developed after 1550 actually foreshadowed the Baroque era and culminated, as we shall see, with the dawn of opera at the turn of the century.

"Early," "Late," and "High" Renaissance are, thus, labels that have been used to divide up the period. The Renaissance, however, was not an abrupt break with the Middle Ages but can be viewed rather as its last stage.[1] Europe was emerging from ecclesiastical and feudal domination while Renaissance men were exploring the classic arts and letters. In this way the period held the promise of a "civilized" world. It must also be remembered that musicians of some regions were influenced by the Renaissance spirit earlier or later and to different degrees than were those of others.

All else aside, ". . . the Renaissance witnessed a spectacular

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increase of [secular] musical culture," Grout ([1960] 1973:174) proclaims. Harman (1958:363) concurs: "Music permeated the whole of Renaissance society to an extent unknown before," with both folk singing and dancing more widespread than in earlier centuries and art music more intensely cultivated." Burckhardt ([1860] 1954:292) and Lowinsky (1954:516) document these generalization:

> Whenever we meet with a description of social intercourse, there music and singing are always and expressly mentioned. Hundreds of portraits show us men and women, often several together, playing or holding some musical instrument, and the angelic concerts represented in the ecclesiastical pictures prove how familiar the painters were with the living effects of music.
>
> That the populace itself was deeply imbued with the love of music we know not only from such enthusiastic accounts of Flemish popular music making as given by Guicciardini in his Descrittione de tutti i Paesi Bassi in 1567, or from Marin Sanuto's diaries which tell of the street ballads heard in Venice; we know it also from the statutes of Flemish guilds of musicians. These statutes make it clear that there was a tremendous demand for music for weddings, for dancing, for carnival, for the yearly fair, for processions and a number of other occasions. Literary documents, or paintings and miniatures depicting popular scenes with singers and instrumentalists, offer interesting sidelights on the intimate connection of music with the life of the people.

In response, secular treatises on singing begin to appear in large numbers in the second half of the sixteenth century (see pp.36-7). De Maulde la Clavière (1900:277) quotes a Neapolitan proverb: "Abolish music, and we must e'en fall to prayers." Renaissance secular music had, at least temporarily, supplanted the latter.

The literal meaning of "Renaissance" -- "rebirth," a revival of the arts of Greece and Rome stimulated by discoveries of ancient works of art and literature -- had no comparable parallel in music. The essentials of ancient musical philosophy and theory, as we have seen, were present in the Middle Ages, so ". . . in music alone of all the

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arts, there was no break with medievalism, no harking back to Greek models" (Richard Terry, as quoted in Bauer and Peyser, 1932:87). On the other hand, the incredible effects that the ancient Greeks ascribed to music and both its enobling and corrupting powers were contemplated anew, and the intimate relationship of music to its poetry in antiquity also became influencial.[2]

The more general meaning of the Renaissance signifies the rebirth of the human spirit and a revival, perhaps reversal, of standards of culture. What was reborn was the awareness that man as an individual, as opposed to Man, the abstraction, was extremely important. Men had rights, strengths and worthy personal feelings. Life might, therefore, be investigated and enjoyed to the full, as searching for happiness and striving to achieve full human potential and autonomy became valid motives in individual behavior. Susan Bell (1973:196) points to the upsurge of portrait painting as "perhaps the clearest evidence of Renaissance individualism."

Opposed to the medieval conception in which the world and its pleasures were renounced (the focus being on man's ultimate future), the Renaissance approach to life was no longer mystical and abstract but rather realistic, concrete and focused on the present. "Life on earth was accepted with zest" is the way Armen Carapetyan (1946:49) summarizes the times. Interest in man and his personal self-fulfillment replaced self-abasement in devotion to God. The goal of this "humanism" was the "endeavor of man to reconstitute himself as a free being, not the thrall of theological despotism" (Encyclopedia Brittanica, 1926:23:83). This had existed before in the ancient world and hence was reborn. Its rebirth was aided by ancient literature and philosophy in

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leaning anew to the side of men rather than to divinity. Areas of learning expanded to include secular studies that had been neglected during the intervening "Christian" centuries. ". . . the Renaissance turned to knowledge in a positive, worldly, and life-loving spirit, seeking it for its own sake and for the sheer satisfaction and delight of achieving it" (Carapetyan, 1946:49).

As concerns music, it became important, therefore, that song be pleasing to the singer and/or listener, with the measure of "pleasing" being judged no longer by medieval, ecclesiastic authority but by the individual singer's or listener's ear. It also became important for the individual performer to emerge from the group (see pp.250,338). Hauser (1952:60-1) remarks that this was the first time for centuries that the concept of creative genius as a quality of an individual was found relevant to human lives.

The uomo universale or "universal man" -- a well-educated and well-rounded, many-sided Renaissance man (or woman) -- was the ideal. Humanist education, therefore, "looked upon the child as a complex and complete individual, needing to have each side of his nature trained and developed into an harmonious whole personality," de Robeck (1928:68) tells us. Learning was thus extremely varied, its goal being to produce good and, if possible, even great citizens. According to O'Brien (1950:28), the ruler who would be able to "meet the intellectuals on an equal footing" would gain prestige in this era, one in which respect for the power of knowledge was emphasized. Magnificence, liberality and erudition were considered regal virtues, Iain Fenlon (1980:161-2) observes. The Renaissance was, of course, not within the reach of peasants, nor was it, Hauser ([1951] 1952:309-10)

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tells us, a civilization of small shopkeepers and artisans, nor of a well-to-do, half-educated middle class [at first at least], but rather "the jealously guarded possession of a highbrow and Latinized élite" -- the origin of "that unbridgeable gulf between an educated minority and an uneducated majority which had never been known before to this extent."[3]

Music in the Life of the Uomo Universale

Music no longer functioned only as an adjunct for the stately life for this individual but became an essential part of his/her immediate world. It came into its own as "one of the necessary and more laudable accomplishments of civilised man" (Raynor, 1972:75) because "it combined two favorite Renaissance ideals: rationalism in its formal basis and emotional immediacy in its content" (Mee, 1975:98). The Greek controversy over the ideal benefits and possible dangers of music -- "Music could be the speech of the soul, but it could be also the means for a betrayal of all finer instincts, a play of the emotions ungoverned by reason, a danger and a nuisance" (de Robeck, 1928:61) -- was taken up by the Italian humanist educators, one of whom settled on the following:

> We must ask ourselves whether we are to include music amongst pursuits unsuited to a Prince. . . . our judgement lends to the inclusion of music, as a subject to be pursued in moderation under instruction only of a serious master, who will rigorously disallow all melodies of a sensuous nature. . . . that music exerts a soothing and refreshing influence on the mind. (AEneas Sylvius, 1450, as quoted in de Robeck, 1928:69)

The Florentine scholar Cosimo Bartoli, in a long discussion on music in his Ragionamenti accademici (1567), represents the aim of music similarly -- as edification of the soul and spiritual medicine in a

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life full of sorrows and hardships. Anthon (1943:26) summarizes his view: "[M]usic is not an effeminate pursuit, as is held by some, but noble and worthy . . . The only danger lies in an excessive addiction . . ." In addition, music was thought to be "good for everything, from curing illness to causing ecstasy -- for the good of man, not as in 'the old music', in praise of God," states Mee (1975:98).

The study of music was recommended, for "[i]ts rapid measures made the body alert and 'trained it to adopt graceful attitudes'" (Lucas-Dubreton, 1961:129). In the Renaissance hierarchy of the arts, music stood above painting, sculpture and the still more inferior manual arts of lace-making, embroidery and tapestry "on the principle universally accepted in the platonic world that the less an art needs the cooperation of the senses to touch the soul, the greater is its excellence" (de Maulde, 1900:262). It directly transmitted an impression, vocal music especially representing "almost the speech of soul to soul" (de Maulde, 1900:262). It was often considered one with the supreme art of poetry (that art having been recited "musically").

Aristocratic families, and later the mercantile classes, educated their children in music. Vincenzo Giustiniani ([1628] 1962:69), a cultured dilletante interested in all the arts and very knowledgeable about music, spoke of the dukes of the courts of Mantua and Ferrara, "who took the greatest delight in the art, especially in having many noble ladies and gentlemen learn to sing and play superbly, so that they spent entire days in some rooms designed especially for this purpose." But Anthon (1943:45,35) describes an even larger class of educated people who ultimately came to cultivate music as a hobby and an art -- princes and lesser nobles, middle-class scholars,

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doctors, lawyers, artists, government officials and the like. He characterizes the later Renaissance as a period of amateur music par excellence.

In Il Cortegiano (Le Courtier or The Book of the Courtier, written about 1514 but published in 1528), Baldassare Castiglione (1478-1529), a north Italian courtier, diplomat, poet, scholar and soldier, recorded the supposed discussions held at the court of the Montefeltro of Urbino on four evenings in March of 1507. In these "salons," the intimate circle of aristocratic participants, "cultivated women, men of the world, scholars and buffoons" as they are described in the introduction to the 1967 English translation ([1528] 1981:18), are Castiglione's voices for defining the qualities of the ideal courtier, including the place of music in aristocratic life.[4]

Castiglione ([1528] 1928:75,77) quotes Ludovico di Canossa: ". . . I am not pleased with ye Courtier if he be not also a Musition, . . . "; and Lord Guiliano de' Medici: "I believe . . . , that musicke is not only an ornament, but also necessarie for a Courtier." Ludovico recalled also that Plato and Aristotle understood the force of music to be "to very great purpose in us, and for many causes . . . ought necessarily to be learned from a mans childhood, not onely for the superficiall melodie that is heard, but to be sufficient to bring into us a new habite that is good, and a custome inclining to vertue, . . ." for it "make sweete the mindes of men, . . ." (Castiglione, [1528] 1928:75-6). This representation corresponds with the position of music as an indispensable part of a courtier's equipment as suggested by writer Pietro Aretino, in a letter of 1537 which concerned a man about to set out for court: "I am a good musician, and somewhat of a literary

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person; I like hunting, and can carry on a discussion" (Quoted in Anthon, 1943:24). Toward the end of the Renaissance, musical theorist Gioseffe Zarlino still held music to provide the gentleman with an honorable and virtuous pastime (Anthon, 1943:163). Clearly, the gentleman was expected to have an amateur knowledge of music and instruments.

Haar (1983:172-3) describes Renaissance musical education as including the acquisition of skills in reading the mensural notation contained in polyphonic compositions (once the exclusive property of ecclesiastical singers), through attendance at cathedral schools, apprenticeships to master players and/or studying popular musical treatises. In Il Cortegiano, for example, Sir Federico Fregoso is quoted as declaring: ". . . pricksong is a faire musicke, so it be done upon the booke surely and after a good sorte" ([1528] 1928:101). A later (1967) translation gives us a better picture of what he means by good "sorte:" ". . . truly beautiful music, . . . , consists, . . . , in fine singing, in reading accurately from the score and in an attractive personal style, . . ." ([1528] 1981:120). This ability united with the art of bella maniera improvisation to produce the cultivated amateur described by Castiglione. And "[b]y blending the . . . notion of music's effect on the spiritus with that of the usefulness of technical and intellectual grasp of the art, Castiglione," Haar (1983:177) concludes, "comes as close as anyone in his century to presenting a rounded aesthetic ideal for music."

This statement of the ideal, however, needs further qualification. For instance, the technical and intellectual grasp attained was supposed to lead to "a certain nonchalance" and an easy

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grace rather than to affectation: ". . . true art is what does not seem to be art; . . . the most important thing is to conceal it, . . . to reveal intense application and skill robs everything of grace" (Castiglione, [1528] 1981:67). Count Ludovico's attitude that excessive diligence was harmful (Castiglione, [1528] 1981:67,70) is reminiscent of Aristotle's feelings about verging on professionalism (see p.44). The more nonchalant quality of sprezzatura -- inborn spontaneity and relaxed self-confidence -- was encouraged instead. We read, for example: "When a musician is singing and utters a single word ending in a group of notes with a sweet cadence, and with such ease . . . it seems effortless, . . ;" and ". . . the courtier should turn to music as if it were merely a pastime of his and he is yielding to persuasion, . . ." (Castiglione, [1528] 1981:70,120).

Such advice not only warded off the vices of virtuosic professionalism but also protected the noble performer from resembling too closely the professional improvvisatori, singers of not very exalted status, and even those practicing assorted street arts. The aristocratic courtier would do very much the same improvisatory songs and accompaniment, perhaps only with more sprezzatura and less professionalism. It is in line with Castiglione's representation of the aristocratic aversion to any kind of specialized or professional activity or with the more general "repulsion of the vulgar," "increasing sensitivity to anything corresponding to the lesser sensibility of lower-ranking classes" that Elias ([1939] 1982:300-1) says permeated all spheres of social conduct in the courtly, upper class. It is also in line with ancient and medieval traditions that had constantly weighed down musical performance. "There was still a wide

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gap between theory and practice," Anthon (1943:162) proclaims, "and between theoreticians and practical musicians" -- the latter regarded as inferior.

Sacred and Secular Vocal Music in Renaissance Italy

Secular music developed in line with Renaissance ideals. Concern with subjective expression and with musical beauty in and of itself are both characteristic. Whereas fifteenth-century music had been "full of ingenuity and intellectual contrivance," the sixteenth century contributed "the directly sensuous, poetic expression of an idea" (Einstein, [1937] 1947:59). This trend is apparent in the vocal music that was being composed. "The harsh lines of counterpoint became pliable and formed the new harmony over which, simple and song-like, the new melody arched," states Pahlen (1949:59). And the search for the musical means that would best express the meaning of the text (now for very different reasons than the medieval Church had sought the same goal) reversed the insensitivity shown by many composers to this relationship. From the time when it had become the recognized task of the composer to invent not only tone combinations but also expressive melodies,

> . . . the musical mission of the Netherlands was ended. If the other nations, . . . , had left to the Netherlands alone the development of a counterpoint, and also cheerfully conceded to them during a century and a half all the musical honors in the capitals of Europe, they themselves now enter anew upon the musical stage, in the foremost rank the Italians, who soon succeed in gaining for themselves the supremacy in the realm of music. (Langhans, 1886:51)

Each region had the same sort of native songs: songs of childhood, games and cradle songs, religious songs, songs for holidays and feasts, love songs, marriage and wedding songs. Other kinds of

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native songs were work songs, drinking, humorous, political and satirical songs and dance tunes of course. They include funeral and mourning songs, narratives, ballads and legends (Bauer and Peyser, 1932:99). And each area still had its own distinctive music, as we have seen for Italy, which Grout ([1960] 1973:210) maintains, "was certainly better known and probably better enjoyed by most people than the learned art of the northerners." Slowly during the course of the sixteenth century, local and national idioms rose to prominence and eventually caused departures from and modifications of the common style.

Langhans (1886:52) admits that the transfer of musical supremacy in favor of Italy, effected during that century, might seem strange to us "if we did not remember that even before this epoch the artistic fecundity of the Italian soul had by no means been dormant." In the thirteenth century, a literature in the Italian vernacular had been developed, culminating in the fourteenth-century works of Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio. ". . . the Italian language, vehicle of national life and thought, was born, O'Brien (1950:14) states and continues, "[w]ith its wealth of beautiful sounds, it was destined to inspire the new art of Italian music, . . ." Silva (1922:59) expresses even more pro-Italian sentiment on this subject: ". . . the dawn of artistic expressive song coincided with the dawn of Italian and Provencal literature, that is, of the very two languages whose distinctive characteristic, as compared with other tongues, is the melodic expressiveness of the voice."

De Robeck (1928:6-7) makes the case that in Tuscany everything favored popular music. The "natural" inclination of peasants to sing as

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they worked and feasted in the fields and vineyards is illustrated in an image of the contented peasant: "It beguiled the fatigue of the workman toiling under the hot sun; it cheered the peasant girl who had risen before dawn to spin and weave" (Lucas-Dubreton, 1961:129). Such tendencies were further stimulated by the Franciscan movement. Franciscan friars, friends of the people, lived in their midst and encouraged music and singing in the vernacular "in a far more general way than the monks had naturally ever thought of doing" (de Robeck, 1928:6-7). Thus, the quote ". . . what Saint Benedict stored Saint Francis scattered" (de Robeck, 1928:7) offers an interesting comparison of the Church's change in attitude about congregational participation in songs of prayer. Laude singing, monodic in the Middle Ages, polyphonic in the Renaissance, hymns of praise and devotion, especially to the Virgin Mary, became immensely popular. During the thirteenth century, parishes had regularly-meeting Compagnia dei Laudesi societies of the lay congregation. And a quasi-religious, penance movement arose as the result of wars, disease and general suffering. The penitents marched in procession, scourging themselves and singing what were also termed laudi. These developments "coincided most happily" with the rise of the above-mentioned Tuscan lyrical poets, de Robeck (1928:7) concludes. Adding to these the Italian troubadour-like singing of the late Middle Ages and the continued popularity of folk singing, an idea difficult to document as yet, we have an image of the widespread practice of song in this influencial part of the Italian peninsula.

In addition to these basically Florentine developments, one finds that many Byzantine scholars sought refuge in Italy after the capture of Constantinople by the Turks, bringing with them "the long

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obscured learning of the past" (Bauer and Peyser, 1932:81). The Medici family of Florence made that city a magnet for classical learning "until she resembled Athens," the authors (1932:81) go on to say, but soon Greek scholars were "sought after by an ever-widening circle of admirers," to whom the Hellenic culture was "intoxicating," de Robeck (1928:60) explains. Langhans (1886:53) concludes: "To them Europe owed the complete redemption from the intellectual thraldom of the Middle Ages, the appearance at last of the day of new birth, of the epoch of the Renascence, so important for the advancement of music . . ."

Finally, some of the most important technical advances in music occurred in Italy. The Venetian Ottaviano dei Petrucci's improvements in the art of multiplying copies of music produced the first printed music at around 1500. This invention came late, considering the fact that printed books had existed for more than 50 years, some even containing musical illustrations. Printing music, however, was a complex process involving several stages:

> On the plate with the staff systems the notes were printed in lead type; then followed the text. In spite of its complexity the [Petrucci's] procedure was handled so carefully that there is never the slightest doubt regarding the place of a given note on the line. (Einstein, [1949] 1971:I:57)

In addition to being the first important printer of music, Petrucci's publications are said to have "set a standard in accuracy and artistry which have never been supassed and rarely equalled" (Harman, 1958:211).

All of this can be added to the fact that music was the only art in the early Renaissance in which Italy was not absolutely predominant.

> Italy was well in advance of the rest of Europe from roughly 1350 to 1530 because of its early consolidation of genuine states, the mercantile and manufacturing economy that

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> supported them, and its working out of postfeudal and even postguild social relations. These developments reorganized Italian society along modern lines and opened the possibilities for the social and cultural expression for which the age is known. (Kelly-Gadol, 1977:139)

In literature, painting and sculpture Italy outstripped all of Europe. Harman (1958:226-7) argues that the striking difference between the predominance of music in northern Europe and the predominance of literature and the fine arts in Italy can be explained by the fact, discussed earlier, that the Renaissance was

> primarily concerned with a reality based on the close observance of man and his world, the forms, colours, and details of which are readily and naturally transmitted to canvas and stone, or described in words. But realism is fundamentally foreign to music which, in its essence, is abstract and incapable of conveying exact [emphasis mine] images, ideas, or feelings. . . . The abstract mysticism and universality of outlook of the Middle Ages found music a perfect means of expression, but only in certain limited respects, some of them naive, was the primary attitude of the Renaissance reflected in the works of her composers.

An examination of Harman's last comment will be taken up in the next chapter in looking at the actual music of this period.

The result of all of these factors was that the preponderating influence of Flemish music imported to Italy throughout a century was ultimately of consequence to Italian music in a chiefly technical vein. "[I]t [had] enriched the Italian art with new formulae without obliterating its national characteristics" (O'Brien, 1950:16) when finally the Italian Renaissance expressed itself in the music of native Italians.[5] Costanzo Festa (ca.1480-1545), for example, was one of the first Italian composers of significance and one of the few in the papal choir, of which he became a member in 1517. Of his music, it is said that he favored a style which was "basically Flemish in its contrapuntal elements but infused with the melodiousness characteristic

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of Italy" (Ulrich and Pisk, 1963:144-5). During the next century, Italy was to supplant the Netherlands as the center of European musical life. Her primacy then established would endure for several hundred years.

Rushmore (1971:17) relates the Renaissance view of the world to singing: ". . . when individual man began to assert his uniqueness, the singing voice responded with its special claim to uniqueness too." Until then men had mainly been as members of a unit, as was ideal for their voices, whether a common vocal unit as in plain chant or a differentiated one as in polyphonic song. A philosophy that relied on the individual instead of the dominating institution of the Church, however, supported one, a new emphasis and increased appreciation of autonomous, secular music that expressed individual sentiments of an individual creator rather than divine harmony; and two, the solo performer. In Burckhardt's ([1860] 1954:291) words, ". . . as singing, . . . , is an exhibition of the individual man of society, each should be seen and heard separately." One way in which composers are known to have asserted their individual stamp was by entering their own names into the texts which they set to music.

> The old impersonal attitude of devotion still dominated certain composers, but new paths were being opened, and a new spirit moved through the world: the spirit which demanded that music should be a means for the expression of personal emotion, and for feelings of a human world. Henceforth there are two currents in Italian music, one of the Church, one of the Court, which run side by side, often intermingling, sometimes at variance, . . . (de Robeck, 1928:19)

Church composition, as has been discussed in the previous chapter, soon became caught up in the spirit of the Catholic revival, concentrating on spiritual values and the reforms ordered by the Council of Trent, and belonged ultimately to the atmosphere of the

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Counter-Reformation. Music was now being written to meet the needs of the new Protestant churches, and the Catholic mass and motet of Lasso, Palestrina and Byrd was recomposed with renewed splendor. These and a host of other sixteenth-century composers "strove to avoid secular suggestion and to emphasize the ethical as against the merely aesthetic function of music in church," Grout ([1960] 1973:263) explains. Palestrina, according to that author ([1960] 1973:265,272), "better than any other composer, . . . captured the essence of the sober, conservative aspect of the Counter Reformation" with its ideals of "inwardness, purification and concentration" in an objective, "cooly impersonal" formal style. Palestrina's attempt to achieve a "perfect poise," to let no feature (rhythm, melody or harmony) obtrude or be given undue importance, was successful. During his later life, he supervised revisions of official liturgical music in order to purge the chants of "barbarisms, obscurities, contrarities, and superfluities" which had come into them (Pope Gregory XIII, Brief on the Reform of the Chant, 1577, as quoted in Strunk, 1950:358). Palestrina's followers carried on the tradition into the seventeenth century.

Yet even within sacred music, changes stimulated by Renaissance philosophy were evident. "Nothing illustrates better the change in aesthetic feeling," Lowinsky (1954:538-9) claims, "than the imposition of Renaissance principles on the Plain Chant which was held by medieval writers to have been dictated to Pope Gregory I by the Holy Ghost." And whereas the earlier Ockeghem (ca.1420-ca.1495) wrote twelve masses and ten motets, the famed master Josquin des Prez (ca.1445-1521) composed nineteen masses but about 100 motets. Josquin, ". . . a man at the crossroads of two diametrically opposed artistic concepts," as

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Burkhalter (M/M, [1966] 1968:114,116) describes him, united "the elevated science and the profound spirituality of the Middle Ages with the first smile of the Renaissance." This general sixteenth-century trend reflects both the composers' growing consciousness of their individuality and their artistic desires to give full rein to their talents. "Because the motet, unlike the mass, could be based on any sacred text written in Latin," Harman (1958:301) explains, "it gave the composer not only freedom to choose those texts that especially appealed to his temperament, but also greater opportunities for technical experiments and expressive treatments." One might ask, then, why such musicians did not shift their attention to composing more in the secular sphere. Besides the security of continuous employment, a major reason why most famous composers worked primarily in the sphere of sacred music was because the international character of Catholic Church music gained them fame abroad and at home. The reputations of composers of secular music alone remained, in most cases, only "national."

The Italian Cities and Musical Leadership

Secular music triumphed in the Italian cities -- in Rome, Padua, Bologna, Naples, Florence and Venice -- and in the court towns of Verona, Urbino, Milan, Ferrara, Modena and Mantua. ". . . there was hardly a town of any size that did not display some musical activity during the Renaissance period," O'Brien (1950:57) concludes. The increased populations and increased influence, trade with the Orient and contacts with other peoples and races, and the favorable climates of the "forward-looking" cities of the Italian peninsula "combined to award to [them]," Pahlen (1949:55) writes, "the leadership in European

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affairs and cultural developments." They fostered all forms of organized entertainment. And de Robeck (1928:64) reminds us that the chief source of secular musical art is to be found in the natural desire for such enjoyment: ". . . secular music during the Renaissance grew, not so much from an intellectual impulse, but rather to meet the ever increasing demands of worldly life." Anthon (1943:4) documents the importance of music in almost all aspects of Italian Renaissance life -- in painting, architecture, literature, religion, historiography, social customs, even in diplomacy and politics. Artistic and literary remains, for example, illustrate its pervasiveness:

> The number of paintings representing musical instruments and music scenes is enormous. But one must take into account that musical instruments were conventional attributes of cherubs, angels, . . . Moreover, musical instruments as such are objects of great aesthetic appeal, and frequently a painter will chose [sic] to represent a scene with musicians for the sake of a beautiful composition, and not necessarily in accordance with the musical practices of his day.
>
> In Italian literature, one can find references to contemporary music in every genre. Particularly the formal, published letters of literary men which were so popular in the educated world of the sixteenth century yield many illustrations. . . . of Andrea Calmo . . . of Antonfrancesco Doni, . . . of Aretino, Bembo, Castiglione and others.
>
> The diaries of the period likewise reflect the interest in music. . . . description of pomp and festivals which invariably include music . . .
>
> Poets, novelists, and playwrights have introduced numerous musical scenes into their works, and though they do not reveal much about the kind of music played, their very presence speaks much for the universality of music at that time. Usually these scenes consist merely of a singer accompanying himself or herself [emphasis mine] on a lute . . . (Anthon, 1943:4-7)

Florence

In the mid-fifteenth century, Florence renewed its musical energies. The wealthy merchant princes, the Medicis, managed during four generations to hold a supreme position in the free town's

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bourgeois oligarchy. Virtually its rulers, the family created a court "equal in splendour to that of any contemporary prince," as it is described by O'Brien (1950:53). During the lifetime of Lorenzo il Magnifico (1449-1492), the court reached its summit of power and artistic influence, "a golden age . . . for the artists of Florence, and, indeed, of Europe, and from all parts they flocked to the Court of this truly magnificent patron" (de Robeck, 1928:63). Himself a poet and musician, he was the center of what de Robeck (1928:63) calls "the most vital and creative circle of men ever gathered together in one place since the days of Athens." Italian and Flemish musicians worked side by side. Sacred music flourished, the various churches vying with one another for the "excellence of their choirs and the accomplishment of their organists" (de Robeck, 1928:62). In 1480 a school of harmony grew up and became a sort of academie, which included painters and sculptors who were also musicians.

Secular singing, dancing and acting were all three immensely popular. ". . . there were songs of every description, whether gay, or melancholy, satirical, sentimental or passionate" (de Robeck, 1928:65). Lorenzo's own poetic line -- "di doman non c'è certezza" (dance and be happy today, for tomorrow is uncertain) (Helm, [1960] 1964:384) -- set the tone. In Daily Life in Florence, In the Times of the Medici, the author (Lucas-Dubreton, 1961:40,130) maintains that the inhabitants of that city were essentially singers, and that one voice was preferred to a choir because it could be "better heard, enjoyed and judged." Lucas-Dubreton (1961:129) names and praises one Luigi Pulci, a virtuoso who improvised: ". . . so great was his talent that the young Michelangelo rushed to hear him as soon as he discovered his

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whereabouts." The diary of an architect offers a description of the elaborate carnival festivals organized by Lorenzo. It included a procession of over 300 masked horsemen in rich costumes, and as many more following on foot with lighted torches "set out after dinner and continued until three or four in the morning . . . passed through the city singing harmoniously in four, eight, twelve, and as many as fifteen parts, accompanied by all kind of instruments; . . ." (Antonio di San Gallo, as quoted in O'Brien, 1950:56). Many of the canti carnascialeschi (carnival songs) -- "with one voice, then four, and then in chorus" (Lucas-Dubreton, 1961:70) -- were by and about the tradespeople in the city. Lorenzo greatly encouraged his courtiers and the city's poets in these celebrations and wrote verses himself. In this effort, he "furthered the cause of vernacular poetry and stimulated the formation of an Italian musical style distinct from that of the Franco-Netherlanders," Howard Brown (1976:107) concludes. Helm ([1960] 1964:388) distinguishes the canto carnascialescho style from the latter:

> Here is the technique of fresco, with its broad, flat strokes as opposed to the miniature work of the northern composers. Here are simplicity and directness instead of complication and artifice. Expressed in musical terms, here is homophony instead of polyphony; vertical in place of horizontal construction; sharply delineated phrases instead of textual continuousness; square-cut rhythm instead of a complex, undulating rhythmic flow.

The politics of Florence were such that wars, exiles and party struggles were interspersed with such gay festivities. These activities, Lucas-Dubreton (1961:236) remarks, related to the Florentine passion for stories, gossip and anecdotes, the "well-told tale" that could be satisfied in the streets by the professional fable singer. This itinerant bard "had the ear not only of the people but of

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the middle classes and even the Signoria, whom he entertained at meal times," whereas, on a lower level, blind men, beggars and young apprentices sang the Tuscan refrains (Lucas-Dubreton, 1961:237-8). This brings us to a point that was interesting about and somewhat unique to musical entertainments in the days of Florentine "democracy." Most were public and, therefore, ones in which all classes had a share.

Sixteenth-century theatrical festivals of the Medicis Cosimo I, Francesco I and Ferdinand I were most frequently associated with weddings and state visits by dignitaries. These involved plays with musical interludes, or intermezzi, serving as intermission features, with great sums of money lavished on such shows in Florence's desire "to outshine competitive courts and to impress the guests with the riches of the Medici" (Nagler, 1964:3).

Rome

Sixteenth-century musical life in Rome centered in the choirs, which increased in number as each important church acquired a choir and choir school. An example can be found in a document in the archives of the Basilica of Santa-Maria Maggiore, to whose choir school Palestrina was admitted. Dated 25 October 1537, it is recorded that "Giovanni Pierluigi of Palestrina was one of the six 'pueri cantantes,' choir boys, who, for a period of six years, received instruction in singing, counterpoint and grammar, and were, in addition, fed and clothed and lodged in the house of the choir-master" (O'Brien, 1950:95). The papal court of Rome was also brilliant under Leo X and other Renaissance popes. As has been stated previously, drama and music were particularly beloved by this Medici Pope, and both religious and secular music flourished during his reign. Among the singers he appointed to the

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Sistine Choir (renamed by Pope Sixtus IV, who built the famous chapel and limited the duties of the pontifical cantors to this private place of worship in the Vatican Palace) was Costanzo Festa, the first Italian of note among the papal singers and a gifted composer.

Naples

Naples, although politically separated from the rest of Italy (having been under Spanish rule from the beginning of the fifteenth century), possessed the earliest school of singing and counterpoint in all Italy, founded there in 1470. "With its brilliant court and its many important churches" (O'Brien, 1950:59), this center continued to cultivate both ecclesiastical and secular music during the course of the sixteenth century. On the secular side, a "great wave of canzone villanesche . . . was moving north" from Naples during mid century, according to Anthony Newcomb (1980:16), who (1980:15) also offers documentation by Nino Pirrotta (Li du orfei: da Poliziano a Monteverdi, 1969) of the cultivation and flourishing of solo singing in the Neapolitan commedia dell'arte during the same period.

Venice

The leadership that Florence held during the trecento belonged to Venice by the quattrocento. An independent city-state, geographically secure and isolated on her lagoons, politically aloof from her neighbors, the chief port for European trade with the East, Venice, Grout ([1960] 1973:288) concludes, reached her summit of power, wealth and splendor in the fifteenth century. Early Venetian music was chiefly connected with the Basilica of San Marco. The beginning of the fifteenth century brought the foundation of a choir school, the

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Venetian Senate decreeing that "eight Venetian boy-deacons . . . be admitted to the choir and taught to sing well" (O'Brien, 1950:74-5). Although there, as elsewhere, music was at first chiefly vocal, it was for its organ music that Venice was soon to become renowned. The Basilica's Italian organists were usually also singers who, at first, led the choir. Even when Flemish musicians were deemed superior in choral music, "the organ," O'Brien (1950:75) writes, "continued to be served by Italians, and almost exclusively Venetians."

Besides the cappella of the ducal basilica and of the cathedral, the Venetian religious communities called scuole grandi sponsored musicians. By the 1440s, Glixon (1981:196) finds them to have improved standards of music at their ceremonies by hiring outside professional singers. The importance of singers he (1981:197) further illustrates by citing the first official act of the newly-created Scuola di San Rocco in 1488 -- the hiring of four cantadori de laude. Another example is that of the maestro di cappella of the Basilica of San Marco and three of his senior singers being lured over to the Scuola di San Marco in 1492 (Glixon, 1981:200). Finally, their concern for musical quality Glixon (1981:201-2) demonstrates with an explanaation for the dismissal of several singers from the Scuola di San Rocco in 1517 -- "for not being sufficient to our needs, and mostly for the salary they received, considering that at such a salary we could have the best singers in the world" -- and in the audition that was held for the selection, in 1524, of a new set of four singers. By the beginning of the sixteenth century and for about 40 years thereafter, five confraternities employed between four and six cantadori vecchi each (who were paid by the occasion) and generally

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four cantadori nuovi (who were paid annual salaries) (Glixon, 1981:197).

The defeat and partial partition of Venice by the allied forces of the Church, the small states of Italy and several European powers in 1509, coming after the Turkish wars and the loss of her trade by the discovery of the Cape of Good Hope route to the Indies, marked a turning point from which she recovered but could not regain her importance and began a decline that would last for centuries. Her descent was a slow process, however, and was concealed by an extravagant increase in artistic and cultural display: "The secretly ailing body wears a splendid dress whose colorful brilliance casts a spell over the whole of Europe" (Einstein, [1948] 1971:318). Sixteenth-century Venice was luxuriously flamboyant -- "a decadent and fun-loving community that enjoyed any kind of display" (Roche, 1972:55). De Maulde (1900:277) describes a city "swim[ming] in music: a thousand bells chimed out the Ave Maria; jangled sounds of serenades and concerts rose from the palaces, the alleys, every nook and cranny; the sea sent back its response; noisy parties lightly skimmed the glistening surface of the Grand Canal; illuminated barges splashed their oars under a window, with an orchestra or band of singers." Everything was on a big scale, so ". . . in order to adapt itself to the splendour of the State ceremonies, music, hitherto restricted to small forms, was forced to increase its dimensions, to intensify its tonal volume" (O'Brien, 1950:75). Even church music, according to Einstein ([1949] 1971:I:319), took on a secular coloring.

Polychoral writing flourished by about the middle of the century. Adrian Willaert (ca.1490-1562), a most influential musician

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and teacher of the entire next generation of Venetian musicians, built on fifteenth-century examples of this device and fostered the growth of the antiphonal psalm for separated choirs, which became common in northern Italian churches early in this century. Willaert gave rise to a distinctive Venetian style, which would culminate in the music of Giovanni Gabrieli (1557-1612), who wrote eight-voiced double choirs. Thus, two choirs, with accompanying organs, gradually multiplied to as many as four, "providing the material for a polyphonic vocal and instrumental music which no other town had yet attempted on such a grandiose scale" (O'Brien, 1950:76). Finally, Venice became the center for the music-printing trade. Almost all of the secular works that are associated with the forthcoming Italian frottola style would be published in this city.

Shifting Societal Relationships and a New Social Order

The social changes originating in the Middle Ages and discussed in Chapter IV (see pp.153-7) had accelerated in the Renaissance centuries. Along with increased money circulation and commercial activity came further currency devaluations, and the income of the entire remaining nobility fell. Favored, on the other hand, were those groups whose functions permitted them to compensate for the falling purchasing power of money by acquiring more money. These were bourgeois groups and the controllers of the tax monopoly, the kings. The nobility in general, therefore, lost social power with the increase in the monetary sectors of the economy, while bourgeois classes, emerging on the twin properties of money and intellect, according to Von Martin [(1932) 1944:1], gained it, and the revenues of the central authority

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rose.

> Some of the knights were reduced to a wretched existence, others took by robbery and violence what was no longer available by peaceful means, others again kept themselves above water for as long as possible by slowly selling off their estates; and finally a good part of the nobility, forced by these circumstances and attracted by the new opportunities, entered the service of the kings or princes who could pay. These were the economic options open to a warrior class that was not connected to the growth in money circulation and the trade network. (Elias, [1939] 1982:11)

In addition, the development of military technology operated to the nobility's disadvantage:

> . . . the infantry, the despised foot-soldiers, became more important in battle than the cavalry. . . . A situation where the nobles alone were warriors or, conversely, all warriors were nobles, began to turn into one where the noble was at best an officer of plebeian troops who had to be paid. The monopoly of control of weapons and military power passed from the whole noble estate into the hands of a single member, the prince or king who, supported by the tax income of the whole region, could afford the largest army. Thereby the majority of the nobility were changed from relatively free warriors or knights into paid warriors or officers in the service of the central lord. (Elias, [1939] 1982:11)

In Italy especially, Crane (1920:160) demonstrates, nobles deserted their castles early on for the benefits of residence in court towns and cities, resulting in the fact that, there, less stress came to be placed on nobility of birth than elsewhere.

Elias ([1939] 1982:7) connects these social transformations to revised and ever-more restricting modes of social interaction:

> Here were created the models of more pacified social intercourse . . . ; here the coarser habits, the wilder, more uninhibited customs of medieval society with its warrior upper class, the corollaries of an uncertain, constantly threatened life, were "softened," "polished" and "civilized." The pressure of court life, the vying for the favour of the prince or the "great"; then, more generally, the necessity to distinguish oneself from others and to fight for opportunities with relatively peaceful means, high intrigue and diplomacy, enforced a constraint on the the affections, a self-discipline and self-control, a

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peculiarly courtly rationality, . . .

Furthermore, the division of labor had become more developed. The trade network had beome larger, resulting in an increase in the number of people sustained in close proximity. As a result of numbers of individuals of different social origins having been thrown together, the social hierarchy inevitably changed. The new web of dependencies resulted in a highly ordered system having become loosened. As a result of such changes in the social structure, and, particularly, as the new upper class became exposed to an unprecedented extent to the pressures of dealing with others, controls and restraints on the individual became more strict, uniform and continuous. Elias's ([1939] 1982:88) summary of this civilizing process is as follows: ". . . seen from the aspects of standards of conduct and drive control, [it] is the same trend which, when seen from the point of view of human relationships, appears as the process of advancing integration, increased differentiation of social functions and interdependence, and the formation of ever-larger units of integration on whose fortunes and movements the individual depends, whether he knows it or not."

That the "frontiers of sensibility and the reserve which they expected of each other" were truly increasing, Elias ([1939] 1978:60-1,70) shows through a comparison of the medieval precepts on socially acceptable behavior -- ecclesiastical writings, epic poems of chivalrous society, and compendiums of behavior such as Bonvicino da Riva's Courtesies, John Russell's Book of Nurture and The Babees Book, the latter probably collections and arrangements of fragments of the commands and taboos of an oral tradition -- with the raised "thresholds of embarrassment and shame" of the humanists' works (many platonic in

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moral outlook) on etiquette and manners -- "courtesy books," such as Baldassare Castiglione's Il Cortegiano (1528), Erasmus of Rotterdam's De civilitate morum puerilium (On Civility in Children) of 1530, Giovanni Della Casa's Galateo (1554) and Stefano Guazzo's Civile Conversation (ca.1573).

Good manners, along with education, then, had become important prerequisites for admission to courtly society. And there were differences from similar requirements of the Middle Ages nobility:

> The increased tendency of people to observe themselves and others is one sign of how the whole question of behavior is now taking on a different character: people mold themselves and others more deliberately . . .
> . . . The coercion exerted by people on one another increases, the demand for "good behaviour" is raised more emphatically. All problems concerned with behaviour take on new importance. (Elias, [1939] 1978:79)

A final contrast was in the shift from external to individual self-control of an "internalized" type. This new aristocracy was a truly constrained upper class.

The Musical Court Towns

No longer feudal nobles living within a narrow circle of uneducated courtiers and men-at-arms, the Renaissance princes realized how important it was to attract to their courts "those who were in the van of the new movement" (O'Brien, 1950:28). They also tried to transcend the upheavals and instabilities of sixteenth-century Europe "by retreating into a refined, artificially created world where 'civilized' noble values prevailed" (Riley, 1980:38). Toward this end they were desirous of the best musicians "as they were anxious to secure the best soldiers, artists, and scholars" (Anthon, 1946:226). Nothing took precedence over the quest for a good musician, de Maulde

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(1900:276) explains. All of this, Riley (1980:39) says, provided a diverting preoccupation, security within a safe environment of court circles and the projection of an élite image beyond the reach of the lower classes. Courtly aestheticism, according to Weber ([1915] 1949:342), also afforded "a salvation from the routines of everyday life, and especially from the increasing pressures of theoretical and practical rationalism."

The Renaissance court, then, where music was cultivated along with all the other arts that helped to make life pleasant, was another "powerfully creative force in music:"

> If, in its beginnings, it was merely an attempt to ape the grandeurs of royalty [by Renaissance nobles and merchant princes], by the middle of the fifteenth century and for a considerable time afterwards, the rulers who patronised music were men of fine taste and educated outlook who knew what was good and tended to admire what was up-to-date. (Raynor, 1972:75)

At the beginning of 1471, Lockwood (1981:229) finds only four Italian court centers that maintained companies of singers capable of mounting performances of sacred polyphony of the more complex varieties -- Savoy, Florence, the papal court and Naples -- but, by the end of that year, he speaks of important new initiatives toward the founding of court cappelle having been announced and already begun by Ercole of Ferrara and Galeazzo of Milan. With this, a new phase of competition for talent had also begun. "Intense pride and rivalry," Anthon (1943:15) writes, "were the keynotes in musicopolitical relations." Tinctoris's musical treatise of 1476 reinforces such documentary evidence for the founding and cultivation of cappelle of court musicians through this new source of patronage: ". . . the most Christian princes . . . desiring to augment the divine service, founded

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chapels after the manner of David, in which at extraordinary expense they appointed singers to sing" (Quoted in Lockwood, 1981:227); "[a]nd since the princes' singers gather into themselves honor, glory and riches, many have embraced this profession with zeal" (Quoted in Burkhalter M/M, [1966] 1968:83-4). Giustiniani ([1628] 1962:72) affirms our observation about the influence of these courts on the development of musical taste and practice in his short history of Renaissance music: ". . . it may be clearly understood that the style and manner of singing varies from time to time according to the tastes of the Lords and great Princes who take pleasure in it; exactly as it happens in the manner of dress, which continually changes according to the fashion that has been introduced in the courts of the great; . . ."

Choirs, all important for the performance of polyphonic religious music in the private chapels of the nobility, consisted in the fifteenth century mainly of Flemish singers (often former members of the papal choir). Such small-scale religious choral singing (small compared with that of the dukes of Burgundy, Bavaria and Saxony and the rulers of England) reached "a good standard" in many parts of Italy, according to O'Brien (1950:28). ". . . in proportion to their size," Anthon (1946:227) remarks, "they maintained very respectable artistic establishments." D'Accone ([1971] 1976:605), comparing the smaller church choirs of the northern Italian cities with the musical establishments of these courts, presents the following information:

> . . . the Italian courts of the time, probably in emulation of the dukes of Burgundy and similar northern centres, began to assemble much larger groups of singers. During the 1470s, for example, the Sistine Chapel [unique in its size compared to other church choirs] employed between fourteen and twenty adult singers, and the number went as high as twenty-four in 1483. Similar numbers are to be found in the chapel of King Alfonso I of Naples, who as early as

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> 1451 was employing twenty-one singers and two organists. Also in 1480 twenty-one singers served the court of Naples. The Milanese court chapel under Duke Galeazzo Maria Sforza boasted twenty-two cantori de cappella and eighteen cantori de camera [secular, "chamber" singers] in 1474, though the combined number of singers was apparently reduced in the following year, first to thirty-three and then to twenty-six. Even a small court like Ferrara in 1472 had fifteen adult singers as well as a corps of boys. In 1476 twenty-three singers were associated with the Ferrarese court; similar numbers are found until the year 1482, when war with Venice depleted the ducal treasury.

However, the courts needed the pomp, awe and amusement of secular music as much as music for the chapel. Flanders and the Netherlands, with "[a] paucity of courts and [a] multitude of churches and congregations" had led in church music, Lowinsky (1954:516) decides; Italy, "with its many independent political centers and its academies," would lead in the development of secular music. Music outside the liturgy gained "a range and social importance it had never previously attained," Raynor (1972:92) asserts, making secular music "not only the equal in importance but also the more adventurous branch of the art, and so indispensable to social life in general that no composer of the period found it possible to restrict his output to work for the Church" (Raynor, 1972:98). In a musical treatise of circa 1593, Giovanni Luca Conforto wrote that in the great cities and at the princely courts was practiced "that manner of singing with charm and disposition" (Quoted in Stark, 1973:94).

Consequently, the prestige of musicians, especially composers (who were now less tied by tradition and hence were allowed a certain freedom of treatment), was enhanced: "The musician is no longer a tradesman or a savant as in the Middle Ages, but an exceptional man [most of the literature takes for granted the absence of women], endowed by Heaven with imperishable gifts" (Einstein, [1949]

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1971:I:55). Humanist Lodovico Zacconi (1555-1567), author of the theoretical tract Musica prattica, testified: "The singer lives surrounded by great admiration and esteem and is everywhere received with open arms. . . . always considered a gentleman and is favored and honored by everyone" (Quoted in Lang, 1941:303). Stefano Guazzo's Civile Conversation ([ca.1573] 1967:156) describes a scene: "While they passed the time so merelie at super . . . , a Musician comes in place, with a Harpe in his hand, and after he had with the sweete sound of it, invited them all to suddaine silence, and all of them disposed to bend their willing eares to his Musicke, . . ."

Another reason for the regard shown to singers and composers was an assumption about their universally held high education and contact with culture, which they supposedly shared in common with other artists. Antonfrancesco Doni (writer, academician and musician) suggested in stories about "poets vs. ignoramuses" in his "Dialogo della musica" (1544) that both professional and amateur artists gifted with virtù considered themselves "a race apart from, and well above, the level of ordinary humanity" (Haar, 1966:224). Many theoreticians required musicians to have an encyclopedic education including arithmetic, geometry, physics, grammar, ancient languages, history, dialectics and rhetoric in addition to counterpoint and specialized musical skills (Anthon, 1946:123).

In actuality, however, the average musician fell far short of such extraordinary demands. Hauser ([1974] 1982:282), in fact, claims that Renaissance princes used "anyone, no matter what his origin, who contribute[d] to the attraction of the court." The Italian Renaissance courts, as we have already mentioned, differed from their predecessors

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in their composition:

> . . . if it is useful, they will accept even upstart traders, badly educated humanists, and plebian artists into their midst. In contrast to the moral community of the chivalric court, a comparatively free intellectual sociability develops in these courts. This is the origin of the social forms of the salon of the seventeenth and eighteenth century and also of bourgeois social aesthetic culture. (Hauser, [1974] 1982:282)

The artist in general gaided from this. He rose "from his role as craftsman . . . into the intelligentsia" as part of the class of "free, independent intellectual workers" (Hauser, [1974] 1982:283). But the "ultimate cause of the social rise of the artist" Hauser ([1974] 1982:283) sees as simply "the imbalance on the art market between supply and demand which resulted from the increase in seigniories and princedoms."

It was the shift of the musical center of gravity from the church to the court, Raynor (1972:98) maintains, that would establish music as a real profession, even though the numbers who could be employed in it were limited even there. Italian town musicians, on the other hand, had only practical and not theoretical musical educations and were paid salaries even less than most municipal church singers received, therefore occupying "beyond doubt the lowest rank in the hierarchy of musicians" (Anthon, 1946:222-3). In the northern towns, where musicians had banded together into quasi-professional guilds, Raynor (1972:98) contends that the relative paucity of work and the difficulty of maintaining a monopoly had made any professional organization of their craft "little more than a convenient fiction."

According to O'Brien (1950:28), court artists were admitted to a "familiarity, hitherto unusual" by ruler/employers whose own origins were not of very ancient lineage. Leone Battista Alberti, artist and

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humanist, remarked in his third book on painting that "the ultimate aim of an artist should not be to amass a fortune but to earn artistic fame and the patronage, pleasure, and good will of his contemporaries" (Quoted in Lang, 1941:303). This presupposes an intimate contact between the artist and the receptive public, one which singers and composers had accorded to them as well.

Since the achievements of such individuals lent glamour to the court, their presence was regarded as a social asset, thus suggesting a reciprocity of interests of patrons and musicians. This reciprocity was expressed in monetary terms also. Court musicians received better pay than town musicians and church choir members. This is confirmed by a review of the late-Renaissance, sixteenth-century salary figures collected by Anthon (1943:315-32). A comparison of fees paid singers in the courts of Ferrara, Mantua, Milan and Parma with those of church choristers and maestrae di cappelle in numerous cities and towns (predominantly Bergamo, Bologna, Padua, Treviso and Venice) reveals the following. Whereas church singers received 1-12 lire monthly or 12-144 lire annually (the grouping around 12-18 lire a year probably the salaries of boy singers), with a few choristers in Venice recorded as having received 250-600 lire per anum, and whereas church choirmasters realized generally 120-400 lire annually, with some going as high as 600-1200 lire (notably in Venice); court singers obtained anywhere from 60-200 lire annually (in Ferrara, sometimes 300 and 400) and maestrae di cappelle even higher (600-700). Renowned court composers faired even better, as did some individual performers of particular ability, leading to salaries from 1000-2000 lire a year, especially in Milan and Ferrara.

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The special way in which these singers and composers were often treated is illustrated in the stories that follow. O'Brien (1950:50) relates that Charles de Launay, a French soprano who worked in Mantua for some seven months, suddenly disappeared, carrying off with him a precious book of manuscript music. He escaped to Florence, offering his services to one of the Medicis, to whom he presented the manuscript. The ruler of Mantua wrote to a representative in Florence, requesting the return of the music and demanding that the singer be severely dealth with. Piero de' Medici returned the book but refused to punish Launay, giving as his reason that "when people of such rare talent appear on earth, we should respect them and treat them with affection" (O'Brien, 1950:50) -- one similar to that given to excuse deviance in artist-musicians both previously and since. Brown (1976:99) recounts that the same ruler at Mantua kept in her employ "the tempetuous Tromboncino," even after he had murdered his unfaithful wife. Einstein ([1949] 1971:I:54) adds that Tromboncino "evidently fell into disfavor for but a short time," his talent earning him "forgiveness even for this," as Reese ([1954] 1959:157) suggests. And the noble Gesualdo, musician and Prince of Venosa, also having been implicated in the murder of his supposedly faithless wife, became part of an illustrious circle of musicians at Ferrara and even married a member of the ruling d'Este family. His rank combined with the prestige accorded to his status as musician to afford him not only impunity in the murders of his wife and lover but also freedom in "[selecting] his poetry according to his own will and pleasure . . . power also to take whatever liberties he [chose] in the musical field without running the risk of being attacked" (Einstein, [1949] 1971:I:199).

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Still, the musician was particularly vulnerable. "He held office at the pleasure of his patron," Raynor (1972:97) describes, and would continue (if he did nothing wrong) until his employer's death, at which time his contract ended. Anthon agrees: He was "hired and dismissed at the pleasure of the prince" (described as "a whimsical autocrat of a small principality whose entire life was spent in securing and improving his precarious position among a host of rivals and enemies"). The latter author (1946:230) adds, though, that the princely patron "generally did all in his power to bind his artists to his court by generous treatment," including the possibility of fine salaries, light duties, excellent board and lodgings, servants and horses, monetary gifts, precious jewelry; and even prebends of landed property, houses, farms, forests, and concessions in bridges, roads, mines, and similar enterprises. And popes could confer prebendal bishoprics and knighthood, as could emperors and kings outside of Italy. To round out the picture of their social and economic organization, Anthon (1946:234) admits that it would be necessary to have more complete salary statistics; more documentary material relating to musicians that can be found contained in letters, diaries, chronicles, histories and fictional literature; surveys of the countless epilogues and eulogies written in honor of musicians; information concerning their relations with publishers; and even investigations into such status matters as how many were important enough to have their portraits painted. Some of this has been accomplished for individual musicians of exceptional reputation; little of it is known for the <u>average</u> musician.

Having accepted his post, the court musician was not free to

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leave for a better one. One could petition for discharge, but breaking a contract was liable for imprisonment. In addition, musicians, being of lesser importance compared to civil servants and administrators, were the first to suffer financially when shortages occurred in noble and royal treasuries. At such times they might be paid a fraction of their official salaries, with what was owing often being allowed to mount up, leading to the likelihood of their never being paid in full. However, the tradition of family "spelled some sort of security of tenure for the musician at court -- so long as there were Gonzagas in Mantua," Raynor (1972:96) offers as an example, "they maintained some musicians." (The papal chapel, on the other hand, demonstrated greater insecurity. A newly elected pope was more likely to have tastes incapable of being satisfied by his predecessor's musicians or might dislike or disagree with the practice of supporting music altogether.)

Musicians, Lockwood (1981:235) emphasizes, were not merely passive or captive participants in this patronage process; they developed their own "tactics for self-advertisement and advancement." These combined with already-existing rivalries among competing courts for the best musicians to produce incredible contests. For example, in 1484 and 1502 respectively, the male soprano Cornelio di Lorenzo told Duke Ercole of a singer at Florence whom he'd "risk his soul" to bring to Ferrara (D'Accone, [1971] 1976:614 and Lockwood, 1981:237); and the singer Girolamo da Sestola told Ercole that if he brought Josquin to his cappella neither pope nor king would have a better chapel (Lockwood, 1981:237). "Vanity, the dream of outdoing kings and popes, wins out" in the latter match, writes Lockwood (1981:237), and Josquin is hired over Isaac (who is "very rapid in the art of composition" and

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"good-natured and easy to get along with" [Lockwood, [1971] 1976:132]), despite the fact that although "Josquin composes better, . . . he composes when he wants to, and not when one wants him to, and he is asking 200 ducats salary while Isaac will come for 120 . . ." (Lockwood, [1971] 1976:133).

The love of ceremonious splendor and interest in contemporary artistic movements of each of the great families that created the Renaïssance courts, coupled with their wealth, made them ideal patrons of art. And music, in return, not only afforded pleasant entertainment but enhanced (relative to its excellence) the prestige of the noble family.

> Of the families that lorded it over various portions of Italy -- and whose power was in some cases ephemeral, in others enduring [and in some cases beneficent, in others tyrannical] -- the most celebrated were: the Montefeltro of Urbino, the d'Este of Ferrara and Modena, the Sforza of Milan, and the Gonzaga of Mantua.
>
> Italian music owes its later glorious development not only to the schools of Florence, Venice, Rome, Naples, Bologna, Padua and Parma, but also, in a large measure, to the favourable atmosphere of these small courts where music was so intelligently fostered. (O'Brien, 1950:28)

Urbino

Although music was one of the favorite pastimes of Federico of Montefeltro, Duke of Urbino from 1444-1482, it played an even more important part at that court during the reign of his son, Guidobaldo (1482-1508), whose wife Elisabetta, one of the music-loving Gonzagas of Mantua, shared his artistic and intellectual tastes. Regulations for the Duke's household included a decree that it "shall include some excellent musicians and there must always be two or three singers who can sing softly and expressively . . . also be able to play the lute and the cittern" (Quoted in O'Brien, 1950:32). The ducal couple thus

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brought good musicians to their court, and talented young men of Urbino were sent to study with Flemish and Italian masters elsewhere. In addition, Elisabetta and her ladies spent evenings singing and playing. The name of Urbino was immortalized by Baldassare Castiglione's canonical depiction of the refinement and charm of the Renaissance court -- Il Cortegiano, which supposedly described the discussions on life and art that took place in the evenings in the Hall of the Vigils in the palace. For more than a century this court was regarded as "the supreme exemplar; in the 17th century the Hôtel de Rambouillet was still striving to make itself a copy of it" (de Maulde, 1900:290). Duke Francesco Maria Della Rovere and his wife Eleanora (a niece of Elisabetta) succeeded Guidobaldo in Urbino, carrying on the musical traditions of their predecessors. On the death of Francesco Maria, however, the earliest and for nearly a century one of the chief artistic centers of Italy ceased to be an independent state.

Milan

In the middle of the fifteenth century, the military Sforza began their careers as rulers of Milan and "set about organizing their court on a scale of impressive grandeur" (O'Brien, 1950:40). The importance of the court dates from the foundation of its chapel choir in 1471-1472.[6] The second duke, Galeazzo Maria, was determined to outshine the musical activities of Florence and Ferrara by creating a cappella not only of superior quality but of greater size and even greater volume (in a letter of 1473, the duke is said to have commented that he wanted a cappella "such that when he want[ed] to hear a really big noise he would 'call the singers together and have them shout all at once so that their voices would resound up to heaven'" [Quoted in

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Lockwood, 1981:241]) than any Italian rival. To achieve this he sent singer-recruiters to England, to the courts of France and Burgundy and to Flanders to obtain singers, in addition to finding excellent oltremontani (foreign) singers among the many Flemish musicians in Italy at that time.

The richest state in Italy, Milan had the "pick of the Flemish singers" (O'Brien, 1950:41) by paying higher salaries than its neighbors. An account of a visit to Ferrara mentions how the Duke lured the singer Jachetto di Marville (or di Lorena), brought to Ferrara from Naples, to the court of Milan: "'Al mele va le mosche' (flies make for the honey), said the Sforza envoy, Cerutti, when Jachetto joined the Milan Court Choir," (Quoted in O'Brien, 1950:41-2). Lockwood (1981:233) and O'Brien (1950:41) claim that the Sforza even tried to keep the best of a choir that had been borrowed from Savoy for some special occasion. Ultimately, "[o]nly the Papal Choir, to which it had always been a signal honour to belong, could hold its ground against the Sforza choir," O'Brien (1950:41) relates.

> By 1474 Galeazzo had formed an establishment of forty singers (twenty-two da cappella, eighteen da camera), by far the largest of its time, and although it was reduced to thirty-two and then to twenty-six members by the end of the year 1475, it was a sizeable special group even within his well-populated court. Wages for the singers were not high, even for the leading figures, but clothing and housing were supplied and benefices were sought for them. By 1476 Galeazzo was spending some 5,000 ducats annually for the cappella, and it is therefore hardly suprising that after his abrupt demise in 1476 the cappella was cut to half this size by his successors, who kept the best of the singers but let the others go. Yet, although this figure has been cited as a very high one, for a chapel of forty singers . . . in contrast to some of Galeazzo's other extravagances this may not have seemed truly excessive. (Lockwood, 1981:233-4)

The Duke took his musical household to his various residences and lost no opportunity of impressing other princes with the wealth and

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refinement of his musical escort on his travels to other states:

> . . . the principal singers riding on horseback attended by ducal servants. They were dressed in rich costumes, for the sartorial element was considered of great importance . . . Several entries in the Sforza accounts refer to velvet brought back for the singers, usually black, but sometimes crimson or green; and costumes of peach colour, turquoise, or willow-green . . . (O'Brien, 1950:41)

The Sforzas also went to great lengths to acquire examples of any music that was new. For example, Galeazzo Maria commissioned his representative at Venice to acquire all the latest Venetian songs "with their musical notes" and to look out for a "well-set-up boy from twelve to fifteen years, with a good voice, who could sing them to his own accompaniment on the lute" (O'Brien, 1950:42).

It was to this court that the young Beatrice d'Este (of Ferrara) came on her marriage to Ludovico Sforza, "Il Moro," the Regent of Milan, in 1491. Fond of music and interested in any scheme to increase their prestige, the couple were in constant touch with the musical life at the court of Beatrice's father, Duke Ercole of Ferrara, and her sister, Isabella, who was betrothed to Francesco Gonzaga, Marchese of Mantua. The two sisters rivalled each other in securing the services of celebrated artists, states O'Brien (1950:42), lavishing money with all extravagance on singers, instrumentalists, poets and composers as well as other artists, and having richly ornamented musical instruments of all kinds and precious musical manuscripts produced and/or acquired for them. The glory of the Sforza ended prematurely with the death of Beatrice at the age of only twenty-two.

Ferrara

Ferrara, the principal seat of the d'Este family (lords of Ferrara, Modena and Reggio) demonstrated particularly brilliant musical

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developments during their long rule. Its musical traditions harked back to the troubadours, and records for the early quattrocento mark the presence of an "occasional singer or lutenist," used primarily for official court functions or modest secular entertainments (Gundersheimer, 1973:192). In 1429, Niccolo (twelfth Marchese of the house of d'Este) began the archetypical evolution of this Renaissance court by hiring a tutor -- Guarino of Verona, a friend of the Florentine humanists -- to train his sons. The oldest, Leonello was "an apt pupil and eagerly drank in all his master could teach, and when he succeeded his father he was a 'true humanist on the throne'" (de Robeck, 1928:70). Poets, men of letters and artists flocked to Ferrara very much as they had to Florence. Leonello's marriage to Margherita Gonzaga (educated by another famous Renaissance humanist teacher, Vittorino da Feltre, at Mantua) was the first of the Este-Gonzaga alliances which would bring the two courts close together. This golden age of Ferrara continued during the reign of Leonello's brother Borso, who became a Duke of the Empire in 1452. All of the splendor of his court fell to a third brother, Ercole I, upon Borso's death.

Large numbers of Flemish and Italian musicians had come under d'Este patronage. The Italians had for a long time left the field of sacred music to the foreigners and devoted themselves to the composition of secular songs and the playing of the lute and viol. One of the most famous lutenist-singers, Pietrobono (ca.1417-1497), was praised by Tinctoris and had medals struck in his honor. His income is cited as more than 1,000 ducats annually (1 gold ducat equalled 6 lire. 4 soldi), yet his official salary was a mere 8 lire a month (Lockwood, 1980:744). It appears, however, that he excelled particularly as a

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lutenist (though he "doubtless also sang to his own accompaniment" [Lockwood, 1980:744]), for he is considered one of the principal court instrumentalists under Ercole. From a list of salaried officials in the ducal household, Gundersheimer (1973:294) notes that musicians classified as singers were generally priced slightly higher:

> the ducal singers, of whom there are twenty, all at salaries ranging from 7 to 25 LM [lire monthly], with most of them in the 13 to 19 LM category. There are sopranos, tenors, basses, and many unclassified voices. They come from Flanders, Brabant, Cambrai, Holland, France, Paris, Mantua, and other unidentified places.

It was during the course of the sixteenth century that native musicians would greatly increase in number and importance. ". . . with such composers as the two Della Viola, Ercole Pasquini and Luzzasco Luzzaschi, Ferrara [would possess] the nucleus of a local 'school'," states O'Brien (1950:38).

The commitment to music from the beginning of Ercole's reign was to both sacred as well as secular ceremonial music, the former having taken second place to secular singing with accompaniment during Borso's rule. Determined to create a "most celebrated cappella" and wanting "excellent musicians, whom [he was] looking for everywhere," Ercole built a staff of singers "by every means of recruitment available to him," says Lockwood (1981:231). "Within eighteen months of his becoming Duke . . . he had secured the service of an impressive international corps of singers [male, of course], plus choirboys. . . ." Lockwood ([1971] 1976:106) continues.

This effort, not entirely independent of but aimed also at competing with Galeazzo Maria Sforza of Milan (who used essentially the same tactics as a music patron), made demands in various spheres. First, it put Ercole in a position of having to compete financially for

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sought-after musicians "in a market that included such lavish and potent consumers as the Duke of Milan, the King of Naples, and above all, the papacy" (Gundersheimer, 1973:193). Second, it meant that he needed to make more extensive use of his diplomatic network by requiring his resident ambassadors at the courts of France, Rome, Milan and Florence to add to their tasks those of identifying musical talent and recruiting new singers, which included gathering minute information regarding their personal characters in addition to their musical abilities. In a ducal minute of 17 May 1504 addressed to Alfonso d'Este, Ercole speaks of needing singers and directs Alfonso to "use every effort to see whether these singers [the names listed in accompanying official orders] are good and able, and those whom you find really excellent you will bring here" (Quoted in Lockwood, [1971] 1976:136). Third, he needed special agents, chiefly musicians, for similar missions. "In sending recruiters on far-flung missions and in their steady raiding of one another's cappelle, these Italian princes," states Lockwood (1981:234), "were obviously competing for talents that were not in plentiful supply in their own populations," with the added fact that they were taking "calculable political risks." In a letter of 24 July 1476 from Galeazzo to Ercole, the Milanese Duke's tone is interesting: "We are certain that your Lordship would neither wish nor permit that any of your singers should steal away any of ours, just as we would shun such behavior, since we are brothers and comrades . . . but we must advise you that a certain Michele Feyt, a singer of ours, has left our service [along with a] Daniele, another of our singers . . ." (Quoted in Lockwood, 1981:234). Nevertheless, Ercole is described by Lockwood (1981:234) as "more courteous" (than the above

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implies and than Galeazzo was) in his attempts: ". . . in 1479 when recruiting in Milan; first he told his ambassador to keep it all as quite as possible, and then solemnly advised the singer Victor Tarquinio de Bruges that 'before you leave you should ask permission from Her Ladyship . . . since if you don't have it we don't see how we can honourably accept you.'"

Ercole's efforts must have met with success for both D'Accone (see p.266) and Lockwood (1981:231-2) see the number of Ferrarese musicians in the 1470s as "impressively high for a smaller Italian court:"

> . . . by 1472 there were fifteen singers, by 1473 at least thirteen adult singers and eleven imported German choirboys. By 1476 the choir had grown to twenty-seven singers, and though it fluctuated at a somewhat lower figure (around twenty) through these years, by 1481 and the end of Ercole's first decade it again had twenty-seven mature singers, plus choirboys.

Ercole ultimately formed two musical chouses: "one of twenty-four young boys, and the other of more than that number of very expert [male] professionals who instructed the lesser ones" (Sabadino degli Arienti, as quoted in Gundersheimer, 1973:194).

Lockwood ([1971] 1976:124-36) presents numerous letters and assorted documents concerning musical culture at Ferrara from the years 1502-1504, some of which we have chosen to illustrate the importance of singers to that court:

> . . . the singers have at last arrived at Modena, and that by the grace of God they all look well. And I will only say to your Lordship that the singers are truly perfect, and that Don Alfonso can hardly wait for Your Lordship's coming, for many reasons but all the more to let you hear these singers. And tell Tommaso that I want him to listen to them with fear and awe. (Letter from Girolamo da Sestola ["il Coglia") to Duke Ercole I d'Este, Modena, 4 August 1502, p.126)

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> I would gladly have come to pay homage to Your Lordship with these singers, but finding two of them to be ill, and knowing the difficulty of the journey and also of those places, it seemed better to come along later with them, . . . I have arranged that my lady, . . . , should hear them sing, and they pleased Her Excellency so much that it is impossible to describe it. (Letter of "Jan" to Duke Ercole, Ferrara, 7 August 1502, p.128)

> . . . I am already in fear of being bewitched by hearing the singing of these singers, and I can hardly wait for Your Lordship's arrival because you will derive such enjoyment and consolation from them, not only in the chapel but in the chamber as well, and in any use you like. They are young men; the oldest is only 25 years of age, and our singers are astonished by them. . . . and . . . say that they have never heard better in their lives, . . . (Letter of Girolamo da Sestola to Duke Ercole, Ferrara, 14 August 1502, pp.130-1)

They also show the lengths to which Ercole went to attract singers to Ferrara:

> . . . Gian has been detained in the lands of the Duke of Savoy on the charge of having lured away singers from the service of his Lordship. (Letter from Alfonso d'Este to his father Duke Ercole, Ferrara, 27 July 1502, p.125)

> This is to notify Your Lordship that I am asking you for a reward since Gian and the singers have all arrived at Modena safe and sound, . . . (Letter of Girolamo da Sestola to Duke Ercole, Modena, 4 August 1502, p.127)

and to hold them in his service:

> Your Excellency may remember that many days ago I asked you to be kind enough to give me leave for three months, so that I could go home to take care of some important affairs of mine, . . . You replied to me then that the chapel was in a poor state, mainly with regard to contraltos, and that I should wait, for as soon as it would be [better] supplied, Your Lordship would be glad to give me leave so that I could go. Now, . . . , I ask once again . . . (Letter of Bartolomeo Cantore [known as Bartolomeo de Fiandra] to Duke Ercole, Ferrara, 13 August 1502, p.129)

> The singer Bartolomeo requests Your Lordship's consent to give him a three months' leave . . . Your Lordship is bound to give him permission because he says that Your Lordship promised it to him. Don Alfonso, too, thinks it would be better for Your Lordship to grant him leave now than to wait for another occasion because the chapel is well staffed with contraltos, and then too Your Lordship is now away. Also, if you were not to grant it to him now he would always be

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> resentful about it and would never be content. Besides, Your Lordship knows that he now has that country house at Ferrara and there is no longer any danger that he would stay and not return, so that Your Lordship can indeed give him leave. (Letter of Girolamo da Sestola to Duke Ercole, Ferrara, 14 August 1502, p.131)

Finally, the kinds of musical activities engaged in in Ferrara presupposed, Gundersheimer (1973:193) concludes (and as we shall see), the presence of "an audience potentially capable of serious interest in and attention to music, and thus assumes musical professionalism of a new kind." The above characteristics and requirements applied, of course, to all of the Renaissance courts that would attempt such a musical standing.

Ferrara became a center of musical life during the reign of Guarino's pupil, who in 1473 married Leonora of Aragon, daughter of the King of Naples.

> Endless georgeous pageants fill the pages of Ferrarese history, . . . All and any excuse for festivities were welcome to Ercole, if it gave him the opportunity to indulge his passion for the stage. . . . In all this music played an important part. The Duke . . . was famous for his private orchestra, . . . , and the best-known performers were secured at a high salary. . . . Ercole I was a much-sought-after patron. His choir was renowned throughout Italy, and in it were Italian, French, and Spanish singers. . . . The musical life in Ferrara did not flag for another hundred years or so, . . . (de Robeck, 1928:72-4)

The influence of Ferrara spread to Milan and Mantua with the brilliant marriages managed by Ercole for his two accomplished daughters. "The future must, indeed, have looked golden to these two girls, surrounded as they were by all the beauty and luxury and culture of their father's Court; themselves the centre of so much love and admiration, . . . , conscious of their own power" (de Robeck, 1928:75). Beatrice was betrothed to the Regent and future Duke of Milan and Isabella to the Marchese of Mantua. Ercole's son, Alphonso II, provided an additional

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alliance with Milan through his marriage to Anna Sforza. These marriages, coupled with the equally close familial ties between Mantua and Urbino, resulted, O'Brien (1950:36) states, in "frequent intercourse between the four principal Renaissance courts; and community of tastes and interests led to an artistic rivalry that proved highly beneficial to the growth of music."

The artistic prestige of Ferrara would reach its climax, as we shall see in Chapter IX, towards the close of the sixteenth century under Ercole's son's rule. With Alphonso's later marriage to Lucrezia Borgia, there would be perpetual festivities, concerts and plays, the Ferrara court becoming then "one of the most cultured and brilliant in Europe" (O'Brien, 1950:38). And with his final marriage to Marguerita Gonzaga would come "the last flaring up of the musical life at the court of Ferrara, which had seen an uninterrupted succession of brilliant events . . . and which had included every sort of music -- dramatic scenes and choruses, the pastoral drama, the tragedy, the madrigal, the budding instrumental music" (Einstein, [1949] 1971:II:825). Most important to the focus of this study, this pinnacle would concentrate on a musical innovation in the secular realm that would influence both the style of music composed and the type of performance practiced as well as the social background and characteristics of the performer, especially that of gender.

Mantua

Mantua was the last of (that is it outlived) the other Renaissance courts. "Urbino and Milan had long ceased to be when Mantua was at the height of its glory, and its fame outlasted that of Ferrara, which was originally its mentor in matters artistic and musical,"

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O'Brien (1950:45) comments. To Vittorino da Feltre, the eminent humanist teacher who ran a school at Mantua, has been attributed (Cf. O'Brien, 1950:46) the strong interest taken in the intellectual movement by the Gonzaga princes of the fifteenth century, as well as others (Federico of Urbino for one) who came to study there. By the end of that century, stimulated by the example of Ferrara, new currents in music reached Mantua. The Flemish had arrived, and polyphonic singing came into vogue. Still lacking its own good musicians, however, Mantua looked to well-equipped Ferrara:

> When Ludovico the Third, pupil of Vittorino, wanted a music teacher for his children, he wrote to ask the advice of Nicolo Tedesco of Ferrara. The Flemish musician recommended a compatriot of his own "who has the modern style and sings very well," . . . Again, when Gianandrea di Allesandro, organist at Mantua, desired to perfect himself in organ playing and singing, it was to Ferrara he went, . . . (O'Brien, 1950:46)

Yet, Mantua has the distinction of being the first town in which a secular drama in the Italian language was performed with musical interludes -- Poliziano's Orfeo, 1472.

By the time Isabella d'Este married the Marchese Francesco, she found at her husband's court "a society every whit as brilliant and accomplished as the one she had left in Ferrara," as de Robeck (1928:78) describes it. For fifty years the Marchioness of Mantua, Isabella was an important figure in the Italian Renaissance. "Active and full of energy like a man [emphasis mine], she had a woman's intelligence, grace, and serenity," is the way Einstein ([1949] 1971:I:39) describes her, pointing out that it was she who determined the character of the arts at her court, the masculine qualities he alludes to perhaps having been what made it possible. She considerably enlarged the court's music, with the number of singers, for example,

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increasing dramatically. So great was her love of music," Walter Rubsamen (1943:9) relates, "that she ordered a design of clefs, time signatures, and repeat marks sculptured into the wall of her room, and even had the emblems embroidered on one of her gala dresses."

Her interest in music and musicians, and the arts in general, is evidenced in her prolific and widespread correspondences with musicians, poets and painters and in her communications with other d'Este family members. The latter frequently mention composers, singers, organists, lutenists, etc. Her own artistic gifts were developed by her contacts with the many famous people she attracted to the Gonzaga court, who were, in turn, "encouraged and inspired" by Isabella (O'Brien, 1950:45). Included were some key musical figures of Italian origin -- singers and composers, the two most distinguished being Bartolomeo Tromboncino and Marco Cara. Their presence aided the Marchioness's efforts to establish a native Italian song style -- the frottola. "Isabella," Fenlon (1980:21-2) explains, "had strong views on musical composition, and as a musically literate patron with considerable understanding of performance she was able to exercise some control over the productions of her court composers." Well-placed patronesses, then, could influence and even dictate artistic norms for the literary and musical language of social music as well as serve as aesthetic and financial inspirers of song. Einstein ([1949] 1971:I:39) qualifies his statement concerning Isabella's influence on the music of her court, however, adding about the particular style she desired, that "it was in the nature of things [her femaleness] that this music could not be exuberant, grandiose, and overpowering." He ([1949] 1971:I:39) then apologizes for her: "Italian music need not be ashamed of this

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patroness . . . , for she was the first and greatest fosterer of a national art practice" -- even though that national practice might have had feminine overtones because of her nature.

Having decided to learn to sing herself, the Marchioness wrote home to her father, Duke Ercole, to send her Don Giovanni Martini, her childhood music teacher at Ferrara. The musician subsequently spent time at Mantua and continued his tuition by letter after his return to Ferrara, "sending his pupil new songs and recommending her 'to go over and over them, till she was note perfect'" (O'Brien, 1950:47). In addition to singing, she learned to play several instruments and, like her sister Beatrice, collected and commissioned rare and beautiful instruments. Famous poets dedicated ecstatic lines to her singing, recitation and playing. Isabella also obtained a loan of her father's collection of songs to have the manuscripts copied out by hand in Mantua. She collected musical manuscripts "with as much enthusiasm as she did instruments," O'Brien (1950:50) remarks.

The standards that "that friend of illustrious works . . . liberal and magnanimous Isabella" (Ariosto, as quoted in Reese, [1954] 1959:157 and Rubsamen, 1943:9) established were maintained by three succeeding generations of Gonzaga rulers. Her grandson Guglielmo would sustain excellence in vocal music and his successor, Duke Vincenzo, the last of the Gonzagas to rule at Mantua, would focus Gonzaga court music patronage on the madrigal and the theater, emphasizing the new styles of singing coming out of Ferrara at the end of the sixteenth century. Finally, Vincenzo would employ a young musician named Claudio Monteverdi, who was to become one of the first great composers of opera.

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The Donna Universale: Extension or Constriction of Power for Women

Noble ladies, Lang (1941) argues, were not behind the uomo universale in intellectual attainments and "in many instances came perhaps nearer to the perfect specimen than the men of the Renaissance." Castiglione ([1528] 1981:44) described Elisabetta of Urbino as having in her "tender soul" and accompanied by her "singular beauty" "prudence and a courageous spirit and all those virtues very rarely found even in the staunchest of men." The two Renaissance centuries brought forth a number of outstanding and powerful women "whose intrinsic strength and grasp of the new ideas made them formidable rivals to the great men of their time" (Bell, 1973:197). These include Queen Isabella of Spain (1451-1504) and the regent Anne de Beaujeu (1460-1522), Queen Anne of Brittany (1477-1514), Margaret of Austria (1480-1530), Louise of Savoy (1476-1531) and Marguerite of Angoulême (1492-1549) from France. The Italians were Leonora of Aragon (1450-1493) and her daughters Beatrice (1475-1497) and Isabella (1474-1539) d'Este; and toward the latter part of the sixteenth century, Catherine de Medicis (1519-1589), queen mother and regent of France. Elizabeth I (1533-1603), who became Queen of England, falls into this category.

In Italy, as elsewhere during the early Middle Ages, monkish theology had belittled and condemned woman. Polemics against her had been common, rehashing misogynist themes from the past. Her function was limited, her virtue residing in "feeding the babies, telling her beads, mending the linen and looking after the keys" (Lucas-Dubreton, 1961:222). Paolo da Certaldo. in his Handbook of Good Customs (ca.1360) put it this way:

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> If you have a female child, set her to sewing and not to reading, for it is not suitable for a female to know how to read unless she is going to be a nun. . . . Teach her to do everything about the house, . . . , so that when you marry her off she won't seem a fool freshly arrived from the wilds. (Quoted in O'Faolain and Martines, 1973:169)

The knightly romanticism of the following era, on the other hand, had elevated womanhood (or, more precisely, some [elevated] women) "to a sphere where it almost ceased to be a part of earthly life" (Lang, 1941:301).

The Renaissance, it has been claimed, helped destroy these narrow outlooks, raising the dignity of woman (again, the aristocratic and patrician woman). The Florentine writer Gelli wrote, "You regard women as slaves and servants rather than companions, which is what justice requires; and this is so impious and contrary to the natural order of things that no other animal than man has the audacity to do it" (Quoted in Lucas-Dubreton, 1961:222). It was left to the Renaissance, Lang (1941:301) writes, to reinstate woman into humanity, where she soon took part in "the intellectual life of the Renaissance admired and recognized by men." For the first time in western history, Bell (1973:182,3) observes, men placed an emphasis on the education of females -- tutoring at home, schooling in convents and sometimes participating along with boys in local schools -- because learning lead to the ultimate good, but also because a carefully brought up daughter might be shrewdly married to the enhancement of the families wealth and power.

This last fact and a contemporary comment by courtier, historian, literatus, poet and later cardinal Pietro Bembo (1470-1547). to the effect that a little girl should learn Latin in order to complete her charm (de Maulde, 1900:96; Putnam, [1910] 1970:188),

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causes us to question the intent and extend of female education and the whole issue of the Renaissance freeing women from subordination. Certainly there was disagreement about the manner in which young girls were educated: ". . . as the treatises on education speak only of boys, or at most of 'children', and practically never use the words 'daughters', some historians have concluded that the girls were left to vegetate and that their education was never considered, while others, on the contrary, . . . have believed that the girls merely followed the same course as the boys" (de Maulde, 1900:87).

Jacob Burckhardt's classic, The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy ([1860] 1954:292-4), on the other hand, states that women stood "on a footing of perfect equality with men," that the education of women in the upper classes was "essentially the same as that given to men," and that the individuality of women in those classes was developed "in the same way as that of men," woman's rights being "a matter of course." Thomas Frederick Crane's Italian Social Customs of the Sixteenth Century (1920:172) also describes woman as "the social equal and companion of man." "[T]o our predominantly male . . . historians, everything looks fine," Petersen and Wilson (1976:24) conclude.

At the same time, however, invectives against women continued to appear, including writings by antifeminist clerics, lyricists and satirists[7] which outrightly opposed the emancipation of women. In response to their claims that woman was cursed, evil, bestial, crafty, proud, scournful, etc., and that educating her would refine and heighten her natural depravity, humanist writers produced works in her defense:

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> The only difference between man and woman is physical. . . . In everything else they are the same. Woman does not have a soul of a different sex from that which animates man. . . . Women and men were equally endowed with the gifts of spirit, reason, and the use of words; they were created for the same end, . . . (Agrippa von Nettesheim, "On the Nobility and Excellence of Women," 1529, as quoted in O'Faolain and Martines, 1973:184)

This literary controversy over the pros and cons of women's capabilities became known as La Querelle des Femmes.

Ruth Kelso's Doctrine for the Lady of the Renaissance (1956:10) distinguishes four general attitudes in this confused debate: "Some thought woman at best a necessary evil, some admitted her good in a limited and humble way but of inferior value compared to men, some took her as good and necessary equally with men, and some claimed superiority for her . . ." Kelly-Gadol (1977:139), however, goes so far as to say:

> . . . there was no renaissance for women -- at least, not during the Renaissance. . . . women as a group [emphasis mine], especially among the classes that dominated Italian urban life, experienced a contraction of social and personal options that men of their classes either did not, . . . , or did not experience as markedly, . . .

Lerner (1979:175) states this more generally: "Events that advance the position of men in society, adding to their economic opportunities, their liberties and their social standing, frequently have the opposite effect on women," Watkins (1983:82) adding that reconstructed theories of social progress like Kelly-Gadol's frequently discover the human costs paid by women in a period previously thought of as "progressive." (The times during which women were able to impinge on fertility rates. Lerner (1979:177) illustrates, "mark the 'Renaissance' for women and they occur at different periods than did the 'Renaissance' for men.")

Kelly-Gadol (1977:139-40) considers four criteria for gauging

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the relative contraction (or expansion) of female powers and, therefore, for determining the quality of their historical experience: (1) the regulation of female sexuality as compared with male sexuality; (2) women's economic and political roles and their access to property, political power and the education or training necessary for acquiring and performing the above; (3) the cultural roles of women in shaping the outlook of their society and their access to the education and/or institutions necessary for this; and (4) ideology about women, in particular the sex-role system displayed or advocated in the symbolic products of the society -- its art, literature and philosophy. All of these will be considered as we proceed with our investigation of the position of the noblewoman during the Renaissance and the role she played in the realm of music.

Castiglione's ([1528] 1928) handbook for gentlemen and gentlewomen about the social and cultural functions of the Renaissance court and their roles within that court included one book on the gentlewoman of the court in which Lord Giuliano de' Medici, son of Lorenzo the Magnificent of Florence, summarized the qualities appropriate to her status as a counterpart to the courtier (an explicit role outside the circle of the family and household): "I will say that this woman have a sight, in letters, in musicke, in drawing, or painting, and skilfull in danncing, and in devising sports and pastimes, accompanying with that discrete sober moode [meaning modesty], . . . , the other principles also that have beene taught the Courtier" (Castiglione, [1528] 1928:195).[8] He wanted the donna di palazzo to understand all that had previously been described that the courtier himself ought to know, so that she might "serve her turne with

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manie of them, and be endured with verie good qualities. . . . For many vertues of the minde I recken be as necessarie for a woman, as for a man" (Castiglione, [1528] 1928:189).

The highest praise that could be bestowed on a woman, Burckhardt ([1860] 1954:294) and Lucas-Dubreton (1961:223) explain, was to say that she had "the mind and the courage of men," or "the mind and soul of a man." A Renaissance example was the female writer Cassandra Fedele, of whom was said that she was "the 'miracle' of the age, for a male soul had been born in one of female sex" (Pietro Dobuson, as quoted in King, 1980:76). In response to being praised as a "virilis femine" ("a fusion of the icons of Athena, the chaste goddess of wisdom, and of the Amazons, fierce warriors ruthless to men" [King, 1980:79]), author Christine de Pisan said of herself: "now I am truly a man" (Quoted in Labalme, 1980:5). The early seventeenth-century artist Artemisia Gentileschi, in referring to herself, declared: "You will find the spirit of Caesar in the soul of this woman" (Quoted in Parker and Pollock, 1981:20). Strong and forceful performances by later women instrumentalists were described as "play[ing] like a man" (Quoted in Wood, 1980:292).

Female cross-dressing was even tolerated, despite Deuteronomy's (XXII:5) disapprobation against women putting on "that which pertaineth unto a man" and vice versa. Acceptance of garment irregularities in the "right" direction demonstrates societal status concepts about the roles of the sexes: ". . . they were striving to become more manlike and therefore better persons" (Bullough, 1974:1382). And some nuns and other religious women posing as monks were even encouraged, as early as the time of St. Jerome (ca. 340-420), "to adopt the guise of men and

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live like men in order to attain the higher level of spirituality normally reserved to males" (Bullough, 1974:1383). All of the examples of such women denote a splitting away from their former beings.

A nineteenth-century writer sums up the situation: "So long as a woman refrains from unsexing herself by acquiring genius let her dabble . . . woman of genius does not exist but when she does she is a man" (Quoted in Parker and Pollock, 1981:8).[9] Their sex transformed, they ceased to be women (or rather ceased to be viewed as women) and became, in a sense, intellectual (at least) transvestites -- male by intellect, female in body and soul -- which rendered their sexual identities ambiguous. They are likened to a new form of the classical virago -- not an armed maiden but an "Amazon of the mind" (Labalme, 1980:5).

However, when a woman attempted to compete with men on their own terms, on masculine grounds, she had gone too far. Female rivalry for male territory meant no longer just a rise in her status but the potential loss of status for men. As a result, such females achievers in the difficult materials of humanist studies were rebuked everywhere -- "not in recognition of their excellence admitted to the company of men . . . yet they were excluded from the company of women" (King, 1980:75). Any such disapproval William Goode (1978:295) equates with "costs" to be borne, with punishments: "Almost certainly, . . . , its impact on socialization is greater than any other kind of cost or punishment, especially if disesteem is expressed . . . as a withdrawal of affection, love, or warmth." Consequently, frustration and conflict resulted from the contradictions inherent in the humanists' claims of women's capabilities at the same time as they discouraged women's

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advancements, or at least failed to reward them. Disparate and inconsistent evaluations ravaged female scholars' individual attempts to eke out an intellectual role, the results being unintegrated roles sets and lack of support, including "the mechanism of social support by others in similar social statuses with similar difficulties of coping" (Merton, [1949] 1957:377). Epstein's (1974:29) remarks concerning the success of professionals today with the "wrong" sex status are applicable here: They "succeed, idiosyncratically, as a 'deviant', and without the systematic set of rewards and punishments by which the professionals within the system acquire standards and professional taste and learn to identify with the occupational status so that it becomes a defining part of the self." The qualities that resulted in the withholding of esteem were not related to the performances or contributions of some Renaissance women; rather it was their ascriptive status of having been born female that signaled the dispraise.

King (1980:74) speaks of thwarted ambitions, "in part because, being women, they were vanquished from within: by their own self-doubt, punctuated by moments of pride; and by their low evaluation of their sex, which undermined their confidence further and which was affirmed by the behavior of other women for whom the intellectual strivings of a few threatened their condition of comfortable servitude." Goode (1978:7,79,83), in his extensive treatise on prestige as a social control system, mentions in passing differential distributions of prestige based on belonging to a denigrated group by birth. He never analyzes, however, either the phenomenon of withholding respect based on ascription when achievement is evident or the resulting lowered self-esteem on the part of the "victim."

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Mostly, though, the Renaissance women humanists were thwarted because of controls generated by the societal norms by which woman's primary role was associated with the home and nonwork (Cf. Stewart and Cantor, 1974:97) and because of their acceptance, to some degree, of these ideas. King (1980:74) summarizes their fates:

> The learned women, conquered from within, capitulated and withdrew from battle. They withdrew from study altogether, into marriage, or into grief. They withdrew to convents and to good works and to silence. They withdrew from secular studies, where men excelled and took up sacred studies, appropriate for women, and formed cloisters of their minds. They withdrew from friendships, from the life of their cities, from public view, to small corners of the world where they worked in solitude: to self-constructed prisons, lined with books -- to book-lined cells, [King's] symbol for the condition of the learned women of this age. . . .

This situation was not dissimilar from the choice for women artists: ". . . marriage or a career: solitude as the price of success or sex and companionship at the price of professional renunciation" (Nochlin, 1971:500). Epstein (1974:33) views modern women professionals as subject to a similar zero-sum evaluation, in which "the greater her occupational accomplishment, the more likely she is to be rated lower in her performance of female roles."

The choice of marriage and family was an "easier" one: "To the extent that there is a prior consensus on the relative 'importance' of conflicting status-obligations, this reduces the internal conflict of decision by those occupying these statuses . . ." (Merton, [1949] 1957:382). Also, "[s]ince having others' esteem is both desirable and useful, people will act to increase it, if that is not too difficult" (Goode, 1978:7). The career option generally meant retreatism, as it did in Merton's ([1949] 1957:188) contemporary examples of retirees and widows, as a result of their exemption from a wide array of role

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obligations. In the Renaissance cases, withdrawal occurred because choice of the intellectual role automatically meant loss of the familial one. Nochlin (1971:507-8) adds that, for those electing the second, equally difficult was the fact that

> . . . the voice of the feminine mystique, with its internalized ambivalent narcissism and guilt, subtly dilutes and subverts that total inner confidence, that absolute certitude and moral and aesthetic self-determination demanded by the highest and most innovative work in art.
> . . .
> . . . while great achievement is rare and difficult at best, it is still rarer and more difficult if you must wrestle with inner demons of self-doubt and guilt and outer monsters of ridicule or patronizing encouragement, . . .

King (1980:80) says of the Renaissance woman humanist scholar:

> . . . She received no degrees. She wrote no truly great works. She exerted no great influence on emerging trends in the history of ideas. She was probably unhappy. But she was perhaps the earliest figure of the type of the learned woman who is still with us.

Some aristocratic and haute bourgeoisie women of adequate education became sponsors of creativity -- that of men. They played supportive, secondary roles as bearers of musical, literary and visual artistic traditions by encouraging and providing in their homes or courts -- artistic "salons" -- the necessary and proper facilities, equipment, atmospheres and audiences for the execution and demonstration of such creativity.

The qualities that Renaissance writers praised most frequently as constituting perfection for women are covered by Kelso (1956:23-30): the traditional ones of beauty, chastity, modesty, humility, constancy. temperance, piety, humanity, justice and prudence, with the addition of another -- a smattering of learning.

> . . . in these qualities, . . . , a picture of the renaissance lady . . . makes her, as her admirers intended, comparable in some degree at least with the gentleman. If

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> she still remains a figure incomplete unless joined to his, she appears worthily framed for her place beside him . . . , with some of the qualities necessary for acting in his place lightly sketched in. (Kelso, 1956:37)

This was partially because there was nothing open to her that was nearly as lucrative as marriage. The economic prizes, Putnam ([1910] 1970:69) therefore concludes, were awarded in such a way as to discourage productive activity on the part of the lady. This is obvious in the choices King and Nochlin list above. Giuliano included for this woman, however, even some qualities of the courtier that might not appear to be relevant in her "social encounters" with others, in order to make her truly virtuous "and these vertues to make her such a one, that she may deserve to bee esteemed, . . ." (Castiglione, [1528] 1928:195).

Lord Giuliano's reference to the lady's social encounters gives a clue to a major perspective on her place at court, the exposition of which comes earlier in Castiglione's work ([1528] 1928:190):

> Leaving . . . a part the vertues of the minde that ought to be common to her with the Courtier, . . . , and likewise the conditions that are meet for all women, as to be good and discreete, to have the understanding to order her husbands goodes and her house and children . . . : I say that <u>for her that liveth in Court, me thinke there belongeth unto her above all thinges a certaine sweeteness in language that may delite</u> [emphasis mine], wherby she may gently entertain all kinde of men with talke worthie the hearing and honest [in the later (1967) translation: "before all else, a certain pleasing affability whereby she will know how to entertain graciously every kind of man with charming and honest conversation" ([1528] 1981:212)], and applyed to the time and place, and to the degree of the person she comuneth withal.

This art of speech -- "discourse with every sort of people, . . . ; on every sort of subject, . . . ; on every sort of occasion" (Kelso, 1956:264), but talk intended to stimulate rather than inform -- was deemed essential to courtiership in the woman. Crane (1920:172)

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distinguishes her by "her charming manners and social tact." It was in the social life, and on the assumption that sociability was artful, therefore, that ladies needed education and that ladies became "equal" -- in their social and cultural role, that is -- to gentlemen. "Erudition was an erotic stimulant and made one a congenial partner," state Petersen and Wilson (1976:25). Learning and culture, therefore, were accomplishments these upper-class ladies needed in order to charm others as much as (or more than) to develop the self: ". . . the gentlewoman of the palace, beside her descretion [good sense] to understand the condition of him she talketh withall, to entertain him honestly, must needs have a sight in many things, and a judgement in her communication to picke out such as be to purpose for the condition of him she talketh withall, and be heedfull that she speake not otherwhile . . . words that may offend him" (Castiglione, [1528] 1928:192). This was true for the gentleman also but became primary for the lady. "Thus the aim which women had to set before themselves . . . was twofold: first, a personal, aesthetic aim, the reinvigoration and refreshment of their own souls; secondly, an aim relating to their apostolic mission, the art of understanding men's souls, then of charming and leading them by means of conversation" (de Maulde, 1900:264-5).

One consequence of her need to charm was her being called upon to give up unbecoming activities, e.g., riding, feats of arms and certain physical sports and also specific instruments and certain virtuosic musical skills (Cf. Castiglione, [1528] 1928:193-4; and see p.317). Another involved effacing her own personality:

> The woman of fashion, . . . , hovers over a conversation, mingling with it only to throw out a suggestion, a

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> criticism, a reflection, an argument, or to give a finishing touch . . .
>
> Women's sway only imposed itself by dint of patience, tact, and a nice regard for detail, and above all at the cost of genuine self-denial. . . . To make herself agreeable to the starched Spaniard and the boastful Neapolitan; [etc.]; and then with all gentleness, with a woman's instinctive subtlety, almost by stealth, to select among these men -- to hold by an unconstrained and loyal welcome those in whom she perceived some merit, and to bind them to her by speaking their own tongue -- wisdom to the wise, piety to the pious . . . -- and thus to set them all on the path towards the desired perfection . . . (de Maulde, 1900:298,301)

In summary, she should not compete with men for she was not their economic, political or professional equal, but she could grace her man as wife, mother or daughter. She could also provide inspiration to men and influence rather than directly affect serious affairs:

> A circle of men about a lady, and she talking or making them talk, -- this was the supreme and final formula of life.
>
> . . . To draw a man out and show him what he is capable of, . . .
>
> . . . Their mission was to cause this happiness [men's pleasure in letting their ideas "float off," their thoughts take flight, "like bubbles in the air"] to blossom, to tend it, nurture it, turn it to fitting use . . . (de Maulde, 1900:284,285,301)

"Salon culture," Weber ([1915] 1946:346) states, "rested upon the conviction that inter-sexual conversation [of the kind illustrated above was] valuable as a creative power":

> . . . [not] any Courtier can bee gracious, pleasant or hardie, nor at any time undertake any galant enterprise of Chivalrie, unless he be stirred with the conversation and with the love and contentatio [pleasure] of women, . . . The Courtiers talke is most imperfect evermore, if the intercourse of women give them not a part of the grace wherwithall they make perfect and decke out their playing the Courtier [a touch of that grace wherewith they perfect Courtiership and adorn it]. (Castiglione, [1528] 1928:188)

It was just such sufficiency of charm on her part that was needed, of course, also "to induce some man to assume the responsibility and expense of maintaining her for life," Putnam ([1910] 1970:70) writes.

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Perhaps this underlying assumption about her function is one reason for the amount of emphasis on two other of her features: her beauty and her loving. In Castiglione ([1528] 1928:190) we find: "Me thinke well beautie is more necessarie in her than in the Courtier, for (to say the truth) there is a great lacke in the woman that wanteth beautie." Along with Castiglione's discussants, Lucas-Dubreton (1961:224) mentions others who became "sort[s] of professional theorist[s] of beauty," from the fourteenth-century author Boccaccio to the early sixteenth-century poet Firenzuola. "The head . . . fairly large, the eyebrows . . . not form two curves but a single line; a slightly aquiline nose, a broad bosom, a white hand which looks well against a scarlet cloak, a smooth, straight forehead . . . , brown, almond-shaped eyes" were among what constituted a beautiful woman for Boccaccio (Lucas-Dubreton, 1961:224). The following are some of the characteristics of a beautiful countenance to Firenzuola:

> . . . the hair should be fair but gold-tinted and verging on brown . . . The skin should be bright, not dull; . . . the eyes large, slightly protuberant, the eyelids white and marked with scarcely perceptible red veins. The white of the eye should be slightly bluish, the eyelashes not too long or too thick or too dark. . . . The pink on the cheeks is more marked round the curves. The nose becomes more slender, but by insensible degrees, towards the top. The mouth should be rather small, and should not display more than six teeth when the lips (which should have a dimple and not be too thin) are half open. (Lucas-Dubreton, 1961:224-5)

Such narrowly-defined definitions of beauty were not likely to have been so prevalant during the interim. To the fifteenth-century eye, Putnam ([1910] 1970:164) points out, "there were nearly as many ways of being beautiful as there were ladies." Yet woman was indeed viewed similarly to an object (and not creator) of art: "Her raison d'etre was her character as a thing of beauty and object of love"

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(Putnam, [1910] 1970:182). Some means of remedying imperfections were offered in order to achieve these perfect states, but moderation was also advised in attempting to increase beauty artificially -- through the use of paints and other cosmetic ingredients.

What, though, was beauty (and all the courtly social functions) without love? Renaissance literature, Lucas-Dubreton (1961:227) shows, was full of hymns to love: "From love springs all good things, all virtues and all pleasant customs. . . . the sweetest condiment of existence and without it everything would be insipid." After medieval knightly romanticism, lords and ladies grew up on Petrarch, whose Laura was "a woman ripe and real, with a 'white bosom' and 'dainty feet'" (Boulting, 1910:21) compared to the earlier Dante's abstract and superior Beatrice.[10] Nevertheless, she was just as dead. Kelly-Gadol (1977:153,156) argues, in fact, that Renaissance beloveds "have no meaningful, objective 'existence'" compared to the "physically and socially 'real'" (though admittedly stereotypically blond and fair) ladies of the romances and troubadour poems, that woman had become asexual, not loved for herself but as a mediator for the male authors' and listeners' transcendent aims:

> The preferred kind of union, achieved by way of ascent, uses love of the lady as a step toward love of universal beauty. The lover here ascends from awareness of his own human spirit, which responds to beauty, to awareness of that universal intellect that comprehends universal beauty. Then, "transformed into an angel," his soul finds supreme happiness in divine love.

Whether the lady was "intelligent or stupid, sweet-tempered or irritable" was irrelevant to the "metaphysical theory of love," Briffault (1965:187) says. Popularized by Bembo in Gli Asolani (1505). men attempted to rise above sensuous love in favor of this spiritual

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and celestial version. The use of ladies as intermediaries, as means towards other ends, was not new, however, as we have seen for the medieval chatelaine (see p.157). The ends were perhaps the only difference.

Castiglione filled the end of his book with talk of love. Whereas formerly a young woman had been warned against the pitfalls of love and had been advised how to preserve her modesty, Renaissance instructions praised chastity (Cf. Kelso, 1956:24-5), but were also, at times, somewhat different. An experienced matron, advising a young girl, is quoted by Lucas-Dubreton (1961:228):

> One must not waste the years of one's youth . . . , if you do not yield a little to the attraction of pleasure, despair will deliver you bodily to the devil. Honour rests only on public esteem, and that is why a woman should use all her ability to prevent people from talking scandal of her. Honour, in fact, does not consist in what one does or does not do, but in the impression one gives of oneself, . . . Sin if you can't resist, but maintain your good reputation.

One can see how this court lady might degenerate into a cultivated courtesan, many of whom flourished, especially in Venice and Rome. Anthon (1943:67) goes so far as to say that it is not always easy to distinguish between a respectable lady and a courtesan, both having had "the same liberal education, the same social contacts, the same luxurious clothes and environment, and the same flexible conception of morals." Mee (1975:63-4) notes identical characteristics: ". . . known for their sumptuous houses; they [the courtesans] rode about in fine coaches, discoursed easily of Cicero and Ovid and Petrarch, sang, danced, played the lute, and behaved generally like well-born court ladies."

There were, at this time, different types of courtesans -- the

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low-class kind, the intermediate kind (the cortigiana di candela, because she was generally lodged in the house of a candlemaker) and the higher-class, "honest" courtesan, of whom we have been speaking and who played an important part in the artistic life of the Renaissance in Venice and Rome, in Naples and Florence. Several sources of the period number over 11,600 cortigiane in Venice, for instance, out of a total population of 300,000 (Anthon, 1943:68). One reason for the success of courtesans, offered by Lucas-Dubreton (1961:230-1), was the popularity of written attacks on and mocheries made of marriage, and even the fashionableness of celibacy. "When, . . . , marriage is regarded as little else than a necessary means for the creation of a family and the conserving of property," Henriques ([1963] 1965:74) writes, "the status of the prostitute is high." Also, Rome and Venice contained high proportions of bachelors.

The higher-class courtesans functioned similarly to those of the ancient world, some reaching heights comparable to the hetairae of Greece, except that they, unlike the former, were countered by a disapproving Church. They are described by Boulting (1910:296-8):

> . . . a special class of public women. . . . an aristocratic class of public women, . . . a whole galaxy of women of high education, polished manners and loose virtue, . . . witty, widely instructed, accomplished, elegant, . . . The vile word peccatrice could no longer be given to a creature so adorable [Georgina Masson (1975:5) says it would have been "awkward" to refer to these "beautiful, much courted, and often gifted women" as whores]; the euphemism cortigiana [companion and mistress of the cortigiano, first used in the late-fifteenth century] replaced it. . . . They could play musical instruments with taste; some of them sang sweetly; some loved art and were excellent critics . . . ; many wrote . . . All were excellent dancers.

by Lucas-Dubreton (1961:231,3):

> a well-bred and cultured woman, sometimes a poetess too and a musician; she was witty, knew how to receive in a

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> courteous manner, and was in short a woman of the world.
> . . .
> Nannina Zingera, for example, had a voice so sweet and gentle that it might, people thought, move mountains and calm the wind. Her manners were those of a great lady, and everything base and vile flees from her approach. . . .
> . . . the famous courtesan Tullia d'Aragon [nicknamed "courtesan of the academicians" and "the intellectual courtesan"] . . . had come [to Florence] from Rome where her culture and taste for poetry and music were so well known that her departure had been deplored.

by Burckhardt ([1878] 1954:295):

> . . . the intercourse with courtesans seems to have assumed a more elevated character, reminding us of the position of the Hetairae in classical Athens. The famous Roman courtesan Imperia was a woman of intelligence and culture, had learned from a certain Domenico Campana the art of making sonnets, and was not without musical accomplishments. . . . At Milan, Bandello knew the majestic Caterina di San Celso, who played and sang and recited superbly. It is clear from all we read on the subject that the distinguished people who visited these women, and from time to time lived with them, demanded from them a considerable degree of intelligence and instruction, . . .

and by Masson (1975:6):

> . . . many of the courtesans were highly accomplished, particularly in music, . . .

all of whom include musical abilities in their descriptions. Henriques ([1963] 1965:90) claims that they were able to marry without difficulty after having saved 700-800 ducats!

Repeatedly, they demonstrated musical accomplishments -- ". . . shee will endeavour to enchaunt thee partly with her melodious notes that she warbles out upon her lute, which she fingers with as laudable a stroake as many men that are excellent professionals in the noble science of Musicke; and partly with that heart-tempting of her voice" (Quoted in Henriques, [1963] 1965:80). These abilities would have been possible for such women, for lower-class males (possessors of knowledge and abilities in this sphere) were socially accessible to them. They

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took lessons from some of the best musicians available, good musical educations having been not uncommon among them. Imperia, for example, played the lute or the viola da braccio "because Niccola Campana, . . . , was adept at improvising songs, accompanying himself on the viola da braccio, and was in fact the most fashionable entertainer of the day" (Masson, 1975:39). And Einstein ([1949] 1971:I:271-2) includes the courtesan as one class of patron for whom Arcadelt (ca.1505-1557) composed madrigals: ". . . he writes a partenza for a departing Florentine . . . a festive madrigal for a Roman wedding . . . supplies the lovers of the Roman courtesan and the courtesans themselves with the madrigals they desire . . ."

Although physical beauty was paramount when it came to these women, there was also emphasis on ". . . those talents that exalt you and show you as supreme, and which fill with astonishment those who hear you sing so sweetly, and with that white and beautiful hand play so beautifully whatever you please" -- Carlo Saraceni's (1585-1625) description of his painting The Lute Player (Quoted in Masson, 1975:113). Other pictorial and also literary testimony to the activities of courtesans in the musical arts has been collected by Anthon (1943:68-70):

> Several pictures of the period show courtesans playing musical instruments. A very beautiful painting by Michele Parrasio represents a cortigiana playing the lute while Cupid is holding the music book. In another picture, a sixteenth century etching, the courtesan is shown playing a harpsichord.
>
> The literary evidence . . . is plentiful. Moralists like Garzoni condemn this music altogether with the whole tribe of courtesans. . . . "She caresses the ears of youths with music, softens their spirits with every lasciviousness, breaks down every decorum, inflames the soul with the fire of love, and inspires carnal lust; whilst she sings laments and despairs; . . . and the lyre or lute is played . . . unlucky lovers . . . are ravished by those angelic and high

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> voices, and attracted by those divine sounds issuing from harpsichords and lutes . . ."
>
> Pietro Aretino . . . , in his comedy, Talanta, one reads, "You know, . . . , how ribald wenches indulge in . . . , singing, . . . in order the better to destroy . . . whoever wishes to hear how well they can sing and converse."

Specific courtesans other than those mentioned so far, who were acclaimed for their musical talents in the sixteenth century, are named by Anthon (1943:70-3): Franceschina Bellamano, a Venetian courtesan and excellent singer and lute player "who moved in the highest social circles and was a welcome guest at artistic and musical gatherings;" Veronica Franco of Venice "who wrote poetry, sang well, played several instruments, and gave frequent musical parties" and who was painted by Tintoretto and courted by Henry III of France; Lucia Trevisan and Calandra "of sublime voice," also of Venice; in Verona, a celebrated Giulia; and the Venetian Gaspara Stampa (scholars disagree as to whether she was a courtesan or not), a well-educated and unmarried lady "with many admirers" who was an accomplished singer and musician as well as a poetess and to whom the composer Perissone Cambio dedicated his first book of madrigals à 4 (1547) writing: "no lady in the world loves music more than you do, and few others are as accomplished. . . . given . . . the name of 'divine siren'." Newcomb (1986:102,105) refers to them not as professional musicians but as "imitations of the ideal donna di palazzo," for whom music was "an accessory necessary for [their] trade."

To the courtesan's salon one gained admission by payment (as compared to those presided over by great court ladies and other patrician women, which were limited to courtiers and noble visitors). And even the houses which stood in distant quarters of the city -- supposed registries for servants, or mammazuole -- served as meeting

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places for men of letters and poorer officials and employees -- "an office, a rest and a sort of salon where one conversed in company with the 'servants'" (Lucas-Dubreton, 1961:235).

At the least, what a fine line there often was between this courtesan and the honest gentlewoman. Mee (1975:64) maintains that this was because, just "[a]s the Courtier was intended to serve his prince, so the Court Lady was intended to serve men." And so, Giuliano de' Medici's descriptions are filled with admonitions because of how this fine line left the gentlewoman so open to suspicion. From the 1967 Bull translation of Il Cortegiano ([1528] 1981:212):

> . . . her serene and modest behaviour, and the candour that ought to inform all her actions, should be accompanied by a quick and vivacious spirit by which she shows her freedom from boorishness; but with such a virtuous manner that she makes herself thought no less chaste, prudent and benign than she is pleasing, witty and discreet. Thus she must observe a certain difficult mean, composed as it were of contrasting qualities, and take care not to stray beyond fixed limits.

On the other hand,

> Not in her desire to be thought chaste and virtuous, should she appear withdrawn or run off if she dislikes the company she finds herself in or thinks the conversation improper. For it might easily be thought that she was pretending to be straight-laced simply to hide something she feared others could find out about her; . . . (Castiglione, [1528] 1981:212)

Nor again, "in order to prove herself free and easy, should she talk immodestly or practise a certain unrestrained and excessive familiarity or the kind of behaviour that leads people to suppose of her what is perhaps untrue" (Castiglione, [1528] 1981:212).

Her choices were not only complex but often contradictory, and it was frequently a matter of degree on which she was judged. (We see this on a small scale with the expectations of classical beauty being

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countered by attacks on women for their vanities and their time and expense on toiletries [Cf., e.g., Lucas-Dubreton, 1961:226].) Moreover, although a lady was condemned for committing adultery, she was also reproached for cruelty and heartlessness in repudiating suitors. In addition, the degree to which she was pleasing, vivacious and not boorish yet not unchaste or imprudent or discreet and virtuous yet not withdrawn or rude was defined by others and could be defined by them as they chose. Thus, the individual lady might be damned if she did or damned if she didn't, depending especially upon the motivation of others in viewing her behavior.

An early moral treatise (1393) recognized the difficulty of her position:

> . . . a woman need only be once suspected for all to be utterly lost, ruined, and effaced without hope of recovery . . . So you see in what peril a woman places her honor and that of her husband's lineage and of her children [emphasis mine] when she does not avoid the risk of such blame. (Quoted in O'Faolain and Martines, 1973:141-2)

Giuliano recognized it too: "She ought also to be more circumspect, and to take better heede that she give no occasion to bee ill reported of, and so behave her selfe, that she be not onely not spotted with any fault, but not so much as with suspition," adding that ". . . a woman hath not so manie waies to defend her selfe from slanderous reportes, as hath a man" (Castiglione, [1528] 1981:190). The 1517 Broch lament Se mia trista e dura sorte ("If my sad and bitter fate"), a girl's reply to a slanderer, is an example of the necessity of maintaining a reputation beyond repute. The Ferrarese singer Anna Guarini, hacked to death when her husband discovered one of her admirers plotting, apparently on his own, to steal her away, is an instance of the uncontrollable results of this double standard.

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For the lady, and likewise for the gentleman (who should be discrete, decorous, nonchalant, graceful) Castiglione's model, it is stated in the introduction to the Bull translation ([1528] 1981), in focusing on the effects on the reputations of his idealized men and women, leaned to a "the 'show' is all" mentality. Erasmus's courtesy book, having concentrated on bodily carriage, gestures, dress, facial expressions, etc., also viewed outward behavior as critical to the image of the inner man. It was not, then, the actual unchastity that was admonished (Boulting [1910:307-8] explains that beginning in the Middle Ages, unchastity was regarded as almost a venial sin, with Dante placing such guilty lovers in the circle of the Inferno farthest from Satan and in the circle of the Purgatorio nearest to the earthly Paradise) as the public awareness of it. Honor, again, rested on public esteem, freedom from scandal, and the impression one managed through caution and ingenuity in maintaining one's dignity. It is this concern with the "looks" of things that explains also the contradictory advice given women when it came to love (see p.302).

Even the perfect woman of Castiglione's work had not been declared free and equal without complaint -- as exemplified in the dialogue that continued throughout the third book between Giuliano and Gaspare Pallavicino. The latter attacked women:

> . . . since the blame for the defects of women must be attributed to Nature, . . . , we ought not to despise them or to fail to give them the respect which is their due. But to esteem them to be more than they are seems to me to be manifestly wrong. (Castiglione, [1528] 1981:217-18)

Giuliano defended them: "The poor creatures do not wish to become men in order to make themselves more perfect but to gain their freedom and shake off the tyranny that men have imposed on them by their one-sided

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authority" (Castiglione, [1528] 1981:221). Another sixteenth-century writer, novelist Matteo Bandello, agreed:

> It is very cruel of you to wish to do everything that comes into your head and not recognize that women have the same right. If they venture to do something that displeases us we very quickly have recourse to rope, dagger or poison. (Quoted in Lucas-Dubreton, 1961:223)

Comparing the gentleman with "his lady" we find various other distinctions, including the notion of a different moral ideal, a difference in motivation:

> For him the ideal is self-expansion and realization. . . . to develop to the utmost every power . . . , and direct every action with the proud consciousness of his elevation above the crowd not only in position but in worth. All his virtues are turned to insure his pre-eminence, enhance his authority, . . . For the lady, the direct opposite is prescribed. The eminently Christian virtues of chastity, humility, piety, and patience under suffering and wrong, . . . the suppression and negation of self is urged . . . (Kelso, 1956:36)

"She would [still] not be a prince, she would marry one," Kelly-Gadol (1977:150) concludes. In more general terms, sharply distinguished also then is an inferior domestic realm of irrational woman from the superior public realm of rational man. This perspective achieved, according to Kelly-Gadol (1977:141), "a veritable 'renaissance' of the outlook and practices of classical Athens, with its domestic imprisonment of citizen wives."

Mee (1975:64) points out that not only was the Renaissance woman not truly free and equal, but that the men who were defining her were not so free either. All were bound by the lingering hierarchical social structure of feudalism but also by the resconstruction of social relations that entailed for the nobility even greater dependency upon the prince of the state.

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> The men and women of the Renaissance broke many of their old bonds, but not all, and not all at once. As new Renaissance ideals of freedom were laid over old feudal usages, tensions and self-contradictions were inevitable. And, if men were able to seize upon liberating Renaissance ideas, they often kept women bound by older conventions -- and could do so as long as they remained the definers. (Mee, 1975:64)

Renaissance ideas on life, love and manners were almost exclusively produced by men. On a broader basis, Lerner (1979:152) maintains that the decisive historical fact about women is that the areas of their functioning, not only their status within those areas, have been determined by men. In addition to being restricted to being cultural consumers and to sociable roles, Kelly-Gadol (1977:151-2) points out that the lady lost some of her former dominance in these spheres, as secular education and nonmilitary training came to require special, professional skills that were claimed as the prerogative of a class of professional teachers:

> In a sense, humanism represented an advance for women as well as for the culture at large. It brought Latin literacy and classical learning to daughters as well as sons of the nobility. But this very development, usually taken as an index of the equality of Renaissance (noble) women with men, spelled a further decline in the lady's influence over courtly society. It placed her as well as her brothers under male cultural authority. The girl of the medieval aristocracy, although unschooled, was brought up at the court of some great lady. Now her brothers' tutors shaped her outlook, . . . [as well as theirs]

Men were also the definers in most cultural treatises (Cf. Kelso, 1956). Along with the approximate 29 male characters at the Urbino conversations, Castiglione admitted only four women. Only the Duchess and her companion Emilia Pia spoke and, at that, their talk consisted of moderating and directing the discussions of the male participants.

Kelly-Gadol (1977:159) and Petersen and Wilson (1976:21-2) summarize their views of women's losses and powerlessness:

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> Deprived of the possibility of independent power that the combined interests of kinship and feudalism guaranteed some women in the Middle Ages, and that the states of early modern Europe would preserve in part, the Italian noblewoman in particular entered a relationship of almost universal dependence upon her family and her husband. And she experienced this dependency at the same time as she lost her commanding position with respect to the secular culture of her society.
>
> In the convents, at the courts, and on estates when the men were off at war, women developed the arts of administration, education, philosophy, as well as . . . brush and needle and chisel [and song]. The Middle Ages would appear to have been one of the best times for women's culture since those fabled matriarchies, while, ironically, the Renaissance and Reformation, always touted as the beginning of the modern humanist spirit, mark in many of these areas a setback for the status of women. . . . it is Renaissance man who remains the primary beneficiary of all the rebirths and reforms.

To this Petersen and Wilson (1976:22,24,25) add the continued existence of women slaves, countless numbers of witchburnings, the dramatic increase in prostitution and the fact that even upper-class women generally did not receive systematic educations -- "Unless you were exceptionally brilliant and fortunate in your father, you really did not get enough education to do you any good or harm."[11] Finally, the future of the convents had become uncertain as refuges for and nurturers of women, except in strongly-Catholic Italy, because of Reformation attacks against the Church, its convents and the power of abbesses.

In Italy, however, it is likely that there were at least larger numbers of educated women than anywhere else in Europe, considering the region's propitious position during the Renaissance years. Literary works in their honor -- Lodovico Domenichi's Nobilità delle donne (1552), Federico Luigini da Udine's Il libro della bella donna (1554) and Gaspare Fiorino's La nobilità di Roma, versi in lode di cente gentildonne romane (1571) offer evidence. Castiglione's work ([1528]

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1981:192) concludes about the Italian gentlewoman that, having been adorned with good manners, with supreme grace, ". . . so shall she be not onely beloved but reverenced of all men, and perhaps worthy to be compared to this great Courtier, . . ." This definition of woman by the gentlemen of Urbino was, therefore, fairly extraordinary -- a woman "far more independent and far more able to shape her own fate than the female chattels of the Middle Ages" (Mee, 1975:64) and far more than the ordinary woman of Renaissance Italy's cities and towns. They did not, of course, represent all of Italian womankind, but rather a certain class of women -- women of the privileged classes, women at court as courtiers or as sort of princesses, women of the urban upper classes -- an assortment of Renaissance "ladies:"

> . . . an embodiment of human perfection from the same point of view and in the same terms that the man of the privileged classes, the gentleman, was considered: that is, as an individual set off from others less fortunate by birth, training, wealth, position, enabled therefore to develop all his powers to their height, and given authority and responsibility for the welfare of the state. The fundamental pattern for women is kept here, modesty, chastity, sweetness, gentleness, piety, unselfishness, devotion to husband and children, and the capacity to run a household well. But this is not the whole woman as it is in other views, and these virtues are modified and enlarged to fit the loftier role of the lady. (Kelso, 1956:264)

These class and status distinctions are evidenced in a letter of writer Agrippa d'Aubigne (1552-1630) to his daughter: "I would be most reluctant to encourage girls to pursue book learning unless they were princesses, obliged by their rank to assume the responsibilities, knowledge, competence, administration, and authority of men" (Quoted in O'Faolain and Martines, 1973:186).

Moreover, examples of Castiglione's ideal were unrepresentative, in general, even of ladies. Most books concerning

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this female portrayed her as a woman, more specifically "a woman who is a wife," "the most humble housewife" (Kelso, 1956:265). The primary role of wife and mother rigidly circumscribed all other pursuits, except for girls bound for the cloister. Hundreds of such "reductions to mediocrity and nonentity [inabilities to view the female of the Renaissance as other than a woman and a wife, difficulties in seeing her in other roles without reference to her domestic one] usurp the scene," Kelso (1956:265) complains. This was opposed to only a handful of books on the lady of the palace, castle and manor -- those who happened, "through exceptional circumstances," O'Faolain and Martines (1973:xiv) admit, "to emerge into the foreground of history." Gundersheimer (1980:56-7), therefore, decides on exceptional social rank as the best single factor to explain the worldly attainments of a handful of extraordinary women:

> It was life at the very pinnacle [emphasis mine] of a given society that might enable a woman to cultivate interests that lay beyond the narrow world of Kinder, Kuche, Kirche. The women surrounding Eleanora [Leonora of Aragon] and [her daughter] Isabella [d'Este, Gonzaga], almost all of them noble but still subordinate, amply demonstrate that mere wealth and high social status were not enough. They are literally ladies in waiting; . . . These women stood below the summit, and this affected their horizons.
> . . . Eleanor and her counterparts in other Italian cities did not produce a mass movement . . . conditions . . . enabled them -- and only them -- to transcend normal restrictions . . .

Kelso (1956:2), having considered the many theoretical treatises on gentility, feels, somewhat at odds with Gundersheimer, that such individual ladies existed moreso in actuality than in theory, for

> . . . so far as the highborn woman shared the work of men, as administrators of estates or kingdoms, leader in war, and so forth, she was ruled by the same standards as men. What was not granted to her was the common right to share.

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> Circumstances alone gave her that power -- the death or absence of her husband, the inheritance of a title through lack of a male heir, or, as in the nunneries, the lack of competition from men.

Both Leonora and Isabella are obvious examples. Their successes were due partly to personal and partly to structural factors. Both married "down," thus coming to their new families and residences in strong positions. Both had husbands who were frequently absent and who, in addition, lacked self-discipline and dedication to work, thus allowing the wives scope for their administrative desires.

Kelly-Gadol (1977:148), in contrast, maintains that the exercise of political power by Italian Renaissance women was far more rare than under feudalism or under the traditional kind of monarchical state that developed out of feudalism. Louise of Savoy is described by de Maulde (1900:311) as "almost the only woman who so far cherished the old ideas as to regret that she was a woman." She loved to play a part in politics. The Milanese Caterina Sforza, Kelly-Gadol (1977:149) cites, "ruled because she mustered superior force and exercised it personally, and to the end she had to exert repeatedly the skill, forcefulness and ruthless ambition that brought her to power." These compare with the Este, Gonzaga and Montefeltro daughters, whose access to power was indirect and provisional, and who were more representative: ". . . the few who were noticed at all were members of families or relatives of important men and, very occasionally and exceptionally, women who performed roles generally reserved for men" (Lerner, 1979:168). Their effect was more through moral and social influence than direct political participation.

Finally, de Maulde (1900:311) points to the probability that it was chance, in the working of the old laws of monarchical succession,

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that led to any women being called to fill the places of men in the sphere of statecraft. Because of all such contradictions in and exceptions to theories of women during this time period, Putnam ([1910] 1970:191) concludes that the only generalizations that can safely be made about women during these centuries are those that explain that generalization is impossible.

The Donna Universale's Part in the Musical Life of the Renaissance Court

Music having been called forth as a requisite for both male and female courtiership, one obstacle women had overcome was Christian doctrine's injunctions against their musicality. Pietro Bembo's Gli Asolani (1505) espoused "how sweetly does a beautiful song from our ladies soothe the soul, especially when it is accompanied by the strains of a harmonious instrument" (Quoted in Anthon, 1943:62). Federico Luigini da Udine, in his 1554 dialogue on the perfect lady, praised music "at every place, in every season of the year, and I might almost say, by every person of any rank or station in life"(Quoted in Anthon, 1943:24-5). In 1586, Annibal Guasco advised his daughter Lavinia, who was about to leave home for the court of Savoy, about manners befitting a court lady: "Her eyes should be held on linen and needle, on clavichord, or songbook, . . ." (Quoted in Kelso, 1956:223). A lady could now improve herself with skill in music, though, more correctly, with a little skill in music. It served to emphasize her high birth and membership in a cultural élite. Renaissance women artists, for instance, portrayed themselves playing musical instruments (Parker and Pollick, 1981:84). Abilities in music had become a means towards the ends of social elegance, social acceptance and even social

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mobility through marriage.

Although such abilities were included by Giuliano for the Renaissance lady, Castiglione's passages often continue to exhibit a negative tone. Women were to approach musical performance "with a certain bashfulnesse, that may declare the noble shamefastnesse that is contrarie to headiness" and be coaxed, "brought to it with suffring her selfe somewhat to be prayed," into demonstrations (Castiglione, [1528] 1928:194). Thus she would avoid professionalism even more than men. Certain instruments, as we have mentioned, were to be shunned as unsightly for graceful feminine execution. And in singing or playing, she was warned against "those hard and often divisions that declare more cunning than sweetnes" (Castiglione, [1528] 1928:194) -- ingenious ornaments and fast-repeated notes that would draw attention to her skills.[12]

Castiglione advocated woman's amateur status as a singer and seems to have been implying, Haar (1983:177) surmises, that things that he advised against in the musical performance of the courtier were "really forbidden in that of the lady of the court." In addition, we might apply the following nineteenth-century advice for women to those of this period also:

> To be able to do a great many things tolerably well, is of infinitely more value to a women, than to be able to excel in any one. By the former, she may render herself generally useful; by the latter, she may dazzle for an hour. By being apt, and tolerably well skilled in every thing, she may fall into any situation in life with dignity and ease -- by devoting her time to excellence in one, she may remain incapable of every other. (Mrs. Ellis, 1844, as quoted in Nochlin, 1971:498)

Finally, we must recognize a set of demands and expectations put upon women's time similar to those Nochlin (1971:492-3) describes for the

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aristocracy in general and deems to be restrictive to their potential for creative production (see p.160).

The less than positive attitude that was held toward young ladies taking up music as an "accomplishment"[13] is illustrated in a letter from Bembo to his daughter, who had written her father from her convent school in Padua to ask his permission to learn an early type of clavichord instrument.

> . . . Bembo's reply was scarcely encouraging. He warned his daughter that in order to play really well, she would have to devote herself for ten or twelve years exclusively to the manicordio; he bade her consider that if she did not succeed in mastering the instrument, she would reap little pleasure and much humiliation from her performance; and he ended by advising her to keep to "literature and needlework." (O'Brien, 1950:84)

Others, according to Kelso (1956:53), would not allow girls to be trained to play or sing at all, regardless of the fact that both arts were generally considered "an ornament and grace to a girl of gentle birth." Still others would have her taught,

> but only for private use as recreation and consolation in times of sorrow, trouble, and anxiety, or as a pastime in vacant hours if she has nothing better to do. Then she will play or sing at the proper time and place, and always modestly and <u>not to be heard</u> [emphasis mine]. Or rarely, admitting the pressure of custom, one may be found to advise that when this girl of gentle birth must sing in public she will sing chaste songs in a low voice and without oblique looks, but with reverence and shame in her face. (Kelso, 1956:53)

Finally, we must keep in mind that musical practice was perhaps at a disadvantage (over young women's participation in literature or art, for example) because it was not quiet. The fact that it was being accomplished could not be ignored.

Nevertheless, some female rulers and courtiers were accomplished musicians themselves. Lang (1941:301) claims that "there

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was scarcely a single woman of name and standing whose accomplishments in the field of music were not worth praising." A modern comparison is David Riesman's (1964:xx) description of contemporary academic women: "It seems possible that upper-class position -- and I mean her aristocratic values and not simply more money -- may give a few . . . women a relative freedom from middle-class and lower middle-class conventionalities concerning sex roles." Tuchman (1975:177) calls this "freedom to be somewhat eccentric."

We can conclude that the quandry resulting from the contradictory expectations for women as provided in Castiglione's and others' works became even more exaggerated when it came to performing, an activity which had all the older taboos already attached to it. Yet, many of the above were willing to display their musical talents in "public" -- at least to an aristocratic public that gathered in the salons of the courts or, as Lang (1941:302) puts it, "restricted to their own circle." For example, a biography of Isabella d'Este, Marchioness of Mantua, proclaims: ". . . she had a beautiful voice, and accompanied herself on the lute with exquisite skill; and the favoured guests who were privileged to hear her sing and play all went away charmed" (Cartwright, [1903] 1932:10). Her contemporary, Giangiorgo Trissino, upon having witnessed her singing solo, observed: ". . . when [this lady] sings something, and especially with the lute, I well believe that Orfeo and Anfione, who knew how to draw lifeless things from their singing, would upon hearing her be stupefied by its marvelousness" (Quoted in Stark, 1979:289). "Not the priestess, as in former times, not the nun, not the mother in her peasant home setting, but the queens of small courts in small states," Drinker (1948:215)

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explains, "established new ideals and new customs involving a new relation of women to music." But none of these involved the professional practice of music.

The lives of the two Este sisters are notable examples of the donna universale:

> The first years of the Este sisters' married lives saw a perpetual intercourse between the Courts of Ferrara, Mantua, and Milan. Poets and musicians were handed on from one to the other; life was often troubled, and yet how gay, how interesting and, above all, how full they made it! Isabella and Beatrice were talked of by all the fashionable society of Europe, their entertainments and clothes were eagerly discussed, they were the cynosure of all eyes. The greatest artists painted them, . . . and many a lesser poet sang their praises, and they lived in an atmosphere of perpetual adulation. True daughters of the Renaissance, they had its beauty and graces without its cruelty, its refinement without its vices, and they lived for this world, in the best spirit of their age. (de Robeck, 1928:80-1)

Yet Mee (1975:74) offers Isabella as an illustration of the contradictions under which even the most noble and powerful women lived:

> Her life -- like the lives, no doubt, of many women of her time -- was spent somewhere between the ideal of Castiglione and the harsh lot of the ordinary woman, a life often marked by conflict, by the clash of her desires and of the expectations imposed upon her by her male-dominated world.

Italian Convents: Loci of Female Musicianship

The Italian convents were the only other alternative setting in which females could devote themselves intensively to music. One finds abundant indications of convents where nuns sang, played, performed concerts and composed. "[The nuns] sang and played various instruments so well that the Venetian, Bolognese, Neapolitan, and Milanese public flocked to the evening services to hear their magnificent choral singing," declares Lang (1941:302). At the Church of the Spirito Sancto in Rome, according to Drinker (1948:223), they sang vespers on Easter

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Monday with such perfection that the critic Pietro della Valle said he had never in his life heard such beautiful music.

Susan Cook and Thomasin LaMay (1984:18) sense that Renaissance convents are often portrayed as "little better than dumping grounds" for the abandoned, widowed or daughters from large families unable to afford dowries. Though such an appraisal has some basis in fact (the dowry payable to a convent being far less than that paid to a husband, for instance), and though choosing religious lives for some daughters enabled wealthy families to "protect the familiar patrimony and to safeguard their positions of economic and political preeminence" (Bowers, 1986:152), convents continued to offer also an alternative to the traditional role of wife and mother to women desirous of the opportunity to pursue scholarly activities associated with the monastic life. Since they operated as separate communities, members generally supplied all the music that was part of their religious activities.

Even while the Church was condemning music as detrimental to the modesty befitting the female sex, it had, for some time at least, condoned the teaching and practice of music in convents. These institutions continued, since the Middle Ages (see pp.124-7), to exhibit an atmosphere conducive to religious women's musical abilities and creativity that existed in few other place and for few other groups of women. There, religious females could perform, conduct, compose and teach. "It is very likely," state Cook and LaMay (1984:19), "that a woman with musical talent could have found within the convent the opportunity to develop her art and the chance to pass on her knowledge to others."

Neules-Bates (1982:43) finds the large influx of young women

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from wealthy families into these orders (some of whom had already been trained in music and carried with them into the convents their aptitude, training and taste for it) to be, in turn, partially responsible for a growth in the performance of polyphonic music in the cloisters, the appearance of the work of certain women composers and the reputations as "fine musical establishments" that some of these institutions developed by the sixteenth century.

In his 1594 treatise on instrumental practice (Il Desiderio) Hercole Bottrigari provided a record of the musical expertise of the nuns' concerto grande ensemble at the Ferrarese convent of San Vito -- an instrumental and vocal group of twenty-three nuns who performed for special church and city occasions. He ([1594] 1962:58) demonstrated great respect for the professional quality of the concerto and its maestra, the composer Vittoria Aleotti [ca.1570-1646], daughter of Alfonso d'Este's architect and called Raffaella in the convent: ". . . the most sweet harmony which resounds in those angelic voices, and those instruments played with such judgment and discretion." The nuns were referred to ([1594] 1962:57,59,58) as "truly angelic spirits;" their performances were compared to "Helonica together with all the chorus of the Muses singing and playing" and were deemed capable of causing one to "melt away when you see them convene and play together with so much beauty and grace, . . ." Anthon (1943:75-6) has discovered the names of some of the participants -- Claudria Manfredi and Bartolomea Sorianati, sopranos; Olimpia Leoni, a contralto; and Catabene de' Catabeni, Cassandra Pigna and Alfonsa Trotti, who, interestingly enough, possessed low voices.

Aleotti is an example of a woman who probably took the veil at a particular convent -- San Vito -- because of its musical reputation.

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Cook and LaMay (1984:21-2) guess that she most likely received some of her earlier training there (in addition to being taught by Ferrarese court-employed composers and players) and that she was sent to the famous convent to continue her musical career, as the dedication to her first entire book of madrigals, in 1593, implies. Her leadership talents were lauded by Bottrigari ([1594] 1962:60): "It must be necessary if one wishes to maintain, if not to increase the bright splendor of musical concerts, that there be someone who looks after it, and is intelligent and expert enough to instruct." Even so, the concerto grande was "not at all new," having existed for "tens and twenties of years" without any "living man, [having] had any part either in their work or in advising them" (Bottrigari, [1954] 1962:59). The nunnery had had a musical life all along, under which, it seems, such a professional ensemble could have developed.

Similar groups existed elsewhere. In Milan, music was supposedly cultivated in almost all convents, the most outstanding having been Santa Maria Maddalena and the Assunta detto del Muro.

> . . . in some convents there are voices so fine they seem angelic, and like sirens they allure the nobility of Milan to come to hear them. . . . these venerable religious, besides their holy observance of the apostolic life, are also exceedingly skilled and experienced in music, both in playing and in singing, and one hears select voices that are concordant in harmony, and minglings of divine voices with instruments, so that they seem to be angelic choirs that please the ears of the listeners and are praised by connoisseurs. (Paolo Morigia, 1595, as quoted in Bowers, 1986:125)

In Modena, Sisters Faustina Borghi and Sulpizia Cesis were well-known performers of the convent of S. Gemimiano (Anthon, 1943:77). Cook and LaMay (1984:23-4) offer still further examples to demonstrate that "virtuoso performers and convent life often thrived together." Nuns of

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the Neapolitan San Martino were described as singing like "angels of paradise and Sister Giovanna Sancia, a Spaniard, as "a Neapolitan Siren" in a 1599 anthology dedication by the Counter-Reformation composer Giovenale Ancina (Cook and LaMay, 1984:23). Their connection to the leading Roman composers in the anthology may, therefore, mean that such men might also have known the nuns, if not having written specifically for them.

A certain Bolognese Bovia, from the noble family of the Mezzovillani, is mentioned by Anthon (1943:77), Fenlon (1980:134) and Newcomb (1980:98-9) as having been sought after to leave her convent and become a singer at the court of Mantua during the year 1581. The girl was in the convent of San Lorenzo, where, during the Holy Week services, she attracted great crowds who came to hear her both sing and play. She was described in a catalogue of the library of the music school of Bologna as follows:

> It is no wonder that you are vastly admired and coveted by many important Princesses both near and far, who offer to maintain you with such prizes and honors as are usually offered to the most tenderly loved leading ladies of the court. How many people, for this reason, have sent to Bologna both gentlemen and virtuosi to listen to you and to obtain this superhuman joy? How many musicians, lured by the widespread reputation of your great quality, have come from various places to hear you . . . ? (Gaspari, as quoted in Newcomb, 1980:99)

Cook and LaMay (1984:24-5) claim that, in the early seventeenth century, even greater numbers of virtuosic nuns began to emerge, many of them attaining "a secular status and popularity on an equal with their non-cloistered peers," such as that exhibited by Bovia. At Maria Annunciata in Milan, for example, Claudia Sessa "drew such crowds on feast days that many people were compelled to remain outside" (Bowers, 1986:126). Bowers (1986:118) discusses, also, the compositional

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successes of numerous religious women during this period, when over half the women whose musical works were published in Italy were nuns. Virtuosic nuns appear, therefore, to have existed in sufficient numbers until restrictions on convents (even ultimately in Italy), and sometimes their dissolution, occurred in the wake of the Counter Reformation.

Again we find this specific group of isolated, religious women to have been somewhat exempt from the normal expectations and restrictions for their sex, perhaps because, due to their religious status, nuns were assumed virtuous and therefore not subject to (or were simply protected from) the typical screeds against other women; perhaps because, restricted from the public eye as cloistered women usually were, such issues did not come up; or perhaps because sisters were, by definition, not in competition with men.

Conclusions Concerning the Musical Activities of Renaissance Women

Although in performing women appear generally to have been restricted to various degrees, important court women served more typically as avid patrons of the arts.

> While women took an active part in musical life, their chief merit and contribution to Renaissance art was their interest in the furthering of music. In their brilliant "salons," which antedated the famous literary drawing rooms of the French women of letters and royal mistresses [and which postdated those of some ancient courtesans], they were the centers of attention; poets, artists, and musicians owed them inspiration and encouragement. (Lang, 1941:302)

Lang (1941:301,2) concludes that "[t]he female influence . . . contributed markedly to the aesthetic enjoyment of arts and letters," but Drinker's (1948:227) more negative view of their inspirational role holds that this function was fulfilled when an ample amount of wealth

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and power was represented in a lady trained in music for "her high position as fosterer of the genius of men."

Renaissance women functioned as patronesses and as audiences. Some were even able to take on the role of amateur singers and players. If they could perform well and they were of the right social standing (or the extreme opposite), they could be musically active within limited circles. Most could not achieve professional training, and there was not opportunity for professional performance. Only in the convents, where women did not compete in the wider public and male world, could they, in any number, become expert.

With increased freedom to make secular music and with increased attention paid to the Italian style in song during the sixteenth century would come limited opportunities for professional female singers and even composer-conductors. Society, however, was not organized to either support them or promote their creativity. Certain courts, as we shall see, would come to provide the former with new roles in which their talents could be furthered. Before investigating this, though, we need look at the musical and social attributes of secular song in Italy in order to determine the effects of its technical, stylistic and extra-musical elements on the number, nature and quality of performers and their performances.

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CHAPTER VII

MUSICAL AND SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF SECULAR SONG IN RENAISSANCE ITALY

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the creation of a large body of secular vocal ensemble music "rivaled the sacred forms in vitality, expressive power, and artistic worth" (Ulrich and Pisk, 1963:87). These offered to a specific social circle compositions suitable for every occasion and situation of Renaissance courtly life. In Italy the new songs were frottole and later madrigale, in France the chanson and in Germany the lied. They demonstrated "the perfection of polyphonic music in its secular aspect" (Nef, [1935] 1964:113-14) -- chamber compositions for several voices, but with one voice (usually the highest) leading, that displayed a relationship to the music of the troubadours[14] and a broadly popular foundation.

A description of the stylistic developments of first the frottola and then the emergent madrigal form and an analysis their effects on the ultimate role of the female singer will be presented in the pages that follow and in the next chapter. This discussion will attempt to point out certain elements in these vocal styles -- e.g., polyphony versus homophony (a single accompanied melodic line) or part songs versus solos with instrumental accompaniments, and the effects of such stylistic shifts on performers and performances. A voice would come to stand out versus equality of the parts. High vocal range would predominate over the lower. High-cultured music would supercede lower-class secular music, i.e., the aristocratic forms would triumph

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over the popular. Melody would be emphasized over intricacies of notes. In line with the latter, dominance of the poem would be underlined, or music would be viewed as expression as opposed to purely autonomous music. Simplicity would do battle with floridity.

All of these new fashions in vocal music had consequences for performers and their performances, i.e., soloists or group members, upper-estate singers or lower, private chamber singers or public songsters, music for singers or for an audience, artistic or entertainment music, professionals or amateurs, virtuosos or dilletantes, freedom of vocal expression or restrictions, high-voiced singers or low, natural voices or artificial, and finally, men or women singers. In turn, changes in the number, nature and quality of singers, and thus their vocal executions, would be reflected in the music then to come. A shift in taste and style was under way. The preference for new voices and voice balance would upset, as we shall see, the positions of both male and female singers. But such changes in tastes may well have been the results of changes in class and status group dominance, sponsorship, secularization and other social factors as well.

The Italian Song Style: Homophony Disguised

In Italy, ". . . even while the people . . . were singing part songs, the charm of a predominant melody, to which other parts were subject, made itself felt," Henderson (1921:77) reminds us, as does Claude Palisca (1960:359), who speaks of Italian musicians' "devotion to the homophonic idiom." In this sense, the Italian works (dating from about 1480) represented both a new emphasis on the secular and a "national" reaction against the artificial sentiments and the

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contrapuntal style of northern music (so alien to Italy's "songful nature" [Palisca, 1960:359]) --

> . . . it was the task of the composer to draw, spin, and weave together at his will a number of melodic lines, each of which could be plausible in itself but usually lacked an aria, that is, a sense of self-possessed determination. In the process, whatever melodic character the individual lines might have had initially . . . soon faded away in the less distinctive function of providing a background or even a contrast to the emergence of other parts. (Pirrotta, 1968:58)

-- and began a reversal of the musical influence in Italy from those regions.

The frottola style, which, strictly speaking, refers to only one class of composition, is used by many authorities as a generic term to cover all the various musical subtypes which arose from a widespread practice in the courts and in the homes of the Italian nobility. It was based on reciting poetry to an improvised accompaniment (Cf. Grout, [1963] 1970:211; Harman, 1958:209; Reese, [1954] 1959:156; Rubsamen, 1943:4). Probably derived from the Latin frocta, Rubsamen (1943:4) defines it as "an assortment or bouquet of enjoyable things (in this case, verses)." Cultivated in the north of Italy and prevalent around the turn of the sixteenth century, this song style is identified especially with the court of Mantua, partly because "the enlightened patronage of Isabella d'Este . . . , greatly stimulated the development of the genre" (Brown, 1976:99), and also because the two most famous composers of frottole -- the Italians Bartolomeo Tromboncino (d. ca.1535) and Marco Cara (d. ca.1530) -- both established their reputations in Mantua, remaining there for good parts of their respective lives. Einstein ([1949] 1971:I:34) says that at the smaller courts, there was one; "relative political tranquility"; and

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two, an inability to pay the high salaries demanded by the best international musical talents. both of these factors furthered the growth of a new, national music.

Lyrical verses were thoroughly enjoyable to Isabella and her court circle only when they were sung to the lute or clavichord, Rubsamen (1943:10) claims. "What the lover and the courtier of the time had to express a hundred times in prose," Einstein explains in his seminal work The Italian Madrigal ([1949] 1971:I:74), "he wishes expressed in th[is] livelier and more effective form of . . . living art, . . ." A circle of upper-class poets provided Isabella and her lower-status musicians with verse made to order -- written expressly to be set to music. Such authors are generally not known, for their poetry served "exclusively as a vehicle for music" and "filled its purpose only after being set to music" (Einstein, [1949] 1971:I:108). Helm ([1960] 1964:382) concurs: "There were, . . . , vast quantities of popular poems and rhymes produced . . . , nearly all of them designed as lyrics for musical performance." Mantua's influence on this musical style extended

> east as far as Venice and west as far as Milan; it takes root in Florence, Pisa, and Siena, and reaches even Rome and Naples. We are evidently dealing with a single generation of musicians, virtually all of them born in the 'seventies or 'eighties of the Quattrocento, and virtually all of them disappearing after 1530. For the first time they are prominently Italians, . . . (Einstein, [1949] 1971:I:39-40)[15]

This new kind of vocal setting developed quickly into a standardized style in which Flemish counterpoint played no part and in which a "lighthearted mode of expression" was "warm and human rather than profound" (Ulrich and Pisk, 1963:174-5). Helm ([1960] 1964:391) maintains that the Italian lack of the technique necessary for creating

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lomplicated music acted as a safeguard against the temptation for the new art to become "obscure, over-learned, and turgid." Through the frottola, Italy influenced the art of the northerners. These songs transmitted to the rest of Europe "the essentially Italian love for melody, feeling for chordal structure, and taste for clear, vigorous, but simple expression" (Ulrich and Pisk, 1963:174).

The frottola was generally of amorous intent[16], but it could also be humorous and satirical in content, the tone being fashionable and frivolous. Its related forms, the strambotto, was more serious in nature and sentimental. The canzone was freer in form and with text often of a higher literary quality. The sonetto, was based on the sonnets. The oda was short, with moralistic and edifying content. The Neapolitan villanella was initially lighter and more folklike. The Florentine canto carnascialesco was designed to be sung above crowd noises. All were normally simple, chordal pieces of variously arranged patterns of contrasting musical ideas set for four parts but having a definitely homophonic style with the melody in the upper voice. The structure of frottole, Helm ([1960] 1964:400) explains, was "essentially homophonic, even when their homophony [was] disguised by superimposed movement." He ([1960] 1964:404) calls it "decorated" homophony.

The Upper Voice Takes the Lead

"What strikes us at once," writes Einstein ([1949] 1971:I:76,77), "is the unequal importance of the voices, . . . ;" specifically, the upper voice is the leading one. As in all homophony, the sense and expression of the composition was concentrated in the melody. Composers allotted to the soprano this sustained melody. It

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was written in a "simple fluent cantilena" (Quoted in Henderson, 1921:79) as compared to the more florid parts that were given to other voices. The soprano voice ascended or descended "without hazardous leaps or perilous roulades" (Quoted in Henderson, 1921:79). Such melodic high parts were most likely composed for dilletante singers who did not possess the brilliant qualities of professionally trained artists, for, in addition to Henderson's observations, one can find that the upper melodic line was of small range and typically moved stepwise and contained many repeated notes.

Both the male and female could have sung such parts, the latter because of the height of this voice and the paucity of demands of the music on professional training and musicality on the part of the performer. The former could have sung the high part because of the many tenors, countertenors and even falsettists in the ranks of male musicians. The possibility that the higher cantilene might have strained the male voice and its abilities in that range falls in line with the above description and later warnings to singers. By 1592, Zacconi was advising them not to force the voice to sing at too high pitches. Praetorius, in his Syntagma Musicum of 1619, noted that if a tenor, alto, castrato or soprano could go higher it was "all the better, and all the more to his credit" (Quoted in Mendel, 1948:200). It was his opinion, however, that high pitch was "inconvenient for the singers of vocal music" and "often impossible for them to reach" (Quoted in Mendel, 1948:202-4). Hoarseness was the result of singing such high tones. The writer concluded, therefore, that ". . . the human voice sounds much more attractive and sweeter in its middle and lower registers than it does when it must cry out and shriek very high and

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above its proper limits" (Quoted in Mendel, 1948:204). Angus Heriot [(1927) 1975:12] claims that the forced and unnatural manner of falsetto singing tended to actually wear out vocal chords at an early age, and today Henahan (1985:23) maintains that the "high-ranging, overstrained creature" --the tenor! -- is an unnatural voice, brought into being by composers' increasing demands in the upper register.

The gender correspondence of the parts is, however, hard to determine from the music alone, because there is not any necessary connection between part-names and voice-names during this period. In secular part-books and in many choir-books, G.M. Ardran and David Wulstan (1967:17) tell us, ". . . the intended voice is not necessarily indicated by the part-name; and furthermore, different items in, for instance, the altus part of a collection may require different voices." There was no standard soprano range, for example, and compositions represented not absolute tonal designations but only parts in relation to each other. "To musicians before 1750, the notes on the staff, and the names by which they were referred to represented degrees in a gamut that had no permanent anchor at a standard pitch level, but was freely movable up and down according to the nature of the voices or instruments involved on any given occasion" (Mendel, 1948:29). This is demonstrated by musical theorist Pietro Aaron in the early sixteenth century: "You must consider the string or degree called c, giving it whatever pitch you please" (Quoted in Mendel, 1948:28). Thus, "a" or "c" meant "any tone related according to a given pattern of tones and semitones to the other tones in use, the actual pitch . . . being determined by the convenience or necessity of the moment" (Mendel, 1948:30). We will look, therefore, in Chapter VIII, to social factors

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for further connections of gender type to voice type.

Evidence for Solo Homophony

The difference in character between the principal, more conspicuous, upper part and the others -- the bass line providing a kind of harmonic supporting foundation and the inner voices (added later and not melodically or expressively inspired) serving primarily to fill out the harmonies[17] -- leads to another belief. This is that such songs were intended for solo voice accompanied by instrument, which would replace the still complex lower parts. The prevalence of the inscription "for voices or instruments" in sixteenth-century polyphonic composition is noted by Ferand ([1956] 1961:12), Kaufmann (1966:218), Rowen ([1949] 1974:2) and Rubsamen (1943:218). The first, for instance, lists eight major musical treatises of the second half of the century that denote choice of performance medium as "per cantare o sonare" (for singing or playing).

Pirrotta (1954:174) describes scenes from the masques produced in 1539 to mark the wedding of Cosimo de' Medici to Leonora of Spain: " . . . a singer representing Dawn sang the opening song, . . . , as a solo accompanied by a harpsichord and small positive organs; and likewise the conclusion, . . . , was entrusted to a solo singer, this time in the person of Night, accompanied by four trombones." Jerome Roche (1972:12) demonstrates additional evidence: ". . . whereas the top part was punctuated by rests, the lower ones were continuous"; and Einstein ([1949] 1971:I:77) too notes that the bass line is "without the eloquent pauses of the soprano and without any immediate possibility of an adaptation of the text." William Prizer (1975:227) speaks to both of the above and adds additional reasons:

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> The frottola appears to have been solo song . . . is apparent both from the layout of the original sources, in which only the top voice contains the entire text, and from the nature of the lower voices, to which the text can be added only with difficulty. The bassus often contains too few notes to accomodate the verses, whereas the altus and tenor contain too many. In addition, the middle voices tend to . . . span a rather wide range. Documentary evidence from Mantua, . . . , tends to confirm a solo practice, rarely mentioning more than one singer at each performance.

Helm ([1960] 1964:398) comments on the character of the top voice -- "usually the most melodious, being sometimes a real tune." In contrast, there is the expendable nature of the alto part in three-part, voice-with-lute arrangements of four-part frottolas (see p.339).

Finally, Einstein ([1949] 1971:I:58) finds confirmation of this premise in the published music prints themselves:

> It is hardly possible that four singers can have sung from a single copy [of a Petrucci print], not even when their eyesight was good; and if this should have been possible with Petrucci's prints, it is quite out of the question with the prints of his imitator and . . . competitor, Andrea Antico da Montona, who, . . . reduced the format to such an extent that one almost needs a magnifying glass in order to read it, equally out of the question in the case of the tiny Sienese frottole print of 1515, the work of the Neapolitan printer Sambonetus. It is also certain that a quartet of singers did not buy two or more copies . . . for printed music was expensive . . .[18]

Observing a codex of the National Library of Florence, Einstein ([1949] 1971:I:59) further illustrates his point. While the carnival songs are arranged so that the soprano and tenor and the alto and bass could be sung by two couples sitting opposite one another with the large and distinct manuscript lying between them on a table, the frotolle, by way of contrast, are arranged in a way that all parts could be seen at a glance by a single player or singer. Dent (1968:35) substantiates Einstein's claims in his comparison of this early Italian technique with a later French printing method:

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> Contemporary pictures often show three or more people singing and playing from one single book of this type; one can only wonder how they ever managed it. In 1525 Pierre Hautin of Paris invented the method of printing music in one impression; a few years later this method was adopted by the Venetian printers, who at the same time began the issue of part-music in separate part-books which made reading much easier and the production much cheaper. Moreover, notes could be more widely spaced than in the tightly packaged pages of Petrucci, and words could be printed under them with more accurate adjustment. [The upcoming ensemble] [m]adrigal-singing could not become a practical possibility until this had been accomplished.

Helm ([1960] 1964:398) demonstrates, on the other hand, evidence to indicate alternative forms of performance practice to the accompanied solo, specifically several voices without accompaniment: the fact that certain pieces published by Petrucci are found in contemporary manuscripts with full text in each voice; the title page of Antico's Canzoni nove, showing an example of what Dent refers to above -- four persons singing without instruments; close examination of the lower voices that reveal that, although devoid of rests, "they are entirely singable and form clear cadences." "The truth of the matter would seem to be," Helm ([1960] 1964:398) decides, "that in publishing frottole Petrucci and his successors were supplying raw material for adaptation in various ways, depending upon the resources available." This is substantiated by Stevens ([1960] 1961:68), who emphasizes the flexibility that distinguished Renaissance song: "The song might contract or expand in harmonic depth according to who performed it; . . . when times changed and retrenchment was the order of the day, a part could just as easily be dropped without doing irreparable damage to the music."

Einstein ([1937] 1947:44) concludes, nevertheless, that the essence of the art of the frottola "lay in the subordination of

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accompanying parts, generally for instruments and richly ornamented, to a single principal part . . ."[19] The fact that this was probably the usual performance method is attested to in most sources (Cf. Bukofzer, 1947:14, 1950:181; Grout, [1960] 1973:79,231; Harman, 1958:234; Kaufmann, 1966:218; Reese, [1954] 1959:157; Ulrich and Pisk, 1963:174; Wold and Cylder, [1947] 1963:70). Kaufmann (1966:218,223) adds that virtuosic solo singing to the accompaniment of an instrument recalled the custom of the ancients. There was as yet, however, "no new conception of the relationship between a vocal part and an accompaniment, no dualistic separation of opposing functions" (Einstein, [1949] 1971:II:834); rather there was simply the possibility of an instrument taking over the lower parts of a composition.

Solo Songsters

The solo lute singer -- cantore a liuto, the thirteenth-century Italian trovatori singer who had followed in the footsteps of the troubadours -- became increasingly popular.[20] De Maulde (1900:273) talks of celebrated poet-singers spending their lives in the market places -- Aurelio Brandiolini, who sang in the squares of Verona; and Bernardo Accolti, who wandered from town to town giving recitals in the principal squares. Masson (1975:39-40) adds the disreputable but well-known Niccolo Campana, Serafino Aquilano and Antonio Tebaldeo: "They were all as much at home with courtesans as with great ladies, and their improvisations attracted crowds in the taverns and streets of Italian cities, though the best were also appreciated in learned circles and even by maecenases of the arts like Agostino Chigi and Pope Leo X."

There were differences in social setting: ". . . Venice with

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its tradition of public and state affairs loved choral performances . . . , whereas the courts withdrawn from the common world and emphasizing the uncommon individual became centers of accompanied solo song and solo play" (Lowinsky, 1954:521). The demand of the courts for secular musical entertainment encouraged lute virtuosos, who became "the court poet and arranger of songs . . . , the composer of . . . artful courtly compositions" (Hughes, [1948] 1970:98). The ideal, defined by de Maulde (1900:275) was "to hear in a drawing-room a pure and mellow voice, supported by a single lute." Castiglione ([1528] 1928:101) offers Sir Federico Fregoso's views on both the advantages and difficulties of singing to the lute: ". . . all the sweetnes consisteth in one alone, and a man is much more heedfull and understandeth better the feat manner, and the aire or veyne of it, when the eares are not busied in hearing any more than one voice: and beside every little errour is soone perceived, which happeneth not in singing with company, for one beareth out an other."

Lionardo in Milan, Giorgione in Venice and Pietrobono in Ferrara are late fifteenth-century examples known for extraordinary playing and singing. Music was improvised by such professional singers but also by members of the court who had musical ability, secular vocal performance having become "the delight of the dilettante and professional alike" (Foreman, 1969:7). This is corroborated by de Maulde's (1900:275) explanation that the goal of such activities was "a little happiness"; they were performances "of feeling rather than of skill."

Publishers began to realize the possibilities of this diversified market for songs, issuing

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> books of songs with the voice part in ordinary staff notation and the accompaniment in tablature [the tones indicated not by notes placed on the staff but by letters, figures or other symbols], this tablature containing perhaps two out of three of the original parts. Thus, a four-part frottola arranged for the lute in Petrucci's collections would normally lose its alto line, for the average lute-player of the early sixteenth century could easily play two parts and sing the melody, though if he were expected to play three parts he might well stop singing from sheer concentration. (Stevens, [1960] 1961:69)

By 1574, the Bottegari Lutebook came into existence.

The "Social Status" of Frottola Music and Text

Sometimes a frottolist was, in the old tradition, both poet and composer; sometimes he acquired his texts. Musicians also set the superious (not only the principal part in terms of the music but also the only part to which the text was closely related) to already existing poetry.[21] Frottola texts were strophic, that is that two or more lines were repeated as a unit. Most were also trivial. "All it shares with poetry," Einstein ([1949] 1971:I:64) complains, "is stanza and rhyme, and it is impossible to apply any aesthetic standard whatsoever." In fact, these meters were not intended to have value as independent verse but were mere poesia per musica -- musical poetry or poetry written to be set to music or, as Einstein ([1949] 1971:I:64) puts it, "merely improvised rhyming which owes to its music alone the honor of having been printed." "Such was the power of music in the Renaissance," Lowinsky (1954:526) decides, "that it evoked a whole poetic literature written expressly to be set to music." Einstein ([1949] 1971:I:44) adds that the poets "do not enjoy the best repute in the history of Italian letters, and they certainly possessed no first-class talents, . . ." In summary, "[f]rivolity was often the keynote, . . . but that did not prevent the unpretentious little

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pieces," Reese ([1954] 1959:161) determines, "from having, as a class, musical importance of their own."

Therefore, both in their poetic and musical content, the style of such compositions was "half popular, half aristocratic" (Reese, [1954] 1959:159). Besides popular verse, popular tunes were often employed, but in a manner designed to please the cultivated listener. Einstein ([1949] 1971:I:83) gives examples of how the frottola "toys with the genuinely popular style" of the street ballad, and Lowinsky (1954:526) calls it not only light and frivolous but "of an untarnished obscenity" and frequently approaching blasphemy. Such material attracted the frottolists, Einstein ([1949] 1971:I:87) supposes, as "an object of mirth and mockery, though also of a secret yearning to descend into the lower sphere of supposed vulgarity . . ." Nevertheless, despite the simplicity of the vocal line and the freedom of the text, frottole were not "popular" or folk music; their milieu was the Italian court and their consumers the Italian aristocracy and nobility:

> . . . it is well to remember that the leaders of this revolt [against the simulated sentiments and affected conventionality of the Burgundian genre] were writing for the same social circles as the Burgundian musicians, for the gay aristocracy of Mantua, Milan, Urbino, and Ferrara, for the young and exuberant members of the Venetian patrician order, and in spite of their freshness and originality in matters of detail they were not great enough to produce a genuine art with genuine expression. . . . caricature and mannerism produce caricature and a new conventionality. (Einstein, [1949] 1971:I:82-3)

In contrast to the Burgundian chanson or German lied, the Italian style was less complex and "learned." And the main melody in the top part was both simpler and more clear-cut compared to the lower (Harman, 1958:209). Nevertheless, the fact that the lowest three parts

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were still written in a quasi-polyphonic manner created a heaviness which Einstein ([1949] 1971:I:102) criticizes as being ill-suited to the "light and airy melody of its vocal line. Cara, he feels, sought to remedy this aesthetic deficiency in the sonnet S'io sedo a l'ombra, written in a monophonic style of declamation and with the support of only a few chords. This experiment, "so much more typical of the Italian genius" than the mass, motet or approaching madrigal would almost certainly have led to the creation of the monody[22] long before the "nuovo musiche" of the early seventeenth century, Harman (1958:210) speculates, "but Burgundian polyphony intervened, and for nearly 100 years Italy adapted her natural talent to the art from the north." The frottola forms, though innovative in their straightforwardness of rhythm, were yet on too low an artistic level to compete with the quality of the internationally-renowned music of the Franco-Flemish: "The frottola is at best a second-rate form of art, as regards both the texts and the music. . . . the work of hack poets and inferior musicians. . . . artificial and banal, devoid of technical prowess or serious emotion. . . . repetitious, stereotyped, and cliché-ridden" (Helm, [1960] 1964:391).

Transition to the Higher-Class Madrigal

The next intervention or change in musical style in Italy was paralleled by a complementary trend in the literary sphere when, around the second quarter of the sixteenth century, a reaction set in against the frivolous tone of the frottola texts. These improved, as can be seen, in the succession of frottola publications by Petrucci that came out of Venice, center of the music-printing trade.[23] Although no famous Italian poets were drawn upon in his Book I of 1504, several such poets

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were represented in the later collections. By 1514, in Petrucci's Book XI, one finds 25 settings of poems of literary value, of which 20 are by Petrarch (1304-1374); and, in the Musica (1520) of printer Bernardo Pisano, "Petrarch's domination is already undisputed" (Einstein, [1949] 1971:I:171).[24] Other poets of importance include Ariosto and Tasso. Rubsamen (1943:35), in a book about literary sources of Italian secular music during this time period, summarizes such changes: "The literary trend in secular music, . . . , grew in strength during the 1520's until classical verses of distinction and elegance became the norm." Some of the credit for this improvement in taste is given to the influence of Isabella in Mantua and to Pietro Bembo's campaign for better poetry in the Italian vernacular.

Such poems also moved away from a rigid verse structure to an irregular one. This new poetic form was, as Einstein ([1949] 1971:I:172) calls it, "made to order for music, with its free alternation in the length of its lines, its freedom of rhyme, its brevity." It was capable of producing "vital emancipated music, worthy of the Renaissance," he ([1937] 1947:61) concludes. Roche (1972:13) suggests, therefore, that it was this literary movement -- a change in taste toward higher artistic standards -- that prompted the musical changes which constituted the transition (between 1520 and 1530) from frottola to madrigal.[25] But,

> . . . since gaiety and frivolity by no means disappear, the content of the frottola collections begins to gather around two diametrically opposite poles; . . . the half-serious becomes entirely so, while the half-frivolous develops into burlesque and parody, so that on one side we find the sonnet, the canzone, . . . and the madrigal proper, and on the other the mascherata, the villotta, the villanella, the canzone alla villanesca, and the canzonetta. . . .
> . . . And [the] higher forms become more and more

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> frequent as we progress chronologically in Petrucci's prints. (Einstein, [1949] 1971:I:107-8)

Besides the uplifting of the text, the madrigal "strikes a noble and lofty note . . . in . . . music" (Roche, 1972:13). Tired of the rhythmic constraints of the frottola song principle and the contradiction of its strict meter (with repeated stanzas) to the feeling in the content of its poetry, composers looked for a freer technology to satisfy their urge toward expression. Upon the simple chordal style was superimposed a motet idiom[26] -- the only other form available -- so that passages of homophony and polyphonic (or quasi-polyphonic) imitation alternate, thus "[raising] the text to a higher [more refined] and more elegant level of expression and [doing] so by a more delicate fashioning" (Einstein, [1949] 1971:I:125). It no longer supplied what Einstein ([1949] 1971:I:152) calls a "musical dress for the poem" but rather "fill[ed] it with music." In this transition, however, it became what he ([1949] 1971:I:152) terms "disintegrated song," the forces responsible being the very ones brought about by the failings of the frottola: the contrapuntal necessity of granting importance to all voices and the desire to interpret the text by expressively "painting" in music -- the imitazione della natura. Such, then, was the fate of the frottola:

> Brought forward as a contrast to the Flemish-Burgundian art: not prescribed melody but free invention; not artificiality but simplicity; not fashionable lyricism but freshness, . . . -- all this is a beginning. But considered as lyric art, it is also an end; for the madrigal, which rises after a thirty-five years' bloom of the frottola, is the very opposite of song. . . . in the genre of serious and exalted music [the song principle] is crowded out as soon as it has attained a certain importance and is doomed to lead, as it were, an underground existence, at least in its monodic form. (Einstein, [1949] 1971:I:115)

Throughout the development of the Italian madrigal, however,

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villanelli and canzonetti were also composed, a parallel development on a more popular, less serious plane. Roche (1972:91) sees the lighter forms as filling the vacuum left in the field of humbler secular music: "It was a less polished, more folk-like counterpart to the madrigal, to which it stood in opposition -- not [so much] the opposition implied in class distinction between aristocratic and peasants but that implied in the present-day difference between classical and popular." It must be remembered that these were intended for the same public as the madrigal, but functioned as entertainment music when the madrigal became a more prestigious, aristocratic, cultural activity. In villanelli and canzonetti the song principle lived on, going "underground," and continuing to run parallel to the "higher" forms. The tendency towards monody was more marked in "the many kinds of compositions that made no claim to artistic and technical mastery but that set out to give ready enjoyment and yet were not inelegant" (Pirrotta, 1954:173-4). Not until a century later (in the monody of the opera and seventeenth-century solo songs) would accompanied song rise again to the level of "artistic" song. Therefore, no longer was there simply the contrast of the sacred and secular. Three forms of recognized vocal music became distinguishable in the sixteenth century: church music, artistic chamber music and a "lower class" type of entertainment song.

The madrigal style became popular not only in aristocratic circles but among the new upper-middle class as well. More so, it became the preserve of the Renaissance man of culture, of a learned élite. The result, therefore, was indeed a kind of class line of demarcation between the two diametrically opposed categories of

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high-cultured, serious music and lower forms of frivolities, as described on p.340, and between the two respective audiences -- those with the purgate orecchie (purified ear) and hearers with vulgari orecchie (vulgar ear). Castiglione ([1528] 1981:120,1), for example, recommended that his courtier not resort to music in the presence of ignoble, common people nor in the presence of a large crowd. Kaufmann (1966:215), referring to Vicentino's account of members of the cultural groups called "academies" and their "refined ears," says that they felt themselves "isolated, by virtue of their erudition, from the tastes and standards of the common herd, . . ."

The Academie, a New Institution for Secular Music-Making

Besides the exclusive noble courts, then, and apart, of course, from the papal court, sessions of madrigal singing took place in the parlors and musical "studios" or "salons" of the homes of the wealthy. Public records are silent, however, on the role of music in private homes, which can only be deduced from dedications and prefaces of published music and writings on music and from the visual arts. In addition, there evolved the cultural academies, regularly-meeting, club-like groups for the purpose of "all manner of intellectual betterment" (Roche, 1972:18) and smaller versions of the same -- the ridotti, more loosely organized under the patronage of an art-loving aristocrat. "It is no longer only the Camera of Leo X, the court of Isabella, the courtly society of the Cortegiano," Einstein ([1949] 1971:I:191) expounds, "but the [new institution of the] Accademia, the circle of courtiers, nobles, and patricians, who take refuge from the tumult of the day in the realm of arts and letters. . . . such as

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[those] exclusively devoted to the study and cultivation of music. . ." Thus, "from the earthy level of the frottola," Roche (1972:34) summarizes, the madrigal had risen in two decades "to the rarefied realms of the academic atmosphere."

Einstein ([1949] 1971:153) emphasizes how small and select this latter company must have been that cultivated such secular music as a form of art and for which collections of the music printers were destined. Roche (1972:47) cites the Accademia Filarmonica in Verona, one of the first (1543) and most famous academies, as an example of this exclusiveness. It numbered only thirteen members. Nonetheless, the importance of such academies is listed by Pietro Cerone of Bergamo, in his uneven and controversial work on song entitled El melopeo y maestro (1613), as one of the main reasons for the blossoming of Italian music in the sixteenth century:

> . . . in many cities of Italy there are several houses called "academies" [By then even little cities in northern Italy had one, the larger -- two or three], which are solely places of reunion for singers, players, and composers, who devote themselves to their art for two or three hours [Einstein inserts "a day," but Lowinsky discovers that the statutes of the Verona academy suggest that the gatherings took place once a week]. The most famous masters of the town usually take part . . . [perform] their most recent compositions and . . . discuss some musical problem. (Quoted in Einstein, [1949] 1971:I:199-200 and Lowinsky, 1954:515)

The atmosphere of these academies, Harman (1958:272) illustrates, was quite different from either the intimate music-making of a few friends or the festive performance at court. Compositions were not only performed and listened to but criticized as well, and the arts as a whole were discussed. These groups of "younger scions of aristocratic families with a sprinkling of professional scholars and artists," as Anthon [1943:80] describes their composition, permitted

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and appreciated "every act of subjectivity, every boldness, and every experiment" (Einstein, [1949] 1971:I:199) and "fostered all sorts of theoretical investigations, and performed and criticized all that was new, original and experimental" (Kaufmann, 1966:215). We shall see them again with respect to the beginnings of the opera. Anthon (1943:80) sees the academies as "an embodiment of the spirit of amateurism," providing support for "gentlemen of taste, learning, and the leisure to exhibit their accomplishments in friendly rivalry, and to cooperate in artisitc and intellectual pursuits."

The academies were usually select in the sex composition of their memberships. Generally limited to men, with the presence of occasional females, the musical academie, Einstein ([1949] 1971:I:196) says, was "a men's club and not a mixed salon." In this it might have offered noble men an alternative occasion for their musical performance -- a private sphere comparable to the inner court circle, but one devoid of women. Stark's (1973:123) comparison of the two institutions comes to the same conclusion: "While the courtly circles usually consisted of men and women in approximately equal numbers, who met in the palace of the prince, the academies were private organizations often comprised chiefly or exclusively of men, who met in the members' houses or occasionally had their own building." He (1973:124) and others (Einstein, 1934:247; Haar, 1966:218) refer to academie madrigals for four to eight voices portrayed in Antonfrancesco Doni's "Dialogo della musica" (1544) as confirmation of such male dominance. The interlocutors in the dialogue -- seven courtiers and a lady -- exhibit a preponderance of male voices. The upper parts must have been sung, therefore, by men in falsetto.

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Transition to the Equal-Voiced Madrigal

The early madrigal was essentially a cappella[27] music for several voices, usually four, each of which was allowed "its full development, its individual life," according to Nef ([1935] 1964:119). Einstein ([1949] 1971:I:243) describes the ideal:

> . . . everything is done to convey to each of the singers the imaginative conception, . . . , so that each may feel himself an equal part of the whole, that each may sing as a soloist within the frame of the whole. As a matter of principle, each part is to contain the whole text; each is to be declaimed with the same care; . . .

In order that equal attention be paid to all the parts, the 1556 German treatise Practica musica of Hermann Finck advocated the following:

> The higher the voice rises, the quieter and more gentle should be the tone; the lower it goes, the richer should be the sound, just as in an organ with various sizes of pipes, both large and small, the larger ones do not overpower the smaller, nor do the smaller ones with their bright tone swamp the larger, with the result that the polyphony and harmony make their way evenly into the ear, in such a way that each voice plainly sounds just as clear, as gentle and as smooth as any other and the listeners enjoy the performance to the full and experience the appropriate emotion. (Quoted in Kirby, 1961:213-14)

Grout ([1960] 1973:176) mentions that this change in vocal music reflected a change in the method of writing such music. Composers had formerly written the various parts successively, beginning probably with the tenor and adding the superius and then the other voices, whereas now they began to conceive of and write the parts simultaneously, as a whole.

The Madrigal As Singers' Music

Generally sung with one voice to each part, the madrigal was "essentially chamber music, intimate, subtle, refined" (Harman, 1958:261) -- musica reservata or musica segreta. Musica reservata is

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first of all expressive music, with close association of word and tone. It also means "vocal chamber music, as distinguished from church music and music for public festivals; music for connoisseurs, able to appreciate a refinement, an audacity, an experiment; music for the accademie, to which only artists and nobles were admitted; music for the entertainment of princes" (Einstein, [1949] 1971:I:228). Finally, it denotes the emergence of a new style revised from past styles and from older means of practice. The term musica segreta also applies but refers more precisely to "the little band of chamber musicians, as distinguished from the larger band of the cappella grande or cappella commune, a distinction that goes back to the Sforzas and to Leo X and which in the sixteenth century was particularly marked at the courts of Bavaria and Ferrara, . . ." (Einstein, [1949] 1971:I:228).

As secular music responded to the increasing demands of worldly life, de Robeck (1928:64) reminds us not to forget that the chief source of all temporal musical art lay in the natural desire for enjoyment and that the fundamental conception of chamber music, specifically, rests on a social basis. The average madrigal functioned largely to provide companionable entertainment for the participating singers. According to Roche (1972:18), the madrigal was "a convivial chamber music that did not require the presence of an audience." The small group of vocalists (generally four to six) were "as self-sufficient as two chess-players or a group at a card-table," states Einstein ([1949] 1971:II:743), adding that "kibitzers," though they may have stood by, were uninvited and a general nuisance. Sixteenth-century paintings illustrating groups performing music, Einstein ([1949] 1971:I:243) points out, show only singers and players,

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all of whom take part in the music. If one appears to be doing nothing, he or she is understood to be resting, for there were no listeners.

Exceptions, of course, were those pieces intended for ceremonial occasions. These were festival madrigals, some of which formed part of the musical accompaniment to a spectacular dramatic and staged entertainment. Those written for particular ceremonies, where a larger audience was present, had to impress and therefore made use of part doubling to obtain a greater volume of sound. And in the case of the court, a small élite of listeners might be present, for instance, the prince himself and his closest peers or dignified visitors.

"In any case," states Newcomb (1980:22), "music for large rooms and public occasions, and music for smaller rooms and more refined ears were separate types in sixteenth-century minds," and, he adds, "[t]he same might be true of musicians." Cerone, in his El melopeo, made the distinction between the cantor de choro, one who sang "in a chorus [crowd] and with a full voice," and the cantor de camera, who sang "artistically in a falsetto voice or sotto voce [or voce de camera, according to the celebrated eighteenth-century theorist, teacher and composer Padre Giovanni Battista Martini] in the accademia" (Quoted in Einstein, [1949] 1971:I:229). Nicola Vicentino, in his 1555 multi-volumed treatise L'antica musica ridotta alla moderna prattica, concerning the theory and practice of music, also distinguished between a full-voiced, forceful sonority (a piena voce) of church and open-air music and the soft and intimate tones required in musica da camera (Kaufmann, 1966:220). A musician appropriate for one type of performance might not be suitable for the other, as Newcomb (1980:22) illustrates:

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> Brancaccio, trying out a bass for Duke Alfonso in Venice in December 1581, first listened to the candidate sing alone and then with others in St. Mark's. Pleased with the candidate's sound in these surroundings, he then arranged to hear him in private apartments to the accompaniment of Claudio Merulo at the harpsichord. . . . Brancaccio reported that in such surroundings the bass did not succeed well at all.

In the days of the frottola, lute singers were, for the large part, professional servant-musicians who were hired and paid to provide entertainment music of the dance and dinner type. The vocal participants in madrigals might now be noblemen, for it had come to be considered "elegant to follow one's individual part in a complex ensemble, more elegant, certainly, than to appear as a singer to lute accompaniment." Music of the church, ceremonial court music and solo entertainment songs were generally the province of professional male musicians of lower status groups and classes. Chamber ensemble singing lured the noble, recreational courtier. The madrigal, then, may have offered still another solution to the inadequacies for the élite of the frottola era. It disassociated the nobility from the lower stratum both in the role of the performer and the audience for his/her performances as well as in the texts for such performances. The poorer strata were allowed no opportunity to listen to madrigals but retained their folk music and what appreciation they could have for the masses, motets and other anthems that they heard in church services. The growing wealth of the middle, merchant-class bourgeoisie enabled that stratum, however, to "imitate and eventually acquire the tastes of the aristocracy" (Harman, 1958:364).[28]

Much madrigal singing, with its equally privileged "active" singers, few or no listeners and constant adherence to the part book, was musica de camera just as much as the eighteenth-century

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instrumental chamber music that is normally associated with this term. The function of sixteenth-century music, in general, was less emotion, edification and uplift than entertainment. Such amusements included singing and playing in company, preludes to the drama, accompaniments to eating and drinking or merely individual pastime.

The primary subject of the madrigal was love, like Petrarch's "unconsummated love [of] the ideal but unattainable woman" (Roche, 1972:12). It resulted in a feeling of fluctuating "between desire and remorse, between heaven and earth" (Einstein, [1949] 1971:I:190). But this was not the only content of madrigals, for the whole life of the later Renaissance is reflected in them. It was only after the founding of the academie that we begin to meet with "art for art's sake." Roche (1972:18) feels that the madrigal should be seen as part of a Gesamtkunstwerk, a total artistic picture, of the period and as a manifestation of the humanist spirit "that related art more and more to everyday life."

The Madrigal As a Composite: of North and South, of Words and Notes

Roche (1972:16) views Italy by the 1520s as a "melting-pot for a style compounded of many diverse elements." The transformation from the "accompanied song with a supporting bass and two inner voices as 'fillers'" of the frottola to the "motet-like polyphonic construction" of the madrigal, as they are contrasted by Einstein ([1949] 1971:I:121), was born of the contact between northern composers and Italian poets. "If the love of sensuous sound and the delight in linear counterpoint may be regarded as the material and the spiritual faces of music, then it may be said that Renaissance . . . developed both the

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body and the spirit of music to it fullest, . . ." (Lowinsky, 1954:535).

Early madrigalist composers were Costanzo Festa (1490-1545), Philippe Verdelot (1500-1565) and Jacques Arcadelt (ca.1505-1557). In contrast to the frottolists, Festa was the only native Italian. They represent a new synthesis, "fusing the song-like manner . . . with the studious contrapuntal treatment . . . to produce a varied alternation . . . always fastidiously [articulating] the text" (Roche, 1972:31).

It was the last characteristic, the relation between music and text, that took the place of the more formal schemes on which the writing of music was previously based. Here the Renaissance effected what Lowinsky (1954:536) calls "a veritable revolution," as is evidenced in Gioseffe Zarlino's thesis Istituzioni armoniche ([1558] 1950:258): ". . . we ought . . . to take care that we adapt the words of the speech to the musical figures in such a way and with such rhythms that nothing barbarous is heard, not making short syllables long and long syllables short as is done every day in innumerable compositions, a truly shameful thing." This new word-tone relationship, Textunterlegung, Lowinsky (1954:547) finds to compare with the concept of decorum, concinnitas, or convenienza in the art theory of the Renaissance. It is part of "one of the most fundamental guilding forces of the age, namely, Naturalism" (Carapetyan, 1946:47). Both the composer and performer were expected to imitate the meaning of the words.

All the great church composers, O'Brien (1950:83) claims, sought relaxation in the lighter secular form of the madrigal. Lowinsky (1954:526) talks of composers of the solemn masses "[dignifying]

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incredible frivolities to the degree of clothing them in the most attractive four-, five-, and six-part choral music." Grout ([1960] 1973:231) counts some two thousand collections, including reprints and new additions, being printed between 1530 and 1600. The production continued into the seventeenth century. Brown (1976:343) lists musicians as setting "epic, lyric, pastoral, dramatic, and even moral or philosophical poetry to music, for performances by virtuosi at courts, dilettanti in academies, amateurs at home, or for splendidly festive occasions such as 'princely weddings and banquets'."

The enormity of this production was lost, however, due to (1) the emphasis on speedily providing fashionable entertainment pieces for consumers who valued novelty highly, and (2) the lack of importance attached to creating works of "eternal" value. Haar (1981:174) maintains that the madrigal was music "written to order for single patrons or individual occasions," and Raynor (1972:86) adds that they were composed "in the latest style and then forgotten . . . the the property of . . . men whose wealth existed to be squandered in the cause of impressing the world and maintaining a reputation for grandeur." In contrast to what was created for and stored by the Church, that written for secular use, says Raynor (1972:86), was "enjoyed and discarded." ". . . few masters and few printers [therefore, took] any care of their intellectual or commercial property," Einstein ([1949] 1971:I:276) decides. Still, most of the secular music that has survived was composed for the pleasure of just such aristocratic and cultivated listeners and amateurs.

"Naturalism" Applied to Music and Text

The poetic text now being non-strophic, the musical setting

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becomes non-strophic (or continuous or through-composed)[29], providing the needed opportunity for "a natural correspondence between words and music" (Roche, 1972:13). The madrigalist broke with the old custom of setting different verses to the same music and strove to accompany each stanza with music appropriate to its meaning. In this he gave up the security of preexisting patterns to "[adopt] the human word as his new guide" (Lowinsky, 1954:539). Here Lowinsky (1954:547) draws a parallel with the Renaissance artist, who replaced the medieval patternbook with "the sketchbook destined to hold his free inventions and observations." "But what was there for the composer equivalent to the natural objects available to the painter?" Carapetyan (1946:53) asks -- "only the words to which he set music."

Prescriptions and proscriptions exist in the musical treatises of the time:

> . . . the more recent composers devote more care to the sweetness of euphony and are diligent and careful in fitting the text so that it agrees with the notes placed above it, and that these [notes], in turn, express, as characteristically as possible, the sense of the language and the individual feelings. (Finck, 1556, as quoted in Kaufmann, 1966:202)
>
> . . . if the words speak of modesty, in the composition one will proceed modestly, and not wildly; if they speak of gaiety, one will not write sad music, . . . when they are bitter, one will not make them sweet, . . . lest they appear at odds with their sense; when they speak of swiftness, the music will not be sluggish or slow; . . . (Vicentino, 1555, as quoted in Einstein, [1949] 1971:I:221).
>
> . . . if in speech, . . . , matters may be treated that are joyful or mournful, and grave or without gravity, and again modest or lascivious, we must also make a choice of a harmony and a rhythm similar to the nature of the matters contained in the speech in order that from the combination of these things, put together with proportion, may result a melody suited to the purpose. . . .
> . . . Thus it will be inappropriate if in a joyful matter he uses a mournful harmony and a grave rhythm, nor when funeral and tearful matters are treated is he permitted

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> to use a joyful harmony and a rhythm that is light or rapid, . . .
> . . . The primary consideration is the matter contained in the words . . . (Zarlino, [1558] 1950:256-8)

Einstein ([1949] 1971:I:223) remarks that in spite of the primitive and childish character of such advice, they record a historic fact in the history of music: "The medieval autonomy of music is definitely at an end . . . Music . . . obeys the text." This, what we know to be a renewed effort to make the texts in vocal music more easily understandable and to make the music (through both those who composed it and those who sang it) "immediately and strikingly express the images and especially the feelings suggested by the text" (Grout, [1960] 1973:178), now occurs in all the voices (not just the top one). The demand for the "fastidious articulation" of the text about which Roche speaks is a salient feature of this Renaissance music and that which followed.

> Before Josquin vocal compositions are largely abstract in conception for most of them would sound just as well to other words. From Josquin on, however, not only are the syllables set with increasing regard for their natural accents, but the words begin to be more closely linked with the music, . . . to a style in which the text is the raison d'être of the music. (Harman, 1958:262-4)

Nevertheless, the relationship of the musician to his poets is often the direct opposite of that of the minstrel to the troubadour. ". . . this time it is the musician who rides the high horse while the poet holds his stirrup," Einstein ([1949] 1971:II:691) declares. For example,

> To [Gesualdo] the text is merely the occasion, the necessary and indispensable raw material of his aristocratic music. . . . Gesualdo's texts had first and above all to be short: they had to give him the opportunity to shape his music as he pleased by repeating parts of the text, and a longer poem would have made this impossible. . . . , he is an

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> egotistical musician who thinks only of himself and never of his poet. (Einstein, [1949] 1971:II:691)

Marenzio, too, Einstein ([1949] 1971:II:612) cites as having sought the poems of Petrarch that revealed "the pastoral, the playful, the contrast, the pathos, . . ." This musicologist ([1949] 1971:I:200) finds, in general, that composers gave preference to poems "particularly remarkable for the clash of conflicting feelings . . . , since these clashes g[a]ve them the greatest opportunity to 'paint', to depict the expression of the words, and to 'imitate' . . ."

Adrian Willaert (ca.1480-1562) and his pupil Cipriano de Rore (1516-1565) led the quest for forceful musical expression, but they and their followers appealed probably only to the highest echelons of educated society. A complementary genre, having a lightness of style and content that appealed quite widely, was the entertainment madrigal of the 1570s and 1580s. With its pastoral leanings[30], it is described (Roche, 1972:53) as providing a "boldness and simplicity" with texts that conjured up "an atmosphere of amorous delight." Luca Marenzio (1553-1599) Roche (1972:59-60) calls the pastoral musician par excellence, "able to clothe the ubiquitous tales of nymphs and shepherds, fields and woods, with delightful music." This music too reflected every nuance of the words, in this case often "in fanciful, often over-obvious imagery," as stated by Roche (1972:53).

The individual who stressed the subordination of music to text most sharply, according to Einstein ([1949] 1971:I:223), was Marc' Antonio Mazzone, a Neapolitan musician who, in the dedication of his first book of madrigals in 1569, turned against the critics "who are demanding specific feats of contrapuntal dexterity in the wrong places and without knowing why." "Stupid and ignorant as they are," he wrote,

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"they should consider that the notes are the body of music, while the text is the soul . . . , so the notes must follow the text and imitate it, and the composer must pay due attention to it . . ." (Quoted in Einstein, [1949] 1971:I:223). This view would again be expressed at the end of the century in a famous slogan: "L'oratione sia padrona del armonia e non serva" (Quoted in Brown, 1976:369). Music as expression (even at the expense of musical proprieties) would become the essence of the seconda practica, the name given by Giulio Cesare Monteverdi to "modern" music (in which the words were not the servant but the mistress of harmony) as conceived by members of the Florentine camerata and as attempted in the earliest operas. This was in opposition to the autonomous music of the prima practica (in which harmony was not commanded, but did the commanding), as evidenced in the sacred polyphony of the Franco-Flemish school as well as many composers who continued to write Renaissance polyphony well into the seventeenth century. "To sing the text in each part so that it can be understood and felt, so that the subject matter becomes, as it were, visible through tones, this is the deepest motivation of the stylistic revolution," Lowinsky (1954:552) proclaims; "this is the contribution of humanism to music."

The increasing tendency to make music express or interpret the sense of the poem, to enhance the meaning and clarity of the text -- called imitazione della natura -- endowed this song form with an emotional quality -- trying to produce in the listener joy, fear, sorrow, calmness, etc. The art of music came to consist of "giving to thought all the external beauty of which it was capable" by giving the words "a precise value, intensity, brilliance, and force" (de Maulde,

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1900:272,271). Robert Wolf (1955:88) contests, moreover, that it was not the "rediscovery of the antique," nor the "discovery of man," but what he calls this "conquest of illusion" -- "a coldly reasoned, scientifically calculated technique of illusion, which for the first time in history merited the name 'art', for its aim was not religious or moral or ethical but only aesthetic -- that was the victory of the Renaissance." The descriptive potential gained an increasingly prominent place in the madrigal as the century progressed. Consequently, music came to depend on the words to give it meaning and unity, "for without them the sudden alternations in harmony, melody, and rhythm [created in order to convey the words] would be largely incomprehensible" (Harman, 1958:262). The attempt to paint, express and imitate became, at the same time, increasingly mannerist. One definition of mannerism -- preoccupation with problems of style for its own sake and the indulging in artificiality -- fits the Italian madrigal phenomenon. Artificiality and convention are present, and the musical genre is associated with a literary movement which conforms to mannerist ideas. Compositions were often criticized, paradoxically, as being cold and mechanical. Mannerism is seen by Hauser ([1974] 1982:286) as having developed in Italy into "an elite social art of the ruling classes, an art which asserts itself most impressively in painting in the highly adorned decoration of interiors, in music in the playful social form of the madrigal, and in literature in the intimate secret language of the love lyric, which only a select few can understand."

Instances of deliberate use of musically expressive devices became frequent. Sometimes referred to as "madrigalisms," the following

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are listed by Wold and Cylder ([1963] 1977:70-1): textual interruptions by rests; chromaticisms (the use of raised or lowered notes instead of the normal degrees of a scale, thus producing altered chords which, through a process of "color modification," serve to heighten the emotional tension of music); frequent changes of rhythm; and, finally, attempts to make the music illustrate the text by means of rhythmic and melodic tone painting.

For instance, ". . . it became conventional to set words like 'ascending', 'descending', 'flying', [etc.], to rising, falling, or florid passages respectively" (Harman, 1958:228). Ulrich and Pisk (1963:181) offer the following examples of the latter: "A leaping melody to suggest joy, an undulating figure to picture singing, a melodic rise and fall . . . to imply sighing, . . ." Other illustrations of word painting or associating a word or phrase with music that gives a graphic picture of it include "'sea' -- a wavy melodic line; 'sigh' -- short rest like a catch of breath, . . . , 'arch' -- an ascending or descending 'curved' melody; . . . 'suffering' -- chromatic changes . . . , slowness or length of time . . . indicated by long notes, and undulating lines represent 'flying'. . ." (Harman, 1958:259). The trill of the nightengale and the chattering of birds often find direct representation in the hands of Giaches de Wert (1535-1596) (MacClintock, 1966:192). Lowinsky (1954:540) mentions the Frenchman Clément Janequin (ca.1485-1558) as holding up "an acoustical mirror to the world to catch and to render musical what was audible in it" in his concerts of birds, his renditions of battle and hunting scenes and his street scenes of Paris. Einstein ([1949] 1971:I:123) finds a suggestion of musical "flight" in the earlier text of Antonio

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Caprioli's (flourished 1504-1509) Ognun fuga, fuga amore (Everyone flees love) and in Michele Pesenti's (ca.1470-1524) Fuggir voglio el tu bel volto, in which the alto "runs after" the soprano. By Willaert, "a mood of depression is suggested by the use of low tones, and agitation by rapid rhythmic motion" (Ulrich and Pisk, 1963:177). Another example of the use of rhythm as an expressive device is found in Wert's Fiamma del ciel, "where all the voices have triplet rhythms alternating with duplets, the resulting cross-rhythms underscor[ing] the bustling acivity suggested by the text" and "[c]hains of dotted notes . . . be used to give the idea of breaking . . . or rockiness . . ." (MacClintock, 1966:193). Dissonance is used to illustrate sorrow and descending notes to underscore the invocation of spirits in compositions by Wert also. Marenzio's most striking trait, according to Reese ([1954] 1959:421) is his "highly detailed and literal painting of words that represent a visual object, a sound, an idea, or a mood":

> The opening motif turns from an ascending leap . . . to a descent . . . ; the next phrase translates "rallegrar" into a joyous, swift-moving figure, then depicts air by three higher notes and earth by a descending leap. . . . The image in "s'acqueta" ("becomes calm") is pictured in three ways at once: the motion slackens; the superius leaps down an octave; and an unexpected chromatic change in harmony emphasizes the contrast between the sea moving and the sea at rest. Some measures later, a brief melisma suggests the singing of birds. . . . sight, sound, and mood are all paralleled in the music.

About "lesser" madrigalists, however, Reese ([1954] 1959:421) complains that the essentially naive device of word painting (rather than tone painting) does not always attain high artistic expression. It is often "trivial and mechanical," even "crude," Harman (1958:259) and Roche (1972:66) add. And, in even the best, Einstein ([1937] 1947:61) laments, these laborious efforts caused them to "[lose] sight of the

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work as a whole in the detail . . ."

> This consisted of taking individual words or phrases out of their context, rather than the mood of the text as a whole, and making them [emphasis mine] objects of "musical" description. The words or phrases were depicted only in their realistic, physically representable sense. They were imitated literally. Words were interpreted, so to speak, in their denotative rather than their connotative meaning, . . . (Carapetyan, 1946:53)

Imitation -- or "imitazione della natura at all costs" -- Einstein ([1949] 1971:I:233,229) cites as the most dangerous means toward the end of expression of the text. Music was supposed to have become an expressive art; frequently, perhaps, it became a hyperexpressive art,

> most perfectly by imitating so far as possible the text, the word, even by becoming identical with it. This is a terrible confusion of wit with mind, of naturalism with symbolism. In this confusion are rooted all those conceits which strike us today as childish and appear to discredit the content of the madrigal . . .
>
> The epoch did not draw a distinction between justified "painting," such as the symbolizing of "running" and "flight" by a rapid succession of tones, of "high" and "low" by a high or a low pitch, and unjustified "painting," that is, . . . in which the relation between what is to be expressed and the means of expression is brought about merely by an act of "intelligence and wit." One of the earliest [examples] is that of the tone syllables . . . mi fa sol la with the words mi fa sol la; . . . The word sol (meaning "alone") seldom occurs unless sung by one part only and to the corresponding scale-step. Mi fa (meaning "it makes me") is inevitably a semitone step. Francesco Corteccia (1547, a 5), in setting the following text:
>
> Sola la donna mia
> Mi fa viver contento . . .
>
> uses the corresponding tone syllables as a matter of course, . . . (Einstein, [1949] 1971:I:229)

Even Wert used such corresponding musical syllables to represent linguistic syllables and also correlated numbers and number of voices (MacClintock, 1966:193). Wolf (1955:95) concludes, therefore, that what was "expressed" was for the mannerist musician an objective affair not a subjective one, and for this, he made use of a concrete vocabulary of word- and emotion-painting devices which was held in common with all

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his contemporaries and into which they all dipped without hesitation.

Protests were voiced early. In his 1555 treatise on musical practice, Nicola Vicentino disapproved:

> . . . they will say that they are imitating the words when among the conceptions of these there are any meaning "to flee" . . . ; these they will declaim with the greatest rapidity and the least grace imaginable. In connection with words meaning "to disappear," "to swoon," "to die," . . . they have made the parts break off so abruptly that instead of inducing the passion corresponding to any of these, they have aroused laughter and . . . contempt in the listener . . . And when, . . . mention of the rolling of the drum, or of the sound of the trumpet, . . . , they have sought to represent its sound in their music, without minding at all that they were pronouncing these words in some unheard-of manner. (Quoted in Einstein, [1949] 1971:I:231-2)

Vincenzo Galilei (Dialogo della musica antica e della moderna, 1581) also deplored the superficiality and artificiality of a pictorial interpretation of words that imitated their sound instead of their sense and resulted in bizarre compositions lacking in expressive unity.

The requirement of imitazione della natura extended to the singers as well in their interpretation and improvisation of these pieces. Vicentino's complaints were: "Others, in the singing of this particular line . . . have declaimed it to staggering, wavering, syncopated notes as though they had the hiccups" (Quoted in Einstein, [1949] 1971:I:231). He includes in his treatise a chapter entitled "How to pronounce the long and short syllables underneath the notes and how to imitate the nature [of the words], with other useful hints" (Einstein, [1949] 1971:I:222).

"Eye-Music": Sound Representations for Singers Only

Whereas all the devices already discussed are meant to be intelligible aurally to the singer and the listener, one common technique was "black" notation, black notes of short time value[31] that

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were used to represent the word 'darkness' or 'night' or 'death' or when hell or the devil were mentioned. This was seen only on the musical score and was without aural complement. More abstract uses of this technique are offered by Einstein ([1949] 1971:I:239,242):

> The dark veil which surrounds the silent world is symbolized by the use of black notes. . . . The stupid blindness of the mob, to whom the inner meaning of love is a closed book, is rendered by blackening. . . . In Marenzio's work, no passage involving notte, color, or discolora is allowed to go by without an abrupt shift to the black notation; conversely all passages involving "light" or "day" are written in "white."[32]

The effect of such Augenmusik or "eye-music" notations in printed music, symbols which make their appeal to the eye, not the ear, are limited to the performers, the only ones capable of appreciating such symbolic imitation. That the madrigal was intended more for performers than for listeners -- "the look of the page being as important as the sound" (Roche, 1972:66) -- and that it was more sociable music than were concert pieces is further supported by the characteristic appearance of eye-music. Examples can be found in innumerable compositions of almost all regions and schools, especially in the latter part of the sixteenth century.

That such practices might be regarded as exaggerations or aberrations on the part of a few composers is also refuted by the existence of myriad examples of eye-music in sixteenth-century church music. It appears then that Einstein's ([1949] 1971:I:243) notion that "everything is done to convey to each of the singers the imaginative conception, even through the eye" applies to the sacred singers as well as the secular, even though church music was generally sung to be heard by an audience. Perhaps the fact that these singers were so highly trained influenced the incorporation of eye-music, an added dimension

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for them, into sacred song.

The assumption that eye-music was humorously intended does not find support either, the lighter genres being precisely where it does not occur. And the fact that these forms were more often sung from memory would, of itself, eliminate the function of eye music in such works.

Finally, Einstein ([1949] 1971:I:243-4) admits other "negative evidence" to support the case that madrigal singing was singers' music," that is it was meant for the enjoyment of the singer more than the listener. This is that festival madrigals tend to renounce expression, including eye-music. An example he ([1949] 1971:I:244) cites is a piece by Wert, probably wedding music, intended to be heard by the guests at the banquet table: "As a result, Wert, though a decided partisan of eye-music, keeps it wholly neutral, contenting himself with a sonorous intertwining of the parts and altogether renouncing representation and expression, which in this case would have been a sheer waste of effort."

Music and the Dramatic

Imitation exercised its influence on performance in one more way, the dramatic. In the illustration of laughing, weeping, howling and sighing, singers became actors, Einstein ([1949] 1971:I:234) tells us, and ". . . we may be sure that they did not let such opportunities escape them." Sixteenth-century descriptions of the commedia dell'arte indicate the large part played there by vocal musical performances, especially of the lighter strophic pieces, Newcomb (1980:17) discovers, and proposes that ". . . these innovations may in turn have encouraged the increasing theatricality of the madrigal in the last years of the

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century." For instance,

> This popular extemporary comedy . . . inspired Orazio Vecchi, . . . , to fashion it into what might be called . . . musical comedy. The characters, such as the old Venetian merchant, . . . , the pedantic doctor . . . , the . . . buffoon, the braggart . . . , and the courtesan were familiar to everyone. Vecchi's famous Amfiparnasso (1597) consists, not of recitativos and monodic songs, but exclusively of madrigals for five voices, . . . Vecchi's work was immediately imitated by . . . Adriano Banchieri, whose . . . La pazzia senile (1598), [was] also written in madrigal style. (Anthon, 1943:126-7)

Toward the end of the century, the madrigal became, indeed, more and more infused with dramatic life, despite its numerous voice parts and a seemingly inappropriate musical form (Henderson, 1921:61). Nef ([1935] 1964:119) sees this as another reaction against the "old, restrained, diatonically self-sufficient choral art." In addition,

> The times were impelling toward something new. A desire for novelty was in the air. There was a longing for something complete in place of the many short pieces, for something dramatic in place of the incessant lyric. The opera ultimately appeared, but as an intermediary stage there was the madrigal-comedy, . . . (Nef, [1935] 1964:120)

The dramatic madrigal comedy, a development in the last two decades of the century, consisted of a cycle of madrigals in a dramatic sequence and segments of dialogue between various characters. It is depicted by Roche (1972:68-70) as "private . . . entertainment; . . . its appeal . . . more on the human level than the learned, high-flown works . . . an idea which -- but for the use of a single, monodic line for each character -- leads on in its turn to the concept of music drama or, . . . , opera itself."

Sixteenth-century secular music, therefore, would not only lead in the direction of the opera through its experimentation with monody and with expressiveness in vocal music, but with the theatrical as well. And such embriotic performances in the operatic form occurred

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contiguous with the centers of virtuoso singing.

The delight in the pastoral amours spread to the stage. Many pastoral poems, called pastorales, were intended to be either read or acted. Venetian rappresentazioni musicali were produced by all the great composers of that city. Often, however, "entertainment" music dealt with themes of everyday life. "There were manifold opportunities for music in theatrical performances," Anthon (1943:126) tells us, referring to pictorial representations of stage settings and performances in which musicians appear to illustrate its prevalence. Music also served as an introduction or overture to the play.

Anthon (1943:129) describes the actors and actresses as "a rather musical crowd." They also appear to be a throwback to the medieval minstrel:

> The most famous actor of the late sixteenth century, Francesco Andreini, was an extremely well-educated man, a linguist and poet, and he could play every kind of musical instrument. His wife, Isabella, a beautiful and celebrated actress, was also a poet and musician, . . . Other versatile actresses who were also musicians and poets were Armiani of Vicenza and Brigide Bianchi, called Aurelia. In short, most women of the stage could sing and play several instruments. (Anthon, 1943:128-30)

At big court and wealthy city events, madrigal intermedii, light entertainments, were staged between acts of serious, classical plays, during scene changes. They too proved important precursors of opera, particularly since they were accompanied by displays of great splendor in their staging, such elaborate scenic settings becoming a significant feature of that upcoming genre. Eventually the intermedii became more popular than the serious drama of which they were originally only appendages, Harman (1958:267) writes. Anthon (1943:127,129) talks of both a delighted public that could "hardly wait

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for the end of the act to hear the intermezzo" and playwrights who "resented [this] arrogant predominance." The Florentine Grazzini, he (1943:129) points out, complained that "one used to write intermezzos to serve the play, but in his day plays were written to serve intermezzos."

With the spread of the pastoral amours to the stage and the popularity of the madrigal comedy and madrigal intermedii went a tendency to treat the madrigal as a dialogue. This led, as Einstein ([1949] 1971:II:539) sees it, to the madrigal's ultimate decay: ". . . the lyric utterance bec[a]me more and more untrue, and its claims to a mise-en-scène lead it inevitably to the stage itself and thus to self-destruction," of the madrigal form. He ([1949] 1971:II:801) too agrees with Henderson, above, and Wolf, below that it "became absurd in dramatic performance."

> Madrigal and motet seem to move with order, their surface is attractive, but there is a fundamental illogicality in the conflict between their polyphonic means and the constraints and distortions which must be placed upon those means in order to accomplish their expressive aim, the setting forth of a text. The "I" of the text is opposed to the "we" of the polyphonic setting. Armeda's woes are proclaimed by soprano, alto, tenor and bass. To compensate for this dramatic incongruity, in place of the Josquinian polyphonic complex in which all voices are equal partners, sixteenth-century polyphony is based on the opposition of voices, their successive emergence from the complex . . .
>
> Music, then, struggled with an unwieldy technique to perform an impossible task in a cultural context so psychologically complex that even real experience had little more reality than aesthetic experience. (Wolf, 1955:93,95)

This inherent contradiction in the madrigal, "a conflict between a first-person singular text and a first-person plural technique" or "between 'spirit' and 'flesh'," as Wolf (1955:96) describes it, would find its solution in the next century -- in monody and in the opera, as we shall see in Chapter X.

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Dent (1968:36) adds to this list of what killed the madrigal the "general spread of musical enjoyment and appreciation to a public which . . . learned to want to listen [emphasis mine] to music rather than to sing it themselves." The madrigal is a good example of Hauser's ([1974] 1982:286) view of sixteenth-century mannerist arts as arts "for connoisseurs, the virtuoso products of cultivated and refined artists for the enjoyment of experts and aesthetes capable of making critical judgments. . . . The result of that process of artistic aristocratization and intellectualization . . ." With this would come the class of virtuoso singers (to be discussed in the next chapter) who, though they developed their role through the late-century madrigal, would find their true vocation ultimately in the opera of the next century.

As we have seen, the internal development of each one of these new musical styles inevitably had results for the singers of such frottola, madrigal and monodic-type songs -- their number, their ability, their freedom in the use of their voices, the height of their voices, their dramatic appeal, and, as a result of the latter two, their gender. These will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

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CHAPTER VIII

RENAISSANCE SINGERS

Competition along the Vocal Range

Although the madrigal in the hands of the Flemish masters in Italy was contrapuntal, with no one voice having the full text and the full expressivo of the motives, the voices still did not achieve the equality desired. States Einstein ([1949] 1971:II:821): "To all apppearances there is peaceful collaboration on the common ground of equal rights: the conflict is as yet latent." He ([1949] 1971:II:821) goes on to show that in the course of the sixteenth century the balance of the voices with respect to one another underwent a change, with two or more voices standing out, beginning to compete, and forcing the rest to accept a subordinate and menial role. In the madrigal and motet the voices were supposed to combine into a consonance, a concento. When voices began to oppose one another, the style moved in the direction of the concerto.

The complete equality of all the voices, therefore, remained for Einstein ([1949] 1971:I:151) an illusion, "for the upper voice [was] more or less obliged to lead, even though it [was] no longer a song-like melody, while the bass [would] always exercise a greater or lesser supporting function."[33] Although the inner voice or voices assumed some life of their own (and, therefore, proved attractive to performers, further enabling the madrigal to be, indeed, singers' music), Einstein ([1949] 1971:I:152) illustrates that in

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sixteenth-century compositions these inner parts had, roughly speaking, more notes and fewer rests than the soprano or bass. "Perhaps they [were] no longer subordinate -- they [were] indeed essential, fully privileged parts of the whole" -- but," he ([1949] 1971:I:152) concludes, "they still [had] menial work to do, as they [had] in the frottola . . ." Even the equal-voice advocate Hermann Finck's description of the way in which the various ranges of voices were to sound together bears out Einstein's contention: "The treble should be sung with a delicate and sonorous tone, the bass, however, with a harder and heavier tone; the middle voices should move with uniformity and try to match themselves to the outer parts sweetly and harmoniously" (Quoted in Kirby, 1961:213).

While the voices did claim a fairly equal share in the musical structure, this seems to have occurred, then, "without prejudice to the special rights of the soprano as the highest part and tone most prominently heard, . . ." (Einstein, [1949] 1971:I:119). Ultimately the top part asserted its superiority in the texture of secular song, as the violin would in instrumental ensembles. (The emphasis on high voices in the makeup of church choirs [see pp.204-5] suggests that the soprano line was given prominence in sacred performance as well, even though there the four or more male voice lines of fairly similar character shared more equally in the presentation of the musical motives.) Einstein ([1949] 1971:II:536) reiterates his stand: ". . . an upper voice cannot help but dominate, a bass must support and thus assume a subordinate function, inner parts must 'fill in' and thus surrender a part of their independence," adding the following to support his observations:

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> [Composer and Musical theorist] Zarlino [writing mid-sixteenth century] already understands this very clearly when he compares the four voices with the four elements -- the bass with earth, the tenor with water, the alto with fire, and the soprano with air . . . ; having made this comparison, he continues . . . "If we were to examine the nature of these parts, we should find that the soprano, as the part that is higher and more penetrating for the ear than any other, makes itself heard above the others . . . thus the composer must see to it that the highest part of his composition has a beautiful, ornate, and elegant procedure . . .

Furthermore, musical treatises by Adrian Petit Coclico (1552), Lodovico Zacconi (1592) and others proscribed ornamentations for the lowest voice. Still others, Hermann Finck (1556) for example, noted that this appeared generally to have been the case in actual practice.

The distinctive character of the superius could be enhanced either by reserving for it certain harmonic means that the composer would place in the original or the singer would improvise in performance that would set it apart. Or this could be accomplished by detaching the higher voice it from the contrapuntal argument of the lower three voices. Another way to make it stand out even more was to place it in the highest register possible, well above the alto which would hardly ever cross it. This last means was influenced by, and in turn influenced, changes in the range of voices, and likewise the gender of singers.

Ockeghem had earlier enlarged the range of voices by placing the bass part lower than usual, with his two middle voices, tenor and contratenor, about equal in range and the male-occupied superius (soprano) pitched lower than today. The superius corresponded roughly to the modern alto range. Application of such an allocation of the parts to the secular madrigal resulted in "a rather dark vocal color" (Ulrich and Pisk, 1963:118), the bottom-heavy sound of the motet.

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Gioseffe Zarlino, writing in 1558, speaks, therefore, of a variety of alternative combinations for which madrigal composers wrote: "for three tenors and a bass, or for three basses and a tenor, . . . sometimes for four basses . . . sometimes for four sopranos." All of the above were considered a voci pari, or for equal, like, or same voices, with voci mutate referring specifically to only mer[illegible]ices within a limited range; but some combinations were "for two sopranos and a contralto or tenor and a bass, sometimes for three sopranos and a bass" -- for varied, mixed voices (Quoted in Einstein, [1949] 1971:II:821).[34] De Maulde (1900:277) describes such a group of Venetian male singers: "You hear the boys whinnying, the tenors bellowing, the counters braying, the altos bawling, the basses scraping the bottom of a well, . . ."

A switch to five-part scoring of madrigals (with Rore the five-voiced madrigal became the norm) made it possible to extend the total range of voices further or, at least, emphasize certain areas of the total register -- and that proceeded, for the most part, in one direction:

> The majority of Marenzio's madrigals are scored for the established ensemble of five voices, though there is an increasing tendency to use . . . two soprano parts rather than two altos or two tenors. The higher lie of the parts . . . opens many new opportunities for brilliant colouring that contrasts with the rich hues found in the bottom-heavy five-part writing of earlier madrigalists. Moreover the chording seems to have a more acoustically natural layout when the voices are closest in range at the top of the texture -- a feature which emphasizes the brightness of jolly, pastoral music. (Roche, 1972:62)

Einstein ([1949] 1971:II:822) records that, in the course of the sixteenth century (similar to d'Accone's conclusions for sacred music of the previous century [see pp.204-5), the changing vocal register rose higher and higher, at the same time that the note values became

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smaller and smaller. By the seventeenth century, nine monodies out of ten would be written for a high voice -- soprano, mezzo-soprano or tenor (Fortune, 1954:207). In conjunction with this, Mendel's (1948:28) work on sixteenth- and seventeenth-century pitch offers evidence, based on the pitch of old organs, that chamber pitch was probably a whole tone higher than church pitch and that it was also a tone higher than modern chamber pitch.

The ratio of treble, potentially women's, voices to those lower, then, became generally two to three, i.e., two sopranos balance a falsetto alto, a tenor and a bass. Expansion upward and downward to "the full practicable range of voices" (Grout, [1960] 1973:174)[35], and from the medieval tonal space of not quite three octaves to almost five octaves, resulted ultimately in (1) differentiation between voices being achieved naturally by pitch and timbre rather than artificially by rhythm and the singing of different words (Harman, 1958:194); and (2) women's participation in such songs.

In the last third of the sixteenth century this shifting of the voices had the following results:

> . . . the pair of voices having the same clef wanders from the lower register into the soprano. Earlier, whenever two voices detached themselves from the rest by singing in canonic imitation, they were as a rule two altos, or two tenors, or a soprano and a tenor; now they are two sopranos. . . . the conduct of the two sopranos comes more and more to approximate a duet, though without prejudice to the vocality of the whole, the uniformity of the melodic idiom. An example from [Filippo di] Monte's thirteenth book (1588) will serve as illustration. The two sopranos answer one another and come together, but as yet they do not completely detach themselves from the living body of the madrigal or degrade the three lower voices to the status of mere accompaniment. . . . Luca Marenzio had come forward with his Primo libro, and in some of the madrigals . . . the duet-like conduct of the two sopranos is as it were announced as a principle. . . . It is a relationship . . . that does not place itself in intentional and open

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> opposition to the lower parts; it is hidden, but it is undeniably there. (Einstein, [1949] 1971:II:823-4)

This duet relationship between matched treble voices became what was called the "concerto"-like competition of a new type of madrigal. It would be accomplished by a new type, and gender, of singer.

Resurgences and Abatements of Female Singing

By the end of the fifteenth century, we must assume that women had begun to join with men in singing the secular songs, in which many had the melody given to the soprano voice. The transition to women's range voices is surmised from the wider ranges, higher tessituras[36] and greater prominence of soprano parts -- musical grounds for female vocalization. Up to this point their vocal range had generally been appropriated by boy sopranos, falsettists and castrati[37] in both sacred and public secular music. But Henderson (1921:60) maintains that "[u]nless we are willing to believe that boys or male sopranos were to be found in every chorus and household, we must conclude that women sang in the [secular] polyphonic works of the time." Cut off from the church and the minstrel stage, the privacy of the parlor or the chamber had become the locus (apart from the privacy of the convent [see pp.320-5]) of their musical feats, one change being that women now sang when men were present -- that is, they participated in musical activities along with men. Music-making in a courtly context had become something done by women and no longer just for women.

There became possible, Roche (1972:24) declares, "a genuine dialogue between two lovers represented by high and low groups respectively" -- which indicated the presence of women as singers. Songs expressing a woman's point of view, whether composed by her sex

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or not, were in evidence. Einstein ([1949] 1971:II:822-3) cites examples of the transition from men's to women's voices in the stories of contemporary novelle. For example, in Giambattista Giraldi Cinthio's Hecatommithi, one reads: ". . . after a lagrimosa or "tearful" sestina by one of the youths, there follows a gay . . . dialogue in song . . . between Camilla and Cornelia, two of the girls; after this they declare themselves ready to go on singing . . . whenever the youths accompany their voices with the sound of their viols . . ." Italian works of art further confirm the active participation of women in scenes of amateur, recreative performances of secular song. In Castiglione's Il Cortegiano, Lord Giuliano de' Medici expounded upon the proper musical activities and abilities for the cultivated lady (see pp.291,317). The attitude encouraged in his statement, "I would not have her use . . . , in singing . . . those hard and often divisions [abrupt and often repeated diminutions] that declare more cunning than sweetenes" ([1528] 1928:194) fits the character of the top voice in frottole and early madrigale as it has been described in Chapter VII (see pp.332,340).

In the early frottole, a woman as the subject of the song was still "a relatively rare occurrence, owing to the social purpose of the genre" (Einstein, [1949] 1971:I:93). Most of the poesia per musica was addressed to women and was meant to be listened to by them. All the traditional themes were present: the timid lover who dares not speak up; joy over the return of the beloved and the greeting of welcome; reproaches addressed to a cruel, fair one; revival of an old love; disappointment; laments of the lover; protestations of eternal fidelity (Einstein, [1949] 1971:I:65-6). Petrucci's first book of frottole (1504) contains "virtually nothing but compositions intended for men

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[to sing] -- that is, addressed to women," Einstein ([1949] 1971:I:65) notes, but adds that ". . . verses intended for women are particularly striking and have as a rule a peculiar passionate character," one reminiscent of those composed by the women troubadours of Occitania (see pp.165-6). They became serious and pathetic when a woman was no longer the object but now subject of the songs. Only a few fell into the frivolous and parodying category. Most were amorous laments. Riley (1980:56-7) suggests that many of these were written and composed by women, considering the personal quality of poetry at the time and the fact that many distinguished women poets (Vittoria Colonna, Veronica Gambara, Isabella di Morra, Gaspara Stampa and the courtesans Veronica Franco and Tullia d'Aragona, for examples) were accustomed to fashioning their own verse. However, we know of no circle of women composers from the fifteenth or early sixteenth centuries.

Music-making by specific noblewomen improvisors can be noted in numerous casual references, but with little detail on actual vocal practice, made to their partaking in such activities. From an MS of the Biblioteca Nazionale of Florence (cod. Mag. VII, 735) from about 1510, Einstein ([1949] 1971:I:78) lists the specific Florentine women who sang the fourteen printed frottole -- "la Maria, femmina del Bianchino da Pisa, la Masina, e la Lionarda [Arrighi], donna di [the composer] Baccino degli Organi" -- and notes the following comment: "Mary sang it superbly, so much so that virtually everyone would have fallen in love on listening to such fine singing . . ." O'Brien (1950:56) too comments that Florentine women began to make names as performers, especially in connection with the popular canzone da liuto.

For Mantua, Einstein ([1949] 1971:I:93) states that Castiglione

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attested that the Marchioness Isabella herself recited the last lament of Dido to the accompaniment of her famous alabaster organ. Cartwright ([1903] 1932:I:85) mentions that Isabella and her sister-in-law, Elisabetta Gonzaga, constantly sang and played together. And Einstein ([1949] 1971:I:52) speaks of Isabella having given the composer Cara, in 1512, one of her damigelle as a wife -- "one Giovanna de Marasechi, famous and sought after by many courts because of her skill as a singer." Howard Brown (1986:69) concurs: ". . . there can be little doubt that Giovanna Moreschi, . . . , was a professional singer at the Mantuan court." Brown (1986:69) refers also to one Paula Poccino as having been mentioned by Isabella for bringing honor to Mantua. She sang with Bartolomeo Tromboncino and others during a comedy given to celebrate the marriage of Alfonso d'Este and Lucrezia Borgia in Ferrara in 1502.

In this last regard, it is clear that women figured "prominently among the allegorical, mythological, and historical characters who appeared in the tableaux vivants and other semistaged spectacles that were a standard feature of banquets celebrating special events and intermedii between acts of spoken drama" (Brown, 1986:66). What we cannot be certain about is the social backgrounds of the women who appeared at such occasions -- "court ladies displaying their talents, particularly gifted townspeople called in to help celebrate a notable event, the wives and daughters of the regularly employed chapel and chamber musicians, or, just possibly, women hired by the court for the express purpose of singing secular music" (Brown, 1986:66).

In mid-century Naples, a certain Neapolitan lady, Madonna Eufemia, also written Fomia, Phomia, Fumia or Femia, is known to have

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worked "some of the miracles of solo song . . . in a manner halfway between singing and reciting" (Newcomb, 1980:17). The Bolognese sculptress, Properzia de' Rossi, is said to have "played and s[a]ng better than any other women in her city . . ." (Vasari, as quoted in Anthon, 1943:67). And a writer on the Milanese nobility recorded: ". . . there are in Milan many ladies who are good musicians, and their accomplishments are recognized by even the best professional musicians" (Morigia, as quoted in Anthon, 1943:67).

A description of the quality of the singing of the circle of cantatrici in Venice during the mid-sixteenth century is offered: "the two Bellamanos, Pecorina, Antonia Aragona da Napoli, Elena Veneziana, Isabella Bolognese, Irene di Spilimbergo, and the rest, singers whose praise fills the letters of Pietro Aretino, Antonfrancesco Doni, and Andrea Calmo [aristocratic writers and musicians captivated by these solo performances] to overflowing" (Einstein, [1949] 1971:II:843). Of the musical capabilities and accomplishments of the young Irene (versed in letters, music and painting) one reads in Vita della Signora Irene:

> As to what Signora Irene learned by way of playing and singing to the lute, the harpsichord, and the viol; and how on each of these instruments, far beyond the usual custom and intellect of women, she approximated the very masters in these arts . . . I shall say only that in a short time, being taught by Gazza, a musician of no small renown in Venice, she learned a vast number of madrigals, odes, and Latin verse, to be recited to the accompaniment of the lute, and that she recited them in such a striking, delicate, and melodious manner that the greatest connoisseurs were amazed. (Quoted in Einstein, [1949] 1971:I:50)

Polisena Pecorina -- the most famous singer in Venice, according to Einstein ([1949] 1971:I:164) -- maintained at her house an entire musical academie with Adrian Willaert as director. Of her, Doni wrote on 7 April 1544 to a friend and patron:

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> . . . if you could have heard the divine music which I have listened to . . . in Venice, you would be amazed. There is here a lady named Polisena Pecorina (the wife of a compatriot of mine) who is so accomplished and charming that I cannot find words in praise of her, worthy of her merits. One evening I heard a concert of viols and voices, where she played and sang together with other distinguished persons. Adrian Willaert was the composer of this music . . . (Quoted in Anthon, 1943:100)

Einstein ([1949] 1971:II:843) adds that it was in a monodic fashion that these Venetian "noble courtesans" (donne da bene, some of them actual courtesans [Calandra (see p.306) is sometimes named as part of this group] while others like "the virtuous Irene" [Einstein, [1949] 1971:I:50] -- ladies who sang) sang to the lute or gravicembalo, recalling a letter of Calmo about their excellence: "And as for your singing, I have never heard better: oh, what a beautiful voice, what style, what runs and divisions, what sweetness, enough to soften the cruelest, hardest, most wicked heart in the world." The Venetian engraver Giacomo Franco expressed similar sentiments in a description he appended to a 1610 picture of a lady with a lute playing from a music book:

> Besides the numerous accomplishments which Venetian ladies possess, most of them also play the lute. This they play unusually well, and they become so excellent, that while playing for their diversion [emphasis mine], they sometimes add their own voice; whoever hears it, is overcome with amazement. (Quoted in Anthon, 1943:79)

While there is no real indication that any of these women, other than the courtesans, were professional musicians, Madalena Casulana is an example of "a different and apparently much rarer type of Venetian woman musician" who, Newcomb (1986:106) explains, "was approaching the profession of music as many men approached it in the same years."

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> She published madrigals, first in anthologies then in collected books, and sought through her publications to attract the patronage of a highly placed sponsor. . . . a picture of a young woman active as composer, teacher, and singer in the most prestigious musical circles of Venice in the late 1560s . . . conform[ing] to the role of professional musician according to the male model more thoroughly than any other woman discussed . . . (Newcomb, 1986:106-7)

Sadly, there is almost nothing known of her early background and training. She is discovered as she attempted to make a place for herself in the relatively tolerant atmosphere of the Venetian ridotti. But ultimately her attempts appear "not to have been an unqualified success" to Newcomb (1986:107) since after 1570, when she changed her surname and seems to have married, she left Venice, "pulled back from her intense professional involvement with music" and didn't publish again until her last book came out in 1583.

For Rome, the only specific name for which we have found any documentation is that of a Madonna Laura Ruggeri, listed as musica in the five-person private musical group serving Pope Paul III from 1538 until at least the beginning of 1545, the time at which extant records cease to be available. Newcomb (1986:105) concludes from the registers of the privy expenditures of the Pope that "she was clearly a professional musician earning a fair salary [on the same level as the four men in the group] in a stable position." Newcomb (1986:105) postulates that other ecclesiastical princely households likely maintained such women musicians throughout the century. This is one of many unknowns concerning secular music in Rome, the history of which is only beginning to be researched.

Such scattered citations and those about courtesans quoted in Chapter VI (see pp.303-6) lend credibility to the notion that women

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(not only cloistered women, that is), trained sometimes by lower-class, male musicians, sang and played. Anthon (1943:78) says that, for this period, it is possible to find women musicians of all kinds. As for what they sang, considering the deficiency of works from a woman's perspective, Riley (1980:56) believes that women did not hesitate from singing texts written from the male point of view. Again, it is difficult to specify from the music alone songs written specifically for them, because composers inscribed their works in any clef they preferred without any intention of indicating the pitch but only the relationship between the parts (see p.333).

That there is so little known about individual female singers must be partially due to their not having had reputations as composers. Few singers of either sex that were solely interpreters of the music of others seem to have been well known as soloists before the second half of the sixteenth century. This applied more frequently to women, however, for several reasons. The evolving specialization of function was more common to secular (the realm in which they were permitted to participate) than to sacred singers. The latter (male) singers, it has been stressed, generally contributed their compositions as well as their voices. In addition, women were not, owing to their lack of theoretical training because of their exclusion from ecclesiastical schools and even universities, able to rank among those who combined theory and practice. These were theoreticians and performers -- those called "perfect" musicians (musici perfetti) (Anthon, 1943:163).

The scarcity of information about women singers can also be partly attributed to their amateur status and the fact that, as Jander (1980:341) points out, probably a large number of them, until well into

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the sixteenth century, were of courtesan status, one reason why it is difficult to trace their presence through financial records.

Einstein ([1949] 1971:I:93) supposes that frottola and the earliest madrigal compositions geared for female performance were most likely destined for women of quite questionable virtue -- nobili cortigiane and dames galantes. "In Mantua these were scarcely needed, for . . . the Marchesa Isabella, herself beyond reproach in her mores, showed a genial tolerance toward her ladies . . . or damigelle [called "dissolute young ladies" by Burckhardt ([1860] 1954:285) and deemed "too-free-lived" and "less strict" in their morals by others (Einstein, [1949] 1971:I:39, for example)] and allowed them complete laxity," whereas

> . . . in other centers of cultivated society, at the papal court of Alexander VI and of Leo X, at Ferrara, and especially in Venice, only the meretrices honestae enjoyed full freedom in the circle of men; only they had the literary and musical education necessary . . . compositions with Spanish texts found in the frottola prints, . . . were presumably destined for their use; for in the reign of Pope Leo X Rome was full of Spanish harlots. (Einstein, [1949] 1971:I:94)

The generally-held attitude at that time toward female musical performance (except, again, among themselves or for the highest-ranking women residing in courts composed of a homogeneous social circle) was expressed by Pietro Aretino: "The knowledge of playing musical instruments, of singing, and of writing poetry, on the part of women, is the very key which opens the gates of their modesty" (Quoted in Einstein, [1949] 1971:I:94). Bembo's aforementioned forbidding of his daughter Elena to learn to play the clavier (Rome, December 10, 1541) included the following admonition: ". . . you may perhaps not know in view of your tender age, namely that playing is an occupation for vain

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and frivolous women" (Quoted in Einstein, [1949] 1971:I:94). In a 1555 treatis on the education of noble girls, Giovanni Michele Bruto made known similar apprehensions regarding possible vices associated with the study of music by girls (Bowers, 1986:139). This type of entertainment music on the part of women was still generally viewed in the early part of the Age of Humanism as it had been among the ancients and throughout Catholic Europe -- as promiscuous, immoral, "invented by the shepherds in the hills, then refined in brothels by evil women" (Leonardo Dati, as quoted in Einstein, [1949] 1971:I:95). For participation in such, a talented woman again often paid the price of sexual notoriety -- "her vocal virtuosity a metaphor for sexual virtuosity," as Wood (1980:292) puts it. Paradoxically, both the ancients and moderns exhibited a rather contradictory attitude toward courtesans, about which Michel de Montaigne wrote in his journal of his voyage to Italie, Switzerland and Germany in 1580 and 1581. Despite corresponding reproachments and disapprovals, great value was attached by the respective societies to the more refined offerings of the nobili cortigiane, as recognized by the fact that their fee for social conversation was as great as for the négociation entière (Boulting, 1910:300 and Einstein, [1949] 1971:I:95).[38]

In the opening stages of the rise of the madrigal, we again meet with "these ladies in their various qualities" (Einstein, [1949] 1971:I:95). The traditional character of Madonna in early madrigals was not the gay, dissolute noblewoman damigella of the Marchioness of Mantua, but the Roman and Venetian courtesan whose favors were implored -- ". . . a transference of Madonna into a lower and more vulgar sphere . . . and in some cases we know all about the lady and about her lovers

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and her price as well" (Einstein, [1949] 1971:I:174-5). Of this class of songs and the courtesans to whom, of whom and sometimes by whom they were sung, Einstein, ([1949] 1971:I:180) states further: "One may perhaps suppose that the more delicate of these madrigals were addressed to the Florentine ladies . . . , the coarser ones to the Roman," thus distinguishing between the cortigiane oneste and the +ower-status cortigiane piacevoli. It was to this lowest rank that those madrigals, in which "the lovers made such frank appeal to the ladies' complaisance while the ladies appeal no less frankly to their lovers' liberality" (Einstein, [1949] 1971:I:181), correspond. More typically, however, the "fair ones" celebrated in song belonged to the circle of the oneste cortigiane.

Nevertheless, most madrigals of this early period, in which the woman is again the object of the song, were written for voci mutate or voci pari (that is, for four equal voices, men's voices: bass, two tenors and falsetto most typically), and the woman took part only as listener. Arcadelt, for example, is shown by Einstein ([1949] 1971:I:273) to have set a coarse text for a courtesan a voce mutata, "sufficient proof that it was not meant to be sung by the fair one herself, but that it was simply written to her order." One of his ceremonial madrigals of 1538-1539 exhibits female parts taken by high-voiced men:

> Et quest' in gonna
> Fu si leggiadra donna
> Ch'ancor motli di qua par ch'inamori.
>
> (This man in a skirt was such a pretty lady that many fell in love with him.)
>
> (Quoted in Dent, 1968:41)

Antonfrancesco Doni's musical descriptions in "Dialogo della musica"

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(see p.347) are in agreement on the lack of women's voices. The falsetto voice, then, was common in polite society (until the end of the century, at least) as well as in the church.

Male/Female Competition for Vocal Status

What we find to have happened was that as the public, rational world of the sixteenth century became more difficult for the noble male, the private, sensual and more irrational -- historically female -- sphere came more into favor. Erasmus of Rotterdam, for example, wrote: "Let others paint lions, eagles, and other creatures on their coats of arms. . . . true nobility is possessed by those who can inscribe on their shields all that they have achieved through the cultivation of the arts and sciences" (Quoted in Elias, [1939] 1978:74).

Isabella, though she can be credited with having brought women into a more public musical province, also played a great part in inducing noble men to become part of the more private realm -- acting "as a mediator between noble men and private court music," Riley (1980:54) resolves. ". . . once the connection was made, appropriation of the style by men was swift and complete," she (1980:54-6) states, feeling that this was accomplished before the publication of Petrucci's first frottola printing in 1504. Though Riley makes this assumption on the basis of Einstein's claim that the social intent of the frottola was the serenade of a lady-love (see p.330), it is more likely that the male singers of these earliest serenades were in large part still of lower rank, with higher-status men lending themselves more to poetic than vocal participation. Later frottola prints (of 1514 and the 1520s) exhibit the previously-discussed upgrading in literary elegance and

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refinement (see pp.341-2), the time at which it is more likely that upper-status males attempted their conquest of an art form previously almost the exclusive territory of amateur noble women (or else courtesans) and professional lower-status men.

This corresponds with the approximate date of the Treaty of Cambrai (1529), at which time reductions in warfare caused courtiers to be no longer primarily men-at-arms (whose attentions were focused on things external to daily court life) but instead come to spend more time in residence at court than away. Up to this time, ". . . when men [were] as a class engaged in the subjugation of the natural world or in struggles with each other, the arts of peace naturally [fell] into the hands of non-combatants, . . . to belong more or less exclusively to the female type" (Putnam, [1910] 1970:131). This is another demonstration of the effects of larger social, economic and political structures and processes on opportunities, and the lack of them, for women.

The earlier, Middle Ages courtois code of manners (discussed in Chapter IV) became the basis of the transformation of the nobility into courtiers. The further regulation of the Renaissance courtier is described in Chapter VI as having "civilized" their conduct. Elias ([1939] 1982:267) explains the double bond on the new courtier by the king or prince and his court:

> Had the nobles been concerned solely or even primarily with economic opportunities, they would not have needed to go to the court; many of them could have acquired wealth more successfully through commercial activity . . . But . . . they would have had to renounce their noble rank; they would have degraded themselves in their own eyes and those of other nobles. It was this very distinction from the bourgeoisie, their character as nobles, their membership in the upper class of the country, that gave their lives meaning and direction. The desire to preserve their class

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> privilege, to "distinguish" themselves, motivated their actions far more than the desire to accumulate money. They therefore not only remained at court because they were dependent on the king, but they remained dependent on the king because only life amid courtly society could maintain the distinction from others and the prestige on which depended their salvation, their existence as members of the upper class, the establishment or the "society" of the country.

The courtier's functions were reduced and more domesticized, to the point that he began to imitate even the manners, dress and adornments traditionally associated with women. He is described by de Maulde (1900:369) as "rigged out as elaborately as the ladies, if not more elaborately (save that instead of displaying the bosom they displayed the leg), with flying plumes; in winter, smothered under furs; in summer all unbraced, . . . ; loaded with diamonds, so that you would take them for walking showcases . . ." to the point that he was frequently charged with effeminacy. He too, therefore, took on a somewhat ornamental status. Riley (1980:41) supposes that the codification of intricate rules of etiquette, such as those of Erasmus of Rotterdam or Castiglione's Il Cortegiano, was "undoubtedly intended to lend a certain dignity and breadth" to what had become a rather narrow, circumscribed role.[39]

Although Castiglione's work ([1528] 1928:75) did pose the question of the advisability of men of rank practicing secular music because of its extra-musical associations with both lower-class, solo, male performers and the more feminine arena of women singing semi-improvised songs, generally among themselves ("I believe musick . . . together with many other vanities is meet for womē, and peradventure for some also that have the likeness of men, but not for them that be men in deede: who ought not with such delicacies to

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womanish their minds, . . ."), defense of music in general, with documentation of its many attributes and its historical (classical especially) acceptance, overwhelmingly dominates the manuscript (see pp.240-1).

Noble male courtiers and those among their ranks who sang in the academies gradually infiltrated the realm of musical performance, which the troubadours had given up to the jongleur-minstrel [see p.166], in a style now more compatible with their exalted position. the early madrigal was for them a respectable, noble genre in both its poetic text and its contrapuntal musical style and, therefore, admitting "enthusiastic cultivation by the male aristocracy" (Riley, 1980:53). Moreover, they were able to take over here because their education had included instruction in music theory, counterpoint and sight reading. Krause (1971:261) finds these noblemen of leisure dabbling in science -- "a gentleman's plaything" -- as well, for "basic science has no more payoff in the political economy than did art." For this, too, they had the necessary education.

Noble women, on the other hand, although experienced in the semi-improvised solo-song principle, were less able to participate in the counterpoint of the new madrigal form because of their lack of technical expertise. This would become another, though temporary, setback for female vocalization. The structure of opportunities for female singers, then, was influenced by both their disadvantages in terms of formal musical training and the increased esteem or prestige that was being accorded the musical genre of the late frottola and early madrigal compared to the arena of solo song. The former kept women out; the latter drew men in and also kept women out.

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As for women singers' deficiencies in theory, counterpoint, etc., we find a simple, single, but critical comparative instance of deprivation and disadvantage in the literature on women artists (Cf. Nochlin, 1971:493-6), the unavailability of the nude model to women art students, who more frequently attended public art schools (in which the female nude was forbidden) rather than the male-dominated academies. Even in the latter, "lady" students were not admitted to life drawing classes from the time of the Renaissance until near the end of the nineteenth century, "a period in which careful and prolonged study of the nude model was essential to the training of every young artist, to the production of any work with pretentions to grandeur, and to the very essence of history painting" (Nochlin, 1971:494). "To be deprived of this ultimate stage of training," Nochlin (1971:494) concludes, "meant, in effect, to be deprived of the possibility of creating major art works, . . . "; It meant that it was "institutionally impossible for women to achieve artistic excellence or success on the same footing as men, . . ." (Nochlin, 1971:508).

More generally, art-making, along with music-making, traditionally demanded the acquisition of special techniques and skills in sequence, which took place in an institutional setting outside the home. Nochlin (1971:497) points out that this was not true for the writer, a clue to the reason for the existence of some great literary women but the lack of contemporary counterparts in the visual arts or music. Exclusion of women from the more academic spheres of musical instruction (in theory, counterpoint and sight reading) deprived them of the requirements necessary to compete within the evolving genre of the more professional, high-cultured and verging on public madrigal.

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They were limited to the private, domestic, recreational and amateur context of the solo song just as women artists were constrained within flower painting, pastels, portraits and miniatures.

The second way in which women were at a disadvantage vocally, the effect of the status of a genre on the population of participants in the field, is found to have been an important factor in the case of Victorian writers. Tuchman and Fortin (1980:309) apply the "empty-field phenomenon" (found in social work, nursing, gynecology, preventive medicine and domestic law, for example):

> . . . when a field or occupation is not socially valued, women and other minorities will populate it heavily. If the field grows in prestige, . . . men may push women (and other minorities) out. Conversely, as a field loses social value, when "proletarianization" occurs, . . . men may decamp and leave the field to women (and other minorities).[40]

In their case, Tuchman and Fortin (1980:309,324) suggest that the growing prestige of the novel in Victorian England limited the opportunities for women to have their work seriously considered and to achieve fame: ". . . men invaded the emerging profession of novelist and developed the notion of the novel as high culture, thus differentiating it from the novel as popular culture; women remained relegated to the popular novel with which they had been associated traditionally" (Tuchman and Fortin, 1984:73-4). More generally, these authors speak of an inverse relationship between such evolving prestige and the chance for women to partipate successfully in it.[41]

For women vocalists, as in the case of female artists and Victorian women writers, a particular style or genre pursued by singers, artists and writers determined the lead for men. In the third instance, the process through which males were able to accomplish this was based on their domination of the most prestigious literary genre.

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nonfiction, as well as their resulting power within fiction. In the first two instances, their gain evolved out of the sex-differentiated training of singers and artists. Men "invaded" Renaissance song as the role of the singer became more professionalized and offered greater social and economic rewards, and women were, as Tuchman and Fortin (1980:308) term the process, "edged out."

Indeed, discouraging suggestions can be found regarding women's active role in courtly entertainment. Included in the "time and season" when music was to be performed by courtiers was "especially . . . in the presence of women, because those sights sweeten the minds of the hearers, and make them the more apt to bee pieced with the pleasantness of musicke, and also they quicken the spirits of the very doers" (Castiglione, [1528] 1928:101). Not only, then, was women's music coopted by their male "equals," but attempts were made to envision the lady again as a passive listener and muse-like inspiration for men "of quality" performing what used to be "her" province, albeit amateur, of music-making (as well as that of men of lower rank). In addition, whereas the tradition of female performance within the private court circle was poorly documented by contemporary writers and has generally gone unnoticed, Riley (1980:44) feels that "undue attention" was paid to men's entrance into the field, with the result that their participation is completely accepted in music histories (in addition to another possible reason why the late frottola receives such lengthy treatment in the same).

After 1550, though, according to Einstein ([1949] 1971:I:182), the madrigal a voci pari disappears along with the crudity of the texts. He ([1949] 1971:I:177) cites examples of madrigal composers'

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leaving the lady's name blank in order to make the work more generally applicable, similar to the medieval courtly practice we have already discussed (see p.152):

> . . . the poems addressed to a courtesan, a donna da bene, ought also to pass as homage to a patrician woman. Only in the early times of the madrigal do some of the madrigal texts clearly indicate the lady's rank. By 1550, the picture becomes blurred, "generalized," "idealized," and the dialogue between lover and lady grows pretentious, sentimental, and conventional, . . . (Einstein, [1949] 1971:I:182)

Also, around the middle of the sixteenth century, both the Catholic Counter Reformation and the growth in the academies caused diminished attendance at courtesan salons. The donna da bene disappears, and the aristocratic woman takes, or re-takes, her place, ladies of the highest rank again being honored in the texts. With this change, the woman also obtains her share in the performance of such part music.

This last assertion corresponds with diverse information from a variety of sources. Einstein ([1949] 1971:I:196) proposes that the rule of the soprano, the female "star," does not begin until the second half of the century; and O'Brien (1950:83) contends that women took up music as an accomplishment in the middle of the sixteenth century. Jander (1980:341) provides evidence that, in the generation of Isabella d'Este, all secular music (frottole and early madrigale) used vocal ranges comfortable for male voices, with falsetto parts that never go above d", whereas madrigals of the ensuing decades reflect the discovery of the soprano voice, taking it as high as g". Newcomb (1980:16-17) states that in a 1545 commedia dell' arte performance given in the palace of Ferrante Sanseverino in Naples all the singers were male -- "Scipione delle Palle, . . . , Luigi and Fabrizio Dentice and Giulio Cesare Brancaccio . . . that Dentice with his falsetto and

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Brancaccio with his bass 'worked miracles'" -- but that the same was not true of a performance in Naples approximately a decade later --

> A booklet recently uncovered [Erasmo Percopo, "Di una stampa sconosciuta delle 'stanze' del Tansillo per la Duchessa d'Alba," 1558] describes intermedii . . . performed with a comedy at the house of Maria d'Aragona in 1558. Scipione delle Palle, Giovanni Leonardo dall' Arpa, and Fomia, a female, are mentioned as musicians.

Nicola Vicentino had made the distinction between compositions a voci mutate (without women's voices) and those with mixed voices (Jander, 1980:341).

By the middle of the century, women had evidently prepared themselves better for the contrapuntal setting, at the same time that composers were raising the voice register higher and higher. Techniques of singing were developing within the lighter, solo-song style, relinquished again to female singers as males emersed themselves in the madrigal, and would become important elements in the new, virtuosic madrigal, as we shall see in the next chapter.

Riley (1980:69-70) theorizes a final reason for the acceptance of women court singers to have been "a curious combination of sexual voyeurism (surely a carryover from dealing with courtesan performers), with a desire on the part of male listeners to immerse themselves completely in the diversion through aural and visual stimulation." She (1980:70) quotes both an anonymous text of a late Wert madrigal:

> My lady teases and delights in song,
> Now rising, now falling, now quickly, now slowly,
> She entices and melts me.
> The clear notes leave her lips with a warmth
> So charming that two senses are gratified at once,
> In looking and listening;
> O sweet diversity! Reward in two forms --
> The eyes enjoying jewels, the ears enjoying sounds!

and a letter, found in Solerti (1900), from the Ferrara ambassador to

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Vienna to his Duke, Alfonso II: "I waxed eloquently in praise of their [Ferrara's noble Bendidio sisters] virtues and nobility and also their beauty. At which he said that the music of women who are not beautiful isn't worth a thing, . . ."

In support of Riley's suggestion, we find sketches of both the Neapolitan gentildonna Eufemia's mid-century vocal execution and that of the later, northern Laura Peverara, in which their performances were judged partially by physical attributes respective to their gender:

> Between the beauty of so rich and beautiful a spectacle [Euphemia] and the sweetness of the singing, so new and suave, everyone felt himself in Paradise. (Quoted in Newcomb, 1980:17)
>
> When His Excellency [Duke Alfonso] was at Mantua he saw a young lady [Laura Peverara] who was rather beautiful and, in addition, had the virtue of singing and playing excellently. (Letter of 1580 by Grana, as quoted in Newcomb, 1980:11)
>
> [Laura Peverara] fired the imagination of poets and composers alike as much by her youthful charms and blond hair as by her beautiful voice and accomplished singing (Kenton, 1966:501)

Other descriptions, of the singing ladies of 1570's Ferrara, emphasize not specifically their physical beauty but the overall beauty of their song: "sang . . . , so well and so beautifully" (Letter of 1571 by Canigiani, as quoted in Newcomb, 1980:12), "a very lovely thing to hear" (Letter of 1579 by Conosciuti, as quoted in Newcomb, 1980:9).[42] We must agree, therefore, with Wood (1980:295), who stresses not only the ways in which women competing with men for professional power have been trivialized but also the ways in which female "stars" have been glamorized.

Singers in the Church

Secular music, which in the past had relied on church music for its styles, notation, rhythms and techniques, had now left the

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restraints of ecclesiastical composition. With the ideological support of secular humanist philosophy and the practical backing of Renaissance princes, worldly music in Italy created its own modes and techniques, including new freedoms in the use and treatment of melody and harmony. It also embraced a larger variety of voice ranges. The increased number of higher voices in the new mix of singers within a vocal composition meant, correspondingly, a new mix of sexes within such pieces.[43]

The popularity of these new forms for church composers, church singers and ecclesiastical princes led to sacred music's borrowing from its temporal counterpart. In relation to its singers, the problem became one of finding new and better ways to produce the higher, more complicated sounds that had become so admired in the secular sphere.

The absence of female voices in the music of the Church was "accommodated easily enough in the relatively simple strains of the Middle Ages" (Pleasants, 1966:37). They made do with men and boys. But the elaborate polyphonic style, which flourished by the middle of the fifteenth century, had already "necessitated a much wider range of voices [see pp.372-3] and a higher degree of virtuosity [see pp.193-202] than anything that had gone before" in church music (Heriot, [1929] 1975:10). Choirboys and falsettists, who functioned to enlarge the compass of the voices of male choristers, had already become impractical and inadequate in florid upper ranges, and castrati began to appear in church choirs in great numbers in the sixteenth century. This was despite the fact that Deuteronomy's 23:1 dictum "He that is wounded in the stones, or hath his privy member cut off, shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD" had long presided.

The discovery of the female treble voice in secular music

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created an even more "exciting new sound which the Counter Reformation Church could not do without" (Jander, 1980:341-2). In contrast, the growth of interest in the bass voice observable not only in the creation of separate bass lines as a harmonic foundation to counterpoint but also in the emphasis on low voices for their novel sonorous effects,[44] which played important parts in the polyphonic chamber works of the Renaissance, was of only brief duration in sacred music (Jander, 1980:339).

"With women barred from participation in church music," Jander (1980:342) goes on to explain, "only the castrato could provide the sound required, and so moral qualms regarding castration were set aside." Emasculated male sopranos were to perform a function much desired by society that, because of sex-biased prohibitions, it would not allow the more likely candidates, women, to do.

> Not only were they allowed to sing because of their trained voices, but also because women were forbidden to do it until the eighteenth century. Because of this the castrates were welcome and were an indispensible substitute for women. (Habock, 1927:150)

Prohibitions against castration were overlooked in order for the Church to acquire voices essential for the music it had a mind to have. Prohibitions against women, on the other hand, were not excused in order to procure their voices. Were castrati the better of two evils? It's not likely that an explicit choice between the two was ever made. Rather, there remained a longstanding tradition exempting women from church participation and a continuing desire to keep women out in conjunction with the custom, going back to the early Church and even the Jewish chant, of substituting boy and falsetto voices to achieve the height of women's. The employment of castrati to accomplish this

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end was going just one step further, but it was also that it was a step that challenged more equivocal rules and restrictions than those that forbade women.

The Spanish Falsettists

Boys' voices were not strong enough to hold up new treble parts that were both highly complex and demanding of power and stamina. In addition, "the musicianship required for the secure execution of this exacting music was such that the boys, by the time thay had acquired it, were either boys no longer or had, at best, no more than a year or so to go" (Pleasants, 1966:37). These short-lived voices had, in fact, always proved an unprofitable investment. Besides their voices mutating or "breaking" as the onset of puberty deepened them by a whole octave,[45] Heriot ([1927] 1975:10) complains that boys were also "mischievous and troublesome." A non-Italian picture of the change that occurred was that of the Bavarian Kapelle at Munich, the first German court to find glory as a center of music:

> Until 1579, when the Kapelle reached its largest, [Kapellmeister] Lassus collected singers and players, especially boys with good voices, from all over Europe. . . . In the 1580s the court began to employ castrati, and found castrated boys in the Netherlands and Germany. (Raynor, 1972:91-2)

The papal choir had eliminated boys much earlier.

But before the onset of castrati choristers in large numbers and aside from the presence of choirboys, the Church had been dependent upon masculine voices in the falsetto register to enlarge the compass of voices in church choirs to three octaves. The English Church counted as many countertenors, the English term for male altos singing falsetto or with "head voice," in sixteenth-century choirs, as tenors and basses

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put together, according to Ardran and Wulstan (1967:17). We have already mentioned and will later discuss in greater detail the disadvantages of such voices -- emissions of only moderate power; inability to go very much higher than the alto range (Franz Habock [1927:146], author of the principal detailed study of castrati singers,[46] says not above C or D); forced, unpleasant and strident qualities; wearing out the vocal chords at an early age; lack of expression. Nevertheless, these substitute voices were expedient, especially when, before the middle of the sixteenth century, falsettists trained in Spain (supposedly according to a special system and with a secret technique of which nothing is known) managed a far superior, more flexible and sweeter sound compared to those who had come before and also an ability to extend their range through the soprano register. They became known as contraltini, the mainstay of church choirs until their replacement by castrato voices.

Charles Burney presents in his General History of Music ([1789] 1957:240) the following list of Spaniards who performed in the falset in the papal chapel previous to 1600:

> Bartol. Escobedo, Ant. Calasans, Ernest Bultezo, Francesco Palavera, Cristofero Morales, Juan Sanchez, Francesco Bastamente, Juan di Figueroa, T. Gomez di Palenza, Juan di Pareds, Fran. di Priora Toletano, Fran. Sottoda Langa, Juan Pantos Toletano, Diego Vasquez di Conca, Fran. Spionosa, Tomaso, Lod. da Vottoria, and Diego Lorenza

Ida Franca (1959:95) names Simon Perusinus as the first Italian falset sopranist in papal service. He was leader of the singers at the Council of Trent from 1561 to 1563. Italy's first pontifical contraltist she (1959:96) finds to have joined in 1580, one Gian Luca Conforti.

It has been suggested in the literature (Fantoni, 1873; Monaldi, 1920; Habock, 1927) that the secret of the Spanish falsettists

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was that they were really castrati. Franca (1959:92-5), in fact, makes no distinction between the two. Whether it was to blame on Spain the introduction of castration, to explain how considerable numbers of castrati would appear around 1600 or to fathom reasons for the improvement in the falsetto sound, it is likely that at least some actual castrati pretended to be falsettists for the sake of public opinion. If clandestine castration had ever supplemented the falsetto method in Spain, it must have died out rapidly, however, for the last of the Spanish soprano falsettists at Rome, Giovanni de Sanctos, died in 1625. By that time the acknowledged Italian castrati already reigned supreme. In fact, before the sixteenth century, Pietro della Valle was already referring to castrati as natural sopranos and falsettists as artificial ones (Bukofzer, 1947:399).

Church Castrati

The practice of castration was not a new one and was performed in former times for reasons other than maintaining a high voice. Charles Ancillon ([1707] 1718:title page), in his description of "all the different sorts of Eunuchs; the esteem they have met with in the world, and how they came to be made so," counted 4,000 years during which time such men had been mentioned in sacred and profane history. Many scholars have attributed the introduction of this form of mutilation to Semiramis, Queen of the Assyrians, but eunuchs were to be found in numbers in most ancient societies:

> Signs of castration surrounded the child in antiquity. In every field and garden he saw a Priapus, with a large erect penis and a sickle, which was supposed to symbolize castration. His pedagogue and his teacher might be castrated, castrated prisoners were everywhere and his parents' servants would often be castrated. (de Mause, [1974] 1975:46)

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Franca (1959:91) claims that castration had its origin in "the brains of evil despots," as Lewis Coser (1974:4) blames what he calls "greedy institutions" -- organizations or groups which make total claims on their members and which attempt to encompass within their circle the whole personality, which seek exclusive and individual loyalty and attempt to reduce the claims of competing roles and status positions on those they wish to encompass within their boundaries. In the case of political eunuchs, the latter describes "the recruitment and use of servants of rule who are totally beholden to the ruler because they lack roots in the society at large" due to the destruction of "all family and sexual, as well as local attachments of . . . devoted servants so as to monopolize their energies and interests."

The interpolated translation of Ancillon's ([1707] 1718:26-9,51-65) legal opinion concerning the admissibility of castrates marrying discusses all the various motives for performing operations of this sort. The following is a summary of the major reasons:

> (1) to produce "safe" and suitable attendants and those to watch over the wives and daughters of the powerful, frequently in harems, in order that no wrong could be done to them and so that they could do no wrong
>
> (2) to be eligible for ancient and even some Christian sect priesthoods, so that members might live with greater chastity and purity
>
> (3) to serve the criminal and sexual ends of others
>
> (4) to punish serious offenses and consequential failures and to retaliate against enemies
>
> (5) to ward off or cure diseases and pains
>
> (6) to procure loyal servants and civil ministrants, including educators (Cf. Coser [1974:8] for a discussion of "political eunichism" and Habock [1927:10] for portrayals of eunuchs as "true, brave, hard working, dependable, patient

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as teachers, trustworthy.")

(7) to assure the preservation of fine young voices

Many of those falling into the first six categories had probably been singers also. Since eunuch slaves might be called upon to entertain, it is reasonable to assume that their unusual vocal qualities were quickly noted. The term "eunuch voice," Duey (1951:47) says, was commonly used in antiquity. At what point in time boy children began to be castrated strictly to secure their treble voices is unknown. Duey (1951:47) and Habŏck (1927:69) speak of the castration of Roman dancers and pantomines because it caused the body to become more lithe and flexible. Burney ([1789] 1957:528) found no information on eunuch singers in antiquity, however, except for a particular sect of emasculated priests who frequently sang and played instruments through the streets. Franca (1959:91) claims the opposite:

> . . . Queen Semiramis kept an entire army of eunuchs at her court, selecting from them the paramours and singers for her lustful orgies.
>
> The Romans learned to emasculate from the Greeks, . . . Both Romans and Greeks castrated boys before puberty to form singers with voices higher and brighter than male voices, which at the same time were more powerful than any female voice ever can be [emphasis mine] . . . The Arabs did the same thing long before Mohammed and for the same reason; . . . Even the Hottentots deep in Africa castrated the vocalists of their wild, primitive rituals.

She offers no documents to support these statements, however. Engel ([1909] 1970:107) too, though, mentions Assyrian eunuch musicians: "These persons undoubtedly were singers as well as instrumentalists: this may be concluded from their attitude, and from the nature of their instruments, which in some instances could scarcely have been used otherwise than for accompanying the singing." We have found no other references to emasculated singers in our survey of ancient singing.

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Angus Heriot's ([1927] 1975:10) guess that eunuch singers had been in use in Rome as early as the fourth century also lacks evidence. In fact, there is not trustworthy information concerning castrati in early church music. At Constantinople, it was probably at least as early as the reign of Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus (905-959), for his tutor, Theodore Balsamone, composed a treatise in defense of the species who, he said, were habitually employed as singers (Heriot, [1927] 1975:10). The eunuch Manuel is recorded as having introduced the eastern chant into Smolensk, Russia, in the eleventh or twelfth century. Herbert Biehle (1931:20) and Francis Rogers (1919:413) claim traces of evidence for anonymous castrati singers in Italy during the twelfth century. Franca (1959:91-2) refers to both Matteo Fornari's Narrazione istorica . . . della Pontifica Cappella . . . col Catalogo dei Cantori, an eighteenth century treatise presumedly containing a complete catalogue of sopranists and contraltists in the service of the popes back to the twelfth century, but which was lost from the library of Bologna's academy of music, and Fantoni's Storia universale del canto (1873), in which the historian quotes a twelfth-century canonist as saying: "Once the class of singers did not consist of eunuchs, as it does today."

The first mention of a particular musical castrato at Rome occurs in Due dialoghi della musica (1552 or 1553), by Luigi Dentini. Some were reported in Spain and Portugal about this time also. The claim that Orlando Lassus employed as many as six castrati in the duchal chapel at Munich during the 1560s and 1570s (Biehle, 1931, as quoted in Bowman, 1951:28; Heriot, [1927] 1975:11) is not consistent with Raynor's (1972:91-2) account for that court (see p.398). Franca

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(1959:96) names the Italian sopranist and composer Francesco Severi Perugino (ca.1556-1630), who spent his life in the service of the Church and who "helped to prepare the path of his brethren for world fame." Two papal singers, the Spaniard Padre Francesco Soto (first listed as part of the Rome choir in 1562) and Giacomo Spagnoletto (engaged in 1588) have been referred to by early musical theorists as castrati, and therefore the earliest to serve the Roman popes. They figure in Vatican records, however, as falsettists. Habŏck's statement (1927:163) that it was "found out" that the sopranist Francesco Soto was a castrati is perhaps an answer to this discrepancy. Thomas Walker (1980:875) adds a certain Martino to the 1588 Spagnoletto appointment. That was the year that Habŏck (1927:163) claims that the term "eunuch" was first used in the Sistine Chapel records.

The first acknowledged castrati admitted to the Sistine Chapel were Pietro Paolo Folignato and Girolamo Rossini, both appearing in the Sistine Diary entry for 22 April, 1599 as such. Over the objections of the Spanish falsettists, they were sanctioned by the current Pope, Clement VIII, who endorsed the creation of castrati for the purpose of church choirs as "ad honorem Dei" (Brief of Pope Clement VIII, 1600, as quoted in Rogers, 1919:414). A Bull issued ten years previously by Pope Sixtus V, Cum pro nostro pastorali munere, had already presented the possibility for such singers through its reorganization of the Capella Julia at St. Peter's Basilica. It ordained "12 singers: four basses, four tenors, and four contraltos [i.e. falsettists], and in addition, for the voice which is called soprano, four eunuchs if skilled ones can be found; if not, six boys" (Quoted in Milner, 1973:250).

Singers of this type rapidly became more numerous, both in the

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Roman choir and in other Catholic churches throughout Europe, among which were the splendiferous court chapels. By the second half of the 1600s, according to Habŏck (1927:149), castration had reached its peak, and, by the beginning of the 1700s, an overflow of castrate voices existed, many of whom he (1927:168) names.

The conservatories of southern Italy (Naples and smaller cities of the Apulia region were likely centers for castration operations), where needy children and poor orphans were provided for and educated, came to be places of intensive musical education for castrated boys. They also began to take in paying pupils. The major Italian cities housed several conservatories each:

> Naples alone had three, and for a while four conservatories -- Madonna di Loreto, Santo Onofrio a Capuana, Poveri di Gesú Cristo, and Santa Maria della Pietà dei Turchini. The first, . . . , was established in 1537. . . . sheltered 300-400 poor boys, to whom the best education was given. They studied composition, all instruments, voice, Italian, French, speech, dramatics, history, and so forth. All subjects were taught by the best teachers of the time. Santo Onofrio, . . . , became one of the most famous music schools which ever existed, with the greatest Italian musicians as teachers. . . . The same applies for Bologna, Venice, and so forth.
>
> Also Germany, with its many autonomous soverigns, had conservatories for orphans and poor children attached to the various court chapels. Some of them had a special division for Kapaune [capons, fattened castrated cocks]. (Franca, 1959:97)

In these, boys studied from ten to twelve years, every day from dawn to dusk. A later description of the rigors of such institutions is given by Burney ([1770-1772] 1927:65):

> The only vacation in these schools, in the whole year, is in autumn, and that for a few days only: during the winter, the boys rise two hours before it is light, from which time they continue their exercise, an hour and a half at dinner excepted, till eight o'clock at night; and this constant perseverance, for a number of years, with genius and good teaching, must produce great musicians.

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Habock (1927:315) composes a typical schedule of daily exercises. In the morning, the first hour entailed learning hard passages and techniques, the second practicing trills, the third developing pure intonation. Then came two hours of literature. In the afternoon, there was a half hour in theory, one in composition and the rest in piano. He (1927:315) describes students performing for teachers and in front of mirrors in order to observe tongue, mouth and facial movements and pupils listening to echos for the purpose of hearing mistakes. It should be noted that the voice was not threatened by overuse. As much attention was paid to the theory of singing as to its practice.

Eighteenth-century reports would tell of special care that came to be given to future castrati singers compared to the other boys (and sometimes girls) of the conservatories: "There are in this college [St. Onofrio] sixteen young Castrati, and these lie upstairs, by themselves, in warmer apartments than the other boys, for fear of colds, which might not only render their delicate voices unfit for exercise at present, but hazard the entire loss of them for ever" (Burney, [1770-1772] 1927:65). They were also given better food and warmer winter clothing in attempts to attend carefully to their health. Habock [1927:312] quotes Doni's opinion that castrati put unoperated boys at a disadvantage in being taught. An example is seen in Burney's ([1770-1772] 1959:269) description of the common practicing room:

> The jumbling them all together in this manner may be convenient for the house, and may teach the boys to attend to their own parts with firmness, whatever else may be going forward at the same time; it may likewise give them force, by obliging them to play loud in order to hear themselves; but in the midst of such jargon, and continuied dissonance, it is wholly impossible to give any kind of polish or finishing to their performance; . . .

A more exalted status for specialized castrate vocalists becomes

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obvious. No longer would such singers be called "evirato" (emasculated one), but instead "musico," or connoisseur of music. On the other hand, they suffered psychological disadvantages. Heriot ([1927] 1975:45) reads, again and again, in the list of pupils of the Neapolitan conservatories the entry "so and so, eunuco, entered . . . se n'e fuggito" -- "he ran away."

The attitude of the Church towards the practice of castration was "absurdly inconsistent and unreasonable" (Heriot, [1927] 1975:25), "thoroughly equivocal" (Martin, 1961:48). Although the Church never specifically prohibited castration, Milner (1973:251) says, it was "implicitly condemned by the traditional teaching on mutilation which states that 'amputation of any part of the human body is never lawful except when the whole body cannot be saved from destruction in any other way.'" Most theologians condemned as unlawful and unnatural the acquisition of select voices by such means.

But official Church statements on the matter were in contradiction with the reality of the times and even Catholic Church policy in regard to its relationship with castrate singers. For example, there was the position that "scarcely anyone can be a eunuch without sin," from Pope Benedict XIV's Concerning Diocesan Synods, as late as 1753 (Quoted in Milner, 1973:252), a time when castrate singers were an accepted fact both in the churches and on the secular stage. And even Benedict's disapproval (1753, as quoted in Milner, 1973:252) recognized the difficulties of the situation, as one sees in the following part of his statement:

> . . . when the secular powers [including the Pope as ruler of the Papal States] allow the castration of boys to pass unnoticed, . . . when a musical fashion has been introduced into the churches which can only be maintained with

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> difficulty (or not even with difficulty) without castratos; when for a long time now people have been accustomed to hear these voices even in the Papal Chapel, [I ask] whether a bishop who removed the castratos would act prudently, or whether he would not rightly incur . . . blame and hatred . . .

The operation was supposedly punishable by death, at times, at other times by excommunication (Cf. Burney, [1770-1772] 1959:247): "I know very well, they will tell us at Rome, that every one who makes an Eunuch is excommunicated, ipso facto" (Ancillon, [1707] 1718:136). Nevertheless, evirati singers were not discouraged: ". . . the great Men at the Court of Rome can, notwithstanding, encourage this Practice (as in fact they do, by encouraging Eunuchs, . . . even in their very churches, which if they did not, there would be none) . . ." (Ancillon, [1707] 1718:136).

The reality was that every church in Italy, including the Pope's own private chapel, was quickly staffed with castrato singers. By 1640, della Valle wrote: "At present every court and every chapel in Italy is furnished with them" (Quoted in Burney, [1789] 1957:531). Contemporary writers have summarized the Church's rational: ". . . the victim, once the irrevocable deed was done, might as well be encouraged to serve both the Church and himself in the most congenial and profitable field thereafter open to him" (Pleasants, 1966:38). Therefore, ". . . if a husky male well-trained musically and in vocal production, from whom emanated a voice with a female range, appeared on the doorstep, so to speak, this was the will of God" (Rushmore, 1971:18).

Financial rewards and positions of honor and security could be gained by those subjected to the knife. In effect, then, the Church created the demand for castrati. The opera would later augment this

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demand and enlarge such singers' possibilities for success in both fame and fortune. But since Sixtus' Bull antedated the opening of the first public opera house by 48 years, "it can be argued that the popular taste for the castrato voice reflected in the singers chosen for the opera was largely created by church practice" (Milner, 1973:250). And until the eighteenth century, when castrati would come to dominate European opera, production of this variety of singer for church choirs was largely independent of the needs of the opera and other secular music. And so, as the musical needs of the church prevailed, the operations continued to be performed, with the supply of castrati thus insured.

The procedure of castration involved either full emasculation or depriving the individual of his testes only, by various means:

> . . . made so frigid, as at last quite to disappear and vanish, this is done by cutting the Vein that conveyed their proper Aliment and Support, which makes them grow lank and flabby, till at last they actually dry up and come to nothing. Another method was, to take the Testicle quite away at once, and this operation was commonly effected, by putting the Patient into a Bath of warm Water, to soften and supple the Parts and make them more tractable; some small time after, they pressed the Jugular Veins, which made the Party so stupid and insensible, that he fell into a kind of Apoplexy, and then the Action could be performed with scarce any Pain at all to the Patient; and this was generally done by the Mother or Nurse in the most tender Infancy. Sometimes they used to give a certain quantity of Opium to the Persons designed for Castration, whom they cut while they were in their dead Sleep, . . . but as it was observed, that most of those that had been out after this manner, died by this Narcotick; . . . (Ancillon, [1707] 1718:15-16)

The surgery "saved" the voice, keeping it at boyish pitch and with boyish flexibility. It was was usually performed on boys who showed both vocal and musical potential between the ages of seven and twelve years. Some, however, were castrated in infancy on the mistaken assumption that the procedure alone would produce good singers.

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> But if Castration does better a good [voice], yet it never can give a Voice where there was none before, or make a bad one good . . . I have been told, that when they used to cut Children in their most tender Infancy, there were . . . Eunuchs made, which proved to be good for nothing; for when they grew up, it so happened, that not one of them had a tolerable Voice, and thus the Parents were frustrated of their Expectation (for they are generally the Persons who execute this Cruelty on their Children, in hopes they may one Day be a Help to them, and raise the rest of the Family [for they would have no children of their own to divert the financial benefits]) and so many poor Children made double miserable, First mangled and maimed in their Body, and Secondly rendered incapable of getting a tolerable livelihood, their Voice being good for nothing; and it is certain, nothing in Italy is so contemptible as a Eunuch that cannot sing [emphasis mine].
>
> But since that Misfortune wherein so many miscarried, they now are grown (as they think) much wiser, they therefore will cut none now till they know they have a Voice; . . . (Ancillon, [1707] 1718:39)

Burney ([1770-1772] 1959:247) claimed that before the operartion was performed, boys were brought to a conservatory "to be tried as to the probability of voice." He ([1770-1772] 1959:248) added, however, that too frequently the operation must have been performed without trial or, at least, sufficient proofs of voice, "otherwise such numbers could never be found in every great town throughout Italy, without any voice at all, or at least without one sufficient to compensate such a loss." Even by the time of Burney's continental travels, at Ludwigsburg the Duke of Würtemberg, like his seventeenth-century ancestor Eberhard III before him, was famous for kicking out unsatisfactory emasculated boy singers and "ordering" new ones. The Duke employed "two Bologna surgeons, expert in this vocal manufacture" (Burney, [1770-1772] 1927:115).

The Church was supposedly willing to take up the vocal "failures," if not as singers than in some clerical capacity. According to Johann von Archenholtz (1791:299), the number of these victims by

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the last decades of the eighteenth century was so great "that they surpass[ed] the want of singers of all kings and princes: for which reason, they [were] allowed to take orders; but they [could] only be secular priests . . ." It was Burney's contention ([1770-1772] 1927:68) that by then, after the best castrati had fled the churches for the operatic stage, "all the musici in the churches . . . [were] made up of the refuse of the opera houses," and it was "rare to meet with a tolerable voice upon the establishment in any church throughout Italy."

Contrary to the voice, the body

> continued its normal development, except that it almost always put on weight or even became bloated.[47] This led to a strange disproportion between physical build and vocal apparatus, a boy's voice in a man's body. The boy's voice, though, was much stronger, because he now had much larger resonance spaces in his whole body. So the voice remained supple, adapted as before to runs, leaps in pitch and coloraturas, but at the same time gained strength. With the breathing powers of a man, it acquired tremendous new potentialities [while their chest dimensions enabled them to inhale a great amount of air, the larynx, considerably smaller than normal, allowed the voice to be produced with much less expenditure of breath]. (Pahlen, [1971] 1974:15)

Pleasants (1966:42) offers more physiological detail: "Under the rigid discipline to which he would now be exposed, his lung capacity and diaphragmatic support would be augmented to an extraordinary degree, enabling him to sustain the emission of breath in the projection of tone up to a minute or more, which is beyond the ability of most normal adult male and female singers."

So, the castrato voice was a viable replacement for that of the female:

> . . . the fibres and the muscles of the vocal organs . . . kept the female flexibility, a characteristic of boyhood. Therefore, the emasculated adult, with his female vocal apparatus and his male thorax, had a voice much higher and brighter than the best tenor, sometimes even higher than most of our sopranos. The support of such a voice in both

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> its male and female ranges by strong male lungs resulted in an ample voice far more powerful in its upper register than any female voice can ever be, . . . (Franca, 1959:100)
>
> It was a woman's sound but with a difference -- something deeper, fuller, richer. There has been no exact vocal equivalent. (Schonberg, 1984:25)
>
> Their timbre is as clear and piercing as that of choirboys and much more powerful; they appear to sing an octave above the natural voice of women. Their voices have always something dry and harsh, quite different from the youthful softness of women; but they are . . . brilliant, light, sparkling, very strong and wide-ranging. (De Brosses, [ca.1739] 1978:24)

Because of supposed condemnation by the Church and the threat of civil penalties, that seem almost never to have been enforced, the operation was clouded in secrecy. Burney ([1770-1772] 1927:67), during his travels in Italy in 1770, attempted, in vain, to gain specifics as to where and how the surgery had been and still was accomplished: "I was told at Milan that it was at Venice; at Venice, that it was at Bologna; but at Bologna the fact was denied, and I was referred to Florence; from Florence to Rome, and from Rome I was sent to Naples." Yet, Burney's History ([1789] 1957:II:530) refers to M. de la Landi's Voyage d'Italie, in which that traveller describes shops at Naples with the inscription "Qui si castrano raggazzi" ("Here boys are castrated") over the door. However clandestine the operation may or may not have been by the time of Burney's observations, it was certainly widespread. Walker (1980:875) estimates that castration was perpetuated on perhaps 4,000 boys during the eighteenth century.

There are also arguments as to whether the more simple or more severe operative form was performed, with most evidence pointing to the former -- little information on fatalities, little effect on castrati's ultimate health (a high proportion, in fact, lived extremely long

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lives) and the probability that many, at least those who performed in the secular sphere, engaged in sexual relationships.

Boys destined for castration came almost totally from very poor, uneducated families: "So fatal is it in Italy to be the Son of a poor Man, and have a fine Voice, . . ." (Ancillon, [1707] 1718:40). The possibility for financial security and success for the child, and perhaps benefits to the parents, necessitated a great sacrifice on the part of the boy offspring. In addition, it was a mutilation inflicted on him by his parents before the age of his consent. "They are generally people of the meanest description who give their children for such operations, in hope, that they may be able one day to support their parents" (von Archenholtz, 1791:298).

Benefits might issue from such actions only because the Church was willing to take on the expense of training the child. Here was an important exception to what we will find to be the rule of musicians originating from well-to-do or, at least, artistic families (see p.17). At least two reasons appear to explain this variation: the price to be paid and the relative needs and gains on the part of the singers' families;[48] and the possibility of external support or patronage from earliest childhood as compared to parents' carrying that burden.

However, the illegality of the act and the shame owing to parental complicity "inspired many a tortured excuse" (Pleasants, 1966:40) for the results: injuries in childhood brawls, victims of animal bites, pathological health circumstances that required surgical remedies. The status loss associated with emasculation (Ancillon [(1707) 1718:94-116] spends a chapter discussing the negative notions of hatred, mockery, derision and revulsion people held toward eunuchs)

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was compensated for by gains in honor, wealth and security, especially among desperate peasants in times of great insecurity. This mixed status is reflected in descriptions of castrati by Zacconi, in 1592: "those singular and perfect voices," "voices similar to angelic and divine voices," which belong to another type of singer, who are "among the saddest and unfortunate which are to be found" (Quoted in Foreman, 1969:118).

Castrati were not necessarily bound within physically separate "total institutions," as Erving Goffman (1961:xiii) calls such barriers to social intercourse . Yet they were divorced from others, the rest of society actually, by a symbolic boundary that created a social distance similar to that occasioned by a sexual difference, a racial distinction or an ill-fated disease. It was that very distinguishing mark, however, though held in contempt and ridicule, that was, at the same time, their mark of distinction -- the reason for their unique and thrilling vocal capability. Many did indeed become trapped in total insitutions -- the church conservatories and the church choirs -- and concentrated in one overall status, with no other groups of reference, to the extent that marriage was prohibited to them (based on their incapacity to procreate). They had been sold by their parents into a kind of musical slavery. With the forthcoming choice of an occupational life in the secular opera, others would have more options. Burney ([1770-1772] 1959:115) illustrates, though, their utter dependence on music for a livelihood, in a comment he makes about Bernacchi, a famous castrato singing teacher, when he was young and not singing well: "This stimulated and piqued him to take uncommon pains, well knowing that there was then no possibility of changing his profession: a castrato

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has seldom strength or spirit sufficient for any other employment than that of music; . . ."

Another reason that the cruelty and unnaturalness of the surgical solution to the Church's dilemma -- needing high voices but banishing women -- was overlooked was because the effected singer would be doing work pleasing to God: "For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake" (Matthew 19:12). If so the priest, then why not the sacred singer as well? Also, the beginnings of the castrato singer in the Church coincided with Pope Paul IV's edict of 30 July, 1555, requiring celibacy for all pontifical chapel staff and his dismissal of married men (including Palestrina).

Castration could be justified because it could serve the double purpose of preserving the voice to honor God

> . . . eunuchs serve the common good by singing the divine praises more sweetly in churches; . . . ; the conservation of the voice is certainly to be called a good of no little importance to them, when through it they change their way of life for the better and through their whole life obtain fat and noble support. (Jesuit Thomas Tamburini, 17th century, as quoted in Milner, 1973:251)

and protecting its possessor from the depravities of the flesh. The latter was not generally so, however, for the sexual drive was not usually extinguished (as the operation probably did not prohibit the manufacture of testosterone [Burgess, 1985:7; Schonberg, 1984:25]). even though the possibility of procreation was eradicated and the potential for full sexual satisfaction reduced.

Sixtus' Bull and the employment of castrati in church choirs made certain the continuation of the very elaborate ornamentation and

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secular and theatrical styles against which the Council of Trent had issued its decrees. Some seventeenth-century popes, notably Alexander VII in his Bull Piae sollicitudines (23 April, 1657), revived legislation against "unfitting and secular music," but since none ever removed their castrati, such attempts at reform were ineffective (Quoted in Milner, 1973:251). Benedict XIV's treatise, about a century later, still warned against theatrical fashions on the part of castrate choristers without any attempt to dismiss singers capable of such vocal feats.

Although all falsettists had disappeared from the Sistine Chapel Choir by the end of the seventeenth century, castrati, on the other hand, continued there for another two centuries thereafter (and long past their withdrawal from the secular scene, in particular, the opera). This may have been simply because the Church was willing to do a humanitarian service by providing homes and jobs to the remaining individuals of this tradition.

The last of the great church castrati was Domenico Mustafà, who directed all papal music until his departure in either 1898 or 1902. The very last castrato singer, Alessandro Moreschi, retired from church singing in 1913. There is some disagreement as to whether Moreschi was a true castrato or a congenital eunuch. Nevertheless, he was the last in the line of "natural" (i.e., not falset) male sopranos. Recordings from 1902 and 1903 of his sound exist, however they represent the declining years of a "not great singer to begin with" (Schonberg, 1984:25):

> His technique is not exceptional, and it is always difficult on old records . . . to be sure what the true tone and timbre of the voice may be. Clearly he is a soprano and not a falsettist. His tone is stronger than a boy's unearthly

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> quality, and on some notes it is pleasing; on others it is whiny or raspy. But his technique is faulty even on the simple, religious songs he sings, and so he is not a good example, however interesting, of the kind of singing and tone that made the best castrati so famous. (Martin, 1961:55)

And yet, in a way, Schonberg (1984:25) admits, "his vocal textures have a curiously moving quality . . . a timbre that does suggest the warmth and sweetness that 18th-century audiences were raving about in the work of the famous castrati of the time."

Castrati were formally banned from the papal chapel by Pius X in 1903.

Renewal of Virtuosity and Professionalism as Qualities of Singers

The development in the use of the female voice in secular music which occurred in the various courts of northern Italy, and which influenced the style and range of sacred music as well, would reach its peak in Ferrara during the reign of Alfonso II d'Este during the late 1500s. This occurred concurrently with a trend toward increased professional and virtuosic standards in vocal music that also began to prevail in parts of the north and that contrasted with the amateur madrigal activity that continued to thrive in Rome. Newcomb (1980:3) points out, however, that Einstein's work, "the only authoritative survey of the history of the madrigal," omits the late-century Roman madrigal.[49] And so he (1980:78) informs us that the exposition of important ideas within the piece by the high voices alone was a characteristic even more common in the Roman canzonetta-madrigal than anywhere else during the 1570s and was, as well, a usual trait in the Venetian madrigals at that time. On the whole, however, the ensembles for which the later madrigals were generally conceived were "not merely

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groups of reasonably capable amateurs, . . . , but really gifted groups associated with cultural academies whose singers might be professional in attainment if not by occupation, or indeed groups made up of professional court singers in cities like Ferrara and Mantua, which were able to attract some of the greatest talents of the day" (Roche. 1972:73).

Einstein ([1949] 1971:I:153) claims that this was the epoch which invented the concept of the virtuoso and which found the first embodiment of this concept in the singers to the lute and viol and the players of these instruments. Lowinsky (1954:521) maintains that the courts of the Renaissance were the "cradles of vocal and instrumental virtuosity." This research has shown that the Renaissance represented, more precisely, the beginnings of these modern secular virtuosi -- soloists at court to whom Vicenzo Giustiniani, in his short history of the madrigal and its developments in the late-sixteenth century "Discorsa sopra la musica" (1628), attributed the new style of singing, which he says appeared after 1575. (Giustiniani, however, named scores of male virtuosi as against only three women, which Riley [1980:72] attributes to the retrospective nature of his explanation.) The old madrigal -- a form of "music-making in company" (Einstein, [1949] 1971:II:854) would yield to the new madrigale concertato -- "solo voices describing a new style of counterpoint over a clear and simple harmonic background" (Newcomb, 1980:19). As we shall see in the court music of Ferrara, this could no longer be accomplished by aristocratic dilettanti but required the services of the virtuoso and brought with it the applauding listener. By the beginning of the next century, Caccini's Nuove musiche ([1602] 1950:381) would declare: "This art

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admitteth no mediocrity."

This growth in the art of singing is remarked upon also by Drinker (1948:220), who writes of singers' motivations to display their voices with difficult coloratura[50] passages, sensuous singing and other displays of "showmanship"; by Duey (1951:37), who says that "[t]he music demanded more and more of the singer and participation grew both intensively and extensively"; by Kaufmann (1966:223), who remarks that "the ability to sing as well as play difficult chromatic and enharmonic intervals, . . . implies an unusual skill . . . "; and by Horsley (1951:3), who concludes that an expert performer was expected to "produce music as well as reproduce it." It has already been documented for church singers in choral ensembles (see pp.193-202). Now we must look at the evidence for the art of the individual secular performer.

Antonfrancesco Doni, James Haar (1966:219) contends, gives the impression that his "convivial company" was sight reading all their music. Anthon (1943:149-50) describes a typical scene:

> When at a social gathering it was decided to make some music, all the available instruments in the house were brought forth, and books were distributed, but the music produced was essentially vocal music. Most of the guests would probably sing, while the cornetti, flutes, and viols played any of the vocal parts which suited them best. There was practically no end to the variety of tonal effects, and the initiative which the performers had in arranging this music must have contributed to that sound musicianship which both professionals and amateurs possessed.

Padre Martini later wrote, about the difficulty of many madrigal pieces, that bold dissonances were permitted because of the "just and perfect intonation" on the part of the smaller number of singer participants as compared to the crowd of those performing in church music (Quoted in Einstein, [1949] 1971:I:245). (Another reason for soft singing, then, might have been the difficulty of correct intonation or

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pitch in compositions involving numerous accidentals [chromatically altered notes such as sharps or flats], especially when sung loudly.) Brown (1976:362) cites Marenzio (who from 1581 through 1584 displayed in his published works what Newcomb [1980:86] describes as "his continuing preoccupation with the luxuriant style in particular and with virtuosity in general"), and to a lesser extent Wert and Gesualdo, as composers of intricate works for singers: ". . . instead of restricting themselves to evenly paced, smoothly flowing lines, the three composers gave to some of their voices the sorts of highly decorated runs and trills that had become part of the improvisational arsenal of virtuoso singers" -- diminutions, passages, divisions, coloraturae, gorgie, in which the melody and counterfigures were made elegant and ornate by being broken up into progressively smaller note values to produce the effect of complicated, accelerated motion. About the evolution of such technical skills Ferand ([1956] 1961:13) concludes: ". . . the general delight in diminution had intensified to highly developed virtuosity. . . . centuries-old practice of melismatic decoration and passage-work led to constantly more varied types of ornamentation of increasing extent, . . ."

"Charm" and "speed" were key ingredients, a formula that has proved itself ever since, according to Pincherle (1963:19). To achieve these, two requirements are listed by Zacconi: strength of chest and agility of throat, the first to provide the necessary quantity of breath and sufficient number of musical figures and the second to sustain and make clear those figures. These, we have seen, were the outstanding accomplishments of the castrati. Improvised vocal embellishments were indeed common, with singers often developing a

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repertory of ornate patterns to substitute for simpler ones and with the choice of elaborate over normal rendering being an individual matter dictated by the vocal dexterity, musicianship and discretion of the singer. (Ever since the fourteenth-century practice of discantus supra librum, singers were aware of, if not trained for, improvising a counterpoint to a given melody at sight.) Before the seventeenth century, then, "[n]imble minds [were] continually discovering new embellishments . . . even to works previously embellished . . . like so many well-trained birds" (Zacconi, 1592, as quoted in Donington, 1974:165). This often resulted in complete transformations of the pieces. Ferand (1956:131) compares this improvisatory nature with that of late Renaissance and early Baroque architecture, sometimes called "frozen music":

> "It was a custom [in the second half of the 16th century, and later] . . . for builders to solve many of their structural and decorative problems as a building progressed, with leeway left for extemporaneous detail; not every figure . . . was worked out . . . The plans of many . . . buildings . . . gave only the general layout, with no specific design for the decoration" [Kelemen, 1952:22]. In this passage, one has only to substitute "composers" and "compositions" for "builders" and "buildings" to grasp the striking similarity. nay, identity, of characteristic trends in both music and architecture of that time. In the music of the Renaissance and Baroque, too, the "plan" (or "blueprint"), i.e., the written composition, very often does not present much more than a general outline, the details of which (added voices, supporting chords, ornamental or expressive figures, and the like) were left to the imagination of the individual performer or group of performers ["an outline to be amplified in performance" [Horsley, 1951:3); "a skeleton," with the details of clothing left to the performing singers (Ferand, [1956] 1961:13)].

Consequently, the concept of one "authentic" performance did not yet exist, Horsley (1951:3) points out.

Virtuosity was more than merely technical. It was closely allied with the creative art of improvisation. Anthon (1943:148) says

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that although ornamentation was based on the rules of counterpoint, it gave the performer "considerable opportunity to display his ability and to express his personality." (And "[t]he assertion of individualism and of spontaneous creation extempore," he [1943:153-4] adds, "must obviously have suited the temper of an age which almost made a cult of personality.") Horsley (1951:4) states the case even more strongly:

> A proficient soloist improvised embellishments upon the composed line, exhibiting his own skill. Performance was to him a creative application of his technique to a composition; the composition was the vehicle of, rather than the motive for, his performance [emphasis mine].

Ferand ([1956] 1961:5,13) calls this re-creation, "a performance practice constantly changing, heavily dependent upon the circumstances of the moment and the capabilities of the available forces, a practice in which the performer's contribution often exceeded that of the composer."

Ferand (1956:133) and Lowinsky (1954:552), in fact, conclude respectively that such diminutions or embellishments "point[ed] decidedly towards virtuoso music," that the vehicle of virtuoso exhibitionism was "the art of improvising embellishments and coloraturas, an art assiduously cultivated by singers and players." This had developed in Italy within the solo tradition:

> . . . solo-singing was the area of music best suited to the development and display of the techniques of vocal virtuosity. The very presence of a solo singer (sometimes a highly skilled one), the many repetitions common in this type of music, as well as the loosening of the requirements made by the complex interdependence of several voices, made solo-singing an ideal proving ground for the rapidly developing art of diminution. . . . Diminution also allowed the singer to give vent to his [or her] own musical personality. Through diminution in the solo song, vocal display and spontaneous embellishment began to reenter the mainstream of Italian vocal music. (Newcomb, 1980:19)

and, therefore, was practiced by women as well as men.

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In madrigal performances, the rhythmic and melodic similarity of the otherwise diverse solo virtuoso embellishments presented successively by each part created sometimes the only balance and unity in such works. These also "demanded great cleverness in ensemble work as well as a facile imagination and improvisatory skill" (Horsley, 1951:16). The next step would be for such virtuosity to provide an alternative means for interpreting human emotions, a more abstract means compared with the precise expression of the words required by madrigal philosophy. Verging on the Baroque, the tempo and emotional content of a composition, rather than either the words of the text or the skill of the performer, would be expected to govern the types and amounts of ornaments used.

Ferand ([1956] 1961:8), Foreman (1969:7) and Horsley (1951:4) show that as the number of performers and the difficulty of performing increased throughout the sixteenth century, "how to," "teach yourself" books began to appear for players and singers, including instructions for improvisation -- "sections on the technique of improvised embellishments as a matter of course, . . . each author tak[ing] it for granted that an understanding of this technique is essential for any type of respectable performance" [Horsley, 1951:17]). Vocal and instrumental manuals and textbooks on ornamentation, theoretical music treatises that included advice on ornamentation and collections of embellished compositions became more and more plentiful as the century progressed. The earliest of such books were written by, among others, Pietro Aaron (1523), Stefano Vanneo (1533), Sylvestro di Ganassi dal Fontego (1535). The latter defined diminution as meaning simply "to vary a thing." Later authors were Antonfrancesco Doni (1544), Adrian

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Petit Coclico (1552), Vicente Lusitano (1553), Diego Ortiz (1553), Nicola Vicentino (1555), Hermann Finck (1556), Gioseffe Zarlino (1558), Giovanni Camillo Maffei da Solofra (1562), Claudio Sebastiani (1563), Fray Tomas de Sancta Maria (1565), Giovanni de' Bardi (1580), Giovanni Maria Nanino (ca.1580), Vincenzo Galilei (1581), Girolamo dalla Casa (1584), G. M. Artusi (1586-1589), Pietro Pontio (1588), Orazio Tigrini (1588), Sethus Calvisius (1592), Richardo Rogniono (1592), Lodovico Zacconi (1592), Giovanni Luca Conforto (ca.1593), Girolamo Diruta (1593), Giovanni Battista Bovicelli (1594), V. Bona (1595), Giovanni Bassano (1598) and Adriano Banchieri (1599). These handbooks and textbooks contained extremely ornamented arrangements of madrigals used to instruct "professionals as well as lay musicians, virtuosos as well as choirboys" in the art of embellishment, as well as to provide models of ornamentations, or, "to save them the trouble of inventing embellishments themselves" (Ferand, 1966:154). A few musicologists insist that they were not so much didactic as they were a means of codifying and classifying a repertoire of ornaments. The list is evidence also that luxuriant diminution practice extended to all the leading musical countries of Europe.

It is through the study of such sixteenth-century works that one can ascertain the technical skills possessed by virtuosi, the actual music of the period offering little evidence of what feats they were capable. Ferand's ([1956] 1961:10) evidence for a flourishing improvisation practice and a highly-developed art of ornamentation includes (in addition to some actual compositions that survived in both simple and embellished versions) just such practical and theoretical sources, "systematically collected diminution formulas, examples for

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study, and instructions for the employment of such forms according to need, taste, and the skill of the performer, as they appear in constantly growing number from the second third of the 16th century on."

Ferand ([1956] 1961:10) contends that the popularity and widespread use of such texts points, at the same time, to "a certain waning of the impulse to improvise, an at least temporary or partial weakening for it," for ". . . a truly creative art of ornamentation stimulated by the inspiration of the moment [was] replaced by the rationalistic, mechanizing trend towards the choice and convenient employment of [stereotyped turns of phrase and static] diminution formulas supplied 'ready made'." The theoretician-teacher Luca Conforto, for example, boasted that he could teach the necessary formulas for ornaments in nine days and that within twenty the pupil would be in a position to apply them at sight to any piece of music -- Breve et facile maniera d'essercitarsi a far passage (A Brief and Easy Way of Making Passages, ca. 1593).

Here we come to the issue of the changing relationship between improvisatory and "composed" music. "The lines of both types of creative activity [emphasis mine] frequently cross," states Ferand ([1956] 1961:6), making it often impossible to determine both the extempore versus formula nature of modifications on compositions and the spontaneous vs. already-existing nature of the invention. All degrees of absolute versus relative improvisation and true spontaneity versus carefully-prepared embellishments existed in the course of the historical development of improvisation from the first centuries onward. The degree and variety of such become exceedingly confusing

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during this period. From the fragmentary and sometimes contradictory information on improvised counterpoint, Ferand (1956:130-1) resolves that late Renaissance and early Baroque music ". . . shows innumerable shades and transitions from spontaneous extempore performance to all degrees of semi-, quasi-, and pseudo-improvisation, from genuine, truly creative improvising to the more or less mechanically applied devices of [conventionalized] 'canned embellishments' . . ." Horsley (1951:5) agrees concerning the diversity of practices and the divergent opinions on the subject:

> The details of the practice varied from time to time and from place to place, and even from performer to performer, since any good virtuoso developed his own style of improvisation and embellishment [freedom and variety having been two of the main characteristics of sixteenth-century improvised embellishment]. An attempt to synthesize these various practices into one general statement of the practice as a whole [and to summarize the variety of ways the subject is treated by theorists] could not but be misleading.

An emphasis on increasing the range of individual singers is also evident in diminution exercises designed to expand its compass. Ornamental versions of pieces, Stark (1973:164) tells us, almost invariably have a larger scope. By the seventeenth century, Giustiniani ([1628] 1962:71) would talk of singers "with a range of many notes," and Praetorius (1619), of the extreme ranges of certain singers, including a high f by a Neapolitan bass, Carolus Cassanus (Mendel, 1948:200). A letter of 1589 concerning an audition of a bass discloses the consideration given this factor in a singer: "how he sings in the upper range, and how far down the voice goes" (Quoted in Stark, 1973:165). The fact that chamber pitch was higher than choir pitch might imply that secular singers had even better control in the upper range than did sacred choristers, or, perhaps, it simply represents the

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inclusion of women singers in the secular category. In both sixteenth-century music and its theoretical literature, we find, therefore, not only a preferance for the upper voices but also an expectation of increased range for all the voices.

Along with technical applications, even the conduct of the singer while performing received increasing attention by musical theorists:

> Nothing should move while singing except the arytenoid cartilage. . . . People look ugly if they shake their heads while singing from the throat. (Maffei da Solofra, 1562, as quoted in Duey, 1951:38)
>
> . . . nor should the singers ever make such an exertion or articulation of the voice that many of them call attention to themselves by changing colour, getting black in the face or running out of breath. . . . fine compositions were monstrously distorted and deformed, with mouths twisted and wide open, heads thrown back and shaking, and wild vociferations, . . . (Finck, 1556, as quoted in Kirby, 1961:213)
>
> The singer should not sing with movements of the body or actions or gestures . . . moving so much that they really seem to be dancing. (Zarlino, 1558, as quoted in Duey, 1951:38)
>
> . . . it is a wise singer who keeps his head, his eyes, and his body quiet; this is almost a necessity in singing, . . . It is a bad singer who displeases the eye; thus, any deformity or ugliness made with the body in singing does not satisfy or delight the eye. (Zacconi, 1592, as quoted in Stark, 1973:183).

This was, to a large degree, dictated by the fact that the singer-audience for these works were sacred as well as secular performers.

Zacconi, focusing on general outward appearance, reveals high expectations: "The singer must be young, refined, well-dressed, not entirely ignorant, not hesitant of speech, nor sharp in speaking: but gentle, courteous, clean, and adorned . . ." (1592, as quoted in Duey,

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1951:38). These requirements denote not only the cultured, noble singer rather than the paid professional but also a heightened prestige associated with the role, illustrated in Zacconi's remark that the singer "should not be a jester, . . . , or marked by any notable defect, for these things cause contempt for a person" (1592, as quoted in Duey, 1951:38).

Although fundamentals of technique were discussed and readers were armed with ornamentations of all kinds, methods of training to perform elaborate vocalizations are not in evidence. "We know that the singers were told when and where to breathe but not how," writes Duey (1951:42); "[t]here are no manuals [as yet] showing how the flexible voice was acquired." (There is some rudimentary advice concerning vocal emission in Maffei da Solofra's singing manual Discorso della voce [1562]; in Conforto's and Bovicelli's ornament tutors -- Breve et facile maniera d'essercitarsi a far passage [ca.1593] and Regole, passagi di musica [1544], respectively; and in Zacconi's treatise Prattica di musica [1592].) It is probable that it was generally taught "by ear," from the singing master with technical knowledge and performing experience to the student. It is also probable that natural proclivities and natural ways of solving vocal problems were encouraged, the lack of specific instruction concerning the nature of breathing, for example, most likely indicating a very natural respiratory approach.

If we equate the late sixteenth-century period of vocal development (and, considering the discussion that will follow, it seems we should) with the beginnings of what is called "the old Italian method or school of singing" -- a unique way of producing the voice

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that is associated with a large range, a special "disposition" of the throat, a constant vibrato (a slight wavering of pitch), flexibility, lack of breathiness, evenness, full resonance, ornamentation, grace and apparent ease of production (nobile sprezzatura), and emotional "affect"; and that composer-singer-teacher Caccini, in his Nuove musiche (1602), termed the "noble manner of singing" and later came to be called "bel canto" or beautiful singing -- we find that the mystery surrounding the old Italian "sound" in years hence was there in its inception. Musicologists have claimed ever since that this special tone quality could invariably be heard and recognized but rarely described or explained. Although it involved a sophisticated and contrived use of vocal muscles which required good training, it could only be taught through example, coming down to us as an oral tradition: "that most necessary grace which cannot be described in better manner and more clearly for the understanding thereof, and yet it may be perfectly attained unto" (Caccini, [1602] 1950:383). Maffei had recommended that his students associate with accomplished singers in order to gain insights through listening. Indeed, the spokesman for the new manner of singing, Caccini, taught his wife and daughters by demonstration.

Renaissance writers told of singers who used their voices differently, but not how -- or why. The principles of such vocal production were not then, or later, either agreed upon or clearly defined. Control of the voice has, subsequently, been attributed to a mysterious "sixth sense." This has resulted in our lacking an understanding of one of the most important factors in the change from Renaissance to Baroque style, in our missing one of the most important elements in the evolution of the vocal artist -- how singers overcame

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vocal difficulties and came to use the quality of vocal production that would, from then on, be associated with European art music.

James Arthur Stark's 1973 dissertation "The Rise of Virtuoso Singing" attempts to explicate this critical gap in vocal history. Using information relating to the structure and functioning of the human voice that has come out of the young discipline of phoniatrics. he (1973:abstract) has attempted to write a "rapprochement between the scientific view of the singing voice as found in modern phoniatrics and the historical view as documented in the works of the late Renaissance and early Baroque." He (1973:abstract) concludes that the turn-of-the-century "noble manner" depended upon

> a special "disposition" of the throat, in which the muscular functions of the two "natural" registers, i.e., chest voice and falsetto, are combined in order to produce what is today called "mid-voice."[51] This well-disposed mid-voice possesses a "dynamic" tone quality, which arises from a balanced antagonism of vocal muscles, and which has the properties of breath economy, "ring," controlled crescendo and decrescendo, flexibility, and vibrato, . . .

and which was capable of vocal excitement and emotional "affect." The voice had come to take on a life of its own (apart from the musical score); there was "spirit in the voice" (Stark, 1973:193). Also, the new sound went hand in hand with astute ornamentation. Stark (1973:212) postulates, in fact, a possibly causative relationship between the vibrato or pleasant tremulancy of the voice that demonstrated the "noble manner" and ornamentation: "There might be a certain neuro-physiological, not only psychological, necessity for some sort of ornamentation in music!" Ornamentation, he (1973:220) goes on to explain, was "less structured, less melodic, less musical than it was organic and emotional, physical and psychological." It represented inner urges on the part of singers rather than something that could be

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adequately indicated in a musical score.[52] In this sense the term "ornament" is perhaps misleading, "since these vocal graces are not something a singer feels are in addition to the printed melody, but are a vital part of it" (Stark, 1973:221).

All of this required not only the possession of a good "natural" instrument but also a specific kind of training. Voices demonstrating both grew in numbers toward the end of the sixteenth century (as we shall discuss in the next chapter). Phoniatrics confirms what was possible in the functioning of the vocal mechanism, and Stark (1973:10,136) has begun to explain sixteenth- and seventeenth-century vocal practice and the rise of virtuoso singing as these relate to such physiological possibilities:

> . . . not until the late sixteenth century was the cultivation of a blended middle register, with certain unique characteristics, pursued, and when this finally occurred, it resulted in a total rejection of the polyphonic "sound ideal" and an exploring of certain "dramatic" qualities of the voice incompatible with part-music. . . . the voice with disposition cries out for solo repertoire.

Contrary to Duey, Foreman and others, who fail to see any "secrets" in this method of singing but rather a simple approach to the business of vocal emission, and who attribute the development of the "real" virtuosic technique to the castrato, Stark (1973:226) proclaims that there was a secret to the "noble manner" of singing and this was <u>disposizione</u>, later called <u>appoggio</u>, and ultimately "mid-voice": "It was something which very few singers ever achieved, and could certainly not be called 'simple' or 'natural'." When discovered it "leads away from amateurism, away from part-singing, and to a new and noble manner of singing" -- "the secret that led to the rise of virtuoso singing" (Stark, 1973:226).

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It must be remembered, though, that the virtuoso grew out of a certain social, as well as a special musical, milieu. In line with this, Stark (1973:237) postulates that virtuosity gained quick prominence because of its respectibility, and that it is doubtful that the modern virtuoso could have emerged from the ranks of the minstrel. The musical and social aspects of the noble manner of solo accompanied song were perhaps recognized as early as Castiglione: ". . . singing to the lute with the dittie . . . is more pleasant than the rest, for it addeth to the wordes such a grace and strength, that it is a great wonder [emphasis mine]." "Grace" and "wonder" are terms that would appear repeatedly in connection with descriptions of the "noble manner" of singing.

The artistic use of the voice, in its solution to the limitations imposed on the quality of the sound of the voice by the dissimilarity and, therefore, incongruity of its registers, in its precision in executing ornamentations, and in its expanded range, is exemplified by a number of late sixteenth-century women singers, whose artistry we will take up in the next chapter.

The Future for Amateur Vocalism

At the same time that the professionalization of the secular singer was taking place, that music geared to such singers was being developed and that virtuoso singers were managing to blend their voice registers and achieve a new and exciting quality of sound, the activities of amateur vocalists continued in certain musical forms. Einstein speaks of the "fanciful, socially adaptable" madrigals of Andrea Gabrieli (ca.1520-1586), which were addressed to both professional and amateur singers (Quoted in Roche, 1972:53). He ([1949]

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1971:I:270-1) also recalls that Arcadelt's madrigals were used as exercises for vocal instruction, recommended as late as 1613 by Cerone as "a work which is easy and suitable for beginners." Horsley (1951:19) adds that ornamentation manuals "helped the average musician to develop a composition technique -- a skill in making variations upon a given melodic line." Nevertheless, ". . . [i]f the expanded vocal ranges and cultivated vocal qualities were a boon to the virtuoso singer, they must have been a bane to the amateur singer who was left behind." Kenton (1966:504) describes Marenzio's virtuoso madrigals of 1595 as "unsingable by amateurs." And so, by the third decade of the 1600s, Giustiniani ([1628] 1962:76) would write the following about the changed status of singing and the performing musician and a change in musical taste:

> . . . music is not much in use, not being practiced in Rome by gentlemen, nor do they sing together with several voices as in past years, . . . , <u>music is reduced to an unusual and almost new perfection</u> [emphasis mine] being practiced by a great number of good musicians who, trained by . . . excellent maestri, being the greatest pleasure to whomever hears them by their artistic and sweet song.

The days of amateurs performing for their own pleasure would take second place to a new relationship between the professional virtuoso performer and his/her audience. And, although virtuosi possessing great technical skill but limited musical knowledge were later to invade the profession, in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, "proficiency in both the science and practice of his art was required of the singer," O'Brien (1950:79) maintains. Foreman (1969:138) concludes that "a study of the music of the period [of its demands and difficulties] reveals that the singers were either very good or the performances very bad."

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The Futility of Anti-Virtuosic Stands

Anti-virtuosic criticism, of course, also appeared, and it is from such charges that we frequently learn much about the actual performance of the music of a particular era. As in the past, the immense enthusiasm for music at all levels of Renaissance society, Lowinsky (1954:528) shows us, was matched by "an intense fear and violent condemnation of the seductive power of the ethereal art." Renaissance assaults on current musical practice were aimed at just those professionals who were perfecting their art, the vocal virtuosos.

The English madrigalist William Byrd (1543-1623) expressed the respectful way fine singing voices were thought of: "There is not any Musicke of Instruments whatsoever, comparable to that which is made of the voyces of Men, where the voyces are good, and the same well sorted and ordered" (Quoted in Morgenstern, 1956:7). However, ". . . the virtuoso, the singer with a cunning throat and a flowing coloratura, [was] the deadly enemy of the creative [composer] musician whose chief concern [was] expression" (Einstein, [1949] 1971:II:842).

Exhibitions of what Einstein ([1949] 1971:II:854) calls "singers' vanity in solos and in the duets" combined with all sorts of "artifice that the contrapuntalists of our day have so industriously sought out to allure our ears" (Galilei, [1581] 1950:314) received attacks in the foremost tracts on musical practice -- by Hermann Finck (Practica musica, 1556), Gioseffe Zarlino (Istituzioni armoniche, 1558), Giovanni de' Bardi ("Discourse on Ancient Music and Good Singing," 1580), Vincenzo Galilei (Dialogo della musica antica e della moderna, 1581), Lodovico Zacconi (Prattica di musica, 1592) and Giulio Caccini (Le nuove musiche, 1602) because improvised ornamentation was

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often extreme and in bad taste:

> First of all, he must take the utmost care in singing to perform his part just as the composer has written it and not to imitate those of little understanding who, to make themselves thought worthier and wiser than the rest, sometimes invent divisions so inappropriate and wild . . . that they disgust the listener and at the same time commit errors in singing . . . (Zarlino, 1558, as quoted in Einstein, [1949] 1971:II:843)

> . . . the noblest function a singer can perform is that of giving proper and exact expression to the canzone as set down by the composer, not imitating those who aim only at being thought clever (a ridiculous pretension) and who so spoil a madrigal with their ill-ordered passages that even the composer himself would not recognize it as his creation. (de' Bardi, [1580] 1950:299)

> [Advice to singers:] . . . let them be embellished in a fitting situation, remaining in their own places, so that one embellishment can be heard and picked out expressly and distinctly from another, yet with the composition whole and unharmed. (Finck, 1556, as quoted in Donington, 1974:164)

Zacconi concluded that ". . . the singer who with a little ornamentation . . . goes not too far afield will always be better appreciated than another who digresses far too much, . . ." (1592, as quoted in Donington, 1974:165) and that, if their gorgia could not be perfectly performed, it would be better that they not be performed at all. Tasso's dialogue, La Cavaletta, ovvero della poesia toscana (1587), is stronger in its condemnation of the song principle's invasion of music that was supposed to serve its text, evoking anew female-associated characteristics in its denunciation: "Then let us put aside all that music which, in degenerating, has become soft and effeminate, . . ." (Quoted in Einstein, [1949] 1971:I:220). These were not necessarily the attitudes of the majority of the listening audiences, of course, who doted on ornamentation. Caccini ([1602] 1950:380,378) felt that divisions had been invented not because they were necessary to a good fashion of singing but rather for a certain

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"tickling of the ears," and that singers demonstrating a "multitude of divisions made upon long and short syllables and in every sort of music" were vulgar but also often famous. And it must be remembered that these theorists wrote from the perspective of the listener when, for some time, the enjoyment of madrigal singing was geared for the performer. Finally, it should be mentioned that such excesses were nothing yet like the abuses of vocal freedom that would characterize the beginning of the seventeenth century "and whose correction [would require that] century's untiring efforts" (Einstein, [1949] 1971:II:843).

Parallel to these requirements for the modo di cantare (style of singing) and gusto della musica (musical taste) of the performer, Giustiniani ([1628] 1962:72-3) summarized the requirements for the success of a composition along similar lines:

> . . . to be of worth and pleasing to the hearer, . . . , it must be written first of all in good counterpoint founded on the correct rules, with novel and difficult passages to weave together in all the parts without burdening it with superfluous notes, . . . be easy and flowing in such fashion that the artifices do not make them harsh, . . . be pleasant to hear and have unusual grace. . . . else without it they will be cold and tasteless . . . , for all their artifice and difficult counterpoint, . . .

We must agree, therefore, with Lowinsky (1954:552) that the virtuoso performer preceded virtuoso music. They created a demand for it while, at the same time, desiring as much freedom as possible within the written composition for their own creative impulses. The highly ornamented style of the early Baroque "stems at least in part," Brown (1976:371) contends, "from composers' attempts to curb the improvisational excesses of late sixteenth-century virtuoso singers by writing into their music precisely the notes they wished sung." ". . .

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composers deliberately composed in a style that simulated improvisation," states Anthon (1943:146), thereby hoping to repress the creative spirit of the performer/interpreter. Jander (1981:341) cites Giache de Wert's eighth, ninth and tenth books of madrigals, composed between 1586 and 1591, as examples.

Composition during the Renaissance, we must recognize, was regarded rather differently from our romantic conceptions of inspirational inventions of pieces by innately talented creators. Composition then was more of a craft involving objective, prescribed methods and rules for constructing contrapuntal parts around a given theme or cantus firmus. It was not that anyone who learned the rules became a first-class composer, but it was certainly a much less subjective activity: ". . . the creative activity of the composer was exercised in adding parts, varying and ornamenting them according to definite rules and restrictions" (Anthon, 1943:153). This was the very same creative activity in which many singers engaged. In fact, Anthon (1943:153) guesses that ". . . the practical, down-to-earth attitude toward the creative art of composing stimulated many performers to exercise their creative impulse, where they might otherwise have been content to slavishly reproduce the printed notes."

All such half-composed, half-improvised counterpoint also produced, at times, dissonant clashes, as a result of the practice of additive, vertical contrapuntal improvisation, and excessive progressions, as a result of the practice of horizontal contrapuntal improvisation. Both of these effects, in the extreme, were renounced by theorists and composers alike. Yet, all such critics admitted that the process was extremely difficult. Musicologists still wonder how several

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singers could possibly have improvised together, without confusion, not knowing what one or the other might do. without confusion.) At the same time, complementary testimonies to "celestial harmonies" produced by the improvisational contrapuntal process, even among large choirs, are also in evidence (Zacconi, 1592, as quoted in Anthon, 1943:145, for example).

And so, anti-virtuosic and anti-improvisational (of which there were fewer) attempts failed to halt the continued popularity of both elaborate ornamentation and extempore counterpoint -- remnants of earlier stages of polyphonic technique. The struggle for creative control would continue. And complicated and florid divisions, Fortune (1954:213) feels, came to be regarded as "a necessary evil, and an evil so firmly entrenched that they gave up trying to combat it." De' Bardi's exasperation and resigned attitude are evident:

> To make divisions upon the bass is not natural, for . . . this part is by nature slow, low and somnolent. Yet it is the custom to do this. I know not what to say of it . . . , but I would counsel you to do it as little as possible and, when you do, at least to make it clear that you do it to please someone. (Quoted in Fortune, 1954:213)

Accordingly, de' Bardi ([ca.1580] 1950:293) concluded that the goal of music was "the art of good singing," which did not necessarily mean good song. ". . . if virtuosity for its own sake temporarily divested music of much of its intrinsic merit, it was precisely because, for a while at least, the voice was more important than the music" (Stark, 1973:10-11).

In addition, while on the one hand ornamentation was to be discouraged (and even deplored), if virtuosi did it well -- with elegance, in good taste and, perhaps, in moderation -- it was applauded. This demonstrates the difficulty for the performer balancing

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"intrinsic [perhaps] physical laws" and "extrinsic conventions of good taste" (Stark, 1973:221). It also illustrates the emerging difficulty for the new listener -- torn between a desire to hear the printed score and an appreciation for the spontaneous, affective creations of the interpreter.

Improvisation was "a memento of the ever recurring clashes" between the musical theory of theorists and composers and spontaneous creation by "practical" performers," an ancient art "as old as the art of music itself" (Ferand, 1956:154). The importance of improvisation decreased "inversely to the development of musical notation and the accumulation of theoretical tradition" (Anthon, 1943:150), but it increased directly with the development of the virtuoso performer. Consequently, Anthon (1943:151) has concluded that "long after music was rationally and formally composed, the personal creative impulse [of the interpreter] continued to assert itself. . . . the stage in which we find musical practice in the sixteenth century."

For both de' Bardi and his fellow Florentine Camerata[53] member Galilei, the only proper role for vocal music was the delivery of a text with a minimum of musical interference. In pursuit of this goal, they felt one should "not strive for horizontal and vertical musical complexities suitable to the instrumental composer" but rather "emulate the speech of a skillful actor" (Newcomb, 1980:71). One should "not confuse physical facts [the numerical ratios of intervals, categorized as science by Galilei] with sensations [or art]" (Quoted in Palisca, 1956:85). Holding up the recitation formula or madrigali ariosi of the 1550s and 1560s as the ideal style for vocal music, they opposed the stylistic innovations of the late 1560s and 1570s and those of the new

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luxuriant style of the 1580s.

In addition to ensemble performance style, the specific expectations and goals of solo singing plus the forms and styles of such performances, from the middle-sixteenth century until the last few decades of that century, were also both diverse and somewhat contradictory:

> Bardi and Galilei . . . stressed the effective projection of words by a performer to a separate listener and advocated a simple musical dress, in order to render minimal the interference with the singer's delivery of the text. They singled out as models tastefully simple performances of recitation formulae, or the serious declamatory madrigals of Rore. Galilei also saw in solo-singing a hope for the resurrection of a simple tunefulness [ariosita], which he felt had been seriously crippled by the limitations imposed on melodic naturalness by the polyphonic context. . . .
>
> On the other hand, solo-singing was the area of music best suited to the development and display of the techniques of vocal virtuosity. . . . light strophic songs were most appropriate, since the repetitions allowed the singer to insert varying diminution, and since the diminutions did not interfere with the projection of a highly serious text. (Newcomb, 1980:18-19)

Regardless of all these differences of opinion, Foreman (1969:19) proposes that the written vocal tutors of the time had one thing in common -- an emphasis on good performance: ". . . they form a continuum of aesthetic and performance standard" involving "a central preoccupation with the fundamental question of the composer's intentions and the performer's duties toward those intentions."

Vocal Musical Tensions and Contradictions during the Sixteenth Century

Despite the fact that the madrigal was always dependent on its text, Einstein has shown that until the end of the sixteenth century music retained its supremacy, though contested. Music's upcoming turn-of-the-century defeat by the text, he ([1949] 1971:I:124,151,132)

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declares, would be due to the madrigal's major flaws, its inner contradictions. First, its polyphony forced it to express what was personal with impersonal means and to entrust the most subjective expression not to a single singer but to a number. Second, its polyphony produced the additional conflict between its being, as polyphony, a pure, autonomous form of music and any desire to express the words of the text.

Einstein ([1949] 1971:I:124) has also shown that, while imitation destroyed the pure, songlike course of the melody, the song line still "shined through:"

> . . . at the side of the motet-like style, the song-style continues to retain its prestige, for it is an eternal principle of musical construction. In reality the soverign position of melody was never shaken, and it is immaterial whether as upper voice it imperiously dominated an accompaniment of one sort or other, or whether as cantus firmus it laid down the law for a particular composition. (Einstein, [1949] 1971:I:151)

Harman (1958:258) aggrees that polyphonic texture in general and imitation in particular became increasingly superseded by the marked melodic superiority of the upper part or parts, but also by predominantly chordal writing, contrasts between voices and a detailed and realistic treatment of the text. This occurred at the hands of the leading madrigalists of the end of the century, all of whom were Italian. Marenzio, Gesualdo, Andrea and Giovanni Gabrieli, Vecche, Banchieri, Striggio and Monteverdi took over the madrigal and, as Reese ([1954] 1959:413) explains, it became more concerned with delineating the text than with the absolute values of polyphony. It became also more dramatic, more colorful and more desirous of expressing personal emotions, leading toward the monodic style. Systematic imitation finally gave way to the Italian predilection for chordal writing, in

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which the highest voice was most important.

These features it borrowed from the lighter southern forms and traditions of solo performance that were invading the north --

> . . . villanellas, the new villottas, and conzonets. Basically these songs continued the tradition of the frotolla . . . but the melody in the highest part was now more conspicuous . . . It is noteworthy, in fact, that the first solo songs that Vincenzo Giustiniani [would] mention in his survey, Discorsa sopra la musica [1628], . . . [would] not [be] those of Caccini and other composers of the "new music" [of the seventeenth century] but the homophonic villanelle alla napoletana that he had heard sung in his youth about 1575 . . . (Fortune, 1968:143)

-- and from the commedia dell' arte, where, Newcomb (1980:17) reminds us, ". . . a virtuoso performed before a well-defined separate audience." Harman (1958:256-8) concludes that it was, therefore, no coincidence that the madrigal merged into the accompanied monody of the next century, "for the Italian genius naturally avours sensuous melody, clear-cut harmony and rhythm, and colourful expression." Bukofzer (1947:26) agrees: ". . . it is within the orbit of the solo song of the Renaissance that monody was first experimentally approached."

Vicenzo Giustiniani's account of this stylistic evolution in "Discorso sopra la musica" points to the years 1576-1582 for this change in musical taste. Then, for example, ". . . the compositions of Luca Marenzio [his first book was issued in 1580] and Ruggero Giovanelli [he first appeared in print in 1582] appeared with delightful new inventions, either that of singing with several voices or with one voice alone accompanied by some instrument, the excellence of which consisted in a melody new and grateful to the ear, with some easy fugues without extraordinary artifices" (Giustiniani, [1628] 1962:68). This, Newcomb (1980:48) concludes, marked "a return to the ariosità that the Italians had always valued highly, as well as a

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turning away from the equal-voiced imitative style that for so long limited the melodic freedom of the parts." Lowinsky (1954:529) agrees concerning the Renaissance musician's arriving at a musical expression "free of all shackles," i.e., abandoning the use of preexisting melodies, rhythms and forms. He (1954:529,531) attributes the strength of the new music to its being planned and organized as a whole rather than a structure of several successively-erected layers with each part in relation to each other part -- "simultaneous conception," "think[ing] in harmonies," as he calls it.

> Ever since the first experiments with a consciously harmonic style of singing were made musicians and listeners had become increasingly fascinated by the sheer magic of harmony. . . . the continuous expansion of the harmonic range . . . , the constant enlargement of the vocal and instrumental apparatus, point to a state of growing intoxication with the power of sound, the multicolored brilliance of modulatory harmony, the emotional effects of major and minor, consonance and dissonance, high and low registers, . . . (Lowinsky, 1954:532-3)

Madrigal music during the sixteenth century had been free

> only [emphasis mine] within the limits of its traditional polyphony. It shakes the bars of its prison but is unable to break them. But this striving for freedom goes on underground until, toward the end of the century, it causes the proud edifice of polyphony to totter. (Einstein, [1949] 1971:I:214)

Grout ([1969] 1973:231) speaks of madrigals showing the Renaissance ideal of equal voices being transformed into the Baroque ideal of dominating solo parts against a firm harmonic bass and chordal background. By the end of the century, Galilei had extracted from polyphony what would further his ends -- "the plurality of voices necessary for a variety of consonant and dissonant chords" -- disgarding what hindered his purpose -- "the rhythmic and melodic independence of voices" (Palisca, 1956:95).

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> From the compromise there emerged a new structural frame for composition -- chordal harmony dominated by a single melody or bass. Galilei never tired of repeating that in music of several parts it was either the bass or soprano that "gave the air" . . . or movement to the piece and determined its key or mode.

This was very different from Finck's earlier conception of the totality of the parts:

> . . . all the parts can and must be ornamented, but not all the time. But they should all be embellished at a suitable place and the others in their places, so that each coloratura can be heard and clearly distinguished from all the others but without affecting the unity of the composition as a whole. (Quoted in Kirby, 1961:216-17)

Einstein notes this reversed tendency back to the inequality of voices and at the same time forward towards the monody of the next century in numerous compositions. Of Wert's four-voiced works of 1561, the piece Chi mi fina il ben mio he ([1949] 1971:II:517) describes as "closer to the 'aria'[54] and to the lyric-dramatic soliloquy." Such pieces, "pseudo-monodies, he ([1949] 1971:II:834) and Palisca (1960:344) call them,[55] made it clear that, even for the most expert masters, "polyphony had become an anachronism and . . . monody was some day bound to appear." He ([1949] 1971:II:567) reprints Dunque basciar si belle e dolci labbia and Se tu m'occidi in the form of "an 'accompanied monody' in order to show that this style did not need to wait for its 'invention' by the Florentine Camerata" at the turn of the century. He ([1949] 1971:II:682) does the same for a later madrigal of Marenzio: "I shall quote only one passage, reproducing it at once in the form of an 'accompanied monody' without indicating the voice-leading and the rests, not in the mistaken belief that it is no longer a genuine madrigal, but simply to show how small a step still remained to be taken by the Florentine Camerata . . ."

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Einstein ([1949] 1971:II:838-41) also makes note of many other pieces that existed in two versions -- a "vocal" one for several voices and a "monodic" one for voice and lute, stating again, ". . . 'accompanied solo song' is not an invention of the Florentine Camerata; it is already in existence here. . . . also to be found in the marvelous literature of the Spanish villancicos for voice and guitar." He ([1949] 1971:II:842) adds further that those madrigals that most faithfully preserved the poetic form were most suitable for monodic recital. Put the other way around: ". . . in this 'monodic' singing before the rise of monody, in the monodic improvisation of the sixteenth century, the poetic word always takes precedence over the music" ([1949] 1971:II:842). Finally, of Claudio Monteverdi's (1567-1643) madrigal technique, Einstein ([1949] 1971:II:724) says: ". . . the effect of the whole is that of frustrated monody. . . . , still the prisoner of the traditional polyphonic way of working, . . . beating against the bars of its cage, . . ." By 1595, this trend culminated in the madrigal Ah, dolente partita (Book XI a 5 of Wert), described by Einstein as "an aria in advance of its time," "an aria in madrigal guise," referring to "the way the top part is from time to time detached and placed in dialogue, or in opposition, to the others" (Quoted in Reese, [1954] 1959:410 and Roche, 1972:86).

That this change in musical style and the resulting new repertoire for solo vocal music were able to come about Stark (1973:10) attributes to technically-advanced singers "with an altogether revolutionary tone-quality" who "demanded a new kind of music commensurate with [their] newly-cultivated voice[s]." He (1973:18,245) relates the above innovations, therefore, more to the changing physical

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manner of using the voice than to devices of ornamentation (of which Caccini included many in his definition of the "noble manner" of singing) or the Camerata experiments in recitative (speechlike declamations): "The motivating force behind proto-monody was . . . good singing."

> It is essential to understand this new vocal quality if one is to also understand the change from a homogenous Renaissance sound-ideal without particular idioms to a soloistic Baroque sound-ideal with marked idioms. . . . from a relatively light, transparent, if not colourless, quality to a voice of "noble" quality . . . closely tied up with breath control and registers. (Stark, 1973:22)

Stark (1973:23) goes even further, claiming that this extraordinary means of singing not only gave rise to a new cultivation of virtuoso singers and a new repertorire of solo song, but that it "created a new aesthetic appreciation of things purely vocal, and conditioned the artistic outlook for centuries to come."

Although the lighter forms -- strophic villotte, villanesche, villanelle, balletti and canzonette songs -- constituted the preferred types of solo-song music in the later-sixteenth century, and although musical formulas (called arie) were often used for the recitation of standard poetic forms by soloists with instrumental accompaniment,

> . . . solo-singing did not always imply lighter forms or semipopular recitation formulae. This style of performance was also applied to a certain type of serious madrigal, a type which even by mid-century gave signs of a shift away from the ideal of equal-voiced polyphony. In such pieces, often called madrigali ariosi, musical interest was not centered on the interplay of equal voices but rather in the progress of a predominant melodic upper voice placed against a harmonic background. (Newcomb, 1980:18)

This transformation of "the democracy of the voices into an aristocracy on the one hand and a slave-state on the other" is considered by Einstein ([1949] 1971:II:836) to have been innate in the

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madrigal -- in its contradiction between its "monodic" text and its polyphonic treatment -- just as its forerunner, the frottola, had been a form of monody.

> Crowded into the background -- although by no means suppressed -- the mysterious resilient force of the song, of the song-like, had actually been doubled. The frottola does not die; it simply becomes submerged, and it transforms itself until at the end of the century it first corrupts the madrigal, then overpowers it, and in the seventeenth century, as the aria, triumphs regally over every other form. (Einstein, [1949] 1971:II:552)

Thus, the trend towards the equal-voiced, a cappella ideal seems more to Einstein like a deviation and the trend away from it, in fact a return. He ([1949] 1971:I,II:153,865), therefore, concludes that one might consider sixteenth-century secular music as "an aberration, . . . from the development initiated by the frottola," for "[o]ne cannot help observing how closely the extremes approach one another -- the beginning, about 1500, and the end, about 1620 . . . as though Monteverdi [one of the last great madrigalists] had sought to prove that from first to last the splendid development of the madrigal was nothing but a detour, a deviation from the natural course."

Einstein ([1949] 1971:I:107-8, see p.342), Riley (1980:63) and Roche (1972:91, see p.344) add to this that it is reasonable to assume that the solo-song forms likely remained fairly active as a separate though secondary course of musical culture, with women continuing to foster various improvised styles within that realm, including reducing madrigals to a solo-voice melody and lute accompaniment, such as in Willaert's 1539 publication Intavolatura de li Madrigali di Verdelotto da cantare et sonare nel lauto. It is in the semi-improvisational solo style that we will find, also, in the next chapter, that Ferrarese women under Alfonso II's rule endeared themselves to the court.

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Riley (1980:66) observes that for some music historians this has produced a misleading perspective, especially the suggestion that certain composers were responsible for a sudden flowering of female performance. For example, Elio Durante and Anna Martellotti (1979, as quoted in Riley, 1980:66) write:

> Corresponding with Willaert's presence in Venice . . . from 1527 until his death in 1562, there is a considerable blossoming of female singers.
>
> It seems possible to attribute the promotion of [the practice of women singing to the lute] to Adrian Willaert and his school.
>
> To Willaert seems to be tied the practice of solo female singing with instrumental accompaniment.

The evidence, on the other hand, Riley (1980:66) declares, "strongly suggests that Willaert et al. did not cause the musical phenomenon of ladies playing and singing, but rather capitalized on a currently active tradition, . . ."

This solo vocal mode, with its renewed predominance of female singers, was, however, comparatively obscure and out of history's spotlight, which continued to focus on male-dominated vocality, now the secular madrigal. In mid sixteenth-century Italy, ladies at every level on the social scale sang in the fairly private settings of the home parlor and court chamber or the somewhat more public salon to the lute, viol, harpsichord and harp. In measuring their influence, we are reminded of Einstein's ([1949] 1971:II:843) contention that the cantatrici of Venice sang in a monodic fashion. Reese ([1954] 1959:324), likewise, refers to Willaert's 1544 publication Musica nuova, dedicated to the Venetiaan Pecorina, as containing a number of pieces in which the musical interest is centered in the motion of a melodic voice against a harmonic background. In fact, most of the

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masters who published volumes incorporating the lighter, solo-performance ideal had had close relations with gifted female musicians. Giaches de Wert, in 1589, would also publish one sole volume of villanelle canzoni, composed during his ardent relationship with the Ferrarese virtuosa Tarquinia Molza. The soon-to-be-discussed Molza is, in fact, identified, by Patrizi, in his only lately discovered manuscript L'Amorosa filosofia (1577), as one of the primary agents in the process by which the song principle entered madrigalian territory: ". . . she does not employ the vivacity and boisterousness of the French, the languid sweetness of the Spanish, nor the firmness and measure of the various Italian styles without employing all the marvelous skills mentioned above" (Quoted in Riley, 1980:76). In addition to vocal control and sweetness and grace, she employed skills in embellishment and an accomplished knowledge of counterpoint.

The position of women in the modern vocal arena was to be linked with the destiny of this, "their" solo-song style. During the last decades of the century, as we shall see, they would come to be celebrated for their vocal acumen in a variation of the madrigal that would stress both virtuosic display and high-voiced dominance. Understanding this, we might elaborate on Einstein's already-quoted words ([1949] 1971:II:552,865):

> Crowded into the background . . . the mysterious resilient force of [female] song, . . . , had actually been doubled. . . . at the end of the century [they] first [corrupt] the madrigal, then [overpower] it, . . .
>
> . . . from the first to the last the splendid development of the [originally male] madrigal was nothing but a detour, a deviation from the natural course [of high-voiced, melodic dominance].

Throughout the sixteenth century there were tensions pulling in

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different directions in the field of vocal music. We have seen the continuing conflict between word and tone; in fact, it has been noted throughout this survey of vocal art. Einstein ([1949] 1971:I:168) insists that ". . . a history of the song or of vocal form in general can be treated only as a history of the increasing conflict between the claims of music and of text." We have also been concerned with the shifting emphasis between both solo song and the prominence of certain voices in part singing and polyphonic striving for equality of the voices. And there has been the question of improvisation versus composed counterpoint, the performer as creator versus the composer as the only creative force. Finally, there is the distinction between the virtuoso with "charm and disposition" and the amateur voice without disposition.

These antithetical philosophies and performance practices represent, in addition, the opposition of two sexes. They result as well in a changing view toward the audience and the function of music for the performer versus listener, and in the contested development of the virtuoso singer. Concerning the latter, Stark (1973:227-8) views their advance as a dynamic movement which arose out of a number of polarities: "Antagonisms surrounding the virtuoso existed between cities and courts, between court and church, between various types of singers such as falsettos, natural male and female singers, and castrati, between polyphony and monody, between dilettantism and professionalism, and of course between individual personalities." Finally, the unique feature of the new manner of singing (disposizione or the "mid-voice") was antagonistic in itself -- the result of a complex muscular polarity and a high degree of opposition between

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breath pressure and vocal fold resistance.

Einstein ([1949] 1971:I:216-19) adds still another dimension:

> The entire century wavers between the "cosmic" and the sensual view of music. . . . Petrucci, in the dedication of . . . , his first publication, cannot refrain from speaking of the ethical effect of music as Plato understood it, . . . And the musicians, . . . , are never tired of boasting of the nobility of their art and of its close connection with the highest manifestations of the human spirit . . .
>
> On the other hand it is admitted frankly that the aim of music is simply entertainment and pleasure. . . . Particularly significant, . . . , is the dedication of the villanelle of Don Vincenzo Ostiano, . . . (1579): . . . it takes pleasure for its ultimate purpose . . . , it has spread in its own way over the entire domain of sensual beauty, in spite of those philosophers who have repeatedly wished to restrict it . . . , to lead it to dignity and austerity.

This is clear in the shift from frottola to madrigal, in the changing tone of the madrigal and in the opposition of the madrigal to the lighter forms of vocal entertainment. To the sensual side, composer Ostiano adds, in his 1579 dedication, another widespread notion held historically: "Music, . . . is nothing but a safe and genuine remedy for the discomforts and disturbances of the mind" (Quoted in Einstein, [1949] 1971:I:219).

Einstein ([1949] 1971:II:551-2) discusses, also, two conflicting forces which worked on the development of the madrigal as they did on that of every other form of art. Of the one, traditionalism, or what he calls convention, he ([1949] 1971:II:536) states:

> How powerful a force convention was in the sixteenth century . . . The impulse to follow the beaten path and to repeat steps made before is an irresistible impulse that can assert itself at the same moment as the impulse toward the new, toward originality, toward progress.

Its counterpart was the urge to progress:

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> . . . every musical enterprise of the Renaissance is characterized by an endless curiosity, a firm -- if at times concealed -- refusal to abide by authority for authority's sake, an intrepid pioneering spirit and an inexhaustible joy in theoretical speculation, personal and literary controversy and debate, and practical experimentation. (Lowinsky, 1954:553)

The conflict between these two never stops. It goes on, Einstein ([1949] 1971:II:552) adds, sometimes quietly, beneath the surface, whereas at other times it is noisy and ostentatious. It is viewed by Hughes ([1948] 1970:41) as central to the whole development of music.

The different courses that solo singing seemed to be taking and the different paths that vocal music in general was embarking upon resulted in opposition: ". . . nowadays one party takes pleasure in 'full' music with many voices, although it seems that the larger party desires and applauds 'empty' music for solo voices and instruments, perhaps because of the greater distinctness and charm of beautiful voices and beautiful singers" (Quagliati, as quoted in Einstein, [1949] 1971:II:857). The conflict would persist, for "[c]ounterpoint militated against the soloist while, conversely, an outstanding solo part would have marred the counterpoint in a vocal ensemble" (Morgenstern, 1956:9). The contradictions in the goals and styles of such courses for the composer, singer and audience would persist as well.

Nevertheless, the rise of the new kind of polyphonic madrigal, designed to be performed by virtuosic professionals and heard by patrons, triumphed in the last decades of the sixteenth century. The new and sophisticated vocalizing apparatus it required was reflected not only in the vocal treatises and manuals of diminution, as we have discussed, but also in both the musical compositions and the contemporary chronicles about performers and their performances, as we

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shall see in greater detail in the next chapter. The unique disposition of the voice that evolved will also be studied there. The appreciation of such artistic good singing, which has persisted to the present day, Stark (1973:11) has chosen to call "the vocal aesthetic." The virtuoso madrigal was

> . . . not an art form for performers [by this he means geared for the pleasure of performers], but one for listeners. It no longer depended for its impact on the effect of the individual part on the individual performer, but on the effect of the whole on some outside person or persons. (Newcomb, 1980:62)

Primitive and even most ancient music was generally utilitarian and participatory. One performed or assisted but less rarely listened passively. Church music was the same, until certain participators were restrained from joining in.

> Only after a long period and after an accumulated experience has the aural faculty obtained the same importance as the activation of the muscular sense in the musical action, and it required again a long development before the aural faculty became the more important and, eventually, the predominant factor in music.
>
> . . . There is a long evolution from [a] "Gebrauchsmusik" stage to that in which music represents for the listener a product of art involving the element of artistic enjoyment. (Sendrey, 1969:258)

Sendrey (1969:258), as we have discussed earlier, attributes the fact that ancient Israel "passed relatively soon the phases of development to the autonomous 'music as art phenomenon'" to the importance of tonal art in ancient Jewish life -- its impregnation with music "in all its aspects." The Renaissance, we have now seen, is the first period in Christian western Europe in which both man's sacred and secular life. that is that of one class of man, at least, are permeated with music "in all its aspects." In the courts and the academies, music had again become an art form to both performers and listeners. Though this may

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have been the case for skilled church singers for several centuries, the community of listeners in that realm of vocal performance did not compare to the knowledgable hearers of the Jewish sacred forms or to the audiences for the courtly and academic Renaissance secular entertainments.

Although the new style's strong element of virtuosity would attract a captivated audience and involve all singers, ". . . the most significant development in the history of singing during the second half of the 16th century [would be] the emergence of the female voice (especially the soprano) as both an important participant in performance and an influential factor in composition" (Jander, 1980:341). Hand in hand would go the shift in the grouping of the voices and a heightening of demands on vocal technique, especially in so far as the preferred new upper voices were concerned.

Einstein ([1949] 1971:II:825) summarizes the history of these developments:

> In the first two periods of the madrigal's development we find little trace of the qualities that the seventeenth century will expect of the singer -- range, skill in making divisions, and delicacy of expression. Good vocal quality was perhaps not even required. Only the low basses were praised, and justly so, for their deep tones were essential if the upper voice was to sing falsetto. Anyone was supposed to be able to sing. . . . In the concento, parity of the voices also implies parity of ability. . . .
>
> The concento is forced to make the transition to the concerto when to the competition of the sopranos there is added the element of virtuosity. And this addition coincided with the appearance at the court of Ferrara under Alfonso II of . . . three celebrated ladies, so often praised in song . . .

In fact, many musicologists and music historians (Einstein, [1949] 1971; Harman, 1958; Newcomb, 1980; Reese, [1954] 1959; and Roche, 1972; among others) have attributed both the desire for the high voice and

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the demand for virtuosity to what occurred in Ferrara from 1580 on. Newcomb (1980:3) goes even further: "The history of music may eventually assert that the formation of a virtually professional group of [female] madrigal singers at the Ferrarese court in 1580-1581 was the most important single development in the history of Italian secular vocal music during the last third of the century."

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CHAPTER IX

THE VIRTUOSA

Female Ensemble Music at Ferrara

The history of female singing at the Este court is divided into two periods -- before and after 1580. Anthony Newcomb's The Madrigal at Ferrara, 1579-1597 (1980) looks to the introduction to Adriano Cavicchi's edition of the composer Luzzasco Luzzaschi's 1601 publication of solo madrigals for one, two or three sopranos for the most recent (1965) summary of singing ladies of that court.

Gentlewomen Singers during the 1570s

During the first period, Cavicchi lists the sisters Lucrezia and Isabella Bendidio, Leonora di Scandiano and Vittoria Bentivoglio. The Bendidio sisters "belonged to one of the most illustrious Ferrarese families, quite accepted at court" (Solerti, as quoted in Newcomb, 1980:8). In addition, Lucrezia was married to Count Baldassare Macchiavella, and Isabella was the wife of Marchese Cornelio Bentivoglio, the highest ranking nobleman in the Este court. Leonora Sanvitale di Scandiano, a "brilliant noblewoman" and married to Giulio Tiene, Count of Scandiano, was "scarcely less well born and well married" than these "daughters of one of the most prestigious Ferrarese families and wives of important noblemen" (Newcomb, 1980:9,8). Finally, Vittoria Bentivoglio, a member of the noble Cybo family, had married into the "equally noble Bentivoglio family" (Newcomb, 1980:9).

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Newcomb (1980:8) states that several documents presented by Angelo Solerti, a late-nineteenth, early-twentieth century Italian scholar,[56] demonstrate that the Bendidio sisters sang in the Ferrarese court between 1570 and 1580 and that additional evidence shows that they were no longer part of the regular group of singing ladies in the court by the carnival season of 1580. Solerti, Newcomb (1980:9) goes on, quotes a dispatch of 14 December 1577, which specifically mentions the singing of both Leonora Sanvitale and Signora Vittoria Bentivoglio. A letter of 4 February 1579 written by Leonardo Conosciuti (a minor courtier who kept Cardinal Luigi d'Este in Rome advised of happenings within the Ferrarese court) is offered by Newcomb (1980:9) as a list of the cast of entertainers in court festivities by winter of 1579:

> Tuesday evening, . . . , all the high nobility retired to the apartments of the Duchess of Urbino [Duke Alfonso's sister]. All the Bendidio ladies and all the Scandiano ladies as well as Signora Bradamante [daughter of Duke Alfonso's uncle] were asked in, and then the doors were closed, . . . The below-mentioned ladies were then asked to sing, each one separately and then all together. It was, as far as I have understood, a very lovely thing to hear, the affair having been rehearsed beforehand with the participation of Messer Luzzasco [Luzzaschi], Marchesa Bentivoglio [Isabella Bendidio], Signora Machiavella [Lucrezia Bendidio], Signora Vittoria [Bentivoglio], the sister of the Count of Tiene, and Marcia married to Signor Anguellino.

Although the last two ladies Newcomb (1980:10) has found elsewhere mentioned only as dancers, and although Conosciuti was of "insufficient social standing to be admitted to the parties of the inner court circles" and was therefore "probably not absolutely clear as to who sang, who danced, and who told tales at such affairs," what is apparent here is that all the participants were ladies "of noble birth with high positions in the Este domains."

Newcomb (1980:11-13) attempts also to document what little

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specific information can be found about the musical practice, its forms and quality, of these singing ladies. A 14 August 1571 dispatch of Canigiani, the Florentine resident or ambassador at Ferrara, gives the first known testimony to them: ". . . to the accompaniment of a harpsichord played by Luzzasco [Luzzaschi], Signora Lucrezia and Signora Isabella Bendidio sang, separately and together, so well and so beautifully that I do not believe one could hear better anywhere" (Quoted in Einstein, [1949] 1971:II:828-9 and Newcomb, 1980:12). This might be considered quite extravagant praise considering that Canigiani was supposed to have been, according to the above two writers, anything but a eulogist of the Ferrarese court and was habitually denigrating things Ferrarese.

What is of note here, besides the praise lavished on these ladies, is that they sang together. As Einstein, Riley and I have tried to show, there was nothing unusual about noble ladies simply singing for their own enjoyment and for the entertainment of their betters and their peers, even as part of their duties as members of court. The above quote suggests that, "if they added diminutions of any elaborateness, they must have worked out or written down -- or at least memorized -- their diminutions beforehand" (Newcomb, 1980:12). This would have been a more professional, organized, systematized, methodical, authoritative approach to music-making. Einstein ([1949] 1971:II:539-40) includes a comment by Valdrighi upon the ladies' complementary abilities: Lucrezia Bendidio ("gifted with a most beautiful voice and an expert in the art of music") and her sister Isabella "always had the main part in the grandiose concerts which from 1571 to 1584, . . . delighted the court of Ferrara. . . . [and]

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"amazed everyone by their improvised singing of any motto or composition that was suggested to them."[57]

We have seen already that, according to Vincenzo Giustiniani ([1628] 1962:69), this new style of ornamental solo singing rose up around 1575 or 1576. In the absence of contemporary musical documents to the singing ladies of the early 1570s, their actual musical practice remains conjectural, but Newcomb (1980:12) speculates that the pieces sung were "already a good deal like the simpler madrigals for one or two sopranos eventually published by Luzzaschi in 1601" and, in any case, ". . . their performance on this occasion was impressive enough to be mentioned by the Emperor [Maximilian II of Austria] while dining with the Ferrarese resident in Vienna in 1574." In addition, examples of villanesche and arie for reciting sonnets, mentioned as geared toward the singing ladies by the late 1570s, place them "squarely in the long tradition of what Einstein and Palisca have referred to as 'pseudo monody'[see pp.444-5]" (Newcomb, 1980:14). This, Newcomb (1980:14) states, should not be suprising considering Ferrara's close musical connections with Naples and Venice, "two of the most active centers of this tradition during the middle decades of the century." He (1980:17-18) goes on to specify his argument:

> From Naples and from Venice, from inside and from outside the theater, we have seen reports of exceptional singers who, singing alone were able to impress their listeners deeply. We have seen that several personalities closely involved with the rise of the singing ladies at Ferrara in the 1570s were also closely involved with the Neapolitan and Venetian schools of solo singing (and, . . . with Roman practices as well). The presence of these connections indicates a continuation in Ferrara during the 1570s of a particularly advanced and vital tradition of "pseudo-monodic" solo song. Even if one did not find the evidence of these connections convincing, one would still have to view the rise of the singing ladies at Ferrara against some form, however provincial, of the tradition of

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> solo song, for some form of solo song was practiced in every center of cultivated society throughout the early and middle sixteenth century, and probably well before. Song was a necessary ornament to the life of well-bred ladies and gentlemen; it was part of virtually every courtly gathering. When the Bendidio sisters sang in 1571, they simply varied the tradition a bit by singing together rather than separately. This may also have brought to it, because of Ferrara's connections with Naples and Venice, an emphasis on theatricality and on virtuosity of both vocal technique and expressive effect -- an emphasis on performers who "work miracles" of some sort before a delighted audience. (Newcomb, 1980:17-18)

The presence in Ferrara of both a strong tradition of solo singing connected with the theater and the experience of music performed by virtuoso singers in that context may have contributed to, according to Newcomb (1980:17), (1) the formation of a group of professional madrigal singers; and (2) the separation of audience and performers that necessarily came about as a result of the new disparity of ability between "professional" and "amateur". Both of these ideas will be taken up as we proceed. The other important developing stylistic trait, the exposition of important ideas within the piece by the high voices alone, is reflected in these and later tendencies in singing in Ferrara but is to be found elsewhere as well, in Roman and Venetian madrigals of the 1570s (Newcomb, 1980:75).

The next known description of the female vocalists occurs in a 14 December 1577 dispatch of Canigiani. Accounts for the intervening years 1572-1576 are lacking -- between the death of Duke Alfonso's second wife, the Duchess Barbara of Austria, and the advent of the Duke's sister Lucrezia d'Este, Duchess of Urbino. Lucrezia was the next woman to maintain female attendants, wield authority over them and, therefore, be able to reinstitute the woman's concerts that would take place in her apartments and under her sponsorship. Ambassador

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Canigiani's message of 1577 mentions having heard Giulio Cesare Brancaccio sing with Signora Lucrezia Bendidio, Contessa Leonora di Scandiano and Signora Vittoria Bentivoglio. The communciation illustrates symptoms of "the growing interest at court in the small group of solo vocalists that was taking shape outside the normal capella di musica":

> First, two more ladies were involved than had been in 1571; second, the singing took place in private apartments as a customary event, not in a special room on a festive occasion; and finally, one of the foremost basses of the age had been attracted to Ferrara to join the group. An incidental gesture in a large court entertainment had begun to take on the status of an energetically cultivated hobby. (Newcomb, 1980:13)

To this evidence is added the facts that (1) the Duke's sister Lucrezia became, like him, "an enthusiastic backer of the new diversions" (Newcomb, 1980:13); and (2) the rate of music buying increased in 1575 and 1576 and again, more dramatically, in 1579.

Let us switch our attention for a moment from the singing ladies to the "foremost bass of the age," Brancaccio, even though he preferred to consider himself a distinguished courtier and warrior. Brancaccio's favored treatment at court was less likely to have been because of his nobility, he was of the minor Neapolitan nobility, than because of his abilities as a singer. On the basis of verses written by Tasso in praise of this voice, Newcomb (1980:18) describes it as having been quite remarkable. Furthermore, he was one of the basses Giustiniani ([1628] 1962:69) listed as exemplifying the new style of ornamental singing.

Newcomb (1980:185) describes Brancaccio as "an old and distinguished warrior who wanted nothing more than to talk of his exploits at war." Alfonso, however, wanted to hear him sing, not boast.

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In fact, "[h]e was probably the first person to be brought into the inner court circles on this basis," Newcomb (1980:14) declares. Brancaccio, having sensed the reason for his acceptance at court -- "You hold me for such a bad courtier that I would not have known how to behave . . . in the manner appropriate to a place of pleasure and not of business" (Quoted in Newcomb, 1980:14) -- left in protest. We find him absent from Conosciuti's February 1579 communication quoted above. "It is probable that the Duke, in 1577 or 1578," Newcomb (1980:14) speculates, "had asked Brancaccio once too often to sing with the ladies, that Brancaccio had for this reason come to feel that the court was for him not a place of pleasure but a place of business, . . ." But although his protest was against "the idea that his function at Ferrara was virtually that of a professional singer," he seems to have accepted the power that his musical ability gave him over the Duke," Newcomb (1980:14) feels, for we see him using his singing to regain his position in Ferrara in 1580, after lamenting his state outside that court. In a letter from Rome on 9 July 1580, attempting to regain the Duke's favor, he "dangled a few more arie and villanesche before Alfonso" (Newcomb, 1980:14): "now that, in the service of the court ladies of your court, I had put together some no unpleasant arie di sonetti and canzone Villanesche that would not have been found displeasing" (Quoted in Newcomb, 1980:14). It seems to have worked. (Newcomb [1980:13] shows that an earlier [10 April 1580] offer to dedicate his commentaries on the translation of Caesar's account of the Gallic wars had not secured an invitation to return to court.)

Brancaccio's return to Ferrara -- as a singer -- was arranged by October of 1580: ". . . [the Duke] has made a pact with him that he

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is not to talk of his miracles of war. . . . rather to take part now and then in a musica secreta, which is being prepared by some ladies of the court," wrote the then Florentine resident, Urbani (Quoted in Newcomb, 1980:14), who in 1581 recalled the agreement and summarized the situation as follows: ". . . the Duke called [him] into his service principally in order to take advantage of this skill of his" (Quoted in Newcomb, 1980:21). Nevertheless, comments appear later about Brancaccio's feelings of unpleasantness about his status at court and his unwillingness to participate in many of the performances of the otherwise all-female musica secreta, particularly in front of important visitors, which ultimately led to his second dismissal in 1583.

Even so, Brancaccio's musical importance in this context, Newcomb (1980:16) asserts, "can hardly be overemphasized." Indeed, it is hypothesized that he may have been inspiration during 1577-1578 for the decisions that led to the forming, after 1580, of a new group of singing ladies, who would become "the most frequently mentioned musical institution of the period" (Newcomb, 1980:4). This male singer was certainly to be influencial during their formative period, providing the link between the old and new groups.

Here the contributions of the newly-discovered Francesco Patrizi manuscript L'amorosa filosofia ([1577] 1963) evoke questions about Newcomb's analysis. Evidence that Alfonso was a spectator at a 1568 performance in Modena (Tarquinia Molza's hometown) in which Patrizi was impressed with her genius in both the solo and contrapuntal styles of singing, leads us to believe that, as early as that date, the Duke might have been taken by the possibilities of the innovative delights of refined female singing:

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> His Highness wanted to hear [Tarquinia] perform some difficult madrigals of Vincio in the company of the top musicians of his Cappella, and in that test everyone else missed certain passages, while she held firm and sustained it so as to give the others a chance to recover. And so the Duke, after reproving his musicians, praised her, saying he had never heard anywhere a more secure part than hers . . . . . But there is nothing to be heard on the whole earth more sweet, wonderful or divine than her singing to lute accompaniment . . . This singing so amazed Duke Alfonso and [his second wife] Duchess Barbara, that in testimony of it, and because of the merits of her virtues, he always gave her a place to sit on the same level as Their Highnesses, (probably to the great envy of the noble ladies and gentlemen present). (Quoted in Riley, 1980:78-9)

Riley (1980:79) adds to this Durante and Martellotti's assertion, in 1979, that Alfonso had manifested no particular interest in music before this episode. His activities had centered around the more "manly" arts of arms, horsemanship, ballplaying, etc. His musical entourage had contained the traditional ducal cappella di musica. The soprano parts in this organization were taken, as elsewhere, by young boys, falsettists or castrati and included two of the most famous male sopranos in Italy -- Domenico and Hernando Bustamente.

Durante and Martellotti, Riley (1980:79-80) says, suggest explicitly that it was precisely Alfonso's experience hearing Molza that called his attention to female singing practice, which he then came to promote so energetically. It is not possible to prove such a connection, but the first grouping of singing ladies, court ladies in the Duchess's entourage who had acquired along the way gentlewomanly musical training, appears to have come about only several years after 1568, when Alfonso prevailed upon them "against their will and to the horrified disapproval of their families," (Riley, 1980:80) to learn and perform some musical dialogues for princely guests.

Although the court of Ferrara was attaching increasing

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importance to the activities of its singing ladies several years prior to 1580, by that date Duke Alfonso "seems to have decided that his group of singing ladies as it was then constituted would be incapable of realizing the bolder artistic plans that he had come to have for it" (Newcomb, 1980:20). Again, Brancaccio's near-professional presence may have suggested this. His or similar presences would be necessary for fulfilling the large place in court entertainment that Alfonso now saw for it. Although this new course was meant to "please his own dreams of musical splendor in a period of personal withdrawal from political into inner court life," it was also to please (and was probably partly at the instigation of) "the energetic, extroverted, fifteen-year-old daughter of the Duke of Mantua" -- Alfonso's new wife, Margherita Gonzaga[58] -- and her "thirst for music, dancing, and general festivity" (Newcomb, 1980:7). Here is an archetypal example of Edward Henning's ([1960] 1976:361) contention that although stylistic developments occur through the artistically creative members of the community, artistically nonproductive patron groups "decisively affect . . . the large-scale development of new stylistic traits."

Female Virtuose after 1580

The Duke attracted to the court three new sopranos -- the Mantuan Laura Peverara (sometimes Peperara), Anna Guarini and, also from Mantua, Livia d'Arco. They became ladies in waiting to the new young Duchess,[59] joined for a period by a fourth, Tarquinia Molza. These constituted what became referred to as the Ferrarese concerto delle donne. The concerto delle donne activities, its fame and its effects on the madrigal and vocal musical style in general are the focus of Newcomb's (1980) work. From his following of courtly

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communications about the activities underway (1980:20-1), we can summarize the history of the formation of the new group. Owen's (1981:371) review of Newcomb's study rates his ability to construct musical events from evidence found in correspondences as "of the highest quality," "[o]ne of Newcomb's strengths as a musicologist."

In a dispatch of March 1580, the current Florentine resident, Orazio Urbani, mentioned the recruitment of Laura Peverara. Conosciuti reported her arrival in Ferrara in a letter of 4 May. In a letter written to Duke Alfonso on 20 November, the correspondent mentioned having heard Peverara and Anna Guarini sing in the apartments of the Duke's sister. On 1 December Guarini officially entered the court of the Duchess Margherita. Urbani talked about the rehiring of Brancaccio in October 1580 and noted his arrival in a dispatch of 26 December. The new concerto in its first form was then complete. Although Livia d'Arco had come to the court from Mantua with Margherita Gonzaga in 1579, she was young and needed extensive training as a musician and did not, therefore, join the group until the spring or early summer of 1582.

Newcomb's history when it comes to Tarquinia Molza proves weak, however, in that he fails to fully explain how she fits in. After the death of her husband, she visited Ferrara frequently, seeking legal assistance in the litigation of her husband's estate. During visits from 1579 to 1583, then, she probably performed with and advised the new ensemble. Anthon (1943:64) and Riley (1980:84) make the claim, in fact, that she most likely had an actual hand in the organization and training of the original women. Quoting from Domenico Vandelli's biography (1750) of Tarquinia Molza, Einstein ([1949] 1971:II:827) makes the passing comment that she came to the court of Ferrara, where

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she had already established "quel celebre concerto di Dame" while on a visit. From the same source, Riley (1980:85) offers the following information concerning the singer's permanent residency as dama d'onora to Margherita and her supervisory capacity in regard to her role within the concerto delle donne:

> Alfonso . . . , was overcome with admiration, having discovered in [Tarquinia] a great wonder, . . . Shortly after, Tarquinia founded that famous concerto of ladies, who respected her very highly, and who . . . did her the honor of calling her permanently into their company in order that through her presence she might lend perfection to that chorus of musicians she had instituted so well.

Riley (1980:106-7) also traces chronological acknowledgments of Molza as director/supervisor of the "three [other] ladies of Ferrara": Ramazzini in 1879 described her as "conductor, composer"; Valdrighi in 1883 referred to her as "director and soul of a concerto di dame"; Solerti in 1900 mentioned only that the concerts took place "under the direction of Luzzasco Luzzaschi and the famous Tarquinia Molza" (Einstein, [(1949) 1971:II:540] attributes this statement to Valdrighi); and, finally, Durante and Martellotti (1979) restored her (based on evidence derived from Patrizi's 1577 manuscript and in contradiction to Solerti's [1900] influential representation of the ensemble) to director and moving force behind the concerto delle donne. And so, it has been said (Anthon, 1943:64) that Molza played "the most important role in the musical life of Ferrara during the reign of Alfonso II."

Newcomb's thesis demonstrates that the basis for the new group lay in the court's amateur singing ladies of the 1570s, but he (1980:20) states that most witnesses in 1580, while reporting the stages in its establishment, either failed to connect it with the

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earlier singing ladies or saw such a difference between the two "as to dwell continually on the newness of the second." Both Urbani and Conosciuti, for example, viewed the activities under preparation as new, interesting and worthy of reporting to Florence and Rome.

Some scholars, on the other hand, have ignored the distinction between the two. Newcomb (1980:7) mentions Einstein and Solerti in particular, "the latter probably because it did not concern him, the former because he was misled by Solerti's presentation of information." One finds Einstein ([1949] 1971:II:825,834,844) grouping together women of both periods. Anthon (1943:64), Horsley (1951:131) and MacClintock (1966:115), too, list as part of the concerto delle donne women from the earlier period, although it was quite infrequent, even in the beginning of the 1580s, for the former singing ladies to participate in an entertainment by the latter.

Although the origin of the quasi-professional ensemble was based in the prior presence ofwomen courtiers who sany, there were, indeed, important differences about the two groups that are significant. The singing ladies of the court before 1580 were, as has been seen, members of noble and wealthy, important Ferrarese families,

> who would have belonged to the court and enjoyed its advantages whether or not they sang. The court may have rewarded them and been rewarded by their singing, but it did not reward them specifically for singing. (Newcomb, 1980:7-8)

These women were supplanted, however, during 1580 and 1581 by the new group of ladies, whose backgrounds contrasted clearly with those of the first group.

Socially, those who made up the concerto delle donne fell close to the middle of the social class spectrum, of middle class or

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"artistic" birth. They were not of mean birth, but only one, Livia d'Arco, was even of minor nobility. Laura Peverara was the daughter of a wealthy merchant, and Tarquinia Molza and Anna Guarini came from prominent poets' families. They were not yet professional musicians, "trained from childhood to carve for themselves an independent career in music" (Newcomb, 1980:7) nor formally socialized for such futures. At that time such a plan would have still been quite impossible for a woman. Nevertheless, they had spent a great deal of energy "cultivating their musical abilities, . . ." (Newcomb, 1980:7). The place of music in the educations of upper-middle class ladies "aspiring to courtly life, uncovered and developed" their talents (Newcomb, 1986:100) and, most likely intentionally, prepared them for careers in music.

The learned women humanists discussed in Chapter VI also came typically from the court cities of northern Italy. They, frequently, came from prominent families, some (e.g., Battista Montelfeltro, Cecilia Gonzaga, Costanza Varano) daughters of ruling families. Others (e.g., Isotta Nogarola, Cassandra Fedele, Laura Cereta) belonged to the urban aristocratic and professional elite, often born into families that "specialized" in learning where they were educated by wise fathers and excellent male teachers. The great majority of women artists in this century and the next, Parker and Pollock (1981:20) tell us, came from "families of painters in which the absence of sons or the availability of materials and free teaching gave daughters an entry to an artistic career . . ." Nochlin (1971:501) agrees:

> . . . they all, almost without exception, were either the daughters of artist fathers, or generally later, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, had a close personal connection with a stronger or more dominant male artistic personality. Neither of these characteristics is, of course, unusual for men artists; it is simply true almost without

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> exception for their feminine counterparts, at least until quite recently.

Since most careers in the creative arts required "either sophisticated education . . . , early commitment with parental backing . . . , or special courses in public or [institutional] settings . . ." (Krause, 1971:262), the social class of the individual was a potent factor for the potential nurturance of creative talent in general.

Birth into the family of an artist or musician provided gifted women not only with technical and theoretical training for furthering their talents but also entry into professional networks. This was one way, in addition to birth into a wealthy family, in which women could overcome sex-biased restrictions and become exceptions to the rule. At least, this one class of women could. With the addition of innate talent and the necessary personal characteristics to carry it off, these would prove to be means available to relatively few women. And the means were almost totally ascriptive.

As for female singers, Wood (1980:293) concludes: "Given creative traits of independence, initiative, discipline, concentration, and self-esteem, the exceptional women musicians have invariably had the advantages also of birth in an educated musical family and a degree of financial security, . . ." Numerous other women singers who became prominent in Italian courts and cities in the latter part of the century, and who will be discussed later in this chapter, were members of musician families. Caterina Willaert and Virginia Vagnoli, Venetian vocalists active after 1560, both came from musician' families. The Pèlizzari sisters hired by the Mantuan court in the late 1580s were sisters of a musician who performed in an academie at Vicenza. Vittoria Archilei, a famous singer in both Rome and Florence, was the wife of a

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singer and lutenist. The wife and daughters of Giulio Caccini are also well-inown examples of such types. Claudia Cattaneo, the Mantuan singer who marrried Claudio Monteverdi, was the daughter of that court's cappella di musica.

In Vandelli's biography of Molza, we find:

> When she was yet very young, her father recognized her genius, that she was gifted with a marvelous vitality and a lofty intellect . . . He had her taught, along with her brothers . . . , by the best masters he could find. She studied grammar, rhetoric, astronomy, poetry, music, logic, philosophy, theology, Latin, Greek and Hebrew. (Quoted in Riley, 1980:5)

Tarquinia's schooling, the kind of encyclopedic one desired for musicians as described on p.267, was indeed exceptional. Her three sisters, in fact, received no literary education whatsoever. In addition, the resistance with which she met is illustrated in Francesco Patrizi's account of Tarquinia. A friend of the Molza family, Patrizi, in his L'amorosa filosofia ([1577] 1963), contradicts Vandelli's presentation of Tarquinia being routinely handed an education as a perfect equal to her brothers:

> Tarquinia, along with her sisters, was put to the feminine arts of needlework by her mother, an activity she used to flee from whenever she could. She so longed to hold a book in her hand . . . that she smuggled one out which she continually carried hidden under her mantle . . . She was caught many times in this noble larceny, both by her mother, who disapproved, and by her father, who took infinite delight in it. And Tarquinia so pleaded with her father to let Don Giovanni teach her along with her brothers, that he just had to concede to her charm. (Quoted in Riley, 1980:8)

Both Patrizi and Vandelli described Tarquinia's initiative and persistance. Having been married off to a Modenese gentleman, Paolo Porrino, but having had no children, she continued her studies, lucky enough that Porrino "did not interfere, but always admired her intellect and musical gifts, with pride and approval" (Vandelli, 1750,

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as quoted in Riley, 1980:10). Biographers' assumptions that, in this way, she filled the emptiness in her life from not having produced children are not held unanimously. There is even the possibility that her childlessness might have been deliberate! Molza is also known to have renounced the time-consuming procedures of personal adornment that were necessary to meet the prevailing standards of beauty, in order that she might study. Indeed, her resistance to such sex role encumberances is both a recurring theme in her life and a prominent feature of her personality. One thing is obvious: she was unconventional. She fits Nochlin's (1971:502) description of aspiring women artists with independence of spirit and liberty of manner:

> . . . she must . . . have a good, strong streak of rebellion in her to make her way in the world of art at all, rather than conform to the socially approved role of wife and mother, . . . It is only by adopting, however covertly, the "masculine" attributes of singlemindedness, concentration, tenaciousness, and absorption in ideas and craftsmanship for their own sake that women have succeeded and continue to succeed in the world of art.

For such violations of cultural norms, Molza, we shall see, would pay a price.

Previously she had learned to sing improvised verses to her own accompaniment as an attribute of a woman of good breeding: "Since childhood she had been accustomed to singing and playing as a recreation . . . , and being endowed with a beautiful voice, she became a very accomplished musician" (Anthon, 1943:64). She now took to the "serious" study of the ornamental solo style as well as the mastering of polyphonic techniques. We must remember that this feature in the education of men had previously put them at great advantage in the early years of the contrapuntal secular madrigal (see p.389).

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> She succeeded so incredibly that not three months had passed before she was accomplished enough to sing by note, effortlessly and gracefully, any music whatsoever that they placed in front of her, no matter how difficult and embellished it might be. And next she was singing the words, in less than two months more, something that, in my judgement, no man -- no matter how intelligent -- could have done. And she became more assured, and improved in the secureness of her singing, so that she then had no difficulty improvising contrapuntally upon whatever difficult music might be presented to her. (Patrizi, [1577] 1963, as quoted in Riley, 1980:73-4)

Her home became a meeting place for the Modenese literati and a place where her talents might be admired:

> No other woman has a voice so sweet and round in singing, nor such pleasing delivery of every manner of trills, runs and diminutions. Neither is any woman so secure in any difficult compositions, nor able to sing so angelically to the lute, to play a bass line on the viola and sing the soprano at the same time, nor able to understand counterpoint, nor the art in its entirety, as she does. (Patrizi, [1577] 1963, as quoted in Riley, 1980:13)

Riley (1980:75-6) offers numerous other accolades, from Patrizi's work, to Molza's talents:

> Her voice is a soprano -- not dull, suppressed or forced, but very clear, open, most delicate, soft, even, very sweet -- in short, . . . more than angelic, and also what musicians call 'rounded' in low medium and upper registers, which is very rare.
>
> Among all the sopranos in Italy, Hernando [Bustamente] -- castrato of the Duke of Ferrara -- is most admired. But his greatest excellence is in the high parts alone, since his voice is not even in the low register. But even in the high parts there is not the clarity, much less the sweetness that there is in our Signora . . .
>
> Much more rare in musicians is the ability to express accidentals with the sweetness and softness they require. . . . There is no man who does this better than she.
>
> And she does many things excellently -- not by mere practice, nor because they were shown to her by her teachers . . . but rather due to her marvelous and unusual ear, . . . , and due to her accomplished knowledge of counterpoint.
>
> Thus it happened that one day [the composer] Pietro Vinci

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> arrived while she was singing one of his madrigals, and, . . . , onlookers saw him raise his hands to heaven as if to thank God, weeping from the sweetness of it. And when she finished singing, he rushed to embrace her, saying, "Oh, my daughter, I thank God and you for giving me before my death the consolation of hearing my works sung as I never would have thought I should, or could, hear them."

Newcomb (1980:11) summarizes his first comparison of the before 1580 and the after 1580 ladies ensembles, one that demonstrates a critical difference and radical uniqueness of the new lady singers: "None of the [new] ladies was of the same stock as the Bendidio, Scandiano, and Bentivoglio ladies, and none of them would normally have been a member of the inner circle of the court." In addition, d'Arco and Peverara, the latter called "La Mantovana," were not even subjects of Alfonso but were "imported" from outside the boundaries of his Duchy. They would not under normal circumstances have been members of the Este court were it not for their musical talents. Each was brought there specifically because she sang so beautifully, as, we recall, was Brancaccio. For example, about Peverara, the Florentine resident wrote in March 1580: "When His Excellency [Duke Alfonso] was at Mantua he saw a young lady who was rather beautiful, and, in addition, had the virtue of singing and playing excellently [and] thereupon conceived the desire to have her at Ferrara . . ." (Quoted in Newcomb, 1980:11).

Women Courtiers Performing Versus a Quasi-Professional Female Ensemble

The four were <u>made</u> ladies in waiting, a necessary pretense under which they were brought into court, since it would have been unthinkable to have hired women of any standing as musical servants. It was to their fine voices and their success at their vocal endeavors that they owed their standing at court. In this way, they were better

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suited for and more highly committed to the role of musician than the earlier female vocalists. For them it was their primary role, their reason for being at court. In return for the enjoyment of their voices,

> . . . the court assumed responsibility for the future of the lady involved. . . . , it discharged this responsibility handsomely. It fed the ladies, housed them, clothed them, paid them well, lent them its prestige, provided them with dowries, and found them highly placed husbands. (Newcomb, 1980:7)

Here we find an interesting contrast between women singers and their scholarly counterparts which reveals the advantages of women engaging in the vocal type of learned activity. Concerning the others,

> A young woman was free to be studious. There were no other demands made of her, and the period of adolescence for those with literary interests was a period of freedom. But that freedom could not last into adulthood. A young woman eventually confronted a choice between two futures: marriage and full participation in social life on the one hand; or abstention from marriage and withdrawal from the world. For learned women, the choice was agonizing. To marry implied the abandonment of beloved studies. Not to marry implied the abandonment of the world. (King, 1980:68-9)

For the singers, it was very different. First, engaging in musical capabilities was not only socially acceptable but even a sociable activity; second, participating in music socially was possible whether unmarried or married; and third, being musical even aided in being marriageable. In short, musicality in a woman was not mutually exclusive of marriage and social life. In Mertonian terminology ([1949] 1957:383), being a singer and a woman (and perhaps a wife and mother) were statuses "neutral" to one another in the status-set of the upper class woman at this time. The values and obligations of each were not likely to have entered into conflict and were even, at times, mutually reinforcing.

Both Livia d'Arco and Anna Guarini married gentlemen of the

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Ferrarese court. The arrangement for the marriage of Laura Peverara to Count Annibale Turco included the Duke's accepting her chosen husband as a gentleman of his court with the provision given to other barons of the realm. Anthon (1943:66) speaks also of a possible dowry of 10,000 scudi (more than 2,500 lire) and a pension for not only her husband but for her father-in-law as well. A 12 February 1583 letter of Federico Cozzi, a courtier who kept Cardinal Luigi d'Este advised of court happenings when he was absent from Ferrara, and a 7 February 1583 dispatch of Urbani tell that the couple was to have the palace apartments of a late sister of the Duke plus additional rooms that had previously been held for a count. Urbani shows his amazement at the extent of the regard shown for Peverara, in reporting on the preparations for her wedding celebration:

> Tomorrow, to conclude the festivities, the wedding of Laura Peverara will be celebrated with a tournament, . . . One can see from this program, . . . , the honors and favors that are done to this lady. To compose this program and the words to a grand ballet that will be performed in the evening by the Duchess and eleven other ladies, Cavalier Guarini was recalled from Venice, . . . (Quoted in Newcomb, 1980:39)

Tarquinia Molza was a different story, however. The eldest of the group and a widow for many years, "a skilled player of the viola and the lute and a poetess of considerable accomplishment" (Newcomb, 1980:187), a woman "educated by the most learned men in philosophy, theology, Greek and Latin" (MacClintock, 1966:45), a composer and conductor in addition to singer and instrumentalist, desired by the court of Emperor Rudolph (Anthon, 1943:64), this dama d'onora probably overshadowed Peverara during the six years that she lived at the Ferrarese court, years which "constitute the high point in the musical brilliance of that court" (Einstein, [1949] 1971:II:828). She may even

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have been the force underlying the whole concerto delle donne venture. The tragic circumstances that led to her departure in 1589 are summarized by Einstein ([1949] 1971:II:513):

> [The composer] Wert, a frequent guest in Ferrara, conceived a deep passion for this maturely beautiful woman, a passion that she returned with equal intensity. He was now oftener in Ferrara than in Mantua [where he was maestro di cappella], and on December 22, 1584, [Duke] Guglielmo had to demand, . . . , the immediate return of his choirmaster. The lovers did not know that they were beset by spies and that their letters were secretly opened and copied. In October 1589 Tarquinia was forced to leave the court to return to Modena under the close surveillance of the ducal governatore and to forego all further communication with Wert.

Why had Duke Alfonso, who had himself once rode in a tournament in Molza's honor, not helped her at this critical moment? Her association with Wert in the pursuit of music had brought about a friendly relationship that blossomed into love, according to Wert's biographer (MacClintock, 1966:45). They were both mature persons -- he about 54 and she a widow of 42 or 43. Why did the exposure of their affair cause her banishment from the court?

In their letters, says MacClintock (1966:45), were words of affection and even passion but also phrases that were interpreted as suggesting thoughts of matrimony. She (1966:45-6) conjectures that the Duke felt that such a relationship was unworthy of a gentlewoman of Molza's quality and station. Fenlon (1980:136) and Anthon (1946:123) agree:

> It was unpardonable in such a highly structured society that a well-bred lady should associate in this way with a court official . . .
>
> Wert's love affair illustrates the deep gap that existed between the aristocracy and musicians who were, after all, essentially craftsmen.

It was more than that, however. It was unsuitable because Giaches de

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Wert, although a court official and favored courtier (of Mantua), was nevertheless a "povero fiammingo" (poor Flemming) whose wife had had a bad name and had died in prison.

It was not the actual behavior that was so unacceptable as Molza's violation of the aristocratic social code in directing her behavior at a commoner. Riley (1980:21) reads Patrizi as suggesting that Molza might have expected to have overcome the treacherous intrigues of male-female relationships and remained "safe" through her avoidance of the niceties of female adornment, through manifesting her commitment to "elevated things of the mind" and by relying on her sense of humor and sharp wit. These were also her ways of coping with the difficulties of an unintegrated role-set. Dealing with the rules of courtly love on her own terms eventually proved her undoing, however. What the motives were of those behind the disclosure of the "affair" is a question that has also led to speculation, one possible answer being artistic jealousy.

The fact that Molza was a "new kind of person" (in terms of gender, that is) in a position formerly the stronghold of men (for Molza was not only a superbly-trained singer but also a directive force of musical leadership) adds to the confusion surrounding this issue. The appearance of "new kinds of people in established positions" results in "instability in the role-set" (Merton, [1949] 1957:370), "in some measure, a status contradiction. . . . may also create status dilemma for the individual concerned and for other people who have to deal with him[/her]" (Hughes, 1945:357).

What seems strange here is that it was Molza who was forced to leave Ferrara. Reese ([1954] 1959:409) states that her family refused

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to consent to the marriage and that the Duchess dismissed her from her court post at Ferrara. MacClintock (1966:45) says that Alfonso, rather than disgrace her publicly, allowed her to ask permission to leave the Duchess's service on the pretext of being ill and unable to continue her duties. It was Molza's career, not Wert's, that was ended.[60] It appears that the license often allowed (male) artists (see p.270) was not extended to the "ladies" of this category.

We must recognize, though, that this incident occurred at the same time that personal, political and economic difficulties were beginning to overwhelm Alfonso, one result being a lessening of his interest in his musical organization (see p.543). Hints also can be found to the possible decline in the quality of the musica secreta by the late 1580s (see p.543), both of which would have made it less likely that Molza would have been defended by the ruling family. Perhaps, if the right motivation had still existed, this error in judgment might have been excused. Perhaps it might have been overlooked had she been male.

To summarize again the pattern involved in the transition that occurred in the early 1580s and the basic difference that justifies the division of the history of female singing at Ferrara, we look first to Newcomb (1980:7): "The first group was made up of courtiers who happened to sing, the second of singers who, because of their musical ability, were made courtiers." Fenlon (1980:126) describes the change as "from an ensemble of aristocratic amateurs performing for their own pleasure to one of professional virtuosos who rehearsed and performed for an audience in a more formal sense." These distinctions perhaps explain why the earlier singing ladies were referred to as "concerto di

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donne" (concerto of women), while the later group was designated "concerto delle donne" (concerto of the women).

Of the sometimes contradictory elements that solo singing of the mid 1500s focused upon -- (1) effective projection of text, (2) freedom for melodic growth, and (3) cultivation of diminution and vocal virtuosity, it was the third that Newcomb has insisted that the ladies of Ferrara during both periods chose to emphasize. The trend toward vocal flourishes and ornamental complexity that began in the 1570s he shows, with more ample documentary evidence, to have continued and intensified with the concerto delle donne of the 1580s. In addition to this concentration, the single element that was to have an "extraordinary powerful effect on the whole" was the high degree of musical and vocal training among the singers -- ". . . vocal amateurs of the 1570s were replaced by vocal virtuosi" (Newcomb, 1980:19).

This was another major difference between the groups of women of each era. It was also the reason for the acceptance of the difference in social status between the two. Here we see again, as we have already seen inside the Catholic Church, that when singers of particular quality were desired, institutions of great power -- such as that Church or the Court of Ferrara -- took unconventional, extraordinary and often prohibited steps to obtain them. In this case, we see, finally, women of less than the highest rank being accepted as quasi-professional musicians without such participation damaging their reputations. In fact, it enhanced the same. In addition, their new-found status as courtiers generally secured and protected the virtuose.

These women cannot be dismissed as what Lerner (1979:145)

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refers to as notable "women worthies," individual women who, through exceptional circumstances and supported by exceptional rank (and against great odds), managed to emerge into the spotlight of history (see p.314). Rather, they combined uncommon talent with increasingly attainable training in a place that welcomed their abilities despite, or possibly even "as well as" (see pp.394-5), their gender. Although women, as we have seen, had always made music, they were always subject to major limitations and unending prescriptions. This period and place, northern Italy at the end of the Renaissance, was the first historically to have promoted the best of them as quasi-public professionals rather than solely as amateurs in private. Still, they were not true professionals, solely dependent on public performance.

Some women, therefore, were able to obtain the training, encouragement and opportunities necessary for a professional career, although these essentials were still far more accessible to men than to women. The women of the Ferrarese concertos, as well as those that would emerge in other towns and cities and in addition to numerous musically-famous religious females, were neither freakish accidents nor yet part of an established occupational structure. They represented a series of individual women who were able to overcome institutional barriers to their participation in a particular societal activity and their partaking in the prestige associated with that activity. These were a line of talented women taking advantage of new opportunities for staking out and developing a hold over an occupational territory, one based upon virtuoso singing and composition that stressed the soprano voice.

A final distinction between the earlier and later musical

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arrangements is to be found in Newcomb's (1980:21) detailing of the fascination and even bafflement about the nature of the new group on the part of contemporary chroniclers even as it was being set up:

> a distinct institution within the court, whereas previous singing in court had been done by members of the court, who, although they happened to sing, still made up no independent group. Urbani reflects this distinction by giving the new group -- or to be more precise, the activity for which it was established -- a name: he called it the musica secreta.

Urbani's correspondence is the first in which Newcomb encounters the use of this phrase, which soon after appeared in many sources when reference was made to the chamber concerts -- music made in private chambers for an exclusive audience -- by the ladies.

> It is closely related to what Canigiani meant in 1571 when he observed that the festivities at which the Bendidio sisters sang took place assai retiratamente, or what Conosciuti meant in 1579 . . . that only a certain limited number of people were admitted to the apartments of the Duchess of Urbino to hear the ladies sing [see p.457], or what Urbani himself meant . . . when he called the occasion of which the musica secreta formed part a trattenimento retirato [a private entertainment]. All refer to the intimate nature of the performance, held in private chambers for a small and select audience. (Newcomb, 1980:21)

It is, therefore, closely related to the term musica reservata, discussed on pp.348-9. Both denote music that is esoteric -- "reserved for an audience that is usually small and always has special qualities, be they social, musical, or both" (Newcomb, 1980:22).

In the case of Ferrara, the audience was the immediate d'Este family, high members of the court and visiting dignitaries, "a learned audience worthy of the more sophisticated musical fare," as Cook and LaMay (1984:8) describe it. The dedication to Duke Alfonso of Wert's Book Eight a 5 (1586) included praise to these Ferrarese hearers: ". . . in what part of the world could [these musical compositions of mine] be sung better than at the court of Your Highness where I cannot

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determine which is greater, the mastery of the singers or the judgment of the listeners" (Quoted in Einstein, [1949] 1971:II:832). Hercole Bottrigari's famous treatise (Il Desiderio, [1594] 1962:53), describing sixteenth-century musical practice in general and Ferrarese musical life in particular, spoke also of "judicious and intelligent listeners, . . ."

More specifically, il concerto secreto refers to a specific group that performs in a musica secreta, and il concerto delle donne, to the ladies' ensemble at Ferrara, in recognition of its most striking feature -- its highly skilled female singers. The singers of the concerto were musical personnel employed by the court, as were those of the large Este cappella di musica, which performed at big public occasions, both religious and secular.

Female versus Male Sopranos and Altos and the Renaissance Bass Virtuoso

In a Renaissance court, music played a part in large-scale public festivities. It was also part of triumphal, funeral, and carnival processions. Music occurred at large banquets and formal receptions in addition to providing the intermedii of court theater presentations. Newcomb (1980:31-5) spends several pages describing the variety of functions of the clerics (cappellani), singers (cantori) and instrumentalists (musici) listed under the cappella on the salary rolls (bolletti dei salariati) of the court in 1582 and of the growing number of names on successive lists (the cappella suffering no cutbacks under Alphonso II), reaching a peak in the mid 1580s with over forty names.

Aside from the tendency toward expansion both within and outside the cappella, it is possible to discern changes in taste for

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particular kinds of singers during the nearly forty years of Alfonso's reign that coincide with developments in musical style discussed in Chapter VII and VIII. The proportion of Flemish singers was decreasing and, along with this, the recruitment of male sopranos ended. The castrati Bustamente brothers, hired in the late 1550s, were the last of this era (though Hernando was still the most highly paid singer of the cappella in 1589). Instead, Alphonso pursued his women's ensembles.

Mantuan court records indicate a continuation of the practice of attracting male sopranos and altos -- but concentrating on castrati (more equal to women's voices), not falsettists. In 1565, Duke Guglielmo was reported to have had three eunuch singers, a fourth being added slightly later (Stark, 1973:262).[61] Their sparse pay demonstrates, however, the small premium placed on their talents at that time. A. Bertolotti's account of Mantuan vocal organizations ([1890] 1969:37,40,58,64,66-8) demonstrates their later enrichment with castrati. He names many that were acquired by Mantua throughout the sixteenth century and mentions, around 1586, even a possible surgeon named Tornielli. It was at that time that the advantages of castrato voices began to be really appreciated, as is evident in Duke Guglielmo's attempts to recruit the same:

> In 1571 Guglielmo was trying to engage a castrato who had been in the service of the cardinal of Ferrara and the cardinal of Trent. But the fellow was evasive and tried to raise the offer by procrastinating. The duke's secretary wrote indignantly, "These creatures (animali) are extremely scarce, and the few one finds are very fickle." In 1581 the duke again attempted to get an eunuch, . . . During the next three years strenuous efforts were made to obtain castrati. Guglielmo's agents combed France and Spain and reported that the duke would have to pay a good castrato 300 to 400 crowns [scudi] a year [as opposed to the three scudi per month he had paid twenty years earlier], though the duke of Bavaria had just snatched up a few at only 200 crowns a year. . . . enormous salaries . . . (Anthon, 1946:232-3)

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It was during these very years that Ferrara was concentrating on women. Late in the century, though, the castrato was already coming into a strong position, supplanting falsettists in numerous courts as well as in the churches.

Support can be found for a connection between the appearance of the virtuosic "noble manner" and rejection of the falsetto singer. Zacconi complained that the voce di testa was boring, annoying, out of tune, brittle and offensive (1592, as quoted in Stark, 1973:125). And by 1619, in Praetorius' Syntagma Musicum, was written that falsetto was a "half and forced voice" (Quoted in Stark, 1973:127).

> . . . all those people, apart from trilli and passaggi, and a good placement of the voice, had in their singing practically nothing of the art of piano and forte, of making the voice crescendo little by little, of a graceful descrescendo, of the expression of the affetti, of reinforcing the meaning of the words with judgment, of making the voice become cheerful or melancholy, of becoming pitiful or bold as required, and of similar galanteries, . . . (Della Valle, 1640, as quoted in Stark, 1973:137)

Caccini's was the strongest critic. He ([1620] 1950:382) attacked the voice type as wasteful of breath, as producing crescendos which become "harsh and rough" and as not being capable of singing loud enough to accomplish the important technique of esclamazione or messa di voce (the "placing of the voice" through sustaining a long note at an unwavering pitch, often combined with a crescendo and dimmuendo on that note, a technique essential to the "noble manner" of singing in that it was the "principal means to move the affection" and crucial to attaining the mid-voice) and, when they did, it having been "harsh and insufferable to the hearing." Stark (1973:126) concludes that Caccini "sounded the death knell" for the falsetto, who, because of his deficiencies, was not able to cope with the musical demands of

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Caccini's new style. Caccini ([1620] 1950:391-2) complained, ". . . from the feigned voice can come no noble manner of singing, which only proceeds from a natural voice, serving aptly for all the notes which a man can manage according to his ability [through his whole range], employing his wind in such a fashion as he command all the best passionate graces used in this most worthy manner of singing."

New Ferrarese efforts at recruitment were aimed, in contrast to Mantua's switch from falsettists to castrati, at instrumentalists, female sopranos and basses. The bass Brancaccio has been shown to have been an important and highly valued member of the early concerto secreto. Other male singers -- from the cappella -- occasionally joined Brancaccio and the ladies but were never an essential part of the concerto. Virtuoso tenors, therefore (necessary to many later madrigals, of Monteverdi for instance) "never caught the fancy of Duke Alfonso" (Newcomb, 1980:22). On Brancaccio's leaving the court for the last time, Ferrara attempted in 1584 to attract a famous bass soloist from Rome. Giulio Masetti, the Este resident in Rome, wrote in a 6 June 1584 dispatch a description of the basso Pitio that offers us an account of the qualities expected of the role of the professional solo singer at that time:

> He displays lovely fantasy in the singing of napolitane and in making up words and tunes of great attractiveness. By profession, he sings bass to the accompaniment of the lute, and he has a very sweet voice. I do not know how he succeeds together with other singers . . . , he has an alert mind and makes agreeable conversation. (Quoted in Newcomb, 1980:47)

Besides vocal and improvisational abilities in solo and ensemble singing and besides skill on an instrument, he was expected also to be a conversationalist and, as Giustiniani ([1628] 1962:68) adds, a fine jester (buffone nobile, a remainder from the commedia dell' arte

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tradition). But, such a desired combination of expected characteristics would leave the inhabiter of the role "in the same no man's land between the courtier and the professional musician that had so puzzled Brancaccio" (Newcomb, 1980:47).

Ferrara soon gave up the idea of maintaining a bass exclusivly for the musica secreta. No bass other than Brancaccio is ever mentioned as an essential part of the concerto secreto. As with the other male voice ranges, there were certainly fine and highly paid basses among the Duke's cappella members to assist the group, but the role of the bass changed:

> . . . their role was incidental. After having initiated the intensive cultivation of virtuoso singing, the bass had to watch the province being taken over by the high voices -- the sopranos and (elsewhere than at Ferrara) the tenors. (Newcomb, 1980:23)

By 1596, a chronicle is cited by Newcomb (1980:23) as lumping the bass together with the other males by calling them all simply "musicians of the Duke." Finally, Newcomb (1980:34) finds only one testimony, a letter of 1583, to the singing of madrigals in private apartments by only male singers from the cappella.

This left composers as the only other link between the two musical bodies. The exclusive musica secreta group was distinct and was kept separate from the larger choir, therefore, in membership, function and, finally, salary.

Vocal Status as Reflected in Salaries

Besides the bollette dei salariati, a list of early 1589 (Provisionati da S. A. Serma per la musica), specifying salary compensation and fringe benefits (the value of any housing, food, clothing and other bonuses) of various employees of the court, gives an

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idea of the respective values of the different positions. This list and other accounts in chronicles of the court are important means of determining the payments made to musicians of the musica secreta -- ladies and gentlemen who were not generally listed among the servants of the court on the usual salary rolls. Jessie Owens (1981:371-3), however, finds Newcomb's analysis of salary records a major weakness in his work. Newcomb was apparently unaware of collections of documents consisting of original pay orders, missed salary information for numerous important years (1561, 1562, 1570, 1571, 1572, 1593), and he did not understand well the systems of the different types of pay registers. Only certain generalizations can be made, therefore, concerning the respective salaries of the various singers and other musicians.

Newcomb (1980:30) recognizes, in the records on which he did his research, "signs of the cultivation of the virtuoso performer at Ferrara." For example, of the ten composers on the rolls at the court cappella in the 1580s and 1590s (some considered eminent and two having directed the Ferrarese musical establishment), "none received as high a salary as the most famous of the virtuoso singers and instrumentalists within the regular cappella, to say nothing of musicians of the musica secreta" (Newcomb, 1980:30). Brancaccio is listed as having been paid 130 lire per month in the bolletta of 1582 and January to May of 1583; in June 1583 he was paid 161.19.0 (Newcomb, 1980:185). Ippolito Fiorino, the maestro di cappella of the court, and Luzzascho Luzzaschi, its most prestigious composer, received approximately 125 and 135 scudi per year respectively in comparison to Brancaccio's over 400. And, though Luzzaschi was also given rooms in the palace and a farm outside

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the city, Brancaccio was the recipient of a furnished house and "horses as many and whenever he wishes" (Quoted in Newcomb, 1986:96).

In comparison, the women were paid far less than Brancaccio, but usually more than the highest paid cappella members. In 1583, Peverara received 63.6.8 and Molza 52.0.0 per month (Newcomb, 1980:185). In a letter of May 1583, however, Provost Trotti (who also kept Cardinal Luigi d'Este advised of happenings at Ferrara when Luigi was absent from the court) reported Molza as having been given 300 scudi per year (which represented more than 95 lire monthly), presumably including compensation that she received beyond her listed salary and rooms. Peverara might have done even better, for the duke furnished her with 10,000 scudi of dowry, beyond which she is noted, also, as having once received 300 scudi a year, with the same going to both her husband and her mother. Again, it is not known what fringe benefits these figures may have included. Finally, whe and her family occupied apartments spanning several floors of the palace. By 1597, the base salaries of the ladies in the concerto were: Livia d'Arco, 32.10.0 lire per month; Laura Peverara, 63.6.8; Anna Guarini, 65.0.0.

The Renown of the Concerto delle Donne

The new group had begun to perform together regularly by carnival time in early 1581. Urbani, describing the season's entertainments in general, interjected: ". . . there is consistently some private entertainment . . . , most of the time with the musica secreta of some ladies of the court (especially Peverara) and Brancaccio" who, he adds, sings only "in secreta in the company of ladies" (Quoted in Newcomb, 1980:21). By this time the Duke had begun to display the group to important visitors, its reputation, then,

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spreading with its audiences. At the same time, activities of the new group penetrated all aspects of court entertainment, as is expressed in a 26 June 1581 dispatch of Urbani: "Cardinal Madruccio was entertained on the day of his arrival with the usual music of the ladies, which takes place every day without fail" (Quoted in Newcomb, 1980:24). In less than a year, then, the new group had evolved from "a musica secreta that is being prepared" (Urbani, 31 October 1580) to "the usual musica delle Dame" (Urbani, 26 June 1581).

The original singing ladies did not, of course, leave the court of Ferrara with the arrival of the new concerto delle donne, since they were and remained prominent members of the court. "They were simply replaced," writes Newcomb (1980:10), "by other ladies more fitted for and more throughly committed to their role as singers in the court life." The transition was not necessarily a smooth one, however. Two letters to Luigi d'Este from his correspondent in Ferrara at that time, Cavalier Giacomo Grana, make this point. On 26 July 1581 Grana wrote, ". . . the Duke presented la musica di quelle signore, who grow better everyday. Signora Machiavella resents this somewhat, since one does not ask her to learn any new things [i.e., to take part in the new routines]" (Quoted in Newcomb, 1980:10); and on 7 February 1582: "Signora Machiavella, Signora Isabella, and Signora Vittoria have abandoned the field, having lost the backing of Luzzaschi, . . ." (Quoted in Newcomb, 1980:11). Annibale Romei's account of the vacation activities of the Ferrarese court (The Courtiers Academie, Comprehending Seven Severall Dayes Discourses, [ca.1584] 1969:4) mentions Leonora, Countess of Scandiano, Isabella (Bendidio) Bentivoglia and Lucrezia (Bendidio) Macchiavella as participating in

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the discussions but not as musicians.

What had begun as an idea in the mind of the Duke, suggested by Brancaccio's presence, Alfonso's hearing of Peverara in Mantua and likely his early witness to Molza's talents, evolved by 1581 into what Newcomb (1980:26) designates as "a near obsession." The previously mentioned Urbani dispatch of 26 June 1581 stated: "The Duke is so inclined to and absorbed in this thing that he appears to have placed there not only all his delight but also the sum total of his attention" (Quoted in Newcomb, 1980:24), attending rehearsals and closely monitoring the group's progress. In the spring of 1581, His Highness took the ladies travelling with him, as testimony to the splendor of his court. Newcomb (1980:24) relates an interesting story about Duke Guglielmo Gonzaga of Mantua, which serves as an illustration of the different attitudes held by the two Dukes with regard to musical entertainment, specifically of female musical accomplishment:

> [Duke Alfonso], having with great ceremony caused His Excellency [Duke Guglielmo] to hear the music of these ladies, was expecting to hear them praised to the skies. [Instead], speaking loudly enough to be heard both by the ladies and by the Duchesses who were present [Guglielmo] burst forth, "ladies are very impressive indeed -- in fact, I would rather be an ass than a lady." And with this he rose . . . putting an end to the singing . . .

Numerous passages from courtly communications illustrate the degree to which the Ferrarese Duke and Duchess took pride and pleasure in their concerto:

> One can give [Duke Alfonso] no greater pleasure than by appreciating and praising his ladies, who are constantly studying new inventions. (Urbani, 26 June 1581, as quoted in Newcomb, 1980:24)

> They withdrew to [the Duchess of Urbino's] last room, where ordinarily there is an instrument tuned, like the one in the rooms of the Duchess [of Ferrara], so that it is always in a key [at the proper pitch level?] for the angelic voices,

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. . . (Grana, 7 March 1582, as quoted in Newcomb, 1980:26-7)

> The Duke . . . , holding in his hand a book wherein were written out by hand all the verses that the ladies were singing, . . . enjoyed himself greatly for two hours. (Grana, 21 July 1582, as quoted in Newcomb, 1980:27)

In response, musical homages to the spectacular musical organization began to appear. In April of 1581, what Newcomb (1980:23) considers to be the first of such musical monuments to the new concerto delle donne were published: Marenzio's First Book of Madrigals à 6 and Wert's Seventh Book à 5. "Thus it appears that two of the most important madrigalists of the 1580s had heard the new group almost as soon as it was formed, and that they reacted to it [as evidenced in the stylistic techniques incorporated into these publications] immediately in their compositions," Newcomb (1980:24) declares. Interest in the group by composers inside and outside the court ran parallel to increasing purchases of music by the court for the ensemble.

Agostini's Third Book à 6, published early in 1582, contains madrigals dedicated to Peverara and Guarini. In that same year the ducal music printer at Ferrara produced an anthology of madrigals, Il lauro secco, compiled by the poet Tasso and set by the foremost composers of northern Italy and Rome to Peverara's inspiration. Newcomb (1980:69) says that it gathered together all of the most vital styles in the madrigal at that time and "proclaimed Ferrara's leadership of the progressive elements [in the luxuriant madrigal] at [that] time." In the following year, a second appeared, Il lauro verde, supposedly put together for the occasion of Peverara's wedding. The number of known composers who contributed to these volumes, Cook and LaMay (1984:10) demonstrate, "indicates the highly esteemed place and far-reaching influence Peverara had as a performer in the Ferrarese

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court."

Up to this time, the new group still consisted of only the two ladies Peverara and Guarini. Grana mentions one of Livia d'Arco's first appearances with the group in a letter of 30 June 1582 (Newcomb, 1980:183); by 1583 she was a regular member. A performance by the trio is related in a letter of 23 July 1583 from Allesandro Lombardini (another Luigi d'Este correspondent) to the Cardinal:

> . . . Luzzaschi was with the harpsichord. La Turcha [Peverara], La Guarina, and the other one, d'Arca, came in as well, and all three sang very nicely, alone, in duets, in trios all together; they sang Echo dialogues and many other beautiful and delicious madrigals. (Quoted in Newcomb, 1980:25)

The ladies were also skilled instrumentalists, as a late (1596) account makes clear: "la Signora Livia con la viola, la Signora Guarini con un lauto e la Signora Laura con l'arpa" (Solerti, as quoted in MacClintock, 1966:116). These three ladies, "each of whom combined a highly trained voice and a lovely manner with sure musicianship" (Cozzi, 1583, as quoted in Newcomb, 1980:68), were in a position to devote immense amounts of time to singing. They sang every afternoon for two to six hours in the apartments of the Duchess of Ferrara, according to Cozzi in a letter of 2 March 1583 (Quoted in Newcomb, 1980:68). Giulio Caccini referred to them as "three angels of paradise, for they sing so miraculously that it seems to me impossible to do better" (Quoted in Newcomb, 1980:90). Hercole Bottrigari ([1594] 1962:58) referred to them in passing as "those three Ladies, rather those three true and living images of the Graces."

Tarquinia Molza is first mentioned as singing with the concerto in December 1582. Final arrangements for her joining the court were not made until April 1583, when she appears in the salary bollette. In

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November 1583 correspondences, she is still, however, not listed as participating in the secreto ensemble. Even in autumn of 1584, in Annibale Romei's description of events of Alfonso's entourage at the seashore ([ca.1584] 1969:4,22-4), she is mentioned as participating in the discussions, while Laura Peverara is called upon to sing and play.

Riley's (1980:86-7) speculation concerning Tarquinia Molza's commanding role within the concerto delle donne is based on various kinds of evidence. This includes the untrained d'Arco's taking up the viola (Tarquinia's instrument) in 1579 and her ultimate joining with Peverara and Guarini in performance shortly after Tarquinia's official arrival at Ferrara. Further indication is the sudden appearance of consistent references in contemporary documents to the women as an ensemble -- le tre, le tre cantatrici, le tre dame, il concerto delle donne, tre grazie. Next, Riley points out the emphasis in post-1583 documents on the group's musical skills rather than their lovliness of presence and voice for example, Conosciuti, 28 July 1584 (below) and Striggio, 29 July 1584 (see p.504) versus Lombardini, 23 July 1583 (above). Precisely those skills commented upon were already mastered by Molza, i.e., sight reading and diminutions conceived within a contrapuntal setting. Finally, Riley notes the exhibition of a style "genuinely avant garde" and a model for musicians all over Italy.

We must recognize from all this that female mentorship was crucial to the skill-sharing of the individuals within this ensemble. We can not be sure, however, at this time and without better evidence, about the possible degree of importance of Molza's influence on the development of the occupational role of the singer in general, and of the woman singer specifically.

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In reference to their style being in advance of its time, noted especially (in letters of Cavalier Grana, 8 September 1582, and of the composer Striggio, 29 July 1584, for example) were the exemplary results of the concerto's singing of madrigals a libro (from part books) and frequently at sight.[62] That their skill in the latter exemplifies their extraordinary musical abilities is indicated in a letter of Conosciuti, 28 July 1584:

> Striggio and another singer . . . are here, and some stupendous singing and playing is going on. They are astounded by the singing of these ladies and by their knowledge, for the ladies sing without rehearsal every motet and every composition that they give them, however difficult these pieces may be [emphasis mine]. (Quoted in Newcomb, 1980:68)

Newcomb (1980:68) reminds us:

> It was not unusual to encounter in a court charming ladies with lovely voices who had learned some music -- perhaps even some rather spectacular music -- for performance by heart. It was distinctly unusual to find that such ladies had benefitted by considerable musical training, and that they used their training and skill for the performance in concert of printed polyphonic music.

Moreover, Einstein ([1949] 1971:I:243) refers to accounts that the famous women singers at Ferrara also knew several hundred compositions by heart as "a significant revolutionary turn toward new principles."

A remaining question in the development of the early female virtuosi concerns their training. Guarini, Peverara and Molza had arrived in Ferrara "expert," already having made some reputation as performers. Those from artistic families -- Guarini and Molza, for example -- often received instruction from male musicians of their own class, either friends and associates of their families or those in close geographical proximity because of a common employer. Peverara and d'Arco, exceptions to the rule of family sponsorship, came from more

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elevated backgrounds and may have had the opportunity, therefore, of studying with a professional male musician. But where else did the latter and others receive the necessary training to perform the difficult repertoire of the Ferrarese concerto delle donne, and even the earlier concerto di donne, and similar versions that were to appear at other courts?

The convent is one likely answer. Considering the range of musical activity occurring in various nunneries, young women not intending to enter a religious order might still have studied with convent performers in order to advance their musical ambitions or perhaps as part of a general Renaissance education. Cook and LaMay (1984:25) resolve that "[t]he secular culture of the virtuosa, nurtured under Duke Alfonso in Ferrara, may fittingly have had its entire roots in female religious communities."

Harman (1958:269) and Newcomb (1980:28) conclude that the ladies of the Ferrara concerto delle donne had captured the imagination of their patrons and were well on their way to capturing that of all musical Italy, their fame spreading even beyond her borders. Einstein ([1949] 1971:II:844) concurs: "From innumerable sonnets, madrigals and canzoni . . . as a trio and as solo singers they were the delight of their aristocratic public at the court." Wert's 1586 Book Eight a 5 dedication asked: ". . . who is there today who has not heard of the marvels of art and nature, the voice, the grace, the disposition, the memory, and all the other rare qualities of the three young noblewomen of Her Ladyship the Duchess of Ferrara? [emphasis mine]" (Quoted in Einstein, [1949] 1971:II:832). Here again is a description that contains the three traits most frequently associated with the "noble

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manner" of singing that evolved at the end of the sixteenth century and that was noted by Giustiniani and described by Caccini -- grace, disposition and meraviglia, the latter denoting marvel, wonder, surprise as affective responses aroused in listeners.[63]

Newcomb (1980:69) claims documents to the effect that the musicians Marenzio, Wert, Porta, Lasso, Striggio, Bertani, Moscaglia, Bardi, Caccini and Orazio della Viola had all heard the concerto delle donne by the middle of the 1580s, adding to this list doubtless many others whose visits cannot be documented plus others who had heard of its reputation second hand. In two letters from Alessandro Striggio to Belisario Vinta, secretary to the Grand Duke of Florence, his words of admiration for the concerto ("Angioli del Paradiso," "veramente raro" [Quoted in MacClintock, 1966:116]) are coupled with his intention to imitate some of their compositions. Orlando di Lasso was said to never cease speaking of the music he heard on his visit in 1585 (MacClintock, 1966:116). As an example, the Duke of Bavaria, Einstein ([1949] 1971:II:828) notes, wrote to Alfonso that Lasso "never tires of praising the rare music he has heard and of complaining that the ducal chapel in Munich no longer pleases him," complaining further that "[n]owhere else [but in Ferrara] could such music be heard."

The prestige of the enlarged musica secreta, coupled with extensive buying by the court of madrigal prints during the early years of the concerto delle donne's existence, may have had forced composers, then, to turn to the Este court as a promising source of patronage. The practices and the tastes of that court, says Newcomb (1980:68,69), "almost inevitably came to have an effect on the style of the polyphonic madrigal," whose language changed "in ways that answer to

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the tastes and reflect the practices of the musica secreta at Ferrara." The dedication to Wert's eighth book of madrigals is a contemporary example. The composer, speaking of the rare qualities of the young noblewomen in the quote above, cites the presence of those very characteristics as being "enough to induce every composer in the world to dedicate his works to Your Highness [Alfonso] . . ." (Quoted in Einstein, [1949] 1971:II:832). The number of madrigal books dedicated to members of the court during these years indicates that many composers did so (Cf. Appendix IV ["Madrigal Prints of the Second Half of the 16th Century Related to Ferrara"] in Newcomb, 1980:251-5). In addition, Durante and Martellotti (1979:223-52) have collected pages of poetic testimonies to the women singers, some of which became musical testimonies as well.

Besides its ramifications for the style of the late sixteenth-century virtuosic madrigal, the concerto delle donne had created a vogue for the high voice and had greatly helped establish women as professional singers in the secular sphere. Although we have presented evidence of women singers taking part in secular performances all along, we finally find such participation directly reflected in the music being composed. To the question of the direction of influence on musical style, Einstein ([1949] 1971:II:828) responds:

> It would be idle to ask whether the concerto of the three ladies was a result of the increasing concerto-like tendency in the madrigal, or whether, on the contrary, the tendency was brought about by the ladies. The fact is that the ladies did contribute to it all over Italy -- for example, the Roman musician Giovanni Andrea Dragoni includes a few pieces for three sopranos and two lower voices in his fourthe book of madrigals (1594) -- but especially at the courts of Northern and Central Italy, in Mantua and Florence.

Polyphonic madrigals had begun to be composed as professional madrigals

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with virtuoso performers in mind (called, in fact, "virtuoso madrigals") and, in particular, for female virtuoso performers. These women vocalists had become an inextricable part of the creative process itself. Thus, while composers writing for the higher voices encouraged singing by women, it appears that virtuosa singers of the latter half of the sixteenth century influenced composers to elaborate their work in that direction.

The Influence of the Concerto delle Donne on the Madrigal

In August of 1581, the following comments about two different Ferrarese musica secreta events were made by Urbani and Grana, respectively:

> . . . it was necessary for me simultaneously to play cards, to listen, to admire, and to praise the passaggi, the cadenze, the tirate, and such things . . . (Quoted in Newcomb, 1980:25)

> . . . besides being very beautiful it was decorated with such lovely and diverse passaggi that one could not [hope to] hear better. (Quoted in Newcomb, 1980:25)

Both emphasize illustrations of diminutions but describe instances of what was still sixteenth-century diminutive techniques.

The change in musical taste, that Giustiniani places as occurring in the years 1576-1582 and of which we have cited many of Einstein's examples (see pp.444-5), was, according to Giustiniani ([1628] 1962:69) initiated by certain basses (Giovanni Andrea, a Neapolitan and Alessandro Merlo, a Roman, in addition to Brancaccio) and involved especially the use of new diminution figures, "a variety of passage-work new and pleasing to the ear." These, he ([1628] 1962:69-70) felt, had gradually infiltrated the printed madrigal as early as 1575 or 1576, the formation of a stable group of virtuoso

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madrigal singers such as the first Ferrarese concerto secreto having encouraged the rapid and full development of this technique. Newcomb's claim is that Ferrara played a crucial role in this invasion of the polyphonic madrigal by the "new" (for it had long existed in solo singing) style of vocal diminution both before and after 1580. The further differences in the style of the 1580s was "the degree [emphasis mine] to which the texture is at some points saturated with diminution" and the extent to which its use was "not merely as an incidental feature in a single voice but as an essential and identical feature of the thematic material in several voices [emphasis mine]" (Newcomb, 1980:76). Horsley (1963:131) adds to this list the fact that florid passages were "not used indiscriminately, but in harmony with the text."

Newcomb has further proposed that the luxuriant style arose mostly in response to the stimuli coming from Ferrara's changing composition of vocal performers around 1580. Indeed, he (1980:79-80) shows that

> If one looks in the most important madrigal anthologies of [earlier] years, one finds no diminution as elaborate or as all-pervasive as that which was seen in the madrigals of Marenzio and Bertani from Il lauro secco; nor does one find diminution used as an essential part of the thematic material. A quick glance at even a few examples of the many five- and six-voiced canzoni from the late 1560s and 1570s by such composers as Ferretti and Conversi is enough to convince one that elaborate passage work was far from the stylistic world of these works, which are almost strictly syllabic and designed for performance by amateurs.

Incorporation of the complex style into madrigal composition would demand, in turn, greater virtuosity on the part of singers in general. Giustiniani ([1628] 1962:69) offered northern Italian examples of this in all voice ranges. Andrea, Brancaccio and Merlo all sang bass

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with a range of 22 notes and "achieved greater invention and artifice." The ladies of Ferrara and Mantua were

> highly competent, . . . , they moderated or increased their voices, loud or soft, heavy or light, according to the demands of the piece they were singing; now slow, breaking off with sometimes a gentle sigh, now singing long passages legato or detached, now groups, now leaps, now with long trills, now with short, and again with sweet running passages sung softly, . . . They made the words clear in such a way that one could hear even the last syllable of every word, . . . (Giustiniani, [1628] 1962:69)

Besides the amount and kind of ornamentation described here and the renewed emphasis on getting across the text, both evidence of the women's advanced style, the first four lines fit Caccini's strong position on the messa di voce or esclamazione as critical to "his" new "noble manner" of singing. Later, in Florence, tenors and basses were also said to have sung "with a range consisting of many notes, and with exquisite style and passage-work, and with extraordinary feeling and a particular talent to make the words clearly heard" (Giustiniani, [1628] 1962:71).

Newcomb (1980:49) interprets Giustiniani as suggesting that the most significant event in the history of the style of the madrigal during the 1580s was the transition to this luxuriant form that would become prevalent in the seventeenth century, and that fundamental to this transition was the incorporation of the new diminution formulas into the composer's vocabulary, the musica scripta, instead of spontaneous improvisation of ornamentations and elaborations by the singers themselves. In this, the practice of the concerto delle donne was crucial "because at Ferrara, instead of each of several soloists taking a turn in ornamenting his part (as the theorists recommended), each of several soloists simultaneously ornamented his part [emphasis

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mine], the ornaments having been composed and written down beforehand to avoid unseemly clashes" (Newcomb, 1980:49).[64] For example, Newcomb (1980:59) imagines

> . . . Peverara not alone in her song, but joined by Anna Guarini or Livia d'Arco or both. This situation departs only in detail from the normal texture of sixteenth-century pseudo-monody, yet it introduces a more complicated concerted texture. Most importantly, it adds the element of simultaneous diminution in two or three voices -- virtuosic diminution carefully composed, rehearsed, and written down.

Newcomb (1980:59) reminds us that various commentators on the concerto delle donne from its beginning onward remarked that, at least in certain pieces, the diminution performed by the ladies had been written in a book and could be, and often was, as the examples of Duke Alphonso on pp.492 and 504 testify, followed note-for-note as they sang. Grana in 1582, Lombardini in 1583, Striggio in 1584 and Caccini in 1592 are examples of those who mention such a book. "The minor change of multiplying the ornamented upper parts seems to have been," declares Newcomb (1980:59), "the most striking and influential innovation in the musica secreta during the early 1580s." It is what Tinctoris had described as so difficult in 1476, what Giustiniani saw as so significant about the madrigals of Ferrara at that time and what Alessandro Striggio came there in 1584 to imitate. In addition, the diminution is "more freely placed in order to contribute to the expressive effect," and "the melodic shape of the diminution follows less closely the formulas of the diminution manuals" (Newcomb, 1980:60). Finally, the bass and chordal fillers "have divorced themselves further from the vocal parts" (Newcomb, 1980:60).

The picture presented here of the Ferrarese female ensemble and the music practiced within that court's musica secreta Newcomb

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ascertained largely from contemporary written accounts supplemented by one single surviving musical document, one that came directly out of Ferrara and was written expressly for the three cantatrici -- Luzzaschi's madrigals for one, two and three sopranos with keyboard accompaniment, published in 1601. This publication contains five accompanied madrigals for three solo voices, four for two voices and three for one. The latter were probably favorite pieces of each of the three virtuose, as they reflected their respective voice ranges -- high soprano, soprano with a somewhat narrower range and alto. We have added to these sources materials concerning the concerto delle donne found in dedications to madrigal publications and in two famous treatises about the period -- Hercole Bottrigari's Il Desiderio (1594) and Vicenzo Giustiniani's "Discorso sopra la musica" (1628).

Newcomb (1980:53) cautions relying on Luzzaschi's sole remaining trace of music written specifically for the singing ladies ensemble for several reasons: No other musical evidence remains with which to compare it; and It was not likely to be either a complete or necessarily accurate representation of the most advanced techniques within this vocal group. In fact, factors such as the audience for which the collection was designed and the specialized interests of its printer may have influenced the composer to select pieces representing only one style of Ferrase singing, and an early one (from the first half of the decade of the 1580s) at that, for the pieces selected are "suprisingly conservative in harmony, structure and the use of diminution" and show "no sign of early seventeenth-century ornamentation" (Newcomb, 1980:53). Finally, even the most complicated of these correspond exactly to Alessandro Striggio's description of

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what he wrote as early as 1584 in imitation of the concerto delle donne.

The letters of the Mantuan noble and composer Striggio to the Grand Duke Francesco I de' Medici and his secretary Vinta, were written "while he was engaged in a bit of cultural [or what Einstein ([1949] 1971:II:846) says would today be called 'industrial'] espionage" for that Medici. And so, one states: ". . . I shall be able . . . to compose some pieces for the concerto of Your Highness in imitation of these Ferrarese pieces" (29 July 1584, as quoted in Newcomb, 1980:55). These correspondences are the richest of the sources in impressions about Ferrarese musica secreta activities during the mid 1580s. For example, Striggio wrote also on 29 July:

> Those ladies sing excellently; both when singing in their concerto [from memory] and when singing at sight from part books [without rehearsal] they are secure. The Duke favored me continually [as a musician and nobleman he had to be received courteously by the court] by showing me written out all the pieces that they sing by memory, with all the diminutions . . . that they do. (Quoted in Newcomb, 1980:55)

From evidence as such, Newcomb pieces together the progression in the kinds of music-making that took place in the musica secreta during the years of the 1580s. Reflections of these innovative practices appear as tendencies in printed madrigals of a variety of composers from a variety of regions during the early part of the decade, for the madrigal literature from 1580 on is "full of pieces written with them [the ladies] in mind," states Einstein ([1949] 1971:II:829), adding: "The influence of the three cantatrici extend[ed] far beyond the narrow confines of Ferrara."

Some pieces from both Wert's and Marenzio's 1581 publications use diminution "not merely as an incidental feature in a single voice

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but as an essential and identical feature of the thematic material [rather than purely decorative] in several voices," Newcomb (1980:76) demonstrates.[65] About the motivic diminution in Wert's Seventh Book à 5 is also said that it required

> more advanced vocal skills than anything in the sixth book; and it is the technical difficulties of some of the pieces in the volume which mark them off from Wert's earlier vocal writing . . . The virtuoso style in general and simultaneous diminution in particular, . . . suggest[ing] that they . . . were composed with Ferrarese forces in mind and under the influence of the progressive poetic and musical impulses of the Este court. (Fenlon, 1980:138)

Newcomb (1980:83) continues his brief history:

> Having been adopted by the two most influential composers of their respective generations, the new style was indeed well launched. The madrigal prints that appeared between 1582 and 1585 bear witness to its further development and its spread outward from Ferrara. Marenzio and Wert, leading forces in this development and diffusion, were soon joined by other composers.

In Il lauro secco (1582), more than half of its madrigals involve florid, thematically-functioning diminution:

> While the Canto in m. 17 (to pick an example) uses diminution figures to ornament its leading tone, this diminution is incidental -- applied to the melodic cadence of a single voice, exactly as a performer might have improvised it in practice. This diminution does not function as an essential part of the thematic material of the piece. The diminution in mm. 27-36, on the other hand, does so function; it is treated imitatively, appearing in the same form in more than one voice. Incidental diminution like that in m.17 can be found in many madrigals of the 1570s; thematically used diminution like that in mm. 27-35 is characteristic of the new luxuriant style. (Newcomb, 1980:77-8)

The Third Book à 6 (1582) of Lodovico Agostini, a member of the Ferrarese cappella, Newcomb (1980:84) includes as the first entire publication designed as a monument to the new musica secreta (containing madrigals dedicated both to high nobility who frequented the court's musica secreta and to the singers) and as an example of the

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"hyperbolic extremes to which the new style could immediately be pushed by a composer not restrained by overmuch taste, talent, or musical personality."

In 1583 came the complement to Il lauro secco -- Il lauro verde -- in which the use of diminution "seems a bit more extreme and pervasive" (Newcomb, 1980:84). It also indicates spreading of the luxuriant style in Rome: "For example, Stabile's madrigal in Il lauro verde, although it is not as luxuriant as Marenzio's, gives a much larger role to diminution than does his earlier madrigal from Il lauro secco" (Newcomb, 1980:84-5). At the same time, however, "[the] same composers who are represented in the Ferrarese anthologies by madrigals in the luxuriant style are represented in the Roman anthologies by madrigals in the pastoral or canzonetta style" (Newcomb, 1980:85), further evidence that the style spread from Ferrara, where the presence of highly skilled virtuoso singers aided in its development. Newcomb (1980:85) explains this as a difference in audiences or patrons for whom the collections were intended: "The Ferrarese collections were printed by a private printer and were designed for a virtuoso performing group, while the Roman anthologies were printed by a commercial printer and were designed to offer traditional canzonetta-madrigals to amateur performers."

The connection of the ladies to Wert's Eighth Book a 5 (1586, dedicated to Duke Alfonso) and the impetus it (and therefore they) gave to the development of the concertante (or concerto) style in the madrigal (not only in Ferrara, but throughout Italy) is well documented:

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> works containing virtuoso passages for three sopranos; in some sections the diminutions penetrate the entire texture. (Horsley, 1963:131)
>
> Many of the pieces are suffused with the mature Ferrarese virtuoso style. (Fenlon, 1980:138)
>
> The element of virtuosity is particularly strong . . . [it] contains the madrigals presumably intended for the three ladies of Ferrara: the three uppermost parts are often brilliantly written. They become detached from the two lowest . . . (Roche, 1972:86)
>
> contains . . . three pieces, each including parts for three high voices, . . . whom Wert refers to in the preface as "Tre nobilissime giovani Dame." At some points these three parts are definitely the main ones, the lower voices merely accompanying. (Reese, [1954] 1959:409)
>
> the first appearance of the clearly defined concertante madrigal. . . . never before had he grouped the three upper [voices] so definitively [emphasis mine] as now. Here the three high (female) voices dominate and the two lower act as a harmonic-contrapuntal support; the two groups of voices are more or less independent of each other, . . . These works are neither unequivocally homophonic nor polyphonic; rather they are transitional, pieces, pre-cantata in character, . . . (MacClintock, 1966:115)
>
> . . . the three upper voices are written in the same clef, either the soprano or the treble, and these voices alone carry the complete text. The two lower parts are still vocal, but even when they combine with the women's trio they do not always participate motivically in the musical conversation. They are not altogether eliminated, but they are at a disadvantage. (Einstein, [1949] 1971:II:832)

Einstein ([1949] 1971:II:832) names the three madrigals that "[reveal] their destination" for the concerto delle donne -- in the voices employed, the floridity exhibited and the concerto-like conduct of the voices -- as Si come ai freschi matutini rai, Non e si denso velo and Con voi giocando Amor.[66] Fenlon (1980:139) calls this list conservative and, along with MacClintock (1966:115) adds three more that display all the characteristics of motivic diminution, concertato groupings and high tessitura: Us civa homai, Sovente alhor and Misera non credea.

Riley (1980:88) complains that Einstein ([1949] 1971), Newcomb

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(in his 1969 dissertation which was the basis of the 1980 book) and Durante and Martellotti (1979), when commenting on this phenomenon, unconvincingly explain sixteenth-century composers' intense interest in the concerto di dame in terms of the women's technical abilities in the virtuosic singing of runs and trills at sight, emphasizing their mechanical abilities rather than their creative skills. Riley (1980:88), on the other hand, argues, for example, that Striggio was an experienced musician capable of composing in the usual style without the need to witness virtuosic performances of commonplace skills like diminishing and sight reading, and that his excitement about and desire to imitate the group was more likely based on the women's sound musicianship and creative solutions to problems of musical style, in their innovative application and thematic use of diminution figures in polyphonic writing, that, when written down, was to become the luxuriant madrigal. We might add to these attractions the possibility that they accomplished all of this using a new and wondrous technique of vocal production that resulted in an altogether superior sound. Riley's (1980:88) faulting twentieth-century musicologists for their shared implications that these women were imitative rather than creative is only partially correct. We have already noted subtle references to the ladies' active formation of style or at least allusions to their innovations (e.g., Newcomb, 1980:49,59,60, see p.502; Fenlon, 1980:138, see p.505). On the other hand, the above authors do tend towards the tradition of viewing women as merely inspiring and influencing artistic stylistic movements -- this time through the availability of their vocal virtuosity to composers.

The concerto delle donne's practical knowledge of both the solo

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and the contrapuntal styles of music, their perfect mastering of sight reading, the rules of counterpoint and the art of improvised diminutions disposed them to experiment actively with merging solo styles with the contrapuntal. Virtually unlimited time for rehearsal made this feasible. They may have been the truly creative female musicians that musicologists have continually claimed to be missing from the history of music. They also fit Woods (1980:290) description of the treatment of women musicians over time: ". . . scholarship on exceptional, successful women in art music provides repeated evidence for their historical devaluation as cultural creators, for the trivialization of both their ambitions and the genres in which the majority of them produced, and for societal attitudes and conditions which have prescribed or confined women's musical activity . . ." Suggestions that their freely placed and simultaneous ornamentation ran contrary to traditional, official, theoretical formulas for diminution (Newcomb, 1980:49,60, see p.502) support our hypothesis and are in line with Riley's (1980:76-7) documentation from Vandelli's biography of Molza's disinclination to follow the teachings of masters and the realization that she was, to a great degree, self-taught: "From her childhood Tarquinia began to learn music for enjoyment and as a diversion from her more serious studies, . . . acquired control of her voice with the true rules from books, not by memorizing the dictations of masters in the art, . . ." Finally, we have Ferand's (1956:140-1) observation that "[t]he most widely accepted term . . . , by which the entire practice of improvised counterpoint [vertical improvisation as manifested in the adding of contrapuntal voices to a cantus firmus, that is, not to be confused with the purely horizontal of linear

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process of improvised diminution, embellishment or ornamentation of one or several voices] became known, especially in Italy, was contrappunto a mente, or alla mente, and its Latin version, contrapunctus ex mente," literally "mental counterpoint." Of even more difficulty was the combination of the horizontal and vertical procedures, which seems to have been exactly what the concerto delle donne achieved. References to the Duke's book of repertoire makes this all the more likely, considering the difficulty in remembering works of such complexity and the need to standardize them for future performances.

The far-reaching talents of the concerto delle donne, combined with Alfonso's patronage, provided the conditions necessary for experimentation with applying to the equal-voiced madrigal diminutions which originated in the solo-song style. Their awareness of the elements of which a melodic line was constructed and their technical skills in creating ornate configurations from simple melodic outlines produced unique results, the kinds of which would evolve into the luxuriant style and later the concertante madrigal. Horsley (1951:19) states that ". . . any art that develops a sense of musical construction along with a technique for producing that construction cannot but be important in the development of musical style itself." If this was indeed so for Ferrara's concerto delle donne, then numerous composers capitalized on the ensemble's originality, men coopting (Riley [1980:91) says "stealing") the role of women in composition as well as their role as vocal performers.

Ferrara does appear, as Einstein ([1949] 1971:II:829) puts it, to have been "universally envied" because of her three ladies. For the 1580s, we have been able to draw upon documentary as well as musical

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evidence. For the following brief discussion of the publications that appeared during the 1590s, our sources have had to rely almost solely on the music. In 1590, Filippo di Monte dedicated his fourteenth madrigal book to Duke Alfonso, although it was unlikely that he would have been in Ferrara or even in Italy after his call to the Austrian Imperial Court: "Fame celebrates your zeal for Music, and . . . , so do you often desire to hear it, divided among angelic voices and sung by such rare spirits that he who listens believes himself to have a sure foretaste of the life of the blessed" (Quoted in Einstein, [1949] 1971:II:829). His collection is full of pieces in which there are episodes for two or three high voices. "[T]he old master has evidently tried to adapt himself to the tessitura of the three Ferrarese nightingales if not to their virtuosity, of which he can have known only from hearsay," Einstein ([1949] 1971:II:829) writes.

In Monteverdi's setting of O come'e gran martire in his third madrigal book (for five voices, 1592), the long opening written for a trio of upper voices, Roche (1972:87) maintains, is "exactly like passages in Wert's Book VIII, and once again suggests the three ladies of Ferrara." Einstein ([1949] 1971:II:723) concurs:

> . . . this book seems to me to stand in much the same relation to Ferrara as Giaches Wert's eighth madrigal book of 1586: it is filled with the presence of the tre dame, the three singing birds of Alfonso's court. No student of these madrigals can have failed to have been struck by the prominent position they give to the soprano trio; . . .

It is further described by Einstein ([1949] 1971:II:830-1) as

> halfway between the madrigal that gives prominence to a trio of women's voices . . . and the genuine madrigale concertante . . . , the piece is not yet by any means a trio with two accompanying vocal parts. At the same time, it is no longer a madrigal in which the voices are equally privileged; it is a hybrid, as befits the restless 'nineties . . .

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Einstein ([1949] 1971:II:723) notes a major difference between the two composers' works, however: "There are few concessions to the ladies' fondness for coloratura" by the later musician.

About Monteverdi's fourth book (1603) Einstein ([1949] 1971:II:728) feels,

> It is a disassociation of the parts from the whole, a disintegration that was bound to bring about a transformation of the classical madrigal and to lead to the madrigale concertato.
>
> . . . invariably some one voice -- least often the bass -- now takes over the role of primus inter pares or, as primus, ruthlessly proclaims its uncontested supremacy.

Besides this aside comment about the status of the bass voice by this late time, Einstein ([1949] 1971:II:728) adds further clues as to the low prestige of the male voices in a comment about madrigal No. 13: "obviously . . . set to music with a view to its performance by the three ladies of Ferrara . . . the bass takes no part in the coloratura and the tenor does so only once, almost as though inadvertently."

As for Monteverdi's having become "the man who realized everything that the sixteenth century had dreamed about the virtuoso madrigal, the vocal concerto" (Einstein, [1949] 1971:II:830), it is the fifth book (1606) about which Einstein ([1949] 1971:II:728) proclaims that Monteverdi would take the decisive step. This one, as well as the fourth, came after the disbanding of the Ferrara concerto with the passing of the Ferrarese court from the Este family to the Papal States in 1598. It reflects not only the prior influence of musical activities and performers of that court but also the then-current influence of Mantuan musical practice, as we shall see.

Various and even more complicated forms of concerted singing were also in evidence during the two decades of Ferrara's groups of

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singing ladies. Urbani's dispatch of August 1581 already mentioned several ladies singing with several instruments, a concerted texture of some complexity; and a letter of 1582 by Federico Cozzi told of a performance of the concerto grande that was "accompanied by the voices of those ladies" (Quoted in Newcomb, 1980:61), who most likely projected above the larger group in a different, more ornamental style (or perhaps simply sang separate sections of the piece).

In addition, accompanied solo singing continued to be an important style. Again, Newcomb (1980:56-7) postulates that the differences in practices in this area between the 1570s and the 1580s were also "probably subtle ones involving the nature of the accompaniment, the virtuosity of the ornamentation, the places at which ornaments were applied, and the uses to which they were put -- differences of degree [emphasis mine], not of kind." He (1980:57) finds in the realm of solo song, too, that more significant steps were taken "along the path from 'pseudo-monody' to what must presumably be called genuine monody." For one, just as the diminution in the pieces which the ladies sang together was by necessity worked out and written down beforehand, he (1980:57) suggests that one might "reasonably suppose" that more care came to be lavished upon the diminution in solo singing as well, "taking it out of the realm of improvised performance technique and moving it into the realm of composition." Second, just as diminution came to function as an essential part of the thematic material of the madrigal, "[w]hen a highly ornamented piece was conceived to be performed by one of the ladies exactly as written, the ornament becomes an integral part of the piece and an element that the composer can manipulate for expressive effect" (Newcomb, 1980:57). We

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can add to this the fact that Caccini ([1600] 1950:379) believed that "songs for a single voice . . . had more power to delight and move than the greatest number of voices singing together, . . ."

All that Newcomb discovered about the background and development of the concerto delle donne suggested to him that the nature of its performances would have stimulated composers to explore new stylistic possibilities, encouraging an evolution such as that to the luxuriant style. In turn, composers writing madrigals for this active seat of patronage would have wanted to incorporate into their pieces some of the new diminutional style, in order to display most favorably the unique virtuosity of the group.

Giustiniani's account, then, was confirmation for Newcomb (and Einstein) that Ferrara led in this new style. Newcomb (1980:52) nicely summarizes the outline of Ferrarese influence in Giustiniani's history:

> He says first that taste in music changed; . . . next that a new style of singing arose, which gave rise at roughly the same time to a new style of polyphonic composition whose most striking trait was a mixing of elements from the previously well-separated worlds of the lighter forms and the serious madrigal; he then mentions the courts of Ferrara and Mantua as the most prominent centers both of this new style of composition and of the new style of singing that rose up with it (of these two, we know that Ferrara was by several years the leader); finally, . . . that in imitation of these courts, the style of composition and of improvised singing in Rome began in turn to change.

On the last point, Giustiniani ([1628] 1962:70) offered Prince Gesualdo of Venosa as an example of a southern madrigalist who composed works "full of many artifices and exquisite counterpoint, with difficult, beautiful canonic subjects in each part, all mingled together . . ." It was at that time that Cardinal Ferdinand de' Medici, in Rome, "hastened to acquire excellent musicians, especially the famous Vittoria [Archilei]," who Giustiniani ([1628] 1962:70) described as having

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"almost originated the true method of singing for females" and who he credits with having helped spread the florid, virtuosic style within and outside of Rome. The Cardinal is also attributed by Giustiniani ([1628] 1962:71) with having provided for many male sopranos "who sang falsetto" in, it appears from Giustiniani's account, secular performances, for the writer distinguished these from the "many eunuchs of the Capella." Ferdinand was followed by Cardinal Montalto, "who took no less pleasure in music," according to Giustiniani ([1628] 1962:71). The latter's musical activities were described as follows:

> . . . for singers he had Onofrio Gualfreducci, a eunuch, Ippolita Napoletana, and Melchior Basso, and many others for whom he provided generously. . . . Even all the Maestri di Cappella undertook to instruct certain castrati and boys to sing in florid style and in the new sentimental style. (Giustiniani, [1628]1962:71)

A description by Newcomb (1980:51) of the "arsenal of vocal effects" at the disposal of the singing ladies from about 1583 on includes not only the passagi (scale passages), tirati and cadenze (chordal progressions) typical of the time, but also the small accenti or effetti (breaking up the full length of the note), such as trippi, tremelos, trilli, gruppi (quick reiterations of the same note or the rapid alteration of two different notes) and messe di voce or esclamatione that are considered to be ornamental innovations of the early seventeenth century (Cf. Buckofzer, 1947:28; Horsley, 1963:136-9) and are associated with the "noble manner" of singing described, and thought by some to have been invented, by Giulio Caccini of Florence, who has been identified more than anyone else with developing the upcoming century's style. Caccini, however, was closely connected with the Ferrarese court, where such ornaments were already being explored, during the 1580s and early 1590s. His influence on the court's singing

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is assumed by musicologists, but one must also recognize the reciprocal influence of the concerto on Caccini. Sophisticated and forward-looking ornamental effects are documented as having been practiced and heard at Ferrara at least from 1592, if not earlier. In a letter of 11 October, Caccini wrote:

> Upon my arrival in Ferrara last week, I immediately paid homage to His Highness, who . . . invited me that very day to the music of the ladies. . . . Every day I went . . . , and for six days on end he has wanted me to sing after his ladies had sung. . . . , today he begged me (this was the word he used) to favor him both by teaching his three ladies something with these accenti and passaggi of ours and by writing a few diminutions on a favorite bass of his. . . . Thus for three hours I taught some Arie to these ladies in the presence of His Highness . . . (Quoted in Newcomb, 1980:58)

There is evidence, therefore, that Caccini was not the first to use the techniques associated with the "noble manner," although he was the first to describe them "in an engaging and forceful way" (Stark, 1973:223), and his Florentine school was the first to systematically use all such subtleties of singing. In fact, Stark (1973:223) maintains the reason that earlier theorists failed to have the impact that Caccini would, i.e., "establishing the cult of the singer for the succeeding three hundred years," was the very fact that the solo virtuoso had not yet emerged in strength or numbers at the time Maffei, Conforto, Zacconi and Bovicelli, for example, were writing, the readers of their works having included as many amateurs and choral singers as trained soloists.

The vocal "revolution," as Stark refers to it, that occurred in the late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries, had already begun (again, Giustiniani points to 1576-1582 as critical years of vocal growth) and was gaining force before the appearance of Caccini's Nuove

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musiche in 1602. The foundations for such innovations having been laid by bassos like Brancaccio, further developments in advanced vocal style and technique were likely cultivated and enhanced by women singers rather than falsettists, who, as we have seen (see pp.485-6) could not fulfill growing expectations; nor the natural-voiced tenors of Florence that wouldn't appear until Caccini's heyday; nor even the seventeenth-century castrati, as has been claimed by musicologists: ". . . it cannot be denied that the castrati both as teachers and as singers were almost entirely the direct and motivating agents in the foundation of everything that is meant by 'the old Italian singing methods'" (Duey, 1951:58-9). The castrati certainly had their own unique advantages in sonority, power and skill, but they brought these, in force, to secular music later than did the women of whom we have been speaking. The preference for these outstanding and unparalleled voices has been prevalent probably because the birth of bel canto is usually associated with the castrato's role in opera and not related to the earlier development of the "noble manner" of singing. Foreman's (1969:7) designation of the years from 1550-1800 as the classical period of bel canto includes the history of the career of the secular castrato but begins with the important years for our female court singers.

We have provided evidence here for the fact that virtuoso singing became prominent in the courtly performances of a few known bases (lower tones gaining appreciation with the coming of more sophisticated musical taste) and numerous Venetian and Ferrarese noble ladies (and later those of other courts as well). Through the latters' efforts a vocal refashioning apparently flourished and spread. This was

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followed by the appearance of natural male soloists in the academies and in the courts of Florence and Rome and, finally, by the rise of the castrato in the secular vocal sphere. We can add to the case for the prominence of women virtuose the physiological possibility, put forth by Stark (1973:251), that female singers had another technical advantage in addition to the natural height of their voices. Recent phoniatric findings, he (1973:251) says, point to the soprano voice as the least problematic with respect to finding the 'mid-voice'" -- which he equates with disposizione. Voice teachers, he (1973:251) puts forth, have recognized the greater ease with which a soprano is able to "balance the registers and sing with a dynamic quality." Even Einstein ([1949] 1971:II:834) refers to the "agile throats" of Peverara, Molza, . . . Thus, cultivation of this "mid-voice" quality of tone very likely occurred simultaneously with the rise of the virtuosa, placing her and her sophisticated abilities, techniques, vocal production and style ahead of the "discovery" of the "noble manner" by Caccini.

These interrelated developments resulted in the real beginnings of refined virtuoso singing, and they antedated not only Caccini's classic statement in Le nuove musiche but also the opera. They have been overlooked, or at least minimized, however, compared with the clamour made over the Florentine Camerata.

> . . . while Vincenzo Galilei was carrying on correspondence with Girolamo Mei regarding Greek music and drama, Caccini was intent on something much closer to home, namely virtuoso singing. The result was that Caccini's music, especially the monodies in Le nuove musiche, more than Peri's or any other composer's was motivated by the proto-monodies of Ferrara, and oriented to the particular qualities of the virtuoso voice which Caccini called the "noble manner." (Stark, 1973:254)

Music in Florence, which became the cortex of vocal activity by

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the beginning of the seventeenth century, would come, therefore, to follow two different lines of development. One was associated with Caccini and was demonstrated in the new solo monodies aiming at expressive affect, focusing on virtuosi who sang in the "noble manner" and who were up to then mostly women. The other path, encouraged by Peri and Cavalieri, had its source in the theories and experiments of Galilei and other Camerata members, evolving into the more declamatory stile rappresentativo of the early operas, and carried out by male singers like Peri himself. Pirrotta (1968:46-53) distinguishes the former, cantar recitando, from the latter, recitar cantando, by a difference in emphasis. The latter's was on the play to be acted or recited through song, modifying singing to bring it closer to speech, "either ordinary and unemotional or, preferably, heightened by the urgency of vehement passions" (Pirrotta, 1968:51). Adherents to this philosophy even tryed to justify the song by choosing for protagonists figures such as Apollo and Orpheus (Pirrotta, 1968:79). The former applied Caccini's "noble manner" style to the stage, composed in such a way that "no audience could ever forget that their performance was the exploit of a singer" (Pirrotta, 1968:52). Though the second -- emphasis on the word -- was important in early opera and would return over and over again in the form of various movements to reform the opera, it was the first -- captivation with the sound of the voice -- that became prevalent and that, taken to the extreme, prompted the calls for reformatory actions.

Other types of innovative practices appeared as tendencies in the concerto delle donne's madrigals of the early 1580s. One important to our theme was a more explicit dramatization of the madrigal --

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". . . the very style of delivery of the concerto delle donne tended to dramatize the madrigal," Newcomb (1980:61) declares. Included in Urbani's dispatch of 26 June 1581 is mention that Cardinal Madruzzo praised to Duke Alfonso not only Peverara's singing and playing but also her maniera -- her manner in performance; and Giustiniani ([1628] 1962:69) observed that the ladies "accompanied the music and the sentiment with appropriate facial expressions, glances and gestures, with no awkward movements of the mouth or hands or body which might not express the feeling of the song."

This information, in conjunction with the variety of textual contrasts mentioned above are merged in Einstein's ([1949] 1971:II:620) description of the madrigal's "symphonic structure in the service of the text," where the individual voices are parts of a greater whole. Newcomb (1980:62) goes one step further:

> . . . the rise of this new element, which Einstein calls "symphonic structure" . . . , is ultimately tied to the rise of a new kind of polyphonic madrigal, designed to be performed by professionals and heard by patrons. This madrigal was not an art form for performers, but one for listeners. It no longer depended for its impact on the effect of the individual part on the individual performer, but on the effect of the whole on some outside person or persons.

The development of this kind of madrigal singing Newcomb (1980:62) concludes, "was one of the most profound effects that the separation of audience and performer within the musica secreta at Ferrara had upon the music of the ensuing years."[67] Einstein, he (1980:62) says, implys that this change did not come about until the concerted madrigals of Monteverdi's fifth book in 1606, but Newcomb points to both the explicit separation of singer and listener in the dedication to Wert's eighth book (1586) twenty years earlier and examples of this same

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tendency in the early works of Marenzio (works which Einstein [(1949) 1971:II:620] cites) during the years when he was closely associated with the ladies' concerto at Ferrara.

> His experience with the musica secreta at Ferrara shines through his Second Book à 5 of October 1581, . . . yet more clearly than it had in his First Book à 6 of April. Thematically used diminution is scattered throughout the madrigals of the later book. . . . these same madrigals furnish fine examples of the constantly shifting textures and tempos that mark Marenzio's virtuosic style. . . . , this book continues to show the stylistic traits of Marenzio's First Book à 5, especially a love for the high-voiced beginning and a marked reliance on the high voices for color and for striking effects . . . (Newcomb, 1980:87)[68]

The techniques such as Einstein points to in Monteverdi's fifth and sixth books existed, therefore, at Ferrara in the 1580s, but as important as that evidence is is the fact that ". . . the practical situation which might both permit and call forth such pieces also existed there at that time" (Newcomb, 1980:62).

In summary, a complex set of novelties existing at advanced centers of madrigal cultivation during the last two decades of the sixteenth century acted together to produce many new vocal ideas:

> . . . an increasingly vigorous expression of the dramatic content of the text, . . . encouraged the transformation of the homogeneous texture of the mid century madrigals into a texture of rapidly changing smaller combinations of voices, a texture made to be appreciated at a distance that separates audience from performers. . . . no further pretense was made of an equal-voiced, homogeneous texture, and the composer was free to isolate small groups within unequal texture for structural or expressive reasons, or for pure virtuoso display. . . . concerti of virtuoso singers encouraged the incorporation of diminution into the written language of the madrigal, which in turn gradually brought about a change in the composer's attitude toward part-writing . . . The complete separation of audience and [more professional] performer suggested a more dramatic approach to the madrigal. A change in the social purpose of the madrigal, which came with this separation, had helped to suggest a new attitude toward texture, and this attitude was in turn encouraged by the presence of certain especially

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> famous and skillful singers within an ensemble. (Newcomb, 1980:64-5)

Unlike Einstein, whose purpose was to provide a broad overview of the development of the madrigal, Newcomb's focus is narrow -- limited to two decades in one city. But "[w]hat he gains in detail he loses in perspective," Owens (1981:378) maintains, in a review of his work, claiming that he has "acquired a bias towards Ferrara that affects his judgement," specifically in his less well-documented and more musically-dependent section concerning the later development of the madrigal. We will need to wait, however, for comparable studies of other courts (Fenlon's [1981] is one example) in order to better access his conclusions concerning Ferrara's domination at the end of the sixteenth century.

Two other questions remain, the answers to which might contradict Newcomb's suppositions. If such progressive madrigals had indeed been written and performed at Ferrara during the 1580s, why did Luzzaschi not publish examples of them in his 1601 publication, if not before? Secondly, why did Monteverdi wait until 1605 to publish such pieces?

Newcomb (1980:63-4) counters the first with the fact of the unwillingness on the part of Duke Alfonso to see the most advanced practices of his musica secreta issued for the general public (Cf. also Einstein, [1949] 1971:II:829,831; Harman, 1958:269; Horsley, 1963:132; and Reese, [1954] 1959:411) and by the possibility that in the 1580s and 1590s both Luzzaschi and the Ferrara publisher might have felt there to be no market for elaborate concerted madrigals.

Aware of the fame of his concerto delle donne, Alfonso reserved expressly for the ladies music commissioned for them by his court. The

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Duke was jealous, especially of the Medici court at Florence, for both regions were contending for preeminence in art, culture and music, in addition to political power. Alfonso, therefore, kept the Ferrarese repertory of his concerto secret. There were even the attempts to spy upon their art and their repertory (see p.504, for example). Einstein ([1949] 1971:II:831) adds that the "most radical pieces" of Wert are not preserved or were never printed, owing also to the fact that "Duke Alfonso would never have permitted it."

The career of Marenzio is a striking example of the second reason -- constrictions laid on musical style because of the market for compositions. In the case of Marenzio, it was perhaps exacerbated by the unusual nature of his professional position, for, according to Newcomb (1980:86), he was perhaps the first important composer to hold no position in a cappella di musica. Rather, he worked with and composed for the small concertino of virtuoso singers at Ferrara and in the salons of Rome and "seems to have formulated his style with the singing of such people as Peverara and Brancaccio in his ears" (Newcomb, 1980:87). Although his experience with the musica secreta "shined through" in his Second Book à 5 (1581), Newcomb (1980:87) continues, in his Third Book à 5 (1582) Marenzio "turned away from the Este -- but not far away," addressing his collection to another center of intense madrigal cultivation and a different highly sophisticated audience, the Accademia Filarmonica di Verona. Unfortunately, we have no knowledge of the performers there in the 1580s, for the record books for the accademie for those years did not survive. Whatever their quality, Newcomb (1980:87) feels it "certain that they found enough in this book to challenge their abilities, for the element of virtuosity

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is at least as prominent here as in the Second Book à 5."

Marenzio's fourth and fifth books, on the other hand, show moderation in his "fondness for virtuosity and textures dominated by high sopranos" (Newcomb, 1980:88). Under the ill-defined circumstances of his professional position as composer and with his career's future in mind, "Marenzio," Newcomb (1980:88) speculates, "may well have begun to feel that he could no longer afford to write only for concertini of virtuoso singers and that he would do well to direct his music to the needs and abilities of the average group of amateurs and the more normal cappella di musica. So,

> In his Fourth Book à 5 of May 1584, . . . one can already detect a tendency to moderate the demands on audience and performing group alike. Only three of the twenty madrigals are for two high sopranos; there is much less harmonic experimentation; by far the most virtuosic madrigal in the collection, both in its texture and in its use of diminution, is a Ferrarese wedding piece (Corran di puro latte) that was clearly not initially conceived as part of this book. In the Fifth Book à 5, dedicated in December 1584 . . . , the moderation of virtuosity has become even more apparent. Diminution, rather infrequent, is often used only incidentally in one or two voices. (Newcomb, 1980:89)

However, in the Third Book à 6 (1585), Marenzio returned to the luxuriant style. In noting this return to the "virtuosic madrigal dominated by high voices," Einstein ([1949] 1971:II:648) remarks that the work "seems to look furtively toward the three ladies of Ferrara," whereas Newcomb (1980:89) maintains that this later collection looks, rather, "directly and hopefully toward Florence," with its dedication to the Grand Duchess. By this time, performing groups such as the concerto secreto at Ferrara were, as we shall see, becoming more numerous, offering additional markets for publications in the appropriate style.

Coming full circle, Marenzio's Sixth Book à 6 (1595), dedicated

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to Duchess Margherita Gonzaga, was ". . . pure chamber music, in a mature and luxuriant style, with ample coloratura for the three ladies and their companions, worked out at great length and with great brilliance" (Einstein, [1949] 1971:II:671). Einstein ([1949] 1971:II:675 continues: "As though to conclude the book on a harmonious, Italian, 'Ferrarese' note, Marenzio ends with two madrigals . . . both in a bright high register, both filled with luxuriant coloratura, both pieces of the most refined virtuosity [and "unsingable by amateurs" (Kenton, 1966:504)], the jubilant 'echo' [O verdi selve, o dolci fonti, o rivi] once again a piece especially designed for the Duke of Ferrara's birdlike singers."

Luzzaschi, court composer for Ferrara, had to deal with both the Duke's aforementioned reluctance and a similar market to that of Marenzio. Newcomb (1980:63) believes, furthermore, that even the late 1601 Luzzaschi undertaking was "only . . . a happy chance, in response to a particular set of circumstances." When, in 1598, Este Ferrara lost her independence and Cardinal Pietro Aldobrandini came to take over the government of Ferrara for the Papal States, he brought with him the composer Giovanelli, who, with Luzzaschi, may have conceived of publishing a retrospective collection of examples of the art of vocal diminution as practiced at Ferrara --"a memorial to the departed splendor of the court music in Ferrara (Einstein, [1949] 1971:II:845) -- foreseeing interest for such a publication in the Rome of that time. Owens (1981:368) supports Einstein's and Newcomb's assumptions, quoting from the 1965 Cavicchi edition dedication to Cardinal Aldobrandini of the 1601 Luzzaschi print:

> Among the rarest marvels that my lord Duke Alfonso of blessed memory had at his court, rare and unique in the

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> judgement of many was the music of the leading ladies, who, serving Duchess Margherita, his wife, gave with their singing at the same time both homage and delight to their Most Serene Highnesses. But since that music was extinguished with the death of the duke, I, who had a great part in it, desired to bring it back to life as much as was possible for me, bringing to the light of the world madrigals composed by me that were sung by those most illustrious ladies.

Rome, with its traditional interest in ornamental singing and the increasing number of virtuoso singers employed there and with the presence of the printer Simone Verovio, whose new method of engraving had already proven ideal for extensive ornamentation, was at the same time impetus for the project but also a restricting influence on the madrigals that would be chosen to be presented. "The important consideration," as summarized by Newcomb (1980:64), "is that a specific market . . . and printer . . . existed for a particular kind of music . . ." We might add, a specific patron was a third factor. Pirrotta (1968:45) brings out another possibility -- that composer Emilio de' Cavalieri's (1550-ca.1602) jealousy over the conflicting claims of Jacopo Peri (1561-1633) and Caccini to being the first monodist (Cf. Caccini, [1600] 1950:371 and Peri, [1601] 1950:375) led him to encourage Luzzaschi in this publication (Pirrotta's supposition may also explain the gap in time between the concerto delle donne's demonstration of the characteristics inherent in the "noble manner" of singing, possibly encouraged by Caccini or possibly having encouraged Caccini, and that composer's publication of Le nuove musiche, which sought to explicate the new style):

> [Luzzachi's] belated decision to release some samples of the "reserved" soloistic repertory of the famous singing ladies of Ferrara seems to me an intimation -- cognate to Cavalieri's thinking, and possibly suggested by him -- that a refined style of soloistic song had long been in existence, independent of Caccini. In turn, Luzzaschi's

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publication may have prompted Caccini to restate his claims with the printing of Le nuove musiche.

Newcomb (1980:64-5) answers the second question, concerning Monteverdi's late publication of madrigals demonstrating sophisticated seventeenth-century vocal ornamentative techniques, with the same resons he suggests above for the lateness of the Luzzaschi publication -- the possessiveness of Monteverdi's Duke and the lack of a foreseeable market. Such music was not likely to find "even in the richest salons of Rome at [that] time" a group such as was needed: several fine soloists, a few able singers of normal madrigals and a few skilled instrumentalists; on the contrary, it was "conceived with professional court musicians in mind" (Newcomb, 1980:65). The explanation for such a publication by Monteverdi finally in 1605, Newcomb finds again to be in the nature of a particular public, as revealed in the prefacatory letter accompanying the print, in which Monteverdi responded to attacks by the theorist Giovanni Maria Artusi (made in the latter's 1589 diatribe entitled Trattato apologetico) on some of the composer's techniques and those of others. Monteverdi could have fully answered Artusi's criticisms, Newcomb (1980:65) concludes, only by officially presenting the possibilities of his developing new style.

Other Female Performances at Ferrara

The only other musical event at Ferrara that "may have been as unusual and as virtuosic as the concerto delle donne" was another group dominated by ladies: Margherita's balletto della duchesa, who performed "a new and lavish union of dance, madrigal, and instrumental music" -- il balletto, with elaborate costumes and quite complex choreography

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(Newcomb, 1980:35). Like singing, dancing as a social activity involving men and women was a major pastime at court. At Ferrara, for example,

> The ladies retired to the rooms of the Duchess [of Urbino], . . . When the men returned . . . two ordinary balli were done; then they began balletti, and then the ballo del piantone, and . . . (Conosciuti, 31 January 1579, as quoted in Newcomb, 1980:35)

Evidence dates a change from such spontaneous dance forms to "a carefully rehearsed and costumed performance with a plot and a limited cast" (Newcomb, 1980:36) as occurring around 1580 also. An undated letter of early 1580 by Conosciuti mentioned "beautiful balletti done by our Serene Duchess and her accomplices with beautiful costumes"; another (19 April 1580) talked of them "rehears[ing] the music with which this evening they will do the ballet; . . ." (Quoted in Newcomb, 1980:36)

Fenlon (1980:154,156-7), however, counters Newcomb's presentation of the novel aspects of the Ferrarese balletto:

> Elaborately prepared and rehearsed dances were not new or peculiar to Ferrara: contemporary dance manuals are full of them, and there are important precedents elsewhere, . . . Neither is the all-female character of the balletto without previous example.

The parallels between the French ballet de cour and the Ferrarese balletto della duchesa are strong and hardly coincidental. Both have unusually and essentially long and intricate dances performed to specially composed music and choreography. There are parallels too in the all-female cast of the ballet comique and that of the balletto, and in the similar roles of Caterina de Medici and Margherita Gonzaga -- both responsible for training the ladies of their court to perform elaborate ballets in settings of their own devising. Given the strong

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cultural connections between the French and Ferrarese courts at this period, such parallels are not suprising. Documentation of the elaborate ballo that took place in Ferrara upon the arrival of Henri III there in July 1574 suggests that some six years before Margherita Gonzaga's coming to the Este court "the choreographic practices and female personnel of the balletto della duchesa are presaged" (Fenlon, 1980:157).

Like the Ferrarese virtuoso singing female group, the balletto was fairly well established by 1581 and became a regular feature on the court's entertainment calendar. The ensuing years would see a rapid growth in its repertory too. The evolution of dancing in court," Newcomb (1980:36) concludes, "was following the same path as that of singing in court and at the same time." He was able, however, to uncover neither as many extensive descriptions of the ballets as of the vocal performances nor the remains of any music specifically designated as having been composed for them. Something interesting that occurs in two of the descriptions offered by Newcomb is the ladies representing men in their performances. For examples, a 22 February 1583 Urbani dispatch mentions the Duchess and eleven other ladies "dressed partly in black as gentlemen and partly in white as ladies"; and Camillo Albani, the Florentine ambassador in 1585, reported on 25 February of "ballets . . . , danced by twelve very graceful ladies representing men" (Quoted in Newcomb, 1980:39,40). This is a sex-role crossing the opposite of that found in vocal presentations.

The balletto's points in common with the concerto delle donne are summarized by Newcomb (1980:41-2). It was "new, a creation of the youthful enthusiasm and love of festive entertainment manifested on all

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sides by the new Duchess." It provided "a showcase for the beautiful and talented ladies of her court." It involved "a carefully rehearsed set performance as opposed to an informal social activity." It furnished "an outlet for new music from composers of the Ferrarese cappella." It was "secreto, i.e., reserved for the court and its important visitors."

However, it differed from the concerto delle donne in at least two important respects:

> First, it seems normally to have been a performance designed for large festivities.[69] More important, its performers were not sought after specifically as dancers and hired virtually as professionals -- they were not specialists, as were the singers of the concerto delle donne. (Newcomb, 1980:42)

The latter we can tell from the rough sketch of it members, who were either existing female courtiers or had been hired foremost as singers. In this case we have, therefore, not only courtiers who happened to dance, but also singers who, because of their musical ability, were made courtiers, and who happened to dance. Newcomb (1980:42) describes an occurrence to demonstrate this important difference: "It was possible, . . . , to substitute on short notice Barbara Sanseverino for Vincenzo Gonzaga's first wife in one of the performances of 1582 . . . ." Such a replacement would have been impossible in the concerto delle donne. The individual participants in the balletto, then, were less critical to the performance than were those in the concerto. (We must remember, however, that the balletto was a considerably larger group.) Newcomb (1980:42) likens the difference between the two groups to "that which might exist today between a good professional company and a fine amateur dramatic society." We might also liken it to the difference between the concerto delle donne and the singing ladies

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prior to 1580. Whichever, this latter difference, Newcomb (1980:42) feels, might explain "why the concerto delle donne became famous and was imitated all over Italy, while the balletto della duchesa was not similarly copied."[70]

Concerto delle Donne Facsimiles

Indeed, "[j]ust as the style that reflected the practices of the Ferrarese concerto delle donne spread gradually outward from Ferrara in the madrigal books of 1581-84," states Newcomb (1980:89), "so the idea of the concerto di donne itself was adopted during the latter part of the decade in several centers of intense cultivation of the madrigal." After 1585, therefore, luxuriant madrigals dominated by high voices no longer indicated necessarily the influence of Ferrara, for the concerto delle donne was no longer unique. And, the establishment of women's ensembles in the various courts would come to mean changes in the training of women singers, who were now sought out and sometimes even brought to courts specifically to be trained, as well as to serve, as musicians.

The earliest copy, attempted in Mantua from 1581-1582, failed. An ardent admirer of the Ferrara musica secreta was Vincenzo Gonzaga, son of Duke Guglielmo of Mantua and the future Duke. With his sister's marriage to Alphonso, he spent much of his time at Ferrara in order to escape his father's strict rule at home. In fact, he was constantly "visiting" there from 1580-1587, as the comments of chroniclers document. In musical taste, Newcomb (1980:95,98) says that he was almost wholly a child of the Ferrara court and hoped for his own performing group such as Ferrara's. Fenlon (1980:5) reminds us, however, that Vincenzo's tastes matured in the secular atmosphere of

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both Ferrara and Florence. After his second marriage to Leonora de' Medici in 1584, it was there too that "he received a grounding in music, poetry, and theatre, all of which became strong interests" (Fenlon, 1980:124).

As early as 1580, Mantua tried to recruit singers of reputation, initially probably to be participants in Vincenzo's upcoming wedding festivities but ultimately to form a concertino of singers for Vincenzo's first bride-to-be, Margherita Farnase. Duke Guglielmo engaged two important ducal agents and members of the Mantuan court and cappella in this pursuit. The marriage was soon annulled, however, and the proposed musical group was never established.

The first successful imitation was established in 1584 in the court of Francesco de' Medici in Florence. An account of the wedding ceremonies for Vincenzo Gonzaga and his new wife Leonora de' Medici in April of that year include the first mention of the Florentine concerto secreto: "In the evening, . . . , there was musical entertainment . . . by a Bolognese woman of the Grand Duchess, who was extraordinary, by a certain Vittoria who had come from Rome, and by other famous musicians . . ." (Quoted in Newcomb, 1980:90). The aforementioned letters of Striggio, written during the following summer and fall, illustrate how the Grand Duke was able to keep abreast of musical happenings in Ferrara and how he obtained for his group, consisting of at least three sopranos, music that was as close as possible to the original Ferrarese practice (see pp.497,504). They also indicate the involvement of Giulio Caccini in the training of the Florentine ensemble (see pp.515-16).

The three sopranos can be tentatively identified as: first, Vittoria Archilei (1550-ca.1620), nicknamed "La Romanina," whose

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singing was praised by the foremost composers of her day:

> Cavalieri tells that because she was "in a wild mood and singing in a vaulted room, I certainly have never heard her in more beautiful voice. She gave so much satisfaction that Acquaviva said to me: 'I for shame did not weep.' Paravicino said he never thought such refinement was possible. They are musicians." (Quoted in Palisca, 1963:346)

about whom a piece in Marenzio's Book II à 6 of 1584 refers, whose early 1590s performance in Emilio de' Cavalieri's Disperazione di Fileno was said to have moved the audience to tears (Hitchcock, 1980:551), and whose influencial technique was cited by Giustiniani (see pp.514-15); second, Laura Bovia (flourished 1580-1590), the Bolognese woman whose name appeared also in connection with the earlier Mantuan failure and whose talents were noted in a letter of 1581 (see p.324) describing her being in the convent of San Lorenzo where people came to hear her sing and play during the Holy Week services (Quoted in Fenlon, 1980:134 and Newcomb, 1980:99), in the earlier-quoted praise to her abilities recorded in a Bolognese music catalogue (see p.324), and in the dedication by the Bolognese composer Camillo Cortellini of his first book of madrigals for five voices, extolling her virtuosity "among both musicians and nobility" (Fenlon, 1980:134); and the third, almost certainly Lucia (flourished 1570-1606), the first wife of Giulio Caccini and a fine singer employed as a musician by the court.

With the death of the Grand Duke and Duchess in 1587 and the passing of the rule into the hands of the Duke's brother Ferdinand, a former cardinal, the original group was slowly disbanded. All left except Archilei, from the beginning a protégée of Ferdinand in Rome [see pp.514-15). She continued in the employ of Ferdinand and was to become probably the most famous virtuosa of the generation following the original Ferrarese concerto delle donne. Both composers Giulio

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Caccini ([1600] 1950:371) and Jacopo Peri ([1601] 1950:375) respectively would name Archilei as having performed their music in order to buttress their respective claims to primacy in the new, impassioned, monodic style:

> . . . the new manner of passages and redoubled points invented by me, which Vittoria Archilei, a singer of that excellence to which her resounding fame bears witness, has long employed . . .
>
> . . . , I demonstrated to them this new manner of singing, which gave the highest pleasure, not only to . . . , but also to that celebrated lady whom one may call the Euterpe [one of the muses as listed by Hesiod] of our age, Signora Vittoria Archilei. This lady, who has always made my compositions seem worthy of her singing, adorns them not only with those groups and those long windings of the voice, simple and double, which the liveliness of her talent can invent at any moment . . . , but also with those elegances and graces that cannot be written [too subtle to write out] or, if written, cannot be learned from writing.

Another, perhaps more impartial, musician (according to Hitchcock's [1980:551] biographical sketch of Archilei), Sigismondo d'India, lauded her (preface to Le musiche . . . da cantar solo . . . , 1609) as "being 'above any other' as an excellent singer, spoke of her as 'most intelligent' and emphasized the sweetness and tenderness of her voice." Her relationship to the new manner of singing is evident in two descriptions of 1590: the first which praised her for "moving marvelously to tears" the audience at Cavalieri's Disperazione di Fileno (Guidotti, as quoted in Stark, 1973:290), and the second which observed her as "stupefying everybody" (Guidiccioni, as quoted in Stark, 1973:290).

Descriptions of the festivities surrounding the marriage of Ferdinand to Christine of Lorraine in April 1589 show that in the intermezzo La Pellegrina Archilei accompanied herself on the lute and improvised elaborate treble ornamentation on a solo composed especially

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for her by Emilio de' Cavalieri (Hitchcock, 1980:551).

> In the fifth intermedio Peri sang his own composition . . . , and Lucia Caccini performed in the fourth . . . and in the terzetti of Cavalieri's ballo together with her sister Margherita. The highest praise is reserved for Vittoria Archilei, who appeared as Armonia Doria in the first intermedio and who also sang in the terzetti of the final item. (Fenlon, 1980:130)

It is difficult to tell which singing ladies were at the court from 1589 onward. It is assumed by Cook and LaMay (1984:139) that Ferdinand, with the assistance of Archilei, acquired other singers from Rome, including singer, poet and actress Isabella Andreini, who also sang in the wedding intermezzo. Robert and Norma Weaver (1978) list V. Archilei, but not L. Bovia and L. Caccini in their chronology of music in the Florentine theater from 1590 on. Included, however, are Francesca (1587-1640) and Settimia (1591-ca.1638) Caccini, daughters of Giulio and Lucia and professional singers of the next century. By that time, though, Caccini had begun to herald a significant departure from the virtuosi we have discussed by training pupils closer to his own type of vocal emission, tenors. Whereas in the earlier performances of virtuoso singers it is difficult to find names of celebrated male singers, certain basses being the major exceptions, in Caccini's upcoming Florentine circle there would come numerous male singers who would achieve considerable fame.

Soon after the beginning of the Florentine concerto, concerti di donne were formed in the Orsini household in Rome, at the Gonzaga court in Mantua and in the court of Lucrezia d'Este in Ferrara. In a dispatch of January 1588 the Este ambassador in Florence communicated that two of Ferdinand's nieces were bringing together a concerto di donne in Rome which would come under the patronage of Ferdinand's

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nephew Virginio Orsini and his bride (Newcomb, 1980:94). Because of the close, familial connection between the Orsini household in Rome and the Medici court in Florence, this establishment would acquire some of the talent employed by Ferdinand just as he would borrow musicians from Rome. Vittoria Archilei is an example offered by Cook and LaMay (1984:16,132) and Newcomb (1980:94) of the sharing of artists between the two households: ". . . a member of both the Florentine and the Roman concerti," "[s]he sang in Florence on many occasions in the 1580s and 1590s, but she also spent considerable time during the 1590s in the service of the Orsini in Rome."

When Vincenzo Gonzaga assumed direction of the Mantuan court in 1587, he installed the musical traditions, and ultimately many of the actual musicians, of the Este court at Ferrara, especially the Ferrarese taste for female singers. Again, the founding of a similar ensemble in Florence must have also influenced his actions. Almost immediately upon becoming Duke, Vincenzo he formed his own concerto di donne, the formation of which Fenlon (1980:145) describes as

> symptomatic of the fundamental alteration in attitudes that took place at the Mantuan court with the passing of Duke Guglielmo. Conservatism, piety and moderation now gave way to a preoccupation with the latest fashions and the pursuit of pleasure.

Orazio della Rena, the Medici resident in Ferrara, reported about Vincenzo's visit to Ferrara in 1589: ". . . with the Duke of Mantua came four ladies . . . who sing very well and play the cornetto and other instruments" (Quoted in Fenlon, 1980:132 and Newcomb, 1980:99).

MacClintock (1966:48) discovers financial records of the years 1587-1592 as showing four female singers being paid from the Mantuan Duke's privy purse. A list of singers from records of 1591 includes

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Lucia Pellizzari, Isabella Pellizzari, Lucrezia Urbani and Catterina Romana (MacClintock, 1966:48). The identical four are noted by Fenlon (1980:127) on a list of payments made in the first years of the seventeenth century. In a paper of 1979 entitled "The 'Virtuosi' at the Court of Mantua," Susan Parisi maintains, however, that such a foresome did not perform <u>together</u> until 1603 (Quoted in Cook and LaMay, 1984:148).

The Pellizzari sisters (flourished 1580-1600) were members of a family of musicians from Vicenza who had appeared with their brother on the rolls of the Accademia Olimpica in Vicenza as early as 1581 or 1582 (Newcomb, 1980:100). They were skilled in playing the cornet and trombone, and were most likely identified, according to Fenlon (1980:128), with "la musica vicentina," (including perhaps as many as five members of the Pellizzari family), who were paid in 1588 an impressive 3,000 lire from Vicenzo's purse (MacClintock, 1966:48). It is not known how long Isabella and Lucia remained in Mantua's service or if they performed in the service of any other courts. Lucrezia Urbani (or Urbana, according to Fenlon, 1980:127, who flourished in 1589) came from Naples, but little is known of her career. Caterina Romana (flourished 1589), Fenlon (1980:127) says, is "almost certainly" Caterina Martinelli, known also as "La Romanina,"

> the young singer [who was lauded by Gagliano in the preface to his <u>Dafne</u> and] who later prepared the title role of Monteverdi's Arianna . . . but who dies shortly before the first performance. This suggestion is supported by the absence of a payment against her name in this [above-mentioned] list, since at the time it was compiled she could have been no older than fifteen, and may well not have been eligible for a salary.

Cook and LaMay (1984:145,149) and <u>The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians</u> (1980:2:719), however, list the two as different people and

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give Martinelli's birth date as approximately 1589 and the year of her arrival at the Mantuan court as 1603. "By that time the Mantuan court employed many famous male and female virtuosi," Cook and LaMay (1984:145) state, with Martinelli (already known for her vocal accomplishments) taking her place "as one of the jewels in Vincenzo's musical establishment." Claudia da Cattaneis (flourished 1590-1607) had also been a Mantuan court singer before her husband-to-be, Monteverdi, would arrive there, but she is never mentioned as a singer in the select concerto. Frequent notices of extra performers brought in from other cities also appear.

Pahlen ([1971] 1974:32) makes the claim that "any woman who wanted to become a highly paid singer at [Duke Vincenzo Gonzaga's] palace had to accept the Duke as lover; and it was no different at other courts." He offers no information to support his assertion, however, other than commenting that

> for all the preferential treatment thay often received, women singers were still basically members of the servant class. . . . She rode and danced and had meals with her lord, so that outwardly her position was nearer a great lady's than a servant's. (Pahlen, [1971] 1974:32)

Even if this were so at Mantua, it does not seem to have fit the situation at Ferrara, where women singers were raised to the position of ladies of the court in order for them to sing there.

> Rather than being sensitive about the socially degrading implications of their specialized function at court, they were happy that their specialized abilities caused them to be welcome and honored there. The fervent attachment of the duke and duchess of Ferrara to music and musicians doubtless helped to smooth this passage. (Newcomb, 1986:94)

Also, the upper-stratum marriages of d'Arco, Guarini and Peverara and the exception taken to the relationship of Molza with Wert contradict Pahlen's ([1971] 1974:33) contention that it was exceptional for such

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singers to marry aristocrats.

By 1589, the Mantuan musical establishment was, as Fenlon (1980:132) puts it, "sufficiently accomplished for some of its members to be exhibited in the prestigious Florentine entertainments of that year," symbolizing the new importance and artistic status of the Gonzaga. A Mantuan musical contingent is noted in the aforementioned descriptions of the spring wedding festivities for Ferdinand and Christine: ". . . a large number of musicians came from outside Florence, and the majority of these were provided by Vincenzo Gonzaga. . . . particularly prominent in the fifth intermedio" (Fenlon, 1980:130).

From the beginning of Duke Vincenzo's reign, he visited together with the Duke of Ferrara at each others' courts, with their singers even engaging in musical competitions -- the gran competenza fra quelle dame di Mantova et di Ferrara referred to by Giustiniani([1628] 1962:69): "The ladies of Mantua and Ferrara were highly competent, and vied with each other not only in regard to the timbre and training of their voices but also in the design of exquisite passages delivered at opportune points, . . ."

Enthusiasm for the madrigal had invaded the formerly musically austere Mantua, with composers there issuing new secular publications. An anthology by Mantuan composers in 1588, along with Pallavicino's Fourth Book à 5, also in 1588, are full of examples of the luxuriant style.

> Many of the pieces contain extended passages of thematic embellishment of a virtuosity which leaves little doubt that these works were intended for professional performers, while the dedication makes clear that they were composed at the Mantuan court. . . . diminution occurs in all voice-parts, but generally it is more noticeable in the soprano and bass

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lines. (Fenlon, 1980:144-5)

The new stylistic emphasis is generally accepted as heavily influenced by Wert, who spent much time during these years in Ferrara, and with Tarquinia Molza in Ferrara (see p.477). Besides his earlier Ferrara-related madrigal works in which he acted as an important agent in initially communicating Ferrarese musical style to Mantua during the late 1570s and early and mid 1580s, Wert, O'Brien (1950:51) indicates, wrote villanelle and madrigale for the Mantuan court ladies who "entered into keen competition with the ladies of Ferrara" in the late 1580s. In Wert's ninth book (1588), a Mantuan product in its dedication and pieces praising the ducal family members of that court, the style of the contents, Fenlon (1980:139-40) maintains, is "unmistakably that of the Ferrarese virtuoso manner, modified (it could be suggested) to take account of the particular temperaments and vocal abilities of the Mantuan court."

Amidst this Mantuan musical renaissance, somewhere around 1590, Monteverdi arrived at the court. While the influence of a concerto di donne and his adoption of the virtuoso manner noted in his third book (1592, his first publication after his establishment at Mantua) has usually been attributed to his stay at Ferrara (see pp.511-12), and although Monteverdi had written music for Ferrara during the late 1590s and even acknowledged his debt to that musical court in the dedication to his fourth book in 1603, "we now know," states Newcomb (1980:101), "that he had, . . . , his own concerto di donne in Mantua" and their direct influence, as well as the continued indirect influence of the Ferrarese concerto delle donne on the Mantuan concerto di donne and that on Monteverdi and of its influence on other Mantuan composers and

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them on Monteverdi, must be considered.

Finally, in Ferrara itself a second concerto di donne was formed by Duke Alfonso's sister Lucrezia. Between 1580 and 1582, the performances of the musica secreta had alternated between the apartments of the two duchesses, as we have seen. Jealous of Margherita, for whom the group had been created, and resentful of her intrusion and installation as Duchess of Ferrara, Lucrezia, in late 1582, conceeded the concerts to Margherita's rooms and, in 1583, slowly withdrew her patronage. The first documents that offer evidence for the existence of a separate concerto, however, are from much later, 1589. It is interesting that this is the same year that Molza left Ferrara, and it is possible that her departure weakened the original group to an extent that competition became possible. It is also possible, as we have previously noted (see p.479) that a slow decline in the quality of the original group made more likely both Molza's leaving and the conceivability of a competitor.

In June of 1589, the Florentine ambassador reported that one of Lucrezia's ladies sang to the accompaniment of various instruments, and in August the Ferrarese courtier and composer Alfonso Fontanelli wrote of being called to the Duchess of Urbino's apartments to hear "her

Vittoria who performs miracles" (Quoted in Newcomb, 1980:102). Another chronicler wrote that Lucrezia maintained "three sisters, noble Ferrarese ladies of the Avogadri family . . . and they performed beautifully" (Quoted in Newcomb, 1980:102). It is not certain whether there were two or three performing sisters, with little else known about the careers of any of them. In 1590 the newly appointed Medici resident reported about Duke Alfonso's daily acts: "An evening never

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passes that he does not go before anything else to greet his sister . . . remains for at least an hour with her, and listens to music . . ." (Quoted in Newcomb, 1980:102). Finally, Giulio Caccini, while visiting Ferrara in 1592, "expressly distinguished between the Duchess of Ferrara's musica delle Sre Dame and the Duchess of Urbino's musica delle quattro Dame che cantano, e suonano" (Quoted in Newcomb, 1980:102).

In addition to those women connected to vocal ensembles, information exists concerning women recognized as solo singers. A 1598 account points to Virginia Vagnoli of Siena, called virtuosissima madonna: "I have heard many excellent men of music tell of her, who have been here and there in diverse parts of the world, but have not found anyone who is her equal, who had her surety in singing, her charm and precision in her manner of singing, her sweetness of voice, or her tremelo which she gracefully uses in singing" (Quoted in Stark, 1973:186). She was honored in poems and laments and was frequently referred to in the context of meraviglia -- "stupefying by the velocity, the sweetness, and the grace of her voice" (Quoted in Stark, 1973:289) -- a term, along with "grace" and "disposition" that occurs in so many accounts of women singers and illustrates their connection to the "noble manner" style of singing. The occasional appearances of a Vagnoli, who started her career in Venice as early as 1555, or a Madalena Casulana (see pp.380-1) or Laura Ruggeri (see p.381), suggest, again, the possibility of a number of prestigious, and perhaps professional, women singers in Italy prior to the better-documented court vocalist of the 1580s and after.

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The Decline of Ferrara and Its Women's Ensemble

For Duke Alfonso at Ferrara, the later part of the decade and the beginning of the next at Ferrara proved to be difficult years, ones in which his world changed drastically. The leadership of the duchies close to him all changed, as his generation started to fade away. Alfonso's hope for an heir seemed to vanish. Famine and inflation troubled Europe. A result of all of this was "slackening interest in maintaining the position of the court at the leading edge of musical progress," says Newcomb (1980:107). A decline in musical innovation is indicated by a declining mention of the musica secreta by the chroniclers, the declining number and importance of madrigal books dedicated to and emanating from the court, a declining rate of music buying by the court and the virtual cessation of Ferrarese music printing between 1586 and 1594 (Newcomb, 1980:106).

In addition to Alfonso's external, internal and personal problems, some of the loss of momentum Newcomb (1980:106) attributes to "the difficulty of maintaining the excitement and enthusiasm of a new and innovative group across several years of continuing activity" and the outright vocal decay of the ladies, who, by the summer of 1586, were already accused of "accumulating bellies and other such accessories, and seem . . . somewhat hoarser than usual" (Alfonso Fontanelli, as quoted in Newcomb, 1980:106). Yet, at the same time that madrigal composer Fontanelli complained about the concerts deteriorating, he ended his communication with the accolade: "And yet they are heavenly" (Quoted in Newcomb, 1980:106). And the Florentine ambassador in Ferrara in 1588 also reported on 21 January about the "sweet harmonies of those most gracious and skillful ladies"

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(Cicognini, as quoted in Newcomb, 1980:98).

Music at Ferrara was able to regain its position in the musical vanguard, says Newcomb (1980:107), through a favorable marriage in 1594 for the eldest daughter of the Duke's uncle, Don Alfonso d'Este, with the "intensely musical" nephew of Cardinal Gesualdo. However, in 1598 the Este succession in Ferrara ended and shewas secured for the Papal States, too soon for the Estensi to see at their court the dawn of a most extraordinary innovation in vocal musical performance -- the opera. In the 1590s and the early years of the seventeenth century, Mantua and Florence, then, acquired Ferrara's former reputation for vocal performances and produced the great theatrical music-drama entertainments of the next century.

Ferrara's musica secreta had set an incredible precedent for professional women as vocalists. The activities of female virtuoso singers and ensembles, most prominently those of mid sixteenth-century Venice and late-century Ferrara's concerto delle donne, had greatly influenced madrigal, solo-song and even the upcoming monodic style. The virtuoso movement, we have found, was dominated by the female singer whose vocal advantages over boys, falsettists and natural male voices had come to fruition in a number of educated, aristocratic or patrician ladies who demonstrated disposizione, skillful passagi and creative improvisation. They "put the composers to work writing solos, duets, and trios, and were greatly praised and applauded by all who heard them and even by some who did not" (Stark, 1973:265). Younger women, following in their footsteps, would require more repertory. Cook and LaMay (1984:26) find that surviving compositions suggest that the tradition continued well into the Baroque period. Despite the "men's

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club" developing around Caccini in Florence, that watched the beginnings of this from the wings, and even though male singers -- tenors and castrated sopranos and altos -- would soon emerge as equal in talent to their female counterparts, solo and ensemble virtuose would continue to influence seventeenth-century style and the upcoming genre of opera, particularly in its early incorporation of roles for women singers of exceptional skill.

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Notes to Section 3

[1] Discerning beginnings and ends of artistic movements has always led to dissension. "The problem becomes simpler," Harman (1958:180) assures us, "if we realize that there never can be a hard and fast line between one movement and another, that the later develops from the earlier, and that therefore the distinction of a particular movement from other movements lies in the importance attached to certain features most or all of which will be found in the preceding period."

[2] The early seventeenth-century experiments that led to opera were consequences of the Renaissance interest in the music of antiquity. Bauer and Peyser (1932:87) declare that music at that later time grasped for its advancement Greek learning and, through it, evolved into a "broader and more human art."

[3] The clergy as a whole "had never been . . . a select group of intellectuals" (Hauser, [1974] 1982:282-3).

[4] The 1561 Thomas Hoby English translation of Baldassare Castiglione's Il Cortegiano -- The Book of the Courtier ([1528] 1928) -- is the source that will generally be used here for references to the life of the courtier because it was the first translation and because it actually influenced contemporary English expectations about the role of the gentleman. In the introduction to a 1967 translation ([1528] 1981:13) we find:

> ". . . The Courtier enjoyed for some generations at least a pervasive influence , and not least in Elizabethan England, where the first translation, by Sir Thomas Hoby, appeared . . . The kind of behaviour recommended to the Italian courtiers became the accepted standard for English gentlemen. To Elizabethan literature it channelled Renaissance philosophy and conceits . . ."

This later 1967 translation by George Bull ([1528] 1981) will be used at times (where noted), however, when a modern English version is required for its comprehensibility in "translating" the nuances embedded in the language of the earlier version.

[5] At the same time, Franco-Netherlandish music was negatively affected by unfavorable political conditions in the Low Countries.

[6] Music in Milan had been traditionally connected with the Cathedral, famous for its liturgical music since the time of St. Ambrose.

[7] James Wellington (1964:3), in "Renaissance Anti-Feminism and the Classical Tradition," discusses the strain of poetic antifeminism and its origins in a calculated rebellion against the triple culture of love-longing -- courtly love, Petrarchism and Renaissance neo-Platonism:

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"From the lofty pedestal . . . , woman has been unceremoniously pulled down and shown to be made of matter . . . It is consequently not for the frustrated lover to worship from afar, to pine and weep and wish to die; it is rather for him to denounce, and often to jeer, . . ."

[8] Actually, this description is quite similar to the idealized image of ladies found in some thirteenth-century troubadour poems. Upper-class ladies then were also expected to display a wide range of qualities, besides being able to read and write, as the following verse discloses:

"She could carry and fly falcon, tercel and hawk,
She knew well how to play chess and table,
how to read romances, tell tales and
sing songs. All the things a well-bred
lady ought to know she knew and lacked none."
(Robert de Blois, as quoted in Power, 1975:77)

[9] Barbara DuBois (1983:107) states:

"The androcentric or phallocentric fallacy about women in virtually all of social-science has been this: The 'person' has been considered to be male, and the female, the woman, has been defined in terms, not of what she is, but of what she is not. Woman has been defined as 'not-a-man'."

[10] Briffault (1965:188-90) compares Dante and Petrarch: the first "truly an Italian troubadour. . . . rais[ing] the ideal lady to the highest spheres, set[ting] the crown upon the amatory conceits of [the troubadours];" but the work of the second as even more faithfully modelled (in its subject matter, inspiration and form) on the troubadour tradition -- "Petrarch was the final blossom and perfection of the troubadours . . ."

[11] Bologna has been pointed to as having been a progressive city in which humanism, even for women, thrived, its university having opened its doors to women as early as the thirteenth century.

[12] In 1692 colonial America, Cotton Mather wrote: "If she had time she might study music and language but would not take pride at her skill in them" (Quoted in CMS Proceedings, 1977:185).

[13] Judith Tick (1979:iv) defines a female "accomplishment" as a branch of study marginal to a true academic subject but more important than a craft. Drawing, dancing, ornamental meedlework, singing and playing were more social skills than formal arts, but the degree of training, effort and perfection attained would affect the degree to which they would be considered quasi-professional accomplishments. Arthur Loesser (1954:267-8) speaks of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century female accomplishments as "a number of trivial occupations superficially related to the fine arts" that filled young women's "genteel idleness" with something "uselessly pretty" to do;

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something more ladylike than doing nothing and therefore serving to both confirm her family's gentility and render her "a more valuable prize in the marriage gamble."

[14]"The monophonic songs of the troubadours and trouvères," state Ulrich and Pisk (1963:87),

> "had continued to represent a strong secular impulse through the thirteenth century. Late in that century polyphonic equivalents of the trouvères' lais, ballades, rondeaux, and virelais appeared. These two- or three-voice (seldom more) compositions gave rise to a rich and varied secular literature to which the generic term chanson is applicable and which flourished in the following centuries with ever increasing vigor."

[15]The northern Henrich Ysaac and Alexander Agricola dominated both the sacred and secular fields. ". . . as Netherlanders they are composers of grandiose specimens of church music; as naturalized Italians they compose delicate frottole" (Einstein, [1949] 1971:I:54).

[16]The theme of courting the lady meant, as in medieval times, flattering and praising the fair one to be conquered. Another motif is the lover's protestation of his constancy or his rebuttal of the imputation of infidelity or fickleness (Einstein, [1949] 1971:I:63).

[17]Helm ([1960] 1964:400) describes these:

> ". . . the two middle voices are quite active, giving at first glance the impression of considerable counterpoint. Closer examination, however, shows that the activity is of a specious kind; the voices are not making real polyphony but rushing about from one harmony note to another, often filling in larger intervals with passing notes, . . ."

Dent (1968:35) agrees: "The two middle parts . . . often look contrapuntal, but are in reality mere filling up."

[18]Petrucci did print much sacred music in the form of individual part books, thus making them available for practical use. Not until 1520 or 1525 did he issue separate part books for secular music (Einstein, [1949] 1971:I:59).

[19]O'Brien (1950:25) remarks about the trecento compositions comprising the Squarcialupi MS that the importance of the upper part (or canto melody) as compared to the other parts and the fact that the latter are sometimes not well suited to the voice "make it probable that these songs were often sung by a soloist, the secondary parts being played by lutes or viols." However, in the upper part of these earlier secular songs, there was still a tendency toward elaborate vocalises.

[20]The lute was the most popular instrument and became regarded

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as "the aristocratic accompanying instrument par excellence" (Haar, 1983:175). ". . . it was almost always used either in extemporizing an accompaniment to a song or, . . . in playing as much of the lower parts as it could manage, . . ." (Harman, 1958:217). It was not an easy instrument to learn, "but once its essential technique had been mastered a whole new realm of possibilities was opened up for professional and amateur musicians alike" (Stevens, [1960] 1961:69).

[21]Roche (1972:11) complains of the base poetic standards of any available verse -- that of the fifteenth century. This is perhaps another reason why Italian musical activity had lapsed during those years.

[22]Monody is, literally, music for one singer. It includes monophonic music (a single melodic line without chordal accompaniment) and accompanied solo song. In particular it denotes the particular type of accompanied solo song which developed around 1600 as the speechlike declamation in operas and will be further characterized in our discussion of the evolution of opera.

[23]The art of the frottola perhaps had heightened historical consequences, Einstein ([1949] 1971:I:55) concludes, because it coincided with the intervention of music printing.

[24]Of the elegant and refined lyric poet Petrarch Einstein ([1949] 1971:I:190) says: "The supersensual and yet sensuous worshiper of Madonna Laura was the ideal poet for an art that was striving for a perfect, secular, and sensuous expression, but whose means were still restricted, . . ." This was because the character of Petrarch's verse provided "well-nigh perfect madrigalian texts," as we shall further recognize in our upcoming discussion of madrigal style and technique:

> "Each verse is short enough to permit imitating interplay between the voices without making the piece too long, the clarity and conciseness with which each mood is expressed almost dictates the musical treatment, and the emotional contrasts give the composer full scope for varying his rhythm, melody, and harmony." (Harman, 1958:265)

[25]The use of the word "madrigal" reflects the Renaissance spirit of resurrection of the Italian past -- the fourteenth-century use of the term. Other than its name, however, the only connection whatever with the earlier type was that both reflected the desire to set vernacular poetry to music.

[26]The motet idiom or principle or style, in its most general sense, denotes a polyphonic texture (1) with equal importance of all parts and adaptation of the text to all parts; and (2) with expressive or picturesque imitation -- the restatement (either exactly, in reverse or in notes of longer or shorter duration) in close succession of a musical idea (theme, subject, motif or figure) in the different voice parts.

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[27]"A cappella" designates choral music without instrumental accompaniment.

[28]Not until the seventeenth century, in fact, did a "popular" art music arise, restricted to one country -- Italy -- and one type -- opera (Harman, 1958:364).

[29]A song is termed "strophic" if all the stanzas of the poem are sung to the same music, usually of a verse-refrain type; the opposite treatment, with new music to each stanza (and therefore without repetitions) is called "through-composed."

[30]In Italian, pastorale is "shepherdlike" -- "where the lovers Phyllis and Corydon played among shepherds and shepherdesses in fields and woods, pierced from time to time by Cupid's arrows, or perhaps languished from the pangs of unrequited love, unable to be consoled by nature" (Roche, 1972:53); where a knight wooed a virtuous shepherdess, who sometimes did and sometimes did not preserve her virtue (Harman, 1958:83).

[31] ♪

[32]These are notes not filled in (𝅗𝅥) and of longer duration.

[33]A basso seguente is a bass that merely duplicates the momentarily lowest part of a polyphonic composition. A basso continuo (or thorough bass, a bass continuing throughout the composition) "stands in relation to the upper voice or voices as an opposite role; it is a firm instrumental foundation; it "releases" the upper voices and sets them free -- free for expressive declamation, or for concerto-like rivalry, or for both" (Einstein, [1949] 1971:II:850).

[34]This movement of the melody up the voices would have been pointless in earlier centuries, when the ranges of the various voice parts were more alike.

[35]By the sixteenth century, regular use was made of the C and F clefs to designate the ranges corresponding to our modern soprano, alto, tenor and bass voices.

[36]Tessitura is the prevailing compass of a vocal part in a composition in relation to the total range of that voice.

[37]The castrato (also called evirato, musico) was an emasculated male who at a young age (before puberty) had been subjected to an operation that halted the development of the vocal chords. He therefore retained the height and agility of a boy's voice, which, at adulthood, would reside in the body (and thus possess the lung power) of a man. He is described by some as having been one of female voice in a male body.

[38]Montaigne also expressed the view that Venus and the muses were closely related.

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[39] Weber ([1915] 1949:356) speaks, also, of the lack of fulfillment in such a role:

> "The peasant, . . . , like Abraham, could die 'satiated with life'. The feudal landlord and the warrior hero could do likewise. For both fulfilled a cycle of their existence beyond which they did not reach. Each in his way could attain an inner-worldly perfection as a result of the naive unambiguity of the substance of his life. But the 'cultivated' man who strives for self-perfection, in the sense of acquiring or creating 'cultural value', cannot do this. He can become 'weary of life' but he cannot become 'satiated with life' in the sense of completing a cycle. For the perfectibility of the man of culture in principle progresses indefinitely, as do the cultural values."

[40] The authors (1984:73) relate this process to that of the gentrification of inner-city neighborhoods by middle-class whites.

[41] The pattern of female-dominated occupations being low in prestige, of female entrance into previously male-occupied positions diminishing the prestige of such, and of males upgrading the status of "female" occupations has been widely recognized (Cf. Carol Schreiber's [1979] work on transitional occupations). As more people have moved into any field offering greater rewards, gains by men have tended to be greater than those by women. Complicated, confused and even contradictory expectations, when particular personal attributes of incumbents change -- gender in this instance -- have also been studied (Cf. Everett Hughes, 1945).

[42] Women artists of the eighteenth century, it is claimed (Parker and Pollick, 1981:92) were admired not for their minds and abilities but were expected to be beautiful and desirable, their merits as artists confused with their personal charm. The English Angelica Kauffman and the French Elisabeth Vigee-Lebrun exhibited beauty of "dubious advantage," but the unsuccessful Anna Dorothea Lisiewska-Therbusch failed to establish her reputation because she lacked not talent but youth, beauty, modesty and coquetry (Parker and Pollick, 1981:92-3).

[43] In the latter part of the sixteenth century, courts in England and France were also centers of musical activity:

> "Queen Elizabeth herself was a musician, and English girls of the aristocracy studied music like the Italian girls. Lady Mildmay, . . . , in describing her pastimes to a friend, wrote: 'Every day I practice my voice and set songs of five parts to my lute'. There was the royal pageantry in England and France involving special musical compositions and performances. On one of Queen Elizabeth's 'progresses', she was greeted by a party of girls . . . [who] sang what is described as 'a sweete song in six parts'. When King Henry II of France traveled to Rouen, he too was entertained by

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> . . . ladies [who] sang a song of praise to the King . . . a four-part motet for three soprano voices and one alto . . ." (Drinker, 1948:224)

[44]Primitive peoples found deep tones often grotesque and even humorous. Lower tones come to be appreciated only when there is a development of a wider and more "educated" musical taste.

[45]Within a few years, sometimes only months, at puberty, the male vocal apparatus, a secondary sexual characteristic, doubles its size (the vocal chords lengthen an average of 7/12 of an inch and also thicken), resulting in a voice which has deepened by a whole octave and which has lost its suppleness and agility:

> ". . . growth changes affect his larynx, bringing the wings of the thyroid cartilage together at a sharper angle which causes the Adam's apple to become more pronounced. The vocal bands or cords become thicker and more rounded. Their length and bulk are also increased. The muscles and parts of the larynx become firmer and much more powerful." (Bowman, 1951:8-9)

[46]There is, as yet, no English translation of Habŏck's lengthy work, Die Kastraten und ihre Gesangskunst. The only major work available in English on the subject is Heriot's The Castrati in Opera. It, however, is inadequately documented and frequently unreliable.

[47]Generally, descriptions and picures depicted castrati in this way. Habŏck (1927:4), on the other hand, refers to their slimmness, which is actually more consistent with their reasonably long lives. Farinelli, the most famous of the operatic castrati, fits this image. Finally, Bowman (1951:10) points to endocrinological evidence for tallness in castrated adults, which might account for either or both of the previous two discrepant descriptions.

[48]An interesting example is described by Coser (1974:25):

> "In Byzantium, 'If one wished to ensure a successful career for one's son, one had him castrated. He might then easily become a governor, ambassador, prime minister, strategos, admiral or Patriach.' . . . 'Even the noblest parents were not above mutilating their sons to help their advancement . . .' Castration was a step on the ladder of upward mobility . . ."

[49]Haar (1981:165), too, points out that Einstein's account remains "of the greatest value despite errors of fact."

[50]In vocal style, this characteristic involves the ability to execute rapid scales, arpeggios, trills and similar passage work of a virtuoso character.

[51]There has been lack of unanimity amoung vocal theorists

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regarding the number and nature of vocal registers. Disagreement among the one-, two- and three-register theories revolves around use of the term "natural":

> "Those who believe in the two-register theory maintain that there are two "natural" registers. One can easily demonstrate this by asking an untrained tenor to sing up the scale. At about an e1 the voice will quickly flip or break and the quality will shift from a heavy lower register, or "chest voice," to a light, upper register, or "falsetto." Thus the two-register concept appears justified.
>
> On the other hand, the three-register exponents argue that while there may indeed be two "natural" registers, through training one can cultivate a middle register, unlike either of the other two, but using elements of both. As proof of this, one may ask a trained tenor to sing the two octaves from C to c1, and one will detect no sudden shift in quality, but rather a gradual one. In addition, the whole range may possess a more "resonant" or "cultivated" quality [emphasis mine]. This middle register has been called by various names, including voix mixte, blended register, head voice, chiaroscuro, mezza voce, and more recently, simply mid-voice. The fact that it can be so demonstrated lends credence to the theory.
>
> To complicate matters, there are those who say that, since there are no apparent breaks or shifts in the well-trained voice, there is only one register." (Stark, 1973:25-6)

It is not that any of these perspectives are incorrect as much as they are inadequate. In the light of recent physiological verification, Stark (1973:27) attempts to resolve the above contradictions: ". . . there are two "natural" registers: a "chest" register and a "falsetto" register; there is sometimes a cultivated third register: a "mid-voice"; and the ultimate effect of good training is to create the illusion of one register."

[52] Stark (1973:220-1) offers evidence of this "inner" origin of ornaments in jazz singers -- Ella Fitzgerald, for example, who "is not content to, or simply cannot, sing a simple unornamented melody: the voice must move!"

[53] This was the name of the group of distinguished amateurs, writers, artists and musicians who, shortly before 1600, gathered in the drawing room (camera) of Count Giovanni de' Bardi at Florence in order to discuss the possibilities of a dramatic musical revival of the ancient Greek tragedy.

[54] The aria -- an elaborate composition for solo voice (or occasionally a duet) with instrumental accompaniment, characterized by a vocal part of considerable complexity, often including elements of virtuosity -- figured prominently in operas, oratorios and cantatas beginning about 1600.

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[55]Stark (1973:243,247) prefers "proto-monody" as more clearly representing their functioning as true forerunners of the Baroque style: "It hardly seems fitting to apply the term "pseudo" to something as genuinely appropriate to the whole Italian temperament as monody."

[56]Cf. Angelo Solerti's "Ferrara e la corte estense nella seconda meta del secolo XVI," I discorsi di Annibale Romei (Citta di Castello, 1891); "Il teatro ferrarese nella seconda meta del secolo XVI," Giornale storico della letteratura italiana (XVIII, 1891), with D. Lanza; Le origini del melodramma (Turin, 1903); Gli albori del melodramma, 3 vols. (Milan, 1904).

[57]The reliability of Valdrighi's remarks is questionable, however, due to his error in including the Bendidio sisters in this musical venture after 1580, as we shall see further on.

[58]Alfonso hoped, through this marriage, "to produce the male heir which had so far eluded him, . . ." (Fenlon, 1980:125)

[59]During the 1570s and 1580s, Mantua and Ferrara were closely related politically, culturally and through marriage. Music historians (e.g., Einstein, [1949] 1971:II:539; MacClintock, 1966:37-8; Newcomb, 1980:43) emphasize the necessity, therefore, of considering these two musically progressive courts of the second half of the sixteenth century simultaneously, in order to trace their musical histories.

[60]After returning to Modena, Tarquinia Molza continued as a performing musician but became more famous as a poet. In 1600 she was granted Roman citizenship, receiving the title of "L'Unica" (unique), for it was the first time the honor had been bestowed upon a woman.

[61]Praetorius indicated that Orlando Lassus had five or six in Munich by that time (Stark, 1973:263).

[62]Madrigal singing was generally singing from an MS or printed score, a cantare sue libro.

[63]Meraviglia is found discussed

> "in terms of a response aroused in the reader by a concetto, a poem, a painting, a statue, etc. It frequently seems the kind of response aroused by virtuosity, technical feats, or mere nimbleness of thought -- in short, a raising of the eyebrows. But in its more profound sense it refers to the impressions of beauty, the flashes of insight, the intuitions of hitherto unrevealed aspects of reality that emanate from a successful piece of witty art." (Mirollo, as quoted in Stark, 1973:286)

[64]It must be understood, however, that less skilled players and singers also prepared their parts in advance, writing out the diminutions, in this instance, in order to practice them before trying them in public (Horsley, 1951:19).

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[65]Newcomb (1980:83) reminds us that although both of these composers seem to have come to the luxuriant style while in Ferrara,

> ". . . they approached it from different directions. Wert first used it for long-breathed themes within full, imitative expositions -- a use within the tradition of the "classic" polyphonic madrigal . . . Marenzio, on the other hand, first used it for the decoration of tiny canzonetta -- motives within the . . . Venetian conzonetta-madrigal . . . Wert often used the style for dramatic purposes . . . , while Marenzio used it for vocal display or for descriptive tone-painting. The comparison between these two earliest instances of the new style illustrates as clearly as possible its origin as a new textural possibility within the context of preexistent styles."

[66]The third was named as Vener' ch'un giorno havea by Fenlon (1980:139) and MacClintock (1966:115).

[67]A parrallel transition in instrumental music occurred much later. According to Ulrich (1948:5-6):

> "Until well into the nineteenth century chamber music was amateur music, confined to small rooms and private homes. In a day when every cultured person played an instrument and professional musicians played several, chamber music provided the natural outlet for their activities. Every home of any size or pretension to culture harbored a chamber-music group; the sounds of trio sonatas, quartets, and even flute duets were heard throughout Europe. In the time of Beethoven, however, professional chamber-music players became active, and the two classes of musicians -- namely, performers and listeners -- took a long step away from each other. It became more fashionable to listen than to play, and the amateur status of the field deteriorated somewhat. As the music became more difficult to play (there can be no question that each new composition made greater demands upon the player), it became more and more a specialized field; consequently, fewer amateurs played it and knew it as a living literature."

[68]These latter traits were elements basic to the Roman conzonetta-madrigal also.

[69]These, however, Newcomb still considers to have been "secreto," since they were "reserved for the court and its important visitors," as we see in his fifth point above.

[70]Fenlon (1980:154), however, does compare Guarini's incorporation of the balletto Groco della cieca in the preparations for the Mantuan production of Il pastorfido in 1592 as also involving "carefully rehearsed performances of specially prepared dances of

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considerable complexity, requiring close collaboration among musician, poet and choreographer" and "[contrasting] sharply with the more conventional types of dancing based on the repetition of commonly understood steps." He (1980:154) also quotes from a letter of Ambassador Conosciuti (26 February 1585):

> "The dancing was so well matched to both [the music and the words] that it was celestial. I have tried to get hold of the words to send to you, but have been told that they cannot be distributed."

-- a clue that the repertoire of this group was also kept secret.

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CHAPTER X

THE DAWN OF OPERA AND THE BEGINNING FOR THE SINGER AS STAR

Although early secular song embodied human feeling, as distinguished from religious abstraction or devotion, it was the dawn of opera which brought, finally, a more dramatic element, a drive for expression, an emphasis on passion and an attempt at the tragic. Pirrotta (1968:58) talks of "deep dissatisfaction" with polyphony's attempt to "soothe the ear with soft consonances or smoothly managed dissonances" and its emphasis on eliciting admiration for the skill of the singer and the ingenuity of the composer but its inability to captivate and move its audience.

Affetto, or "affect" was the term assigned by Caccini ([1602] 1950:383) to this quality of influencing the soul and "mov[ing] the passion of the mind," but it had already been initiated in the "pseudo" or "proto" monodies of the sixteenth century: "For sometimes when a beautiful, learned, and elegant poem is recited to the sound of an instrument, the listeners are greatly moved [emphasis mine] and led to behave in various ways -- laughing, weeping and doing other similar things" (Zarlino, 1558, as quoted in Einstein, [1949] 1971:837). Laura Peverara was described by Romei ([1584] 1969:30) as having sung "so sweetly, as it seemed the soule at the sound of that . . . harmony ravished, would have flowne out from the body of every one that heard her . . ." Caccini's Nuove musiche elucidated this manner of vocal

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usage in general and its affective goals. We will trace its importance for the opera and the effect of such an emphasis on the position of the singer.

The forerunners of, beginnings for and earliest history of the opera have been treated at book length. We are culminating our study with the start of this new and most important vocal musical form. Therefore, for our purposes, we will only sketch that history in order to take a glimpse at where singers would now be going. In order to expedite this process, we will rely heavily on one of the first systematic historical surveys on the opera, Donald Jay Grout's A Short History of Opera (1947).

Medieval and Renaissance Music-Dramas: Precursors of Opera

Although dramatic scenarios might have been performed occasionally by strolling bands of players and by minstrels, musical theater during the Middle Ages was overwhelmingly religious. It's origins were in the liturgy, where certain portions of the service were performed, "that is, the officiating priests actually represent[ed] the characters rather than merely narrating the events" (Grout, [1947] 1960:17). This form was applied to scene after scene of sacred events.

The liturgical drama of the eleventh to thirteenth centuries was next

> removed from its primitive position as part of the church service and reserved as a special feature of feast days, often coming as the climax of a procession and being performed on the church porch or steps, still however with priests and clerks as the actors [another likely opportunity for nuns to perform in public], though the people might take part as a chorus. Next, the vernacular began to replace Latin; stage properties and costumes grew more elaborate; and with the constantly increasing size of the spectacle, the charge of the performances was finally given over to

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> guilds of professional actors, and the arena of action changed from the church to the market place. (Grout, [1949] 1960:18)

This transformed the ecclesiastical liturgical drama into the somewhat more elaborate municipal mysteries (in Italy, Sacre Rappresentazioni) of the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries. The further such plays grew away from the Church, generally, "the more speaking and the less music they included" (Grout, [1947] 1960:18). Scores of episodes came to be represented, involving large numbers of characters. Soon comic antics were inserted and even indecent, blasphemous, anticlerical and pagan tableaus.

At the same time, courtly entertainments -- banquets, tournaments, festivals, triumphant entrances, concerts, ballets and actual staged events and their intermedios -- served also to "[bring] together many different artistic resources -- singing, playing, dancing, scenery, costumes, stage effects -- in a single spectacle calculated to appeal equally to the eye, the ear, and the imagination" (Grout, [1947] 1960:27). The Italian musical interludes to plays and the French dramatic ballet de cour (also a composite art form, consisting of a number of danced or mimed pieces, introduced by sung or spoken verses) were particularly important as forerunners of opera because they, like the sacred forms of music-drama, "kept alive . . . the idea of close collaboration between drama and music" and because "the external form of the future opera [was] already outlined -- a drama with interludes of music and dancing" (Grout, [1947] 1960:32). "As soon as the drama itself could be set to music and sung instead of recited," Grout ([1947] 1960:32) concludes, "opera would be achieved." It remained only to transform the "relation between drama and music

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from a mere association into an organic union" (Grout, [1947] 1960:34).

What other elements were present that enabled this to ultimately happen? The kind of drama suitable for continuous music was available in the pastorale --

> a poem, lyric in substance but dramatic in form, intended for either reading or stage presentation, with shepherds, shepherdesses, and sylvan deities for the chief characters, and with a background of fields, forests, or other idyllic and pleasant natural scenes. The dramatic action is restricted to mild love adventures and a few incidents rising out of the circumstances of pastoral life and usually ends happily.[1] The attraction . . . , not in the plot but in the scenes and moods, the sensuous charm of the language, and the delicately voluptuous imagery, . . . (Grout, [1949] 1960:34)

"The unreal, optimistic world of the pastoral," Pirrotta (1954:186) concludes, "afforded the best justification for the use of colorful music and the happy outcome of the action." The type of audience familiar with Greek mythology and the technique of allegory and personification and in possession of an appreciative ear for artistic music was found not only among the erudite but was common to "the luxurious, pleasure-loving court life of cultivated persons" (Grout, [1947] 1960:34), as we have discussed in Chapter IX. Music capable of dramatic expression was being attempted in the late madrigals but would soon be found in its more logical vehicle, the monodic recitative of the Florentine composers.

> . . . it was necessary to project the entire [polyphonic, madrigalian] complex outward, to make the spirit carnal by clothing it in the real garb of some mythological person placed upon a stage, to make the flesh spiritual by permitting it through the use of monody an expressiveness it could not have from polyphony, in short, <u>to unite a third-person singular text with a third-person singular technique</u>; and thus "in the ambiguity of the harshly dramatic act" to express what could not by other means be represented. (Wolf, 1955:96)

Finally, singers capable of carrying all this off were already

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available in the courts as well as the churches.

Monodic Recitative: A New Vocal Setting

Songs for solo voice with instrumental accompaniment were nothing terribly new, as we have seen. Medieval solo vocalists -- troubadours, trouvères and minnesingers -- were followed by Renaissance lute singers. And even polyphonic music showed a constantly increasing tendency for the highest voice to have the character of a solo and for the others to function as accompaniment. This was evident not only in the frottola and its relatives but also in the more contrapuntal madrigal. Luzzasco Luzzaschi's late sixteenth-century madrigals for one, two or three voices with accompaniment have been referred to as "solo" madrigals. This trend can be felt even in church composition of the period, in which, also, a greater emphasis came to be placed on harmony.

The theory through which this practice came to be justified evolved out of the work of composers, poets, scholars and artistic amateurs of one of several Florentine academic groups whose deliberations led ultimately to the first operatic experiments. They have been lumped together under the title Florentine Camerata to represent the whole movement that gave rise to opera. Strictly speaking, however, that term denotes a ridotto form of academie that was established some time before 1580. Its earliest and most notable members were Count Giovanni de Bardi, a wealthy art patron at whose home the group met to talk about learned topics, listen to music and even conduct amateur music-making; Vincenzo Galilei, "whose Dialogo della musica antica e della moderna . . . was the first 'declaration of war against counterpoint'" (Grout, [1947] 1960:43); Girolamo Mei, an

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erudite scholar interested in Greek musical theory and "whose hand may be detected behind the writings of both Galilei and Bardi" (Fortune, 1968:151) from the distance of Rome; and the composer Giulio Caccini. A second, and later, social and intellectual circle included its noble patron and amateur composer Jacopo Corsi, the poet and later librettist Ottavio Rinuccini, and the composer Jacopo Peri. It was more of a musical and dramatic workshop for experimentation in theatrical productions. Direct connections between the two lack evidence. In fact, Pirrotta (1954:170; 1968:40,65) talks of conflicts in personalities and respective aesthetic principles that pervaded Florence, of differences in temperaments. Caccini and Peri were arch rivals as were their patrons Bardi and Corsi. Furthermore, Emilio de' Cavalieri, court composer under Grand Duke Ferdinand I, represented a third musical force. There were other academies, too, interested in musical drama. "The overlapping of membership among all these groups," Palisca (1968:10) says, "makes it hard to keep their contributions distinct." Early operatic work, Pirrotta (1954:170,176) concludes,

> was achieved through polemics, rivalries, and jealousies and through the class of outlooks and temperaments which, from both the personal and artistic points of view, were conflicting and irreconcilable.
>
> . . . Writers in our own time have been too quick to create the legend of a group of theorists and polemicists at whose meetings the theory of the new dramatic music was systematically evolved in the most minute detail before being put into practice.

The aesthetic foundations of the music produced in conjunction with theories of the original Camerata lay in the Greek principle of the perfect union of words and melody, in which the former was dominant. Actual Greek music was unknown to them, however, and so there were many misconceptions about Greek musical practice, for example, an

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insistence upon "absolutely faithful adherence to the natural rhythms, accents, and inflections of the text" (Grout, [1949] 1960:53). Therefore, the text had to be clearly understood; words had to be sung with correct and natural declamation, as they would be spoken; and the melody had to interpret the feeling of the whole passage. Also, the singer would be expected to identify with the character whose feelings were being depicted. This is summed up in Cavalieri's instructions to singers in the score of his stage oratorio La Rappresentazione di Anima e di Corpo (1600): ". . . he must pronounce the words clearly so that they be understood, and accompany them with gestures and movements not only of the hand but also of the feet, so that his actions contribute to the affection" (Quoted in Robinson, [1966] 1978:51). Here were the novel aspects of this new employment of the solo voice and the groundwork for truly dramatic music, which became opera.

But it was more than that. This "nuove musiche," as Caccini saw it, was intended to create the aesthetic phenomenon and baroque[2] ideal called "affect" -- the arousal of a physical and mental excitement or mood in the listener, a strong emotional response, that was supposed to be deeper and more meaningful than the mere "tickling of the ear" ([1602] 1950:380). "Composers and singers were not satisfied to amuse or delight their public; they wanted to move and allure it" (Sachs, as quoted in Dorian, 1942:49), to transmute feeling into art. Moreover, it was supposed to transcend the text in its vocalism and its lyricism, to depict and express rather than simply specify, represent or symbolize certain emotions, hopefully resulting in a higher level association of the two forms -- words and music -- as one.[3] While "Peri had more science," de Bardi ([ca.1580] 1950:364-5) remarks that "Giulio's

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inventions had more elegance":

> Peri's expressiveness derives from his handling of stresses, the inflections in his writing for the voices, his vibrant declamation, the tension produced by sudden unexpected discords and the dying fall of ordinary concords. All this explains -- more than do futile arguments about professional jealousy -- Caccini's constant hostility towards him; for similar leanings in Caccini's . . . make-up were nearly always weakened and frustrated by an ecstatic lyricism which expresses itself in ornamentation, variation, and sensuous vocal writing. (Pirrotta, 1954:187)

Singers were supposed to demonstrate meraviglia, to overwhelm, astonish, stun and amaze listeners with their suavity of tone and their technical feats in performing ornaments, or effeti, in their expression of almighty passions. Such virtuoso vocalists used their voices not in just a natural production but to create "a quality unique in its proportions" (Stark, 1973:288). Opera was supposed to be "passion personified, emotion observed in the process of becoming," in which the audience would "live through" a musical-dramatic experience (Wolf, 1955:96).

The first recorded opera (the most commonly agreed upon as first), Dafne, written by Rinuccini and composed by Peri, was performed in 1597 in a small room of the Palazzo Corsi in the presence of a distinguished audience. The earliest opera of which the music has survived is Peri's Euridice, performed in 1600 and published in 1601. The same text was set to music by Caccini in 1600 also, but his Euridice was not performed until 1602. Both were produced before a "small audience of excessively cultivated people" (Loewenberg, 1943:xiii).

Grout ([1947] 1960:59) and others characterize these Florentine founders as not first-rate musicians, however, and as "actuated by an enthusiastic misconception of antiquity" which resulted in a rigid

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adherence to the text at the expense of the music. Raynor (1972:161) finds this speech song "an almost awesomely intellectual form": "The vocal parts almost disdain melody; they do not attempt any consistent, appealing melodic contour but merely set out to give rhetorical force to the words, . . ."[4] Remember, the vocalism was supposed to ultimately transcend the text in order to evoke the hoped-for stirring up of the affections in the hearer. But this was where Caccini, more on the side of the singer and more concerned with vocal expression than word-tone relations, departed from the rest (see p.519). "[Peri is] perhaps somewhat more forceful in tragic expression, whereas Caccini is more tuneful, excels in elegant moods and gives more occasion for virtuoso singing" (Grout, [1947] 1966:52). His new vocal aesthetic is important, also, for understanding the change in artistic outlook which occurred in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

Grout ([1947] 1960:61) contrasts the eminent polyphonist Claudio Monteverdi, whose first opera Orfeo was performed at Mantua in 1607, with his Florentine competition:

> Monteverdi was a musician of genius, soundly trained in technique, and primarily concerned with musical and dramatic effects rather than antiquarian theories. He combined the madrigal style of the late sixteenth century with the orchestral and scenic apparatus of the old intermedi and a new conception of the possibilities of monodic singing. Externally, Orfeo represents the first attempt to apply the full resources of the art of music to opera, unhampered by artificially imposed limitations, while at the same time it shows a breadth of conception, a power and variety of expression, far removed from the somewhat bloodless, unimpassioned, intellectual art of the Florentines.

Raynor (1972:161) says of Orfeo, "the music is the drama no less than the drama is in the text it sets." This was the direction in which the opera would go. The appeal of subordinating music to the text too strictly was clearly limited: "[I]t was necessary to admit a fuller

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participation of music in order to establish the [operatic] form on a sound basis" (Grout, [1947] 1960:9).

Grout ([1947] 1960:67) summarizes as possibly the most remarkable feature of Orfeo Monteverdi's "sense of form, of a logically articulated, planned musical structure. . . . In Peri and Caccini were mere formless vocal rhapsodies; here they are clearly organized into musical units in which the freedom of declamation is admirably balanced by the careful plan of the passage as a whole." Music in Monteverdi's hands served several different kinds of purposes. Besides declamation, it would be used to depict details of the text through imitation. On the expressive side, it gave utterance to the emotional aspects of the stories and charmed on its own account. An additional difference that originated with Monteverdi was that whereas at the first performance of Peri's Euridice the part of Orpheus was sung by the composer and that of Euridice by Vittoria Archilei, a castrato appeared for the first time on the operatic stage in Orfeo.

The Roman opera, during its comparatively short history of scarcely more than a generation, was the link between the Florentine and Venetian schools. First, from the earliest Roman operas to those of the last important Roman composer, Luigi Rossi, a line of demarcation became more and more distinct between musically heightened speech inflexions and rhythms, called recitatives, and the more emotive arias, with the latter becoming the more significant. Also, the opera moved away from the dramatic Florentine ideal in the direction of "the formal exterior of the later baroque" (Grout, [1947] 1960:79):

> The poem of [Rossi's] Orfeo, by Francesco Buti, reads like a caricature of the Orpheus myth; the whole plot is a marvel of confusion, a hodgepodge of serious and comic episodes intermingled with ballets and spectacular scenic effects.

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> The only way a composer can deal with such a libretto is to ignore the drama (or lack of it) and concentrate on the musical opportunities offered by each scene. The score of Orfeo is as variegated as its poem: there are recitatives, da capo arias,[5] arias with ostinato [a clearly defined melodic phrase persistently repeated] bass, two-part arias, buffo (comic) arias, and many ensembles of different kinds. . . . Orfeo as a whole is no more a dramatic entity . . . ; it is a succession of lyrical and scenic moments in which the beauty of music and decor successfully conceals the lack of any serious dramatic purpose. (Grout, [1947] 1960:77-9)

Opera had become a flamboyant super-art, uniting all the arts -- architecture, painting, scenic design, mime, acting, poetry, dance and song -- in a display of splendor that was one of the main functions of baroque music. "It chimed sympathetically, for this reason," Raynor (1972:165) explains, "with the humanist ambition for universality and the conception of the 'complete man,' the ideal all-rounder who since the early Renaissance had been the humanist ideal."

The baroque predilection for lavish scenery created its own spectacle. "[P]astoral idylls, dreams, incantations, descents of gods, shipwrecks, sieges, and battles filled the stage" (Grout, [1947] 1960:85), with ingenious mechanisms contriving and producing miraculous images, supernatural appearances and climactic wonders that were very costly. A present day review of the 1987 production of Puccini's Turandot noted that the Metropolitan Opera, along with almost every important opera company in the world today, has become a "designers' house" (Rockwell, 1987:25). The complaint of "an ascendancy of spectacle for spectacle's sake" referred back to the Baroque, with its "operatic flying machines, erupting volcanoes and onstage armies pitched in battle" as the only other comparison in Western musical history (Rockwell, 1987:25).

In addition, there were imposing choruses and varied

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instrumental sections. ". . . sumptuousness in the arts became actually an end in itself" (Bukofzer, 1947:394). In 1645, the English traveller John Evelyn wrote that opera was "one of the most magnificent and expensfull diversions the Wit of Men can invent" (Quoted in Robinson, [1966] 1978:79). Lang (1941:355) contends that opera was the most adequate art form, the perfect medium, for "satisfying the insatiable appetite of the baroque for the spectacular, the enchanting, and the overwhelming."

No longer was there even parity between music and the text. Music became the main issue. As the balance of interest among many different factors leaned further in the direction of the music, and even more specifically on the path toward the solo aria, operatic music became more and more another form of "singers music." Stark (1973:244-5) attributes this also to his theory about the specialness of voices that had come to be just before this time: ". . . the whole germ of Baroque affect is found in the voice, since the well-produced voice, i.e., the voice with disposizione, appoggio, or mid-voice, is antagonistic in itself, is the result of a complex muscular polarity, and because of this, . . . is highly expressive." It was capable of producing the heightened, intensified, affective state. This could be carried even further, however:

> the ability of the voice alone, irrespective of words, accompaniment, or musical structure [emphasis mine], to create the conditions leading to an emotional response on the part of the listener. The voice itself [emphasis mine] is "expressive" of something unspecified and undefined, . . .[6] (Stark, 1973:278)

And that was exactly what began to happen in Rome, reaching its culmination in Venice.

Whereas Florentine and Roman opera were court entertainment

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(and in Rome quite sumptuous court entertainment) for a privileged nobility that gained entrance by invitation, "for this reason [keeping] always a certain reserve, a refinement, almost preciosity of both form and content" (Grout, [1947] 1960:84), Venice was the home of the first public opera house, San Cassiano. It opened in 1637 and was run by a group of noblement for commercial profit. Opera there became

> a public spectacle and one of tremendous popularity. Between 1637 and the end of the century, 388 operas were produced in seventeen theatres in Venice itself and probably at least as many more by Venetian composers in other cities. Nine new opera houses were opened during this period; after 1650 never fewer than four were in operation at once, and for the last two decades of the century this city of 125,000 people supported six opera troupes continuously, the usual seasons filling from twelve to thirty weeks of the year. Citizens were admitted on payment of about fifty cents, and wealthy families rented loges by the season. (Grout, [1947] 1960:84)

Opera moved out of the salon and academie, with their court circle and erudite scholars, and onto the public state, with its larger, more heterogeneous and more cosmopolitan audiences. The nobility, visiting dignitaries, and others of rank occupied private boxes, while tradespeople and others less affluent crowded into the pit, with gondoliers often offered free admission in exchange for their exuberant applause and frequent functioning as a claque. The basis of support for this new venture was no longer the patronage of an aristocratic individual, family or class but a broader populace, though its popularity still hinged heavily on its prestige appeal with the rich upper classes and although "dynastic" opera survived (moreso in Germany and Austria) along with the new commercial type.

These changes caused, in turn, transformations in the nature of opera librettos and the character of its music, traits that, as we shall see, were less important stylistically than in sociological

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respect. Disaffection for the god elites of the mythological ideal world of the classics would be expected of a less learned, more down-to-earth population that could not relate to such characterizations. But choice of literary text had already been moving away from the Renaissance interest in antiquity and toward fictionalized, epic, melodramatic legends and romances and dramas of intrigue. With that, "[t]he Aristotelean unities gave way before a bewildering succession of scenes, sometimes as many as fifteen or twenty in a single act, full of strong feeling and suspense, abounding in sharp contrast and effects of all kinds" (Grout, [1947] 1960:85). Action, with its concomitant emotional crises, replaced the earlier emphasis on calm reflectiveness. Robinson ([1966] 1978:73) sees it as a "strain and stress" kind of libretto, at each of which, emotional outbursts of arias were only natural. In conjunction, the music went from "a limited range of musical effects, sophisticated in feeling and declamation, calculated to appeal to invited guests of aristocratic taste and education" (Grout, [1947] 1960:86), to "broad effects by simple means, direct and vivid musical characterization, continual sharp contrasts of mood" (Grout, [1947] 1960:86), that would work on a large stage before a mixed public audience. While opera had, up to this time, reached relatively small and select audiences at the courts, collections of monodic songs on the market (starting with Caccini's Nuove Musiche) had already influenced Italian musical life on a broader scale. Raynor (1972:170) adds that the opera became "more freely lyrical, readier to use strophic poetry and, therefore, repeating melody, . . . automatically widening the distance between recitative and arioso or aria." The public, city audiences wanted songs or,

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better, "song hits."

Owing to taste and pocketbook, public opera did not undertake extravagant, glamorous productions, and even the chorus was used with discretion. This was accompanied by "the rise of a typical operatic phenomenon, the virtuoso soloist, for whose sake numerous songs having no connection with the drama were interpolated in the score" (Grout, [1947] 1960:86). "Opera for the general public, "Raynor (1972:171) concludes, "had to make its way through the interest of the story and the appeal of its music, . . ." City audiences, Bukofzer (1947:397) adds, "were primarily interested, . . . , in star singers and fast action."

Grout ([1947] 1960:87) concentrates on Monteverdi's Venetian opera Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patri (1641) in order to show the striking changes that had taken place since his Mantuan Orfeo 36 years earlier:

> The recitative . . . is no longer a mere rhapsodic declamation of the text, with dramatic high points . . . ; it is constantly organized into patterns, with sequences and canonic imitation between the solo voice and the bass. Sections of free "parlando" [speaking] on a single note alternate with melodic phrases at the cadences [musical progressions at the end of compositions that convey a feeling of repose]. The recitative frequently gives way to short arias, . . . The parts . . . are filled with elaborate coloraturas. Ensembles, particularly duets, are abundant. Conventional word painting is evident. Serious, comic, and spectacular scenes follow one another closely. Every possible occasion for emotional effect is exploited. . . . one senses the effort to be immediately understood, along with an almost nervous dread of monotony, . . . There is little instrumental music.[7]

Monteverdi's next opera, L'incoronazione di Poppea (1642) Grout ([1947] 1960:87-9) finds to be very different again and rates it as "a masterpiece of the composer's old age":

> The music is not spectacular; there are no display scenes and few ensembles (except duets). The composer's greatness lies in his power of interpreting human character and

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> passions -- a power which ranks him among the foremost musical dramatists of all time.
>
> . . . In it Monteverdi applied the full resources of a mature technique to a dramatically valid subject, creating in a great variety of musical forms and effects a unified, moving whole.

However, this "perfect balance" that Monteverdi achieved between the drama and its music, by means of organizing the recitative, deepening its content, and introducing arioso or aria forms at critical points in the action, making the music an equal partner with the text, was only to be reversed again, but this time by the countervailing force of "musical elaboration at the expense of dramatic truth and consistency" (Grout, [1947] 1960:90). If the music was truly beautiful than it was forgiven its faults, "such as keeping a character on the stage to sing a very long aria at the precise moment when peril drives him to flight" (de Brosses, [ca.1739] 1978:28).

> In [the] operas [of Cesti, from the period 1649-1669] the already growing fissure between recitative and aria is noticeably widened: the center of musical interest shifts from the former,[8] reserving the chief attention of composer and audience for the lyrical songs. The latter, by way of compensation, achieve larger proportions and clearer outlines, blossoming forthe in an unprecedented variety of forms and types, offering frequent opportunities for vocal display. (Grout, [1947] 1960:96)

In Marc Antonio Cesti's operas and earlier, in Francesco Cavalli's late works, then, the future "singer's opera" or "solo opera" became patent. "With [Cesti] may be said to begin the reign of the composer over the dramatist, and of the virtuoso singer over both, which was to characterize Italian opera for the next hundred years" (Grout, [1947] 1960:97). "Opera," Brockway and Weinstock ([1941] 1966:10) agree, "began to become vehicles for popular singers, composers the slaves of the singers' whimsies." In 1680, the French traveller Limojon de St. Didier reported, in a scathing critique of Italian opera: "They that

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compose the Musick of the Opera, endeavor to conclude the Scenes of the Principal Actors with Airs that Charm and Elevate, that so they may acquire the Applause of the Audience, which succeeds so well to their intentions, that one hears nothing but a Thousand Benissimo's together; . . ." (Quoted in Grout, [1947] 1960:103).

Public opera houses opened in Florence, Rome, Genoa, Bologna and Modena around 1650 and in numerous other Italian cities, as well as German mercantile centers and London, soon after. The style emphasized by Cesti and others after him had become a national, and quickly an international, one.[9] ". . . melody rose like a sun shedding beams of ineffable warmth and beauty not only over Italy but every musical land" (Goddard, 1911:9). Music came more and more to replace the plot.

Singers were still supposed to use good judgment and continue to try to imitate the ideas behind the words, but ultimately both singers and composers had at their disposal ornamental musical devices "pigeonholed like the affections themselves and . . . designed to represent these affections in music" (Stark, 1973:280). The librettos consisted of "a series of discrete expressive moments, each devoted to a particular mood" or affect: ". . . in order to call forth the necessary variety and intensity of moods, situations were contrived with little attention to unity or consistency of plot, and with corresponding indifference to realism either in subject matter or in details of dramatic development" (Grout, [1947] 1960:179). Also there was the danger of decoration and expression becoming equated.

The musical form in which this came to be carried out has been referred to as the "aria opera" -- a series of arias separated by passages of recitative. ". . . the careful creation of a musical

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texture capable of moving in and out of declamatory, the songlike, and real song was overthrown by an exhaustive interest in song and disdain of everything else" (Mordden, 1980:24). The aria had become supreme. And it "played right into the hands of the singers, who would much rather have the stage to themselves than share a number with their colleagues" (Mordden, 1980:27). It was not to be challenged again until Gluck, who, in the middle of the eighteenth century, would attempt renewed reforms of operatic composition designed to restore balance between music and drama and to endeavor to apply restrictions on the vocal freedoms of "wilfull" and "priggish" performers (Dorian, 1972:268): "I was determined to abolish all those faults that had stolen into Italian opera through the unwarranted pride of singerand the foolish acquiescence of composers, . . . to restore music to its proper place . . ." (Quoted in Dorian, 1972:273). In the meantime, the aria opera had become the most popular of all musical genres: ". . . music and story came to be sacrificed to the excitement of listening to a beautiful voice displaying the brilliance of its technique" (Raynor, 1972:174).

Naples' school of opera, which answered "the growing taste for simplicity, ease, lightness of texture, tuneful melodies, and facile ornamentation" (Grout, [1947] 1960:181) -- luxurious Italian bel canto -- took dominance over the Venetian in the eighteenth century, with Alessandro Scarlatti as its first major composer. Its chief poet, Pietro Metastasio, accomplished what Grout ([1947] 1960:183) describes as "a consistent dramatic structure conforming to the rationalistic ideals of the period, but which incorporated lyrical elements suited for musical setting in such a way as to form an organic whole." Yet,

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his opera seria plays have been criticized as mannered and artificial, elegant but not powerful, with characterizations that are out of character. Structure, says Mordden (1980:30), was everything -- "operas [were] structured by acts, the acts by scenes, the scenes by recitative-and-aria, with an overture to open and an ensemble to close. . . . How was art to breathe?"

The consistency of his dramatic structure and the possibility for lyricism in it and their both forming "an organic whole" were achieved through his new and particular mastery of scene construction, which was, simply: first drmatic action (the recitative) and then the expression of sentiments by an actor in an aria. "In the first part of the scene, the actor is a character in the drama, carrying on dialogue with other actors; in the second part, he is a person expressing his emotions or conveying some general sentiments or reflections appropriate to the current situation -- not to his fellows on the stage but to the audience" (Grout, [1947] 1960:184).

Thus, the plays constantly shifted their prerogatives from the drama to the music and back. Grout ([1947] 1960:184) calls this "the classical compromise operatic form, in which the drama and music each yield certain rights and thereby find a means of living together compatibly." But opera soon became virtually a succession of arias, with the other elements of the genre -- the recitatives, ensembles, instrumental sequences -- crammed in between and in the background and leaving little opportunity for real drama. The quality of the recitative decreased even further as it came to serve as simply a bridge between one aria and the next. Mordden (1980:27) refers to the "aria opera" as "a long sequence of tiny concerts in which one

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character would express his mind and then exit, then another character would express his mind, and then exit." In addition, Neapolitan opera, Raynor (1972:174) says, "exploited voices and vocal acrobatics to a point which cannot unfairly be described as decadent." Mordden (1980:26) complains of opera having turned into "music circus." Brockway and Weinstock ([1941] 1966:23) conclude that Neapolitan opera did not develop; rather, its operatic composers "surrendered to the singers."

As a result, the aria soon reached an even greater degree of stylization. Eighteenth-century arias were classified by the Englishman John Brown into five well-defined types --aria cantabile (ornamental songs of tenderness), aria di portamento (songs of dignity composed of long notes), aria di mezzo carattere (airs on other serious subjects), aria parlante (a rapid speaking air), aria di bravura or di agilità (to afford ostentatious vocal displays) -- most of which had to be composed in the da capo form. The order and distribution of the different types were also prescribed: "It was required that each scene should terminate with an air; that the same character should not have two airs in succession; that an air should not be followed by another of the same class [even if performed by different singers]; and that the principal airs of the piece [to be sung by the principal singers] should conclude the first and second acts" (Hogarth, [1838] 1972:104). Mordden (1980:28) complains of "[m]ore rules and more rigidity: each leading character gets five arias . . . ; each aria should show a different emotional facet of character . . . ; the title character gets a delayed -- therefore suspenseful -- entrance." The recitative was also divided between two distinct types -- recitativo secco (dry, simple,

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unaccompanied), functioning to carry on the action; and the more important (and closer to the aria) recitativo accompagnato or stromentato, reserved for the most dramatic points of climaxes in the action of the opera's plot.

Such overconcentration on one aspect of the whole resulted ultimately in a loosening structure for the entirety, with responsibility for unity becoming limited to individual numbers. The order of arias often changed, and new numbers were frequently added while others were taken away. This was especially true in revivals of older works and in revisions of the operas of one city and composer to suit the particular taste of another region. The outcome of "patching of new materials on old operatic garments," taken to the extreme, was a pasticcio, a "pudding" or "pie," "a gleaning of bits from different works chopped and formed into an opera patty" (Mordden, 1980:31):

> . . . the typical pasticcio was the result of a . . . haphazard process; it was an opera which had migrated from city to city, undergoing patchwork and alternation at every stage, until it might one day arrive at London . . . with a libretto in which Metastasio shared honors with "Zeno, Goldoni, Stampiglia, Rossi, and other librettists," while "Gluck, Ciampi, Galuppi, Cocchi, Jommelli, Latilla, Handel and several more might be pasted together" in the same musical score. (Grout, [1947] 1960:188)

The Evolution of Singer Dominance in Early Opera

One further reason for the increased importance of the aria was the growing power of the singer, as a result of the new institution of the opera and its foundation in the vocal communication of emotions. Singing was the central performing medium of opera. Moreover, here was a musical art form overwhelmingly dependent upon solo vocalism and individual vocalists. But it was also as a result of both the increased professionalism of singers, as discussed in Chapter VIII and IX, and of

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the extraordinary Italian quality of sound, whether it be called "nuove musiche," disposizione, the old Italian school of singing or bel canto, that had the power to move the souls of its listeners. Of course, increased emphasis on the aria, in turn, led to even greater glorification of singers: "The principle of absolute dominance of the aria in the form entailed the absolute dominance of the singer in performance; . . ." (Grout, [1947] 1960:190).

In Dr. Brown's classifications of arias are incorporations of the role of singer as it both related to and influenced the characteristics of these airs. For instance, one reads: "kind of song which gives the singer an opportunity of displaying all his powers of every description"; "notes, such as the singer can dwell on, and have thereby an opportunity of displaying the beauties of his voice and calling forth its powers"; "composed chiefly, indeed too often merely to afford the singer an opportunity of displaying extraordinary powers of voice and execution" (Quoted in Hogarth, [1838] 1972:105,106,109).

> From c.1670, . . . , vocalisations and embellishments began to creep into aria styles with a vengeance. The expressive intent behind the virtuosity now became less clear. At the same time the allocation of arias to particular characters was becoming related less to dramatic ends than to the question of giving the singers the solos they wanted. (Grout, [1947] 1960:186)

Also, because of the nature of the aria, the singer left the stage once his personal reactions to a situation had been expressed. This enabled him to gain great applause by being able to leave the stage after finishing a marvelous solo.

The poet Metastasio complained about his dramas being mutilated by "ignorant and vain vocal heroes and heroines" (Quoted in Grout, [1947] 1960:190), a situation which his own work had helped to bring

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about. And the repeated use of his libretti by different composers (and even the same composer using a libretto over and over again) "made the words seem more and more a mere excuse for singing," says Heriot ([1927] 1975:13). Singers, then, were the "element of anarchy," as Mordden (1980:30) refers to them, that subverted the structure of serious opera.

Composers created notation that was merely a skeletal outline of a composition, "a memorandum of the composer's intentions" (Grout, [1947] 1960:197). The rest depended upon the creative, affective delivery of individual extemporizing singers:

> . . . to him was confided the work of embodying the composer's ideas, of moulding matter to suit the thought, of adapting the thought to suit the matter, of giving real existence to the form which existed only as an abstraction in the composer's mind. The full responsibility of this work rested on him; the fullest liberty of action was therefore given him to execute it. . . . Music was to be the result of the combination of the abstract written note with the concrete voice, of the ideal thought of the composer with the individual personality of the performer. The composition was to give only the general, the abstract; while all that depended upon individual differences, and material peculiarities, was given up to the singer. (Paget [pseud. Lee], [1887] 1978:117-18)

Their art was improvised, often according to individual singers' moods and taste only, and consisting generally of the two related practices of coloratura ornamentation of given melodic lines and insertions of cadenzas, those original passages of elaborate, brilliant improvisations most frequently near the end (at the cadences) of arias. We are reminded by Paget ([pseud. Lee], [1887] 1978:117) that composition and vocal performance were still inextricably linked: "composers always learning first of all to sing, and singers always finishing their studies with that of composition."

Singers were much to blame for the often inconsistent,

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unharmonious and illogical substitutions of arias in operas, replacing original ones with others of their choosing that favored their particular voice or special capabilities. Singers had become viciously competitive as singing came to be judged according to individual and creative talents in solo performances and as rewards came to be made in extraordinary degrees but to the rare few. The number and types of arias awarded to a singer became an important symbol of comparative status.

The license singers took with scores frequently reached extremes: "The glorious ones of the past had scant respect for the composer's intentions; he was there to supply raw materials for the display of a sonic haute cuisine" (Burgess, 1985:7). Melodies, Lang (1941:354) claims, became "overcharged with ornaments, overloaded with difficulties; the breathtaking sallies of the idolized singer could hardly be duplicated by the nimblest violin or flute virtuoso." ". . . a little less Fiddling with the Voice, and a little more Singing with the Instrument would be of great Service to Both," wrote Pier Francesco Tosi, famous castrato singing teacher, in Observations on the Florid Song ([1723] 1926:xii). Simon Towneley Worsthorne (1954:16) reitterates the "ease with which public entertainment can become a simple titillation of bad taste." Yet, Tosi ([1723] 1926:161) explained that "a Deficiency of Ornaments displeases as much as the too great Abundance of them; that a Singer makes one languid and dull with too little, and cloys one with to much; but, of the two, he will dislike the former most, though it gives less Offence, the latter being easier to be amended." Only the most expert composers -- Monteverdi, for example, and later Mozart -- were able to write music so explicit in

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its mood, characterizations and even direct actions that it was not easily distorted.

Finally, music came to be composed for specific singers and in order to display their voices and their virtuosity at best advantage:

> The procedure was to find not the true interpreter for a given opera, but an opera for specific interpreters. Composers were commissioned to write scores for specific virtuosi, keeping in mind the type of voice, register, and personality. (Dorian, 1972:271)

This led, in turn, to the very changes and replacements just mentioned: ". . . in proportion as it fitted them [such and such a performer and his or her individual and often unique excellences] it was . . . unsuited to others" (Paget [pseud. Lee], [1887] 1978:131).

Singers had gained control over the composer and librettist: "No matter what an opera was about, no matter who wrote it or who was in the audience, singers ruled" (Mordden, 1980:30). Paul Nettl (1950:166) offers an illustration: ". . . the author of the [text] is often compelled to insert syllables with the vowel 'e' and 'a,' regardless of meaning, because these are the sounds with which a skilled throat can best display its runs and trills." Besides the composer's anticipating the desires of the particular singers for whom he worked a certain piece, if a jealous singer felt himself slighted, the former was often obliged to interpolate a piece altogether irrelevant to the action. Benedetto Marcello's 1720 satire Teatro alla moda provided numerous examples:

> [the seconda donna] must always insist on the poet making her come out before the prima donna, and when she has received her part she must count the words and notes in it, and if there be less than in that of the prima donna she must insist on the poet and composer giving her the due number of words and notes, as she must never be inferior to her in the length of her skirts, the amount of paint and patches, in her shakes, embellishments, and cadenzas,

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> protectors, parrots, owls . . . (Quoted in Paget [pseud. Lee], [1887] 1978:106)

As early as 1669, the opera libretto of Cesti's Il Genserico included a note to the effect that extra arias had been added to please the cast (Worsthorne, 1954:121). Tosi ([1723] 1926:105) maintained that the audience was also to blame: ". . . few Auditors have this Discernment, and . . . there are Numbers of the others, who blindly applaud every thing that has an Appearance of Novelty." Tosi ([1723] 1926:168) complained of singers who never learn their parts and "who never sing in an Opera without thrusting in one Air which he always carries in his Pocket; of one who bribes the Composer to give him an Air that was intended for another; . . ." And finally, he ([1723] 1926:168) attacked the "one who will not act unless he has the Choice of the Drama, and a Composer to his liking; with this additional Condition, not to sing in Company with such a Man, or without such a Woman." A star system had arisen.

This is further indicated by the differential in salaries of composers and singers. The first were poorly paid: "The producer gives them thirty or forty pistoles, together with the returns from the first copy of the arias which they sell at a high price as a novelty; but they get nothing more once it has been published, for it is very easy to make copies" (de Brosses, [ca.1739] 1978:22). Also, operas were fashionable for a season and quickly became outmoded. Finally, composers still created for clearly defined audiences, in addition to specific performers. Fine singers, on the other hand, received exorbitant fees (Algarotti, [1763] 1768:19; de Brosses [ca.1739] 1978:23). Tosi ([1723] 1926:164) speaks of their "heap[ing] up Treasures." A more specific figure on which to compare is one given by

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Worsthorne (1954:9). The two vocal leads in an opera of 1679 received 400 pistoles for two months . . ."

Abuses on the part of eighteenth-century opera singers have been recounted everywhere. Marcello's satire suggested the following exaggerated virtuosoisms for a singer:

> All the while the ritornello of his air is being played the singer should walk about the stage, take snuff, complain to his friends that he is in bad voice . . . and while singing his aria he shall take care to remember that at the cadence he may pause as long as he pleases, and make runs, decorations, and ornaments according to his fancy; . . . take breath several times before finally coming to a close on a trill, which he will be sure to sing as rapidly as possible from the beginning, . . . using the highest notes of which he is capable. (Quoted in Grout, [1947] 1960:191)
>
> [The singers, male and female, are to keep up their dignity above all thing] never listening to any other actor; saluting the people in the boxes, joking with the orchestra, &c., that people may clearly understand that he or she is not the Prince Zoroaster but Signor Alipio Forconi; not the Empress Filastrocca but Signora Giandussa Pelatutti . . . If the singer plays the part of a prisoner, or slave, he must take care always to appear well powdered, with many jewels on his dress, a very high plume, nice shining sword and chains, . . . (Quoted in Paget [pseud. Lee], [1887] 1978:106)

Anti-virtosic attacks were also levied specifically at castrati: "I want to laugh when I see a fat castrato puff himself up like a baloon so as to go from the top to the bottom of his voice for half of a quarter of an hour, without taking breath, in one run after the other" (de Brosses, [ca.1739] 1978:36). Singers, though, could go quite far before non-compliance on their part was negatively sanctioned.

Grout ([1947] 1960:189) tries to explain the reasons why singers' virtually unrestrained licenses were tolerated: ". . . they seemed to be inseparable from the system out of which they grew and because, on the whole, people liked the system." The voice had become the determining element of the art form: "The world triumph of Italian

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opera . . . was due entirely to the attraction of Italian voices, . . ." (Loewenberg, 1943:x). And the virtuosic soloist was "accessible because he [was] less abstract, and so can lead . . . , by an outward charm that is . . . effective" (Pinclerle, 1963:39). Audiences, Brockway and Weinstock ([1941] 1966:27) declare, were not with [the composers], but with the singers." It was they who "awakened personal enthusiasm" (Paget [pseud. Lee], [1887] 1978:119) and became musical idols. But it was more than that. Singers had also gained in status, a variable associated with autonomy. Paget ([pseud. Lee], [1887] 1978:120) was convinced that "the dignity in which the vocal art was then held necessitated in some measure the dignity of the artist," who needed, in addition to innate vocal talent, intelligence, feeling, refinement and striving for excellence in order to succeed. Finally, singing had been for some time a highly skilled occupation:

> To perform such a work [adding the small notes, which filled up and perfected that part of the form which depended on the physical material, which expressed the minutely subtle, ever-changing mood], to bear such a responsibility, the singer had to be produced almost like a work of art; the physical powers had to be developed to the highest point, the mental powers had to control them to the utmost, the whole had to become so balanced . . . This was the aim towards which singers and singing-masters constantly strove, . . .
>
> Few, very few, of course, ever attained to this ideal, but it was so high a one that the whole level of the art was raised, and mediocrity itself became excellent; . . . (Paget [pseud. Lee], [1887] 1978:118)

Because the opera was dependent on the skill of its performers, a fair degree of independence and freedom had to be granted to the role, even to the point at which writers speak of the "tyranny of the virtuoso" (Goddard, 1911:13). In addition, there were no official checks on singers. All was determined by the force of countervailing personalities and, of course, the favorability of audiences. But people

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also liked the singers, whose extraordinary abilities to entrance those who heard them was a major factor contributing to the rapid spread of the opera. The public wanted trills, embellishments, high and low notes, variations, coloratura, says Mordden (1980:25), and needed celebrity performers to fix on, even if it meant putting up with certain otrocities: "Nightly the heroes of antiquity majestically postured and pathetically expired amidst a glory of roulades and the hushed attention of their admirers, who took so little notice of the rest of opera, and between the big arias turned with a sigh of relief to cards and refreshments and love-making in their luxurious boxes" (Heriot, [1927] 1975:15).

We must also recognize that the relationship of the audience to the action in this system was quite different than the link between the two in either earlier courtly performances or in the modern organization of operatic performance. Audiences at public theaters regarded opera as an amusement as much as a serious dramatic spectacle, in which art was only one of the attractions, partying being the other. There was a shortage of other forms of entertainment (cafes, salons, straight theatre, soirées in private houses). The box in the opera house -- "simply another room in a rambling mansion" (Worsthorne, 1954:10) -- filled the gap. ". . . not to attend the opera was to cut oneself off from society, from the chance of profitable business discussions and the prosecution of personal interests other than music" (Raynor, 1972:171).

Charles de Brosses ([ca.1739] 1978:20) describes performances in Rome, which lasted from eight or nine o'clock until midnight:

> Everybody aims his opera glasses at everybody else to find out who is there of his acquaintance and they visit back and

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> forth if they wish. The taste these people have for music and spectacle is far more apparent from their presence than from the attention they pay to it. After the first nights, when the silence is respectable, . . . , it is not stylish to listen except at the best places. The main boxes are well furnished and lighted with chandeliers. Sometimes the people play cards, most often they chat, seated in a circle all around the box, . . .
>
> . . . Chess is a marvellous invention for filling the gap of those long recitatives, and music is perfect for interrupting too great concentration on chess.

Paget ([pseud. Lee], [1887] 1978:132-3) explains further the change in attentiveness of the audience over the evolution of an opera's lifetime in one city:

> . . . as the audience became acquainted with it, parts of it . . . began to pall on the hearers: the pieces belonging to the secondary parts began to be but little heeded, and when the thirty or forty performances were drawing to their close; when the public . . . had become heartily sick of the connecting scenes and the subordinate parts; only five or six pieces were attended to, . . . But let only the prima donna or the primo uomo come forward, especially if she or he be [famous], and the whole theatre becomes as silent as a church . . . The crowd listens breathless to the great recitative, to the duet, . . . the air, . . . ; they have heard them thirty-five nights consecutively, and each night twice or thrice [at their demand], but they never tire of them: how could they, since each new performance means a new intonation, a new ornament, a new variation -- nay, sometimes a perfectly new reading of the piece? the great singers having become positively incapable of singing a thing twice alike, . . .
>
> Foreigners were amazed at this strange mixture of utter indifference and utmost rapture, . . .

Audiences needed not attend regularly, but "the amenities," Worsthorne (1954:12) reasons, "drew them to the theatre almost nightly." Regardless, Raynor (1972:172) argues that regular attendance at the opera, even for other than musical reasons, "eventually trained the audience in discrimination." Worsthorne (1954:12) agrees: ". . . scores were in the end thoroughly well known, the capabilities of individual singers assessed against the highest standards gained by experience, and an informed taste built up, . . ." This, however, is

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not confirmed for later Italian audiences. Francesco Algarotti ([1763] 1968:58-9) and Johann Wilhelm von Archenholtz (1791:95) were very critical of eighteenth-century audiences and presented them as lacking not only in taste in music but in any interest in the same:

> the perpetual chattering of the company, . . . visits being made from one box to another, . . . supping there; and . . . gaming.
>
> The foolish custom to play at cards during the operas, . . . the noise which it causes, and the continual rambling, from one box into another, annihilate frequently the pleasures of the other spectators whilst the best ariettas are sung. It is bon ton among the Italian ladies, to pay no attention to the plays, they leave this to the wives of the tradesmen. Some even affect the greatest insensibility at the most beautiful songs, which are sung by the best singers, . . .

Worsthorne (1954:4) describes the audience as one "more interested in themselves than the stage."

One result of this was that singers had to resort to all kinds of methods --"crowding in all the graces, all the difficulties, and all the musical tricks he is master of" (Algarotti, [1763] 1768:64) in order to hold the audience's attention. Most of these were condemned by the critics: ". . . they over-do, confound, and disfigure every thing . . . putting, as it were, the same mask on different compositions" (Algarotti, [1763] 1768:62). Another consequence was that librettists, composers and singers became less enthusiastic about working for dramatic coherence.

Accusations would continue and reforms would be attempted. Algarotti ([1763] 1768:9) proposed reducing "the musical province into a proper regulation" and making "performers learn a due obedience to discipline and authority," that of the poet. However, the singer with "crowded ornaments, with which unnatural method the rage of novelty labours to embellish [airs]" would outnumber the performer "in whom

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knowledge is united with taste, in whom elegance and nature combine, and whose fancy is subordinate to his judgment" (Algarotti, [1763] 1768:41,63).

Audiences, composers, writers and even other singers would, for some time, endure, to various degrees and with a diversity of complaint, excesses on the parts of famous soloists. These had become a breed of vocalists that reigned supreme over an institution created in such a way as to secure command for its vocal stars.

Opera Singing in the Seventeenth Century

Praetorius outlines the qualifications of good singing according to the new Italian manner:

> The requisites are these: that a singer has first of all a beautiful, charming, tremulous and vibrating voice . . . , and a round neck and throat for ornamentation; secondly, he must be able to hold a long, steady tone without taking many breaths; and thirdly, choose a voice . . . which can hold a full, bright tone without falsetto . . . (Quoted in Stark, 1973:127)

Zacconi describes, further, what was expected of the sophisticated art of the skilled singer at the end of the sixteenth century:

> Music has always been, and still more with every hour is, embellished by the diligence and effort of singers. It is made new, or changed, not by means of figures which are always the same but with graces and accents it is made to seem ever more beautiful. (Quoted in Duey, 1951:43)

We find also, as always, criticisms of the manner in which songs were being sung. This was, in fact, one purpose of Caccini's lengthy introduction to his volume of solo arias, Nuove musiche. While describing the type of vocal usage he advocated, Caccini ([1602] 1950:377) also proscribed the "indifferent and confused use of those excellent graces and ornaments" with which, he felt, singers "maimed and spoiled" his music. And by offering vocal pieces with his own

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passagi, he hoped to counter the luxuriant vocal improvisations of the whims of singers. For example, "[s]uch songs as [his] 'Amarilli mia bella' represent an attempt to concentrate the endeavours of the singers on producing beautiful and expressive vocal tone as opposed to the dazzling flights of vocal agility which had . . . become so fashionable" (Kay, 1963:14).

History's "recurring screeds against vocal ornamentation," Jander (1980:339) feels, tend only to show that ". . . audiences over the centuries have been persistently receptive to the delights of well-performed vocal fioritura." The main thrust of Giulio Silva's (1922) article on bel canto singing is that the term does not refer so much to a manner or method of singing as to the importance of the singing voice in music and to its audiences. In this sense, the bel canto era may be said to have had its beginnings as early as the twelfth century, with the shift in emphasis from words and rhythm to tones and vocal tone quality, to have survived numerous attacks on music's claim to superiority and to have finally established the preeminent importance of the voice in music by the beginning of opera. "The truth would seem to be that the evolution of the human singing voice was completed by the seventeenth century and thereafter it entered upon a period of stability lasting two centuries, during which time it was used and composed for in its fullness, and it is this period which is usually referred to when the golden age of Bel Canto is mentioned" (Kay, 1963:15).

Opera, in its ability to realize "what in poetry must remain suggestive only," proved the "ideal medium for seventeenth-century artistic ideals" (Worsthorne, 1954:17). The demand for opera in Italy

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and elsewhere made it possible for singers and, in few cases, composers to work independently of any official appointment or without the support of a patron. Also, the bel canto operatic scene irrevocably established virtuosity as an officially interpretive and creative art. Pincherle (1963:36-7) defines this aspect of the virtuoso's role:

> . . . art exists only in the act; . . . ; it is this action whose goal is to excite and modify the sensibilities of man. . . . a work of art is in itself only a formula for action. . . . has . . . only a potential existence. . . . The quality of each of these acts, . . . , depends entirely on the person who acts, and who achieves the transmutation of the potential work into the real work.
>
> . . . Thus the virtuoso is the one who, par excellence, gives life and reality to what was only writing, avail to any comer, . . . The virtuoso renders the work incarnate . . . (Paul Valery, 1940, as quoted in Pincherle, 1963:36-7)

Pleasants (1966:24-5) applies it to the opera of the era on which we are focusing our attention:

> Bel canto was, . . . , a performer's art, with the composer serving the singer . . . , and with the singer granted a liberty to depart from the written notes conceivable today only in popular music, or in the art of the older generation of Jewish cantors. In the composition of an opera, and in rehearsal, all was shaped to the singer's art and convenience. In performance he was on his own and, to some extent at least, his own composer. He was expected, even required, to depart from the letter of the score, and he was judged by the imagination, daring and refinement of his invention.

Vocal and Gender Characteristics of Opera Singers

Three varieties of exponents of such singing existed at the turn of the century. In the churches were thoroughly trained male singers -- the best now castrati -- the culmination of an "unbroken line of descent of the art of song" (Henderson, 1921:70) from the earliest church singing schools to the period immediately preceding the birth of Italian opera. In Florence, male singers, tenors especially, had experienced a quick rise to fame under Caccini. Composing what was

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possibly the first "school" of singers, at the Court of the Grand Duke Ferdinand, they sang in many of the early Florentine operas. Zarlino, Burney ([1789] 1957:II:139) points out, had advised composers to make the tenor part proceed regularly, smoothly and beautifully, "as the rest are to be built upon it." By this, Burney ([1789] 1957:II:139) concludes that the cantilena or principal part was not given (as it was later, in his day) to the soprano or highest part and that castrati had not been so common: ". . . the tenor being the kind of voice most easily found, and more generally good than that of any other pitch, was judiciously honoured with the principal melody." Finally, excellent female singers, as we have seen in Chapter IX, were available in many of the courts, as well as in the convents. Adriana Basile (ca.1580-ca.1640), Francesca (1587-1640) and Settimia (1591-ca.1638) Caccini (daughters of Giulio), Caterina Martinelli (ca.1589-1608), Leonora Baroni (1611-1670) and Barbara Strozzi (1619-ca.1665) were, in addition to Vittoria Archilei, ennobled sopranos of the earliest court operas and/or singers of chamber music for female ensembles. By the turn of the century, some women were being educated directly for a career in music, without any "pretense that music had entered simply as part of the education of the aspiring woman courtier" (Newcomb, 1986:101). By 1610, at least, Newcomb (1986:101) finds them to be not only trained purely as musicians but also "considered purely as women musicians" rather than as specialized kinds of courtiers.

> . . . they were vigorously sought after, highly paid, and widely acclaimed for their appearances in chamber music and dramatic productions. Like "the famous Vittoria" [Archilei] . . . they were explicitly entered on court payrolls as musicians rather than given appointments as ladies-in-waiting . . . (Bowers, 1986:122)

However, because the Church forbade the appearance of women on

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the Roman stage,[10] and because female performers in public theaters were generally disapproved of and were prejudicially associated with prostitution and licentiousness (as has been the case since antiquity), the castrato voice was quickly discovered by opera composers. These, Jander (1980:342) states, "made better use of its special qualities than did the composers of the Catholic church music." Duey (1951:49) agrees: "When the opera appeared they were already prepared technically, and this 'Dramma per Musica' was not laggard in realizing that the extraordinary vocal gifts of these 'unnatural' ones were made to order for its essential baroque characteristics."

And so these vocal anomalies stepped out of the churches toward a stage offering greater glory and glamour (and fortune) and where they were "at greater liberty to indulge themselves in what they were most adept at -- virtuosic embellishments and interpolations of highly elaborate cadenzas . . ." (Rushmore, 1971:19). The castrati were "transferred from their choir-stalls to the stage" (Rogers, 1919:414), where they were first assigned the feminine roles but soon took over the heroic male parts as well.

Heriot ([1927] 1975:31) claims that, by the eighteenth century, seventy percent of all male opera singers were castrati. He finds only two tenors -- Raaff and Annibali Pio Fabri -- who achieved comparable degrees of fame. Neglect of natural male voices can be attributed to the lack of agility in their mature voices, a fact that put them at a disadvantage at a time when fantastic bravura passages were not only greatly admired but were indispensable for principal operatic characters. But it was also because many of the emotions or passions were demonstrated better in the higher voice ranges than in the lower:

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". . . all else equal, the higher the voice the greater the excitement" (Henahan, 1985:23). Tenors were not only lower in pitch than women and castrati but were lower than the modern tenor. It is the modern baritone's range that is closer to that of the pre-Romantic, pre-nineteenth century tenor range.

The emotional quality of a melody depended, then, on both the part of the vocal range it used and the activity of the voice in that range:

> For the tranquil soul seeks the middle notes; the querulous, the high; and the lazy and somnolent, the low. Thus, also, the latter will use slow meters; the tranquil, the intermediate; and the excited the rapid. (Galilei, as quoted in Stark, 1973:171)

So, tenors and basses were at a disadvantage in two respects. Or, to put it the opposite way, the combination of height and agility of voice accounted for the superiority of both women and castrati, with the added advantage of superior strength on the part of the latter. Francois Raguenet's comparison of French and Italian opera ([1709] 1968:38) found Italian vocal lovers to have great advantage over the French

> whose hoarse Masculine Voices ill agree with the fine soft things they are to say to their Mistresses. Besides, the Italian Voices being equally strong as they are soft, we hear all they Sing very distinctly, whereas half of it is lost upon our theatre . . .

There seems, also, to have been "a kind of prejudice against the sound of the tenor and bass voices, which were accused of being intolerably rough and coarse; and it is very possible that the training methods then in favour, though so brilliantly successful with sopranos and contraltos, were not so well adapted to the lower registers" (Heriot, [1927] 1975:32). Burney ([1770-1772] 1959:89), in a paragraph

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of praise for a young Brescian castrato, ended with the following terse comment on the other voices that he heard: "There was a young counter-tenor, of whom little is to be said; a tenor, less; and a base that drove me out of the church." Henahan (1985:23) proposes that the highest range natural male voices have always been scarce because they are unnatural, at least when the upper part of the register is overstrained. To this he (1985:23) adds the fact that "[i]n the upper reaches of any voice, consistently asking for one more half-tone can be asking for career trouble." Seventeenth-century tenors came to be relegated to the less important roles of old men (those assigned to basses later on), while basses were often used for special effect, nonhuman parts. In a review of the current Broadway opera-musical Les Miserables, Luc Sante (1987:14) locates the score within the genre of opera, one reason being that "one can determine the relative virtue of any male character by the height of the singer's vocal register."

With men out of the picture and women largely restricted from singing in public, ". . . the opera-supporting public of those faraway days," Rogers (1919:414) concludes, "overlooked [visual] absurdities, and set the seal of its august approval on the musical efforts of the castrati." This challenging voice, determined and destined to steal the praises of the opera public, became the major contendor to women singers, virtually eliminated the early potential of the male tenor and reigned in opera throughout the next century and beyond, forcing women, again, to take a back seat in another musical art form. Testimonies to that effect are many:

> Interest was centered in the vocal display, in the ability of the singer to trill, shake, and to produce exceedingly high and low tones in one and the same voice.

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Wherever the Italian opera went, the castrati went with it. . . .

During the seventeenth, eighteenth, and the first half of the nineteenth centuries, nothing would so fill an opera house as a very high voice. Even in Puritan England, the artificial male soprano held the center of the stage for nearly two centuries. (Bowman, 1951:21-2)

. . . castrati, who had this unusual vocal quality coupled to unparalleled virtuosity, were the first superstars of music. They took Europe by storm. Rich, vain, ungainly, they commanded any opera house in which they appeared. (Schonberg, 1984:25)

. . . Italian singers evolved voices rivalling the violin in agility, the trumpet in sonority and the organ in staying power. These were the castrati . . . who . . . soon came to dominate the theatre. (Orrey, 1972:72)

. . . while the early opera still employed prime donne, the soverign ruler of the operatic stage was now the castrato, deliriously feted by the public. "Evviva il coltello!" (long live the little knife), they shouted, when a seemingly impossible and endless flourish was successfully negotiated by a singer. (Lang, 1941:354)

A sheer phenomenon . . . novelty that never lost its ability to awe -- the castrati simply elbowed everyone else out of the way, with the exception of the most gifted and tenacious sopranos. (Mordden, 1980:26)

. . . They were not only fixtures but the stars of the show. They took the lead male roles, . . . , and strutted through opera history until the late 1700s. (Mordden, 1980:15)

For almost 150 years they were successfully in control. (Habock, 1927:5)

The world triumph of Italian opera during the first half of the eighteenth century was due entirely to the attraction of the Italian voices, especially those of the castrati. (Loewenberg, 1943:x)

. . . they gave to the world a calibre of vocalism such as had never been heard. (Duey, 1951:49)

There were many singers who attained . . . celebrity, and most of them were castrati: there were, too, well-known women singers, but it is doubtful whether any of them could equal the fame of, say, [a famous castrato], whilst normal men's voices were at a discount and reserved for subordinate parts.

. . . Italian opera was, till the late eighteenth century, almost synonymous with the castrati, . . .

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> . . . the castrati were very important figures in opera almost from its inception until 1800 and even a little later and were absolutely pre-eminent during a large part of that time; . . . audiences of succeeding generations have preferred these half-men with voices as high as women's, both to women themselves and to natural men . . . (Heriot, [1927] 1975:13,23)

In its beginnings, the opera and its composers had tried to focus attention on the lyric drama, in which the emotion of the scene was the principal factor. Soon, though, public interest came to be centered on music that exhibited, as well and as frequently as possible, the resources of the human voice -- but, more specifically, the resources of the human voice that counted most at that time, the high-pitched voice. Italian taste had come to prefer ornamentation and extraordinary vocal technique at the expense of dramatic verity and to favor the high-voiced vocalist capable of such feats above all other vocal ranges. And the definition of performance came, more and more, to include responsiveness to audience preferences on the part of the performer:

> Though librettists and composers both helped to launch the "aria" opera, it was two noncreative [this is debatable] groups who were most responsible. These were the public, who loved singing stars best when they were singing full-out; and the singers, who agreed with the public. (Mordden, 1980:25)

Thus, the casts of early operas changed from normal voice distributions to the casting of the male sopranist, if not in most of the parts, than at least in the leading role. Roman and Venetian operas were to make use of castrati to the near total exclusion of women and other male singers. "The percent of castrato parts in individual operas was at its highest . . . frequently all the male characters were assigned to sopranos and contraltos, and female characters were proportionately few -- as they are, generally speaking, in

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Shakespearean drama" (Heriot, [1929] 1975:32). The symmetrical structure of Metastasian interlocking love affairs later required nearly as many females as male characters, but that does not mean that they were sung by actual females. Comic opera would ultimately employ more tenors and basses in an attempt at achieving both more variety and greater realism. But even in Gluck's later attempts at reform, the artificial voice was retained for his leading role of Orpheus. It still dominated Italian opera at the beginning of Mozart's (1756-1791) career,[11] when the solo singer's soverignty was such that Mozart wrote, in 1770, that he had delayed composing arias for the primo uomo in Mitridate Re di Ponto until he had met him "so as to fit the costume to his figure" (Quoted in Robinson, [1966] 1978:148).

This strange casting system led to convoluted situations, peculiar sexual and vocal reversals on the stage that appear to have been quite acceptable to baroque audiences or, as Heriot ([1927] 1975:34,26) observes, were "valued for lending a spice of double-entendre" and for producing more artifice in art.

> In Monteverdi's 'L'Incoronazione di Poppea,' the parts of Nero and Ottone are for soprano, while Ottavia and Poppea were sung by (female) contraltos: thus, the male characters actually sang in a higher voice than the female, though these were played by women. Later, the female contralto seems to have gone very much out of favour, and such women singers as there were with this type of voice almost invariably sang a man's part -- sometimes opposite a castrato in a female part. Even more eccentric, Cavalli's 'Eliogabalo' has the parts of Eliogabalo, Alessandro, and Cesare for sopranos, and Zenia (a woman) for the tenor voice. In Vinci's 'Catone in Utica' at Naples in 1732, the soprano role of Julius Caesar was sung by a woman, . . . (Heriot, [1927] 1975:33)

Cross-dressing and the bisexual nature of some parts, with the chance that male and female singers could "'disguise' themselves in their proper clothes" (Robinson, 1972:193) rendered the real gender of

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performers even less important. One might question whether it was the presence of castrati that influenced trends in this direction, but it must be remembered that transvestite parts were common in non-lyric theater as well. Certainly, though, it made their presence easier to take. So, by the way, did their acting abilities, as is demonstrated in this most extreme example:

> . . . Castrati can act what Part they please, either a Man or a Woman, as the Cast of the Piece requires; for they are so us'd to perform Womens Parts, that no Actress in the World can do it better than they. Their Voice is as soft as a Woman's, . . . ; they are of a larger size than Women, generally speaking, and appear consequently more Majestick: Nay, they usually look handsomer on the Stage, than Women themselves. Ferini, for Example, who perform'd the Part of Sybaris, in the Opera of Themistocles at Rome, in the Year 1685, . . . look'd like a real Queen, or Empress; and probably no Woman in the World ever made a more beautiful Figure than he did in that Habit. (Raguenet, [1707] 1968:46-8)

Women made little advancement in opera. Although the early seventeenth century could still claim many celebrated women singers, few of them made the transition from court opera to public opera because of the loss of prestige, and even respect, that that would have entailed. Although the composer's wife was the Andromeda of the first public opera, Venus was sung by a castrato. Those that took to the stage generally came from backgrounds of lower status and had lesser vocal credentials. At first, they led questionable lives, to say the least:

> . . . there was, for instance, Giulia di Caro at Naples, who spent most of her time in amorous dalliance, or riding about the town in an open carriage, dressed to the nines and surrounded by numerous admirers; . . . She earned the title of 'Madonna del Bordello,' and the love of the Spanish Viceroy; but such an existence can scarcely have been conducive to the practice and study which are essential to a singer. In fact her performance suffered, not only from her innumerable caprices and fits of the sulks, but also from

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> her mode of life; a naturally brilliant singer, whe early lost her voice, . . . (Heriot, [1927] 1975:28-9)

Gabrielli "Cuochetta" and Maddalena Allegranti are two others, who Paul Nettl (1950:156-7) mentions as having been associated with Cassanova. Tosi ([1723] 1926:100) was not flattering in his descriptions of "some applauded female Singer, who had better Luck than Skill, and whose Errors were excused in regard to her Sex." He ([1723] 1926:154) accuses her, "Foolish and Shameful," also of "the Abuse of copying."

Heriot ([1927] 1975:24) attributes the pausity of women opera singers also to the fact that they were essentially singers de camera, with a delicate and intimate style that, though suited to small-scale court theatrical performances, "would have been dissipated in the yawning spaces of the [larger, public] theatre." Della Valle's Discorso della musica . . . (1640) reveals other possible weaknesses of female voices coming from their training having been based in sixteenth-century courtly styles:

> All those [singers of the sixteenth century] had hardly any other technique of singing apart from trills and florid passages and a good voice-production. As to piano and forte, gradual crescendo and graceful diminuendo, expression of feelings, judicious bringing out of the sense of the words, of making the voice sound cheerful or melancholy, tender or courageous, . . . all such things were never so much so talked about in those days. (Quoted in Dent, 1968:784-5)

Also, women still lacked, in comparison, the kind of solid musical training available to men. For centuries, they had been excluded from church, monastery and cathedral schools, where men received their principal music instruction. Only as private, secular instruction supplanted such institutions during the sixteenth century did women begin to be able to compete in the more sophisticated forms of art music. But setbacks reoccurred in the seventeenth century. On

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May 4, 1686 Pope Innocent XI issued an edict declaring that

> . . . music is completely injurious to the modesty that is proper for the [female] sex, . . . no unmarried woman, married woman or widow of any rank, status, condition, even those who for reasons of education or anything else are living in convents or conservatories, under any pretext, even to learn music in order to practice it in those convents, may learn to sing from men, either laymen or clerics or regular clergy, no matter if they are in any way related to them, and to play any sort of musical instrument. (Quoted in Bowers, 1986:140)

Clement XI renewed this ruling in 1703. How effective these decrees might have been is certainly questionable, but the attitudes that prompted them had clearly persisted and must have continued to limit the musical studies of girls and women.

Finally, women singers' lung power could not compare with that of the sustaining power of castrati in their powerful messa di voice, the "placing," or better "sending," of the voice, the art of swelling (in amplitude) and diminishing one's tone (crescendo and diminuendo) on a single note. It was an integral part of Caccini's method and early bel canto technique and "sent" audiences (Bukofzer, 1947:399). Raguenet ([1709] 1968:37-9) compared French women singers with the Italian castrati and concluded:

> No Man or Woman in the World can boast of a Voice like Theirs [the castrati], they are clear, they are moving, and affect the Soul it self. . . .
>
> These Pipes of Their, resemble that of the Nightingale; their long-winded throats draw you in a manner out of your Depth, and make you lose your Breath: They'll execute Passages of I know not how many Bars together, they'll have Eccho's on the same Passages, and Swellings of a prodigious length, . . . , they'll conclude with Cadences of an equal Length, and all this in the same Breath.
>
> . . . Our Upper Parts [in France] are usually Perform'd by Girls, that have neither Lungs nor Wind; whereas the same Parts in Italy are always perform'd by Men, whose firm piercing Voices are to be heard clearly in the largest Theatres whithout losing a Syllable, . . .

Barbara Strozzi (1619-ca.1665), called virtuosissima

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cantatrice, is an example of an early seventeenth-century singer in the tradition of the concerto delle donne. Born in Venice, the illegitimate daughter of Isabella Griega, she was probably the daughter of Giulio Strozzi, a poet and dramatist and prominent cultural figure in Venetian life, who raised her as an adopted daughter. An archetypical case of a woman musician born to an artistic father of some wealth, and with the right contacts, she received music instruction, including composition and counterpoint, from the composer Cavalli and was exposed to Venetian musical and literary society. Such unique opportunities for a woman were similar to those of the earlier Francesca Caccini's background and experiences. Strozzi was first heard by the musical community in the privacy of her father's home. Ultimately, he initiated the Accademia degli Unisoni, a musical subgroup academie of the larger Accademia degli Incognito, where his daughter served as hostess for academic debates and as artist-in-residence. These functions and the love-sonnet style of her work evoked in some observers the traditional association between music-making and sexual license. Her virtue was impuned, for example, in an unnamed satire on the academie. Furthermore, Ellen Rosand (1986:185) has recently amassed evidence that seems to indicate that Barbara Strozzi was the subject of a painting, "Female Musician with Viola da Gamba," in which the young woman was portrayed not only with pensive, melancholic expression but also with "seductive looseness of . . . costume, which so provocatively displays her ample breasts." "The flowers in her hair make explicit reference to her role as courtesan, as Flora meretrice," says Rosand (1986:185), "and her musical attributes confirm this invitation to love."

Whatever her social position, Barbara Strozzi engaged in only

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solo and ensemble chamber music, ornamental and improvised, performing privately with other sopranos. She never appeared in opera, despite Venice's position at the center of that art during her prime and regardless of her close contacts with librettists and impresarios of that art form. Her voice remained small, addressing itself to a more intimate audience, and expressing less the feelings of fictive characters than her own (Rosand, 1978:280). "Despite the fact that those around her were deeply involved in public activity," writes Rosand (1978:280) about Strozzi's life and career, "her sphere seems strangely enclosed, insular and self-contained." At the same time, however, Strozzi did achieve some measure of public stature as a composer, publishing eight volumes of more than 80 vocal works for one, two and three voices, between 1644 and 1664.

Strozzi's desire to pursue a career as a composer (motivated, perhaps to some degree, by the death of Giulio and her financial needs) distinguished her from female counterparts, who were highly skilled and who also composed but who never attempted to publish their works (among them Laura Bovia, Vittoria Archilei, Settimia Caccini, Adriana Basile and her sisters Vittoria and Margherita, and Leonora Baroni). Creating music for performance was, as we have seen, an integral part of the singer's role, generally expected and perhaps taken for granted. But offering such works for publication was still incredibly unusual for a woman. Rosand (1978:256) quotes the prefaces to some of Strozzi's collections to illustrate the self-conscious allusions to her femininity that even she expressed early on:

> I must reverently consecrate this first work, which as a woman I publish all too anxiously, to the Most August Name of Your Highness, so that under an oak of gold it may rest

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> secure against the lightning bolts of slander prepared for it. (Opus 1)
>
> The lowly mine of a woman's poor imagination cannot produce metal to forge those richest golden crowns worthy of august rulers. (Opus 2)
>
> . . . and since feminine weaknesses restrain me no more than any indulgence of my sex impels me, on lightest leaves do I fly, . . . (Opus 5)

Her comments are reminiscent of Madalena Casulana's, some three-quarters of a century earlier: "I know truly, Most Illustrious and Excellent Signora [Isabella de' Medici Orsina, Duchess of Bracciano] that these my first fruits, because of their weakness, cannot produce the effect that I would like . . ." (Quoted in Bowers, 1986:140).

Besides Francesca Caccini, Barbara Strozzi was "the only known woman among the many aria and cantata composers of seventeenth-century Italy" (Rosand, 1978:241,261), her output "comparable to that of the most prolific contributors to secular chamber music of the seicento." And even at that, she was unable to obtain secure patronage.

The survival of a substantial repertory like Strozzi's, and similar to Luzzaschi's collections -- pieces for one soprano followed by works for two and then three female voices, involving difficult ornamentation that was written-in -- points to the continued availability of and demand for female virtuoso ensembles into the middle of the seventeenth century. This is in addition to early seventeenth century operas, that had women's parts written with trained women's voices in mind.

Venetian Conservatories: Training Grounds for Female Musicians?

It need be understood that there were fine music schools for

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girls in Venice, similar to the all-male Neapolitan conservatories discussed in Chapter VIII (see pp.405-6): the Ospidale della Pietà, the Mendicanti, the Incurabile and the Ospidaletto a S. Giovanni e Paolo. These were also originally foundling hospitals

> under the protection of several nobles, citizens, and merchants, who, though the revenue is very great, yet contribute annually to its support. These girls are maintained here till they are married, and all those who have talents for music are taught by the best masters of Italy. (Burney, [1770-1772] 1927:38)

Like their southern counterparts. they had come to teach music to a professional standard in the seventeenth century, reaching the height of their fame in the eighteenth. Having gradually become musically adept, they also came to accept fee-paying boarders, daughters of nobility, who showed disposition for the art. Denis Arnold, in "Orphans and Ladies: The Venetian Conservatories" (1963:36), records a nobleman willing to pay 150 ducats for a girl's board and tuition, which was over a third of the maestro discorso's salary. The Venetian schools, too, acquired musicians of international repute -- Porpora, Domenico Scarlatti, Hasse and Jommelli, among a host of others -- to teach, direct and compose for the girls. Great numbers of singing manuals have been found as part of the Ospidaletto collection. As the Venetian Republic grew poorer, Arnold (1963:32) explains, school resources grew thin, but music came to be additionally valued for its worth as publicity. Burney, on his tour in 1770-1772 (1959:I:124), counted 70 vocal and instrumental musicians at the Pietà but under 40 at each of the other three conservatories.

It was really only the difference in the sexes which set the Neapolitan and Venetian conservatories apart. This was, however, of crucial importance because, while the quality of the training might

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have been comparable, the motivation behind it was not. The boys of Naples were being prepared for a profession as secular or sacred composers and/or performers, whereas these girls were being thus educated "without any view to making music their profession" (Paget, [pseud. Lee], [1887] 1978:99). An exception to this is Burney's ([1770-1772] 1927:115-16) mention of a conservatory at Ludwigsburg "for a hundred girls, who are educated in the same manner, and for the same purposes [emphasis mine] [as the one for boys]," but this was in the province of a court.

The public came to know the girl conservatory students as musicians, who gave performances on Saturday and Sunday evenings and on festival days. Burney, during his tour of Venice, praised all four schools:

> [at the Mendicanti] . . . I saw as well as heard a charming concert performed in all its parts by females. ([1770-1772] 1969:85)
>
> [at the Pieta] . . . the girls played a thousand tricks in singing, particularly in the duets, where there was a trial of skill and of natural powers, as who could go highest, lowest, swell a note the longest, or run divisions with the greatest rapidity. 9[1770-1772] 1959;I:124)
>
> [at the Incurabili] . . . I was so pleased, both with the composition and performance, that in speaking of them I shall find it difficult to avoid hyperboles.
> . . . I know not which astonished the most, the compass of voice, variety of passages, or rapidity of execution; indeed all were such as would have merited and received great applause in the first operas of Europe. ([1770-1772] 1959:I:126-7)
>
> [at the Ospedaletto] The singing which I heard at this hospital tonight would, . . . , receive great applause in the first opera of Europe.

The Mendicanti he ([1770-1772] 1959:I:124) claimed to have been the most celebrated for its voices. The diary of another traveller is in agreement:

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> Too much applause cannot be given to the Marchetti, sho sang the part of Sisera [in the oratorio of Sisera, performed at the Mendicanti in 1780] and seconded the composer's ideas by the most feeling and spirited execution. There are few things I shall regret more on leaving Venice, than this conservatorio. (Beckford, [1787-1788] 1834:143)

When the music excelled, the audiences increased. Travel guide books even recommended that visitors attend performances at specific conservatories. Arnold (1963:38) concludes that they "sought popularity rather than spirituality" in their music -- show pieces in the operatic or theatrical style. "So great was the demand of the general public to listen to the girls," he (1963:41) says, "that both the Pietà and the Mendicanti had to enlarge their chapels."

All the writers on music of the eighteenth century, Paget ([pseud. Lee], [1887] 1978:99-100) tells us, "speak with enthusiasm of the performances of these girls, of their voices, of their excellent performance, choral and instrumental perfection, . . ."

> Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, no particular friend to music, speaks with astonishment of the concerts given in these hospitals, where she says she heard finer voices and better singers than [the two most famous women operatic singers of the eighteenth century] the Faustina and the Cuzzoni, who then surpassed all other singers; . . . de Brosses and Rousseau soon after mention them with equal enthusiasm; Beckford . . . was entranced by what he heard [see above] . . . ; while Goethe, in 1787, seems to have received a grander impression from these girls' performance than from any music he had previously heard; . . .
> (Paget [pseud. Lee], [1887] 1978:100)

Paget ([pseud. Lee], [1887] 1978:100) concludes that the four charity schools of Venice were "one of the musical wonders of the eighteenth century." In fact, by Burney's measurement, they won out over their male competition in the Venetian churches --

> I went to the church of Santa Maria Maggiore . . . and stumbled on music, but such music as I did not think it possible for the people of Italy to bear. . . . , I ran away from this music to the Incurabili, where Buranello's

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> nightingales, the Rota and Pasqua Rossi, poured balm into my wounded ears. ([1770-1772] 1959:I:132)

-- and in the Neapolitan conservatories:

> The whole Conservatorio of the Pieta [in Naples], consisting of a hundred and twenty boys, . . . , attended. . . . but worse singing I never heard before, in Italy; all was unfinished and unscholar-like; . . .
> . . . of the scholars of another Conservatorio, Santa Maria di Loreto . . . a little better than the day before, . . . But to the bad voices, so slovenly, ignorant, and unfinished a manner was added, that the people were sung out of the church as fast as they came in . . . .
> . . . The boys of St. Onofrio, . . . The performance was much the same . . . ([1770-1772] 1959:I:248-50)

The fact is that by the time of Burney's visit, the male seminaries were, as the doctor ([1770-1772] 1959:I:250,259) put it, "low in genius," "at a low ebb, though formerly so fruitful in great men." And as he also condemned what was left in the churches after the best male singers opted for the opera stage instead of the choir stall (see p.411), it is only possible to justify his ([1770-1772] 1959:I:320) preference for women's voices -- "The superior refinement of the Italian music cannot be fairly attributed to the great number of artificial voices with which Italy, to its dishonour, abounds; for vocal music seems at present in its highest state of perfection in the conservatorios of Venice, where only the natural voices of females can be heard" -- within the realm of sacred music.

Girls were not, however, permitted to sing outside the realm of the conservatories. Exceptions were made, though, for performances in private houses, especially those of contributing nobles. Another English writer-traveller, Samuel Sharp, in 1765, related that during concerts the girls were "intercepted from the sight of the audience by a black gauze hung over the rails of the gallery in which they perform: it is transparent enough to show the figures of women, but not in the

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least their features and complexion" (Arnold, 1963:42).

Most girls were dowered and married or entered the convent, with few taking to the stage. Burney ([1770-1772] 1959:I:135,137) names Signoras Zocchio, Guglielmio and Sirmen who, though married, continued to perform concerts. Others remained in the conservatories, with their voices or their instruments, and taught the younger ones. Arnold (1963:42) explains that the terms upon which they accepted their education were that they would remain in the convservatory until their talents induced someone to marry them, which, he maintains, happened rarely, "so that they generally sing until their voices are lost, and their names are forgotten." In this respect, they were virtually nuns. In contradiction, Burney ([1770-1772] 1959:I:138) comments on the "private families into which the girls of the Conservatorios marry." Still others were in demand in the outside world as private music teachers.

Why would a society invest so much in training that would never come to fruition? It was partially because music was still viewed as a cultural accomplishment in a well-rounded education for young women of demeanor. It might also just have happened, for it would have been perfectly natural in a city that had become so totally musical. Burney ([1770-1772] 1927:38) and Raguenet ([1709] 1968:54-5) record instances of love of music among the Venetians and the inhabitants' excellence at it:

> The first music I heard here was in the street, immediately on my arrival, performed by an itinerant band of two fiddlers, a violincello, and a voice, who, though as unnoticed here as a small-coalman or oyster-woman in England, performed so well, that in any other country of Europe they would not only have excited attention, but have acquired applause, which they justly mented . . . but I shall not mention all the performances of this kind which I

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> met with here; as they happened so frequently, the repetition would be tiresome.
> . . . If two of the common people walk together arm in arm, they seem to converse in song; if there is company on the water, in a gondola, it is the same; . . .
>
> Nothing is more common in Italy than Performers, Singers, and Musick. The Singers . . . on the Rialto at Venice, . . . , will often join three or four in a Company, and . . . accompany the Voices so justly, that we seldom meet with much better Musick in our French Consorts.

In addition to the Venetian female conservatories, we must refer again to the continuing function of convents as musical training grounds for women into the early seventeenth century. Cook and LaMay (1984:38) cite two Roman composers, Paolo Quagliati (ca.1555-1628) and Pietro Sabbatini (ca.1600-1657), as having dedicated collections to the nuns of S. Maria Maggiore. Della Valle wrote that those sisters were the marvel of Rome, but mentioned, in addition, the convents of S. Lucia in Selice, S. Silvestro, Monte Magnanapoli and S. Chiara as sponsors of female virtuosos who for years had "stupified the world" from within the environs of Rome (Quoted in Cook and LaMay, 1984:38). The Romana surname of several virtuose -- Vittoria Archilei and Caterina Martinelli, for example -- Cook and LaMay (1984:150) claim indicates the special facilities within the vicinity of Rome for training professional female performers.

Numerous collections of sacred music were published for only one, two or three sopranos, implying that nuns sang in ensembles "which functioned as part of, but also apart from regular church life [the daily offices, that is]" (Cook and LaMay, 1984:43). Anna Maria Cesi is cited as a nun renowned for her voice. The facts of her young age when she entered the convent, her parents ability to provide her with a generous dowry and her ultimate marriage suggest to Cook and LaMay

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(1984:42) "that she was sent [to Santa Lucia in Selice] precisely to study music, and not necessarily to become a nun."

Convents in Milan, Rome, Venice, Bologna and Lucca were widely known for the excellence of their music, with Milan and Rome vying for the lead. Parallel to the above accolades for Roman convent singers were those extolling Milanese nun vocalists:

> In the 1660s the convent of Santa Margarita . . . attracted attention through the singing and playing of Maria Cattarina Calegari, who, according to Donato Calvi, rendered "all tongues tired in celebrating her outstanding qualities, acclaimed as a heavenly singer, a composer of angelic harmonies, and in organ playing a divine Euterpe."
>
> . . . in 1670 Filippo Picinelli wrote that "the nuns of Santa Radegonda . . . are endowed with such rare exquisiteness in the realm of music, that they have been recognized as the first singers in Italy." Just a little later Carlo Torri stated that its "veiled singers" were so excellent that "even Rome, . . . , must surrender the honor to these Lombardic Pierides." (Bowers, 1986:127)

Nuns also accounted for a large portion of the growing number of women composers during the seventeenth century. Bowers (1986:118-19) cites, chronologically, Caterina Assandra of Pavia, Claudia Sessa of Milan, Sulpitia Cesis of Modena, Lucretia Orsina Vizana of Bologna, Claudia Rusca of Milan, Chiara Margarita Cozzolani of Milan, Maria Cattarina Calegari of Milan, Maria Xaveria Peruchona of Galliate, Rosa Giacinta Badalla of Milan, Bianca Maria Meda of Pavia, and Isabella Leonarda of Novara.

This was all despite the fact that obstacles had always interfered with, and continued to impede, women's opportunities at music-making (both composition and performance) within the sacred sphere. Besides the limited amount of time most nuns had available for musical pursuits, a series of rules and ordinances, aimed specifically at controlling musical activities within convents, were implemented by

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the Council of Trent and enforced by successive popes and other church officials. These sought, especially, strict enclosure for nuns, with all the repercussions for artistic communication that cutoffs from outside contacts would mean. They also restricted the performance of music within nunneries to all different degrees, including removing it altogether.

Singing-Actresses Preparing the Way for the Professional Woman Musician

Women were still becoming expert in music by traversing traditional paths -- private instruction as part of general educations for a future as court lady or cloistered training in all-female convents and conservatories. Such subjects, however, tended to restrict themselves to private, courtly and academic performing. At the same time, examples appear of women consciously preparing themselves for careers as singers, specifically as professional singers, who would ultimately bring their talents before a wider, more public audience.

Besides the woman courtier who sang, the somewhat more liberated woman singer of the Venetian intellectual salons, the singing nun, the conservatory music student and, of course, the artistic courtesan, there was a new fair-sexed vocal figure that, Newcomb (1986:102) maintains, became prominent in late sixteenth-century Italy. This was the professional actress of the commedia dell'arte, the existence of whom was mentioned in Chapter VIII (see p.394), who began to play the feminine theatrical parts previously assigned to men. She helped provide a role model for professional women musicians and eased their entrance into the public theater by promoting an attitude more receptive of female stage vocalists. Beginning in the 1550s, Newcomb

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(1986:102) explains, "the roster of actresses in Italy contains figures of great fame and, at least in some cases, great prestige." This evolution is demonstrated in a comparison of two well-known examples:

> . . . Vicenza [Armani, reported in performances of the 1560s] spoke Latin at age fifteen, and "by herself wrote madrigals, set them to music, and sang them; she was a most graceful player of various instruments, a worthy sculptress in wax, fluent and profound in conversation, and a very fine actress." Here again were the characteristics of the sixteenth-century donna di palazzo, with one important difference: she was not a courtier, she was an actress. The fame of the lady was considerable, as was the passion she aroused; the prestige of her social position is a little less clear. With Signora Armani we may be closer to the world of the courtesan than to the respectable world of Laura Peverara.
>
> This is not so in the case of Isabella Andreini, who seems to have been the most famous woman of the Italian stage from her debut in the late 1570s until her death in 1604. Though she came of humble origins, she rose to see the king of France as godfather to one of her children. The list of her admirers and patrons is impressive . . . She was, most exceptionally, welcomed into the masculine world of the prestigious academies, not only as a visitor, but as a member . . . As an actress she played the prima donna . . . , another emulation of Castiglione's donna . . . She seems to have been so in real life as well, with impressive abilities as a poet, a fine singing voice, and a "soavissimo tocco nella musica" (a very gentle touch at the instrument). Beyond this she had an unblemished reputation as a "donna di salda virtu" (a woman of solid virtue). Yet she was a woman pursuing a professional career onstage, before a paying audience, and independent of any single court or protector. (Newcomb, 1986:102-3)

Andreini was, however, married to the director of a famous company of actors. Although such a connection might no longer have been necessary in order for a woman to establish herself in the theater, a husband in one's field, for an actress or singer, could serve several purposes -- companion, protector, sponsor. But any husband might now function to legitimate the moral integrity of a woman performer. Lack of a mate, however, made it hard to clarify one's moral integrity. A contemporary of Andreini, Vittoria Piisimi, unattached, directed

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several companies of actors over a twenty-year period. Of her Newcomb (1986:103) asks, "Because she was unmarried . . . , was she considered no better than a courtesan . . . applauded, but not included in polite society?"

Whatever the social acceptance of these professional women of the stage, Newcomb's (1986:103) point remains: ". . . the rise of famous, important, and much praised actresses in the commedia dell'arte of the 1560s and 1570s taught the aristocratic world to see women before it as professional performers and to think of and admire women as performers, even as singers."

Male/Female Ascendancy in Opera

Despite all the barriers to women's singing on the public opera stage, even in the dominions of Rome where women were banned from the stage altogether, some women other than the Giulia de Caro, Gabrielli "Cuochetta" or Maddalena Allegranti kind apparently did appear. Some "pretend[ed] to be castrati pretending to be women" (Heriot, [1927] 1975:27). According to Habock (1927:257), this was tried by a number of women desirous of theatrical careers. Duey (1951:54) recounts the case of a female soprano named Theresa, who, according to the memoirs of Casanova, masqueraded as the young castrato Bellino, who had died suddenly. There were also the limited number of cases of composers' wives enacting their husbands' musical characterizations. Whether it was their close association, his direction and/or protection over her or the notion of her helping out his career, this specific marital connection seems to have made it "safer" for her to perform. She was not alone on the stage but somehow appeared through him, her composer-husband, and this seems to have exempted her from the usual

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accusations being hurled against her contemporaries.

The position of female singers in this new art would improve somewhat during the eighteenth century. Faustina Bordoni (1700-1783) and Francesca Cuzzoni (ca.1700-1770) were admired opera singers who achieved great international reputations and who "h[e]ld their own with the greatest castrati" (Pleasants, 1966:97). Yet, while the high-born Faustina Bordoni, who had married the well-known composer Johann Adolph Hasse, "led an existence of complete respectability, had a model family life, [and] was accepted and esteemed in the highest circles," Francesca Cuzzoni, of humble origins, "caused scandal after scandal, became involved in wild adventures, and . . . was actually thrust into a debtors' prison" (Pahlen, [1971] 1974:11). An anonymous English poem (ca.1722-1728) found in the Manuscript Library of the British Museum (Stowe 971, f.3) illustrates her mixed status:

"Lines on Francesca Cuzzoni"

Little Syren of the Stage
Charmer of an Idle Age
Empty Warbler, breathing lyre
Wanton gale, of fond desire
Bane of every Manly Art
Sweet Enfleebler of the Heart
O! too pleasing in thy Strain,
Hence! to Southern Climes again
Tuneful Mischief, Vocal Spell
To this Island bid farewell
Leave us, as we ought to be,
Leave the Britons rough, and free.

The castrati, nevertheless, continued to maintain their hold over opera and, generally, to surpass their female counterparts if not in ability than in celebrity. What was the basis of their superiority? Besides their physical advantages in holding up and projecting their voices with greater strength and stamina, their training, on the whole,

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was "much more rigorous and sound" and they possessed, according to Heriot ([1927] 1975:30), "more application and more perseverance."

As the male castrato singer was both more respectable and, as a group, more thoroughly artistic, it was he that came to have the musical and social advantages in the art:

> He was received with open arms in every house; all his impertinence and caprice were tolerated; when he sang people remained silent and breathless, and occasionally fainted and went into hysterics [Cf. Beckford, (1787-1788) 1834:96]; when he ceased the applause was perfectly frantic; everyone possessed his printed portrait . . . ; the ladies wore miniatures of him, . . . ; all the wits of coffee-houses and lecture-rooms wrote sonnets in his honour; . . . (Paget [pseud. Lee], [1887] 1978:119)

Such responses from "his public" are taken as reasons for some of the defects in his personality:

> . . . a mere lad at the commencement of his career, of the lowest extraction, . . . was placed in the most trying situation, and if the sudden change from the rusty cassock, the scanty food, and abundant blows of the conservatorio, to fine clothes, lacqueys, fashionable dinner-tables, and great ladies' flatteries, did turn his head and make him an intolerable, capricious, swaggering coxcomb, . . . (Paget [pseud. Lee], [1887] 1978:119)

It is in the institution of the opera that the occupational role of the singing star crystallized and became truly professionalized. The castrati would be the predominant occupants of this role for some time. It would be through them, and a few women, that the evolution of the role of the professional singer would occur.

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Notes to Section 4

[1]Since the hero represented the nobility, often the monarch, a tragic ending would not have been appropriate.

[2]This represents the chronological period of music from about 1580 or 1600 to 1750 which, though long associated with the grotesque and corrupt in musical taste, is more closely connected with music's power, even its obligation, to evoke the passions or affections in its listeners.

[3]". . . musical performance . . . became an expression of language and rhythm in the first place, and of vocal beauty in the second place," clashing with the preceding era in which these were reversed (Dorian, 1942:43).

[4]Pirrotta (1954:189) finds the even stronger judgment of these men as "cerebral manipulators of esthetic formulas that they were unable to translate into artistic terms" as unjust:

> ". . . the practical attempts of certain men, each following the dictates of his own temperament and sensibility, to realize their own ideals [brought about opera]: Caccini that of noble, refined singing, Cavalieri that of elegant and pleasing music appropriate to the stage, Peri and Rinuccini that of dramatic expression."

Certainly their different emphases and affinities anticipated opera's central dichotomy.

[5]The da capo aria consists of two sections, the first of which is repeated after the second, thus producing the form ABA:

> "Only simple extraneous ornaments are to be added in the first part; some more artful graces may be introduced in the second; while in the third part -- the repeat of the first -- considerable variation of the vocal line . . . is required . . . The part of the aria that constituted the point of climax was clearly the third, since this was where the singer's creative skill was most actively engaged. From the audience's point of view the simple first part was necessary so that the variants in the third could be properly appreciated. The embellishments were the real raison d'être of the whole piece." (Robinson, [1966] 1978:67).

[6]Cf. Stark (1973:279) for descriptions of voices of the early baroque period that denote this quality of beautiful tone.

[7]All of Monteverdi's operas between Orfeo and his two surviving Venetian works have been lost.

[8]Grout ([1947] 1960:96) concedes that the poor quality of the

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librettos was in some measure responsible for such actions.

[9]Opera in France developed separately and maintained its own individuality. English attempts at opera, however, did not last long, and the early German mode was absorbed into the Italian.

[10]This meant most of the States of the Church, which extended far beyond the geographical city of Rome. Successive popes vacillated on this issue, some half-heartedly allowing women on the stage and others reimposing the ban, which continued in force until 1798.

[11]The castrati system disappeared because of many factors, some of which were: renewed attacks on castration operations; the influence of French style through Napoleon's invasions, the rise of middle-class musical tastes, opera seria's rival in the comic opera buffa, a desire for realism, the decline of improvisation and increased emphasis and respect for composition as a separate art.

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CONCLUSION

The history of singing is a history of stress -- of competing musical preferences and philosophical orientations, of competing organizations and institutions, of competing social categories of singers and voice types. We have followed the fluctuating ascendancy of words over music and music over the text to the victory of music, and with it its singers, in the opera. We have traced the rivalry between the sacred and secular forms to the triumph of temporal singing, with female as well as male singers. We have examined the variety of manners of song represented in the major institutional settings for artistic singing -- "for the Theatre, the Stile was lively and various; for the Chamber, delicate and finish'd; and for the Church, moving and grave" (Tosi, [1723] 1926:92). Most of all, we have been concerned always with the gender of singers and their respective voice types, as well as with other social variables in the backgrounds of vocalists. In addition, of course, we have tried to demonstrate where and how these three themes have intersected and the consequences of the history of vocal musical style and vocal musical institutions for determining the role of the singer. It becomes apparent, however, that singers and their manners of performance-practice, which they adapt to the tastes of their audiences, influence, in turn, styles of music.

The development of the singer's role involves all kinds of continuing social stress: solo versus group performance, simplicity versus complexity or virtuosity, high versus low status, the higher

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versus the low voice and the female's versus that of the male, the vocal performer versus the composer, discipline versus freedom, even muscular tensions in the throat. We have taken into account these antagonisms, apparent polarities or oppositions, through which the role of the singer emerged and in which he/she operated. These were resolved, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, in directions favoring solo virtuoso singers. Just as song developed out of opposition and stress, so did the role of the singer.

Role Emergence: The Origin and Development of Singing as an Occupation

The role of singer encompasses the general social meaning of the ability to enact the skill of singing as well as the sociological definition of the occupation of singer, both of which have varied historically. The first focuses on several issues -- the innate talent of individuals capable of performing that particular skill; the requisite technical training necessary in order to successfully perform it in the desired and expected way at any particular period of time and in any particular style of music, whatever their natural abilities; and the social function of singing in any society.

Singing as an occupation takes on additional connotations. The function of song need be significant enough that singing comes to be economically supported. Individual singers, as a result, can become specialists. Consequently, the occupation comes to "constitute a major focus in the life" of the person (Hall, [1969] 1975:6). As this avocation was transformed into a vocation, it was usually fixed within supportive institutions whose primary or secondary goals denoted, or at least required, the performance of music. The Catholic Church, wealthy

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and powerful individuals, even cities, served as patrons.

Singing as work, I believe, must be looked at at several levels of specificity. First, there was, as we have just mentioned, its existence as an occupation. More specifically, though it was an artistic occupation. Creative, artistic occupations have been less carefully studied by sociologists than other types of work roles.

Up until now, we have used the term professional in the most general way, to indicate advances over amateur status. A central interest of occupational sociologists has been that of tackling the definition of a "profession." That has frequently meant attempting to identify unique attributes of the professions, which have set them apart from other occupations (Cf. Carr-Saunders, [1928] 1966:4-6; Greenwood, [1957] 1966:10-18; Barber, [1963] 1965:18; Hughes, [1963] 1965:1-3; Wilensky, 1964:137-41; Goode, 1969:276-80; Turner and Hodge, 1970:24-5; Freidson, [1971] 1973:19-27; Larson, 1977:x-xviii). How does singing fit into this schema?

The necessity of a long and strenuous training period for artistic (now termed "classical," as opposed to "popular") singers, in which a knowledge base in music and in the use of the voice had to be acquired, creates the appearance of a profession. This is because professionalization is predicated on the "authority of expertise" (Freidson, [1971] 1973:25) in a body of "esoteric knowledge systematically formulated" (Hughes, [1963] 1965:1). This requires, of course, specialized training to achieve.

There was the requisite service to a collectivity, which Hughes ([1963] 1965:1), Wilensky (1964:137) and Larson (1977:x) say the traditional model of professionalism emphasizes. However, service to a

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broad public acting as spectators is a different relationship from service to individual clients, in addition to the fact that clients of professionals are described as vulnerable and as needing help (Wilensky, 1964:140). A clientele that is in need of a professional because of ignorance on their part of a large body of technical knowledge is almost the reverse of a "cultured" audience seeking aural satisfaction, generally because of musical knowledge on their part. It is true, though, that one might consider them being "elevated" by exposure to occupations attempting to "augment life" (Spencer, 1896, as quoted in Freidson, 1986:5), occupations which are culturally important to audiences of cultivated tastes.

The institutionalized nature of professional norms, codes of ethics and setting of standards contrasts with the more "open and chance-controlled quality" (Krause, 1971:261) of artistic occupations. Neither have artists, generally, formed associations. Professional cohesiveness contrasts with vocal competition between individuals. In fact, singers were frequently measured against eachother. In fields where there are audiences or publics, distinctions are made among the various luminaries in those fields. On the other hand, singing shares with the professions both intense commitments and strong identifications with their callings.

A profession, Goode (1960:903) explains,

> is more likely to be a terminal occupation. Members do not care to leave it, and a higher proportion assert that if they had it to do over again, they would again choose that type of work.

This applies to singing, but continuing at it for a lifetime was virtually impossible. The voice is the vocalist's instrument. Wear and tear on it curtails its life and that of the singer's primary

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occupation. Related activities, such as teaching and voice coaching, become alternatives later in life.

Criticism has been made against the accumulation of traits in order to see how occupations measure up against these ideal-type constructions (Cf. Roth, 1974:6-23) in that they "do not tell us what a profession is, but only what it pretends to be" (Larson, 1977:xii). The one overwhelming characteristic accepted today as denoting a profession is its power, as measured by its ability to have control over its work: "The strongest professions have thus far managed to preserve much of the right to be the arbiters of their own work performance, justified by the claim that they are the only ones who know enough to be able to evaluate it properly, and that they are also actively committed to ensuring that performance lives up to basic standards" (Freidson, [1971] 1973:33).

It is in this way that artistic occupations seem most remote from the professions. Singers have always been subject to various external groups that exerted control over their discipline and the performance of the same -- the audience, certainly, whether that was sacred or secular patrons or a broader aristocratic or middle class public; agents or impresarios, as Krause (1971:269) refers to middlemen who have represented artists in their pursuits of work; and the critics, a specific class of public whose function it has been to "acclaim, assess, and/or reject performers and their presentations" (Kamerman and Martorella, 1983:196). The latter has consisted of external, non-colleague knowledgeables about a field. Therefore, neither they nor the audiences have been fellow professionals keeping check on eachother's work, but a class of individuals on the other side

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of the artist-audience (singer-hearer) relationship, who have represented, nevertheless, standards for the field.

Kamerman (1979:227) sums up the difference between professional and artistic occupations in his study of the career of the conductor: a "knowledge-based profession" versus a "craft-like non profession." The respectable position of the crafts within the occupational structure can be attributed largely to its possession of scarce skills. Like the professions, it has considerable control over recruitment into the occupation, can boast a strong sense of occupational identification and long-term involvement on the part of its members and, most important, has control over evaluation of merit and performance. But it differs from the professions in the type of expertese stressed -- manual dexterity as opposed to mental prowess and training in techniques without a body of theoretical knowledge (Hall, [1969] 1975:188-9,193,196).

Craft-like is a critical distinction that Kamerman makes, as singing, among other artistic occupations, does not fit the artisan model as just described either. Also, artists and their works have been associated with "high civilization," expressing "human experience in some way by some complex skills worthy of . . . admiration and attention" (Freidson, 1986:6). Whereas craftsmen have been considered "the elite of blue-collar workers" (Hall, [1969] 1975:187), singers attained a prestige ranking more similar to that of the professions. In fact, Larson (1977:xvi) views professions not only as occupational categories but as positions within the overall class structure: "Whatever else they are, professions are situated in the middle and upper-middle levels of the stratification system . . . outside and

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above the working class, as occupations and as social strata."

We are, of course, limiting ourselves to the tradition of artistic singing that has been traced in this work. And even at that, prestige and rewards were a long time in coming. One theme that we have found to have run through the history of the development of this role is the ambiguous status -- high and low at first -- that singers dealt with well into the Renaissance and the still ambiguous role -- amateur or professional, musician courtier or courtier musician -- that encompassed them until the institution of the opera was to provide a more concrete position for vocalists. But even then the role would prove equivocal for women, who would not be allowed full access to theater life without sacrificing a degree of personal prestige. For castrati, a similar situation existed. Praised for their vocal abilities, they were despised for the deformity that had made those abilities possible. Nevertheless, secular positions in courts and in the opera brought both income increases and vocal and social prestige to singing.

Goode (1960:903) posits that because of income, power and prestige gains, the professions could demand high caliber students. On this subject we will make our final comparison. There have been career opportunities in various professions for those with more than a modicum of mental ability. And for those with the necessary capacity (and financial ability), it has been generally possible to set one's mind to become a lawyer, a doctor, a college professor. "There are few career opportunities in the arts for any but the most talented" (Krause, 1971:261). Furthermore, one could not decide, because one was bright and willing to pursue a tough training schedule, that one would become

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a chamber, concert or opera singer without a particular innate talent that is a rare gift. "High enough above average" has worked in the professions but has been rather risky in the arts, where it simply has not been high enough. In our survey of singers we found, for example, that the Church seemed willing to accept castrato singers who proved unsuccessful in the public vocal musical arena, and that Venetian conservatory women who did not win a marriage by virtue of their voice (or anything else) might stay and teach in the conservatory schools.

Because of the inborn "gift" nature of artistic abilities, there has existed a much smaller pool of possible role encumbents. Because of the requirement of this uncommon faculty for admission into the occupational category, one might expect that singers would issue, of necessity, from a variety of backgrounds. This was so for folk, popular and amateur vocal music. For higher-ranked artistic singers, however, access to requisite musical educations was possible only to upper class groups (and frequently only the males of this category) and those middle-class individuals from families with professional ties to singing. These factors contributed to the sparsity of such singers in the history of this artistic, occupational role.

Regardless of the lack of fit into certain categories considered essential for the label of professional status, artistic singing (and high level careers in the visual arts and letters) seem in some indefinite way to be kinds of professions. (Today, the U.S. Census classifies artists as professional-technical workers.) Goode (1960:903) has suggested thinking of occupations as falling somewhere along a continuum of professionalism rather than having to satisfy all elements that compose the ideal-type of profession that has been drawn from the

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practices and ideologies of the established ones of medicine, the law and academic professorship.

Artistic occupations are said to have "not engaged in professionalization to the same degree" (Freidson, 1986:4). This Freidson (1986:5) bases on the fact that training has invoked "little theory and abstraction" and has been done in studio schools rather than universities. Neither generalization, however, has held for singing. Music is perhaps unique in the arts when it comes to the first point. And, except for private instruction, music has existed as part of a general education course of study.

This whole likening of singing to the professions is in itself troublesome. Not only are artistic vocations ambiguous, with "special anomalous characteristics that challenge conventional conceptions of vocation and labor" (Freidson, 1986:3), but literature on the professions is difficult to apply to such an early representation of laboring in the arts because it developed in reaction to the professionalization of certain vocations over the past hundred years only. Such a contrast is, therefore, somewhat presumptuous. Until the last decades of the sixteenth century, there was always a scarcity of trained singers. And until the institution of the opera, specialists functioned as quasi-professionals, if that, in extremely private settings.

George Ritzer ([1971] 1973:60) recommends that instead of distinguishing between professional and nonprofessional occupations, that we try to differentiate professional individuals from nonprofessional individuals. Individual professionalism seems a more appropriate model to analyze what are, in actuality, independent,

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"free-lance" occupations. This approach also puts the question of autonomy, the pitfall to professionalism for artistic occupations, in a different light. For example, because managers, conductors, etc. and audiences are dependent upon highly skilled performers, autonomy has been granted the role of singer, in addition to the charasmatic authority that many individual singers have wielded. It was considered legitimate and rational because of the sound knowledge base and commitment to vocal musical standards that were the foundation of the role: "In general we may say that the longer and more rigorous the period of initiation into an occupation, the more culture and technique are associated with it, the more deeply impressed are its attitudes upon the person" (Hughes, 1958:36). Kimball ([1963] 1965:258) makes clear that it is possible for a professional ethic to take form "without formal machinery or an elaborate code . . . a feeling that comes over a person when he behaves in concert with his own conscience." Furthermore, individual singer's living up to professional ideals could always be kept in check by negative reactions in the marketplace -- from discriminating audiences and judicious critics.

This brings us to the next, more specific category into which singers fall -- they are performers. Even less sociological work has been done on the generic character of these arts. "The central defining characteristic of the performing arts," states Bensman (1983:5), "is, of course, live performance before an audience," which has implications for all the performing arts taken as a whole. It has an immediate and final quality -- "The final product is revealed only in the act of execution and within the very duration of execution" -- which "embodies the directness of communication that is the unique ideal and goal of

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the performing arts" (Bensman, 1983:5,7). The act of performing is a social one. Therefore, emphasis is put on the personal quality of performers: ". . . their sense of dramatic presence, stage presence, star quality, or 'charisma,' may transcend training, technique, rehearsal, and direction" (Bensman, 1983:7). Individual virtuosity becomes foremost in importance.

Professionalism in the performing arts, though requiring the acquisition of high levels of training, expertise, practice and commitment, is based, even more so, on talent. And because of what we have already said about the rarity of such talent, occupational commitment tends to be extremely intense. The occupation often becomes more than a major focus in one's life. Rather, it pervades the singer's life and becomes a way of life. It has been likened to "a calling."

In relation to the issue of occupational power, it is important to say a word about sponsorship of singing as a performing artistic occupation. The Catholic Church, as we have seen, was not only a major source of employment for singers but, at times, the sole means of acquiring training in vocalism, though it was very restrictive in who it trained and how. Conditions of employment were "subject to the arbitrary personal demands of clerical and lay officials over repertoire, rank and privilege, pay, patronage, and the amount of outside performance [one] could do," but these were not much different under the secular patronage of princes, aristocrats, kings and patricians: "While the range of performance and composition was extended under courtly, secular patronage, the composer-performer was still subject to the arbitrary tastes and whims of his patron" (Bensman, 1983:21). The academies were somewhat free of these

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limitations but provided, for the most part, no means of gaining an income. Independent entrepreneurship of the opera and the sale of tickets or subscriptions to public operatic performances took patronage out of the hands of individuals and put it under the control of a broader public, a collective and more anonymous patron.

"In the midst of . . . shifting pattern[s] of support and control," Bensman (1983:25) says, "the arts have attempted to assert their own autonomy, their own technical, aesthetic and cultural standards as well as the standards they have internalized or been forced to accept from the outside society." By virtue of supply and demand and the scarcity of vocal talent, singers were able to do this, to some degree, all along. Because of these shifting patterns of support and control -- from dependence on employers or patrons to dependence upon larger, more distant audiences -- vocalists gained the kind of vast and disparate client base that those in the professions would enjoy. Their position on a stage in front of a paying audience would create their most autonomous situation yet, as we have begun to discuss. The magical and powerful character of vocalizing is another reason for the freedom singers have sometimes achieved. The awe in which vocalists have often been held granted them certain kinds of independence and rewards, even when their overall status was low.

The most specific plane on which to look at the role of singing involves the nature of the musical instrument -- the voice. It is a combination of bodily parts -- the mouth, vocal chords, chest and diaphragm. The production apparatus and the "product" of the singer -- his or her vocal equipment and the utterances it emits -- cannot be examined apart from the position of singer. The product cannot be

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separated so easily from its means of production. Like the professional athelete, for example, whose body "is" the athelete, the voice "is" the singer. The novel, from the point of view of the audience, can be separated, to a large degree, from the novelist, the building the architect, even the hearing of a piano piece from the pianist, but the voice and its vocalizations bring the singer with it. They are at one with the singer.

Being internal to the person, the voice is not only inseparable from them, but it is delicate and subject to damage through abuse. Vocalists must devote time to mastering control over their vocal equipment and developing healthy physical regimens as well as avoiding harm done by misuse and overuse. Because of the precariousness of this instrument, as opposed to external ones that can be replaced, and because of its ultimate deterioration with age, special care of the voice is critical to a career in singing. This has been suggested as one reason for eccentricities in habits and behaviors of singers and for the temperamental personalities many have exhibited. The latter is also thought a consequence of the tension produced by constant performance before "live" audiences and constant evaluations made by those hearers -- comparisons to previous performances and to the performances of others. The essence of applause also plays a part here.

The most parallel artistic occupation that might be considered on this point, and in general, is the role of the dancer. But outside the arts lies another sphere of occupational activity that appears to be similar in its enactment to that of singing -- sports. All require long, arduous practice and early occupational commitment that makes that possible. They involve duty to and evaluation by an audience in

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performances in which ". . . instantaneous exercise of highly developed skills is tested in a series or crucial chain of spontaneous actions and responses under the pressure of compressed time" (Bensman, 1983:6). All are prestigious, though those in the arts occur within the realm of higher culture, whereas atheletes gain in popular standing, and the technical training of athletes, like craftsmen, is manual rather than intellectual. Finally, each one faces an early end because of their dependence on bodily instruments.

Sex, Power and Singing

Gender has been a major focus for analysis within the dynamics of the emergence of the aesthetic role of singing. The history of singing and the history of the status of women as singers have been considered in relation to one another. We have attempted to connect the specific stories of women throughout the history of vocal music with the cultural ideologies surrounding the position and role of women and the social structures that encouraged or inhibited them, both of which have influenced women's vocal practice in music over time.

Throughout our survey we find that the prestige accorded the artistic, occupational status of singing was ofttimes denied women because of their ascribed status. Women sang in the home, in the houses of worship and in the community, but when the role of singing began to gain in prestige and in rewards and became specialized, professionalized and institutionalized, men moved in and women were kept out. This is in contradiction to the fact that women possessed the most universally valued characteristic associated with the enjoyment of singing -- the pleasing and exciting quality of a high voice. ". . . there is an undeniable gut response to high notes" (Scovell, 1986:50).

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Early in Western history, the Catholic Church excluded women, because of the sensuous tone of their voices, from vocal participation in the service. The attitude was inherited partially from ancient Jewish beliefs. This kept women out of church choirs, which had begun to appear and would become, for men, an important entrance into the world of trained, artistic singing. It also removed women from the only sources of musical schooling -- the Church's monopoly over vocal, technical instruction. Later, musical academies and even the universities would do the same. This structural impediment would haunt her in her attempts at attaining occupational status as a singer.

Because of discrimination against women's obtaining training in and experience at singing, those who persisted in their desire to sing faced three options. They could continue to vocalize, as amateurs, in private, for their own gratification. They could stray outside the normative expectations for women and sing in public, with the result of sacrificing their reputations. Or, they could take an alternative route to a vocal vocation, but one that would separate them not only from the rest of the vocal world but from the rest of the world -- the all-female, musical institutions of the convents. All three means were tried by individuals, but women, as a group, made little progress in singing.

Men enjoyed advantages and opportunities to succeed as singers, but they still lacked the most important trait -- a high voice. Despite women's possession of this innate asset, structural barriers prevented their use of it. Again, it was not the music of women, their style or particular sound that was devalued (though the earthy quality of it was forbidden by religious powers), but rather <u>their</u> singing that music

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with their vocal equipment. The answer to this predicament came with men's increasingly serious attempts to encroach on the female vocal range by manipulating their own voices through the substitution of boys, the use of the falsetto and, later, the more drastic introduction of castration. Praise was heaped on the delights of the high voice. The ultimate insult came when disapprovals of performances were couched in derogatory terms revolving around the femininenes of the singers' voices.

Renaissance philosophy, Renaissance courts, Renaissance education and the Renaissance class structure changed things somewhat for women. At the same time, polyphony had brought the high voice to a new pinnacle. If women had talent and were of an upper social strata, they were able to obtain some musical instruction and could be musically active within a limited social circle under the protection of a prince and his court. ". . . women musicians . . . existed in a shadowry half-world; theirs was a profession that hesitated to declare itself clearly" (Newcomb, 1986:109). With increased demand for women as secular singers, at a time when the Italian style of solo song -- "women's" style -- received increasing attention, a few opportunities for more professional female singers, in a few special courts, finally happened. This was neither planned nor intended. Newcomb (1986:101) speaks of the "subtle forces of chance and custom." Because of custom, women were musically prepared to move into these roles, relying on their traditional training as Italian court ladies. It was by chance that a musical style, in which they had the talent and training to excel, became popular. Also, both the famous commedia dell'arte actresses and the liberated women of the musical salons of Venice and

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elsewhere had eased the way, to some degree, for women singers to become accepted as professional performers.

The transition from women courtiers who happened to sing to women singers who were turned into courtiers in order for them to sing was a major breakthrough for women. ". . . she gradually shaded over from an expression of the generalized ideal of the woman courtier . . . to the more specialized role of the woman musician within the confines of the inner court, a woman who was hired to realize with particular excellence only one part of the generalized ideal of the woman courtier" (Newcomb, 1986:94). This added an authentic choice of singing as an occupation to the unacceptable alternatives listed above. In addition, some of the female ensembles that came about at that time were incredibly influential over the development of song style. "A situation in which women were an obscure and unrecognized part of the profession became one in which they were at its apex" (Newcomb, 1986:93).

Even at that, however, women faced more obstacles than their male counterparts. For example, family class background was a more important consideration in their attaining access to musical education than for men; and moral impropriety was more devastating to their careers than to those of men. The opening of public opera would bring renewed forbidding of performances by females on public stages. And women were still excluded from singing in the churches.

Even when successful as singers, women were not free from their ascribed traits. Their performances were frequently judged by their physical, as well as their vocal, attributes. Descriptions of Ferrarese and Mantuan singers emphasized their physical beauty and the "beauty"

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of their songs. This glamorization of female vocal stars is evident in a very recent magazine advertisement for record albums by the Australian soprano Kiri Te Kanawa. Accompanying a photo of the diva in a pale, off-the-shoulder dress is copy that begins with a quote from a Chicago Tribune review: "Ravishing vocal beauty . . . Kiri Te Kanawa. It's hard not to be seduced by the creamy opulence of her sound" (Opera News, 1986:51:19).

Finally, testimonies by women singers and other female musicians, and sometimes their occupational choices as well, demonstrate their internalization of the cultural ideologies that defined them as wives and mothers foremost, as court ladies who were accomplished musicians, as sources of inspiration and as patronesses, but as marginal to the creative occupational world. Even those women who succeeded atypically in careers in music -- performers or composers, for example -- were hesitant to see themselves as professional artists because of their exposure to the culturally-determined expectations for the role of women.

Vocal musical history is a history of the continual and increasing emphasis on the high virtuosic solo voice as the medium of vocal beauty and technical display.

> Throughout the slow advance toward the Italian opera we can without difficulty trace a steady movement toward the elevation of a single-voiced melody to the throne of vocal art and the crowning of the high voice as the royalty of singing. (Henderson, 1921:78)

Although such female voices had excelled in the secular vocal music of the latter sixteenth century, they were scant competition for the masses of castrated male singers, whose thorough vocal training in the churches and whose unnaturally produced high tones equipped them also

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for the role of the star soprano in opera that might otherwise have rested only with the "rightful" occupants of such roles -- women.

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