

ANIMATING PERFORMANCE: TRACING VENICE'S RESONANT DIVA
ATTRAVERSO IL PALCO E LA SOGLIA

CLAUDIA RENE WIER

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ABSTRACT

Seventeenth-century Venetian operatic divas pioneered a new social identity for women both onstage, as virtuosic opera singers, and as independent professionals in Venice. They accomplished this partly in prototypical commercial opera houses. From such spaces, the sounds of their voices and the memory of their performances in cross-dressed, madwomen, and warrior woman roles spilled out on the cutting edge of performance to spread the novel form across Europe. Their performance transgressed normative gender codes and is one way early modern divas overcame misogynist perceptions. They exceeded and reworked accepted norms performatively while modelling independent agency to pioneer a new profession for women. In this project, I trace the reception of the early modern diva's sonic transmissions and her transition across the stage, out the door of the theatre's sounding architectural space, and into the city. I apply the analytic lens of performativity as employed in gender and performance studies scholarship to analyze the social impact of the early operatic diva's performance of self. This interdisciplinary approach knits together material historical data, formal text, and music readings, with performance theory. In this, I examine the music and texts of five performance scores to understand how composer Francesco Cavalli (1602-1676) and his librettist collaborators tailored iconic warrior woman roles to fit the voices of lead women singers. To comprehend the reception of the diva, I examine the career of Anna Renzi (c.1620-c.1661) and her riveting performances in *La finta pazza* (1641) and *La Deidamia* (1645) contextualized in Venetian cultural history and the performance events in *Teatro Novissimo*. I place Renzi's work into a performance genealogy from commedia dell'Arte to the *dramma per musica*. Finally, I theorize how Renzi's sonic emissions and vibrant performances resonated socially as an energetic electric force transgressing the librettist's texts and the composer's musical composition to effect society and the status of women in it. With theoretical approaches centred on embodiment, gender, reception, celebrity status, and sound, I work to discover remnant traces of ephemeral presence.

DEDICATION

To my true loves E.J. Westlake and Alvernon Travis Ross with deep gratitude for your constant love, encouragement, and help. I am forever in your debt.

In memory of my mother the left-hander, teacher, musician, scholar. You taught me to sing, to think critically, to honour my intuition, and to revere deep, honest feeling.

Effie Josephine Conway-Wier (1928-2016)

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INTRODUCTION

Seventeenth-century Venetian opera divas pioneered a new social identity for women both onstage, as virtuosic opera singers, and as independent professionals in the cityscape. They accomplished this partly in prototypical commercial opera houses. From such spaces, the sound of their voices, and the memory of their performances as madwomen, and in cross-dressed and warrior woman roles spilled out, like water through Venetian canals, on the cutting edge of performance to spread the novel form across Europe. Because the performance of these role types transgressed normative gender codes, it exemplifies the ways early modern divas overcame misogynist perceptions as they forged a new profession.

In this document, I focus on the forceful resonance of the diva's sounding body mined from the historical record to elucidate her onstage performance of gender linked with her off-stage performance as a socially-independent, professional woman. This approach enables me to investigate the interplay of ideologically-infused assumptions about women and the singers' performances onstage and off. By theorizing the area of gender fluidity at the confluence of the diva's performance in cross-dressed roles and everyday life, I work to recuperate their exemplary presence in early modern Venice's "musico-cultural" cityscape (Dell'Antonio 23). In this, I question what happened to the operatic composers' transcription of sound intended to fit some invisible and preconceived metaphor of Womanhood with the visible traces of the pen-on-paper once the real live diva embodied and sounded it differently? Indeed, I contend, with musico-memetic effort, and by performing anomalous social codes, the diva's powerfully resonating presence operated antithetically to normative formulations about women.

In this project of recuperation, I trace the reception of the early modern diva's "sonic performances of gender" (Dell'Antonio 25) and the movement of her "sounding body" from opera stage to city-street (Taylor, "Exploring the Grain" 289). To do this, I apply the analytic lens of performativity as employed by Judith Butler and performance scholars to analyze the performance of gender, elusive ephemerality, and the social impact of her performance. Like the hybrid operatic form, my multi-pronged, transdisciplinary methodology interlaces historical data with performance theory. To derive a clear

understanding of the historical moment in which these women operated, I provide contextual historical information on Venetian society and theatrical activity in Venice.

Aided by performance studies theoretical approaches centring on gender, reception, and celebrity status, my analysis works to wrest out remnant traces of ephemeral “presence and its reception through embodied understanding” of performance embedded in scores, letters, and performance accounts (Taylor, *The Archive* 292). I theorize on the social effect and impact that her “sounding body” made on the Venetian social sphere and beyond as she activated new perceptions about, and material possibilities for women at the inception of the modern era.

My work builds on recent scholarship on seventeenth-century Italian opera or women in early modern music. This scholarship concentrates on scores, libretti, productions, and details of composers, librettists, and singers’ lives derived from archival evidence. Such volumes include Ellen Rosand’s anthology *Readying Cavalli’s Operas for the Stage* (2013) and an anthology by Tomasin LaMay, *Musical Voices of Early Modern Women* (2005). In her forward to *Readying Cavalli’s Operas for the Stage*, series editor Roberta Montemorra Marvin asserts that the field of opera studies has moved beyond the “traditional musicological approaches” of historicism and formalism to incorporate the use of literature and theatre studies, gender studies, philology, psychoanalysis, philosophy, and political science (*Readying* xxiv). This list reflects exciting and important innovations in musicology. It lacks, however, a specific lens focused on performers’ bodies and the reception of their physical sound and presence in live performance. To this purpose, I use performance studies lenses that, as Diana Taylor emphasizes, help us to go beyond the bare facts to find out what they allow us “to do” with them (*The Archive* 16). For as Richard Schechner posits, performance studies, “arises from the premise that everything and anything can be studied ‘as’ performance” (“Can We Be” 48). With these imperatives in mind I use performance studies lenses in order to understand the social significance of the historical diva’s performance.

To analyze the ephemeral sound and presence of the historic diva onstage and in everyday life, I draw on methodologies like those of Joseph Roach, Diana Taylor, and Rebecca Schneider who examine what has been considered ephemeral in historical performance. For, as Schneider and Taylor confirm,

ephemeral remains, like sound, voice, and presence are here whether “live” performance has disappeared or not (Schneider, *Performing* 106). And, as Schneider insists, archival documents are just such remains with archives as “*theatres* for repertoires of preservation, leaning toward and into a promise of the coming ‘liveness’ of encounter” (109). Archival records can be viewed as part of a “performance genealogy” (Roach) whereby energetic force, like the phenomenon of the diva’s body in performance, remains as “structures of feeling” (Raymond Williams) that can be traced as “residue” (José Muñoz) residing in, and moving through, the archival repertoire (96). With such theoretical frameworks, I trace out ephemeral structures of feeling as residual remains of the diva’s affective performance and its reception derived from archival documents.

In chapter 1, I provide the social/historical demographic background of early modern Venice spanning approximately 1600 to 1640 leading to the rise of the commercial opera theatre. I then set out the historical framework of the rise of European cities and the spread of literacy centring on Venice as a cosmopolitan metropolis. Next, I look to Venice’s economic and ethnic demographics to understand phenomena about Venetian audiences, the operatic artists, and cultural influences reflected in the new musical form like Middle Eastern culture in the warrior queen operas and the political setting in which the operas were written and performed.

Subsequently, I describe the governmental body of the *Consiglio dei Dieci* (The Council of Ten) and their control over entertainments in the city and the surveillance of social behaviours. A description of how commercial theatres came to be in Venice with the *commedia dell’arte* follows along with the introduction of the first opera theatre *Teatro Novissimo*. Then I explain the Venetian opera industry including information on the length of operatic runs and the percentage and demographics of the population in attendance. I describe audience demographics in the context of Roach’s “behavioral vortex” by presenting how carnival tourists and differently classed and gendered townspeople mingled with visiting foreign diplomats and how their placement in the theatre space and social status was stratified. This chapter sets Venice into its European socio-political and economic context describing Venice’s polyvalent cultural matrix and how the new Venetian commercial opera was received by foreign tourists

and diplomats. I then describe aspects of the intellectual group instrumental in funding and promoting the operatic form as the *Accademia degli Incogniti*, their philosophical underpinnings, and their subversive libertine influence on Venetian opera.

Placing the women singers in their early modern social context, I examine some of the occupations Venetian women held to make a living. This is done with an eye to revealing how social attitudes affected Venetian women and the limitations within which they conducted their lives. I hypothesize how the virtuosic singers' everyday personas and presence in the city would have been received by the other occupants as different and how their autonomous activities contrasted those of most other women in the city. To understand these social dynamics, I talk about women working in convents and as lace makers, prostitutes, painters, musicians, and as performers in commedia dell'arte troupes. Finally, I discuss how the commedia dell'arte divas became commodities of the stage to earn celebrity status that was subsequently assumed and expanded by the operatic divas. I talk about laws and social customs based on gender and gender politics.

To understand the development and the trajectory of how the warrior woman and Amazon tropes were composed to music and developed by Francesco Cavalli (1602-1676) for divas to perform in chapter 2, I conduct a musical and dramatic examination of five Cavalli warrior woman operas. They include *La Doriclea* (1645), *Veremonda* (1652), *L'Erismena* (1655), *L'Artemisia* (1657), and *L'Elena* (1659). I also discuss Claudio Monteverdi's (1567-1643) Clorinda from *Il Combattimento di Tancredi* (1624) and the similarities and differences with Cavalli's *Doriclea*. In my analyses, I examine how Cavalli construed his musical settings of the librettists' dramatic renderings for their warrior queens voiced by five unknown singers and his adaptations of the role type over the five operas. For each role, I examine how Cavalli applied and developed Monteverdi's musical concept of the *stile concitato* form to musically describe dramatic moments in the military call-to-war. I cover how Cavalli and the librettists often "softened" the effect of a woman singing in that style by having her sing a lament. At the end of the chapter I compare and contrast the five roles and how they served to reiterate socially normative gender prescriptions.

In chapter 3, to provide the socio-material context outside of score and text, I examine the career of Anna Renzi and her performances in *La finta pazza* (1641) as feigning madness and *La Deidamia* (1645) performing cross-dressed with a view to understanding the performative aspects of Renzi's work as the first unanimously acclaimed operatic diva. I theorized how her performance of cross-dressed operatic roles was received along with her celebrity status in everyday life. I describe how Renzi took part in the performance genealogy of cross-dressed performance by embodying a new hybrid genre mixing elements of the commedia dell'arte stage traditions while establishing the new operatic one. My dramatic and musical summation follows Renzi's performances on stage with Giacomo Torelli's newly conceived scene staging equipment, designs, and costumes. I theorize how celebrity status, the powerful allure of her performances, and smart business negotiations helped her to overcome and effectively neutralize patriarchal strictures on movement and personal independence to which most women were subject. This work is substantiated with accounts recorded in letters and published documents to learn the reception of the divas' stage performances and perceptions of them in their everyday lives.

While Beth Glixon has published abundant materials on several seventeenth-century Italian women singers, she insists still that while production in the burgeoning operatic genre required the influx of multiple performers in theatres across the Italian peninsula and Europe, "the biographies of nearly all the singers who performed in Venice, the center of opera during the middle of the century, and in other cities of Italy remain unwritten and, in most cases, unwritable ..." ("Scenes from" 97). The haphazard nature of the archival records on these women causes such un-writability, resulting in an incomplete body of published research on the singers and their lives.

While I originally hoped to analyze the career of at least one early modern diva who specialized in warrior woman roles, I soon discovered there is scant information on the women active during the first years of Venetian commercial opera. However, as Renzi was the first acclaimed operatic diva, she performed cross-dressed twice that we know of, and because there is a great deal of documentation on her, it allows me to theorize on the social impact and surplus social meanings of her performances onstage

and in everyday life. To do this, I analyze two roles of the same name, Deidamia, that she performed in *La finta pazza* and *La Deidamia* along with a contract and other documents on her professional activity.

The migration and performance genealogy of the warrior woman figure as an icon and archetype in Western culture is something I explore in this dissertation. The warrior woman was a popular trope and an admired, but feared, emblem of exemplarity for women. Both admiration and fear were expressed in encomiastic poems about the great operatic diva Anna Renzi. The *querrelle de femme* was also an ongoing polemical topic generating intense debate and publication. Misogynistic fear is a through line linking the dramatic roles of warrior woman, madwoman, and cross-dressed woman as it related to the European-wide obsession with the social status of women and their nature. I examine and analyze these three role types in detail here. The bodies of the professional woman singers who played such roles on public stages also binds the role types together and constitutes a major focus. The obsessive fascination over the dramatic female roles – and with the women who performed them – played out on and in the body of the performing diva for public consumption by a newly conceived general – and paying – public at large. Her performance became a way to work through and make meaning of the conflicting signs that her body and voice presented in the different role types. She momentarily demonstrated – or held out the possibility for – women’s sovereignty over their own bodies and movements in the public realm. Within this constellation, I propose that a cumulative effect of social change took place in the space of early modern Venice in which the divas participated.

In my final chapter, I set the diva Anna Renzi into virtual motion enveloped by the Deluzian *sentendum* – as what is powerfully felt and perceived by the senses – in the inter-relational flow of energetic intensity and affectual sensation at work in the performance venue of *Teatro Novissimo*. On this, I employ Bourdieu’s concept of *habitus* as Butler and others who follow his line of thinking have in its application to the performance of gender. I think of the performance space in Spinozan terms as a “plane of immanence” in its ontology as a sonorous environment or sensorium.

I conduct a granular analysis of resonance as a sonic physical element of Renzi’s sounding body in performance and its social effect on the body politic of Venice. Here, I demonstrate how the diva’s

liminal status – as an unconventional woman singing in the liminal space of the theatre during the liminal time of Venetian carnival – worked productively to generate social change for women in an incrementally accumulative way. By re-enlivening Renzi’s performances in *La finta pazza* and *Deidamia*, I apply the theory of Pearson and Shanks on the social archeology of sound to the sounding space of *Novissimo*. This work involves the compilation of archival information and the evocation of my imaginative and intuitive faculties to simulate a multifaceted, experiential assemblage surrounding the echoing social atmosphere of the performance space. I reconstruct a frame within frameworks of Renzi’s resonant performance as layered social architecture performing surplus social meanings. This work entails reanimating the outwardly radiating energetic force of the diva’s skillful vocal vibrations and somatic presence on stage and in the urban space and the complex social meanings it performed. I suggest that her performance was a socially inflected performative, following Butler, that impressed audiences’ attitudes about women in the ongoing struggle for liberation from oppression.

In all, my study performs a methodological excavation of past performance to re-enliven or reanimate, as a multidimensional entity, Renzi’s performance of gender. J.L. Austin defined the performative utterance, in contrast to the descriptive or constative utterance, as one that performs or enacts a promise. As performative speech acts are spoken through the body, Judith Butler then formulates gender as a culturally constructed and socially enforced “corporeal stylization” that is performative and neither essentially inborn nor constative (*Gender Trouble* 135). In this way, the body operates as what Elin Diamond terms “a corporeal text” (“The Shudder” 158). I heed Butler’s call to “articulate the convergence of multiple sexual discourses at the site of ‘identity’” centring on the politics of gender identity in the lives and work of the first operatic divas (163). So, for example, I examine how the diva’s biological gender inter-acted performatively with the historic warrior woman character in its social citation of past gender behaviours and its seventeenth-century iteration. My interpretation follows Derrida’s “logic that ties repetition to alterity” (*Limited Inc.* 7). Following this logic, the librettist’s written interpretation of an historical text is performed, and altered, by the diva’s sounding body as extra, live, and embodied “citational graft” (12). This deconstructive analysis dis-locates meaning from the

formal, linguistic law-of-the-written to that of corporally voiced where “mimesis,” as Schneider insists, is “always in a tangled ... relationship to the performative” (*Performing* 99). As for the musical notation, early operatic performance manuscripts, in any case, were never complete “works” but more sketches from which singers and accompanists musically improvised and embellished.

Altogether, the repertoire of the archive paired with musical notation, letters, and auditor accounts helps me to imaginatively experience the early modern singer’s movements and sound. My holistic approach follows Tobias Janz’s contention that to detect performativity in music, one must contextualize what is performed like an opera, and I add the performer to this, within the field of the history of performing and listening (“Performativity” 13). For, as Schechner insists, an event or action “‘is’ performance” when it is accepted and called performance “according to the conventions, common usages and/or traditions of a specific culture or social unit at a given historical time” (“Can We Be” 48). In these ways both Schechner and Janz situate performance squarely in its socio-cultural context, as do I.

Otherwise, as Shoshana Felman maintains, that rather than belonging to the category of the constative, doing research is more of a performance than a statement and so belongs to the category of the performative (*The Scandal* 43). Thus, if doing research is a performative action, then the research already completed on the early divas not only constructs history but is pliable. Therefore, my research on the performative aspects of the diva’s life and work adds to the great work already accomplished on Venetian opera and its performers. Such work furthermore facilitates my focus on just how the diva’s expert singing and acting abilities, along with her public sphere business acumen in negotiating contracts, gaining patronage, and securing everyday living and travel accommodations demonstrated exceptional capability that could have affected perceptions about Venetian women on a broader social scale. Clearly, by occupying “the norm in myriad ways,” early modern divas exceeded and reworked accepted norms performatively as transformational “mode[s] of becoming” allowing them to pioneer a new international profession for women (Butler, *Undoing* 217).

I aim to reveal new territories in historical research by attending to the areas of performativity of the voice as a complex affective social force. By augmenting a story already told, my study seeks to re-

store an understudied, multidimensional social epistemology to it. My explication of early modern Venice as vibrant social space stirs up a fluid dynamism of energetic forces contained in the resonant somatic ontology of the exceptional diva.

In sum, Schechner calls performance a “personal, social, and world-making force” (“Can We Be” 51). Accordingly, the diva’s sonic/corporeal work as virtuosic singer performing in warrior woman or cross-dressed roles transformed the early modern theatre world while her everyday life as a professional businesswoman affected the everyday world. In my work here on the operatic roles, cultural circumstances, and the celebrity status surrounding the lives and work of divas who performed the roles, I theorize the significance of singers, my primary example being Anna Renzi, who performed as agents of change in introducing a new dramatic genre. The comprehensive, transdisciplinary methodology employed here is meant to excavate the electric multiplicity of the diva’s sounding body – both onstage and in Venetian society – from the historic record and thereby restore an important dimension to her story. This approach differs greatly from other studies on the early modern diva.

CHAPTER I: EARLY MODERN VENICE AS “BEHAVIORAL VORTEX”

The place of Venice, between squares and canals, between land and sea, creates a paradigmatic case for the combination of comic, tragic and pastoral, to the fusion of poetry, music, art and stage actor. The sea ... surrounds and penetrates everything, ... but it is also the music that was supposed to flow together with incessant speech, gestures, images, different languages and voices.

- Silvia Carandini, author's translation



*Fig. 1. Detail of Embarkation of the Doge in the Riva degli Schiavoni (c. 1595) Leandro Bassano.
<https://www.museodelprado.es/en/the-collection/art-work/embarkation-of-the-doge-of-venice/>*

Michel de Certeau argues that one can “invoke” the “many different spirits hidden” [like those of the divas] in the “ideologized city” (*The Practice* 108). For Mike Pearson and Michael Shanks, the city is a multi-temporal space of accumulated history where the past surrounds us and remains. This is because fragments of old buildings are integrated into other buildings as they are restored and preserved (*Theatre/Archaeology* 151) Similarly, with the rise of early modern commercial theatres, old renovated buildings built first to accommodate commedia dell’arte performances later housed opera productions. Such historical accumulation produced “environments of memory” replaced “by places of memory” as Roach contends (*Cities of the Dead* 26).

I think of such architectural and environmental places like Venice and *Novissimo* as spaces containing and facilitating a genealogy of performance practice from commedia dell'arte to opera as it was recycled and transformed in performance from one genre to the next. In this way, Venetian opera arose within what Roach terms a “behavioral vortex of the cityscape,” where, “the urban confluence of pathways, borders, nodes, and landmarks favors the theatrical and the performative” (28). Roach further explains that the vortex is “a kind of spatially induced carnival” where culture is invented and reinvented in restored behaviours (28). Within Venice’s behavioural vortex, professional women singers embodied “difference and identity” to fashion a new social identity (4). The diva’s performance of gender as a professional woman in ordinary city life likewise evokes Erving Goffman’s work on how humans perform our social roles in everyday life (*The Presentation* 72). On its everyday aspect, I argue, following Schneider, that the betweenness the women entertainers performed generated not only theatre but thought in its alterity from normative ideas about women (124).

Altogether, the early modern city can be read as a social text and I am interested in the social regulation of the diva’s movement within its matrix and how she both embodied and altered such regulation. Either onstage or in “everyday” life, for Derek McCormack, “bodies and spaces ... co-produce one another through practices, gestures, movements, and events” (*Experience and Experiment* 2). Furthermore, as de Certeau argues, power structures as “ruling order[s] ... support ... innumerable productive activities, while at the same time blinding its proprietors to this creativity...” as “a body of constraint stimulating new discoveries” and setting up “rules with which improvisation plays” (*The Practice* xxii). In this way, early modern divas improvised, played, and subverted gender norms both in the theatrical realm and on the city streets. For, as Butler argues, “Insofar as regulations operate by way of norms ... they become key moments in which the ideality of the norm is reconstituted” as, I argue, is the case with the regulation of the behaviour of women in early modern Venice (55).

Furthermore, the “polysemic aspects” of the diva’s presence and voice operated as ephemeral, and desirable, commodities (Derrida, *Limited Inc.* 1). But, importantly, while early modern performance in commercial houses rendered their sounding bodies as sexualized objects for purchase, mercantilism

also afforded the first prima donnas the opportunity to pursue careers and thereby normalize their professional status. For me, the aspirational drive of the sought-after diva's movement and sound across the stage and into the everyday social sphere meant that her resonant performance of gender infiltrated Venice's intersubjective social fabric.

In her dissertation, Amy Brosius contends that despite having adopted interdisciplinarity into the field of musicology the "*virtuose*, along with the social and cultural contexts in which they performed" have not been systematically or comprehensively investigated (2). In this section, I first present the macroeconomic and broad European political context with the migration of people and information across the continent, as it pertains to Venetian society. Then, I look at Venice's microsociology and how particular political and academic bodies interrelated with the theatre system to influence the women singers' social standing and the circumstances of their theatrical performance. My ultimate goal is to reveal how the social-political milieu, along with economic factors and the theatrical organization, presented the professional singers with both hindrances and opportunities in the period from 1640 to 1660.

At this juncture it is important to distance twenty-first-century concepts like "community," "state," or "individual" from seventeenth-century conceptions of personal identity. For, as Zannini maintains, it was neither individual characteristics nor lifestyle that determined a person's social identity but rather the communities and institutions with which they were associated that distinguished them (13). Such groups included "the family, kinship, parish, village communities in the country" and "the corporation or professional body in the city" (13). Therefore, newly forming professional opera practitioners were also marked out as a new and distinct theatrical class in the community. Otherwise, concepts like individual rights or fulfilling personal destiny were not considered worthy pursuits – especially not, as Zannini asserts, for women. This is because Venice's social hierarchy was founded on "natural" differences such that each individual was treated "according to his station" and gender (14). As well, membership in an ethnic community was seen as an overriding and intrinsic signifier of personal identity.

Rapid European population growth caused cities to grow and urbanize, resulting in a “commercial revolution” (Burke 245). Early modern Venice emerged as part of a European-wide rise of the city, as it became a major cosmopolitan trading and diplomatic centre. In the seismic shifts from medieval feudalism and mercantilism to modern capitalism, R. Burr Litchfield characterizes the Italian-speaking states as “the most urbanized region of early modern Europe,” where “a society of orders” was “transforming ... into a society of classes” and that Venice had “a vibrant urban culture” with the merchant class at its centre (87).

Inter-continental commerce invigorated small-scale regional handicraft industries that provided goods to the cities; other dynamic transformations of the period included mass road improvements, canal digging, shipbuilding, the establishment of intercultural postal routes, and the creation of urban printing presses that broadened and solidified communication networks. Foreign travel and trade increased while literacy rose (Burke 245). By 1650, the basic literacy rate in Venice had increased 98 percent (255). Along with increased literacy, the period saw a boom in readily accessible chapbooks, pamphlets, broadsides, and the first weekly Italian *avvisi* (reports) and *gazette* containing military, royal, market, and entertainment news of the world (255). For, as Infelisi posits, the *gazette* was the perfect way to present news of the political happenings in the new “urban environments” and attract readers interested in them (17). For the new opera industry, academic publications, journals, newspapers, and *avvisi* proved indispensable: as they created an aura of extraordinariness surrounding the new genre to entice urban audiences (Thorburn 195).

Unlike the rest of Europe, the Venetian noble class consisted of wealthy merchant families and *nobili* from ancient families. The patrician oligarchy was comprised of about ten families with firm control over state power. For, as Beth and Johnathan Glixon explain, the original patrician class included only those families whose ancestors sat on the 1297 “Great Council (Maggior consiglio)” and whose names were registered in the “Golden Book” (Glixon and Glixon 338). Venetian society was divided into three classes: *nobili*, *cittadini*, or citizens (including civil servants like secretaries, lawyers, and notaries), and the remainder known as *popolani* (338). According to Thorburn, the *nobili* made up four percent of

the Venetian population, while the Glaxons put it at ten percent. After the great plague of 1629-30, (when the theatres were closed) their numbers dwindled from less than 2,000 to 1,666 (180). During this period in Venice, wealthy merchant families could purchase “noble” class status for the first time and thus vie with the titled princes of feudal courts (Litchfield 90-1).

The mass of *popolani* included guild members, wealthy merchants, labourers, government workers, fishermen and “the destitute” (Glaxon and Glaxon 339). Thomas Walker and Lorenzo Bianconi offer a more focused breakdown from the year 1655, where “out of a total population of 158,722, there were in Venice 3844 adult nobles (1844 males), 5450 adult citizens (the term “cittadino” in this case implies the bourgeois, or property-owning stratum; 2620 males), 70860 adult artisans and shopkeepers (34640 males), 4643 clergy, 4870 Jews” (Bianconi and Walker 227). Members from all classes could be found participating in some capacity at the opera theatre; I will return to this subject shortly.

Meanwhile, in terms of ethnic demographics, Venice’s broad polyvalent ethnic and cultural blend paralleled those of other European urban centres; thus, the ethnic dances in Venetian opera were most likely informed by firsthand experience (Fulchignoni and Crowley 40). For “the dialogue between East and West,” according to Fulchignoni and Crowley, was continuous (40). A four-hundred-year cultural exchange involving the Balkans, Venice, and Byzantium (later the Ottoman Empire) left its impression on European and Venetian theatre practices (39). The rupture caused by the fall of Constantinople in 1453 provided impetus to this cultural phenomenon, causing refugees including soldiers, clergy, craftspeople and also actors, mimes and jugglers to run to the Adriatic area (39). Fulchignoni and Crowley attribute the appearance of improvisational performance in Italy by the mid-fifteenth century to the migration of displaced populations who transported new “cultural property” to the lagoon (40). The cultural infusion was enriched by an explosion of gazette reports containing regular news from Greece, Turkey, the Balkans and Persia, the Venetian domains, and news about the Venetian-Ottoman conflicts (Infelise 112). Upon their arrival at the port of Venice, roving Venetian merchants introduced letters from all over the Mediterranean basin (112). These cultural exchanges and journalistic reports provided Venetian librettists a plethora of material from which to draw. In the following, John Evelyn (1620-1706) details the vibrant

array of ethnic cultures clustered in the city: “seen every day in the streets and piazzas; Jews, Turks, Armenians, Persians, Moors, Greeks, Sclavonians, some with their targets and bucklers, and all in their native fashions, negotiating in their famous Emporium, which is always crowded with strangers” (211). Evelyn’s contemporaneous description confirms the rich ethnic mosaic of Venice’s “cultural metropolis” (McNeill 155).

Although there doesn’t seem to have been a significant Persian community in seventeenth-century Venice, there was a considerable diplomatic and trade partnership with the Persian Safavid Dynasty (1501-1722) (Carboni, Kennedy, and Marwell). The relationship with Persia provided a strategic economic and political buffer to Venice’s ongoing conflicts with the Ottoman Empire. From the thirteenth to the fourteenth centuries Venetian/Ottoman tensions incited several wars. In general, according to William McNeill, the Venetian government allowed diverse foreigners into the city regardless of their religious affiliations (174). And, while Catholic, Protestant, and Muslim puritanism flourished in other parts of East and West, Venice’s permissive attitudes on sensual enjoyment attracted upper class visitors from all over Europe (176). At the university of Padua, for instance, as long as practitioners did not proselytize, students from diverse religious backgrounds were welcomed. This made the university a study destination for Orthodox Greek and Jewish students. Awareness of Venice’s pluralistic society ultimately radiated out to inspire resistance against doctrinaire orthodoxies (182).

As a centre of trade and a cultural hub, the Venetian festival celebrations during the Carnival season became legendary. In addition to reading about other cultures in weekly newsletters, Venetians came increasingly into contact with foreign merchants, diplomats, and tourists who joined in the local festival culture. Thousands of wealthy tourists from across Europe flocked to experience the novel theatrical form, subsequently introducing it to their own regions (Thorburn 179). By 1687, for instance, an estimated 30,000 visitors arrived in the city for carnival (Burke 249).

All of these factors – literacy, publishing, cultural, diversity, increased trade – influenced the development of Venetian opera. In the sixteenth century, gentlemen’s clubs presented amateur *commedia erudite* in princely courts and palaces, private houses, academic halls, and in rooms refurbished to

accommodate them for select audiences separated by gender throughout the peninsula (Andrews 33). Similar arrangements held for early amateur court operas. In seventeenth-century Venice, however, the advent of commercial theatres transformed such arrangements. The first commercial performances in Venice took place as early as 1517, when tickets were sold for performances in private houses. By the 1580s, public theatres were housed in renovated buildings, in order to accommodate the opera audience, drawn from the yearly Carnival crowd (36). Important to the development of Venetian theatre were the *commedia dell'arte* acting troupes and the itinerant opera companies of the 1630s. To begin with, in 1565, the “world’s first commercial theatre” was opened by authority of the Doge in Venice to produce spoken dramas for the public (175). In 1581, the *Gelosie* and *Confidenti* *commedia dell'arte* troupes inaugurated the first commercial Venetian theatres with spoken and musical performances at the theatres *Tron* and *Michel*. The Council of Ten designated these two theatres as “permanent, indoor stages to professional comedians” (McNeil, *Music and Women* 9-10). The buildings where *commedia dell'arte* and opera troupes performed were modified in accordance with changing cultural preferences and tastes.

In 1637, an itinerant musical collective led by Benedetto Ferrari and Francesco Manelli brought professional operatic performance to *Teatro San Cassiano* (formerly the *Teatro Tron*, which had burnt down). There were several groups that played an important role in funding and promoting opera in Venice: one was the *Incogniti*, a salon run by young men from the patrician class, other groups included the *scuole grande* confraternities run by *cittadini* and working-class men committed to reinforcing Venice’s glorious reputation (Glixon and Glixon 320). The early public theatres also accommodated spectators of various classes. By the 1640s the obligation to obtain a licence was extended to commercial opera theatres.

The noble Grimani family was inexhaustible in promoting and finding spaces for opera production. In this, Giovanni Grimani (dates unknown) was particularly adept at finding and procuring spaces to house the new form. In 1639, Grimani had the *San Giovanni e Paolo* theatre transferred from its original wooden structure to his own property. The great engineering innovator, architect, and scene designer Giacomo Torelli (1608-78) created spectacular scenes and machines for many of the early operas

held at both *San Giovanni e Paolo* and *Novissimo*.

Like the first *San Giovanni e Paolo* structure, *Teatro Novissimo* was built from a renovated wooden shed. It was situated “behind the Mendicanti, one of the four schools so famous for music in the next century” (Glixon and Glixon 271). The theatre “opened with Sacrati’s ‘*La finta pazza*’” in 1641 (271). The ultra-popular *La finta pazza*, rendering twelve performances in seventeen days, had a libretto by Giulio Strozzi (1583-1682), and music by Francesco Sacrati (1605-50) (both members of the Incogniti). It featured Torrelli’s designs and the sensational young singer Anna Renzi. In chapter IV, I conduct a detailed examination of Renzi’s performance in this opera and in *La Deidamia* at the same theatre in 1644. The new Incogniti-backed theatre was intended, according to the contract with their religious order landlords, to house and produce only heroic opera. In practice, however, the operas integrated comic and heroic elements. In 1647, after producing just eight operas, the theatre burnt to the ground and discontinued its theatrical activity (272).

Like its commedia dell’arte predecessor, the operatic genre was popular and catered to the general public. From 1650 to 1660, eight opera theatres were in operation and, between 1637 and 1678, opera audiences attended 150 operas in nine theatres (Glixon and Glixon 4). In fact, the presence of multiple operatic offerings all at once in the city prompted consumers to drop in and out of different shows (XIV). Lorenzo Bianconi further stresses that “a Venetian *dramma per musica* may run for ten, twenty or even thirty nights,” and successful operas like *L’Erismena* were revived (186). Opera’s immense popularity attracted people from all classes. The independent status that the commercial theatres provided to the new operatic performers and their troupes did not meet however with universal approval. In 1652, for example, the Jesuit priest Giovanni Domenico Ottonelli (1581-1670) disdainfully described the professional opera troupes as “mercenary musicians who are professional actors, and who, organized in a company, [replicating the commedia dell’arte troupe system] are directed and governed by one of their own, acting as authority and head of the others” (Rosand 14). Ottonelli’s derogatory remarks on the “mercenary” entertainers reflects a deep-seated suspicion of artists working independently of church, state, or the control of the patronage system.

While different classes might mix in the pit class stratification was still on display in theatres where owners leased *palchi* [opera boxes] to wealthy patrons who used them to host foreign diplomats. Commoners bought relatively low-priced tickets to sit on benches or to stand in the pit. This is while, as Johnson contends, “Boxes were the precinct of patricians, who rented them to showcase their own eminence and keep a distance from the lowborn audience. Non-nobles rarely appeared in the first- or second-tier boxes, which were occupied largely by members of prominent families, government officials, and foreign dignitaries” (119). The hierarchical configuration of box tiers reflected the social stratification of the overall theatre audience, including a broad cross-section of Venetians and foreigners. Boxes were arranged in a hierarchy of *ordini*, or orders, from top to bottom, with the lowest rung in some theatres at ground level or halfway above (Glixon and Glixon 21). Eventually, boxes also served as liminal spaces where, within the behavioural vortex of the performance venue, political deals were made, business was conducted, and gambling transpired. Box owners could also rent boxes out, and those boxes could be passed on to inheritors upon death.

In opera houses, although the sightlines to the performance stage were poorer than those of the *parterre* or pit, boxes retained an air of privilege. Sightlines directly across the theatre to other theatre boxes allowed patrons to view each other, from a relatively short distance, while the most expensive boxes, located nearest to the stage, could be seen by all (20). Since seventeenth-century theatres were built in a “U” shape, wealthy patrons could especially see and be seen from their boxes (19). Rented *palchi* were decorated and furnished as owners saw fit and, as McNeill relates, wealthy box holders attended the opera almost every evening (197). While the presence of *palchi* was an established tradition, opera theatres exploited their revenue-producing potential at a much higher pitch than earlier theatres had. Other financial support for public opera houses came from patrician theatre owners, and investors (320). Finally, if disputes arose surrounding the occupancy of the theatre boxes, the Council of Ten was obliged to resolve them, usually favouring the interests of the theatre over individual patrons (Ivanovich 406).

In addition to box rentals, theatres also offered relatively low-priced tickets at the door. So, while theatres definitely depended on wealthy donors and box rentals for stable income, “the real key to

financial success was satisfying the ticket purchasers, daily-ticket buyers, and boxholders alike” for the nightly intake at the door (Glixon and Glixon 319). The secretary to the French ambassador in Venice from 1672-77, Alexandre-Toussaint Limojon Sieur de Saint-Didier (ca.1630 -1689), identifies some of the expenses at the opera during the 1670s:

One pays four livres at the door, and two more for a chair in the pitt, which amounts to three shillings and sixpence English, without reckoning the opera-book [i.e., libretto] and the wax-candle everyone buys for without them even those of the Country would hardly comprehend any thing of the History, or the subject matter of the Composition. (64)

Thus, opera theatres relied on a variety of income sources: wealthy donors, box rentals, ticket sales, and incidental sales like libretti.

Regarding the overall economic scheme, Bianconi stresses the fiscal importance of repeat production runs, whereby each show, “even if played before half-empty houses – represents a ‘plus’ for the budget ... Particularly successful productions (Cavalli’s *Giasone*, Cesti’s *La Dori*) may subsequently be revived in an attempt to improve the standing of some financially precarious impresario” (186). And, while successive runs for one show was the ideal, each theatre usually produced two new operas every season so that “[t]he new operas presented in the course of a single Carnival season can number up to twelve!” (186). This abundance eventually resulted in overproduction and “market saturation” whereby “the ‘life’ of any one opera in the collective memory [was] in any case limited.” Wealthy patrons might rent boxes at several theatres at once so that, during the last days of Carnival when the number of simultaneous performances multiplied, theatre proprietors competed vigorously to keep them coming back for the entire season (Glixon and Glixon XIV). The heated competition, also meant, as Bianconi suggests, “Unforeseen events ... c[ould] cause the total loss of theatrical investments ... one or more artistic failures, moreover, c[ould] discredit the theatre, reduce box-office takings and thus compromise long-term financial security” (184). As can be seen, the competitive atmosphere created high demand for

innovative productions and star performers while fostering formulaic compositional approaches and solidifying conventions in a way similar to today's film industry.

Rosand confirms that, "The audience for opera, drawn from the carnival crowds that annually swelled the population of the city, was unusually large; it was also unusually diverse. Carnival was a time of masks, social license, the blurring of class distinctions" (3). Moreover, Thorburn posits, "If Venice at *Carnevale* was a sort of proto-Disneyland, then commercial opera was the greatest attraction of this Early Modern amusement park" (195). As commercial venues allowed entry to anyone who bought a ticket, the mix of gender, class, and regional identity created the conditions for a new socially dynamic cultural exchange. Nonetheless, researchers of seventeenth-century Italian theatre differ on the demographic spectrum of opera audience attendees. For one, Guido Nicastro claims, "A broad public flocked to these theatres, consisting not just of aristocrats but also of the middle and lower classes, attracted especially by the operas and comedies staged in the autumn or Carnival seasons, but also at the Feast of Ascension and sometimes even in summer" (151). Contrastingly, Bianconi asserts that "the widespread idea of the 'popularity' of Venetian opera as opposed to the aristocratic pretensions of court opera can no longer be sustained; available documentation on audience composition clearly shows the irrelevance of lower-class opera-goers for the economic structure of the theatre" (185). However, the Venetian opera industry relied on a variety of social classes to sustain productions and, claims Rosand, audiences were diverse enough that, "When foreign tourists took their places in the theaters, they were surrounded by the full spectrum of Venetians, from the patricians in the boxes to the *volgo* [or commoners] in the stalls" (3). Thus, at the January 17, 1651 premiere of *Eritrea* in the theatre S. Aponal, for example, according to tickets sold, the number of spectators included just over 150 in *scagni*, or cheaper priced benches or "stalls," and around 125 in more expensive boxes (Glixon and Glixon 355). In the same theatre there were approximately 190 spectators in *scagni* and about 135 in boxes for the 1655 premiere of *L'Erismena* (355).

It is, however, impossible to know exactly who attended the operas because, as the Glixons clarify, "The actual attendance at any performance would have been somewhat larger than the paid attendance, as some people, including the owners of the theater and some of those associated with the

production company, were admitted free of charge” (354). Performers and craftspeople were allotted *bolettini gratis* (free tickets) to use and give out at their “own pleasure,” with around twenty going out per performance (307). Managers and owners also likely received the benefit of *bolettini gratis* (307).

Furthermore, the Glixons argue that because the opera was as much social as cultural event, “people of various stations might come together, whether in the parterre or in a box” to confuse class boundaries (313). Other attendees at the opera included wine, pastry, and candle vendors (314). Servants to aristocratic patrons must also have been present, along with stagehands and other theatre personnel like ticket takers, candlesnuffers, and doormen (314). Both courtesans and gondoliers were in attendance as well, with gondoliers retaining the “right of entry to the opera-house” to act “as its claque” (Thorburn 179).

Already in the 1550s female audience members were present in the *stanzi* (performance halls) at commedia dell’arte shows (Henke 77). Eyewitness accounts identify women in the audience from that time on. One account by Pio Enea Obizzi, for instance, describes “gentle” women, students, and common citizens seated in five rows of tiered galleries at the 1637 Paduan performance of *Andromeda* in the *Teatro Farnese* (Rosand, Appendix I.1). Also, in the libretto for *Sidonio e Dorisbe*, performed in the *San Moise* theatre in 1642, a stage direction instructs “Tempo, a character in the prologue, ... to take a place near some ladies [in the audience], whose gambling he has interrupted” (Thorburn 184). Saint-Didier furthermore relays:

... The *Gentledonna's* frequent the Opera much more than the Comedy, by reason the Diversilons of that place are express'd with more Civillity than those of the other: As they are at this time allowed to dress with their Jewels, so they appear most splendidly by the means of the many lighted Tapers which are in those Boxes. Here their Lovers are employed in the Contemplation of their Charms, and they on their side, shew by some Signs that they are pleas'd with the assiduity of their Services ... (65)

Clearly, women were in continuous attendance in commercial Venetian theatres from the beginning.

The Carnival convention of wearing masks, when and where masking likely originated, carried over to theatrical events. In the myriad behaviours at operatic events, mask wearing also altered the seemingly fixed alignment of normative class and gender boundaries. Perhaps the rarified, liminal space of the operatic event facilitated transgressive class crossings and enabled the morphing of seemingly fixed behaviours based on class. The “theatrical boom of the mid-seventeenth century” caused spectators to don masks because posits James Johnson, the spontaneous practice “was soon considered natural by the population” (117-8). Sir John Reresby (1634-1689) who travelled to Italy in 1654 records of the Italians that “... going in mascara, or disguise, is their constant diversion all days in the week, in Carnival, except Fridays, where the greatest art is to find out the most ugly vizard, and the most extravagant dress. If women ever wear the breeches in Italy, it is then, with whom the men change habits” (Reresby, *The travels* 67). By 1663, moreover, the Englishman Philip Skippon wrote of seeing patrician women wearing masks upon entering the theatre and only when seated in their boxes “they pull’d off their vizards” (Johnson 118). The aforementioned Saint-Didier, who published *La Ville et la république de Venise* in 1680, described men and women in the theaters attired in capes, and black hoods (*bautte*) with a shimmering white half-mask. Notably, as Saint-Didier commented, “Most everyone goes to the theater and the opera in masks ... to enjoy grater liberty” (118). Ivanovich also contends that, while noblewomen could acceptably unmask in the privacy of their boxes, and noblemen could defy custom by purchasing tickets to sit with “commoners” in the parterre, they remained masked (118). Johnson forwards the notion that in the pit:

... when they sat shoulder to shoulder with other spectators on ground-level benches, the mask preserved the liberty of all ... By eliminating the need for public displays of hierarchy and status ... Masks excused non-nobles from acknowledging their superiors [by bowing for instance] as such, and they freed nobles from expecting this ritual. (220)

Johnson also informs us that Venetians of all classes joined freely together at the theatre such that “For the *merchena* or artisan who until now had dealt with the ruling elite only as a subordinate, these places offered interactions on the mask’s unique terms, the fictions of similitude” (128). The temporary

anonymity of the mask suspended differences “even if distinctions were still evident in the details of comportment and appearance” (138). For, in Venice, as Montesquieu wrote, “the mask is not a disguise but an incognito,” in which “[o]ne rarely alters one’s clothes, and everyone knows everyone” (qtd. in Johnson 140). Therefore, as Johnson posits, the mask did not serve to disguise the wearer as much as it acted as “the figment of anonymity, mutually accepted and acted on” (138). Venetian audiences came to the opera for many reasons other than for the opera itself. In the liminal theatre space, they enjoyed the freedom to intermix in ways unavailable at other places in the city. The breakdown of class and gender barriers in the theatre constituted a liminal rehearsal space for social transformation that challenged normative divisions in Venice’s social hierarchy.

The stage production was just one part of a total set of effervescent communal behaviours in the same space. Spectators routinely called out to the performers and commented on the action. Saint-Didier portrays an interaction between gondoliers in the audience and onstage performers. He writes, “[N]othing is so remarkable as the pleasant benedictions and the ridiculous wishes of the gondoliers in the pit to the women singers, who cry aloud to them, “*Sia tu benedetta, benedetto il padre che te generò.*” (“Bless you, and bless the father who conceived you.”; qtd. in Strunk 577). Indeed, in recognizing a cross-dressed singer, one audience member cried out, “*Ecco, Padre Pierro, che fa la vecchia.*” (“There, that’s Father Peter playing the part of the old woman.”; 577). All of these behaviours attest to the fact that the experience of attending operas in early modern Venetian opera houses differs significantly from experiences in today’s opera theatres. The inter-subjective interchange between stage and auditorium in Venetian opera is more evocative of a modern sports event or a rock concert than opera performances today.

Indeed, the atmosphere in the theatre could be quite chaotic. Early on, and until the practice was banned, lax expectations for audience conduct in Venetian theatres allowed audiences to bring picnic dinners to the opera (Glixon and Glixon 314). Other distractions from the onstage spectacle could include altercations between noblemen in the audience and even an assassination (314-5). Arthur Livingston states that Pier Vettor Grimani (1610-65), whose father owned the theatre *SS. Giovanni e Paolo*, twice

stationed his hired musketeers in the theatre space. He did this first on the evening of January 10, 1655 and again in 1658. He accomplished this in spite of his confinement at the Grimani palace by the Council of Ten. This was due to an ongoing violent dispute with the son of the Vendramin family, who ran a competing theatre. In the 1658 incident, musketeers from both sides drew their muskets in the theatre but the fight spilled out into the street and concluded with a “bloody epilogue [in the] Vendramin-Calergi palace” (419).

Wealthy opera patrons included foreign diplomats who considered Venice a neutral place outside the boundaries of the Thirty Years War to carry out diplomacy. They could conduct meetings in rented *palchi* during performances. Foreign ambassadors, in fact, took precedence over Venetian box owners for occupancy; they were empowered to request the Doge to provide them one for the evening (Ivanovich 404). The following quote from French diplomat Pompeo Molmenti describes the situation for foreign ambassadors in Venice and at the opera: “ministers from foreign lands must not enter into a relationship with magistrates; one must speak through third parties, or speak by signals at the opera, a circumstance that makes attending shows and the use of masks necessary to foreign ministers” (Thorburn 208). While Venetian law forbade Venetian citizens from openly conversing with foreigners, diplomats could meet in private boxes to discuss politics. By the 1670s, opera was such an integral part of the Venetian political and economic system that foreign diplomats vied for opera boxes as much for the prestige of being seen in them as for the exclusive access to Venetian political representatives where they surreptitiously conducted illicit political discussions. Foreign diplomats too added to the heterogeneous composite of tourists and native Venetians at the opera.

Foreign writers, who often attempted to describe their experiences in detail for audiences at home, usually knew little about Venetian culture and even less about Venetian opera. Thus, their accounts convey raw impressions as first-time witnesses to the new and unique operatic form. Such descriptions transmit a visceral experience to the reader, who derives a first-hand sense of what early modern Venetian opera was like. Following Darren Gobert, such descriptive narratives contain embedded “kinesthetic and emotional memory” to offer readers visceral immersion into the intersubjective temporality of specific

moments (Gobert 121). During the Interregnum of 1640 to 1660, for instance, diplomats, merchants, and royalists fled England or were expelled. British exiles curious about Venetian republicanism and its constitutional organization wanted to compare it to the new British Commonwealth system. After viewing the new operatic productions, the English visitors sent letters home describing their experiences; eventually publishing their accounts for an eager and curious audience. The outside perspective of foreigners' writings on Venetian culture reflects ignorance and prejudice on one hand. However, such accounts also hold a tremendous reserve of immediate, embodied cognizance with first-hand affective experiences of the operatic event. The wealth of "ephemeral" evidence in these communications motivates me to present a sizable portion of them here. Here, for instance is a rare glimpse into one Venetian opera production from English nobleman and musician Robert Bargrave (1628-1661) writing about the wonders of the Carnival:

But above all, surpassing whatsoever theyr Inventions can else stretch to, are theyr Operas (or Playes) represented in rare musick from the beginning to the end, by select Eunuchs and women, sought throughout all Italy on purpose: whose Persons are adorned as richly and aptly as the best contrivers can imagine: theyr many various Scenes set out in rare painting, and all magnificent costliness, intermixing most incomparable apparations and motions in the aire and on the Seae, governed so by Machines, that they are scares discernable from the reall things they represent: having also most exxquisit Anticks and Masking Dances, and whatsoever else beseeming that Art and mony can arrive to. One Opera I saw represented about 16 severall times [likely *Erismena*]; and so farr from being weary of it, I would ride hundreds of miles to see the same over again ... and as Venice in many things surpasses all places elce where I have been, so are these Operas the most excellent of all its glorious Vanities ... (qtd. in Stoye 220).

Similarly, English writer Jean Gailhard (fl. 1659–1708) published an epistle in London in 1669 on his experiences at the Venetian opera. Gailhard offers the following perspective on the singing:

though it seems not to please those who are not used to it, by realson of certain *Fredonies* or quakings, yet it is the most learned of any musick in other places: Not only they employ their

good *Cantarine*, as they call them, that is, women in *Venice* who have good Voices, and make profession of singing, but also when they hear of any extraordinary ones abroad, they are sent for (as hath been that rare singing woman of *Bologna*) and are liberally rewarded for their pains.

(*The Present* 147)

While the genre itself was new to Gailhard, it was the novel women singers who “make a profession of singing” that struck him most. This is perhaps because women singers were not yet the common phenomenon they were soon to become in England.

Thirty years later, Saint-Didier was more critical in his comparison of Italian opera to the French, calling the stage machines “ridiculous,” the compositions “deficient,” and stating that “one would imagine these Dancers wore Lead in their Shoes, yet the Assembly bestow their Applauses on them, which is meerly for want of having seen better” (*The City* 62). But, while Didier is unimpressed here with much of the Venetian form he is, on the other hand, very impressed with “The Charms” of the castrato and women singers’ voices that “make amends” for the abovementioned deficiencies in the following ways:

These Men without Beards have delicate Voices, besides which they are admirably suitable to the greatness of the Theater. They commonly have the best Women-Singers of all *Italy*, for to get a famous Girl from *Rome* or any other Place, they do not scruple at giving Four or Five hundred Pistoles with the Charges of the Journey, and yet their Opera's last no longer than the *Carnaval*. Their Airs are languishing and touching; the whole composition is mingl'd with agreeable Songs, that raise the Attention; the Symphony is mean inspiring rather Melanlcholy than Gaiety: It is compos'd of Lutes, Thelorbos and Harpsicords, yet they keep time to the Voices with the greatest exactness imaginable. (63)

Equally fascinating to Didier was the power the diva had over her male spectators:

Some Gentlemen have shewn themselves so Transported and out of all bounds by the charming Voices of these Girls, as to bend themselves out of their Boxes, crying, *Ah cara! mi Butto, mi*

Butto, expressing after this manner the Raptures of Pleasure which these divine Voices cause to them ... Whenever a new Girl appears to Sing at the Opera, the principal Nobles esteem it a point of Honour to be Master of her, and if she Sings well they spare nothing that may accomplish the Design of getting her. One of the *Cornaro*'s was upon one of these occasions Rival to the Duke of *Mantua*, they both endeavour'd to exceed each other in their Presents, yet the Charms of her Voice were not accompanied with all those of Beauty: The *Venetian* was successful and got the better of the Duke. (64-5).

Not unlike the scene at a modern-day football game or a World Wrestling match, the boisterous crowd and the men vying for attention must have proved a challenge to concentration for singers, and accompanying ensembles, endeavouring to deliver virtuosic performances. This is notwithstanding the disturbance caused to auditors wanting to hear the music. As shown, in the performer/audience symbiosis of Venetian opera, audiences could be raucous, and sometimes violent. The liminal theatrical space housed a publicly exchanged cultural commodity in a social environment that safeguarded transgressive social behaviours. Such behaviours subverted rigidly enforced gender and class norms for the price of a ticket at the door. In particular, the intermingled *mélange* of theatre personnel, vendors, gondoliers, secret police, courtesans, and servants with patrician Venetians caused the suspension and subversion of class order.

Commercial opera, furthermore, was a popular entertainment that came to play an important role in Venice's social dynamics outside of the theatre. For, as McNeill asserts, "opera became a focus of delight, education, and distraction from the difficulties of everyday. Like [modern day] professional sport ... operatic performance became a topic of conversation for the entire city, and a political safety valve and sounding board of very considerable importance" (197). In that environment earlier artistic forms like the *commedia dell'arte* actively prepared audience expectations and introduced the distinctive organizational system and many dramatic conventions that subsequent operatic practitioners assumed. Broader events like wars and the recurrent, but limited, carnival season also impacted the operatic

enterprise. The polyvalent character of early modern Venice's socio-economic and political nexus was the environment within which the original professional operatic divas worked and lived.

Within the public sphere and city limits, furthermore, the professional woman singer conducted business together with other women performing their daily functions as participants in the social vortex of the lagoon city. The diva's relatively free autonomy, nonetheless, contrasted starkly with the constraints under which most Venetian women lived. This is because the strictly paternalistic Venetian hierarchy dedicatedly drove the social dynamic to which women's culture was subjugated. In her independent status as a freelance professional, the diva transgressed proscribed behavioural norms and so embodied a threat to patriarchal authority. Her ability to make personal choices and conduct her own affairs was a privilege denied to most women in the Serene Republic. Conversely, the collectively reinforced strictures on other women's lives and modes of being subject to misogynistic micro-managing could have presented a plausible threat to the diva's chosen way of life.

Because the lead operatic women singers came from varied social classes and geographic places, they bypassed seemingly fixed class parameters while moving relatively freely between geographic locations. They achieved such autonomy by owning and training powerful, if ephemeral, vocal abilities and performance skills that they sold and that enabled them to transgress normative limitations. Professional women singers could gain economic autonomy by virtue of hard work, intelligence, a prodigious memory, great voices and charismatic stage presence, not to mention sheer determination. These qualities enabled some of them to provide consistently excellent artistic work, propelling them to a celebrity status that allowed them to override tradition and custom. These women achieved such status in commercial venues where they paved the way for a new profession for women while simultaneously enacting and modeling possibilities for women in the public sphere.

Because the singers were not listed in the early libretti and other traces of their work and lives is scantily commemorated in archival documents, scholars have been unable to gain a comprehensive understanding of who they were and the details of what they did and where. While Beth Glixon's pioneering work has unearthed tremendous archival documentation to compile, contextualize, and publish

details of the lives and work of several singers like Giulia Masotti, Silvia Manni, Anna Renzi, and Catarina Porri, much of the record remains incomplete. Of course, there may not be any more evidence on their lives to recover. Clearly, however, their lives and careers, in conjunction with proto-feminist writers of the time, played an important role in the struggle for women's self-determination in Venice and beyond. The early divas cultivated and styled their social behaviours as they did their on-stage personas as warrior, cross-dressed, mad, or royal women. The figure of the diva onstage and in the city could easily have been associated in the audience's minds with the roles. In these ways, the diva's body archives the memory, the practice, and the repertoire of the role type and the public persona. Certainly, the figure that the diva cut in Venice's urban geography was unusual, if not strikingly so, in its alterity.

Venetian women performed and embodied everyday public roles and modes of living as wives, nuns, or prostitutes, for instance, with whom the autonomous virtuosa would have encountered and who became part of her lived experience in the city. The diva, too, acted out her public persona as "the diva." In other words, she too embodied and performed gestures and speech indicating her social status as a professional performer in a way that marked her out as unusual and different in the social space of the city. And while her autonomy most closely resembled that of the professional courtesan, she was not selling sexual favours for a living. The diva's ability to conduct transactions relatively autonomously and carry out her business as a free agent in everyday life ultimately afforded her more freedom of movement and independent decision-making than most Venetian women. This is because most women lived more circumscribed lives in confined spaces like the home and the convent, while being restricted to certain urban places like the Rialto, but barred from others like governmental offices as they were subject to continuous male supervision in the city (Heller, *Emblems* 50). The magisterial body charged with hearing testimony, the *Avogaria di Comun*, moreover, kept a close eye on all inhabitants' activities and Venetians were encouraged to report on their fellow citizens' behaviours either anonymously or they could be called to submit mandatory testimonies (Cowan, *Gossip* 120).

Despite the curtailment of women's activity in the city however, women did interact with each other and the diva's presence would have been felt, spoken about, and known. She too would have been

aware of, and interacted with, other women of all sorts in the city. Presence of her difference in the city would have been readily recognized in its radical alterity. Other women heard about or experienced her either in personal interactions, or from a distance as audience members, by word of mouth, and in print materials like libretti and other advertisements. Conversely, the conditions with which other Venetian women contended would have been equally apparent to the diva in her experience of them in the city in what she saw or heard about them. We perceive difference while the knowledge of difference permeates the social network as part of the “socio-temporal dynamics” of the public sphere (Datta 14). This reality would be more obvious in a lagoon city like Venice with its watery boundaries and limited space that circumscribed peoples’ movements through a limited number of narrow passageways and canals placing pedestrians and those in boats – there were no horses used in the city – into close contact. Close proximity increased the likelihood that individuals would encounter each other along the way whether they interacted personally or not (Cowan, *Gossip* 120). Also, Venice’s densely packed private residences with their balconies, doorways, and windows open to public view afforded residents’ views of the streets, canals, and public spaces, including interconnected piazzas all tightly clustered together and filled with people (127). Indeed, in Venice, people of varying socio-economic classes lived together in the same condensed neighbourhoods while men and women of all classes by necessity passed one another in the circumscribed public spaces (Chojnacka 87).

In seventeenth-century Venice, “respectable” or patrician women were constrained to private and enclosed spaces and, if they ventured into the public sphere, had to be accompanied by men. For, as Dennis Romano conveys, “By defining urban space in gender terms, patrician males used the urban landscape to assert further their monopoly over all forms of public power in Venice” (347-8). Romano explains that men didn’t generally approve of having their daughters and wives seen out on the public streets (343). This was partly due to the influence of clergymen like Fra Paolino who warned fathers that if their daughters were allowed to roam around the city streets, it would cause them to “lose their modesty” (343). According to Romano, “men feared for (and feared)” women’s sexuality, compelling them to control it, so that “[g]ender roles and notions of urban space ... complemented and reinforced one

another” (347). In this scheme, men belonged in public piazzas and on the streets conducting business and politics; women, conversely, should be shuttered away from public view to protect their virtue, purity, and modesty while allowing them to concentrate on more passive domestic activities (347). Under the watchful surveillance of her neighbours, however, an upper-class woman was permitted to venture out alone – but only within the confines of the neighbourhood – to visit her friends or go to prayer in the local church (343). And while Alexander Cowan submits that – due to the privacy it offered – upper-class women travelled by gondola while they also avoided having to walk far in their high *chopine* shoes (*Gossip* 131). Much like the lagoon itself, it was as if, submits Romano, “virtually all female sites in Venice’s gender-specific geography were enclosed and bounded” (347). Some enclosed structures included walled palaces and courtyards and walled parish convents bordered by canals accessible only by certain bridges. The Venetian State too worked to limit prostitutes’ solicitations to the Rialto (347).

The organization of civic life came in the form of confraternities, charitable organizations, guilds, and private societies like the *scuole grandi*, all supported and regulated by the Council of Ten and its inquisitors (Glixon, *Honoring* 35). The *scuole grandi*, was both a civic and religious organization that, although scrutinized by the state, was otherwise run autonomously to strictly monitor its members’ moral behaviours (22). The group, moreover, considered itself a unifying moral force for the city bringing all classes together while maintaining social order by regulating behaviours not considered civil offences but rather that might “threaten[] communal order” as Jonathan Glixon transmits (22). The *scuole grandi* organized and participated in civic and religious processions and festivals in the city (50). Each organization had its own set of statutes configured and adhered to by the membership. Women also had their own organizations, and in several guilds, women were allowed to participate nominally by running the charity and devotional work. Other women-run organizations included the *scoleta de donne* run by ex-prostitutes, while convents were supervised by a separate male clergy (52).

As the Venetian government was suspicious of Papal authority and political interference, the church was barred from involvement in administrative activities or governmental matters (58). On the other hand, the state encouraged religious devotion in the population and philanthropic activities by the

church. Patrician rule was legitimized as part of the “natural” social order. To prove its commitment to nurturing spiritual growth in the populace, the state sponsored popular festivals and religious ceremonies. Charity or *carità* to the poor was believed to bring salvation of the soul to the giver and was of prime importance to Venetians. Charity constituted a civic and moral duty that during the Renaissance period became a compelling *virtù* (virtue). The state, writes Datta, capitalized on this priority to overcome and resolve differences between classes and between “clerical prerogative and lay responsibility” and maintain social cohesiveness (*Women* 62).

The sixteenth-century humanist philanthropic impulse to improve public health and social welfare included the education of the poor. While Datta submits that elementary school education was reserved mostly for boys from noble and *cittadini* families, the children of artisans could attend district schools known as *scuole di sestiere* (“La Presenza” 128). Artisan and merchant class children attended vernacular schools where they read popular literature, religious texts, and learned double entry book-keeping (Datta, *Women* 68). While teaching girls to read and do some math became acceptable, studying rhetoric or oratory was not because as it was associated with a public function, as Paola Malpezzi Price contends, it was considered inappropriate for them (*Women and Knowledge* 29). Girls were taught only in the vernacular not in Latin but in the sixteenth century when vernacular Italian became an acceptable language to print, women’s access to knowledge was broadened (31).

The state further used popular belief in *virtù* to link “three interactive spheres” – religious communities, private institutions, and political society – and to consolidate and contain the provision of relief for the poor within state-approved rules (*Women* 62). These charitable institutions provided shelter for homeless women and contrite prostitutes in places like convents or the *Casa delle Zitelle*. They sheltered women and gave them “moral educations” while the *scuole grande* financed the marriages of their inhabitants as a reward for good moral behaviour (65). For access to basic education, poor girls relied on monasteries and charitable organizations like the *Casa delle Zitelle* where, as mentioned, the institution was charged with reforming their moral values with humanist conceptions of morality (*Women* 52). Girls from the upper class got private tutors while very poor girls who did not go to a convent

received no education (177). Datta relays that thirty-three percent of boys and twelve percent of girls attended schools or received private tutelage in 1587.

Neither patrician nor middle-class *cittadini* women ever worked outside the home, while lower-class *popolani* women did. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, women coming mostly from the *popolani* class headed ten to twelve percent of all households (177). Most were widows with sole responsibility for the economic stability of the family working in some form of paid labour outside the home (177). These breadwinning women were obliged to take on the patriarchal functions of supporting the entire family and also of dowering sisters, daughters, and nieces (Ambrosini, *Toward* 435). Federica Ambrosini lists some of the manufacturing sectors involving women's labour to include textiles and retail trade noting that while women could join guilds, they were generally paid less than their male counterparts and had no hope of advancing to leadership positions (434).

Venice was a leader in the European lace making industry during the early modern period and women played a vital role in lace production. The lacemaking trade included women workers from nuns in the convents to the independent lace makers on the Venetian island of Burano. The lacemaking trade also included girls in the *Ospedale dei Zitelli*, with wards throughout the city (Chojnacki, *Women and Men* 84). And the "abandon women" of the *Ospedale dei Derelitti* earned part of their living expenses this way while paying back two-thirds of their earnings for housing (Datta, *Women* 206). Members of the *Zitelli* were taught by women who trained them in math, literacy, and some form of apprenticeship, like lace making, so they might bring employable skills to arranged marriages (Chojnacki 75-6). Women also worked as governesses, schoolteachers, and domestic servants (Ambrosini 434). Ambrosini and Datta concur however, that the worth of a married woman of any social class lay in the virtuous ideal of *prudencia*, or prudence in keeping and managing her household and remaining constant in her attention to the wellbeing of her husband and family (433). Datta suggests to that, by virtue of their aristocratic bloodline, married patrician women were thought naturally honest or *onesta* where chastity, loyalty, obedience and "punctiliousness" exemplified moral gender behaviours and constituted "a peculiar blend of puritanism (afflicting only women in the family) and permissiveness (for men and certain groups of

women)” (*Women* 179). Prostitutes and courtesans were included in the “certain groups of women” allowed more permissiveness in areas like sexual autonomy.

Beginning in the seventeenth century, and as a result of rising dowry costs, a viable alternative opened up for women in “secular spinsterhood,” but it required them to remain single and celibate (Ambrosini 428). As the practice became more acceptable, single women gained more autonomy; one unmarried patrician woman named Vittoria Basadonna di Alvisè ended up controlling her family’s entire estate (428). Otherwise, Virginia Cox argues that “in a society that valued women primarily as breeding stock, the lives of these patrician spinsters have vanished almost without record” (544). Nevertheless, Ambrosini transmits that by the eighteenth century, many unmarried patrician women took charge of their own sexuality by claiming the right to make personal choices and reject the social and religious customs of the past requiring lifelong celibacy (428).

Meanwhile, James Johnson details that in the early modern period, individual freedom for women was thought threatening to civic order so their movements and behaviours were strictly regulated and enforced (110). For instance, although “proper” Venetian women could go masked in public, prostitutes were forbidden to do so. What’s more, a 1608 edict stated “any ‘woman of ill-repute or public prostitute’ found wearing a mask would be chained for two hours between the two columns of the Piazzetta or forced by the lash through a gauntlet of jeers from St. Mark’s to the Rialto” then they were fined five hundred lire and banned from the city for four years (Johnson 107-8).

Obviously, the patriarchal fixation on controlling women’s morality and movements within the city were punitively enforced by the state as well and in general social practice. On the other hand, by the 1630s, when commercial opera in Venice began to garner audiences, while prostitutes occupied prominent boxes like enclosed stages from which to display themselves unmasked, “respectable women” wore veils or masks (108). British traveller Richard Lassels (c.1603-68) describes masked Venetian women thus: “But the most part of the yong *Ladyes* that came to see the *Fayre*, came in an odd dresse, with a false nose, and a little beard of black wool, disguising their mouth and nose: so that they could see all the *Fayre*, and be knowne to no body. Thus, they go often to marriages, and other assemblyes when

they haue no mind to be knowne” (416). Regardless of their appearance at the opera, “respectable” women were constrained to private and enclosed spaces. In the following description Lassels, whose travel accounts were published in Paris in 1670, gives his impressions of the women he had encountered in Venice while also describing in gendered terms what took place before him:

As for the women here, they would gladly get the same reputation That their husbands have, of being tall and handsome; but they ouer do it with their horrible cioppini, or high Shoos, which I haue often seen to be a full half yard high. I confesse, I wondered at first, to see women go vpon stilts, and appeare taller by the head then any man; and not to be able to go any whither without resting their hands vpon the shoulders of two grave matrons that vssher them: but at last, I perceiued that it was good policy, and a pretty ingenious way either to clog women at home by such heauy shoos (as the Egyptians Kept their Wifes at home by allowing them no shoos at all); or at least to make them not able to go either farre, or alone, or inuisibly. As for the yong ladyes of this towne that are not married, they are neuer seen abroad, but masked like Moscarades in a strang disguise, at the Fair time, and other publick solemnities or Shows, Being at other time brought vp in Monasteries of Nunns, till they be married. (380-1)

Lassel’s description provides a window to a lived experience conveying another way in which Venetian women were constrained and controlled this time by a fashion that hampered their abilities to move freely, or furtively, through the city.

On the subject of mask wearing in Venice, Johnson surmises that masked and veiled women were seen as a sign of women’s “natural” social role as subservient to men and the family (116). Masking and veiling then was also thought to protect honest women’s virtue while differentiating them from immodest prostitutes. Venetian historian Gaetano Cozzi detailed the characteristics that the “honorable young woman” should exhibit to include restraint, modesty, silence “and God-fearing, with every thought fixed upon her family” and the mask helped her to maintain this status (Johnson 116). The mask, or *zendado*, protected her innocence from the unscrupulous (116). Alternatively, as Johnson and Lassels imply, wearing veils and masks in public allowed women a certain anonymous freedom of movement otherwise

unavailable to them. Johnson suggests too that, because they were made of sheer silk or cotton, veils did not truly conceal a woman's identity and that upper-class men and women could be recognized. Therefore, the function was not so much to disguise as it was to preserve a measure of liberty by "dispensing with ceremony" and again temporarily suspending differences of rank between noble and commoner (220).

Nuns in Venice comprised a large population ballooning from two thousand in 1581 to three thousand in 1642 representing four to five percent of the women in Venice. Hunecke Volker quotes Giovanni Tiepolo's comments from a letter to the Venetian Doge and Senate in 1629 concerning the status of nuns in the city saying, "two thousand and more ... in this city they live in the monastery as almost in public deposit ... they confined themselves to those walls, not driven by devotion, but by the impulse of ... finding their own freedom ... a gift not only to God, but also to the homeland, to the World, And their close relatives" ("*Essere nobildonna*" 141). Volker disagrees with Tiepolo's contention that most women volunteered on their own to become nuns (141). Tiepolo's idea that they were "finding their own freedom" refers perhaps to the fact that most nuns came from noble families. If they had been born male, they would have ended up in high governmental offices, so should therefore be given "a reasonably pleasant and unconstrained life" since accessing freedom outside the convent walls was nearly impossible (Cox 540). By 1650, according to Elizabeth Horodowich, there were 33 convents in the city and while they were confined to them for life, nuns could nonetheless dress in fashionable clothing, own their own animals, and maintain personal supplies of fine food and wine (*A Brief History* 141). Many nuns, like Arcangela Tarabotti (1604-52), retained contact with the outside world and the wealthiest convent *San Zaccaria* produced plays for the public and held dances and parties (141).

In the arts, some women with literary training published their work while others became professional painters. Most pertinent to my study, as Ambrosini conveys, by the sixteenth century women could attain renown as professional musicians (Cox 435). In the four Venetian *ospedali grandi* orphan girls were trained to sing and play instruments with some becoming professional musicians and teachers to the younger orphanage "inmates" (435). Additionally, as court operas became widespread in the

sixteenth century, women *virtuose* became sought-after celebrities while their commedia dell'arte peers like Vicenza Armani (c.1530-69) and Isabella Andreini (1562-1604) were revered for both their acting skills and their cultured intelligence. All in all, Ambrosini holds, as I do, these early women performers embodied “a new public role that may well have awakened the self-awareness of their female contemporaries” (435). Patricia Labalme cogently queries whether the divergent conditions that early modern Venetian women experienced might have caused them to compare themselves against each other and even against men “impel[ing] them to challenge old theories of inadequacy and subjugation, [and] come to their own defense?” (109). What these women had to defend against was the deeply ingrained historical fixation purporting women to be “naturally” inferior to men and therefore subject to male domination and control. This attitude, and the laws and customs that relied on it, festered in the minds of women with the means – literacy – to write and say something about it.

The spectre of the Amazon and warrior woman fueled a rebellious feminist imagination. I turn now to outline the participation of Venetian feminist writers in the long running debate over women's worth and the feminist fight for self-determination. In reviewing these women's writings, I look to musicologist Susan McClary's assertion that “Taking their utterances seriously can allow us some degree of phenomenological access to individuals and communities remote from us in space and time; their strategies offer us insight into significant – if largely unspoken and undeniably mediated – experiences of seventeenth-century subjectivity” (76). In my view, a most valid source of information on early modern Venetian women's experience is the published writing of women who described their experiences in their own terms. The writers Veronica Franco (1546-91), Lucrezia Marinella (1571-1653), and Arcangela Tarabotti, participated in the European-wide *querelle de femme* by advocating for women's rights. Even though these women had the unusual opportunity and education to write and publish their own work, they nevertheless railed against their lack of personal liberty and the misogynistic writings of the time. These authors published letters, dialogues, poems and other materials in which they assert women's intellectual acuity and decry the social restrictions prohibiting them from gaining higher education or making autonomous decisions.

The *querelle de femme* intellectual philosophical dispute centred on women's nature, lasted from around 1400 to about 1789. The argument about women emerged from misogynist traditions inherited from ancient Greek, Roman, Hebrew, and Christian cultures (King and Rabil vii). Those traditions formed the basis for systematic discrimination against women in European social, medical, legal, intellectual, political, and religious realms. In Venice, the bitter argument took on an especially animated and profuse character, as Wendy Heller has signaled writing that, as a major centre of publishing, multiple books came out arguing for or against women's sexuality and nature detailing their vices or virtues and describing acceptable and unacceptable behaviours for them in Venice (3). Early modern feminist writers took it upon themselves to answer such prescriptions and characterizations by publishing their own thoughts on the subject thus bringing the debate to an even more fevered pitch.

Otherwise, Constance Jordan submits that in sixteenth-century Italy a Humanist backlash against the tenets of medieval natural law took place regarding women's innate potential (296). When Thomas Aquinas (1225-74) revived Greek thinking on natural law, he revealed a philosophy purporting that all humanity had universally inherent rights based on the "laws" of nature. With those rights belonged characteristics, like moral or political capacities based on biological sex or ethnicity, for instance, and social stratification based on class all thought to be fixed by nature in each individual and so essential and unalterable. The debate over women's subservience to men and their subjugation to unfair treatment was based on an understanding of natural law endowing them with a permanent, fixed, and inferior nature (296). This stance was denounced by some humanists as an invention contrived to preserve the social arrangement of women's subservience to men (296). Renaissance writers who resisted the principle of fixed "natural" laws regarding sex argued that gender relations based on an abstract hierarchical order were constituted only of transmutable social conventions, customs, and laws (296). Therefore, Jordan postulates that sixteenth-century "prowoman" arguments adopted "new readings of history" urging readers to take another look at historical records to detect the inherent ambiguity and inconsistency in the belief, taken on faith alone, that human destiny is divinely ordained but does not take into account empirical evidence to sustain or support the claim (296). This skeptical view of canonical thinking on

society and individuals reconsidered such thinking and its views on women's nature and social value (296).

In 1365 humanist Giovanni Boccaccio (1313-75) wrote *De mulieribus claris* (On Famous Women), containing the biographies of one hundred and six historical and mythological women derived from Greek, Roman, and Biblical traditions. In Boccaccio's book, women who were chaste and faithful to their husbands are praised while those who indulged in "masculine" pursuits like war and politics suffer and are usually punished. Boccaccio's work spurred subsequent writers to produce more catalogues of exceptional women. In her *Le Livre de la Cité des Dames* (Book of the City of Ladies) (1405), Christine de Pizan (1365-1431) laments "how it happened that so many different men ... are so inclined to express both in speaking and in their treatises so many wicked insults about women and their behavior" (King and Rabil xviii). In the fifteenth century, Francesco Barbaro (1390-1454) wrote *De re uxoria* (1415), where he maintained that women should remain silent, chaste, and obedient, and should manage the household.

Alternatively, Philosopher Heinrich Agrippe (1486-1535) gave a lecture in Cologne in 1509 where he argued that women were superior to men. In 1529, he published *De nobilitate et praecellentia foeminei sexus declamatio* (Declamation on the Nobility and Pre-Eminence of the Female Sex) (Compagni, "Heinrich"). This work helped to inflame the debate across Europe over the next two hundred years and impact the social status of women. In 1595, the treatise titled *Disputatio nova contra mulieres, qua probatur eas homines non esse*, (The New Argument Against Women, in which it is Proven that they are not Human Beings) was published and attributed to German poet Valens Acidalius (1567-95) (Miato 117). By the early seventeenth century, Pietro Paolo de Ribera published his *Immortal Triumphs and Heroic Enterprises of 845 Women* (1609). And in 1638 Francesco Buonisegni (1604-52) published a satire entitled *Menippea* where he complains about women's propensity for luxury and vanity (117). Regardless of the dispute over women's rights, intelligence, equality, and worth, the everyday social constraints on early modern women's autonomy remained in place. On one level, this reality was bolstered by the notion that women should not hold political power because the rightful privilege of

bearing arms, holding citizenship, or becoming kings or lords was reserved for men (King and Rabil xxiv).

One important woman writer at this time was Modesta Pozzo (1555-92) whose pen name was Moderata Fonte. Fonte's first published work features the virgin woman warrior Risamante in the epic poem *Tredici canti di Floridoro* (1581) who goes on a quest to claim her rightful inheritance. The character, trained as a child in warfare and magic, slays a dragon and saves a damsel in distress along the way. In canto four of *Floridoro*, Fonte writes: "*Le Donne in ogni età fur da Natura di gran giudicio, e d'animo dotate, Ne mè atte à mostrar con studio e cra Senno e valor de gli huomini son nate*" ("Women in every age have had naturally great judgment, and gifted souls, She is able to teach herself with study, and she is born with the valor that men are born"; 17). Departing from the narrative to speak her mind directly to the reader on worthy women who have gone unacknowledged, Fonte writes: "*L'oro che stà ne le minere ascoso, Non manca d'esser or, benche sepolto.*" ("The gold that lies in the mines is still gold, even though it remains underground."; 17). Fonte's Risamante displays the qualities of bravery, independence, and self-confidence that directly contradicts the demeaning qualities deemed appropriate to women by the Council of Trent (1545-63) in its Catholic reforms after the Protestant Reformation (Malpezzi Price, *Women and Knowledge* 33). Fonte died giving birth at the age of 37 (33).

The remarkable Veronica Franco (1546-91) was a poet and courtesan whose mother, according to Venetian archival records, was her procuress (Jones 303). In Venice, the children of courtesans went to foundling homes to later become courtesans and galley rowers from whose work the city gained revenues. Fonte became a professional courtesan in about 1562 and she also earned an income publishing her poetry (303). The city advertised courtesans, including their addresses and fees, whose skill in music and rhetorical eloquence attracted international fame and brought in tourists (303). As Rosalind Jones imparts, Englishman Thomas Coryat (c. 1577-1617) published the following warning to young men regarding Venetian courtesans: "thou wilt find the Venetian Courtezan ... a good Rhetorician, and a most elegant discourser, so that if she cannot move you with all these aforesaid delights, she will assay thy constancy with a Rhetoricall tongue" (303). Coryat's warning reflects anxiety about the alluring courtesan's

rhetorical skill as a powerful tool to sway vulnerable male moral “constancy.” Franco on the other hand describes how fame as a courtesan brought with it personal dangers in her customers’ behaviours: “[T]o force one’s body and energy into such slavery, terrifying even to contemplate; to expose oneself as prey to so many men, with the risk of being despoiled, robbed or killed, or that one man ... may take from you everything you have acquired ... added to so many other dangers of insult and contagious, frightful disease” (315). Considering the kinds of dreadful dangers that Franco details, it is no surprise that women writers were just as preoccupied with the warrior woman figure as men. In her letters, for example, Franco describes herself as an Amazon warrior fighting men’s oppression, declaring: “When we too are armed and trained, we can convince men that we have hands, feet and a heart like yours; ... amongst so many women, I will be the first to act ... on you who have sinned against them all, I turn with whichever weapon you may choose, with the wish and hope of throwing you to the ground” (Rosenthal, *The Honest ix*). Here Franco expresses the seething anger that the grinding subjugation to men inspired.

Otherwise, in Giuseppi Passi’s (1569-1620) 1599 marriage manual, *I donneschi difetti* (Of Womanly Defects), as Heller points out, he argues for the husband’s intrinsic right to “rule over his wife,” a stance translated into the broader social hierarchy (*Emblems* 97). In the back and forth, the highly prized “feminine” behavioural qualities of chastity and virtue, pitted anti-female rhetoric with proto-feminist retorts on the relative superiority of one sex over the other (34). In Passi’s treatise, for instance, he claims that all women possess the traits of pride, lust, envy, ambition, avarice, and especially a “desire for power” (33). Passi believed women’s most egregious fault to be deceptiveness, counseling young men to learn about women’s “deceits” by reading his book (32).

In 1601, and in response to Passi’s treatise, Venetian writer Lucrezia Marinelli (1571-1653) published *La nobiltà et l'eccellenza delle donne cò difetti et mancamenti de gli uomini* (The Nobility and Excellence of Women and the Defects and Vices of Men) where she argued that women were actually superior to men in both nobility and virtue (*Emblems* 35). She claimed furthermore that men knew if they allowed women to learn to read and write they would end up subordinate to them (Rosenthal, *The Honest* 521). Indeed, the warrior queen figure inspired her to declare that if women were allowed military and

academic training that they would excel with “wondrous and unprecedented achievements in the spheres of both government and conquest” (522). To back up her argument, Marinelli pointed to exemplary women in foreign lands like England’s Elizabeth I or Germany where women participated in commerce, while in France, women oversaw the finances of both the household and the family shop (522).

Marinella’s 1635 heroic poem, *L'Enrico ovvero Bisanzio acquistato* (Enrico or Byzantium Acquired) features a group of fully armoured warrior women (Heller, *Emblems* 221). In that same year, Francesco Pona published his *Il Galleria delle donne celebri* (“The Gallery of Women Celebrities”) where he limits women’s proclivities to three categories, those being: lascivious, chaste, and holy (Miato 109). Marinelli, was part of the *cittadini* (professional) class and her father Giovanni Marinelli was a physician who published several medical treatises focused on women (Deslauriers, “Lucrezia”). He encouraged her intellectual development by affording her reading materials covering the subjects of biology, medicine, philosophy and literature (Deslauriers).

In her own works, Marinelli advocated for women’s rights while publishing widely on subjects ranging from poetry to religion, science, and mythology. She published her work in Tuscan Italian and thereby made it more accessible to more readers and especially to women. Because of her station and relative seclusion as a middle-class wife, Marinelli was afforded the time and space to write. Her father also championed her education and writing so she had the kind of support for it that most women lacked. Advocating for women’s worth beyond that of their subservient relationships with men, Marinelli wrote: “the proper purpose of women is not to please men, but to understand, to govern, to generate, to bring grace into the world” (qtd. in Labalme 97). She contended that, due to their ignoble denigration of and false claims about women, women’s feminine nature was not only different, but superior to men’s in nobility and virtue (Deslauriers). Marinelli advocated Plato’s position that women should be seen as equal partners to their husbands in marriage, should be trained in military arts, and should attain educations equal to men’s (Malpezzi Price 36). This attitude, as Malpezzi Price contends, strictly counters the Aristotelian idea that women are inferior and should be subjugated to male control (36).

Conversely, in his novella *Il Corriero svaligiato* (“The Post-boy Robbed of his Bag”) (1641), Incogniti member Ferrante Pallavicino (1615-44) wrote about women that: “As a rule, one does not find in your sex any rational capacity other than the will, so submerged by the passions that it has become an irrefutable axiom to say the woman is without judgment. Whether her lust is boundless or her rages out of control, she knows no moderation, a quality from which one is led to draw the conclusion that a person is human” (Muir 99). Libertine Pallavicino also published *La retorica delle puttane* (*The Whores’ Rhetoric*) in 1642. In this misogynist text a terribly poor girl comes to an old woman’s home begging for help. The woman teaches her the art of the courtesan, and, in the end, a client rapes the girl anally and disfigures the old woman (Fasoli 101). Paolo Fasoli writes that what mattered to Pallavicino’s readers was how “the tricks, mechanisms, and deceptive whorish rhetoric have been exposed” (101). Pallavicino goes on to claim that whores (and by implication, women in general) are “like shitholes and urinals exposed to the common benefit of whomever wants to discharge excessive semen” (102). Otherwise, Garavaglia finds Pallavicino to be “one of the most important Incogniti” pointing to his 1640 publication featuring Amazons who “revolt against male dominance” and posits that beneath Pallavicino’s fictional rhetoric “a share of the claims of the Amazons still emerges ... and therefore, more generally, those of women” (38). If Pallavicino was inspired by a genuine concern for women and their claims, the previous excerpts expose his confusion about them. Furthermore, his writing reflects a general bewilderment with regard to women and their relative worth or merits compared to men in Venetian society and within the academy. Pallavicino was eventually arrested and beheaded for his many subversive writings against Christian doctrine and the Society of Jesus among other charges (102).

During this time, the autodidactic Venetian nun Tarabotti developed a proto-feminist stance based on outrage over her father’s incarceration and life-long enclosure of her in a Benedictine convent at just eleven years old. Her family were merchants from Bergamo. She was the oldest daughter of ten children and because she was born lame, her father thought her unmarriageable (Hatch, “The Tarabotti Page”). Like Marinelli, Tarabotti railed against Venetian women’s exclusion “from education, military training, and public office” (Cox 520). For her, if women were irrational, as misogynist writers claimed, then it

was because “paternal tyranny” kept them from the education that men enjoyed and that would equally free them from ignorance and irrational (or illogical) thinking (Panizza 75). Tarabotti demanded schooling, books, and access to university education for women (75). In the following line from her publication *Tirannia paterna* (Paternal Tyranny), published posthumously in 1654, she writes, “You forbid women to learn in order for them to become incapable of defending themselves against your schemes, and then you proclaim how stupid they are, and how you defeat them” (76). Tarabotti took part in the proto-feminist outcry that took advantage of Venice’s vast publishing industry to decry the endemic misogyny that kept women from publishing their own thoughts; she framed women as victims, claiming that this silencing stifled their freedom of self-determination and movement in the city and beyond. Tarabotti became sought after and famous and, as Heller confirms, corresponded with both foreign and domestic writers along with opera librettists who were members of the Incogniti (*Emblems* 58).

At the request of “many noble ladies” Tarabotti responded to Buonisegni’s *Menippea* with a satire of her own titled *Antisatira* where she claimed that women were already beautiful and so fittingly decorate themselves to become even more beautiful (Miato, *L’Accademia* 118). In 1647, she anonymously published a *Che le donne non siano della specie degli huomini, discorso piacevole*, (That Women are not of the Human Species, a Polite Discourse) under the pseudonym Galerana Barcitotti and published in Venice by Francesco Valvasense (234). Valvasense was the “unofficial” publisher for the Incogniti (172). For publishing *Antisatira* Valvasense was arrested and when he published *Che le donne non siano* he was brought to trial in 1648, convicted for heresy, imprisoned, excommunicated, and his press was suspended (165). And while the Incogniti founder nobleman Giovanni Francesco Loredano’s (1607-61), association with both Tarabotti and Valvasense implicated him, he escaped prosecution (166). Notwithstanding her enclosed status, Tarabotti had access to and was exposed to the outside world through international admirers who, aware of her writings, came to visit her in the convent. In a letter addressed to opera librettist Giovanni Battista Fusconi (162?–168?), Tarabotti effusively thanked him for sending her his libretto for the opera *Argiope* (1649) which includes Amazon characters (Kaborycha, “Archangela Tarabotti”). In the letter she, extolled the figure of the Amazon writing that men were

cowards and were lucky not to live “in the times of those valorous amazons who prudently killed men in order to avoid being their subjects” (Heller, *Emblems* 221).

Eventually, word of Tarabotti’s writings came to the attention of the censors of the Holy Roman Inquisition. Francesco Antonio Ricci (dates unknown), who was a theologian and consultant to the Congregation of the Index (a list of forbidden books), wrote several letters in 1659 condemning Tarabotti’s book *La semplicità ingannata* (1654) to Cardinal Barberini (1630-1704). Ricci asserted that several of Tarabotti’s statements were against holy institutions. Statements that Ricci found problematic included: The locking up of nuns till death was an invention of human malice, not of Christ’s, who dealt with many women but did not impose perpetual seclusion on them; Woman was created by God to be her husband’s companion, not to be placed in a perpetual prison; Condemnation of perpetual seclusion as opposed to marriage which can be terminated (Costa-Zalessow 322). On these, Ricci claimed Tarabotti misinterpreted Holy Scripture and that her writing reflected the blasphemous opinions of Martin Luther on women. He charged furthermore that they would cause young girls to shun convent life (322). Tarabotti’s text was put on the *Index* of prohibited books. The censors argued that female sensuality should be kept under control and they defended the conventional belief in male superiority (322). Nine years after Tarabotti’s death in 1661, the official proclamation condemning *La semplicità ingannata* was published by the *Camera Apostolica* press (322).

Franco, Fonte, Marinella, and Tarabotti vociferously reacted to a gender ideology that 1) held women to be feebler than men “in body and mind,” 2) found gender equality “unnatural,” and 3) “justified” the subjugation of women in both canon and civil law (Panizza 66). The women writers nevertheless seized the opportunity to define in their own words who they were, what it meant to be a woman, and what they were capable of doing. Therefore, even if Venetian women retained the right to seek justice for wrongs done to them or if they seemed to enjoy more freedoms than women in other European communities, the Venetian proto-feminist writers argued for full equality and freedom, to determine their own destinies, and to make personal choices free of patriarchal coercion.

Positioned within this debate, and with a strong connection to the early opera studied here, the *Accademia degli Incogniti* held conflicting views about women. They were a group of libertine literati and followers of philosopher Cesare Cremonini (1550-1631) at the University of Padua (Heller 50). Openly skeptical of the pronouncements of the Roman Catholic Church, Cremonini pitted himself against Catholic authority and was brought before Inquisition courts a few times; he nevertheless taught his students to question accepted Christian dogma (50-1). However, between 1606 and 1660, the Jesuits were expelled altogether from the Venetian territories (192). As a considerable portion of young patricians attended courses at the University of Padua, the Incogniti greatly influenced upper class attitudes in Venice (177). Furthermore, the Incogniti advocated using deceit to subvert “all preconstituted authority,” espoused “philosophical freedom,” and backed opera (Rosand, *Opera in* 241). Venetian operas were first sponsored and produced by members of the literary Incogniti, who pioneered the impresarial theatrical system. Like the Florentine Camerata (the academic society in Florence who originally devised the first Italian language operas fifty years before), they looked to ancient Greek texts to inform their compositions. However, because novelty interested them more than precedent the Incogniti did not strictly adhere to the Greek model. For their versions, for instance, they replaced the Greek chorus convention with dances. To justify the change in approach, they published their arguments at the fronts of the libretti.

In true libertine fashion, the Incogniti were intent on testing accepted social and artistic parameters as they also proudly proclaimed faithful adherence to the Venetian State. For, as Heller suggests, the Incogniti espoused a mixture of conservative patriotism, Venetian Republicanism, and unbounded “*libertinismo*” (*Emblems* 50). They opposed Christian moral strictures on sexuality to instead promote the fulfillment of male physical desires and sexual pleasure (51). This attitude was reflected in their publication of erotica and books forbidden by the Church which they justified as “demonstrations of Republican freedoms and patriotic duty” that fit with the general atmosphere and freedoms of Venice at Carnival (50). Such attitudes translated unfortunately into a form of “rationalized misogyny” where, as Heller conveys, men were obliged and had the right to engage in “physical pleasures and sexual release”

in order to remain healthy and women served that purpose along with other men (51). Women, however, constituted a distraction to men from their patriotic duty to the Republic and so should be controlled and “instructed” on how to virtuously conduct themselves according to their gender. Those virtues included chastity and silence while, for men, it was proper to display courage and eloquence in their civic service and thereby maintain the health of the Republic (51). In this way, the Incogniti balanced private erotic predilections with public duty to the State with impunity (51).

The Incogniti also held unorthodox ideas about women that were heavily influenced by new scientific discoveries at the University of Padua. Following the introduction of autopsy by Andreas Vesalius (1514-64), Gabriello Fallopio (1523-62) the stark differences in male and female anatomy were ascertained (MacNeill 176). Fallopio’s findings contradicted the previously accepted theory based on the second century C.E. Galen of Pergamum’s concept that women’s reproductive organs were inverted versions of men’s genitalia (Laqueur 92). While many of them used the distinctions between male and female anatomy to justify traditional gender discrimination, the Incogniti also challenged accepted gender norms. They invited women to their activities and were the first to promote the newly professionalized women singers in Venice. The disregard for social norms at academy functions and beyond was important because by the 1630s and 40s they were the leading Venetian literary salon, consisting of eminent poets, librettists, and historians (Knippschild). Subjects of debate in their public meetings included: the nature of love, women’s virtue, the nonexistence of God or the afterlife, and the perpetual state of nothingness. Academy members were also interested in influencing city politics and thereby affecting social customs.

Another example of the influence of the academy regarding the social position of women concerns Cremonini’s student, Loredano, who founded the Incogniti in 1630. Loredano promoted the feminist writings of Tarabotti and, as Heller informs us, was instrumental in getting her writings published. However, in response to Tarabotti railing against the forced incarceration of young girls to lifelong confinement in convents by their male relatives, he later rescinded his support. This was perhaps because Loredano himself had his own sister confined to a convent. After Tarabotti’s death, he published a play titled *La forza d’amore* in 1662 that was also called an “opera scenica” (78). Heller explains that

the play was “almost indistinguishable from an opera libretto” with its three-act structure and blank verse interspersed with strophic canzonetta texts that employ devices to represent “exceptional women in opera” (78). In the play, Tarabotti’s “pro-female sentiments” are contrasted by Incognito ideas on women’s nature including juxtapositions on reason and sensuality, the falsity of chastity and women’s insatiable libidos, claims about women and free will versus women’s inability to rule, and on the ability of men and women to transform from one sex into the other (78). With his play, Heller suggests Loredano must have attended many operas as he intermixed subject matter, design, and a style that mimics countless libretti (81). Heller highlights the deep impression Tarabotti made on Loredano and other members of the academy linking their debates to the preoccupation of Venetian opera librettists with the nature of women and sexuality. But her relationship with Loredano was both beneficial and fraught because while he helped get her writings published, he was no proponent of women’s freedoms nor did he hold women in particularly high regard. Loredano, who feared that he would be caught visiting Tarabotti in her convent cell, so came there “incognito,” once wrote that a woman is: “a mad animal, cruel, indomitable, a monster of our species, and an excrement, indeed a nothing of Nature” (Miato 115, 112).

The image of the warrior woman and Amazon meanwhile obviously fueled the women writers’ resolve to fight oppression with the intellectual weapons of their potent pens. Amy Brosius outlines an evolution of the term *virtuoso* as originating from the Latin term for man or *vir* (27). By the Sixteenth century the term became *virtù*, associated with military training, was employed by authors like Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527) and Baldassare Castiglione (1478-1529) to encompass human accomplishments that facilitate political or social success, including the rhetorical arts of oration, letters, and literature (27). The term *virtù* also applied to any man, of any station, who mastered exceptional rhetorical skills used to critique music, painting, and sculpture (27). By the end of the Sixteenth century, when professional women musicians were being employed in the courts, they also became known as *virtuose* because of their virtuosic musical and rhetorical abilities (28). Brosius maintains moreover that when “the active, dynamic, masculine conception of *virtù*” was applied to woman singers, it could seem to threaten “the ‘natural’ social order,” especially when they performed in traditionally “masculinely-populated spaces”

where their exceptional abilities transgressed the boundaries of traditional gender behaviours (29). In other words, by interloping on their spaces the *virtuose* presented a threat to patriarchal prerogatives, while they also disproved patriarchal dictates on women's inferior intellectual abilities with their irresistibly intelligent performances; they therefore embodied a confusing contradiction. Altogether, the lives and work of the early feminist writers and the *virtuose* singers conveys a powerful impetus for change that comprises an early modern feminist wave. The first great divas of Venice too lived and worked within this wave.

The professional commedia dell'arte women actors also embodied the abovementioned contradiction as they performed in court festivals across the Italian peninsula and Europe. As theatrical forerunners to the operatic diva they too performed in cross-dressed and warrior women roles. It is therefore important to know in what ways their work and lives forged this professional pathway. For as Nino Pirrotta contends, these performers "created many of the conditions necessary for the acceptance of opera by the public" (*Music* 353). One condition was the presence of professional women actors on public stages along with the idea of professionalism for women in the context of commercial theatrical performance. This is not to say that there is a one-to-one replication of elements between commedia dell'arte and opera. It is more to say that in the professionalization of the female performer in public theatres commedia dell'arte women served as forerunners to the operatic divas. Within this transitional moment moreover, there was an interchange of performance practice where one form influenced the other. I return at different points in this study to the overlap of performance practice during this period apparent in conventions like cross-dressing and madwoman scenes for instance.

Richard Andrews offers that the commedia dell'arte women were the first professional singer-actor women in Europe, and by the 1560s were commonly featured in travelling troupes ("The Renaissance" 32). They were accomplished musicians and published authors who shared leadership roles in their troupes alongside their male counterparts. One of the first chronicled commedia dell'arte women was known by her stock character name "Flaminia" in everyday life. In July 1566, Flaminia was recorded to have been the leader of her acting troupe in Mantua, where she returned a year later to perform in

various heroine roles from *Orlando furioso* (Nicholson 246). To demonstrate and stretch their acting skills, women actors invented various disguises allowing them to expand their characters' movements outside of women's typical consignment to the domestic sphere. To accomplish this shift, they developed roles as various "as gypsies, beggars, pilgrims, and slaves of either gender; madwomen, pageboys, soldiers" and cross-dressed roles (Katritzky 201). Disguises incorporated elements of social class, ethnicity, age, and gender (201). Cross-dressing was a practice inherited from Roman comedy, carnival and festival custom, and could be found in literary sources. It was used to invert gender, class, and other fixed identities. And, as Maggie Günsberg suggests, while cross-dressed roles subverted "the fixity of boundaries, at the same time ... these boundaries are in themselves being reinforced" with the fetishization of cross-dressed woman actors (335).

Pamela A. Brown contends furthermore that the new "Hypermobile, highly skilled actresses who offered audiences a new kind of glamour and a wider emotional range helped put the *comici* on the map, touching off a revolution in mimesis that eventually rendered most all-male playing obsolete" (253). These women were skilled in solo singing, devising and performing poetry, singing tragic laments, and in performing mad scenes (254). They also attracted a wealthier audience with cultured tastes (254). Brown postulates that these were the first international stars to be called "diva" and that by arousing "circuits of desire" at courts around early modern Europe they brought change with them, attracting noble patrons who vied to hire them (258). The travelling divas inspired much fear and ridicule from their detractors, who accused them of "whorishness and mannish, even monstrous, deviance" due to their reputation as public performers who travelled with men and performed for mixed gender audiences (265). For, as Brown asserts, they violated "masculinist norms" meant ostensibly to "protect" their virtue and chastity requiring women to remain silent and enclosed from public view (265). These women did not observe the strictures on their voices or movements. They were physically active and publicly visible and audible. Through their performance of tragic heroines, they became targets for patriarchal condemnation, because they seemed to glorify and embody "sinful female duplicity" in "transient [public] spectacles" and ever-changing and artificial "fictions" (265).

Unlike most women, many commedia dell'arte women lived on their own and never married (Treadwell 242). Patricia Labalme wonders, as I do, whether when women assumed female roles onstage, it caused the reinterpretation of their everyday roles. Labalme asserts that, in the last years of the Sixteenth century, the new publicly visible women actors constituted a new class of entertainer who occupied the early Venetian stages in female roles (106). By their very presence on the public stage, as Eric Nicholson insists, the introduction of women actors to the previously all-male commedia dell'arte troupes altered the social landscape and troubled normative attitudes in the Renaissance regarding gender. Nicholson lays out the argument that when they brought virile chivalric characters to life, for instance, as the first women to play such figures for male audiences who were used only to seeing men play the roles or only to reading about them in printed romances and fantasizing about them (and as audiences sexually desired these women), “the acting out of heroic and erotic fantasies caused a live, direct confrontation with the exciting but also disturbing effects of such fantasies” (251). Men could now project their fantasies on to the bodies of real, live women performing powerful fictional roles before them with the knowledge that they were also living out personal, professional independence as they subverted prevalent and generally accepted ideas on keeping women contained.

Rosenthal explains that while women were forbidden to attend university, some women, like performer Isabella Andreini, took part in the activities of the male intellectual circles. Indeed, Andreini published a pastoral play titled *La Mirtilla* (1588). In her posthumously published letters (1607), she asserted her difference from most women interested in only “the needle, the distaff and the wool-winder” playing the part instead of a woman or *intravesti* as a man, depending on “what nature and art required” (Doglio, “Letter” 23; MacNeil 111). Concerning, her “masculine” oratorical and literary abilities, Erycius Puteanus (1574-1646) purported:

That such eloquence, that such learning should fall to the part of a woman! Where does that sex, which is mighty in writing, which sweats in public declamation, which grows old in literary studies, where does it show itself stronger than in you? Behold, now there are Amazons of learning, and they have their own Penthesilea! Shall I not call you by the name Andreini with

good reason and compare you to men? It has been implanted in women by nature to be able to speak, but in you to be able to speak well, whence it arises that by correcting a feminine vice you surpass even the virtue of the male. (92)

Maria Luisa Doglio speculates that Isabella's letters, edited and published in Venice posthumously by her husband, reveal her to be a woman who thought herself a "citizen of the world" with a "desire to know" (23). One way she distinguished herself from other women's lived realities was in stage acting as a man or as a woman and this was a thing not permitted to other "honest" women (23). However, as Natalie Crohn Schmitt contends, by virtue of having fictional female characters cross-dressing in male roles, the constructed-ness of the roles was revealed as was the assumption that the sexual hierarchy was permanently fixed and unalterable (*Befriending* 87). When both the character and the woman playing her succeed in doing things not normally allowed to women in society, furthermore, it was a double threat (87).

The company managers Isabella and Vittoria Piisimi (fl. 1595) lifted the profession from one disdained to one of renown by exhibiting "magnetic force" in their learned literary Tuscan and in their graceful performances as *innamorate* across many genres (Brown 258). This aspect differentiated their art from those of piazza entertainers, courtesan-poets, masking aristocrats, and "bawdy Francischinas" as Vittoria and Isabella capitalized on their identities as poets to "burnish and elevate their star personae" (258). Vittoria, a virtuosic singer and dancer, and her troupe called the *Confidente*, inaugurated with their performances the first commercial theatre in Venice, the *Teatro Tron*, in 1567. The commedia dell'arte divas Vittoria, Isabella, and Flaminia developed tragic heroine roles in "star scenes" from Tasso and Ariosto, among others (260). They integrated mad scenes, suicide scenes, along with sung and spoken laments that became associated with them but that later became conventions in opera (261). Flaminia and Armani in fact attracted enthusiastic followers who split into loyal factions dedicated to each (261). Brown posits that these star actors were dynamic figures who simultaneously performed as vectors, agents, and spectacles of "generic invention" (267). They first accomplished this performative dynamism and passed it on to the operatic divas. Brown follows Kerr's argument that the new diva *virtuose*

embodied a new type of “commodity fetish” who aroused unfulfilled desires as they made “commodification work for them” (267). In 1608, the multitalented commedia dell’arte diva Virginia Ramponi-Andreini (1583-c.1680) also performed the lead role in Monteverdi’s opera *Arianna*.

By the time opera became an established form in the 1650s, itinerant opera troupes competed with commedia dell’arte troupes for venues, causing a reciprocal exchange of actors and a hybridity of forms where commedia dell’arte plays included more musical numbers and opera integrated more comedy and spoken dialogue (Pirrota, *Music* 354). On a broader scale, the aspect of compositional fluidity in opera meant that performance scores, music, spoken lines, and scenes were regularly revised during staging rehearsals and in the performance event where singer-actors (usually women) added in virtuosic vocal embellishments. On this, Andrew Eggert explains that, in its adaptation to varying audiences and performance circumstances, this flexibility was not seen as a “concession to commercialism” in Seventeenth-century theatre culture (*Staging* 35-37). The changing circumstances instead caused practitioners of both genres to function semi-improvisationally as they adapted and improvised (on all levels of performance), their musical and dramatic productions (37). Eggert further relays that early opera retained this element of compositional flexibility as it was continuously reworked and adapted to the skills of any number of company members under contract for specific productions. Thus, archived documents like performance scores can be read as evolving works forever “in the process of coming into existence on the stage” (37).

In his treatise *Della Christiana Moderatione del Theatro* (1652) Jesuit priest Ottonelli wrote extensively on the moral and social dangers posed by the commedia dell’arte actors as well as the new women singers or “mercenary” *Cantatrice Comici* (singing comedians) active in travelling troupes. The treatise admonished theatrical performers of all sorts to moderate and constrain their acting to Christian moral codes. Ottonelli was most threatened by women performers who “speak with such warm affects, & uses words, and such gestures in matters of marriage, which scandalize the Hearers, most of them Young, and weak in virtue; & teaches them in words, and with immodest deeds, the way to do serious immodesties” (“*quando la Donna parla con tanto caldo affetto, & usa parole, e gesti tali in materia di*

maritaggio, che scandaliza gli Uditoi, massimamente Giovani, e deboli di virtù & insegna loro con parole, e con fatti immodesti la maniera di fare delle gravi immodestie"; 72).

Ottonelli also differentiated between the commedia dell'arte actors and singers of the new *dramma per musica* – the term used at the time for opera. As they were trained by learned *professori*, they represented a higher class of singer because their art required another level of discipline and he thought the form more “tasteful and nobler” than that of non-musician commedia dell'arte players (525). Unlike their lesser skilled counterparts, however, he characterized Andreini and Virginia Ramponi, as modest *virtuose* in league with the new women singers of the *dramma per musica*. Ottonelli claimed, however, that they still presented a grave moral danger to audiences. He reasoned that women who sing for the public easily lure listeners into sin especially because music has more “force” than spoken words and could therefore lead audiences more easily into lascivious thoughts and deeds. He wrote, “Comedy, or Drama that is represented by singing, as Music, as we know, has more force than ordinary speaking; and the Obscenity in the souls of the Hearers is most impressed: being that the Action expressed in Music moves more than the simple expression of a common [speaking] voice” (“*La Comedia, ò Drama si rappresenta con il canto imperoche la Musica, come sappiamo, hà più forza che il parlar ordinario; e lascia maggiormente impresse l'Oscenità ne gli animi de gli Uditori: essendo che muove più l'Attione espressa in Musica, che la semplice, & espressa con voce commune*”; 523). Ottonelli worried especially about the impression that such singers had on young men, other women, and on children writing: “the same happens to Women: since many ... [go] more often, and more freely, to the Theatre of Musicians, than to that of simple Recitants. Indeed, many bring young children, or relatives [there], without scruple against the grave admonition of St. Christostomo” (“*e lo stesso avviene de le Donne: poiche molte concorrono più violentieri, e più liberamente al Teatro de' Musici, che à quello de' semplici Recitanti. Anzi molti vi conducono senza scrupolo alcuno i Giovanetti figliuoli, ò parenti, contro la grave Ammonitione di S. Christostomo*”; 523-4). To avoid such ignominy, Ottonelli cautioned the *virtuose* to lead modest, virtuous lives and to sing modest and virtuous texts while admonishing learned librettists to avoid material that would lead auditors into lascivious thoughts. This is because, along with the alluring appearance of

beautifully costumed women singers, performing with sumptuous sets, and singing about love as lovers in love scenes, they still lured weak-willed audience members to contemplate sinful thoughts (282).

Ottobelli's long treatise reflects the deep impression that women actors/singers left on audiences and how seriously he took the threat they represented to moralistic Church authority over them and their activities.

Alas, he was too late because after having gained so much from their *commedia dell'arte* predecessors, operatic divas of the next generation lifted the torch of commercial celebrity status to new levels with unstoppable impetus.

CHAPTER II: ENTRA LA REGINA GUERRIERA!

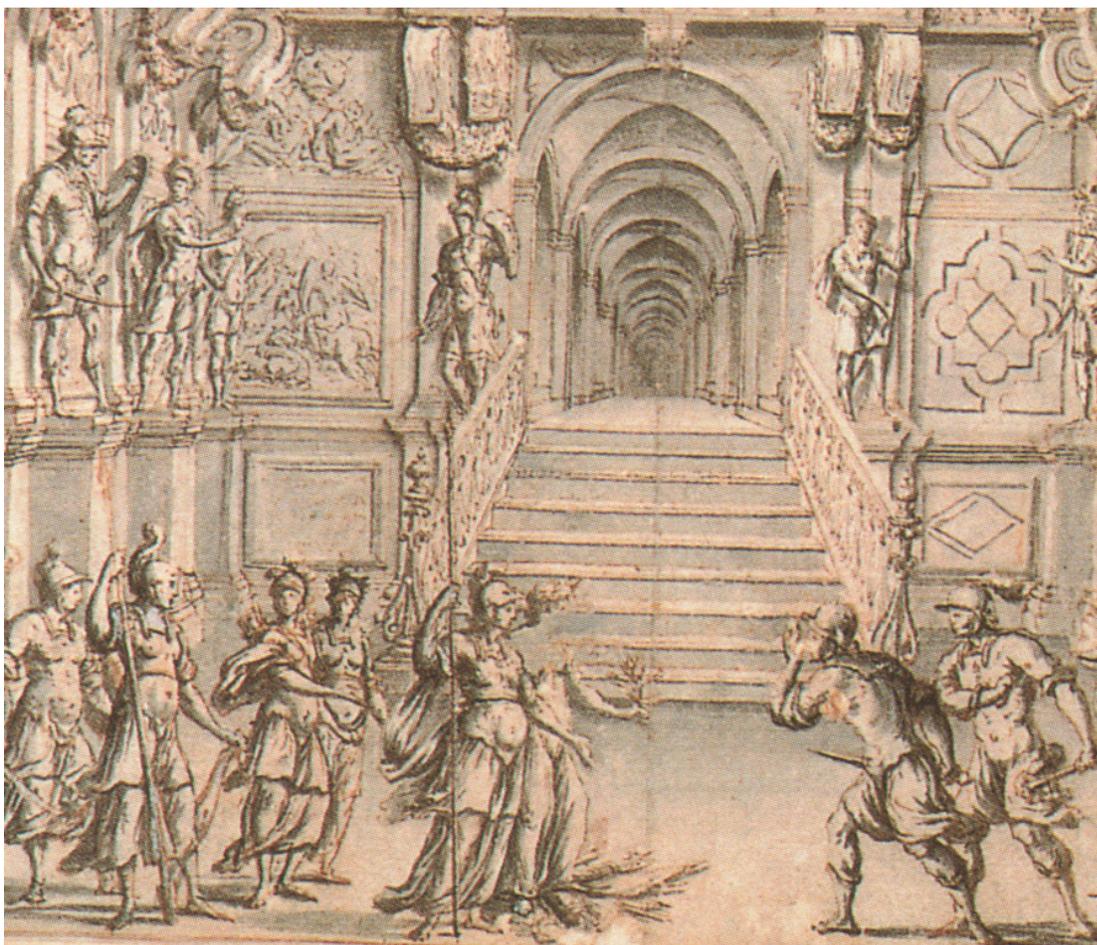


Fig. 2. Detail of Giacomo Torelli scene design with warrior women in a Fortezza (Fortress) (Milesi, Francesco. Giacomo Torelli. L'invenzione scenica nell'Europa barocca 375)

Doriclea, born of the royal blood of Pontus, who always wanted ... to be among the troops, to roam armed in the battles, and to fight ... Like a thunderbolt, she burst through the Parthian ranks and, throwing down whoever tried to oppose her courage, penetrated into the centre of the hostile camp. There, in spite of a thousand swords, she wounded Artabanos.

Giovanni Faustini (Synopsis for La Doriclea 1645)

La Doriclea (1645) is the first Venetian opera to feature a warrior queen. It was only Giovanni Faustini's (1615-51) fourth libretto of his fifteen – twelve of which Francesco Cavalli (1602-76) set to music – completed before his untimely death at age thirty-six. The warrior woman theme was historically popular and remained a popular operatic subject after *Doriclea*. There were seven warrior woman operas produced in Venice from 1650 to 1670, the approximate period that I cover here. Cavalli's four

subsequent warrior woman roles appeared in *Veremonda* (1652), *Erismena* (1655), *Artemisia* (1657), and *L'Elena* (1659).

The figure of the Amazon warrior woman captured the Western imagination. Living queens adopted the iconographic images to represent themselves and their reigns. Sovereigns like Catherine de' Medici (1519-1589), Elizabeth I of England (1533-1603), and Christina of Sweden (1626-1689) commanded public attention into the mid-seventeenth century and were regularly associated with the Amazon figure. Tommaso Campanella (1568-1639) for example, describes the sixteenth century as having hosted the "reign of women" (Garavaglia 17). Campanella lists several notable women rulers, including Isabella of Castile (1451-1504) and Bona Sforza of Poland (1494-1597), not to mention the "Amazons" of Africa from Nubia to Monomotapa (Southern Mozambique and Zimbabwe) (17). Early modern Italian historian Gregorio Leti (1630-1701) described Amalia Elizabeth of Hanau-Münsenberg (1602-51), based on her ability to manage governmental duties, as a "lucky warrior" and "great amazon" (21). About her, Leti wrote: "This Minerva of Germany ... this great amazon, this fortunate warrior, if not of arm and sword, of heart and pen, and if not in the field of armies, in the council of politicians after having more than Ten years, with great fortune and valor, sustained the war, kept the enemies from their states, slamming their victories over the lands of their enemies, in the peace of Münster in 1648" (Leti qtd in Garavaglia 21). Another interesting example of a sovereign groomed to become a warrior queen is Christina of Sweden who, as Garavaglia explains, "learned to ride and handle weapons" in a "male upbringing" (21). Christina, who was a contemporary of Renzi and Cavalli, was often represented as the Greek figures Diana and Minerva and was known by the epithet "Amazon of the North" (21). Such ascriptions belied the myth that women were unintelligent and totally incapable of grasping politics or ruling effectively (21).

These queens, however, had to deflect negative attitudes towards them. They were thought "unnatural" whereby, as King and Rabil suggest, such a sovereign was seen as a monstrous anomaly "at once a deformed woman and an inadequate male, sexually confused and consequently unsafe" (xxiv). The women rulers in turn countered those prejudices with images, like the Amazon, depicting competent,

capable leadership while potently commanding armies and performing their political duties with acumen. Alternatively, King and Rabil claim that hitching the Queen's reputation to the warrior woman image incurred the opprobrium of being "masculinized" and losing "title to her own female identity" (xxv). It is easy to comprehend how women who wielded such political power while commanding great armies played vividly into the popular imagination. Combined with the popular literary tradition of Amazons and warrior women, the presence of recent and living warrior queens was not only a reality but it inspired a plethora of materials across media; as it stimulated the creation of operatic heroines like the Veremonda character based on the Spanish Isabella of Castille (1451-1504). The enduring fascination with the historical or fictional warrior queen and Amazon figures is her ability to exemplify and exercise ultimate freedom in movement, power, and personal will in the world. As she brought the powerful figure to life, the charismatic diva who exemplified free movement onstage and in the city was easily associated with warrior queens both past and present.

The trope of the Amazon and the warrior queen, which operated broadly as an important socio-cultural symbol for European women, informed the operatic role type. Commedia dell'arte women, before the operatic divas, embodied warrior women and Amazon characters on court stages and in the first Venetian commercial theatres during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. As images of Amazon and warrior women were hot currency in the late Renaissance period, they commonly appeared in commedia dell'arte plays and *intermezzi*, where the great women actors helped to spread them from court to court. During the 1560s, Vicenza Armani and Flaminia Romana (dates unknown), for example, performed the warrior woman roles of Bradamante and Marfisa in scenes from Ludovico Ariosto's (1474-1533) *Orlando furioso* for the Gonzaga court in Mantua (Treadwell 224-5). About the ancient warrior women, Ariosto wrote, "Ancient women have done marvelous deeds in arms and by the sacred muses; and of their beautiful and glorious works a great light has spread throughout the world" (Shemek 76). Flaminia and Vicenza, as Nina Treadwell informs us, received accolades for their renditions of *guerriera armata*, or armed warriors (224). Twenty years later, during the 1580s, troupe manager for the *Confidenti*,

Vittoria Piissimi, also played warrior women roles from the *furioso* to great acclaim for the Mantuan court (225).

On the Amazon character, Christopher Mossey writes that Amazon characters like Camilla and Hippolyta populated Italian vernacular publications of epics and editions of myths that were also used as sources for Venetian opera libretti (x). To make them conform to seventeenth-century normative ideas about the female sex librettists subjected the female characters' power to male control by opera's end. The compendium of operatic works concentrating on the Amazon, according to Andrea Garavaglia, spans the approximate period of 1650 to 1730 (54). And while Garavaglia maintains that the Amazon warrior role based on Penthesilea in *L'Euripo* of 1649, with a libretto by Faustini and composed by Cavalli, was the first Amazon-themed opera, *Doriclea* precedes that date by four years (53). Therefore, the period featuring Amazon and warrior woman operas begins in 1645.

Cavalli and Minato's *Artemisia* is partly based on the historical Asia Minor queen Artemisia I, who commanded five ships into battle against the Greeks under the Persian King Xerxes. For his *Artemisia*, Minato concocted a powerful Amazon warrior queen with seductive power over men. For the male librettist, the foreign warrior queen, like the diva who embodied her, was eroticized and then brought under male control. The figures of the Amazons and warrior queens were manipulated to reflect current social priorities and Baroque aesthetics. This is so that, as Chimène Bateman postulates, "The Greek tendency to conceptualize difference in terms of polarity, is largely defined as what the Greeks themselves are *not*. Ariosto's *guerriere* play a new role: not only are they central to the plot, but they stand as emblems of it. The hybrid figure of the woman warrior, monstrous within the ancient world, is relocated to a universe where hybridity is the norm" (21). Amazon and warrior woman roles were regularly written for the first professional operatic women singers to perform. Therefore, while the curtailment of the warrior queen role by male librettists inscribed early modern priorities about female gender norms, the diva's powerful sonic presence contradicted and overrode such curtailment, thereby breaking the librettist's promise. For, as Butler writes, "the body is at once the organic condition of promise making and the sure guarantor of its failure. If the promise relays an intention and the body

signifies the unintentional, then the body, which is presupposed by the promise, is also the occasion of the promise's necessary failure" (*The Scandal* 114).

Rosand connects the image of the warrior woman with the idea of the Venetian State, mentioning that the armed woman warrior Venetia was adopted to represent its personification (*Opera in* 126). Indeed, the public opera, as Rosand contends, was a viable propaganda instrument where "the citizens of the Republic affirmed their allegiance to the idea of Venice" as a place where the "disparate populace" could find a "certain common bond" (152). In fact, the prologue to the opera *Oronte* (1656) ends with the Goddess Iride advising the audience "in their capacity as defenders against the Orient" to pay close attention to the drama (146). Margaret L. King and Albert Rabil Jr. detail how a woman who transgressed and even "exceeded" normative gender behaviours could garner the appellation "Amazon" in everyday life. They write:

Any woman who excelled was likely to be called an Amazon, recalling the self-mutilated warrior women of antiquity who repudiated all men, gave up their sons, and raised only their daughters. She was often said to have "exceeded her sex," or to have possessed "masculine virtue" – since the very fact of conspicuous excellence conferred masculinity even on the female subject. The catalogues of notable women often showed those female heroes dressed in armour and armed to the teeth, like men. Amazonian heroines romp through the epics of the age – Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* (1532), Spencer's *Faerie Queene* (1590-1609). Excellence in a woman was perceived as a claim for power, and power was reserved for the masculine realm. A woman who possessed either was masculinized and lost the title to her own female identity. (xxv)

In this way, as Heller suggests, the heroines of the opera stage and the women who embodied Amazon and warrior women roles performed a stock role-type for female characters adopted from the ancient cataloguing of women and updated by Ariosto, Tasso, the commedia dell'arte, and opera librettists (*Emblems* 17). The catalogued women were transformed into operatic types put into various situations and drawn from various mythological and historical settings that became part of the repertoire (17). The

practice and the type migrated and, in the process, was tweaked and fitted to current tastes and social priorities within the patriarchal order while confirming seemingly fixed conceptions about women.

Librettists and composers for their parts toyed with the concept of the woman warrior. On this, Heller



Fig. 3. Portrait of Jeanne d'Arc (1412-31) Les dossiers de la Société d'Histoire du Pays Naborien – 97
www.shpn.fr/page87/page87.html

posits, “Opera supplied the aural dimension, endowing women with a previously unknown rhetorical power and allure. Like the catalogues, opera not only defined women’s nature” sometimes in contradictory ways but they also modeled how men should treat women and showed women how to behave (17).

The experimental musical structures that Cavalli and composers of his generation employed for these operas were in a state of flux as part of the shift from polyphony to monody and the use of modes to those of tonal key centres. Therefore, the language I use to describe his music reflects this transitional stage. So, for instance, the key signatures in his manuscripts don’t necessarily dictate what will happen either harmonically or melodically in the sections that follow because the harmonic and melodic lines contain many accidentals that shift liquidly with the meaning of the words in the text. On the other hand, the language used to describe his music by theorists like Mossey often suggest that certain harmonies are

meant to indicate specific human attributes like strength and weakness. How such musical sounds are perceived and categorized is fascinating. How is it, for example, that we can take for granted Mossey's explanation that "The parallels between sharp tonalities and deception ... suggest that Doriclea's actions nearly precipitate the loss of her virtue" (Mossey, *Doriclea* xv)? Mossey's connection between emotional "affect" and musical key centres reflects the work of Eric Chafe who analyzes the music of Claudio Monteverdi and his tonal and harmonic innovations, especially his expansion of sharp keys and his contrasting of flat and sharp keys to indicate textual contrasts in the drama. How associations between sonic patterns were linked to specific human behaviours and attributes and then accepted as common sense interests me. All of these musical devices, like the *stile concitato* and the use of sharp major keys, set into practice by Monteverdi and Cavalli, established important new conventions that composers continued to develop.

As this study is not solely musicological, I look for recurring musical elements in recitative and aria units that repeat from role to role, signaling Cavalli's attempt to construct and signify gender in, and across, the five roles. This also pertains to the librettist's textual innovations as they were enveloped into the composer's musical renditions. I do not, however, examine text in a philological sense but more in a deconstructive one regarding the dramatic construction of gender with musical notes. Neither am I looking to know the composers' or librettists' personal intentions. Rather, I seek to better understand their constructions within the social context and how those constructions were linked to prevalent conceptions and questions concerning gender, and especially what it meant, and how the characteristics of the musical composition were supposed to describe and differentiate human attributes like "femaleness" or "maleness," or sound patterns meant to indicate the difference between a female warrior or a male warrior, or a female *en travesti* or a "male" warrior. In other words, how were musical sounds used to indicate gender? On the other hand, I am interested in better understanding how audiences who experienced their stage performances might have perceived the women singers playing out the male creators' constructions.

Librettist Giovanni Faustini's (1615-51) *Doriclea* most resembles the Volscian Camilla in Virgil's epic poem the *Aeneid* (21-19 BCE) and Torquato Tasso's (1544-95) character Clorinda from his epic poem *Gerusalemme liberata* (1575) (Mossey, *Doriclea* x). Tasso's Clorinda is partially derived from Virgil's Camilla in that she is both "feminine" in her virginity and "masculine" in "her desire for glory" (Becker 18). Tasso's Camilla is a warrior queen who commands a troupe of women warriors, remains celibate and single, and dies in battle fighting for her country. In these ways, she most resembles an Amazon. A similar warrior queen character derived from Virgil's Camilla is Bradamante of Ludovico Ariosto's (1474-1533) romance *Orlando Furioso* (1516). The knightly Bradamante engages in combat, laments, is mistaken for a male knight, and disguises herself as a male wizard, while also remaining chaste and faithful to Ruggiero whom she rescues and then marries to become his queen. Like *Doriclea*, Virgil's Camilla seeks glory and renown. Tasso's Clorinda is a fully-fledged Persian warrior queen intent on command and warcraft, rather than love, and dies in combat (Tasso, *Gerusalemme*, Book 12, line LXVIII). Both Clorinda and *Doriclea* are queens, both are depicted in the midst of battle, seek glory, and are offered land as a reward for heroic behaviour. Both are also recognized as superior warriors to their male counterparts in battle. Monteverdi's operatic *scena Il Combattimento di Tancredi* (1624) in his eighth book of madrigals also features the warrior woman Clorinda. Both Monteverdi's Clorinda and Cavalli's *Doriclea* use deception to achieve their goals when wounded and captured in battle, and both remain in armour as warriors for the majority of the operas (Graham 30-2). Something that distinguishes *Doriclea* from earlier warrior women characters, however, is that she does not disclose her biological sex to the other characters until the final moments of the drama.



Fig. 4 *Domenico Tintoretto “Tancredi Baptizing Clorinda,” c. 1585 (Museum of Fine Arts Houston*
<https://www.mfah.org/art/detail/47417>

While Doriclea is fictional, her husband, the Parthian King Tigrane and his rival, King Artabanos of Armenia, are both based on historical kings with the same names and kingdoms. Also, the Armenian city Artaxata, where much of the action occurs, featured prominently in the historical Armenian-Parthian wars (87-5 BCE). Otherwise, the characters and their doings are invented. The setting is Artaxata on the river Araxes lying between the realms of Armenia and Parthia. Mossey details that Doriclea’s name also matches that of a river in the area. The *Argomento* also describes Doriclea’s royal pedigree, her motivation, and her part in the military action:

Doriclea – born of the royal blood of Pontus [near the Black Sea] and who had always wanted to be apart from the sad fates of her dear consort, to roam armed in the fray among the troops and to fight for her life – made herself unrecognized that day, proof of unheard-of valor. Like a thunderbolt she opened the Parthian ranks and, throwing down whoever tried to oppose her courage, penetrated into the centre of the hostile camp. There, in spite of a thousand swords, she wounded Artabanos ... Trampled alive under the battle horse and wounded by many arrows in

that most muscular part of her foot, she accompanies, although sluggish in her course, the flight of her beloved Tigrane ... (Mossey, trans. diss. 747-8)

Mossey adds that the geographic placement of scenes and the military subject matter reflects the Venetian/Ottoman military conflicts of the 1640s and 50s (xi).

In the prologue of *La Doriclea*, the allegorical characters Ambition and Ignorance arrive, after a long journey, at the Mount of Virtue in the Temple of Glory. When Virtue and Glory enter the scene, Ambition and Ignorance hide themselves behind some oak trees. Virtue complains that no one appreciates her anymore even though she brings people “everlasting good” but that she is now poor so no one takes her seriously (Mossey xxv). Ignorance and Ambition accost her telling her to strip down while Ignorance takes her clothes to disguise herself as Virtue. Ambition then eggs her on and they both sing “let Ignorance fly to the temple of Glory on the wings of Ambition, masqueraded as Virtue!” As the Venetian government was involved in warfare with the Ottomans, Glory addresses the Venetian warriors and the women in the audience, informing them that they will witness one of their own sex take up the sword in battle crying:

... Venetian heroes, whose sublime virtues fly from the cold Boreas to the warm Eurus, the temple in which you live is unsuitable to immortalize you in future centuries ... Tonight, you beautiful ladies will see your weak sex covered with glory, and at once you will understand that not only can it amorously conquer hearts and souls with the weapon of a beautiful face, but it can also prepare the palms [of victory] with the sword. (xxvi; Cavalli score p. 1-8)

When Ignorance disguises as Virtue, the device of deception through disguise previews *Doriclea*'s disguise as a male soldier. Ambition then provides Ignorance with wings to fly in pursuit of Glory.

The first two scenes of Act 1 are held on the battlefield near the river Araxes. The two main pairs of lovers are separated and *Doriclea*, disguised as a male warrior is captured and taken prisoner by the Parthians. In his description of *Doriclea*'s plea to Tigrane to kill her upon the advancement of the Parthian troops, Mossey explains that Tigrane is overcome by emotion and that while “his essentially effeminate nature” nearly hampers him from doing the deed, he succeeds in stabbing *Doriclea* (*Doriclea* xii). Then,

thinking her dead, Tigrane runs off. At this point the Parthian officer Surena finds the wounded and unconscious Doriclea lying on the ground. Thinking her a male soldier, he recognizes her as the one who wounded King Artabanos and takes her into custody.

At the Parthian camp, a doctor dresses Artabanos' wound while Artabano marvels at the bravery of the soldier who wounded him. Artabano then leaves to attack the city of Artaxata. The rest of the act focuses on Eurinda, Artabanos' sister, and her infatuation with the Iberian prince named Farnace who she believes is working for Artabano. Little does Eurinda know that Farnace is actually a spy for the Armenians. However, when Doriclea (as the warrior "Cyrus") is brought onto the scene to be cared for by Eurinda, and when s/he disparages the Parthian state and King Artabano, Eurinda threatens "him" with a sword (xii). Yet, when Eurinda notices the soldier's "masculine" beauty, she falls immediately in love. Farnace then enters the scene and disarms Eurinda. He recognizes Doriclea's true identity but does not disclose it to Eurinda claiming he knows the soldier to be an Iberian warrior named "Cyrus." At this, Eurinda relinquishes "Cyrus" to Farnace's control. When alone, Farnace tells Doriclea the news that while Tigrane is alive, the Parthians have laid a trap for him. Farnace then leaves Doriclea in the care of his black squire-doctor named Sabari.

In Act 2, with King Artabanos' consent, Eurinda and "Cyrus" become closer. As Artabano is attends to his business, he comments on "Cyrus's" courage and tells him that he loves him. The scene switches to the desert between Assyria and Armenia where the solitary Tigrane bemoans his fate and cries out for heaven to kill him. Farnace arrives to inform Tigrane that Doriclea is alive and they leave for Parthia to apprehend her (xii). The action returns to the camp where Artabano considers "Cyrus's" suitability to marry his sister, who alone can assure the continuance of the royal bloodline. He decides to offer "Cyrus" a share of his kingdom. "Cyrus" refuses Artabanos' offer but offers "his" services as "cavalier" to Eurinda (xii). Eurinda's lady Melloe urges her to go with Farnace but she is too in love with "Cyrus" to comply. Farnace's dwarf page Orindo overhears Eurinda and Melloe's conversation and sings a monologue expressing what Mossey terms "misogynist conceits" commonly present in Venetian opera (xii). Sabari returns to confess his infatuation with Doriclea to the audience.

In Act 3, all scenes build to the recognition of “Cyrus’s” true identity as Doriclea. The act opens with Doriclea mulling her escape plans in monologue. At the end of the scene, physically and emotionally overwrought she slips into sleep. Sabari finds her thus and tries to kiss her, but when she awakens, he declares his ardour. Based on his ethnicity and low social status, Doriclea berates and refuses him. In a separate scene, Melloe discerns Orindo’s plan to tell Artabano about Eurinda’s desire to seduce “Cyrus.” Meanwhile, Tigrane and Farnace are back in Parthia disguised as Parthians. Sabari sees Tigrane and tells him that Doriclea is to marry Artabano. After Tigrane leaves Sabari feels remorse for lying to him. Next, Doriclea and Eurinda are found in a royal bedchamber where Doriclea pretends to adore her. Eurinda convinces “Cyrus” to kiss her but Artabano and Orindo interrupt them. Artabano curses Eurinda for sullyng the Parthian line and for abandoning her chastity. Tigrane, dressed as a Parthian, enters and draws his sword on Artabano. While Doriclea moves to defend Artabano she catches Tigrane’s eye and recognizes him just as Tigrane utters her name. As Tigrane violently upbraids Doriclea accusing her of infidelity, Artabano orders soldiers to lead him away. Doriclea laments Tigrane’s accusations and Eurinda returns to Farnace, who forgives her.

In the final scenes, in admiration for her courage, even after her biological sex is revealed, Artabano shows Doriclea mercy. Then a messenger informs him that the Scythians have attacked Parthia. Farnace implores Artabano to forgive Tigrane, and Artabano offers to relinquish his hold on Armenia and return it to Tigrane’s control. Thinking that Artabano is still a rival for his wife’s hand, Tigrane refuses the offer. When Sabari admits it was a lie that Artabano was to marry Doriclea, Tigrane begs Doriclea’s forgiveness and they reconcile. Artabano pledges to always protect Armenia and gives Eurinda to Farnace in marriage concluding the opera with a *lieto fine* (xiii).

La Doriclea’s prologue simulates the title character’s path through the plot as the allegorical characters Ambition and Ignorance climb the mount of Virtue up to the temple of Glory. In his dedication Faustini explains: “Simple-hearted and young, and guided by the blind escort of her daring, [Doriclea] does not fear the Alcides, who challenge her, nor heed the traps laid to impede her journey by two powerful enemies, selfish rivalry and presumptuous ignorance” (Mossey, trans. diss. xxi). The allegorical

characters' actions metaphorically describe Doriclea's struggles to face and overcome personal and external impediments to her goal of enacting revenge on the Parthian King Artabano. Throughout the opera, her dual role as the married queen Doriclea and her male disguise, warrior "Cyrus," causes confusion. On her dual nature, Mossey suggests that, while she has the "male" attributes of valor and courage, as she is "passed from one guardian to another," and she is physically weak in the first scene. And because she does not choose a male identity but only passively "allows herself" to be seen as such, all these things add up to a "false masculinity" and so conforms to traditional dramatic treatments of women (diss. 210).

In his dedication, Faustini refers to the character Doriclea as an "Amazon" and, according to Mossey, this would have been enough to clue audiences familiar with the term into her "masculine" role in the opera (195). Doriclea's unrestrained bravery and her mastery of sword fighting mark her as masculine, and her birth in Pontus links her to the mythological Amazons said to have dwelt near the Pontus region in the Black Sea area (198). Furthermore, warrior women are regularly paired with "weak willed" husbands in mid-seventeenth-century warrior woman operas (201). Mossey quotes Heller, who contends that Amazons were considered more powerful than mere warrior women because of their ability to out-perform men in the male provinces of governance and war (197). Amazonian social structure also functioned without men which would have seemed particularly abhorrent in Venice's ridged patriarchy (197). Perhaps because of this, Doriclea is listed neither as queen, nor as warrior, in the libretto but rather, perhaps more appropriately, as "wife of Tigrane."

Regarding the allegorical figures in the opera, they represent human flaws. Ignorance and Ambition are tied specifically to Doriclea and occur only in this and no other Faustini libretto; she must overcome them in order to achieve her ultimate goal of "immortal glory" (202). Glory is featured in only one other Faustini libretto (202). To attain "immortal glory," Doriclea chooses the traditional "female" devices of disguise and deception, enabling her to take charge of the Parthian encampment.

Since operas were offered only during the circumscribed carnival season, and as they became more and more popular, the competition was fierce, so most operas, such as *Doriclea*, only ran once as

Nicola Badolato confirms (*I drammi* 9). This forced librettists to efficiently adjust their production to rapidly supply a high demand market causing them to standardize plot and story construction with “more or less fixed frames yet elastic enough to accommodate wide variations” (9). The librettist was meanwhile also responsible for addressing the requirements of the singers, composer, impresario, and for staging to produce a drama that was both entertaining and well suited for “rapid turnover” (10).

In the preface to his libretto for *Egisto* (1643), Faustini inserted the following complaint about having to delay the premiere of *La Doriclea*:

In order not to let Doriclea perish, with a hasty pen I have created Egisto, which I cast into the arms of fortune. If it is not deserving for your applause, excuse the quality of its being, because having been born in but a few days, it might better be called a miscarriage than an offspring of the mind ... If you are critical, do not abhor the madness of my Egisto as an imitation of an action that you have already seen on the stage ... because the authoritative entreaties of a powerful person have compelled me to insert it into the opera, to satisfy the inclination of the performer. (Mossey, *La Doriclea* ix)

Mossey explains that the two-year delay in producing *Doriclea* from the time of the completed libretto and score had to do with the “delicate balance between librettists, composers, opera’s noble patrons, and the whims of singers in 1643” (xi). Mossey posits that censorship was the reason for the cuts (204).

In *Doriclea*, Faustini used the conventions of parallel and dual plots filled with deceptions and misunderstandings like jealousy and mistaken identity to create complicated predicaments for characters to overcome (44). The theatrical device of mistaken identity often entailed transvestite disguise, resulting in performances of ambiguous gender and “ambivalent erotics” (Badolato 21). In *Doriclea*, this situation is exemplified when Doriclea disguised as a male warrior, feels obliged to elicit princess Eurinda’s amorous affections. An explicit seduction scene between Doriclea (disguised as the male warrior Cyrus) and princess Eurinda was cut from the performance score (ix). The portion from the printed 1645 libretto that was cut included the following lines: If you do not want anything but kisses, I will make your desires

full of kisses. But are your desires languid and soft, Or yet bold and cutting? Do you want that my amorous tongue be slothful, Or do you desire it all restricted In your sweet mouth, wriggling and agile... after the kiss, my love, what will happen? ... I would kiss you for myself, Oh pretty Eurinda, oh idolized god, I enter the bed with great delight (Mossey, trans. diss. 204). Here, Doriclea enacts male privilege.

In his introduction to the edited score, Mossey notes that Doriclea never lets on to other characters, to herself, or to the audience that she plans to dress and pass as a male warrior. It is not until the Act 2 seduction scene with Eurinda that she comments to the audience in an aside *Per non sembrar scortese* (As not to seem rude) that she acts to deceive. Mossey speculates that there is no “explicit motive behind her disguise” and that this deepens her character as she sometimes seems to believe herself to be male (xvii). I also ponder how during a time of year when (and in a society where) masquerading as someone other than one’s self was regarded *de riguer* the composer and librettist depicted a female character who is able to convincingly “masquerade” as a powerful male warrior. Was there perhaps a desire to unravel, disassemble, dissect, and reconstruct a gender narrative on what is “natural” to male and female characters regarding behaviours, intellect, physical abilities, and potential? The prevalence and popularity of the Amazon and warrior queen figures and the narratives about them just before and during the period when the first Venetian operas were produced cause me to wonder how that context effected their constructions. Clearly, the warrior queen and/or Amazon figures held such significant public attention that an enormous quantity and variety of print material was published on them across Europe.

To clarify the overall musical grammar that Cavalli employed and how it fit into the theoretical thinking of the time, Mauro Calcagno explains that unlike later Classical music, key signatures were not fixed but morphed and moved with the actions and the meaning of the text, where linguistic, or illocutionary, force fueled a sonic “environment” without a fixed tonal system (diss. *Staging* 242). As mentioned, keys were either on the “flat side” or on the “sharp side” (242) The overall musical character of the tonal centre was identified by adding accidentals to the chord (sharps or flats that are not in the key signature) into the music along the way. This is important because the music of the period sounds very

different from the codified homophony of the classical period of Haydn and Mozart from approximately 1750 to 1820.

Venetian operatic composers utilized a new technique for setting dramatic text to music known as the *stile concitato* (aroused or agitated style) [file:///Users/administrator/Downloads/Monteverdi_-_Combattimento_-_Battle_music.ogg] to electrify dramatic scenes. Bonnie Gordon relates that Monteverdi was most innovative with his *concitato* style because upon his review of ancient Greek sources, he had found no specific examples of the pitches used (188). He did, however, find a description from Plato of music in the agitated style as “those that imitate the voice and accents of a man going bravely into battle” (188). Massimo Ossi indicates too that Monteverdi based his formulations for the *stile concitato* on his readings of Plato, Aristotle, and classical poetry (*Divining* 192). Monteverdi introduced the *concitato* style in madrigal and then in operatic compositions. With the *concitato* style, as Chafe posits, Monteverdi mapped out a use for the heretofore underdeveloped *duras* or sharp keys as opposed to the *molle* or flat keys (237).

Rather than depicting psychological states of mind, early opera composers and librettists focused on stimulating affective sensations in auditors. The seventeenth-century music theorist Athanasius Kircher (1602-80) for example conceived a theory in which certain intervallic combinations should evoke specific affective effects in the listener. On this, the use of major thirds, high registers, arpeggios and triple dance metres should cause the affect of joy while half-steps, chromatics, slow metres, and dissonances should produce sorrow for instance (Risi, *The Legacy* 82). These treatments are seen throughout Monteverdi and Cavalli’s work.

Eric Nicholson describes the exciting dramatic potential of the *stile concitato* as innovatively theatrical in its repeating “rapid-fire rhythms,” sometimes in triple time – in threes – used to depict the sound of galloping horses and *tremolo* – quickly quavering strings – and fast *pizzicato* – plucked strings – to sound out the blows of swords in battle scenes (265). By splitting the note durations into shorter and shorter values with fast repeating notes, Monteverdi hit on what he thought represented realistic emotions, so he tested the style out on audiences of noblemen, whose applause and praise seemed to verify his

theory (Gordon 189). He then determined to identify several texts with which he could demonstrate his new formula for depicting anger in battle in what he called the *stile agitato* (agitated style). Monteverdi's innovations were based on a scientific experimental model he conceived of whereby sound combinations should represent "contrary passions" (Monteverdi qtd. in Gordon 188). Such "passions" were also known as *affetti* or affections. Monteverdi identified three primary affections: humility (corresponding to low pitches), anger (corresponding to high pitches), and temperance (corresponding to medium pitches). These fit into three musical styles: *molle* (languid), *concitato* (agitated), and *temperato* (temperate). Altogether, the combination of choreographed and costumed singers and orchestra set in the *concitato* and *agitato* styles in driving rhythmical verve infused the dramatic text with heightened emotional impact to thrill audiences in new ways (265). Using sharp major keys with trumpet-like triadic figures, and vocal scale passages in rushing sixteenth notes, asserts Chafe, Monteverdi developed and establish a new musical way to characterize the affective state of warlike aggression (236-40). For his *Doriclea*, as will be seen, Cavalli used the sharp key of D-Major and triple metre to underpin *Doriclea's guerriero* or warrior aspect in *stile concitato*.

Monteverdi's invention of the *stile concitato*, however, as Kelly Ann Harness points out, along with the musical-dramatic depictions of warrior women, did have precedents in operas performed at the Florentine court in the 1620s. There, the Archduchess Maria Maddalena (1589-1631) commissioned several regency spectacles featuring women warriors and amazons meant to represent and bolster her rule. In particular, she hired composer Francesca Caccini (1587-1641), one of the few professional women composers of the time, to compose *La liberazione di Ruggiero*, an opera in four scenes based on Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* and performed in Florence in 1625. In *La liberazione di Ruggiero*, Caccini, like Monteverdi and Cavalli, employed the musical devices of chromaticism, harmonic extremes, sharply defined rhythms, affective intervals, dissonance, and cadences to expressively depict characteristics like agency and self-control (137). To musically characterize Melissa's anger, for example, much like Monteverdi, Caccini deploys the *semicroma*, or short sixteenth-notes, thus Melissa, like *Doriclea*, is made to sound confident when she commands the weak-willed Ruggiero to rise up on the text *sorgi, sorgi*

Ruggiero! (157). Many of the musical elements that Caccini used contain hallmarks that later composers like Monteverdi and Cavalli employed in their compositions for warrior queen roles like Monteverdi's Clorinda and Cavalli's Doriclea. In Cavalli's work, the *stile concitato* style became the signature style he used to portray the expression of the *guerriero* or warrior going into – or speaking of – battle.

The first operas were conceived to highlight and follow the dramatic text in sung recitative. Because *Doriclea* is one of Cavalli's early operas he was still composing in Monteverdi's older style where recitative rather than aria predominated. Recitative is a style of setting music to declamatory speech so that the music follows the tones, inflections, and rhythms of spoken language. In early opera, recitative sections carried the action and dialogue with short interspersed *arioso* (short aria-like) monologue moments featuring individual characters' private thoughts and feelings.

In general, Glover indicates that as the strophic aria only portrays one emotion with simple or lighthearted feelings like greed, fear, or lust, it was thought better suited to lower class and comic characters (Glover 87). Rosand contends too that it was considered more realistic for deities to sing arias because they were "superhuman," could fly, and so regularly defied the laws of gravity and of "verisimilitude" by singing ("Aria as Drama" 76). Rosand comments furthermore that in these early operas, it wasn't thought realistic for serious characters to communicate together in "highly stylized terms" ("Ormindo Travestito" 285). By the 1650s, serious characters were also given a few strophic arias but only for certain circumstances including when the dramatic pace slows down for a character to reflect on the situation in a solo scene, or to repeat the same sentiment with the same music, or when two characters share a specific sentiment as the strophes of an aria (Glover 87). Harold Powers concurs that the only situations that merited giving an aria to a serious character in these operas were where a character comments in a lyrical scene on what has just happened or expresses personal feelings (*Erismena Travestita* 294). In addition, Glover suggests that secondary characters like deities and comic characters sang strophic arias more often because as they were not part of the main plot, it was less problematic to stop the action momentarily with blocks of musical repetition (87). Thus, serious characters who carry the action like Doriclea, should not stop the flow of the drama by singing arias.

On the other hand, Badolato explains that early recitative texts consisted of “long sequences of blank verse usually interrupted by strophic formations in concise measures” such as arias, choruses and prologues (27). These “strophic structures” gave the composer a metrical and rhythmical profile for the music while adhering to the syntax and logic of word groupings (27). Glover suggests that blank verse was most suitable for “recited singing” as it offers a fluid and dynamic structure while the music imitates the rhythms of spoken text (*Cavalli* 96). The more formalized aria is structurally bracketed off as an “enclosed verbalization” that focuses attention on the expression of a momentary affect with minimal verbiage (Badolato 28). Lyric poetry also offers librettists a great range of dramatic opportunities and, for the musical construction of the aria, it allows for repetition and recurring refrains (29). As the demand for more arias grew, most *ariosi* were replaced with longer, more defined, self-contained arias separate from recitative so that later on, arias took the focus while recitative receded in importance. From the 1640s to the 1670s the presence of arias increased manifold (Rosand, *Opera in* 282).

In the very earliest Venetian operas, the overall operatic structure then constantly oscillates within undefined borders between recitative and *arioso* type moments. For Badolato, the kind of verse employed by early librettists offered a flexible variety of metres and multiple “iterative formulas” with which the composer could work while simultaneously offering a structured and formalized text about which to organize musical conceptions and insert novel ideas (34). Indeed, Margaret Murata insists that rather than harmonic changes being organized according to codified musical or metric “rules,” chord changes in early recitative occurred according to the text, its inflections, and its declamation (*Operas*, diss. 165). Murata associates this style of harmonic composition to an improvisational style where a single chord can be used to underpin long sections of music and chord changes varied “with the breadth of thought” (165). She insists as well that the rhythms, line-phrasing, cadences, and basso continuo harmonies provide the structural foundation for the novel style (166).

In the later Western tonal system, music was composed to emphasize specific tonal key centres like F or C-Major, but Cavalli’s transitional music progresses more liquidly, transitioning through “floating tonalities” (Mengozi) as key centres shift flexibly with changing moods and emotional states.

Rosand succinctly describes how Cavalli's method allowed the music to adhere to the sense of the dramatic text rather than vice versa, as would later be the case when the preference for fixed and closed-form arias took precedence. In this way, contends Rosand, Cavalli produced a more continuous, unified but "unpatterned [sic] flow from phrase to phrase" where the direction and amount of "linear motion" reflected the syntactic and emotional requirements of the text ("Aria as Drama" 90).

Cavalli's recitative compositional style is highly developed and integral to the overarching musico-dramatic scheme wherein he cultivates many of his musical ideas. In this, recitative sections wind seamlessly from one tonal centre to another, providing shifting dramatic contrasts with very few "closed" or bracketed-off musical forms like arias to disturb the continuous flow. This means that speech-like recitative operates as the main way to advance the story's action and to portray character (Mossey, *Doriclea* xiv). For the character Doriclea, there are no arias, but only one extended soliloquy/lament accompanied by the orchestra (xiv). Other characters like Eurinda, however, do have arias. Further, Cavalli's music eased the transition by providing familiar musical configurations while introducing novel ones to a paying audience. Susan McClary explains that Cavalli was still using a modal compositional style to carry out successive modulations in preparation for formally closed sections using tonal areas as *arioso* moments and then to serve as logical connectors between a series of sections not fully autonomous from the rest of the music ("Towards" 115). On this, she posits that "the potential complexities of modal structures" served to prepare listeners for "radical change[s]" in "temporal orientation" that the *arioso* moments, as moments of reflection, suspend the action while expanding time (114). Because this music was fixed to a dramatic plot, Cavalli strove to characterize it musically while experimenting with new ways to exemplify affective states and shifts; hence shaping of "temporal orientation" in the mixture of modal and tonal key centres to sonically fashion the dramatic and emotional landscape. As mentioned before, Cavalli's music sounded forth a transitional moment from modal to tonal music systems as a hybrid of both, still anchored in the medieval modal system, but also heralding the coming tonal system. Mossey maps out three musical elements of importance in *Doriclea* consisting of Cavalli's use of tonality as a newly evolving music system, character development associated with drawn-out tonal-allegories, and

the centrality of recitative (xiii). These elements combined allow the music to ride across multiple aural, dramatic, and thematic terrains, flexibly interweaving already familiar dramatic and musical forms and devices in the new Faustini/Cavalli operas. Early modern audiences were quite familiar, for example, with the literary use of allegory in dramatic literature and with the soliloquy/lament.

Concerning the orchestral ensemble for *Doriclea*, a small five-part orchestra comprised of treble [high] – treble – alto [middle] – tenor [middle] – and bass [low] strings and continuo (chord playing) instruments like the harpsichord accompanied the singers. Mossey suggests that this orchestra would actually have been considered large for its time (xiii). The libretto includes 24 characters. There are fourteen named roles, excluding the prologue characters several of which were likely doubled, and five choruses for *Doriclea*. Also, Mossey conveys that in 1645 the *San Cassiano* theatre, where it was performed, could accommodate only up to 620 audience members, rendering it a very intimate space (xi). Glover concludes that, as they were not specified in the libretto or score, we don't know exactly how many orchestral parts there really were but suggests that theatre size is a good way to guess the size of the orchestra (107). She further notes that nine of Cavalli's operas were presented at *San Cassiano*, seven of which had a five-part string section (107). How much doubling of the instruments occurred is not known but Glover thinks there would not have been more than two instruments per string section, along with the basso continuo instruments (107). *San Cassiano* was not the smallest Venetian theatre, but the stage was still only 17.9 m (58.7 feet) long, and the depth was 7.65 m (25 feet) from one side and 5.40 m (17.7 feet) from the other (Thorburn, diss. 301). On the whole, the small orchestra, stage, and theatre space indicates that the experience of attending a production would indeed have been quite intimate and singers' voices would have felt very present to auditors. For Cavalli's operas including *Doriclea*, the orchestra, or string section, unlike the continuo section, was usually reserved for introducing arias or between scenes in ritornellos (instrumental repeats or "returns" of sung music), or sinfonias (orchestral sections coming between the voice and action sections) but was less often used to accompany recitatives and arias (Glover 108).

According to Mossey, for the character of Doriclea, Cavalli developed three tonal centres based on three different key centres to function as her “tonal pillars” serving to musically characterize different aspects of her character (xiv). The keys correspond to D-Major linked to her aggressive “male” persona and actions, D-minor indicating her wifely role, femaleness, and physical weakness, and A-minor linked to her wish for death at Tigranes’ hands (Mossey, diss. 233-4). (See manuscript score [ms.] in Appendix A) In the first scene of the opera, for example, Cavalli ties her identity as a wife to D-minor. The minor key center is used when Doriclea agonizes over her personal identity and how she should act as a woman. Throughout the opera the heroic characters’ actions are mirrored in bookended scenes by the mythological characters. For instance, the character “Venus” parallels Doriclea, while “Mars” is a counterpart to Tigrane. In the final scenes of acts 1 and 2, Venus dons military attire and is the divine protector of Tigrane while Doriclea is his earthly defender. In these scenes and in the scenes where Doriclea wears military attire Cavalli confirms D-Major as the tonal sound set associated with aggression, utilizing marching rhythms in the instrumental accompaniment with trumpet-like imitations – also intended to indicate a military character – in the voice, and repeated arpeggiated – notes of one chord played separately rather than at once – chords in D-Major. Doriclea’s music assumes the same marshal characteristics when she asserts her “male” identity as “Cyrus” (xv). The musical style of Doriclea, as “Cyrus,” is first hinted at when he is offered the possibility of marrying into the Parthian royal line. D-Major is first sounded and becomes a fully-fledged tonal area (containing the full complement of D-Major tones) as “Cyrus” takes Eurinda’s arm (xv).

In act 3 scene xi, the bedchamber scene, Mossey suggests that instead of underscoring the romantic aspects of his courtship of Eurinda, Cavalli chooses rather to affirm the idea that “Cyrus” amorous seduction of Eurinda is part of Doriclea’s revenge against Parthia and so sets the music “firmly” in the “aggressive” D-Major (xv). When Doriclea reveals the truth of her biological gender in the subsequent recognition scene, Mossey imparts that the D-Major “tonalities” used in act 3 to characterize her music recede (xv). He further explains that Cavalli characterized the concept of deception musically with F-sharp major chords, first introduced in the allegorical scenes in the prologue when Ignorance and

Ambition – representing Doriclea – steal Virtue’s clothes to trick Glory. The same F-sharp key area features in the seduction scene when “Cyrus” first offers to marry Eurinda. In Mossey’s view, Cavalli uses “fixed tonalities,” as opposed to the more amorphous modal music, “at the outermost end of his tonal spectrum for extreme situations” when deception seriously effects the characters (*Doriclea* xv). He asserts furthermore that using sharp key areas to indicate deception suggests that “Doriclea’s actions nearly precipitate the loss of her virtue” which was a common mid-century theme for women but that “Cavalli’s musical portrayal of Doriclea, with its unusual tonal framework and carefully crafted associations, gives the heroine tremendous dramatic weight” (xv). Such musical associations were a new innovation in the 1640s when Cavalli and Faustini pioneered them in opera.

In Act 1 scene 12, the allegorical figure Venus, goddess of love (as a proxy for Doriclea), is unusually garbed in military attire. Her army of cupids set out to protect Tigrane and save Armenia. To elucidate her aggressive attitude, Venus declares “*La mia lucida stella Più non diluvia amori, Ma qual Cometa, che minaccia horror Versa, piove di guerra atra procella*” (“My bright star does not rain torrents of love anymore, but like a comet that threatens to bring horror, it rains a black storm of war”; Mossey, diss. 225). By choosing D-Major, the Venus figure links sonically with Doriclea in her military aspect. Her music contains trumpet-like imitations in the preceding orchestral section followed by repeated arpeggiated G and D chords outlined by the voice as single notes in triple metre.

Mossey points out that later, in Doriclea’s opening scene, Cavalli introduces the D-minor key area and chromatic inflections (movement of close semitones) to indicate Doriclea’s “weak” and wounded state. Chromaticism was used to express intense emotions. Mossey writes that the \flat -flat set against the \flat -natural played by the accompanying continuo instruments starts a progression of chords to F Major in m. 5. The first phrase Doriclea sings rises from \flat to \flat -flat in m. 5 but reverts to \flat with the text “*delle piaghe il rio doloroso,*” (“the sad river of tears,”; Mossey diss. 291). From this point on Cavalli uses chromaticism only at cadences to indicate affective shifts. Thus, mm. 9-10 pivots with tritone skips from her highest note, as she describes her painfully wounded foot with *pié trafficato*, while the mood shifts with the music cadencing to A-minor (ms. 9; diss. 291). By mm. 20-21, Doriclea sings an \flat flat as

she turns her attention to Tigrane. She laments the fate of his defeat, moving the musical character by ending on a \underline{d} and cadencing on D-minor. In her second entrance, starting at m. 56 (ms. 10; diss. 293), she continues in D-minor, but as the emotion heightens, her voice rises in pitch to five high \underline{g} s in mm. 64-70 with the text “*che giran sempre*” (“that always turn”) as she anxiously foresees a tragic outcome (diss. 294). When she becomes aware of the approaching Parthian army, her mood drifts to thoughts of death. Right then, a messenger arrives, announcing that the Parthians have come and that Tigrane’s forces have abandoned him. At her vocal entrance, she sings in B-flat-Major starting with her line “*Cedi, cedi Tigrane*” (“Yield, Yield Tigrane”), as she urges Tigrane to listen, the music then moves through a bass line sequence of B-flat-Major, F-Major, D-minor, C-Major in measures 6 to 28 (ms. 13). She ends her soliloquy, in m. 38, with the “sweet” flat or mollis key A-minor cadence on the dominant E chord with the word *amanti* (lovers) (Mossey, diss. 298; ms. 13).

Doriclea admonishes Tigrane to save himself by killing her, escape the scene, and live to fight again, saying, “*Vivi, e del Regno serbati à la speme. Fuggi à l’Assiro amico ... E à me, che la tua fugga, Più seguire non posso, ò mio diletto, Traffigi, e suena il petto!*” (“Live and keep your hope in the kingdom. Flee to your Assyrian friend, but for me, since I cannot follow your flight anymore, oh my delight, pierce through my breast and sever my veins!”; Mossey trans., diss. 235-6; ms. 13). She urges him to kill her so she will not be taken prisoner and made a slave in the Parthian court. When Tigrane sheds tears because he doesn’t have the heart to do it, Doriclea berates him with, “*Eh, che piangi, eh che tardi, Sono inutili i pianti, Dannose le dimore, Precipitano l’hore, E il Partho di te avaro a noi se n’viene, Deh mi rapisca un colpo sol, ti prego, A’servil lacci in fra quest’erme arene.*” (“Ah, why do you cry? Why do you delay? Crying is useless. Linger is harmful, as time is running and the miserly Parthian, eager to capture you, comes for us. Ah, I pray you that a single blow of yours may steal me away from servitude in these desolate lands.”; Mossey trans. 237; ms. 14). The music reflects her impatience in mm. 76-83 where she chastises him, her music moves from the flat key D-minor on *Eh, che piangi*, shifting to the sharp D-major on “*eh che tardi*. At *Sono inutili i pianti*” we are back in a flat D-minor key. On *Precipitano* she sings a \sharp on the syllable *ci* but in the next measure, m. 81, we find neutral

territory with no flats or sharps on “*E il Partho di te avaro.*” As her demand that Tigrane kill her becomes more urgent on “*Deh mi rapisca un colpo sol, ti prego*” a G-sharp note is held in the bass in E-Major (diss. 301; ms. 17). With the words “*quest’erme arene*” her soliloquy cadences finally in m. 88 on A-minor (diss. 302)

The turbulent musical shifts and modulations through various tonal centers vacillating between sharp and flat keys, reflects the emotionally charged atmosphere of the character’s predicament and her distress. Moving forward, the music shifts from the flat G-minor key on Doriclea’s last words “*Uccidi, e fuggi, oh dio, che badi tù!*” (“Kill me and flee, oh God, if you care!”) to the sharp A-Major in mm. 136-144 with Tigrane’s stabbing action after a cadence in m. 140 (Mossey trans. 239; score 305; ms.15). The scene culminates with the imminent approach of the enemy troops and Tigrane stabbing Doriclea.

In the following scene between the wounded Doriclea and the Parthian soldier Surena, the oscillating harmonies continue, indicating Doriclea’s insecure situation (239). When Surena recognizes Doriclea as the warrior who wounded King Artabano, his music arrives in A-Major and concludes in G-Major at m. 42 as Doriclea revives. When Doriclea first speaks in this scene, the music returns to the D-minor of the earlier scene with the words “*Chi mi richiama à vivi? Chi nega à gli’infelici varcar de’regni inferni i tetri rivi? Dispietati nemici. Mi togliete al mio fin, per riservarmi trofeo de le vostr’armi?*” (“Who calls me again to the living? Who denies crossing the dark broods of the infernal kingdom to the unlucky ones? Pitiless enemies, are you taking me away from my end, to reserve me as a trophy of your arms?”; Mossey trans. 240; ms.17). At this, Doriclea’s music breaks for the first time into a short, two-phrase lament pattern in D-minor while the bass descends down d, c, b-flat, a on the line “*Chi mi richiama à vivi?*” to the dominant A-chord with Phrygian cadences as she confronts Surena (309; ms.17). In mm. 50-3, the music shifts from the sharp D-Major to A-minor, ascending chromatically in the bass with f#, g, g#, a in mm. 52-3, and resolves on the dominant chord in E-Major in m. 53 (310; ms.17). As Surena leads her through the Parthian camp, here and in scene 7 he delivers her to Eurinda to watch as he goes off to help Artebano in his next attack. Upon hearing that the prisoner has wounded her father, Eurinda wants to kill “him,” but is stopped by Melloe who tells her that they do not harm prisoners.

Doriclea taunts her to do so, but Eurinda finds herself attracted to “him” when she looks into “his” eyes. When Farnace arrives in scene 9 he recognizes Doriclea and covers for her by telling Eurinda that her prisoner is a mighty warrior named “Cyrus.” He then convinces Eurinda to leave the prisoner with him. Eurinda agrees and leaves in a state of dizzy infatuation.

When they are alone in scene 10, Doriclea tells Farnace that Tigrane has fled to Assyria and Farnace informs her that a trap has been laid for Tigrane in mm. 25-38. Here, she begs him to kill her. On the text “*son in odio al destino*” (“I hate fate”), she drops down a fifth from b on *son in* to e *odio al* to the neighbour tone d on the syllable *de* and back to e on *stino* all in sharp E-minor (313). In mm. 41-5 the music oscillates between A-Major and A-minor and her death wish on the text “*Deh, s'hai pietade in petto, opra ch'io mora*” (“Oh, if there is mercy in your heart, let me die”) is associated with the key area of A-minor (318; ms. 29). A chromatic progression from mm. 44-7 moves through F to F# with a cadence in mm. 46 moving to D-minor. In mm. 46-53 a listless recitative ensues and in mm. 47-51 she states “*E meglio co'l morire uscir di pene Che vivere, e mirare il mio consorte Circondato da lacci e catene*” (“It is better to die and avoid the pain of seeing my consort surrounded by ropes and chains”). This occurs over a drooping bass line falling down a, g, f, e, d as she begs Farnace to kill her (316-7; ms. 29-30). The passage is underpinned by 7-6 suspensions (316; ms. 30). According to Mossey, the shift in tonal center from A-minor to D-minor indicates her “female identity” heard earlier in the act. This is because the return to A-minor in Doriclea’s final recitative in mm. 69-77 signals hope rather than death as Farnace promises to help Tigrane and as she relinquishes her death wish (318; ms. 30-1).

As Act 1 closes Cavalli has established D-minor as the tonal center signifying Doriclea as the heroine, while her emotional shifts into the death wish are in A-minor. The lack of tonal fixity in his musical style allows Cavalli to flow seamlessly in and out of tonal areas in an instant, but also to prolong tonal centers and smoothly traverse the affective/emotional topography. In Act 2, Doriclea appears only once in scene 5 when she encounters King Artabano.

In Act 2. 5, Doriclea realizes how she can escape death and captivity as a slave to achieve glory for herself, her country, and for Tigrane. When Artabano praises her skill and bravery as the warrior

“Cyrus,” who has wounded him, as she flatters him, causing Artabano to offer “Cyrus” land and glory in mm. 15-26 (320; ms. 53). Seeing his magnanimity, in an aside Doriclea admonishes herself “*Che parli Doriclea? Le voglie arresta, Commette i tradimenti anima vile!*” (“What are you saying Doriclea? Stop your wishes! It is cowardly souls that commit betrayals!”; Mossey trans. 245, ms. 53-4). When “Cyrus” offers Artabano’s sister Eurinda his arm, declaring “*Principessa leggiadra, m’offro tuo Cavalliero*” (“Graceful princess, I offer myself as your cavalier”) Eurinda eagerly responds with “*Ti ricevo per mio, Gentil guerrier’, oh Dio!*” (“I receive you as mine, gentle warrior. Oh God!”; 245; ms. 55).

In this scene, “Cyrus” emerges as the male warrior and suitor/companion to Eurinda. To illustrate this, Cavalli turns to D-Major. When Doriclea utters her first recitative in this act, the tonal progression is from C-minor in measure 1 to C-Major in next entrance and to D-Major by mm. 47 as she meets Artabano and mutual admiration commences (319-22; ms. 53). With the arrival of Artabano, Eurinda, and Surena, Doriclea begins her recitative in the flat key C-minor while kneeling before Artabano. As she reaches to kiss his hand, Artabano withdraws it just as she sings in the flat G-minor key in mm. 7-14 turning on a Phrygian cadence to the dominant of G-minor chord (D) at mm. 14 (319-20). As Artabano and “Cyrus” exchange compliments, the key changes with each phrase until finally arriving at the sharp D-Major in mm. 38. Mossey explains that there is a “gradual shift as moving from two-flat (mm. 1-14), to one flat (mm. 15-26), to natural (mm. 27-32), to one-sharp (mm. 33-37) to two-sharps (mm. 38-41),” demonstrating the shifting tonal/affective terrain (246).

When Artabano offers “Cyrus” land in mm. 54-62, Doriclea realizes her goal is within reach and fully assumes her “male” identity. Doriclea’s response starts in E-minor but shifts to the more “aggressive” key of D-Major in mm. 63-72 (323-4; ms. 54). In mm. 83-5, when Artabano pronounces “*Siami la gloria trasformata in Ciro*” (“Let my Glory be transformed in Cyrus”), and “Cyrus” turns to Eurinda to offer “his” services saying “*Principesa gentile m’offro tuo cavaliero*” (“Gentle princess I offer you your cavalier”) it is in D-Major. Eurinda emphatically accepts “him” in D-Major (325). In order to undermine and attack the Parthian state as “Cyrus,” Doriclea now completely commits herself to seducing Eurinda.

The lament was an integral device used in seventeenth-century opera stemming from Monteverdi's earlier opera *L'Arianna* (1608). The lament played an important role in the development of the aria by accustoming listeners to anticipate lyrical moments of expressive emotional subjectivity outside of recitative and action. Cavalli's crafting of Doriclea's lament is an early aural signifier indicating and epitomizing the sound of the weeping woman (Glover 290). Rosand describes Cavalli having set his laments in the 1640s to a repeating "affective text," demarcated by refrains, written in a "continuous recitative style," over a descending bass line (Rosand, "Lamento"). The lament in this case combines syncopations, overlapping bass and soprano lines, and suspensions all intended to create dissonant tension in harmony, melody, and rhythm ("Lamento"). It is played and sung in a slow tempo in triple metre usually over a string accompaniment ("Lamento"). The descending chordal movement, Rosand remarks, is emblematic of the lament where its steady ostinato pattern "encourages free expression" (*Opera in 370*).

Doriclea's early lament has not yet acquired the hallmarks of a fully developed aria but is rather a brief *arioso*-style moment integrated into the structure of the through-composed (music without breaks) recitative. The rhythmically repetitive ostinato pattern in the continuo stalls the progression of time and action. The sensation of time in suspension is accomplished by employing a through-composed repeated ground-bass pattern in the continuo part meant to stretch, halt, or slow down the forward momentum of the action. Furthermore, the bass ostinato provides a formal structure and holding pattern that prolongs the moment and frees the singer to expressively emote while vocally traversing quicksilver mood changes (290). Such sonically lush moments immediately appealed to spectators, so the Doriclea lament helped to pave the way for the development of more powerful interludes in Venetian opera. The multipartite aspect and mixed-aria-recitative design of this musical section acts likewise as a microcosm comprising several musical kernels that later evolve into fully autonomous, or closed off, forms. Such forms include the lyrical lament aria, separate accompanied recitative section, and the *stile concitato* section that is later developed into a distinct aria type known as the "trumpet" or "call-to-arms" aria.

Act 3.1 opens with Doriclea singing in soliloquy as she plans her escape from Parthia. Her thoughts turn first to the foolish Eurinda, then to Tigrane and his desert exile, and the music underpins her sad state of mind. This section contains Doriclea's only solo in the opera, which briefly takes the form of a lament closed off from the recitative. The lament, with four seven-syllable poetic lines, is non-strophic and is prepared musically in the recitative with a "softer" "feminine" D-minor key as Doriclea, in her role as wife, thinks of her husband (ms. 76). Her lament is a full-sounding, concerted lament with added strings that play an introduction and epilogue using three descending D-minor chords that frame and set it off from the rest of otherwise continuous recitative (Mossey, diss. 248). In the metred lament section (i.e., the one marked by a set rhythmic metre as opposed to the rhythmically free and metre-less recitative), Cavalli spans a fourth in the bass, descending chromatically over the chordal ostinato. The continuo also plays a triadic pattern that recalls the "war-like" trumpet imitation in Venus' Act 1.12, again remind us of Doriclea's warrior status.

Rosand categorizes the entire section as a "multipartite recitative lament" that sonically encompasses Doriclea's changing moods (*Opera in* 374). The lament begins with "*Se ben mai non mi vide*" ("Though he never really saw me") in triple metre and is sustained by a correspondingly sinking chordal ostinato (ms. 76). In the preparatory recitative section, she sings her lowest note, a below middle c on the word *giorni* in the phrase "*Io traggo i giorni*" ("I spend the days"; Mossey 326; ms. 76). Doriclea expresses her wish to communicate with Tigrane singing, "*Indarno, indarno io grido, Non pon gl'accenti miei Giunger dove tu sei*" ("In vain, in vain I cry, for my words cannot reach where you are"; Mossey, 327-8; ms. 77-8). The lament section is set to the four-line lyric text "*Deh voi cortesi, voi Arrecate, vi prego Al mio consorte, o venti, Queste voci dolenti*" ("Ah, courteous winds, bring, I pray you, these sad words to my consort"; Mossey 328; ms. 77). While it evokes calm before the stormy *concitato* section, it also develops Doriclea's "internal psychological drama" so Rosand considers the short four-measure "tetrachord-aria style" of the lament to be its "affective center" (*Opera in* 374-6). It is in triple metre and the notes are set syllabically except for short flourishes on *voi* and *venti* and, as this is sung on slow, faltering melissmas on a, g, f, e, sounding out her pathos and echoed in the strings. Doriclea's line is

characterized by suspensions, syncopation, escape tones, and dissonances that clash with the accompaniment. The string accompaniment plays a descending bass line traversing d - c - b-flat - a in the final three measures after she sings *dolenti* to close out the brief lament section (329; ms. 78).

The mood shifts again as Doriclea imagines Tigrane's possible capture and imprisonment by the Assyrians, and as her anger rises, her defiant tone is mirrored in the accompaniment that launches into a *stile concitato* episode, thus regaining its martial character. In the preparatory section, with the text "ohime Tigrane ohime," the vocal line flips back and forth from high e to down a third to c, back up and then down a fourth to b, and back up again, reflecting her anguish as the bass slips chromatically down the chord to c (330; ms. 78). A dramatic leap occurs here when the melodic line shoots up a fifth from b to high g where she cries out, "*Dov'è é lo scudo e l'asta*" ("Where is the shield and the staff?"; 331; ms. 78-9). This line is on short and fast high gs with the voice heard starkly alone above the continuo, which plays only a C-Major pedal (held note). Then she sings, '*Chi mi da l'armi, olà, Ritorni in libertà Il mio caro Signore*' ("Someone give me arms – there! – to return my handsome dear lord to liberty!"), with rapid emphatic declamation in the new "strong" and "masculine" key of C-Major in (331; ms. 79). The strings join in to fortify the voice with high, fast sixteenth notes while the continuo holds firmly to the C pedal. The section ends on a stable V-I cadence. The "male" marshal mood is short lived as she desists and returns to reality, asking herself "*Che va neggio infelice?*" ("What's wrong with you?"; 331; ms. 79). With this, she withers back into despair. Finally, she sings, "*I lumi, urne del pianto, Stanchi di lagrimar l'angoscie mie, Di mille fiori in sen lasciano il die*" ("My eyes, urns of tears, tired of lamenting my distresses, let them leave the day amid a bosom of a thousand flowers"; 332; ms. 80). Here, the music quietly slows as the voice, strings, and continuo recede back to the "weak" and more "feminine" D-minor until she falls asleep (Mossey, score iv). The slow chromatic slide of the minor chord down an octave to d echoes the vocal line as it dips down to a low d (332; ms. 80-1)

In Act 3.2 the Moorish doctor Sabari comes into the room and finds Doriclea asleep. On his arrival, Sabari sings a short arioso in the "weak" G-minor. He is in love with her, so he leans over to kiss her, but she awakens saying "Sabari?" He replies, "Ohimè," and she asks, "*Quivi à che vieni? E quale*

Agghiacciato timor ti fiede il petto?” (“Why do you come here? And what frozen dread strikes your breast?”; 334; ms. 82). As he goes to kiss Doriclea, the accompaniment changes to what Mossey calls the “harsh” sharp key of D-Major with Doriclea’s unexpected “Sabari?” (249). When Sabari declares his love, Doriclea replies with an angry diatribe saying, “*Concentra nel più del cupo del seno Sì temerarie voci, Vilissimo plebeo, Di cento morti reo: Scelerato, ben hai L’infame spirto à par del volto adusto, Se mai più tant’ardisci Spegnerai con il sangue il foco osceno*” (“Concentrate, most vile plebeian, guilty of the death of countless men, keep such reckless thoughts of a hundred dead criminals in the darkest corner of your heart: Scoundrel, the foul spirit like that of yours is as scorched as your face. If you ever say this again, you will pay for your the obscene [i.e., erotic] fire with your blood”; Mossey trans. 249, 334; ms. 84). With this, the scene closes.

Doriclea appears next in Act 3.11. This is the recognition scene where her biological sex is revealed. But first we find Doriclea as “Cyrus” standing across the bedchamber from Eurinda causing her to question why “Cyrus” seems to scorn her by remaining at a distance. “Cyrus” draws Eurinda near telling her, “*T’amo più, che me stesso*” (“I love you more than myself”; Mossey trans. 251; ms. 95). When Eurinda asks why “Cyrus” is distant, her questioning is musically characterized with “weak” cadences in A-minor and D-Major in mm. 1-7, while “Cyrus’s” forthright and convincing responses in mm. 8-11 are set solidly in the “aggressive” sharp key of D-Major (337; ms. 95). And when he delivers the phrase “*ch’altre vaghezze Rimirar non poss’io Fuor che le tue divine, Idolo mio*” (“I cannot gaze at other beauties aside from your divine one, my idol”), his vocal line starts an upward sequencing in mm. 49-51, climaxing with “Idolo mio” over a D-Major chord and on an *f#* at the top of the vocal range (339-40; ms. 96). By the time Eurinda demands a kiss in mm. 66-76, after excursions through E-minor, E-Major, G-Major, and B-minor, the scene resolves firmly in D-Major (342; ms. 97).

Just as “Cyrus” moves to comply with Eurinda’s demand for a kiss, Orindo and Artabano arrive. Artabano berates Eurinda for kissing “Cyrus” and threatens, “*Ah femina lasciva, Dishonesta donzella, indegna donna D’esser nata Reina, e d’esser viva*” (“Ah, lascivious woman, dishonest maiden, woman unworthy of being born a Queen and of being alive”; ms. 97). Here, the continuo leaps down a fifth at

mm.2 from D-Major to G-Major, with Artabano's accusations (343). Just then, Tigrane, disguised as a Parthian, comes into the bedchamber, and drawing his sword, moves to kill Artabano, who he thinks plans to marry Doriclea. As Doriclea intervenes she recognizes Tigrane, saying, "*Ohimé sei tu Signore?*" ("Alas, is it you my Lord?"). He answers, "*Pur troppo io son quell misero, tradito Da la tua fede ingannatrice, e rea Perfida Doriclea.*" ("Unfortunately, I am that miserable man, betrayed by your faith, perfidious and guilty deceiver, Doriclea."); 254; ms. 98).

Tigrane's attack on Artabano is in E-minor, in mm. 3. But when Doriclea with raised sword steps in exclaiming "*Fermati traditor, fermati!*" ("Stop traitor, stop!") this action halts the cadential movement and swerves to C-Major. As Tigrane's wrath turns from Artabano to Doriclea, the key again reverts to E-minor in mm. 7-10 (345-6; ms. 97). With *Ohimè sei tu signore*, the earlier chord progression that was heard when she drew her sword returns, as does the *e-b* sung in the melody (346; ms. 98). As Doriclea recognizes Tigrane, the other characters simultaneously realize that they are both not who they thought them to be but are disguised. To highlight this moment, Cavalli has the continuo drop down a fifth with accompanying chords. The musical movement coincides with the mention of their true names, "Doriclea" and "Tigrane," the ruling enemy pair. With this, the continuo progresses through the circle of fifths starting with E-Major, associated with Artabano, traversing subsequently through the tonal centres associated with Tigrane, Orindo, and Eurinda, and ending on an F-Major chord in m. 32 as Tigrane sings (346-7; ms. 98). Mossey suggests that the circle of fifths progression through the tonal areas associated with the different characters symbolizes the turning of Fate and the Wheel of Fortune (255).

Seized by jealousy, Tigrane launches into a furious rage about Artabano and Doriclea, he roars, "*T'agiterò trà gl'impudichi amori, E con larve, ed'horrori Io renderò funesti I tuoi contenti,*" ("I will wreak havoc among your immodest loves, and with phantoms and horrors I will turn your contentments into tragedies,"); 256; ms. 99). As Tigrane goes on, Doriclea tries continuously to interrupt and explain, but is silenced by phrases like "*Ammutisci malvagia*" ("Silence, wicked woman!"); 350; ms. 99). At this point, Artabano orders his men to take Tigrane prisoner. Tigrane's diatribe is set in the sharp key of D-

Major mm. 54-67, in what Mossey characterizes as a forceful melodic line meant to “communicate the vehemence of his words” as a jealous husband (349-50).

After Tigrane is removed, Orindo and Artabano follow, leaving Eurinda and Doriclea alone. In answer to Tigrane’s unfair accusations Doriclea sings a passionate recitative and refrain conveying her enduring love and faithfulness. As if speaking to him, she explains, “*Non ti conobbi nò nell’habito menti to dolcissimo Marito, errò la mano, e lei l’occhio ingannò; Uno spirito, nemico. Di tradigion, la spinse, Oh dio, contro di te A difesa del Ré*” (“I did not recognize you in false clothes, sweetest husband. My hand wandered and was deceived by my eye; An enemy spirit pushed my hand to betrayal – oh God! – against tradition and against you in defence of the King”; 257-8; ms. 101-2). The words “*Uno spirito, nemico. Di tradigion,*” are in the sharp key of A-Major rising with the notes $c\sharp$, d , e , $f\sharp$ all sung on fast, tense eighth and sixteenths in the voice as Doriclea agonizes aloud about taking forceful “actions” and going against gender “tradition” in cross-dressing and, especially, in wooing another woman (353; ms. 101).

In this section, Doriclea’s music veers away from D-Major with five half-cadence chord progressions in the bass to the dominant ending in A-minor in mm. 44 (352-4; ms. 101). Starting in mm. 7 with the text “*De l’innocenza mia senti senti le grida, Io di fui sempre fida, Sempre te solo a mai, Tigrane, Tigrane*” (“Of my innocence hear hear the cries, I was always true, Always to you alone, Tigrane, Tigrane”) the bass line descends chromatically on the notes d , $c\sharp$, b , a . In sudden defiance, she sings the highest notes of her range with a tritone leap up to $g\sharp$ on the phrase *in che peccai?* (“in which I sinned?”) with *in che pec* on three $g\sharp$ s in the sharp key of B-Major. Then it drops sadly down to e on the syllable *cai* as the dominant tone cadences to A-minor. This phrase recurs four times in the soliloquy. Hearing this, Eurinda comprehends what has happened and tries to comfort and caution her with “*La prudenza raffreni Valorosa Reina il tuo cordiglio*” (“Valorous queen, let prudence curb your grief”; ms. 101). Doriclea, ignoring her, in mm. 27-33 defends her actions with “*Non ti conobbi nò, Ne l’habito mentito Dolcissimo marito, Errò la mano, e lei l’occhio ingannò. D’accusar mi nocente Di lascivi delitti. Con fallaci argomenti Ragion non hai, Tigrane, Tigrane*” (“I didn’t know you I lied about it sweetest husband,

My hand erred, and I deceived her eye. To accuse me of lewd crimes. With fallacious arguments you are wrong, Tigrane, Tigrane”; ms. 102).

This scene encapsulates the uncomfortable predicament that Doriclea’s actions have wrought. She has violated propriety by deceptively cross-dressing, acting violently, and indulging same-sex attraction. Clearly, she is forced to take such actions to protect Tigrane who has failed to uphold his accepted gender role by fleeing, crying, and hiding rather than showing appropriate “male” courage and strength against his enemy. Everything is made right in the end, when the couple, and the kingdoms, reconcile and patriarchal order is restored as Doriclea returns to heterosexual normality in marriage.

The character of Doriclea is constructed as a strong woman in control of herself and of her own destiny. The majority of her music is set in free-flowing recitative, with only a brief lyrical lament tucked into the context of an extensive recitative section. This was composed when, at this very early stage of Venetian opera, it was not thought properly realistic for serious characters to sing arias. The recitative music demonstrates her steady resolve, restrained to the range of a fifth, while the lyrical lament segment represents a short lapse into “feminine” weakness that the character refuses to indulge for long before she rallies herself into a defiant “male” martial mood, corresponding to her thoughts of defending Tigrane.

Significantly, Mossey asserts that unlike future warrior queen characters, because Artabano continues to admire her as a warrior and wife even after her deception is revealed, Doriclea presents no real threat to male authority (Mossey, diss. 270). In *Doriclea*, Cavalli and Faustini have created, according to Mossey, “a larger-than-life heroine who can transform even the most glorious of kings” (272). And, as Graham maintains, the Doriclea character is the first in Venetian opera to “to assert her will on the world around her” using warcraft to help herself and the other characters too (56). Composer and librettist do, nevertheless, cast doubt about whether she has behaved appropriately to her gender when she agonizes over disguising herself in male armour, taking violent “male” action, and engaging in same-sex attraction. Indeed, Tigrane’s “weak” shedding of tears and failure to act as a “strong” male figure causes her to violate appropriate gender behaviors. All is set aright, however, when Doriclea returns to

her wifely role. With Cavalli's musical coding of her martial and "feminine" aspects, he created a sonic template from which subsequent warrior women roles were likely modified to fit new libretti.

Doriclea represents the first fully developed warrior queen operatic role; it sets the standard as a prototype for Amazon/warrior woman roles to come and from which later renditions grew. Indeed, much of the musical, dramatic, and staging information surrounding Doriclea applies to subsequent roles. Therefore, my more circumscribed analysis for the following roles facilitates a focused examination targeting Cavalli's musico-dramatic gendering of the operatic protagonist heroine as warrior. In the following, I analyze the next dramatic roles by tracing out how the various librettists developed the role type in conjunction with the musical constructions focused on the way that gender is construed.

Come à te pare, hò cuore	I have a heart that like yours
Nemico del timore.	Is an enemy of fear.
T' u sai pur qual di spade hò prove fatte.	You know well I have proven myself with the sword.
Sai, se la destra mia scherzo, o combatte.	You know if my righthand jokes or fights.
	- Giulio Strozzi <i>Veremonda</i> (1652)

For the opera *Veremonda*, Giulio Strozzi adjusted Giacinto Andrea Cicognini's (1605-51) libretto from the Florentine opera *Celio* (1646) to centre on the character Veremonda. Strozzi, who published his libretto under the pseudonym "Luigi Zorsisto," took the Queen Isabella in Cicognini's version and gave her the invented name Veremonda (Heller, diss. 333). The Isabella character, who plays a secondary role to her husband the warrior King Iacomo in the Cicognini's opera, was likely based on the Spanish Queen Isabella, wife of Ferdinand, who championed the Inquisition (333). In Strozzi's text, on the other hand, Veremonda becomes the title character and takes her Amazon warriors into battle, while her husband, renamed King Don Alfonso, remains at home studying astrology rather than going to war. In Cicognini's version, the opera opens with King Iacomo in a war-camp vowing to destroy the Muslim African Queen Zelemina's army and prove Christian superiority (332). Heller forwards the notion that Strozzi signals he will be dealing with gender inversion by replacing the more passive queen Isabella with the ferocious Veremonda and by calling her an Amazon (*Emblems* 222). Also, he has Don Alfonso make the unmanly decision to stay at home and study (222). Veremonda furthermore retains her virtue as she valiantly

destroys their enemy, returns the kingdom to her husband, and subdues a treasonous general making her “one of the most heroic of the seicento operatic women” (222). And while Veremonda is loyal to her husband, she eloquently outshines all of the men with powerful fortitude.

Heller points out that in Strozzi and Cavalli’s opera, while the Muslim princess “Zelemina laments; Veremonda does not,” so the two types of women are juxtaposed setting up a “dichotomy for the representation of women in Venetian opera” (diss 328). Here, the exotic and foreign Zelemina displays more conventional amorous, and “feminine” gender behaviours while Veremonda displays anomalous behaviours in her heroism and rhetorical eloquence. Zelemina, who maybe more conventional as far as “femininity,” but she is also “Other” in her African, Muslim femaleness, sings in what Heller describes as “erotic” chromaticism thought to lead men dangerously astray (337). Cavalli’s musical setting for Veremonda, contends Heller, contrasts Alfonso’s “weak” “lighthearted song” as well as Zelemina’s serpentine chromatic lines with straightforward, tonally-centred recitatives, and no frivolous arias, while she decisively spearheads the action to her desired outcome (338). In Strozzi’s version, Cigognini’s powerful general Celio is also reduced from heroic male figure to a soft “feminized” Delio whose only important solo aria begins with the amusing lines “*Gran tormento è l’esser bello, S’io rispondo ad ogni Dama Che mi chiama ... Mostrerò debil cervello Gran tormento è l’esser bello*” (“It is a great torment to be beautiful. If I respond to every woman who calls me, I will show myself to be weak in the brain. It is a great torment to be beautiful”; Heller, diss. 340). This aria does not appear in Cicognini’s text. Whereas Cicognini’s title character Celio acts appropriately heroically and bravely in battle, Strozzi’s Delio is more interested in love than in fighting battles. For Heller, the reduction of General Celio to the treasonous, *innamorato* character Delio along with the diminishment of the heroic warrior King Iacomo to the “soft” and studious King Alfonso while simultaneously foregrounding the courageous, chaste Amazon Veremonda suggests an “anti-hero” theme (“Amazons” 155). This is also seen in the rendering of Tigrane in *Doriclea*. In the anti-hero operas, when the military warrior queen engages in traditionally “male” sexual and military exploits, the surrounding men are feminized, while the warrior woman is linked to androgynous transvestitism (*Emblems* 223).

It is not certain in which theatre *Veremonda* premiered in Venice. There are nine named characters, five allegorical characters, including *Il Crepuscolo della sera* (Evening Twilight), *Furore* (Fury), and the *Demone* (Demon) *La Vendetta* (Vendetta). The Prologue is short and is shared by *Crepuscolo* and *Il Sole* (The Sun). The description at the front of the libretto states: “*Per la poca applicazione del Rè suo marito, la fortissima Veremonsa con una squadra di bravissime Donne venuta in Campo, quasi novella Amazzone, bramava, col prender la fortezza di Calpe, di terminare si lunga Guerra.*” (“Because of her husband’s lack of attention [to the war], the mighty Veremonda, accompanied by a squadron of the bravest women, arrived at camp, almost an Amazon reborn, as she desired to end the long war by capturing the Fortress of Calpe.”; Heller, trans. diss. 326).

The plot of *Veremonda* hinges on the Moors’ occupation of Gibraltar and the Spanish Kingdom of Aragon’s efforts to oust them. The Moorish Queen Zelemina is in love with Delio (Celio in Cicognini’s libretto), the Spanish general. But this conflicts with her responsibility to protect the fortress from the Spanish. Her maid Zaida advises her to let her infatuation go and do her duty instead. Zelemina meets with Delio in secret, and he swears he is not interested in her kingdom, but only in her. In the palace, the King of Aragon is busy studying, and although he is aware that Gibraltar must be captured, he is too consumed with his astrological studies to leave them. Alfonso confides his dilemma to general Roldano, and Roldano assures him that he and his son, who is Delio, will conquer the island for him. When Queen Veremonda is introduced to us and into the King’s audience, it is by the court jester Buscone. She tells Alfonso that she wants to help fight the Moors, but he responds that women don’t belong in battle. As Roldano goes off to battle, Veremonda is unrelenting in her desire to join in, assemble her Amazon troops, and to go with Delio to Gibraltar. She also catches wind of the romance and nighttime trysts between Zelemina and Delio from a woman named Vespina, who is Delio’s lieutenant Zeriffo’s girlfriend. Veremonda learns from Vespina that Delio is going to Gibraltar under the pretense of capturing it for Aragon but really wants to take the island for himself and share it with Zelemina. So she determines to go along, pretending that she is ignorant of the plot, in order to set a trap for the lovers. By the end of the Act, we discover that the jester Buscone is also a spy for King Alfonso.

In Act 2, we find Zelemina in her fortress awaiting Delio while her maid Zaida worries about her affair with him. As Delio and Veremonda, disguised as a male soldier, arrive in Gibraltar, Zelemina's guard Giacutte bars their entry to the fortress. Veremonda then shows Giacutte a ring that Delio has given her that he got from Zelemina, which guarantees them safe passage, so Giacutte allows them in. As Veremonda and Delio first encounter Zelemina she finds herself attracted to the handsome young soldier who is Veremonda. In the meantime, we find the Amazon troops in a forest trying to penetrate the fortress but are being held off by Zelemina's defences. Vespina is with the women, and her boyfriend Zeriffo tells them he will run to ask the general Roldano, Delio's father, for help. However, Buscone, the spy jester, has informed King Alfonso of Delio's plans to betray him, and Alfonso assumes that Roldano is in on the plot along with Veremonda. When Alfonso confronts Roldano about the plan, Roldano nevertheless expresses his loyalty and determines to find his son and put a stop to it. Back at the fortress, the maid Zaida tells Zelemina that Delio's young soldier is actually a cross-dressed woman. In order to find out for herself, Zelemina arranges for Delio and the soldier to be alone together so that she can spy on their behaviour. Delio, however, notices Zelemina watching them, and they play as if Veremonda is a rebellious soldier who Delio is punishing. Zelemina, then satisfied that Zaida is wrong, leaves to participate in a festival. At this moment, Roldano arrives and castigates Delio, calling him a traitor to Aragon, and Roldano accuses Veremonda of being part of the conspiracy. Veremonda defends herself and reveals that she and her Amazon warriors are ready to take the fortress. As the festival takes place, the Amazons breach the fortress and let King Alfonso's army in through the gates to take possession of the island with an onstage battle. Zelemina begs for pardon in a lament while Delio admits his mistake and disavows his relationship with her replacing it for the love of the Christian god and for Aragon. Zelemina converts so that she can marry Delio. In the end, they all run to the walls to secure their victory.

With the introduction of Veremonda in Act 1.6, we see her discussing with Alfonso the threat in Gibraltar, insisting that she is more than capable of leading her Amazons there to victory. She sings the following verses in recitative: *“Delle Amazzonie forse il numero prescritto? In sanguigno conflitto Più di una Issicratea Roma già scorse. Non mi spaventa il lampo Delle spade guerriere, Né l'arco mi*

atterrisce, Dell'empie turbe arciere, Ne men di accessa palla Fulminantea rovina. Donna son, ma Regina." ("Was the number of Amazons perhaps prescribed? In bloody conflict, Is there more than one Issicratea of Rome? The lightning of the warring warriors' swords does not frighten me, Swords do not frighten me, Nor does the bow, Of the crowd of wicked hunters, Not even the thundering utter, Ruin destruction of the fiery bullet. I am a woman, but also Queen."); Heller, diss. 338) (Heller's transcription of Cavalli's musical setting for this number can be found in Appendix A).

For the words *fulminante rovina* (utter destruction) in mm. 12-14, there is a virtuosic melisma in the voice employing the device of word painting with fast sixteenth note figures and a dramatic octave leap up from d to d in mm. 12 where the basso continuo plays a b flat in the bass to introduce the B-minor tonality of the upcoming *stile concitato* section. With the words "*Donna son mà regina*" ("I am a woman, but also Queen") quarter rests, command the listener's attention, and fall between each segment of the phrase, and on *Donna*, there is a dotted eighth to sixteenth note figure indicating her firm determination. The segment finishes on the word *regina* on a solid V-I cadence on e in the bass that drops to middle e constituting her lowest and longest-held note and connoting in the voice the finality of her resolve. Heller describes the dotted rhythmic figure as *guerriero* in its clipped style, syncopations, and dotted rhythms indicating her "militaristic side" (diss. 404). Here she declares "*Nò Nò son tua sei mio, E dovunque n'andrai. Voglio esserte co anch'io*" ("No no, I am yours, you are mine, And wherever you go. I also wish to follow you"; 586).

The Act 1.6 *Donzelle all'armi* contains all the characteristic elements of the *stile concitato* warrior segment with an exhortation to war and for the Amazon troops to fight with fast high sixteenth notes in the voice. She sings, "*Donzelle, all'armi, all'armi. Gia lasciate le gonne; Gia gia fatte guerriere, Scordate vi gl'Amori, e di esser Donne*" ("Women, to arms, to arms. Leave your skirts, indeed, Yes, yes, make yourself warriors. Forget about love and being women"; Heller, diss. 338). As Veremonda calls her Amazon troops to war, the full out *stile concitato* section ensues introduced by the sinfonia and basso continuo outlining a rising B-minor triad with a sixteenth note trumpet-like fanfare. In this section however, the tempo has a duple or common time metre of 4/4 rather than the usual triple time metre. The

basso continuo ground bass holds the tonic note \underline{b} flat with repeated sixteenth notes and then on a half note at the vocal entrance, end of mm. 23, with *Donzelle, all'armi, all'armi!* The first two notes in the voice are eighth notes moving from \underline{f} to \underline{d} with *don-ze*, then sixteenth notes on *lle* and *all* are on \underline{d} and \underline{f} again as she urges them insistently. The eighth to sixteenth note pattern continues as she repeats *all'armi* four times with the continuo joining in at the second *armi* (mm. 24), then the sinfonia joins in with repeated sixteenth note \underline{f} s and \underline{d} s above the voice that sings a \underline{b} flat and the sound is broadening with Veremonda's clarion call to war (m. 25). In mm. 25, she exhorts the women further with, "*Già lasciate le gonne, Già, già fatte guerriere Scordatevi gli Amori, e di esser donne.*" Here the continuo plays a pedal on \underline{b} flat in the bass as the voice descends to the middle register on *gia lasciate le gonne*" reflecting her serious tone and then on *già già fatte guerriere* the voice drops further down to a \underline{g} on the second half of *guerriere*. The ground bass modulates with an \underline{e} flat half note in the bass, taking us into B-Major (mm. 27). The voice breaks into fast sixteenth notes outlining the \underline{g} , \underline{b} flat, \underline{d} triad on the text *Scordatevi gli Amori* lingering briefly with an eighth note on the second syllable of *amo-ri* rising on two eighth notes from \underline{e} to \underline{f} for the word *es-ser*. The final word *Don-ne* is set to a dotted eighth to a sixteenth with the dotted figure, as indicated before, imbuing the voice with a forceful martial character. A short sinfonia with ground bass ritornello follows to close the *stile concitato* section.

This opera contains more military-themed warrior arias and recitative selections than any of the other Cavalli operas examined in this dissertation. This is a list of those not analyzed here: "*Al salvo donne*" ("Except for women") chorus of Amazons, II.10, D-Major; "*Armi foco ruine,*" ("Arms fire ruin,") Don Alfonso, II.12, D-Major; "*Che rumore che voci*" ("What noise it makes") Zelimina, III.6, D-Major; "*Ala ala oh guerrieri*" ("Ala ala oh warriors") Buscon I.6, A-Major (Dalla Vecchia, diss. Table 49) Heller maintains that with *Veremonda*, Cavalli and Strozzi managed complete the requisite characteristics for the well-rounded heroic warrior woman. This is accomplished by presenting a virtuous and powerful Amazon who also has the more appropriate and, to Venetian sensibilities, "natural" female capacity to manipulate men through deception and "feminine wiles," as Veremonda does with Delio (Heller, diss. 361).

Veremonda is also the only warrior queen figure studied here permitted a full-throated, overt call to battle for an extended segment of the opera.

Cavalli and Nicolò Minato's (1627-1698) *L'Artemisia* (1657) is based on the 5th-century BCE Anatolian queen Artemisia I of Caria who commanded five ships into battle against the Greeks at the Battle of Salamis and on the widow Queen Artemisia II (3rd cent. BCE). Minato, who was Giovanni Faustini's student, was a lawyer turned librettist. For his *Artemisia*, Minato created a widow warrior queen with seductive power over men who, in the end, relinquishes her political power to her new husband in marriage. Paradoxically in the Seventeenth century, the figure of Artemisia, as Hendrick Schultz imparts, "was regarded in the Seventeenth century as the personification of a strong and independent woman" so it is strange that her story would be so changed (*Artemisia* 1).

Regarding the historical queens, Artemisia I (Fifth century BCE), her legacy underwent successive modifications and erasure. First, while Aeschylus' (c. 523 BCE – c. 456 BCE) play *The Persians* (472 BCE) provides his eyewitness experience of the Battle of Salamis (480 BCE), he doesn't mention Artemisia's dynamic role in the battle. Herodotus' (c. 484–c. 425 BCE) *Histories* (c. 440 BCE), on the other hand, includes an extensive description derived from eyewitness accounts of the part she played at Salamis and elsewhere, including her capacity as a valued military advisor to Xerxes. And while Giovanni Boccaccio (1313-1375) minimized her military exploits, he admits that at Salamis "Artemisia [I], in the midst of her admirals, was seen urging on her men and fighting bitterly; it was almost as if she had changed sex with Xerxes" (Brown, *Famous* 241). In his *De mulieribus Claris* (1375) however, Boccaccio conflated two separate Queens named Artemisia into one. While he concedes that his Artemisia was "a woman exceptionally capable of masculine vigour, daring, and military prowess" he praises her as "[A] lasting example of chaste widowhood" and for more than half of the account describes the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus that the widowed Artemisia II had built for her husband in the third century BCE. This later Artemisia was also known for her military exploits as having led several naval battles and who added the island of Rhodes and other lands to her territory (Schulze, *Artemisia* XVI). Apparently, the story of Artemisia II was well known to Venetians, and as Heller contends, more than

thirty of Boccaccio's 106 catalogued women feature in Seventeenth-century Venetian opera (diss. 18). Perhaps following Boccaccio's example, Minato combined the two separate Carian warrior queens into one.

Another pre-Boccaccio heroine thought to be based on Artemisia is the warrior woman Camilla in Virgil's book 7 of the *Aeneid* who Trudy Harrington Becker suggests is "to be admired for her martial prowess rather than feared as an example of a woman out of control" ("Ambiguity"). Becker writes furthermore that as a soldier, Virgil describes her as a fighter with "masculine" skills, attributes, and weapons as she uses a spear rather than the bow and arrow that was considered a more "feminine" weapon (Becker). By the end of Virgil's tale, as Heller imparts, he curtails Camilla's legacy because her asexuality automatically exempts her from contributing as a mother to the noble Roman genetic line (diss. 304). Minato followed suit by minimizing Artemisia's true historical legacy as a triumphant warrior queen to portray her as an unreliable woman-in-love who makes bad military decisions based on impulse and whim (Schulze XVI). Finally, Minato evaded the militaristic details of either Artemisia I or Artemisia II's stories, to instead invent her fictional romantic infatuation with a lower-class man. Romantic entanglement then became the focal point of the opera so that the Artemisia character was stripped of her rightful historical significance as a powerful warrior queen. Might Minato's taming of the Artemisia role for an audience familiar with the historical women's actual military exploits have worked to identify warrior women as intrinsically abhorrent, unnatural, and essentially foreign to the Venetian social cosmography? As Anatolian ancestor to Venice's Ottoman-Turk opponent, Artemisia was the antithesis of patriarchal Venice's silenced woman ideal.

Schulze maintains that while there was no fixed tonal system or taxonomy of affect, Cavalli still used tonality to depict contrasting changes of affect and action (*Artemisia Score XXV*). In Act 2.10 for instance, Artemisia sings in sharper keys when she tries to hide the fact that she gave a commoner her portrait but when she succeeds in doing so, the harmony shifts to flatter areas in A-minor and F-Major but then in her annoyance with Alindo things heat up and veer back again to the sharp key of G-Major (XXV). For Schulze, the shifting tonal centre relates to changing action and works to speed things up

while a constant tonality slows things down so that the tonal direction drives the action and indicates affect (XXV).

In *Artemisia*, there are eleven named roles, the Prologue contains allegorical figures, Gods and Muses numbering nine, and there are ten choruses including Ladies-in-Waiting, Soldiers, Page Boys, Servants, Stone Carvers, with a ballet of Archers and one of Page-Boys. It premiered in the large theatre San Giovanni e Paolo. The theatre dimensions were: 41.65m (128ft.) long by 10.9m (61ft) wide; 10.95m (35ft) high; the stage was 22.2m (72ft) long by 19m (32ft) wide; the auditorium was 16.65m (41ft) by 13.2m (43ft) wide; in 1654 there were five tiers of boxes; the capacity in 1683 was 850 (Thorburn, diss. 301). While we don't know the exact orchestral parts for *Artemisia*, Schulze surmises that there were two violins, one large bowed bass instrument, one or two violas, two or three harpsichords, two or three theorboes (XXIX).

After the Prologue, Act 1 shows a square before the mausoleum where Artemisia is found grieving for her husband, King Mausolo, for whom she had it built. She struggles with the fact that she has fallen in love again and distresses over dishonouring her dead husband's memory. Her counsellor Indamoro comes upon her and urges her to remarry. She doesn't tell him that she is in love with Meraspe, who she thinks is a commoner. Prince Meraspe, who is in love with Artemisia, is disguised as the commoner "Clitarco," but it is he who killed King Mausolo in a tournament. Artemisia, who has sworn to avenge her husband's death, does not know that it was Meraspe who killed him. She also declares that whoever finds the killer will be the one to decide with whom she should marry and tries to persuade "Clitarco" to declare his love for her. Fearing that his identity will be revealed, "Clitarco" declines. Meraspe/Clitarco tells his subjects Artemia and Ramiro about his predicament. Artemia, meanwhile, is secretly in love with Meraspe while Ramiro is secretly in love with her. Princess Oronta of Cyprus, disguised as a man, has come to the court to spy on her fiancé Alindo, a general in Artemisia's army, to see if he is being true to her. Oronta overhears Alindo singing about his love for Artemisia and decides to sign up for the army so as to keep a closer eye on him.

Artemisia finds Artemia with Meraspe and forbids her to speak with him. In fact, she forbids anyone at the court from any kind of lovemaking at all. To prevent Artemia from giving her portrait to Meraspe, she takes it and gives Artemia a precious gem. In the meantime, the court has assembled to see the mausoleum being built when the Ghost of Mausolo appears and changes the wording of Artemisia's epithet plaque to him from "Mausolo has died here. Artemisia, his consort, desires revenge and death for the one who slew him" to "Forgive my enemies." At this, Artemisia leaves in a rage. The rest of the Act takes place in "The Royal Gardens" and involves a great deal of back and forth between star-crossed lovers and unfulfilling exchanges between Artemisia and Alindo, Ramiro and Artemia, Oronta and Alindo and so on. Meraspe, at one point, thinks that Artemisia is making fun of him when she gives him another gem but drops it, saying it must have come from an admirer whose "heart has been enflamed by your looks."

Act 2 takes place at the "Arsenal" where "Aldimiro" (Oronta) scolds Alindo for being untrue and tells him that Oronta has come to the court but won't speak to him. Alindo makes some rude comments about Oronta, and Artemisia again rejects his entreaties. When Indamoro discovers "Clitarco" (Meraspe) wearing one of Artemisia's precious gems, he admonishes Artemisia for giving it to a commoner saying it must have come from Artemia. At this moment, Artemia enters looking for the gem that Artemisia gave to her and corroborates Artemisia's lie, but Meraspe still thinks he is being treated with contempt. Artemisia meanwhile inspects the armoury, and Indamoro sings an aria about going to war. Artemisia then instructs Erisbe, her lady-in-waiting, to give "Clitarco" a portrait of her without telling him who it is from. Erisbe succeeds in doing so. As he admires the likeness, Artemisia arrives and tries to get him to say that he loves her. At that moment, Artemia and Alindo arrive, and in order to hide her manoeuvres, Artemisia trades her portrait for a likeness of Artemia, which further confuses Meraspe. Artemia hopes to make Meraspe jealous by telling him she is betrothed to Ramiro, but Meraspe just offers his congratulations to Ramiro. When Artemisia offers Alindo praise for his war preparations, he starts to woo her again, and when she refuses his advances, he threatens to join the enemy army. In response, Artemisia orders Indamoro to abandon the war effort.

In Act 3 Artemia is in the “Royal Chambers” and has written a love letter to Meraspe, but Artemisia arrives and takes it away before she has signed it and gives it to “Clitarco.” He reads the letter and is glad because he thinks it came from Artemisia. In the interim, “Aldimiro” conveys to Alindo that Oronta means to commit suicide, but Alindo shows no compassion for her. When Artemisia informs him that she has abandoned the war and has fired him, he is angry but also feels guilty for his behaviour. In the meantime, “Clitarco” has written a love letter in reply to the letter Artemisia gave to him. But Artemisia decides it is best to tell him about her deception and that it was Artemia who wrote the first letter. This news disappoints Meraspe. Artemisia feels compelled to write her own letter to “Clitarco,” but Alindo finds the letter and threatens to announce to the court her love for a person beneath her station. Artemisia gets the letter back, however. At this point, based on his disloyal treatment of Oronta, “Aldimiro” arrives and asks to withdraw his duty to Alindo. Artemisia then pretends to sleep so that she can spy on “Clitarco” but is surprised to find that he is Meraspe, who she has sworn to kill. She finds that her love for him is too strong to do so, however. Alindo in the meantime hears Ramiro telling Artemia that he is going to reveal Meraspe’s identity if she won’t love him, so Alindo determines to find Meraspe and turn him in to Artemisia. Alindo has Meraspe arrested and goes off to find Artemisia. Meraspe sings a lament that “Aldimiro” hears. “Aldimiro” then releases him and brings him to Artemisia and so wins the right to decide who will be her husband. But first he reminds Artemisia of what the Ghost of Mausolo had written about forgiveness and asks Artemisia to forgive Meraspe. Artemisia complies and pardons him. When Alindo learns what has happened, he accuses “Aldimiro” of stealing his wife. “Aldimiro” reveals herself as Oronta and entreats him to kill her, but this finally moves him to compassion, and he renews his love for her. All is finally reconciled in a happy ending when Oronta gives Artemisia to Meraspe, and Meraspe orders Artemia to marry Ramiro. The above is a condensed version of the Plot Synopsis provided by Schulze in the score to *Artemisia* (X-XI).

Minato’s concern with the dissonance between Artemisia’s gender and her status as a military leader is discernable in his rewriting of Scene 10 in Act 1. In the original version, as Schulze shows, Artemisia defends her abilities as a woman to run the military (something the historical Queens did quite

successfully) saying: “*Farò veder che tutte, non son le donne imbelli; e ch’al diadema, cinger femineo crin Gloria non scema*” (“I will show that not all, Women are weak; and that for a crown, To cling firmly on feminine hair does not belittle its glory”; XVI). But, for whatever reason, Minato cut this statement of fortitude in favour of Indamoro’s lines exhorting Artemisia to marry a suitable candidate and relinquish her untenable infatuation with a commoner. On this aspect, Schulze asserts that, because her love interest is a person beneath her social status, “the verisimilitude of *Artemisia*’s plot is based to a great extent on class differences” (XVI). Her infatuation furthermore adds to the depiction of bad judgment that compounds her unsuitability as a military commander.

For Schulze, Minato’s plot revolves around the Aristotelian thesis that drama holds our interest because the “verisimilitude” of “universal observations” tell us “how a person of a certain type will on occasion speak or act, according to the law of probability or necessity” (XV). This perspective, according to Schulze, fit and reified Venetian sensibilities regarding things like morals, human nature, and world order that Minato’s Venetian audience would have shared (XV). Also, as it was important to advocate the Venetian stance that Republicanism is superior to Monarchy, opera dramas should reflect this point of view (XV). With this decidedly political agenda in mind, Schulze posits that Minato saw to it that his heroine exemplified just how corrupt the Monarchical system (and, I would say, women) could be. This is seen in Act 2.12 where the queen-in-love, in a rage over Alindo’s unwanted romantic attentions, capriciously rescinds her order for the military to prepare to recapture a lost territory (XVI). Artemisia’s reversal stands as proof, furthermore, that Monarchy is an unreliable system based on autocratic caprice, but especially so when the capricious monarch is a weak woman who puts her love interest before her duty to the State over a man of a lower class. In Venice’s Republican government, moreover, such important military decisions would be put to a vote by official governmental committees.

As Francesco Dalla Vecchia has demonstrated, Cavalli did not necessarily base his setting of aria types to particular tonal modes or keys. However, the *stile concitato* elements, in association with themes of war and the “trumpet arias,” are consistently employed across each opera examined here. In *Artemisia*, however, the eponymous character does not dress in military attire, nor does she sing a trumpet or war

aria. Instead, much as the Venus character in did in *Doriclea*, other characters express what she is stripped of as warrior queen. Additionally, with “Aldimiro” we have a cross-dressed warrior figure more interested in keeping her fiancé in line than in acts of war, and she also does not sing in *stile concitato*. Indeed, the *seconda donna* Orontea proves herself as more decisive than Artemisia, whose unadvised obsession with “Clitarco” results in her inability to make rational, “male,” decisions as a military commander. But it is Indamoro who, as a male character, more “appropriately” sings a war-like trumpet aria and voices the warrior element in *stile concitato*.

Indamoro’s *stile concitato* (see Appendix A) aria in Act 2.6, is set in C-Major, is in triple metre, and is introduced by the basso continuo playing repeated \underline{cs} (like a pedal drone) in the bass along with a symphonia of violin I and II and viola outlining C-Major triads in an ascending 5-measure line. The voice enters with the text *Di trombe guerriere* (“The trumpets of war”), and on “trombe,” the strings play high tremolos above, at which point the voice rises to high \underline{b} above the staff and in the symphonia sixteenth notes rush down a sixth from high \underline{f} to \underline{a} , and the voice echoes this in mm.10. With the text “*già de sta il rimbombo*” (“the rumbling already rises”), the vocal line rises up the scale again with added eighth notes on each syllable and, on the word “rimbombo,” a two-measure line begins a melisma (many notes sung on one syllable) with an $\underline{f\#}$ accidental that rises to a \underline{d} above the bass staff on the syllable “bo” that falls precipitously down a tenth to a \underline{b} below low \underline{c} on the word *l’armigere* (“the armistice”). Meanwhile, the continuo leaves the repeating \underline{cs} in the bass to rise with the voice to a \underline{d} creating a rousing drive that climaxes dramatically and then falls with the voice down the tenth. Such a large leap in the voice is indicative of powerfully aggressive emotion. On the phrase “*Armi ultrici trionfar*” (“Ultimate weapons triumph”), the symphonia reaches its highest note on a high \underline{b} -flat and introduces a dotted eighth to sixteenth note figure in mm. 24 that the voice takes up on the word *trionfar* and extends in a virtuosic 5-measure melisma. Again, the dotted rhythmic figure is meant to indicate the martial nature of the text. This 55-measure aria has assumed and developed many of the characteristics introduced in the short four-measure section of *Doriclea*’s solo recitative soliloquy. However, here the aria is a closed set piece separated discretely from the recitative before by being introduced by the symphonia and capped off with

a ritornello. The key of C-Major fits Dalla Vecchia's "call-to-fight" arias meant to express "masculine" pride and strength (Vecchia, diss. 325).

In this opera, Minato and Cavalli alleviated patriarchal anxiety about presenting a warrior queen figure in full possession of virulent "male" rhetorical power. She was inaccurately rendered impotent, while a male figure assumed the call-to-war aria as was the more common practice. On such mis-translations, Susan Stewart avers that the advent of seventeenth-century archeology prompted a "deepening historical awareness" of classical cultures triggering the simultaneous "reappearance and disappearance of the past" (*Crimes* 67). For Stewart, "the nostalgia of the distressed genre is ... a nostalgia for context, for the heroic past, for moral order ... characterized by a counterfeit materiality and an authentic nostalgia" (91). Moreover, the "distressing," or the ageing of newly produced reproductions of ancient objects, "involves a process of separation and manipulation serving certain ideological functions" (68). Clearly, Boccaccio and Minato's separation and manipulation of Artemisia I and II from their Bellatrix legacies, and his conflation of them, served just such an ideological function whereby her memory was distorted and anachronistically appropriated to fit their "way[] of life" and "ideological functions" (68). Also, as the Artemisia story journeyed from oral recounting to Herodotus's written accounts to Boccaccio and Minato's versions, the facts of her life and actions were severed from the "contingencies of [her] temporal moment and spatial position" (69). In this way, as Stewart contends, "distressed forms show us the gap between past and present as a structure of desire, a structure in which authority seeks legitimation by recontextualizing its object [in this case the figure of Artemisia I] and thereby recontextualizing itself" (74). Consequently, because performers were often unacknowledged in the early librettos, the legacies of both the Artemisias and the diva that created and premiered the operatic role were erased from the record. Ultimately, in republican Venice, the idea of a single ruler, whether male or female, was not thinkable, but the outright depiction of a virulent historical warrior queen in action would seem especially antithetical to patriarchal rule.

Despite such erasure, I wonder how the diva's performance of the Bellatrix queen in the "continuous present" or in the "real time" and place of performance worked to recuperate both Artemisia

I and II's legacies and how that might have played out in audiences' memories in the "after life of translation" (Bhabha, *Translation* 226). For my part, if, as Stewart suggests "To become familiar with the past ... is to become alienated from the present" and "the desire to wake and honor the dead must always be reconciled to inappropriate modes, inappropriate contexts," then, the body of the professional virtuosic diva on the public stage intoning, and juxtaposing gender normativity, her performance epitomized inappropriate modes (cross-dressed performance) in an inappropriate context (the public theatre) for women (Stewart 92). For, as "distressed genres characterize periods of nostalgia juxtaposed by upheaval, revolution, and cultural distress," the early modern diva too embodied and enacted an upheaval of gender norms in her time which was in the process of an epochal cultural transition outlined in the previous chapter (92). Also, by virtue of the diva's expressive body, the Bellatrix queen's decomposed body was re-composed as memory and re-sounded, regardless of time and geography, in the powerful performance of Artemisia. Furthermore, how might the diva's performance of the Anatolian queen have served as a hybrid link between "literature and life" in a "dangerous tryst with the 'untranslatable'" and in the "foreignness of cultural translation" (227)?

Otherwise, Catherine d' Medici, a prominent woman ruler within memory in Minato and Cavalli's time, adopted "the figure of Artemisia, [the] androgynous ancient warrior-heroine who combined a female persona with masculine powers" (King and Rabil, *Education* xxv). In the end, the phenomenon of Artemisia I and her subsequent iterations reads like a "palimpsest of hauntings" haunting audience memories as surplus meaning (Kanost 79). Perhaps, despite the interventions to her story, the historical figure persistently fords the temporal gap to haunt all iterations, including the diva's sonic embodiment as a trace of what, and who, has been. This is because the recurrent citational invocation of her "absent presence" (Derrida) informs the diva's sonic corporeality and is readable as a multivalent palimpsest in the multiplicity of her otherness. Accordingly, in her onstage actions and sound, and while embodying the figure of the warrior queen in performance, she performatively embodied the Bellatrix as she boldly claimed gender equality in the Venetian social space. In the nexus of performance and reception, and within the interlocking chain of "trans-temporal" translations, the Bellatrix queen

Artemisia, the ancient historian, the 14th-century writer, the Venetian librettist, the diva, and audiences collectively shared and played their parts in the midst of a paradigmatic shift and socio-political transformation of a new era (Spaponkuté 61).

Erismena (1655) is the second libretto by Aurelio Aureli (1652-1708) and, due to several discernable parallels, Rosand suggests he must have looked to Faustini's *Ormindo* (1644) as a model (*Opera in 157-8*). *Erismena* is a chivalric romance. In *Erismena*, the presence of arias has increased from those in *Doriclea*, and the number of strophic arias for principle characters has also increased, indicating that Venetian audiences were now used to hearing formal, enclosed, arias sung by serious characters (Rosand, "Ormindo" 284-5). *Erismena*, however, shares certain character traits and circumstances with *Doriclea* in that 1) she remains in disguise as a male warrior throughout the opera, 2) is wounded in the heel in a battle taking place before the opera begins where she has bravely fought, 3) and she is brought to the enemy court to be tended to as a prisoner. However, although *Erismena* remains in disguise for most of the opera, she never assumes a "male" name like *Doriclea*'s "Cyrus." Also, instead of having a Moorish squire doctor infatuated with her, *Erismena* is assisted by the "slave girl" Aldimira, who falls immediately in love with her. *Erismena* is also intent on tracking down her lover and not on defending her husband, as was the case with *Doriclea*. This opera became one of Cavalli's most successful and was one of the most famous operas of the century being revived several times and touring widely in Italy (Rosand, *Opera in 202*). *Erismena* was also the first known Italian opera to be transcribed and translated into English, likely by Robert Bargrave mentioned in chapter 1, and a score exists in the Oxford Bodleian Library. However, it is not known if it was ever performed in England.

Erismena was first performed in the *Teatro San Apollinare* that was the smallest Venetian opera theatre to date. According to the Glixons, *Erismena* sold a total of 5,418 tickets with thirty-two performances ("Oil and Opera" 137). Interestingly, and in contrast to the opera theatres owned by Venetian nobility, Apollinare (also called Aponal in the Venetian dialect) was run by middle-class *cittadini* and equally as many of both classes attended operas there (137). The theatre could hold about 400 spectators, had three tiers containing 250 boxes, and was 15m (49ft) long by 11m (36ft) wide

(Thorburn, diss. 302). As the Glixons inform us, Aponal was originally owned by a stonemason's guild, became a warehouse for storing things like oil, and an upper floor was converted into a theatre to present comedies sometime between 1626-35 ("Oil and Opera" 132). It is also interesting that the cousins Francesco Ceroni and *cittadina* businesswoman Zanetta Diamante inherited the property, and Diamante managed and rented it out (132). During the 1650s, commedia dell'arte was produced in the little theatre right along with opera (133).

While on a visit with the Armenian King Artamene, the Median Prince Erimante falls in love with Artemene's sister Arminda and means to marry her but is called back to Media by his father before that can occur. Arminda dies in childbirth while bearing their child Erismena who, unaware of her heritage, is brought up in secret. Erimante goes on to fall in love with his Iberian slave Aldimira. Erismena, meanwhile, grows up outside of the Armenian capital and is seduced and falls in love with the Iberian Prince Idraspe, who leaves her to go to Media. In Media, Idraspe changes his name to Erineo, joins the Armenian court, and falls in love with Erimante's slave Aldimira, with whom now King Erimante is still in love. When Erismena discovers that Idraspe has left Armenia and gone to Media, she determines to find him and joins the Armenian military *en travesti*.

The opera opens with King Erimante dreaming that an Armenian soldier will steal his crown. Meanwhile, Artamene has captured the Median city of Tauris along with Erimante and his court, but Prince Orimeno of Calco arrives with his military to defeat and kill Artamene; however, it is Erimante who ends up killing Artamene in battle. During the battle, Erismena is wounded in the heel, and Orimeno, who recognizes her as *il Guerriero* (the male warrior) who fought bravely in battle, takes her as prisoner and has his servant Argippo bring her to the palace for Aldimira to tend (Swale, *Cavalli*. 150). Aldimira is immediately attracted to the wounded soldier, and Erimante recognizes Erismena to be the soldier he dreamt would steal his crown, so he orders her to be imprisoned and poisoned. Erimante, relieved of his worry, crowns Aldimira and makes her his queen. The first thing Aldimira does is ask that the Armenian prisoners, especially the handsome soldier, be set free. Then, Erismena sings a lament in the prison cell as Erineo comes in with the poison. When Erismena takes the vial, she recognizes Erineo to be Idraspe and

faints in a fury. Erimante arrives and asks Aldimira to revive the prisoner. Aldimira sings an aria while casting a spell and Erismena awakens. Erismena tells Aldimira that Erineo has betrayed her sister and promises her loyal allegiance to Aldimira if she helps her to avenge her sister. Subsequently, Erimante, jealous at Aldimira's attentions, pleads for the prisoner's life and has Erismena, Aldimira, and Erineo cast into the dungeon. In the dungeon, Erismena confesses that she is the girl that Idraspe abandoned in Armenia, and Idraspe asks her to forgive him. At this point, Erimante has returned a picture that Erismena has of her mother, who he recognizes. He realizes that Erismena is a woman and that she is, in fact, his own daughter. It is also revealed that Aldimira is actually Idraspe's sister; he offers her to Orimeno, who has been in love with Aldimira from the beginning.

Unlike the music for Doriclea, Veremonda, and Artemisia, Cavalli and Aureli wrote no *stile concitato* moments or arias for Erismena but only one lament with the rest as recitative. The opera does however contain two other sections of this type. There is a sinfonia in Act I scene 14 in *stile concitato* for the Armenian victory at Tauris. In Act I scenes 14-15, there is also a tiny accompanied recitative with *stile concitato* characteristics for the baritone character named Argippo, commenting on the victory at Tauris. (See Appendix A) In mm. 8 of the accompanied recitative, Erimante enters with an \underline{a} in the bass on the word *che* (that) on a half-note followed by two half rests. Meanwhile, the violins speed up to play quarter notes high above starting in mm. 6 with an ascent from $\underline{d-e-f\#-g}$ again and then in mm. 7 they play a quick $\underline{a-b-a-b-a-b}$ pattern into the first beat of mm. 8 then drops back down to an \underline{e} while the low strings play in counterpoint up the scale with the quarter-note pattern of $\underline{d-e-f\#-g}$. This very short section is woven into the following recitative dialogue between Argippo and Erimante.

The accompanied recitative selection is preceded by a short recitative for Erimante, where he comments "*Quale dentro il mio Regno strepitosi rimbombi odo sonar d'alta etitia in segno?*" ("Why do I hear no cheerful signs of happiness resonate within my Kingdom?"). In this two-measure section, Erimante sings short eighth and sixteenth notes over a \underline{d} pedal in the bass in 4/4 time. The recitative ensues with an introduction by the full orchestra in D-Major containing a \underline{d} pedal in the ground bass and in the first measure four ascending quarter notes are played by the violins on $\underline{d-e-f\#-g}$, then playing three

half-note trumpet-like triads in the upper strings that outline the D-Major chord in triple time heralding Argippo's vocal entrance in mm. 3. Argippo sings "*Sire Allegrezza*" ("Sire cheer") with *Si-re* on two quarter notes and a half note on high ds and dropping down to as followed by a rest. *Allegrezza* is sung on five quarter notes on high d, then drops down to a quarter note in mm. 5, and then raises back up a fourth to the high d on two half notes with a half note rest while the sinfonia plays the D-chord triad pattern high above the voice. Argippo sings two half notes on the high b in mm. 7 and rests as the violins play the a-b pattern above all mirroring the music of the introductory sinfonia. Erimante asks *che* (what) and Argippo replies "*buone nove - Signor Liete*" ("good news Happy Signor"). With this, he sings repeated high quarter note bs dipping briefly on the leading tone a# thus signaling the end of the accompanied recitative with a cadence. Above the vocal line in these last three measures, the lower strings assume the high a-b-a-b pattern while the violins play f#-g-f#-g into the penultimate measure where they descend together separated by a third to e in the low strings and c# in the violins into the final cadential measure. The last note in the voice is on the sixth note of the D-Major scale with a d in the sinfonia and basso continuo. This short *stile concitato* moment moves right back into the recitative dialogue mode without a concluding instrumental ritornello.

Beth and Jonathan Glixon list the following orchestral instrumentation for *Erismena* derived from the Teatro S. Aponal's account book for the season: three keyboards (like the harpsichord or pipe organ), one theorbo (of the lute family with an extended neck); two violins; one viola; and one violone (like the cello) (*Inventing* 351). Considering the very small venue at S. Aponal and the small "band," the sensory experience of performance would have been immediate, intimate, and would have highlighted singers' voices so as not to overwhelm them.

Minato posthumously revised and completed Faustini's libretto *L'Elena* (1659). It is a comedy and was his fifth collaboration with Cavalli. The impetus to produce it came, according to Andrea Garavaglia, from the success of their latest collaboration *Inconstanza trionfante* a year before (107). Both operas are adaptations from Plutarch's *Life of Theseus* and combine other Greek mythology, classical stories, and their own inventions (Wissner, diss. 49). They both concern Theseus's chronic infidelity and

the kidnapping and rape of Helen of Troy and were produced in the Teatro San Cassiano. The title character Elena is not a warrior woman but rather the character Prince Menelao (Menelaus) dressed as an Amazon called “Elisa” who pretends to be Elena’s Amazon wrestling trainer so that he can seduce her.

The comedy starts right away when Elena’s father, the practically geriatric Tindaro (Tyndareus), is introduced to the Amazon “Elisa” with whom he becomes infatuated. In the meantime, after having left his wife Amazon Queen Ippolita (Hippolyta), Theseus goes to Sparta with a character named Peritoo (Pirithous) planning to kidnap Elena who he believes to be the daughter of Leda and Jupiter as Teseo (Theseus) has sworn to marry only a child of Jupiter. This enrages Ippolita because Teseo is her husband and has left her to kidnap Elena. In the end, Elena is rescued by her brothers Castore (Castor) and Polluce (Pollux), and Theseus returns to Ippolita and marries her.

A few striking elements differentiate the opera *Elena* from the other warrior queen operas covered so far. It is a comedy containing an Amazon warrior who is not the title character, and, in an attempt to connect with Elena, King Menelaus cross-dresses as her Amazon wrestling trainer. Also, in this opera, Menelaus sings the trumpet aria. Finally, *Elena* is the only known fully comic opera of the period. In Seventeenth century opera, according to Reba Alaina Wissner, Helen of Troy is portrayed positively in that she is “a victim of other’s actions through no fault of her own” (41). In *Elena*, Teseo kidnaps Elena (Helen) as she is wrestling with her “trainer” Menelaus disguised as the Amazon “Elisa,” and, as both are taken to be women, and one abductor is immediately attracted to “Elisa,” they are abducted together.

For my part, I focus on the *stile concitato* trumpet aria tied to the warrior woman. In this instance however, it is the layered imitation of a warrior woman by a cross dressed man that raises many interesting implications to the study of gender and to the study of gender mutability in Seventeenth-century opera. Kane relays that it is a common device in Renaissance literature to find a man who disguises himself as an Amazon in order to get access to a woman he desires (diss. vol. 1, 33). The vocal range for the part of Menelaus furthermore calls for a soprano voice, and Garavaglia thinks it might have been sung by the castrato singer Giovanni Castell (dates unknown), which raises even more interesting

questions that I am unable to explore here (108). On the castrato roles, Susan McClary writes that they were usually lovers or heroes, but were written especially as romantic idols (*Masculinity* 40-1).

Alternatively, the characters Ippolita and her companion Eurite are the only bona fide Amazon warrior characters clothed in military attire and so will comprise some of my focus here. Ippolita was likely sung by Elena Passarelli, who is listed as the *seconda donna* (second woman) in Marco Faustini's (brother of Giovanni Faustini) account book (Kane, diss. 19) (Find a contract for her in Appendix B). Anna Caterina Venturi, who also specialized in the Amazon and warrior woman roles, likely sang the roles of Eurite and that of Astianassa. Another interesting fact about this cast is that the prima donna (first woman) who sang the title role was the Venetian singer Lucietta Gamba who is not known to have sung in any other operas but was likely a professional prostitute (6). This casting choice is something that Kane links to "the image of Helen as a whore" (7). *Elena* was produced in Teatro San Cassiano again with the dimensions: 47 ft. long, 36 ft. wide, with five tiers, with a total of 790 boxes with some onstage, and could accommodate around 950 spectators (Thorburn, diss. 301). The named characters are seventeen (excluding the prologue characters) with four choruses, and the orchestra is four-part including: two keyboards; two theorboes; two violins; one viola; one violetta (like a three-stringed violin); and one violine (Glixon and Glixon, *Inventing* 352). In 1661, *Elena* toured to Palermo.

The opera opens with the usual Prologue featuring gods and allegorical figures who presage the coming events. Act 1 is held on Sparta, where a party is taking place for Teseo and Peritoo, who are about to leave to abduct Elena. In Laconia meanwhile, Menelao, who in order to come close to Elena, is cross-dressed as an Amazon wrestler, and his servant Diomede go to meet the court jester Iro who introduces them to King Tindaro, thought to be Elena's father (Kane 11-2). Diomede claims that he bought "Elisa" from some pirates and offers her to Tindaro as a gift, Tindaro accepts her, brings her on as Elena's new wrestling coach, and falls immediately in love with her. The servant Euripilo enters with Menelao (as "Elisa") and introduces him to Elena. Elena is immediately attracted to "Elisa," and the mutual attraction is played out as they wrestle and flirt. Peritoo and Teseo have come to steal Elena, and Peritoo falls in love with "Elisa," so they decide to take both Elena and "Elisa." When Tindoro learns of the abduction,

he sends Iro, who disguises himself as a madman, to investigate. Euripilo and Diomede join Iro to apprehend Peritoo and Teseo in Tegea. This Act ends with Iro being chased by bears through the forest with the bears being chased by hunters all of whom end up doing a little dance together (12).

Act 2 starts out in Tegea, where King Creonte holds an audience with Teseo and Peritoo and agrees to protect them. Creonte's son Menesteo falls in love with Elena, who finds herself suddenly attracted to Teseo. Ippolita arrives on the scene dressed as a man with Eurite, who is also cross-dressed. Ippolita is looking for her husband, who has gone missing. In the meantime, Peritoo makes advances to "Elisa," and Menelao pretends to return his attentions. When Elena rejects Menesteo's attentions, he vows to murder Teseo, but Ippolita overhears the threat and resolves to protect Teseo. Meanwhile, Elena finds "Elisa" talking in "her" sleep and divulges her true identity. Elena awakens Menelao (who was only pretending to sleep), and he reveals himself to her. Elena's brothers Castore and Polluce, who have come home from war, hear about their sister's abduction and swear to avenge her. The twins decide at this point to free their slaves, and the Act ends with "*Li Schiavi liberati, per allegrezza fanno un ballo*" ("The freed slaves dance for joy"; 15).

In Act 3 Elena tells Menelao that she loves him, and they decide to escape together. Next, we find that Teseo, who has been chasing after Elena, is tired and falls to sleep while Ippolita hides and watches him. Menesteo arrives, and Ippolita prevents him from attacking the sleeping Teseo. When Teseo awakens, he thinks that the disguised Ippolita is attacking him and challenges "him" to fight a duel but then rescinds the challenge when he recognizes his wife. He then sends her angrily away. King Creonte, who has discovered the plot to kill Teseo, turns Menesteo in while Castore and Polluce rescue Elena and Menelao from Peritoo and Teseo. Ippolita arrives and claims that she is the person who has been most wronged by Teseo and should be the one to punish him. Teseo and Ippolita are reconciled, and Elena and Menelao reveal their love for each other while Menelao is forgiven for his transgressions. All of the disguises and deceptions are revealed, all is forgiven, and the opera ends with a happy quartet (14-5).

The Act 1.10 wrestling and abduction scene features the musical elements of the *stile concitato*, but this time with a comic twist. It takes place in an *Anfiteatro fuori della citta* (Amphitheater outside the

city) where Elena and her servant Astiasanassa await Elena's wrestling instructor. Menelaus enters with his companion Euripilo who introduces him as "Elisa." Here, Kane describes Elena's reaction to seeing the beautiful "Elisa" as an "egregious overabundance of sexuality" expressed with "obvious attraction" (34). Both Teseo and Peritoo have come to abduct Elena but stop to watch the wrestling match.

The scene opens with a sinfonia of violins and basso continuo in D-Major and the musical direction "*Lotta*" or "Fight." It is set in triple metre, and the continuo repeats a \underline{d} in the bass while the violins outline the D-chord with a rousing arpeggiated and trumpet-like introduction. But at the vocal entrances, the rhythmic metre changes to duple time, oscillating back and forth between the short, triple-time instrumental interludes and the duple-time vocal sections serving to destabilize the rhythmic continuity. After Teseo has commented "*ecco il sito ecco il loco ... Vedi la bella, che lottando stà*" ("Here is the site ... See the beautiful one, struggling") with quick sixteenth notes, the music modulates to A-Major (Kane, score 169). He and Peritoo comment on the ensuing match. Meanwhile, Elena and "Elisa" trade taunts, and "Elisa" turns the taunts into flirty banter as she pins him saying "*Che caduta d'amor non e vilita ... Giustamente cader ad adorar*" ("What a fall of love does not grow ... He rightly falls to worship"; 170). (See Appendix A)

Meanwhile, Teseo, Peritoo, Astianassa, and Eurilo describe the action in short, quick commentary as the music speeds up with the action. Peritoo, who is now infatuated with "Elisa," decides that he and Teseo must take them both without delay. As they grab "Elisa" and Elena, the wrestlers cry out "*Chi m'imprigioa? Chi mi rapisce?*" ("Who takes me? Who kidnaps me?"). Now Astianassa and Eurilo cry out "*Fermate, fermate: ... Aita, aita, ò Cieli, ò Cieli ò Stelle! Volano, volano troppo, ed l seguirli è ta*" ("Stop it, stop it: ... Help, Help, oh Heaven, oh Heaven oh Stars! Fly, fly too much, and follow them"). All of this is sung in the upper registers on dotted and sixteenth notes in an overlapping canon-like style. At this point, Astianassa breaks into virtuosic sixteenth note vocal runs with "*Si rapico non vā Scitico dardo*" ("Yes, Scythian darts could not go faster!") that Eurite echoes. Then Astianassa sings a full out *concitato* aria in G-minor singing "*Chi mi rubba, chi mi toglie,*" ("Who steals me, who takes me away,"). Wissner

thinks this aria is more a “mockery of a lament” than a war aria, but it is in the *stile concitato* (Wissner 48). (See Appendix A)

The short section is designated *Aria* by Cavalli, with only a basso continuo accompaniment, but this time the voice also sings in triple metre launching into a long virtuosic melisma as she imagines with pleasure what it might be like to be abducted. By the fifth measure, the metre changes back to duple time as she lets her fantasy carry her away on “*Son qua, son qua libera e spedita ... anch'io d'esser rapita ... Per goder*” (“Here you are, I’m free, and I too must be kidnapped ... To enjoy”) on a melismatic phrase set on “enjoy” and finishing back in triple time with the return of *Chi mi rubba, chi mi toglie*. Once again, the rhythmic shifting underlines her unstable and hypersexual “female” lust. The sinfonia follows the aria here to set it off from the next section. The vocal range spans a tenth, falling from f down to d as the key moves to G-Major. Cavalli has created a carnivalesque reversal where Monteverdi’s *stile concitato* style, normally associated with serious war themes, is turned on its head into the maid servant’s lustful aria to heighten the comic effect in a novel application of the technique as the agitation of love rather than that of war (Wissner 154).

The amazon queen Ippolita does not sing a *stile concitato* war aria as such but only momentarily expresses her irritation at her philandering husband Teseo in the *stile agitato* style within a lament soliloquy, much like Doriclea. Ippolita is a secondary character that acts as a serious one, and so is another example of the carnivalesque inverted hierarchy where secondary characters are serious and primary characters like Elena and Menelaus act comically. Ippolita remains in male attire throughout the opera. In Act 2 she and her servant Eurite appear disguised as men in order to spy on Teseo. When Ippolita overhears a plot to murder Teseo, she vows to protect him (97). Teseo arrives, and after all of his efforts in pursuit of Elena, he falls to sleep, and the murderer, a character named Menesteo who is in love with Elena, attempts to kill him, but Ippolita jumps out from her hiding place and stabs him. Here we have something similar to Doriclea’s resolve to protect her husband. However, outside of the very short *stile agitato* section in her solo, Ippolita, the only true Amazon warrior queen, sings no dedicated *stile concitato* call-to-fight or war aria, but the maid Astianassa does sing a comical aria in *concitato* style.

The foregoing survey of warrior woman operatic roles by Venetian librettists and set to music by Cavalli demonstrates experimentation in the trajectory of their evolution over a period of fourteen years. The structural fluidity of seventeenth-century Venetian opera as a form, conveying textual, musical, and gender constructions, is well known to seventeenth-century opera scholars. Nonetheless, by concentrating on the specialized aspect of the warrior woman in Cavalli operas, I have pinpointed a wide spectrum containing variations but repeating particular elements that continue across the role type to form a basic template for a stock operatic type drawn from literary and theatrical wellsprings.

And while each opera plot is based on different dramatic sources, including mythology, history, romance, and comedy, the musico-dramatic realization of the warrior woman, is the significant factor common to all five operas. The nature of commercial Venetian opera necessitated that Cavalli and the librettists create roles catering to public taste by cultivating a workable and efficient set of formulae to meet popular demand. The formulae provided a flexibly structured formatting allowing for a varied overlay of storylines, locations, characterizations, and musical renderings

La Doriclea is based in Greek mythology, and the title character has literary precedents, like Virgil's Camilla and Tasso's Clorinda. She is a married queen, who is chaste and brave, and actually fights in battle. The story takes place in ancient Armenia. Her husband, King Tigrane, is indecisive and emotional and is loath to kill her to save his kingdom. Doriclea sings a recitative lament with a short *stile concitato* call-to-arms in a "strong" C-Major section tucked into it. Otherwise, she sings in controlled, action-bearing recitative style with a narrow vocal range meant to indicate her steady resolve. For her, Cavalli generally avoids superfluous melismatic or lyrical expressions considered at this moment better suited for secondary or "weak" characters like Tigrane. While Doriclea vacillates over deceptively cross-dressing and bemoans Tigrane's fate and her own, in the end, she decisively abandons trepidation to protect husband and realm. Ultimately, while Doriclea fights bravely in battle, she is virtuous, uncompromising, and devoted. And while these were considered essentially "male" characteristics, they were still thought proper for a sovereign who must discard her "natural" "female" weaknesses, and so does not threaten male authority.

Veremonda is a chivalric romance. The heroine is a Spanish queen who trains and leads her “Amazon army,” to Gibraltar, where, along with the Spanish army, they vanquish the occupying Muslim Moors. Veremonda is a heroic character who, like Doriclea, remains chaste and loyal to her ineffectual husband. Unlike Doriclea however, she is not found having engaged in one-on-one armed conflict but plans and executes the defeat of the occupying enemy as she commands her armed Amazons. Veremonda is allowed more *stile concitato* singing than any other warrior woman addressed here, and she never laments, but her *stile concitato* section ends in the flat key of B-Major while other characters sing in sharp major keys. In her manipulation of Delio, Veremonda fulfills the expectation that a woman’s most dangerous and powerful weapon is her ability to manipulate a man through her sexuality. Veremonda’s sexual power over men presents another dimension to her character, but as her abilities in war-craft and command prove superior to the male characters, she presents a greater threat to Venetian propriety than Doriclea.

Erismena is set in Armenia and is a type of chivalric romance. Erismena shares aspects with Doriclea in that she has fought in a battle, has been wounded in the heel, remains disguised as a male warrior throughout the opera, and is a brave fighter who is taken prisoner. She differs from Doriclea in that she never assumes a male name and is intent only on finding her lover who has abandoned her. While Erismena remains steadfast and resilient in carrying out her plans and sings mostly in “stable” recitative, she laments and never sings in *stile concitato*. Further, while the male character Agrippa sings an accompanied recitative in *concitato* style, the moment is more about the joy of triumph in battle than a call-to-arms.

Artemisia is based on two ancient Anatolian warrior queens of the same name who successfully commanded military battles. While Artemisia is the only warrior woman character based on historical Bellatrix queens examined here, she is essentially stripped of her accomplishments as a warrior and is depicted instead as an amorously obsessed queen who endangers her kingdom. She is petty and manipulative and rules by whim. Although she shows appropriate grief and honours her recently deceased husband with a grand mausoleum, she immediately falls in love with a man who seems beneath her

station. Artemisia does not go into battle but decides against doing so in vengeful reaction to an amorous general. She has no *stile concitato* call-to-arms moments. But the male character Idamoro does sing one in a more fully realized aria style than in the earlier operas in a “masculine” C-Major. Minato and Cavalli’s Artemisia serves to prove the unreliability of female rule rooted in feminine caprice.

Elena is based on the myth of Helen of Troy’s abduction and rape with added elaborations by librettists Faustini and Minato. *Elena* is set in Greece, and it is the singular fully comic opera of the period. While this opera includes the amazon warrior queen Ippolita, she is a secondary character intent on apprehending her adulterous husband Menelaus and laments instead of going to war. In true Venetian carnival style, this opera sets everything on its head and includes gender reversals. The opera, in fact, centres on Menelaus, who dresses as an Amazon woman with whom other men and Elena become quickly infatuated. Cavalli sets sections of the wrestling scene between “Elisa” (Menelaus) and Elena in the *concitato* style to indicate warlike violence and aggression but also the agitation of sexual attraction in the sharp key of D-Major. In this scene, a soprano castrato raises multivalent implications regarding gender and sexuality as he sings the cross-dressed-man-as-Amazon warrior woman. The “Elisa” character epitomizes carnival reversals in its hilarious parodies of physically powerful women, men in love and thus feminized, and the lustfully romping characters.

As the above examples demonstrate, over the course of four heroines and one faux Amazon warrior woman from Doriclea to Elisa, the power of the warrior woman was tamed and diluted. However, this sampling of early Cavalli warrior-woman operas does not encompass or reflect those of other composers and librettists of the period or of those to come: The sonically powerful resonant force of the skilled and empowered diva who performed such roles was nevertheless unleashed in difficult virtuosic music over the next two hundred and twenty-five years. Many of the tonal and textual ingredients for the role type were first combined and tested out on the commercial operatic stage by Cavalli, his collaborating librettists, and in the bodies of the first great operatic divas. As the warrior woman theme was popular it was utilized to great success in Venetian opera. That all the characters examined here were

foreign born likely made their status as warrior women and queens more acceptable to Venetian audiences.

Otherwise, Eric Nicholson, who writes about the warrior queen role and its transition from literary text to operatic libretto, elaborates that as Tasso's Clorinda transforms from "man-conquering infidel virago to man-conquered lady of Christian virtue" it is contrasted in live performance by the women *virtuose* (Nicholson 266). In his theory on this juxtaposition, Nicholson explains that the word *virtuosa* marked the women who performed in public with a complex masculinization as they played "the abject heroine" who, like Clorinda, possess virtù but are also suspect as they are neither "subordinate female subjects ([]or objects!)" (266). Nicholson suggests then that the "charismatic diva" presented a moral threat to accepted gender codes, causing composers like Monteverdi and Cavalli "soften" the effect by giving them laments for "the abandoned Ariadne, the futile rage of the betrayed Armida, [and] the dying utterance of the vanquished Clorinda" (222). Here, Nicholson touches on the rationale for this study. To elucidate the powerful social effect that the charismatic diva performed, in chapters three and four, I conduct a deep analysis of two operatic roles performed by the live, virtuosic diva and their reception. In this, I query how Anna Renzi's riveting sound and physical bodily presence, costumed, singing, and acting as a warrior queen, a madwoman, and cross-dressed effected audiences as she won celebrity status.

CHAPTER III: DIVAS BLAZE THE TRAIL

Renzi trod powerfully across the terrains of theatrical stage and of everyday life ceasing new territory for women. By facing and transgressing staggering social hurdles, detailed in a previous chapter, she established a new profession for women. Because Renzi distinguished herself in two cross-dressed roles, those being Lucinda (“Armino” in *Chi soffre speri*) and Deidamia (“Ergindo” in *La Deidamia*), it is important to address the difference between warrior queen characters like Veremonda, Artemisia, and Cleopatra and those disguised as male (or, in the case of Menelaus, female) warriors like Doriclea, Erismena, and what they have in common.

Although she is openly female when playing warrior queen roles, the woman performer was also thought, according to early modern understandings, to embody male attributes, especially while conducting matters of war and politics. Alternatively, when cross-dressing as male warriors, women performers were also thought to “become” male when engaged in battle; in feigned romance with another woman; while disguised as a man; and in the male sphere, like Doriclea and Erismena respectively. Menelaus as “Elisa” instead enacts an altogether different positionality, especially if sung by a castrato singer, because a man is always already a man and therefore always embodies the dominant sex in the patriarchal order. Even if the singer was a castrato, whether or not he was considered a “complete” or “whole” man, his social status as male and his ability to attain an education, move freely about in the public sphere, and achieve social mobility was still far greater than a woman’s. On the other hand, there is a chain of signification here where, whether as a bona fide warrior queen like Queen Christina, a mythological Amazon character such as Ippolita, or a diva playing a fictional warrior queen, either consciously or not, in the eyes of early modern patriarchy, a woman transitioned automatically into the world of men and male power. The contemporaneous warrior queen like Christina represented a divine right to rule and conduct war as a call-to-duty. This right also conflicted with accepted gender behaviour for women of a lower social order. Nevertheless, even if she wielded real power in the real world, doing so was considered anomalous behaviour for any woman and she only came into such power when there was not a suitable man to do so.

Consequently, in Venice, where women were not allowed political power and were thought to be less than men, they were obligated solely to serve them as wives and mothers. If a woman cross-dressed in public, in order to gain access to spaces and places otherwise prohibited to them, she was doing something devious and false that threatened the moral and political fabric of the community. Therefore, when Doriclea cross-dresses as “Cyrus” in order to save and protect Tigrane, she frets that she has betrayed her “natural” femininity. To reconcile such disorder, and, to rectify the “natural” order, librettists conformed their female heroines to patriarchal norms and priorities by giving over their “un-natural” personal and political power to male characters. These characters could also display traits like loyalty, chastity, and other virtues to balance out the “masculine” attributes. In the end, even if her male partner is written as a “weak” man, her power usually returned to either him or to another “appropriate” male figure. Hence, the message projected is that women of any sort who transgress seemingly fixed borders between male and female realms are doomed to fail, or if, heaven forbid, they succeed, it is an anomalous status that renders them socially suspect.

On the one hand, there were enough women in history known to have ruled politically and militarily as warrior women, and on the other, it was common knowledge that women cross-dressed as men on a fairly regular basis in early modern Europe. This contradicted and overrode the myth that women were intrinsically incapable of wielding political or military power or of self-determination. In reality, the historical record proves that women did just that. In my estimation, fictional depictions, real women in power, or any woman cross-dressed – or *en travesti* – was always involved with a transgression into the male power scheme despite the regulated and enforced barriers set before them.

Isabella Andreini also famously performed *en travesti*, and iconography of her gender play is abundant. Kerr notes that cross-dressing for commedia dell’arte women “worked as a stage device” and the device transferred to operatic performers (89). As Kerr contends, transvestism in everyday life could involve sexual fetishism. Otherwise, whether the diva dressed in designated male attire or just embodied “maleness” by virtue of her eloquence in virtuosic rhetorical skill, known in Italian as *sprezzatura*, like the great commedia dell’arte or operatic divas, she was said by contemporary male commentators to

“become” male. In this way, the diva materialized an alternative to misogynistic myths about women, if only by virtue of her stellar public presence, display of artistic acumen, and personal autonomy. In *commedia dell’arte*, as Nicholson insists, “To some degree the actress plays herself, and she redoubles the process of masking and unmasking feminine roles for a male audience” where “the Marfisa-like Flamimias-as-[Ariosto’s] Drusilla becomes a hero by enacting it on the stage” to bypass unenforced misogynistic law and order (261). Furthermore, Nicholson asserts that even when singing a lament, “the strong-willed [Virginia] Ramponi” had onstage and offstage magnetism that brought her international fame that “compensated for the grieving female abjection ...” (262). This was also the case for the – mostly – unknown early operatic divas who sang the Cavalli roles. Therefore, Renzi’s historical presence as the first professional operatic “prima donna” (first lady) or diva is immensely important. Renzi’s work fits into an interlocking performance genealogy from the *commedia dell’arte* to the *dramma per musica* streaming from the remarkable work of divas like Isabella, Vittoria, and Virginia.

The term “diva” stems from the Latin word for “goddess,” and in early modern spoken dramas, the roles of divinities were also sung, so the term signifies an esoteric deity who sings (Bianconi, *Music*, 262). *Commedia dell’arte* performers like Isabella Andreini were often described as divas, and the appellation migrated to describe the most impressive operatic singers, like Renzi. Valerie de Lucca also refers to *virtuosa* singers as “very expensive and difficult-to-secure ‘commodities’” for opera impresarios (“L’Alcasta” 223). Based on their divine sound and performance, these ways of thinking about the new professional singer-actors not only associated them with the older meaning but also with the commercial opera where the “prima donna” as expensive commodity could be found.

At the dawn of the early modern era, when international communication and travel exploded, and with the demise of court systems throughout Italy, artists became freelance professionals bargaining for good work with entrepreneurs who established new ventures like commercial theatres. They accomplished this in *ancien régime* courts, in private residences, and in commercial theatres (sometimes inaugurated by them) across Europe. The concentration of populations in urban centres like Venice with improvements in transportation networks like canals and coach systems, along with the humanist

emphasis on literacy for all, as Rojek contends, created a perfect vortex in which the new opera industry could take off (103-9). This is because Venice's exponential print culture provided a plethora "of communication through which taste cultures" could be nurtured and evolve (109). Simultaneously, the imaginary relationship between fans and celebrities whose content was "shaped by business interests" but was also fueled by subconscious desire (109). The desire to experience the diva drew throngs in as her cultural mystique influenced subconscious attitudes on women's performance of gender.

Regarding this, I wonder what audiences "read" outside of the sung language – in the "ephemeral," extra-lingual epistemology of performance translated as a "web of vital information" between cultures and in the semiotic grammar of performance as "sensory data" (Stapoucuté 36). Indeed, Renzi was not only a vehicle for the operatic genre, but she was a miraculous electromagnetic force field of performance that mesmerized and deeply moved others as they absorbed the vibrant vector of her resonant presence. I wonder how the polyphonous signs she performed as "web of vital" sensory information was translated. By performing anomalous social codes, and notwithstanding the cultural enforcement of normative formulations about women, the diva's powerful sonic presence looked and sounded antithetical to them. Her performance of difference from patriarchally imposed normativity – set into the text – was juxtaposed by the performative polyvalence of her acting body foregrounding a new "radical textuality" (Diamond, "The Shudder" 164).

David Zerbib sees performativity as a social force where reality appears as the effective result of the "performative operation" rather than as its origin, reference, or "preconceived aim" ("Dionysus" 28). The independent diva's performance of gender, as a skilled professional, exceeded curtailed operatic roles to misfire in a performative "enactment of ... difference" (Felman 57). And, as Diana Taylor proposes, performances transmit a sense of identity, social knowledge, and memory as "vital acts of transfer" in "embodied practice" – itself imbued with cultural discourses – to offer "a way of knowing" (44-5). Clearly, Renzi's performance of difference acted to transfer a vital new cultural discourse with a new "way of knowing" that translated into a new way of being. Renzi's celebrity identity articulated and converged multiple sexual discourses. By virtue of the power of *it*, she possessed the charismatic ability

to embody vulnerability and strength, experience and innocence, while she performed typicality and singularity in transvestite performance constituting an “ontological subversion” of gender (Roach 8-11). This is true because stage performance *en travesti* offered a spectre of freedom of movement and choice to performers and audiences constrained by regulated gender norms. The spectre of freedom was available to male audience members too, especially when both men and women performed *en travesti*.

Despite a social backdrop of punished prostitutes, masked, veiled and circumscribed “respectable” women in the Venetian cityscape, the autonomous diva overrode patriarchal imperatives. On the other hand, as operas played only during the Carnival season – with cross-dressing, masking, and other antics going on in the streets – professional women singers, especially when performing cross-dressed, were part of the upside-down Carnival world. Indeed, by the sixteenth-century, carnival-time constituted what Peter Burke terms “institutionalized disorder” with ritualized reversals in which normal cultural rules were abandoned (Burke 190). The divas played their part in the social disorder. Part of the early diva’s polyvalent performativity included her embodiment of “maleness” in cross-dressed roles. While audiences came to the opera informed by the “social field” outside the theatre, they experienced the diva’s body in performance in the *habitus* or the intersubjective social vortex of the theatre and departed affected by it (Butler, “Performativity’s” 114). To capture this aspect in past performance, I combine the musical and dramatic analyses of two roles with an examination of *Renzi’s performance, audience reception, and her celebrity status*.

Anna Renzi (also known as Rentia, Rencia, or Renzini) was the first universally acclaimed operatic “prima donna” or diva (Rosand, *Opera in 228*). Born about 1620 in Rome, she studied with the composer and singer Filiberto Laurenzi (1619-51), who also served as her accompanist; her surname might have derived from Lau[renzi] (Sartorio 437). More is not yet known about her upbringing and origins. She first appeared in the cross-dressed role of the servant Lucinda/Armido in *Chi soffre speri* (1630) with the libretto by Giulio Rospigliosi (1600-69) and music by Marco Marazzoli and Virgilio Mazzochi at the French Embassy in Rome (Pirrota, *Music* 250). This early Roman opera was labelled a “comedia” and has servant characters with commedia dell’arte names like Zanni and Coviello (Hammond

238). The *Argomento* explains that the young innamorata Lucinda, purportedly related to Zanni and Coviello, cross-dresses and fakes suicide out of love for the nobleman Egisto (Santacroce 74). It is revealed, however, that she is actually Egisto's sister. This opera contains a dramatic recitative sung by a servant character in the Bergamasque dialect with another one in a Neapolitan dialect (Pirrotta, *Music* 250). Servant characters playing out scenes from the everyday lives of ordinary people and singing in dialects links it to commedia dell'arte. Flavio Testi posits in fact that *Chi soffre speri* is the first comic opera (*La Musica* 156). Adopting human characters – rather than the deities of court opera – with lower-class comic servants and attendants, made them more accessible to popular audiences. Venice's popular commercial opera industry vastly multiplied this possibility with Renzi's instrumental assistance. Her appearance as a servant character named Lucinda in an early opera sharing elements based in commedia dell'arte practice is evidence that her onstage training overlapped with it. In 1640, she performed another character named Lucinda, but this time in *Il favorito del principe* composed by Laurenzi, again at the French Embassy before a private audience with Cardinal Richelieu. The front page of *Il Favorito* indicates that it is a *Drama Heroicomico, ... Recitata in musica nella Città di Roma ... 1639* (Heroic-comedy Drama, ... Recited in music in the City of Rome ... 1639). It was a mixed genre piece, and Renzi played a noble class character.

As women were not allowed to perform publicly in Rome, she and Laurenzi travelled to Venice, where she debuted in Francisco Saccati's (1605-50) opera *La finta pazza* for the sensational opening of the *Teatro Novissimo* during carnival January 14th, 1641 (Tierl, *Novissimo* 559). The Incogniti were responsible for envisioning, funding, and building *Novissimo* and its shows. Their productions were meant to glorify the Venetian Republic by featuring dramas based in Greek and classical histories, especially stories associated with ancient Troy (Zanon, "Lo Spettacolo" 11). The Incogniti fancied themselves, suggests Stefania Zanon, to be descendants of the noble Trojans thought to be the founders of Venice (12). The young libertines produced stories heralding republicanism as superior to absolute governments. By touting their patriotism with praise of the republican system, the Incogniti perhaps hoped to incur favour from the Venetian government for their new endeavour. On the other hand, they

were committed to the cause of sexual freedom (for men) and to freedom of the press. As they were a literary society, members published novels, poems, and libretti for early commercial operas aimed at spreading their libertine creed. Their leader Loredano held great influence with publishers, ensuring that their writings would be published (Zanon 11). This potent access to the press enabled them to publish and advertise the new theatre and its productions in a way not seen before, with detailed descriptions of the productions and scenarios sold before shows were opened.

One of many great things about *La finta pazza*, which was only the tenth opera produced in Venice, is the detailed description and scenario published by the Incognito historian and opera librettist Maiolino Bisaccioni (1582-1663) ... titled *Il Cannocchiale della Finta Pazza* (1641) (“The Spyglass of *La Finta Pazza*”). Bisaccioni explains that “if it was not convenient for everyone to see and admire it; the scene was printed and the work was also printed, but the machines and clothes and the extras remained far from the sight of the people” (qtd. in Ruini 283). Bisaccioni offers his firsthand account of the performance as a telescope through which to experience it from a distance.

Musical formulations like Monteverdi’s exciting *stile concitato* were enhanced with the new stage machinery and scene design technologies like the chariot and pole system and revolving stage introduced by Giacomo Torelli (also known as “The Great Sorcerer”). Torelli, who acted as architect, set designer, engineer, and costume designer at *Novissimo*, came to Venice in 1640 to design the Venetian military arsenal. In a letter to his sister, Bisaccioni conveys that Saccati allowed him to operate Torelli’s wheel, from which he conducted set changes writing, “juggling in the wings I got to align the equipment with my Wheel to crown the music, oh! The amazement, it made my heart beat fast as the scenes changed to the suggestions of the verses and arias ... that evening, dear sister, I even dared to feel happy” (qtd. in Zanon 22). Here is how he described Torelli’s novel mechanical inventions:

[A] counterweight [was] held by a small iron: this weight made a reel spin under the stage, for which, according to the need, they went now or behind all the canvases, which were sixteen feet on each side, accommodated in the space of thirty-five feet of floor, for which, turning all the parts to one and very fast motion, made great *meraviglia* [miracle] as art never before employed in

similar Scene changes, and the Theaters will owe gratitude to the Inventor, who has made them worthy of sudden amazement and delights; and it is true that out of this ingenious artifice, the intellect cannot conform to the belief that so many canvases can all at one point, in a single light, even in a split second, settle down to their places to vary a scene. (qtd. in Zanon 24)

Bisaccioni's first-hand accounts convey just how spectacular Torelli's inventions seemed. Roach contends that such marvels constitute "... synthetic experience... fabricated to imitate or replace unobtainable realities, be they threatening or alluring. Its success as a substitute for what passes for real life renders it both a highly marketable commodity, as in the offerings of the commercial playhouse or cinema, and a highly persuasive political technique" (*It* 76-7). As its magical visibility increases, reality vanishes. Also, as the performance product itself was exquisitely assembled and produced to provide an intense synthetic experience, the Incogniti knew just how to market and sell it.

The Incognito poet and librettist Giulio Strozzi provided libretti for Cavalli and Monteverdi. Composer Sacrati belonged to the travelling opera company the *Accademia degli Discordati*, who subsequently produced *La finta pazza* in Bologna in 1647 (Rosand, *Opera in* 110). In the pre-production scenario of *La finta pazza* sold to the public, Strozzi inserted the following marketing blurb:

The poverty of my concepts is made up for by the treasure of the Music of Mr. Francesco Sacrati of Parma, who with his harmonies adorned the verses with marvels, and with the same wonder he also put together a most noble chorus of many exquisite swans of Italy; and from the Tiber, in the horrible height of the winter season, he has brought the most admirable Siren up to the Adriatic, who sweetly kidnaps listeners. From the diligence of Mr. Sacrati the City of Venice must recognize the favour of the most virtuosic (virtuous) Lady ANNA. (*Supplisce alla povertà de'miei concetti il tesoro della Musica del Sig. Francesco Sacrati Parmigiano, il quale maraviglisamete hà saputo con le sue armonie adornari mei versi, e con la stessa meraviglia hà potuto ancora metter insieme un nobilissimo choro di tanti esquisitissimi Cigni d'Italia; e sin dal Tebro nel maggior vigor d'un horrida stagione hà condotta sù l'Adria una suavissima Sirena, che dolcemente rapisce degli ascoltanti. Dall diligenza del Sig. Sacrati deve riconoscere la Città di*

Venetia il favore della virtuosissima Signora ANNA.; 6)

The Incogniti effectively promoted the new art form to a curious and eager public.

The *Novissimo* was a wooden structure built as a temporary theatrical space (Tieri, *Novissimo* 557). Members of the Incogniti funded the project by renting and renovating the space, which had been a storage shed on the grounds of the Dominican order. Unlike most other Venetian theatres sponsored and funded by wealthy families, it was an experiment funded by the wealthy young patricians interested in producing opera and, erroneously, in turning a profit (559). It was located between the *Ospizio dei Derelitti* and the *Basilica dei SS. Giovanni e Paolo* on the *Mendicanti* Lagoon (557). Torelli designed and completed the new theatre in six months. The structure was U-shaped and, in order to fill it with as many spectators as possible, had a stepped cavea that was so noisy that listeners had difficulty hearing the orchestra begin (Zanon 13). According to Nicola Michelassi, contemporaneous documents suggest that noblemen stood in the stalls to better view Torelli's scenic innovations. She also suggests that there were no boxes in *Novissimo* but, rather, there was a central cavea with stairs on which the "common people" sat (Michelassi, *La Finta* 337). And, even while the contract of October 2, 1640 mentions opera boxes, it is not certain how many there were or how they may have been situated in the space.

In any event, the theatre accommodated four to five hundred spectators. The stage was about fourteen metres wide by twelve metres long, but was extended by four metres in 1641, with a height of around seven and a half metres, leaving fifteen and a half metres for the audience (Zanon 14). On *Novissimo*, Maria Ida Biggi surmises that "the entire area was about 15 metres wide by almost 30 metres in length. A small space, if we consider the great scenery-changing apparatus that Torelli will insert into it. The proscenium of the *Novissimo* theatre was about 9 metres wide by 6.70 in height, the stage had a depth ... of about 12 metres, to which 4 more were added, after 1641" (34). Tieri includes that there was "an arcade and sixteen wings, eight on each side... driven by a single winch located in the under-wing" (559). Rosand mentions Torelli's commentary on the space complaining that it was too narrow to contain the full splendour of his sets (*Opera in* 99). All of this indicates intimacy. And *Novissimo*, if it had boxes at all, would only have had up to three rows, bringing the audience into close proximity with the on-stage

action and to the *parterre*. Altogether, the auditorium was about two hundred and thirty metres filled with chairs, corridors, and an area for the musicians. The intimate space might have made patrons feel like privileged participants in a cultured, and seemingly private, academic gathering (Tierl 14). The initial theatre contract was for 1641-42, specifying that “only heroic works in music and not comedies” were to be performed (558). Impresario/lawyer Geronimo Lappoli created the theatre contract and was responsible for paying the rent but was ultimately unable to, so the clerics brought a lawsuit against him prompting him to flee the city (16).



Fig. 3. *Campo Santi Giovanni e Paolo (1735-38) by Antonio Canal “Canaletto” (1697-1798), where Teatro Novissimo stood until 1647.* <https://www.royalcollection.org.uk/collection/400715>

The inaugural production *La finta pazza* is based on the story of Achilles on Skyros and follows the plight of Deidamia (played by Renzi) and Achilles. The action takes place on the Island of Skyros in the days just before the Trojan War. Achilles finds himself on the island because his mother sent him there to safeguard him from fighting in the war. He is disguised as a woman. On the island, Deidamia and Achilles fall in love and conceive a child named Pyrrhus. When Achilles hears about the war, he wants to go and fight, but Deidamia fakes madness in order to persuade him to stay with her. In the end, they happily marry and leave the island together. *La finta pazza* is the first Venetian opera to feature a cross-dressed leading man. Several aspects of this opera, including pervasive self-referentiality, are quite

remarkable.

Bisaccioni describes the cross-dressed Achilles (played by a “young castrato from Rome”) as adorned in a silver embroidered green dress, commenting that it made him seem like an Amazon “who ... mixe[s] the warrior spirits with feminine delicacies” (qtd. in Ruini 288). At one point, Achilles, reflecting on his predicament muses, “Sweet change of nature, Woman into man transformed, Man in Woman changed, Change of name and figure. I am no longer beautiful Phyllis, But return today as Achilles: How many envy my state, To play the man, and the damsel?” (“*Dolce cambio di natura/ Donna in huomo trasformarsi, Huomo in Donna tramutarsi, Variar nome, figura. Non son più Fillide bella, Son Acchille hoggi tornato: Quanti invidiano il mio stato, Per far l'huomo, e la donzella?*”; Strozzi, *La finta* 58). (See Appendix C for libretto and musical selections for *La finta pazza*)

At the beginning of Act 1 scene 6, as the curtain opens to reveal the Royal Courtyard, yet another curtain is seen concealing the gynoeceium. This begins a play-within-a-play. On the opening of the inner curtain, the astonished Ulysses exclaims, “*O Formano gli Dei Questi teatri in terra, O innalzano i mortali Questi apparati in Cielo*” (“Oh, the Gods have made these theatres on Earth, Oh, these apparatuses raise mortals to Heaven”; *La finta* 42). Diomedes remarks: “*O bellissima scena, o nobil choro, Di Donzelle gentili*” (“Oh, beautiful scene, oh noble chorus of lovely ladies”). Deidamia interjects with: “*e quanto Di lunga aspettava Resta all'orecchio nostro Quando sprigioner ai quel canto grato, Musico addormentato?*” (“and how long have our ears waited for you to release that grateful song, Music adorned?”). The Eunuch then comments: “*Come scoppian le corde, Che non mi scoppia il petto? Servo tiranna via Dell'altrui libertà, Che mercenaria fa La libera armonia.*” (“How the chords burst forth, Doesn't my chest burst? I serve the tyrant who takes other's freedom, What a mercenary free harmony is”; 43-4). Here we have characters commenting on the music, scene, and singers. The Eunuch's mention of “mercenary,” points to an ongoing debate over the legitimacy of “mercenary” performers who worked as independent agents rather than for the courts as previous singers and actors had.

A scene ensues in the gynoeceium where Deidamia, the Eunuch, and Achilles, unaware that Ulysses and several ambassadors are observing them, sing and dance for an audience of young girls.

Here, Ulysses and the ambassadors become an audience to the dance, along with the spectators in the auditorium. As they view and comment on the dance, they let the audience in on their conversation. Even more striking, in Act 3 scenes 1-3, the character Deidamia, having heard that a performance is to be put on for the Greek Ambassadors, tells the Eunuch and the Nurse that she would like to co-produce a performance, asking why she shouldn't be able to pull it off. In a moment of meta-theatricality, she describes the theatre and scenes singing, "*Che melodie son queste, Ditemi? che Novissimi Teatri, Che numerose scene S'apparcechiano in Sciro? Voglio esser ancor'io Del faticare à parte*" ("What melodies are these? Tell me? What New Theatres, What numerous scenes do we have in Sciro? I want to take part in building them"; *La finta* 87). She claims to be able to make scenes suddenly appear and disappear simply by whistling (which was how the stage crew communicated at that time). Deidamia explains, "*Hoggi, che dalle stele, Per tante opere ornar illustri, e nuove L'Architettura piove, Anch'io spiegar vorrei Macchine eccelse, e belle Da far romper il collo à cento Orfei*" ("Today, from the stars, Architecture rains to adorn so many new and illustrious works I too want to build such Outstanding and beautiful machines, To break the necks of a hundred Orpheuses"; 87). To this, the Nurse replies "*Versi, macchine, e canto Son atti à render pazze ... Meraviglia non è, se da costei Partito è l'intelletto.*" ("Verses, machines, and songs are things that make one crazy ... It is no wonder with these that the intellect departs."; 88). The nurse voices the suspicion that music is a dangerous thing and can drive one crazy. This opinion also reflects the fear that women, like music, can distract men and cause them to relinquish reason and even complete control of themselves. Finally, when Deidamia seems to have gone quite mad, the Eunuch asks the audience if there is a doctor in the house who can help her.

The music for Deidamia's mad scene includes arpeggiated trumpet fanfares mostly on the notes *g*, *a*, and *c* and played in D-major, with marching rhythms, all elements associated with martial themes (Rosand, "Operatic Madness" 248-53). The music lurches back and forth with the scattered nature of the text from aria to arioso to lament, from time signature to time signature, and the melodic line exploits the extremes of the vocal range with sudden leaps of fifths, ninths, and octaves (253). As Deidamia is dragged from the stage in chains, she screams out for help. As far as costuming, it functioned not only to

identify the character in early opera but was itself meant to complement the stage design and so should integrate with the fabulous scenography (Zanon 274). According to Zanon, costumes were also typically made from “precious fabrics, iridescent colours and precious stone ornaments” (274). We can imagine Achilles in his striking green and silver embroidered dress, adding to the overwhelming sensory experience. In the final scene, as bride to Achilles, Deidamia appears costumed in a white satin dress embroidered with gold flowers (78).

Act 2 scene 10 starts with Deidamia’s iteration as a warrior in *stile concitato*, where she sings: “*Guerrieri, all’armi, all’armi, All’armi, dico, all’armi, Ove, stolti fuggite?*” (“Warriors, to arms, to arms, To arms, I say, to arms. Where are you fleeing to, fools!”; *La finta* 75; trans. Rosand, “Operatic Madness” 248). The music has hallmark *stile concitato* elements such as imitation in the strings and trumpet fanfares with wide vocal leaps and extremes in range. The basso continuo meanwhile plays a constant pedal on g for four measures, and the section is in the “masculine” or “stable” sharp key of G-Major and in a fast tempo. On the words *dico, all’armi* the melody line plunges down an octave from d1 on *dico* up to *al* on d2, rising up again to g on *l’armi*. The disjointed melodic line expresses Deidamia’s mental instability. A short six measure *concitato* fugue section ensues with Deidamia, Eunuco, Diomede, and the chorus, in that order, on a rising vocal line sung up the octave from d1 to d2 first by Deidamia with the words “*Armi, armi, armi alla mano*” (“Arms, arms, arms in hand”). It is sung on dotted eighth and sixteenths accompanied by fast trumpet-like figures in the bass all on the note d and in martial D-Major (“Operatic Madness” 250).

She rants: “*A stride quiete, dunque, Ad intendersi à cenni, Alla muta, alla muta, Pronta man, occhio presto,*” (“Let’s be quiet, then, and communicate with signals, silent, silent, Ready hand, quick eye,”; *La finta* 78; “Operatic Madness” 252). On the words *a stride quiete*, the voice leaps down an octave to middle c to the syllable *quie*, dips down a step shortly on b below middle c on the syllable *te*, and remains on these low pitches, while the tempo slows, on the words *alla muta*. The music is sung in the lower range, employs chromaticism, and is interspersed with pauses indicating disjointed thoughts sounded in reeling disjunct intervals. Then with *Pronta man, occhio presto*, she shoots back up to a b

below \underline{c} and starts to climb in pitch with a faster tempo up to an \underline{e} . Then, with the following text, Deidamia assumes the persona of Helen of Troy, singing: “*Elena bella io sono, Tù Paride Troiano Sù rapiscimi, sù, ladro melenso, Stendi, stendi la mano, Ti picchi? Ti rannicchi? T’incrocicchi?*” (“I am beautiful Helen, You Trojan Paris, Come, carry me off, come stupid crook, Extend, extend your hand, You hit yourself? You crouch? You crisscross?”; 77). Then she comically babbles out: “*Di che ti maravigli? Cutrettola Frinquello, Ocha, Fruson Barbagianni Babbusso.*” (“What are you wondering about? Yellow Wagtail, Finch, Goose, Hawfinch, Barn Owl, idiot.”; 77; “Operatic Madness” 252) As she is carried off stage she exclaims: “*Son forzata, o vicini, Il mio honor è perduto; Aiuto, amici, aiuto.*” (“I am being violated, oh neighbours, My honour is lost; Help, friends, help.”; 77).

Her music sounds in a higher register as she becomes more and more terrified. With *Son forzata* \grave{o} , she drops down a 4th from \underline{d} to \underline{a} and leaps up a 5th from the \underline{a} to up to \underline{e} on \grave{o} then falls a minor 6th to $\underline{g\#}$. The higher pitch, faster tempo, chromaticism, and large intervallic leaps indicate her rising distress making the dramatic leap to \grave{o} on \underline{e} sound like a scream. With *aiuto amici, aiuto amici* the tempo accelerates even more, while on each repetition of the word *aiuto* the voice makes a series of leaps, first down a 4th and then jerks up a 5th with the upper notes falling on the first *a* vowel for the words *aiuto* and *amici* as she rises up on the notes \underline{d} , \underline{e} , and shoots up to the highest \underline{f} on the staff for the first two syllables of the word *ami ci*. This rising sequential pattern produces the effect of her extreme distress.

Just before she is dragged off, a group of buffoons arrive. Deidamia proceeds to instruct them as a choreographer. While they are dancing, she stops them and tells them to keep the beat with the music: “*Fermate, homai, fermate, Rapidi miei corsieri, il nobil trotto: Alle corde, alle corde: Nò, nò, non paventate: Alle corde, alle corde Cromatiche, o Diatoniche; ... S’i piedi havete, o più le mani armoniche.*” (“Now stop your noble trot, my noble horses: On the chords, on the chords: No, no, do not fear: On the chords, on the chords Chromatic, or Diatonic; ... Use your feet, and your harmonic hands”; 83). In this scene, the character/performer introduces the language of the new musical style to the audience. In all, the character Deidamia outlines the duties of the *choragus* or the director. The fools then sing “*Pazzo è il piè, ch’un pazzo segue, Pazzo duolo Non bà mai paci, né tregue. Amor pazzo non è solo,*

Che con mille suoi seguaci Importuno à turbar vien le mie paci.” (“Crazy is the foot, which a madman follows, Crazy pain, Never peace, no truce. Crazy love is not alone, What with a thousand followers.”; 83-4). Another sings ... “*Pazzo core hà pazzo piede ... Pur ch'io resti un pazzo vero, Voli il piè, la gamba ondeggi, E di un pazzo brillar l'alma festeggi.*” (“The crazy heart has a crazy foot ... As long as I remain a real fool, The foot flies, the leg sways, In the crazy celebrations of a madwoman.”; 84). The final clown calls the audience crazy, too: “*E più pazzo chi ci mira, Chi c'ascolta ... È il più pazzo, che si trova, Gran pazzo è chi non hà materia nova.*” (“And crazier still are those who look at us, Who listen to us ... He’s the craziest, Great fool ... who has no new material.”; 84). In this scene we have an out and out comic interlude incorporating the lead character.

Deidamia’s text and music typify how early modern opera composers portrayed the operatic mad woman with excessive chromaticism and repetition. The approach provided a set of “normative procedures” based on the reasoning of mathematical systems (i.e. music theory) functioning as “protective frames” to contain the madness and thus “prevent [public] ‘contagion’” (McClary, *Feminine* 81). By ignoring formal rules about harmony, the music underpins rapid-fire emotional changes while embracing unorthodox juxtapositions of text and music. Aria and recitative are mixed with lyrics that seem to contradict the intention of the dramatic situation reflecting the unsettling dementia of the character in a new way. Sacriati introduced musical sounds that would become associated with the state of operatic madness. Alternatively, composers were obliged to contain the potential social danger presented by the musical performance of female madness. For, as McClary asserts, music itself was considered capable of feminizing, deluding, bedazzling, and corrupting its hearers since Plato’s time (*Feminine* 88).

Renzi subverted gender norms with the power of her vocal sound and her chameleon-like performance of Deidamia as madwoman. On this aspect, Rosand maintains, that as divine beings, gods were released from the realism of normal human speech and so sung. Deidamia too, in her feigned madness, was exempt from the “bonds” of acting realistically with normal text as she stretched the “boundaries of the normal” to perform madness (“Operatic Madness” 120). And as madness was a justifiable excuse for irrational behaviour, like divinity justified singing rather than speaking, the

emotional excesses of madness called for “extravagant musical expression” (120). Renzi, too, released herself from the bonds of what was thought realistic (or appropriate) social behaviour for women. Her performance and sound affected audiences in a unique way, independent of the librettist’s text or composer’s notation. This paratextual effect, combined with the other exquisitely executed elements, rendered *La finta pazza* wildly popular. With sold-out performances and high demand, it was produced twelve times over a seventeen-day period and was granted unprecedented permission to extend performances beyond the official end of carnival season during Easter (Neveu, *La finta* 3). It was subsequently produced in differing versions – more than any other opera in the Seventeenth century – once in Paris, and in multiple cities across Italy over the next forty years.

Commedia dell’arte troupes often combined tragedy and comedy, and Fabbri relates that “‘mad-scenes’ were regularly presented as “*bravura* pieces” that should by convention be completely or partly ridiculous (“On the Origins” 160). In the following monologue, Isabella introduced what Fabbri describes as the prototype of the mad scene genre with the deranged innamorata title character in *La Pazzia d’Isabella* (1589). She comically rants: “I recall – but the year I forget – that a harpsichord placed in concord a Spanish pavan with a galliard by Santin da Parma, as a result of which the lasagna, macaroni, and polenta put on mourning weeds since they could not bear the fact that the wild-cat should be a friend of the beautiful girls of Algiers ...” (Fabbri 165). The comic practice from commedia dell’arte is retained in *La finta pazza* with “the tradition of deforming or subverting serious literature for comic ends ... with ... hyperbole” (170). For example, as seen above, Deidamia employs long lists “*Cutrettola, fringuella, oca, frusone, barbaggianni, babbusso*” ... and close-spaced internal rhymes “*Ti picchi? Ti rannici, t’incrocicchi?*” Similarly, in librettist Strozzi’s rendition of *La finta pazza*, Deidamia’s entrance in Act 2.10, demonstrates the shifting emotional terrain. Deidamia’s disturbed rant is reminiscent of Isabella’s random listing of various birds.

One contemporary witness describes Isabella running throughout the onstage city, “stopping now one person and now another, and speaking now in Spanish, now in Greek, now in Italian and many other languages, but all without reason... [s]he then began to imitate the speech of all her colleagues ...

Pantalone, Graziano, Zanni, Pedrolino, ... and Franceschina” (164). Renzi as Deidamia also ran through the onstage city. Isabella premiered the “divinely inspired” role. And, although rhetorical eloquence was considered natural only to men, Isabella devised and improvised her own text. The “mad” monologue she created was comprised of absurdly nonsensical ideas from various sources presented in “small, illogical fragments” including clownish exaggeration and “the grotesque deformations of the ‘*lingua graziana*’ [from the male character Graziano], all intended to imitate mental instability” (165). Isabella transgressed her designated gender by speaking a polyglot of languages, relying on her anomalous “masculine” command of them, and in mimicking her male colleagues’ physicality and vocal *lazzi*, while rushing wildly about in the onstage urban setting. Her performance embodied a wild female disorderliness that was threatening to the tightly controlled public order.

Due in part to her protean ability to shift fluidly from emotional state to emotional state in cross-dressed and “madwoman” roles Renzi achieved “rock star” status in commercial Venetian opera. She inherited the madwoman role type from commedia dell’arte predecessors like Isabella. So, as Isabella “achieved her fame by demonstrating her mastery ... in her ... iconic mad performance of *La pazzia di Isabella* so too did Renzi fifty-two years later with her masterfully mad performance in *La finta pazza* (Kerr, *The Rise* 11). Such transmissions of performance practice act in what Roach calls a “genealogy of performance” much like the one he describes for the *Beggar’s Opera* where available playscripts, performance traditions, and the repertoire, “unite in the perfection of a new version of a well-traveled scenario” (*It* 213). The newly construed operatic mad scene, like the warrior woman or the innamorata *en travesti*, constitutes a genealogy of performance passed from genre to genre, generation to generation, and from space to space, transmitted in published scenarios and in the bodily repertoire of performance practices.

Strozzi’s mad scene exemplifies Monteverdi’s requirements for singing the scene type. In the following excerpt from a letter of 1627 from Monteverdi to Strozzi, he describes the qualities necessary for a singer to successfully sing and act out a mad scene:

... since the imitation of such ... madness must take into account only the present and not the past

or future, therefore, it must be based on the single word and not on the sense of the phrase; when, therefore, war is mentioned, it will be necessary to imitate war, when peace, peace, when death, death and so on. And because the transformations and the imitation happen in the shortest space of time, the person who takes the principal part, which should arouse both laughter and compassion, must be a woman who can lay aside every sort of imitation except that which is dictated by the word that she is saying. (Rosand, “Operatic” 244)

As Strozzi had worked with Monteverdi, he knew about Renzi’s exceptional acting and singing abilities, and so likely wrote the part of Deidamia in *La finta pazza* with her talents in mind. With Renzi in the role of Deidamia, Strozzi realized Monteverdi’s aspiration to adapt the commedia dell’arte mad scene for the operatic form. Renzi possessed the formidable acting skill and vocal prowess to accomplish and introduce it. It was she who sounded forth a demented innamorata in *La finta pazza*, powered by her virtuosic control of demanding vocal lines with a sonorous capacity that drove her listeners to distraction.

Because opera was a relatively new phenomenon in the city of Venice, and as *La finta pazza* occurred just a few years after the first Venetian opera, Renzi and her associates were introducing the new genre to an audience recently unused to hearing an entirely sung drama. Their task was to present a realistic dramatic form to audiences accustomed to spoken drama interspersed with songs. *La finta pazza* was written as a vehicle for Renzi. With this opera, she and her collaborators firmly established the new form. But it was in Renzi’s body that Monteverdi’s aspirations for the mad scene were realized. While other operatic singers had been singing in Venice since 1637, Renzi was the first to gain superstar status. And, she was known for her ravishing sound, her beautiful appearance, and her transformative acting skill. Here is how Strozzi described her acting ability:

[I]n truth ... Anna has the favoured nature, and has trained and studied, all that is required is fulfilled. The motion by which one gives the soul, the spirit, and being to things, must be governed by the movement of the body, by the gesture, by the face, by the voice, now raising here, now lowering there, disdainful, and coming back immediately to pacify: here talking quickly, then slowly, moving the body either here, or there, picking up the arms, and spreading

them, laughing, and crying, either with little, or with a lot of agitation in the hands: our Lady Anna with expression comes alive, and seems as if the speeches are not learned from memory, but born in the moment.; *Le Glorie* 8) (See Appendix C)

Strozzi's description of Renzi's acting abilities echoes the priorities set forth in the treatise *Il Corago* (circa 1630). It served as an instruction manual for stage directors in the new *drama per musica* and the sung recitation style or *stile recitativo*. The anonymous author of *Il Corago* lists as necessary to the duties of the stage director a basic knowledge of dance, music, poetry, lighting, scenography, and acting in order to coordinate these things with the designers for performance and to communicate them to the performers (*Corago* 23). It directly addresses the changes in performance practice from *commedia dell'arte* to the new *stile recitativo* on several different levels. Concerning the singer-actor, the author writes that to be a great *musico recitante* (recitative musician), the performer must master both singing and acting (96). For the author, the musician who knows the gestures that go best with the text and the corresponding affect, can better move the audience than one who merely narrates it writing:

... something said by one who knows how to deliver it well and accompany it with a gesture will make a much greater impression in the minds of the listeners and will more easily move in them the affections of anger, hatred, passion, joy and the like than when done without a gesture or without vocal inflection in a simple narration. (... *una cosa detta da uno che sappia ben porgerla et accompagnarla con gesto farà molto maggiore impressione nelli animi delli ascoltanti e moverà in essi più facilmente gli affetti d'ira, d'odio, di passione, d'allegrezza e simile che non farà quando da uno senza gesto o mutazione di voce fusse semplicemente narrate.*; 93)

The author further implies that the gestures should correspond to the appropriate affect (94). Thus, for the anger or *ira*, for example, the corresponding gesture should be excited and proud with hands moving furiously with the text. The hands should first move toward the listener and then be thrown outwardly "at the cadence of the period" ("*ala cadenza dé periodi*") (95). For despair, on the other hand, the motions of the hands change often now shaking them together, then pulling them to the chest, stretching them downwards and "*talora scagliandole in fuori quando minacciando*" ("flinging them in the air when

threatening”; 95). Strozzi’s description of Renzi reflects these gestural priorities. Regarding how the singing reciter modulates the tempo of the text according to the appropriate affect, gestures should occur at the beginning and not in the middle of the word (97). So, for instance, if the affect is sorrow, the words should be sung in a slow *adagio*. If the affect is joy, then it would be sung in a fast *allegro* tempo.

Turning to the transition from the mostly spoken drama of the commedia dell’arte, the author enumerates and defines the major character masks. But on their use in performance, the author writes, “*io non so come potessi rappresentare così bene gli affetti come si fa oggi da nostri comici i quali, mutandosi di volto, ora danno segno di allegrezza, ora di malinconia, ora di sdegno e simili*” (“I don’t know how one could represent affections so well as we do today with our comedians who in changing their faces, now give a sign of joy, now of melancholy, now of indignation and the like”; 105). Therefore, since unmasked performance was a new thing, introduced by commedia dell’arte women, it was up to the taste of the reader (*al gusto de’ lettori*) to decide which way they prefer (105). *Corago* provides much more information on textual matters, musical composition, stage machinery, and costumes. The treatise addresses how practitioners and audiences of the new sung style were to handle the transition from spoken drama assuring, “*con il tempo il popolo s’avvezzarebbe a gustar ogni cosa rappresentata in musica*” (“with time the people will accustom their taste to all things represented in music”; 64). Whether or not Strozzi or Renzi, for that matter, was aware of *Il Corago*, Strozzi’s remarks on Renzi’s performance reflect that she was able to master – and masterfully realize – the combined arts of singing, acting, and rhetorical eloquence that Monteverdi and the anonymous author theorized. Indeed, Renzi was the ideal vehicle to accommodate and finesse audience members’ tastes, as suggested in *Il Corago*, by bridging, integrating, and embodying the older style with the new one. She modelled the transition.

The Florentine music theorist Giovanni Battista Doni (1595 – 1647) was active at the same Barberini court in Rome when and where Renzi first performed. In his treatise *Trattato della Musica Scenica* (1635), he differentiates between *stile recitativo* and what he referred to as the *stile rappresentativo*. For Doni, who, like the author of *Il Corago*, worked to define the new *dramma per musica* genre, states that whereas *stile recitativo* describes recitation, as in the recitation of a poem or the

recounting of a narrative, *stile rappresentativo* should represent or imitate a character in a dramatic stage setting. *Stile rappresentativo* includes the gestures, actions, and mannerisms of a human character while conveying the emotions and affect of a dramatic scene set to music (Doni, *Musica* 67). Massimo Ossi also writes that Monteverdi referred to his theatrical works requiring action and staging as *genere rappresentativo* rather than *stile recitativo* (*Divining* 207). Doni further argues that the *rappresentativo* style was perfectly suited to the new lyric genre. He adds that, in theatres where melodies are adapted for scenes from well-conceived tales and combined with exquisite costumes and gestures, they best demonstrate the places that human artifice can go while offering a satisfying experience to awaken the senses (131). As Doni was at the Barbarini court just when Renzi was active there, his ideas were likely influential within the musical theatrical community and impacted Laurenzi's and her musico-theatrical approaches.

In the migration of performance epistemes that I have outlined, the experimental tinkering and morphing of the madwoman scene by librettists, composers, and actors is discernable. This migration operated as a cultural repertoire that morphed and slipped across genres. The theatrical forms of commedia dell'arte and opera overlapped and operated within the paradigmatic shift from feudal court systems to mercantilism and commercial theatre in Venice. The tropes of the madwoman and the warrior woman was archived and transmitted by, and through, the extraordinary sounding bodies of the early modern divas from court performance to commercial operatic performance in Venice. The new professional performers were finally unleashed to storm across the public stages of Europe and into the public realm. This must have seemed like madness to those unused, or not ready, to witness this kind of freedom for women.

At the same time, the comic and musical elements in Isabella Andreini and Anna Renzi's performances of madness could of course have inoculated or distracted audiences from thinking too deeply about the performers' transgressions of social normativity and political ideology. For, as Rosand maintains, audiences at Venetian operas were heterogeneous, and the operas themselves operated on several levels to communicate ideas about Venice's "political culture" ("Fondamente nuove" 414).

Furthermore, “they parodied its mores (for example, in manner of dress and carnival behaviour) and its



Fig. 6. Chopine shoes, 1580-1620. https://mycostumehistory.files.wordpress.com/2014/01/200903_chopine_700w.jpg



Fig. 7. *La Pazza*, Antonio Pisarri (1694) <https://collezioni.genusbononiae.it/products/dettaglio/616>

characters (courtesans, procuresses, gondoliers, etc.)” (414). This happens when the shepherd in *Deidamia* ridicules the “dissembling” city women in their high *chopine* shoes who required servants to help them balance as they walked.

The perceived danger of women exercising freedom of speech on the stage was prompted by fear of the out-of-control female body depicted in the allegorical *La Pazza* seen running wildly, and barefooted, through the landscape [fig. 6]. If this capacity were not held in check, women could endanger men in powerfully seductive ways leading them to evil and immoral thoughts and deeds. Against this overriding phobia, Isabella Andreini's performance of the madwoman free to speak her mind, like Renzi's execution of ineffable sound beyond the male composer's conception, counteracted the dictate to remain silent, submissive, and enclosed. Their unruly physicalities and free movement on the public stage contradicted women's strictly curtailed movements in the city.

Moving now to Renzi's performance in *La Deidamia*, an interesting note here is the transfer of



Fig. 5. Front page. *La Deidamia*. 2nd Printing. Biblioteca Nazionale Roma, 1645 pdf. In the bottom of this page someone has written "musica di Francesco Cavalli"

the role name "Deidamia" to the new opera. Commedia dell'arte artists would be known for their stock character names, so it seems plausible – with the transfer of this role name from one opera to another – that a similar impetus to have Renzi identified with a stock character name, was begun but the appellation seems not to have stuck as she was thereafter referred to as Anna Renzi. This also occurred with her first two roles as Lucinda.

Deidamia was written and composed specifically for Renzi by librettist Scipione Herrico (1592-1670). While the composer is not certain, at the bottom of above copy of the libretto cover, someone has written “Francesco Cavalli,” so he could have been the composer, but the score is lost. The scenario for this show was sold before the production while the libretto was sold on the night of performance (Mento, *Deidamia*, 14). *Deidamia* contains seventeen characters and is in three acts and twenty-nine scenes. The action occurs on the island of Rhodes in its ancient fifth-century BCE republican period, and the



Fig. 6. Giacomo Torelli - Prologue, Harbour with the Colossus of Rhodes – 1645 (Milesi, Francesco Torelli 142).

opening scene includes a depiction of the Colossus of Rhodes commemorating the Rhodian victory over Cyprus.

Deidamia is the daughter of King Molossus. After falling in love with Prince Demetrius, who has sworn to marry her, Demetrius is called away by his father, King Antigonus, to war, and is subsequently betrothed to an Egyptian woman named Antigona. *Deidamia*, determined to stop the impending marriage, fakes her own death and disguises herself as a man named Ergindo and takes off to retrieve Demetrius. At one point, Demetrius finds “Ergindo” with a sword with which, thinking Demetrius’ marriage to Antigona was inevitable, *Deidamia* planned to kill herself. Demetrius mistakes “Ergindo’s” intention and, thinking that he means to kill him, has him imprisoned. At her trial, *Deidamia* reveals her true identity

and her mission to retrieve Demetrius, upon which she is released, and the opera concludes with the couple reunited. Gender-bending in this opera takes primary focus.

For most of the opera, Renzi was costumed as a male hunter in a tunic. (See Appendix C for the libretto and corresponding Italian) In Act I, scene 1, after donning her male disguise, Ergindo/Deidamia takes refuge in a shepherd's hut and the shepherd refers to her as "son." When Ergindo/Deidamia tells him that he/she is tormented by love, the shepherd complains about "city women," whose high shoes ("chopine") make them look so tall and ridiculous calling them "vicious" in their deceptions saying, "They seem like Giants, but are only Pygmies" (Herrico, *Deidamia* 14). This comment calls attention to Deidamia's deceptive male guise. At this moment, an army is heard approaching and the shepherd cries out: "Oh, what a roar of arms, I see armed people coming around me. Flee, children, flee" (18). But Deidamia/Ergindo refuses saying: "I await it here, I wait. I am not afraid of weapons. Because those who face death do not care" (18). With this statement, Ergindo/Deidamia displays "male" bravery. A few moments later, Deidamia's brother Pirro, disguised as a corsair, arrives with Demetrius, who, at first, chases her, thinking that she is dangerous, ends up inviting her to join them in their fight at Rhodes. In Act 1.7, after travelling many miles on foot and over rugged terrain to Rhodes, they encounter a bear. Now Ergindo/Deidamia exclaims: "With your vanquishing sword; You with thunderous lightning, Supreme Jupiter kill this giant beast!" (Herrico 29). Pirro slays the bear and pronounces gratefully: "Here's for every part. The wicked wounded beast. Out pours his blood and life" (29-30).

This opera contains several homoerotic scenes. The female characters Eufrine and Astrilla, for example, are both infatuated with Ergindo/Deidamia, and in scene 2 of Act 1, the two share a breathless exchange after encountering the beautiful "Ergindo": Eufrine: "So, you liked him. Astrilla: And how! In his golden tresses, Love pumps like honey. His forehead is a Mirror of honour. The two loving cheeks are a Beautiful garden of lilies and roses" (42). The homoerotic subtext is charged with double entendre as the audience hears one woman swooning over another woman's "beautiful garden of lilies and roses." On another hand, in Act II.1, Demetrius remarks on the effect that the beautiful "Ergindo" has stirred in him: "He is a strong boy, Who with his daring Killed the Ferocious Bear, to give me life." Not only does

Demetrius owe his very life to the “strong boy,” but his voice is “gentle,” and his looks are “mild” and attractive. Demetrius enthuses: “Here, see the mild appearance Of Ergindo the boy, In him with the same praise one applauds, His gentle voice And his good looks” (49-50). In the second scene of Act 2, Eufrine happens upon the beautiful sleeping “Ergindo” and hears him sleep talking, as he exclaims his love for Demetrius, she realizes that it is a “completely different” kind of love. Looking closer she declares: “Oh, what sweet ivory skin!” (55). But, when she touches “his” skin, she discovers “Ergindo’s” breasts and then understands the reason for his deception. She questions to herself, “How can this be, oh Heavens, oh Stars? Do males have breasts? And as far as one can see ... Ergindo is a young woman” (55).

Later in the act, Astrilla sees “Ergindo” and cannot help but let him know how she feels about him. Ergindo/Deidamia admonishes Astrilla for her forwardness asking her what she wants. When Astrilla tells him, he says that she is mistaken about him. Astrilla: “Wake up Ergindo beautiful, Oh, how mild, and slim, This gentle young man, For whom there is no comparison in beauty” with this, Deidamia awakens and condemns Astrilla’s forwardness but, realizing her infatuation, tries to fend her off while not blowing her cover. When Astrilla declares that she wants “Ergindo” to love her and to “have if not the fruit, at least the flower,” he replies: “Of these flowers and fruits, My field is Sterile; Devoid of the plant, I cannot satisfy your desire” (58-60). Alas, Deidamia cannot fulfill Astrilla’s heterosexual desire for a man.

Later, as Demetrius prepares for his wedding ceremony, Eufrine, who is there to assist, attempts to tell him that “Ergindo” is a woman. When she mentions his name however, Demetrius frets about the uncomfortable feelings that “Ergindo” arouses in him, but she leaves before telling him about “Ergindo’s” true sex. After she leaves, Demetrius mulls the possibility that something about “Ergindo” is not as it seems: “Certainly, with the beautiful face, And the placid voice, Ergindo seems like a girl ...” (66-7) but he comes to no concrete decision about whether “he” is a “he” or not. These scenes of same-sex desire might titillate audience desire, but they also convey that such desire is uncomfortable, strange, and socially questionable.

In scene 6, Ergindo/Deidamia and Demetrius talk, and, as Demetrius is still in denial about

“Ergindo’s” biological sex, he again tries to fight his unsettlingly effect on him. Deidamia/Ergindo cannot help but encourage Demetrius’ attraction. They speak of his impending marriage with Antigona, but Ergindo/Deidamia alludes to their previous relationship. Finally, intolerably aroused and confused, Demetrius asks Ergindo/Deidamia to leave because “With your coming Ergindo ... Thought is lost and my cravings shine” (67). Deidamia questions if there wasn’t a past love he has left behind. Demetrius replies that while still in love with Deidamia, she is unreachable, saying: “Since then the rapture of the abyss intervened” as she is dead (68). Deidamia insinuates that he shallowly fell in love with another woman just after the last one died. Demetrius defends himself by saying that there was nothing he could do after Death took her. Eventually, the conversation proves too disturbing, “Ergindo’s” presence is too tempting, and he bids him to leave saying “Either talk about something else or depart. Do not disturb my chest, With the sweet flame of affection” reflecting his confusion and the power of his growing passion for the “boy” (68). Deidamia presses him to explain himself until Demetrius insists: “But you graceful Ergindo, Do not awaken new ghosts in my heart. You are ill-suited to serve me, go elsewhere” (69). Deidamia, like the ghost in his heart, reminds him of their love and disturbs his commitment to Antigona. But her disguise as a boy most disturbingly makes his “cravings shine.”

The foregoing texts reveal several themes: deception, with Deidamia’s cross-dressed disguise; investigation when Eufrene ferret’s out Deidamia’s true biological identity; homoerotic desire in Astrilla’s desire for “Ergindo” the boy as well as Demetrius’s desire for that same boy; self-control over same-sex desire when Demetrius avoids the temptation to engage sexually with “Ergindo;” and faithful constancy of both Demetrius and Deidamia. All of these themes lead the audience through turbulent emotional terrain that might cause them to identify with Demetrius’s upsetting confusion while questioning the wisdom of Deidamia’s machinations in trying to stop his impending marriage to Antigona.

In Act 3, after seeming to want to kill Demetrius, Deidamia/Ergindo is put on trial for treason. However, Eufrene reveals Deidamia’s true identity to Demetrius, who forgives her and declares his love. The opera culminates with a happy ending and the “rightful” return of sexual power to Demetrius, who assumes his place as Deidamia’s husband in marriage. Here, heterosexual primacy in marriage is restored,

same-sex desire is contained, and the danger of dissembling women is brought under patriarchal control. This instructs the audience on how they should conduct themselves. On the other hand, as same-sex desire and deception are explored as major themes in the opera, a titillating alternative to normative heterosexuality has been entertainingly presented. Furthermore, when the character Deidamia, who has used sexual deception for personal interest, is embodied by the young and beautiful virtuosa Renzi, whose voice and sexual attraction in performance were correspondingly overpowering, the conundrum for men in the audience is magnified. As both homoerotic and heteroerotic sexuality was a principal theme in *Incognito libretti*, when Renzi played in cross-dressed roles, her sexual allure was amplified to audiences. She was the perfect vehicle to embody their messages on the dangers of female sexuality to men.

On another level, even as court operas were performed for exclusive aristocratic audiences for many years before the opening of *Novissimo*, there is a wild unpredictability about performance in the commercial public theatre for a paying popular audience. And even while operas had been produced in Venice's commercial spaces for four years, the performance of *La finta pazza* coalesced and epitomized the exciting new style and genre. With the major talents of Renzi, Strozzi, Sacrati, and Torelli, they created a perfect storm of performance with unstoppable impetus. In this storm, the energetic dynamism of Renzi's resonant body was a nodal point – and an ideal liminal space – for old and new performance practices to coincide before a new kind of paying public. That audience – by virtue of its mixed demographic at Carnevale time – was also unpredictable.

Meanwhile, the theme of female deception and potent sexuality are exemplified in Loredano's indictment of the intractable hold that women wield over men warning, "If she speaks, she lies, if she laughs, she deceives, and if she weeps, she betrays ... With her eyes she enchants, with her arms enchains, with kisses stupefies, and with the other delights robs the intellect and reason, and changes men into beasts" (trans. Heller, *Emblems* 56). The *Incogniti* thought women innately corrupt and licentious yet powerful in their sexual hold over men. In fact, as Heller posits, a major preoccupation of their debate and publication concerned women's sexual power, linked to the irresistible pull of music, both of which can lead men to abandon "masculine" self-control (313). Loredano complains that even while women are "the

fairest and most amiable object[s], ... if at any time, [a man] fixes his eyes upon a most beautiful face, his limbs tremble, and at the same instant he burns and freezes ... [thus forcing] himself upon the altar of a lady's heart as victim and sacrifice" (56). In the experiment of Venetian opera, the theme of women's sexual power is repeatedly pitted against men's prerogative to dominate them. Such a challenge, for Loredano, presents men with the imperative to subjugate women – even to the point of rape – to male sexual will (54).

Likewise, librettists' initial characterizations for female operatic characters might include attributes like masculine autonomy and cross-dressing but eventually subjugated them to the control of the male characters. They also promoted the commodification of women performers and their sexual allure, which was already associated with professional prostitution. While on one level, this was a powerful tool for educating the audience as to how the characters' agency should be contained, the performers themselves still offered an alternate and contradictory vision. Otherwise, Renzi was lauded by Strozzi for her reserved and chaste personal/private behaviour. By claiming Renzi's chaste reserve in everyday life, Strozzi reduced the threat that her onstage performance presented to men. As a result, Deidamia's fictitious power over Demetrius – and even Renzi's power over men in the audience – became innocuous. Furthermore, Strozzi was able to construct and approve her persona as a consummate professional while preserving her reputation as a virtuous woman in everyday life, lending her protection from public censure. This is not at all to say that professional women performers were free from detractors and accusers – quite the contrary.

In her performance, Renzi achieved Roach's ideal for *It* consisting of "the power of apparently effortless embodiment of contradictory qualities simultaneously: strength *and* vulnerability, innocence *and* experience, and singularity *and* typicality among them. The possessor of *It* keeps a precarious balance between such mutually exclusive alternatives" (Roach, *It* 8). Renzi's accomplishment as Deidamia/Ergindo, written and composed for her exceptional abilities, demonstrates sturdy "male" courage and strength in facing danger, vulnerability as a prisoner on trial, innocence in her belief in love, and experience in handling Eufrene and Astrilla's advances. Renzi, while singular in her performance,

was a woman of “typical” non-aristocratic status who was properly virtuous in the comportment of her everyday persona. The combination of her phenomenal performance stamina and intelligence proved a convincing role model in contradiction to beliefs about women’s intellectual and physical inferiority. The novelty of Renzi’s performance attracted the curiosity and attention of a new kind of audience in its social diversity while her tremendous abilities captured their imaginations and devotion.

On Renzi’s performance in *La Deidamia*, Strozzi published the laudatory booklet *Le Glorie della signora Anna Renzi Romana* (1644). In it, an anonymous writer submitted the following:

Alla Signora Anna Renzi La Deidamia in habito d' Ergindo nel Teatro novissimo di Venetia

Velocemente inalza al Paradiso Bellezza Ermafrodita, Da la Magion superna, Scendesti ad animare, Angelica sembianza, In cui sola s'eterna, Quel chiaro bel, ch' ogn' altro bello avanza.

Mentre d' ANNA la voce, In Deidamia conversa, Discioglie à l'aure un musico passaggio,

Divinissimo raggio, (To the Lady Anna Renzi Representing Deidamia disguised as Ergindo

in the New Theater of Venice. Quickly to Heaven Hermaphrodite Beauty, From the Magic

supernatural, You come down to animate, With an Angelic semblance, In which only one is

eternal, That beautiful light advances, which is also something beautiful. While ANNA's voice, In

Deidamia converses, It imbues an aura to the musical passage, In a Divine radius,; signed M.T.

63)

This passage exalts Renzi’s performance of Deidamia cross-dressed as Ergindo, where she transgressed normative gender prescriptions while presenting a titillating diversion involving homoerotic scenes.

“Unconscious and subconscious desires and fantasies,” posits Rojek, concerning the veracity of other

people’s true selves, was very much a subject of interest to early modern audiences who were quite

familiar with Machiavelli’s widely published thoughts on dissimulation (*Celebrity* 110). Cross-dressed

performance, both male-to-female and female-to-male, was considered erotic and was very popular in

Venetian drama, so the sexually arousing themes brought the public flocking to *Novissimo*.

Renzi’s performances awakened obvious excitement, while her “interpretations ... enhanced the effect of opera as drama,” thus establishing its niche in Venice’s theatrical life (Rosand, “The First” 6).

Strozzi wrote, “*La nostre Signora Anna è dotata d’una espressione sì viva, che apiono le srisposte e i discorsi non appresi dalla memoria, ma nati all’hora. In somma, lei cambia per diventare la persona che rappresenta.*” (“Our Lady Anna comes alive with expression, it seems like her speeches are not learned from memory but are born in the moment. In sum she changes to become the person she represents.”; *Le Glorie* 8-9). Strozzi’s laudatory volume helped to spread Renzi’s fame. Elizabeth Belgrano also points out significant details of Renzi’s portrait contained in the volume:

The portrait of Anna Renzi ... exhibits a woman dressed in a male fashion, with a *casacca* underneath a doublet upper body with paned sleeves. Her curly hair is falling down on her shoulders and she has a fashionable short fringe, resembling more of a male hairstyle. Her female attributes in the portrait are the hairpins, earrings, broach and necklace. Her costume proves to fit perfectly well with Renzi’s highly celebrated interpretations and performances of paradoxical



Fig. 9. *Jacobus Pecinus Venetus - p. 7 Programma di Sala: La Didone, Teatro La Fenice.*

mad scenes, demanding her ability to rapidly transform into male and female characters.

Belgrano’s description defines how Renzi is represented as an androgynous “role-icon.” Roach defines

the term “role-icon” to involve “abnormally interesting personae,” concluding that with mass publishing and publicity, “preconceptions of abnormally interesting personae become more specialized, even standardized as role-icons – ‘beauty,’ ‘femme fatale,’ ‘rake,’ ‘fop,’ and ‘pirate,’ for instance ... through novel iterations by exceptional interpreters” (*It* 12).

Renzi’s portrait projects a two-fold meaning. There is the performer known as Anna Renzi, the “exceptional interpreter,” the “abnormally interesting [androgynous, cross-dressed] persona,” and then there is the private person about whom more needs to be discovered. However, early modern audiences were made aware of her movements and performances through the documents that recorded and advertised them, causing them to look forward to experiencing her as a “role-icon.” Images of the “role icon,” as Roach posits, raise money at the box-office because they create curiosity and raise expectations as people excitedly await their “auratic presence” at the event (40). Her portrait, moreover, helped Renzi to achieve “the [early] modern It-Effect” that for Roach requires images of portable but unobtainable celebrity that circulate widely and become “engraved” in consumers’ minds as they desire to experience the person (76).

If, as Rosand maintains, Renzi “was created, in part, by the press, and her undoubtedly extraordinary performances were aggrandized by Incogniti publicity as part of their general, successful campaign to establish opera as a going concern in Venice”, what else “created” her (*Opera in* 228)? On a professional level, Strozzi praised her intelligent expertise as a singer, writing that beyond her beauty, Renzi possessed: “*che per formar un ingegno sublime si ricerca, cioè grande intelletto, molta imaginativa, e bella memoria, come se non fussero queste tre cose contrarie, e non havessero nell'istesso sogetto alcuna naturale oppositione. Dono tutto della cortese natura, che sa, ma radevolte, unir questi tre habiti*” (“the sublime genius one seeks, that is, great intellect, much imagination, and beautiful memory, as if these three things were not contrary, and yet in this same person no natural contradiction exists. All the gifts of a courteous nature, that knows how, to unite these three attributes”; *Le Glorie* 10). He also notes Renzi’s method of studying and replicating human behaviours in her acting writing that she silently observes peoples’ behaviors, and when she performs, she is able to demonstrate the “spirit and valour”

(“*mostra lo spirito, e valor*”) learned from such observations (10). Strozzi extols Renzi’s protean ability to “become whomever she represents:”

... che la stessa moverà il desiderio di più d'un Principe a voler essere spettatore della mirabile azione della Signora Anna, onde in tale occorrenza fortunato sarà quel Poeta, che illustrar voltrà suoi somma ella si trasforma tutta nelle persona che rappresenta, e sembra hora una Talia piena di comica allegrezza, hora una Melpomone ricca di Tragica Maestà Io la chia marei la quarta Gratia, s'ella non fusse valevole d'insegnar gratia alle stesse gratie, e' l brio, e la leggiadria alla medesima Venere. (... it will bring about the desire of more than one prince to want to be a spectator of the admirable action of Signora Anna, so in this occurrence lucky will be that Poet, who will illustrate his whole sum turns all into the person he represents, seeming to be a Talia full of comic joy, and now Melpomone rich in Tragic Majesty. I would call her the fourth Grace if she was not worthy of teaching grace to the same grace, she has the panache, and loveliness of Venus.; 7-8)

Employing the phraseology of the “humors,” Strozzi praises Renzi for her calm and steady nature and her “melancholy temperament” (*temperamento malinconico*), and, though she is a woman of few words, when she speaks, it is with “shrewd, sensible, and worthy” words and “beautiful sayings” (*accorte, sensate, e degne per i suo' bei detti*) (10). Claudio Sartori reports that the first edition of the libretto sold out so quickly that the publisher Surian had to produce a second edition within one month for the first run of the *La finta pazza* (443). The publisher Alessandro Vicenzi, who published a volume of canzonettas dedicated to Renzi, credits her with having edited them, and hopes that she will perform them:

... edited by the very illustrious and very venerable lady, Anna Renzi ... [whose] admirable ingenuity ... and with the spirit of her voice, which raises the souls to the celestial spheres in high hues...the author is ambitious for so much gratitude, he will say, that he gave to ... the Lady Anna...the harmony of his song accents with incomparable mastery and whose song gives it soul. (qtd. in Sartori 448-9)

For his part, Strozzi famously describes Renzi’s vocal technique, the eloquence of her delivery and her

“tour de force” stamina singing night after night with the following praise:

*Domina la scena, intende ciò che dice e chiaramente la pronuncia, che non hanno le orecchie, quel desiderio: è un lungo sciolto, un pronome soave, non influenzato, non presta, una voce piena, sonora, non dura non rauca, né offendoti con la sottigliezza opprimente: ... ha un passaggio felice, un doppio e un rinforzo, con lei, che, con ventisei volte, con un peso di lavoro, si è riprodotto quasi una sera dopo l'altra, senza ... (She masters the scene, intends what she utters, and utters it clearly with a suave pronunciation, not affected, she does not give full voice, but sings sonorously, not harsh, not hoarse, nor offending you with overwhelming subtlety ... she has a happy passaggio, a daring double and reinforcing trill, and all is interwoven with her, who twenty-six times, carried all the weight of the opera that was replicated almost every evening one after the other ...; *Le Glorie* 9)*

Strozzi's description is unusual in its detailed expert explanation. On her verbal elocutionary style, as Rosand has pointed out, Renzi likely conformed to the transitional practices of the time described in *Il Corago*. The author explains that while verbal elocution is the basis for good acting, a good actor should also be a good musician:

Sopra tutto per esser buon recitante cantando bisognerebbe esser anche buono recitante parlando, onde aviamo veduto che alcuni che hanno avuto particolar grazia in recitare hanno fatto meraviglie quando insieme hanno saputo cantare. Intorno a che alcuni muovono questione se si deva eleggere un musico non cattivo che sia perfetto recitante o pure un musico eccellente ma di poco o nessun talento di recitare, nel che si è toccato con mano che sì come ad alcuni pochi molto intendenti di musica sono più piaciuti l'eccellenti cantori quantunque freddi nel recitamento, così al co[mun]e del teatro sodisfazione maggiore hanno dato i perfetti istioni con mediocre voce e perizia musicale (Above all, to be a good reciting singer, one should also be a good reciting speaker, because we have seen that someone who has particular grace in acting can do wonders when they also know how to sing. About this, some question arises whether to select a bad musician who is a perfect narrator, or an excellent musician with little or no acting talent.

Some very few music connoisseurs prefer excellent singers who are cold in recitation, while common theatre goers get greater satisfaction from actors with perfect instincts but who have mediocre voices and musical expertise.; 91)

Renzi's performance was dramatically stimulating. She sang mostly in recitative form more associated with dramatic action than in still moments of single "affects" that the aria came to signify. While her stellar singing made her the perfect vehicle to introduce operatic virtuosity to the crowd, as her audiences expected great acting which she delivered like none other on the operatic stage. All of these things attest to Renzi's professionalism, self-possession, and perspicuity. Such attributes mark her as a role-icon matching Roach's definition, "To have 'It'" the performer has to be fully self-confident, completely unselfconscious while being unconcerned with the effect produced on others and uninfluenced while self-consciousness or conceit immediately destroy "It" (4). This is how the celebrity becomes mysterious, fascinating, "and quite unbidable" (4).

On the conflicting reactions that transvestite performance invites, especially when the performer is a consummate musician/actor, Roach contends, when the charismatic performer assumes the typical markers of gender of the opposite sex, "the uncanny allure of *It* intensifies" so that transvestism is assured a prominent place in great theatrical traditions (*It* 11). Additionally, Roach claims that, to have *It*, "the fortunate possessor must have that strange magnetism which attracts both sexes" (4). While there is no concrete evidence of Renzi or Isabella attracted women sexually, the possibility is undoubtedly high. The two, nevertheless, performed virtuosic-ly on stage and virtuousness off it.

Regarding cross-dressed performance and personal lives, Nina Treadwell asserts that the Marfisa character appealed to commedia dell'arte women, some of whom resisted marriage and domestication while retaining control of their professional lives as troupe leaders and of their domestic lives by heading their own households (238). And their presence in Italian society aroused eager fascination, especially when embodying warrior women like Bradamante and Marfisa. This is reflected in Leone de' Sommi's (c. 1525- c. 90) praise of Vicenza Armani claiming: "But all of which I write and sing, is nothing, in comparison with the divine light that she shines forth, at times in manly guise, with her spontaneous, apt,

and wise speaking ...” (Nicholson 249).

Disguise and cross-dressing in their “deception of the senses” was an integral dramatic device with which Venetian audiences were familiar from theatrical traditions and carnival culture (M. T. Schneider 258). As Johnson maintains, that the gender reversal at Carnival, where “men in dresses act[] coyly, women in trousers act[] mannishly” probably encouraged early modern women to rebuke priests, confront local administrators, and chastise their husbands and therefore step out of line in “more serious moments” (Johnson 187). The cognitive dissonance of witnessing, or even hearing about, these highly paid and popular singer-actors could have emboldened women in the city to rethink their everyday social status and perhaps even to dream of alternatives. For, in Thorburn’s view, there was enough surveillance by the *Inquisitori di Stato* over the opera industry to deduce that it operated as “simultaneously part of the social fabric and the instrument that could tear it” (diss. 264-5). This brings to mind Roach’s assertion that transvestite performance routinely raised authority figures’ suspicions “on grounds of ontological subversion,” where “[t]he audience clamors for *It* and punishes it too” (*It* 11).

Significantly, in seventeenth-century opera, as in the epics of the previous decade, “the hybrid figure of the woman warrior, monstrous within the ancient world, is relocated to a universe where hybridity is the norm” (Bateman 21). And, more broadly, as mentioned before, women who “excelled w[ere] likely to be called ... Amazon[s] ... [because] Excellence in a woman was perceived as a claim for power, and power was reserved for the masculine realm. A woman who possessed either was masculinized and lost title to her own female identity” (King and Rabil xxv). This conundrum is demonstrated in the character of Doriclea, who struggles with an identity crisis as she chooses to cross-dress as a male warrior. On images of truly great performers in androgynous clothing, Roach asserts:

... the endurance of the afterimage in cultural memory ... depends in part on the way in which the icon has been clothed and unclothed. *Clothing* in this usage functions as both noun and verb, as prop and performance, engaging in a double action, each art of which recalls the other as object and subject, which oscillate, adoringly or punitively between glamour and abjection, *charismata* and *stigmata* (88).

Therefore, “If events are doubtful, whether vague, confused, or contradictory – as they are when centred on the androgynous being – they defy positivist interpretation,” as Constance Jordan insists (313).

Otherwise, if Roach is correct that “enacting the public intimacy of role-icon, ‘the professional woman,’ ... in some respects descends genealogically from another, ‘the actress,’” then Renzi followed Isabella Andreini and the other commedia dell’arte divas in this acting genealogy (93). As Kerr asserts, in early modernity the “shifting dynamics between members of the new bourgeois household were being represented onstage” by strong and independent commedia dell’arte and operatic performers ubiquitously performing strong women in cross-dressed and transvestite disguises in public performances (88). Such performances bring the characters to life as active subjects testing out the restrictions imposed on them by their class and gender roles. In this way, commedia dell’arte actors like Vittoria, Virginia, and Isabella, embodied this performative dynamism in a migration of performance episteme to the operatic diva.

Walker and Bianconi propose that “‘popularity’ is to be understood as induced or imposed ‘popularity,’ in the sense of ‘best-selling’: ‘popularity’ as a reflection of the propagandistic effectiveness of the *drama per musica*, emanation as a projection of the ruling class” (“Production” 242). The *drama per musica* may well have worked as a vehicle for elite propaganda, but it was also open to the general ticket-buying public. Indeed, even after Venetian theatres reopened in 1648, and because the carnival season lasted from six to ten weeks each year, during the off-season, singers joined itinerant troupes to spread the new form throughout Europe with revivals of Venetian productions (Eggert 191). Singers, composers, operatic troupes, libretti, and scores circulated to capitals such as Paris (1645), Vienna (1653), London (1674), Hamburg (1678), and Copenhagen (1740) (Bianconi, *Music in* 227-53). Moreover, in seventeenth-century Hamburg, operas were produced year-round – excluding summer months and religious holidays – with an average of 100 yearly performances of five to ten new operas (232-34). Such widespread popularity indicates there was more than just the imposition of ruling class propaganda being proffered by the successful commercial form across Europe. There was popular demand for it.

By the middle of the seventeenth century, women singers too were in high demand, granting them the independence to choose their employers. Singers were usually hired during the carnival season by

opera theatre impresarios, and some singers had noble patrons or “protectors,” like Loredano, or sponsors who helped to manage their careers and negotiate contracts (Glixon, “Private” 511). Renzi, however, does not seem to have had any single protector or patron but made her own arrangements while relying on male witnesses and financial guarantors as the following contract indicates:

That the said Signora Anna is obliged to sing in one or more operas that will be performed this Carnival in the Teatro Novissimo, attending each rehearsal of the operas, only, however, [those that take place] in the theatre or at the residence of Signora Anna. In exchange, the said Signor Geronimo promises to give to the said Signora Anna 500 Venetian silver scudi in this manner:

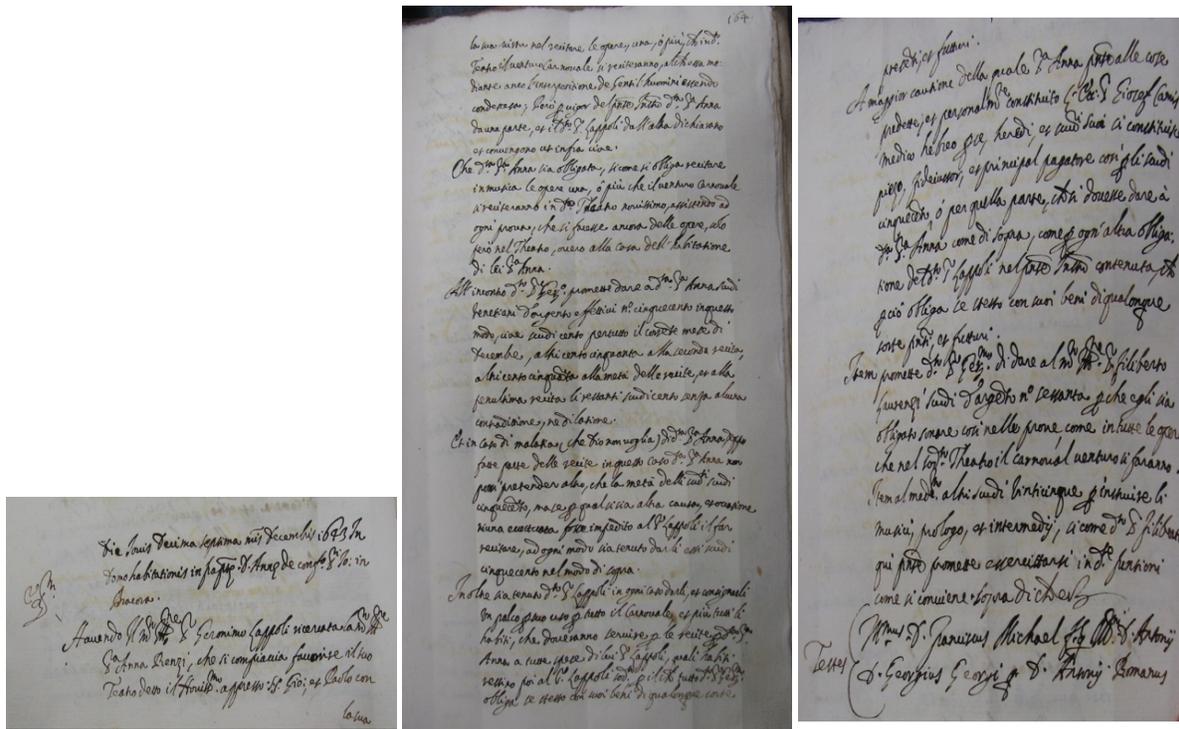


Fig. 10. Anna Renzi contract of 1643. Busta 658. Beaziano, Francesco, 1643 II. Archivio di Stato Venetia (author’s reproduction)

that is, 100 scudi for the current month of December, another 150 at the time of the second performance, another 150 after half of the performances, and, at the penultimate performance the remaining 100 scudi without any opposition or delay. In the case of illness (God forbid) of the said Signora Anna (if she has done part of the performances) in this case Signora Anna could only hope to exact one half of the said 500 scudi; but if for any other cause, without exception,

Signor Lappoli should be prevented from mounting the production he would be required to give her the 500 scudi in the above manner. Moreover, Signor Lappoli is, in any case, obliged to give and consign to her an opera box for her use for the entire Carnival and, in addition, all the costumes she will need for her performance as, of this at the expense of Signor Lappoli; these costumes will remain the property of Signor Lappoli. For all of the above he pledges his property, both present and future. Item: the said Signor Geronimo promises to give the most Illustrious Signor Filiberto Laurenzi 60 silver scudi, for which he is required to play both in the rehearsals as well as in the operas that will be done at the said theatre this coming Carnival. Item: to the same, another 25 scudi to instruct the musicians, [and for] the prologue and intermedi. The said Signor Filiberto, here present, promises to exercise those functions.; Glixon trans. 513-14)

For *Deidamia*, the above contract employed Renzi to sing the title role stipulating that, in case of illness, impresario Lappoli would be obliged to pay only half of her normal pay. For her performance in *Deidamia*, Renzi negotiated an unprecedented salary of 750 ducts, which was enormous for the time (Glixons, *Inventing* 83). As indicated, Renzi had the wisdom to separate her private and public lives, but she was also known to be “generous” with her money, lending it without interest to “friends and acquaintances” while safeguarding the loans with notarized contracts (Glixon, “Private” 515). Like Isabella, Renzi demonstrated and solidified a reputation for intelligent professionalism and competence both onstage and in everyday life (Kerr 104). One important difference between Renzi and Isabella is that Renzi seems to have remained single with no children while Isabella married and, indeed, died young in childbirth. And as Isabella worked for court patronage, for the majority of her career, Renzi worked as an independent artist. Thus, Renzi forged a new kind of professional social status, superseding the limiting cultural imperative to marry young or join a convent.

Antioco was a Cavalli opera featuring the Roman singer named only “Girolama”— active along with Renzi in the 1650s – produced in Teatro San Cassiano (Glixons, *Inventing* 67-8). A singer listed only as “Girolama” also sang the role of Rodope – that Renzi originally premiered – in *Le fortune di Rodope e*

Damira in 1662 and she then sang the title role of *Erismena* – analyzed in chapter II – in the 1662-3 winter production both of which were housed in *Teatro dei Sorgenti* in Florence (Bianconi and Walker, *Production 224*). The Venetian singer Helena Passerelli seems to have sung as *seconda donna* in *Antioco* with “Girolama” singing *prima donna*. Here is the text for Passarelli’s contract:

4(?) (or 2?) Settembre in Venetia (1658).

Mrs. Helena Passerelli is obliged to recite the present year in the theatre S. Cassano [sic] in the work in music that must be represented in it, having to be present at the rehearsals and performances with complete punctuality, diligence at every pleasure, and requisition of the interested gentlemen, without any contradiction; and with the intent (?) the very illustrious lords Marc-Ant [oni] or Correr and Alvise Duodo; and the S [ignor] Marco Faustini interested in the second work are obliged to contribute to the same in recognition of her virtuosity ... seventy double from twenty-eight lira ...; which will be disbursed to her during the performances so that after the carnival she will be completely satisfied; so that these parts mutually oblige each other in this lawful and valid form; and of the present two will be faithful to the distribution of the parts.

(Archivio di Stato Venezia, Busta 194, f. 12) (4(?) (or 2?) September in Venetia (1658). (*La Sig.ra Helena Passerelli si obbliga di recitare il presente anno nel teatro S. Cassano [sic] nell’opera che deve in esso rappresentarsi in musica, dovendo semp[re] esser presente alle prove e alle recite con tutta puntualità, et diligenza ad ogni piacere, et requisitione de Signori interessati, senza contradictione alcuna; et all’intento (?) gli illustrissimi signori Marc-Ant[oni]o Correr et Alvise Duodo; et il S[ignor] Marco Faustini interessati nella seconda opera si obbligano di contribuire alla medesima in recognitione delle sue virtuose (?) fatiche doble settanta da L vintotto l’una; quali gli saranno esborsate nel corso delle recite cosichè finite il carnevale essa Sig.ra Helena resti intieramente sodisfatta; talchè dette parti vicendevolmente si obbligano in ogni sua regola (?) e valida forma; et della presente ne saranno fede due per cautione delle parti.*; I-Vas, SGdSM, b 194, fols. 69-71, 73-5; Also reproduced by Walker and Bianconi in *Production and Consumption*) (See Appendix B)

Like Renzi, Passarelli also likely negotiated her own contract. The travel and accommodation arrangement for Roman singer Girolama Rossi (not necessarily the same woman as the “Girolama” who sang in *Antioco*) from 1641 states:

Establishment made with Mrs. Girolama for her coming to Venice

They will be handed over for his honour to the same to Sig [no] ra one hundred double [a type of currency]. And more for the expenses of the journeys ... going and returning to Rome one hundred scudi [type of currency] ..., For ... for ten shield [currency], so agree with this condition, and pact, that in any case the same to Mrs. Girolama she if wants to stay in Venice for her taste, or withheld for other Theaters, that they should hold fifty shields [illegible] of the hundred double promised, with a dry declaration, that when for the Theater of Paolo the same Mrs. Girolama was withheld for the coming year, so that if the same hundred double were to be paid in full, and this pact was settled with named sig[no]ra because we increased the number of lower shields above the eighty, may it be the case, that the fifty shields that should be used for the return should be paid. And more promised to the same to sig[no]ra for the continued living expenses in Venice of twenty-five scudi ... Per month to paoli ten for shield to begin the arrival of Mr. [no]ranza in Venice, and to finish the first week of this month. And for the Venetian home accommodations for all the necessary furnishings more is promised. And more than in the first week of the month, he is satisfied with his provisions, etc. (*Stabilimento fatto con la Sig.ra Girolama per la sua venuta a Venezia Si consegneranno per suo honorario alla med[esim]a Sig[no]ra double cento. E più per le spese de viaggi fra andare e tornare in Roma scudi cento di Fer[ra]ra, per paoli dieci per scudo, così d'accordo con questa conditione, e patto, che in ogni caso che la med[esim]a Sig.ra Girolama volesse trattenersi in Venezia o per suo gusto, o trattenuta per altri Teatri, che si li dovisse ritenere scudi cinquanta _____ delle cento double promesseli, con dichiarazione seco, che quando per il Teatro de loro Santi la medesima Sig.ra Girolama fosse trattenuta per l'anno venturo, che se si devino pagare intieramente le medesime cento double, e questo patto è stato stabbilito con d[ett]a sig[no]ra perchè fatto da noi lo accrescimento di vinti*

scudi sopra gl'ottanta, puote darse il caso, che dovessero avanzare li scudi cinquanta che dovrebbero servire per il ritorno. E più promessi alla med[esim]a sig[no]ra per le spese continuate a Venezia di vivere scudi vinticinque e m[ez]za al mese a paoli dieci per scudo da cominciarsi l'arrivo di Sig.[no]ranza a Venezia, et e da finire la prima settimana di questa quatragesima. E più promessali la casa a Venezia accomodatane di tutti I suppellettili necesssari. E più che dentro la prima settimana di quatragesima sia sodisfatta d[ett]a Sig[no]ra delle sue pretentioni etc. ; Archivio di Stato Venezia, Busta 188, f. 22) (See Appendix B)

For Girolama Rossi, we can see that the accommodations made for her travel and stay in Venice had also to be negotiated.

Kerr argues that the rise of celebrity culture was connected to newly emerging market capitalism and the introduction of commedia dell'arte women performers in the late sixteenth century (8). This is because the troupes sold a product adjusted to public demand by embellishing their repertoires with literary materials while publishing materials of their own with iconography that circulated across the Italian peninsula (8). It was, however, the new women performers who drew the greatest attention. They were “desirable commodities” trained to “impersonate idealized gentle women [queens and princesses or princes] with exceptional skill and grace,” thereby “breaking the taboo against females appearing in public spaces” (8). Their status as stage performers, moreover, precluded their abilities to attain complete social acceptance as “honest” women. Proof of this position is recognizable in that they were publicly referred to either by their stock character’s first names, like Lucinda or Deidamia, or by their own first names, thus breaching the typical formality of addressing an “honest” woman by her surname. Renzi, also known by her first name, trod a path already paved by her commedia dell'arte predecessors. She, like her predecessors, led a seemingly glamorous lifestyle of travel to foreign lands and courts that emulated the onstage autonomy of the characters she portrayed.

By Renzi’s time, with the help of the Incognito marketing strategy, the urban metropolis became the source from which word of her celebrity status flowed out into the world with throngs of journeying tourists, tradespeople, and diplomats, and in published documents, iconography, and letters. The

explosive impetus of this advertising blitz, the splendour of *Novissimo*, and the performance dynamic it housed caused a surge of activity generating an unbeatable celebrity force. Furthermore, as Sue Ellen Case succinctly remarked in a plenary discussion for the American Society for Theatre Research in 2015, “The formation of celebrity status is related to entrepreneurship.” On the commodification of performers’ corporeal existence, Rojek posits, the body is no longer just a “locus of desire, it becomes the façade through which distinction and attraction are registered” so that it becomes a commodity for consumption “not ... a personal possession, but ... is designed and packaged to generate desire in others” while creating a public impact (*Celebrity* 106). Still, when professional singers sang for high salaries in commercial venues, they were not just purchasable public commodities, but they achieved unusual public and private personal autonomy.

As for the intimacy of their performances, it was by enthraling their audiences with captivated attention that the diva cast a spell to dispel, and unravel, prevailing myths regarding women’s inferiority. Indeed, one author in *Le Glorie* wrote: “*Può la Musica tua toglier à Morte, La forza, e la ragion; e può à gl’ amanti, ... e temperar la sorte*” (“Your Music takes away Death, Strength and reason ... and tempers fate”; signed F.B. 58). Thus, when Renzi sang, the thrall of her spell was doubly potent as she embodied “the epitome of a type or prototype” that brought droves to experience her, likely prompting many to want to be like her. (Roach 6). Additionally, as Kerr suggests about Isabella, “Her charismatic allure was further enhanced by [her] transgression of gender boundaries” (89). The early modern divas’ widely circulated performances and iconography paved the way for future women to gain access to and pursue public professions as careers and to transgress stifling barriers to their sex.

On the reciprocal relationship between celebrities and their audiences, Sharon Marcus offers an excellent examination of nineteenth-century performance that applies here. For Marcus, this relationship constitutes an “asymmetrical interdependence,” where the performer “is one” while “the fans are many,” and the performer depends on their attention and spreading the word of her great work (999). Marcus contends that “though theatrical in structure, celebrity [is] also a social, political, and material phenomenon whereby socially, celebrities ranged between exemplarity and impudence” (1000). When the

diva performed virtuosic-ly, she was an exemplar, but when she performed *en travesti* onstage, and independently by securing contracts and other personal business in everyday life, she was impudent. Celebrities, Marcus argues, must be “impervious to their difference from the norm but needed to display their indifference to the conforming crowd” (1000). In the performance situation, however, “celebrity relied both on the star’s bodily presence and on representations that substituted for it” (1000). Renzi, and Isabella before her, provided audiences with incredible somatic performances while their pictures circulated out as indexical social representations. The theatrical presence of the diva consists of a “stage body” for Marcus, but “the stage body is not natural because it depends on training to be audible and ‘vivid’ while requiring blocking, lighting, acoustics, makeup, and costume” (1003). Thus, posits Marcus, “theatrical presence ... [is] physical, situated, directional, and intersubjective” in the bidirectional connectivity of performer and audience (1003). There is, however, a disconnection in this relationship as the performer does not know every individual in her audience, and most of the audience members are not personally acquainted with her.

On the level of celebrity as role-icon, however, the operatic diva performing in transvestite roles “confronts” her audience with her difference as a powerful singer and independent artist able to believably enact and embody what were thought to be strictly “male” attributes and abilities. It was her skilled performances and celebrity that allowed personal independence. Such a transgression is not only impudent but alluring. For, as Kerr submits, “Actresses who appeared on stage dressed as male courtiers evoked a range of desires in their spectators. Having ‘real’ women breaking the social codes that kept them subservient to men proved to be enormously popular, as female transvestism flourished on the stage throughout the centuries to come” (10). I would add that women costumed to embody male or female warriors too were erotically desirable to audiences, and the betweenness the women entertainers performed was “generative not only of theatre but of thought” in causing their beholders to think about gender mutability and the capabilities of women (Schneider, *Performing* 124). Moreover, her celebrity status rendered the diva’s performance what Marcus calls a “tissue of citations” (1003). The layered citationality of the diva’s performance of gender, intelligence, and virtuosic mastery must have provided

early audiences with a great deal to contemplate. While she embodied and enacted the historians' and librettists' character constructions, she also performed her personal interpretation of that character as she performed personal power in a public space. These performers travelled freely from city to city as their characters travelled freely on public stages. Thus, the professional performers' lives mirrored the lives of those characters bringing fiction to life, especially as independent warrior women, queens, or when they cross-dressed. Even as *commedia dell'arte* women moved freely from court to court, attracting much curiosity and acclaim, church leaders disapproved of their independent itinerancy. So, for example, Catholic father Carlo Borromeo (1538-84) complained about actors who "perform on their stage such lascivious and libidinous [acts], women dressing as men, and boys as women" (Treadwell 104).

On a political level, Marcus argues that "celebrity culture melded absolutism and democracy" (1000). While Marcus is referring to nineteenth-century celebrity culture, I argue that the phenomenon is especially evident in the early modern context and with *Teatro Novissimo*, which exemplified a mixture of Old-World noble patronage and budding commercialism. Rojek further claims that, with the advent of celebrity culture, a democratization of power occurs in a society where celebrities who come from the "mass and form of the people" create "staged celebrity" as opposed to royally "ascribed celebrity" (121). "Staged celebrity," according to Rojek, "refers to the calculated technologies and strategies of performance and self-projection designed to achieve a status of monumentality in public culture" (121). It was with technologies like Torelli's machines, the commercial publishing industry, and strategic virtuosic performance that Renzi achieved durable celebrity status to endure with "iconic significance" (121).

In the following, John Evelyn offers a slice-of-life description featuring his encounter with Renzi one night in Venice in his published travel diary:

The diversions which chiefly took was [sic] three noble operas, there were excellent voices and music, the most celebrated of which was the famous Anna Rencia whom we invited to a fish-dinner after four days in Lent, when they had given over at the theatre. Accompanied with a eunuch whom she brought with her, she entertained us with rare music, both of them singing to a harpsichord. It growing late, a gentleman of Venice came for her, to show her the galleys, now

ready to sail for Candia. This entertainment produced a second, given us by the English consul of the merchants, inviting us to his house. ... This diversion held us so late at night, that, conveying a gentlewoman who had supped with us to her gondola at the usual place of landing, we were shot at by two carbines from another gondola, in which were a noble Venetian and his courtesan unwilling to be disturbed, which made us run in and fetch other weapons, not knowing what the matter was, till we were informed of the danger we might incur by pursuing it farther [sic]. (*Diary* 223-4)

This excerpt not only describes Renzi's status as a celebrity but offers a glimpse into the Venetian nightlife at Carnevale and the unruly dangers that lay therein. Renzi was out this night performing at a private gathering, after performing a full operatic role, and then some Venetian "gentleman," to whom she was not married, took her off to see the galleys. If "courtesans" and prostitutes enjoyed such privileges, and Renzi was neither so, what social status allowed her this freedom of movement? I postulate that, while she was accompanied by men, she was also afforded an altogether different status than women who sold their bodies for sex or those who travelled with their husbands in performing troupes. She achieved a status somewhere between an aristocratic woman, who might also have been out with her husband or another appropriate man, a courtesan, and most commedia dell'arte divas. Renzi also performed a kind of in-betweenness as independent social status while forging a new celebrity status for women. Because celebrities like Isabella and Renzi did not come from privileged social backgrounds, the celebrity status they pioneered enabled them to exercise, and publicly demonstrate, personal power. This achieved celebrity democratized the diva's social status in the new commercial marketplace and in public spaces.

The city of Venice, the commercial theatre and the new operatic genre at carnival time presented new sights, sounds, and possibilities to a new kind of paying audience. Here Deleuze describes Baroque transformation and traits occurring during the paradigmatic shift from the Renaissance where experimentation and play resulted in "The fluctuation of the norm [which] replaces the permanence of a law" ("The Fold" 19). In this period there was interest in "temporal modulation" and "continuous variation" to be found in the fascination with curvilinear folds depicted in paintings and architecture and

heard in the modal and harmonic modulations in Cavalli's music or in musical improvisation. The empirical experimentation and the scientific method that Monteverdi used to test out his theories about the *stile concitato* encompass this impetus. The diva too tested out new modes of being for women as independent agents in Venetian society. The commercial theatre provided a stage upon which, and a space within which, to try out different ways to express and sound out sexuality. It was a place to play out various ways to perform gender and sexuality on a broad social scale for a mixed crowd proving gender norms to be transmutable along with social hierarchies and class. In all of this, universal truths were questioned as was the veracity of church doctrine. Torelli's perspectival scene designs too, are implicated in Deleuze's statement that "the condition in which the truth of a variation appears to the subject. This is the very idea of Baroque perspective" (20). Here, "... perspectivism as a truth of relativity (and not a relativity of what is true)" is presented to heterogeneous audiences where "In each area point of view is a variation or a power of arranging cases" and each individual arrived and departed to and from the performance with a personal perspective and point of view (21).

Venetian theatres closed from 1645 to 47 due to war with the Ottomans, prompted the exodus of singers to the rest of Europe so, when the *Febiarmonici* troupe travelled, they did so with freelance performers leaving and joining at will (Bianconi and Walker 424). The touring *La finta pazza* inaugurated the itinerant cycle (424). The travelling production saw an ever-changing cast of "wandering singers" in which the opera title was "the only element of continuity" (405). The name of the troupe also varied from *Febiarmonici* to *Discordati* as the troupe split into two (405). The troupes were comprised of "mercenary musicians" known as "comedianti by profession," and the companies were led and managed by different members including "virtuous women, comics, and singers, or *sonatrici*, which are wives, or companions; [who] contribute as much to 'harmonious reciting'" (407). An organizational aspect that the commedia dell'arte and opera troupes shared was that of entrepreneurial management embodied in commedia dell'arte by the troupe leader and in opera by the impresario (Badolato 9). Other companies consisted of "mercenary comedians," or commedia dell'arte performers, who recruited singers and musicians. Operatic troupes contrasted with the earlier commedia dell'arte troupes in that the commedia dell'arte

often travelled in more permanent family units, and even as performers sometimes broke with one troupe to join or form another, they usually acted as a more cohesive unit, while the operatic performers worked in a more freelance fashion. In this itinerant phase, operatic troupes like the *Febiarmonici* participated in the process of displacing the older popular form. Pirrotta affirms that, because audiences were used to the improvisational modules of commedia dell'arte performance, the operatic troupes adjusted their performance structure to accommodate audience expectations (in Michelassi 332).

This means that comic actor-singers were also expected to add prepared improvisational moments to their performances. As a result, their acting ability was expected to be as good as their musicianship. And, as a consequence of their close proximity – with similar travelling routes, cities, and performance spaces along with similarities in their performance and rehearsal processes – Pirrotta concludes that commedia dell'arte and operatic troupes were essentially “of the same society and used the same way of conceiving and implementing the theatrical performance” (332). Michelassi also believes that it was with the “transposition” of *La finta pazza* for the Florentine stage that “the osmotic contact” between the “mercenary” operatic troupes and the “ordinary” commedia dell'arte troupes began (333). By virtue of their liminal precarity, each type intermingled with the other to perform a hybridity of old and new.

While the troupes were popular, the sought-after women singers were still disdained, an attitude reflected by a Naples official who in the 1640s declared: “They have never been held to be respectable, since the singing profession carries with it the harsh necessity of dealing with many men: composers, instrumentalists, poets and music-lovers; anyone who witnesses all this coming and going in and out of a woman’s house readily concludes that she is immoral” (Abbate and Parker 70). Another commentator, Hurtado de Mendoza (1535-1609), expressed the following opinion on them:

Women are most often prostitutes who do the job for a fee ... [they] hug, shake hands, they kiss and touch each other, fix the time and place for a secret interview ... [and] they are often extraordinarily beautiful, elegant in deportment and dress ... skilled in dancing and singing, expert in the art of acting. And all that drags viewers to lust. (Mendoza qtd. in Ferrone, 41)

Mendoza’s fearful diatribe reflects a deep-seated fear and mistrust. Notwithstanding the opera

profession's potential to offer women an unprecedented opportunity to lead freer lives, and while some women received musical training as part of their overall education, the stigma marked a profession in commercial opera as worse even than one in spoken theatre discouraging many from choosing that path (Glixon and Glixon, *Inventing* 174). Thus, although operatic prima donnas were popular and often well paid, they were still looked upon with suspicion and likened to prostitutes both at home and abroad, and it was a huge barrier with which to contend.

The word of Venice's astounding production of *La finta pazza* travelled swiftly, and Renzi's performance became instantaneously legendary. Bisaccioni described her as "a young woman so brave in action and as excellent in music, so cheerful in pretending insanity but wise in knowing how to imitate while being modest in all other ways" and his *Cannocchiale* travelled far (284). When Florentine Prince Mattias de' Medici (1613-67) caught word of the goings on in Venice, he became curious to experience the new *dramma in musica*, so he went there during the 1641 Carnival season and personally worked on a production (Michelassi 325). The Medici court castrato singer Michele Grassechi was sent to Venice as well to gain experience singing in the new genre. In a letter of 1642 to Mattias, he commented on having attended a performance of *La finta pazza* and mentioned Renzi and another Roman singer writing, "Most serene lord, I arrived for the grace of others in Venice, and I was received by these virtuous gentlemen [the *Febiarmonics*] with great taste, and there was Signora Anna [Renzi] who performed in *La finta pazza*, and Mrs. Paola, all two Roman, which were really very good for the scene" (328). The choreographer and dancer Giovanni Battista Balbi (1617-1657) took over as troupe leader and raised the performance quality so that when word reached Florence about the troupe's activities, their arrival was greatly anticipated (328). When they arrived, the troupe met with the Grand Duke Mattias to negotiate terms for a performance contract. On February 25, 1645, they performed in Florence. In a letter to Mattias, a correspondent remarked,

The Febiarmonic comedians have recited their play now six times, which in effect has always succeeded very well; it lasts no more than three hours, they have always had a tremendous response, and they are always full of ladies, girls, and widows who enjoyed this pastime ... The

principle [singers] of the room have had the opportunity to show their liberty which, by luring it to ladies, they always attracted a superb collection [of auditors]. (330)

That the author describes “ladies, girls, and widows” in this audience is significant in that women also witnessed women in performance and were thus influenced firsthand by it. The writer then exhorts Mattias to come and see the performances:

The opera is beautiful and very well recited, there being among the others a bass that cannot be heard on the scene, as well as a woman who recites a marvel well, and all the other parts are very good, having brought music from Rome, ... [including] superb clothes, mutations of scenes, flights and dances of bears, cats ... parrots and other inventions that I do not think your Highness has ever seen. (330)

The Florentine performances were so popular that Mattias decided to retain the “comical musicians” for another set of performances during Lent when he would be in the city again. The troupe agreed and worked to raise the funds for staging expenses and to obtain the ecclesiastical licence to perform during the Lenten season (331). Michelassi and Glixon provide evidence that, by 1650, Balbi’s troupe performed again in Florence, but this time with *La Deidamia*, and Renzi was its prima donna and co-producer. The contract “stipulated that Renzi was required to go to Florence at her own expense to perform an opera of Balbi's choice” (Glixon, “Private” 517). That Renzi became an equal partner in the co-production of this commercial endeavour is remarkable for a woman of this time. It also approximates the leadership roles that Vittoria and Isabella held in their commedia dell’arte troupes as *capo comici*. The production of a major theatrical show for commercial public consumption by a singer, much less a woman, is significant. I believe that the fluid itinerant troupe organizational structure allowed Renzi to assume such a position.

The advent of professional performance in commercial venues for a ticket-buying public enabled this unprecedented freedom of choice and self-directed movement for Renzi. This opportunity – coupled with her personal drive and intelligence – enabled her to seize the moment and achieve an exceptional status. That she regularly utilized notaries to substantiate documents and to set her business transactions on solid legal footing, proved her intelligent ability to run personal business affairs. Taken all together,

Renzi disproved the accepted lie that women were inherently incapable of successfully steering their lives in the public realm.

In Isabella's time, *commedia dell'arte* troupes were also sponsored by, and thus obliged to, royal patrons and they usually travelled in family units. Therefore, if as Bianconi suggests, "Imperial power in the eyes of the world – is produced by the court musicians," then the travelling operatic troupes changed the financial relationship dynamics between patron and artist so that, while representatives of the court like Mattias de' Medici (1613-67) might request a performance, he still had to negotiate a contract with troupe leaders (*Music* 227). Once the contracted performances were fulfilled, artists were free to go, with no further obligation to the court. Renzi herself took part in the phenomenon of freelance collectives of independent artists spreading the new cultural and economic paradigm consisting of commercial, or "mercenary," exchange bringing them concretely into the modern era that they helped to inaugurate. However, as McClary contends, "Because professional singers (by definition) marketed their talents, they brought with them the taint of commercialism and even something of the aristocratic mania for collecting freaks and charlatans" (*Desire* 90). Archduke Ferdinand II, for instance, requested that composer Antonio Cesti (1623-69) bring Renzi to sing for his court in Innsbruck in 1653. Renzi sang the title warrior queen role in Cesti's *La Cleopatra* (music lost), also at Innsbruck (Schneider, "Seeing" 269).

In 1654, Renzi performed the titular role of Cesti's *La Cleopatra* at the Innsbruck court. The historic Macedonian Cleopatra (70/69 B.C.E.-30 B.C.E.) was a warrior queen who at age 18, in 48 B.C.E., raised her own army against her brother at Pelusium to become Egypt's dominant ruler (Tydesly "Cleopatra"). Although Cesti's construction of the role may have focused on Cleopatra as a lover or *femme fatal*, the historical queen, like Artemisia, was a warrior queen. When Renzi came to Innsbruck to sing the role, written for her, she was identified, according to Walter Senn as a "*Venetianische Comediantin*" (Venetian comedienne) and as "*Der berühmten Virtuosin*" (the famous virtuosa) (*Musik* 266; Glixon "Private"; 518; Siefert "*Cesti*," 22). She also brought her mother along to stay at the court. In 1655, Renzi sang the title role again in what Senn characterizes as a five-hour "monster opera" (*Monsteroper*) in Cesti's *L'Argia* 1655 (Glixon 518; Senn 288, 290). Senn imparts that the opera was

performed for the famously cross-dressing throne abdicating Christine of Sweden (mentioned in chapter II) (Ruth Stephan “Christina,” Clifton Bennett “Christina”). The court, according to Senn, spared no expense for this production, including recruiting “*die ersten Virtuosen Italiens*” (the first Italian virtuosos) (288). In *Argia*, Renzi played the role of Cyprian Princess Dorisbe (See Appendix C). In an intriguing scene, she sings a love duet with a singer listed on the character page as “castrato ... alias Pancotto” who plays the role of princess Argia cross dressed as “Laurindo.” The scene takes place in Dorisbe’s quarters at the Royal Court. “Laurindo” has been introduced to her, and she falls immediately in love. They play out the following love scene. Laur.: “*Del tuo vago sembiantel / ... ombra adorante ... Anzi t'adoro. Dor.: Io per te vivo. à 2.: Questo cor per te si strugge:/ Già si fuggel/ Dor.: Laurindo, ò Dio Laurindo Laur.: Dorisbe, ohimè Dorisbe/ à 2.: {io vengo meno.*” (“Of your lovely visage, I will be ... your adoring shadow... Indeed, I adore you. Dor.: I live for you ... Duet: This heart is melting for you: You are already fleeing (together) {the soul from the breast. Dor.: Laurindo, Oh God Laurindo Laur.: Dorisbe, alas Dorisbe (together) {I fall.”}; Lequile (librettist) *L'Argia*, 11-2). At one point in the show, the ballet dances a battle (Senn 290). During the performance, one audience member overheard Christina comment on the “*seltene Kunst der Sänger und Musiker*” (“rare art of the singers and [other] musicians”) and that she had “*etwas Ähnliches nie gesehen und wohl auch nicht wieder sehen würden*” (“never seen anything like it before and will likely never see anything like it again”; 290).

Luckily, there is a fair amount of evidence regarding Renzi’s activities and movements to and from cities like Innsbruck, Rome, Florence, and Venice. By the 1640s, she was performing for lower fees (Glixon, “Private” 519). Glixon states that Renzi’s operatic career took her from the “grandest of ... theatres, the Teatro Novissimo and the Teatro SS Giovanni e Paolo, to ... the more humble Teatro S. Apollinare” (518). In October 1652, Renzi was back in Venice, where she had the notary Francesco Beaziano draft her will (Bianconi-Walker 424). She seems to have retired from the stage in the 1660s. After this, her whereabouts are unknown.

The diva’s expert performance virtuosity and her public sphere business acumen in negotiating contracts, gaining patronage, and securing everyday living accommodations, allowed her to openly

transgress the norm and establish a new international profession. Twenty years after Renzi Giulia Masotti (1645- c.1701) negotiated the highest pay of any prima donna to date and earned more than contemporary male operatic composers – so much so that, on an international scale, “prima donnas in Venice often seemed to have enjoyed a higher status than contemporary actresses in England, for example, where women consistently earned less than men” (Glixon, “Private” 509). The diva’s forceful sonic presence in madwomen, warrior, or cross-dressed roles and in savvy business negotiations legitimized her as an independent professional. Such gender subversion would have been the case whether or not she intended to conform to normative expectations for women in her presentation of self in everyday life. For, as the Glixons assert, “Opera also changed the lives of the women who chose to perform it ... [A] select few, through their special appeal to the public, earned enormous sums and achieved the status of ‘diva’” (*Inventing* 175). Therefore, the divas’ popular celebrity status, epitomized by high pay, directly contradicted accepted notions regarding women’s potential as independent thinkers, career strategists, and autonomous social actors. As the Glixons explain, “Public opera in Venice put th[e] new class of women singers in the spotlight ... Each opera presented in Venice featured a mixed cast of male and female characters comprising all of the vocal ranges from soprano to bass” (175-76). Indeed, for Marco Faustini’s company alone, from the 1651/52 to the 1667/68 seasons, eighteen women were hired (203). And for *La Rosinda*, there were eight roles sung by women compared to seven sung by men (Eggert 90). Finally, prior to the pre-eminence of the castrato singer, in Venetian opera, women’s roles were larger than men’s and women were more often disguised as warriors than were men so that women were employed as singers on a large enough scale to make a meaningful social impression (Glover, *Cavalli* 104). If, as Fred Inglis declares, “Celebrity ... is the product of culture and technology,” then Renzi’s celebrity fame was made possible by Venice’s flourishing printing and publishing industry and her involvement in the productions featuring Torelli’s spectacular technological wonders (*A Short* 7). And hers was a singular achievement as she gazed back at her audiences and sounded the truth of her personal power and capabilities.

In her excellent text on Isabella, *The Rise of the Diva*, Kerr discusses how Isabella’s predecessor

Virginia Armani possessed: “the magical ‘It-effect’ or charisma, as Max Weber named the unique qualities that are vested in certain individuals, giving them miraculous powers to influence, inspire, and heal others ... Armani’s extraordinary personal qualities, such as her natural beauty and great intellectual accomplishments, are legendary and made her into an object of worship” (72). Kerr attributes Armani’s “supernatural” magnetism to her eloquence and its “alchemic power to transform listeners” (72). Armani accomplished her celebrity in the generation before Renzi, but Renzi had an advantage in the timing of her arrival on the commercial stage. Rojek links “taste cultures” to the rise of industrial capital and urban populations in the shift from royal court culture to urban popular culture. New technologies, like Torelli’s stage machines, and the new groups that formed, like the patrician Incogniti literati, influenced changes in cultural tastes, paving the way for celebrity culture. Rojek clarifies his thinking in the following way:

... the crux of the multiplication of taste cultures was the shifting balance of power between the Court and society. Royal patronage was not erased during this period. ... Royal patronage was supplanted by the new taste cultures emerging in the coffee-houses, reading societies, debating clubs, assembly rooms, galleries and concert halls. The origins of celebrity culture are rooted in this great transformation In addition, the business of satisfying these taste cultures and expanding them became one of the specialized, and most lucrative, objects of commerce. (111-2)

Like Kerr, I push Rojek’s date back from the 1660s to at least the 1640s, with the burgeoning popular success of commercial theatre in Venice and especially with the newly formed operatic industry. I set the nodal time frame to have occurred just as Renzi was performing a musical/theatrical hybridity in the cross-dressed heroine role type as it transitioned from the previous performance paradigm to a new one – or from Renaissance to Baroque taste culture. This moment is exemplified in the creative burst of energy thrusting forth the hybrid form replete with interlocking elements like polyphonic madrigals and monadic recitative/aria, hybrid recitative as recited text interrupted by the embryonic arioso form set into a continuous whole, where acting was equally as important as singing ability, and tragic elements were mixed with comedy. In this way, Renzi embodied and performed betweenness as she changed taste culture. So, where Roach sets the “period of *It*’s modern emergence in the ‘deep eighteenth century,’” I,

like Kerr, set it back at least to the early seventeenth century (Roach 3). Renzi became the face of a new movement by embodying the “effortless look of public intimacy ... the multifaceted genius of *It*” while seeming to invite “public intimacy (the illusion of availability),” through “synthetic experience (vicariousness), and the It-Effect (personality-driven mass attraction)” (Roach 3).

The multiple published tributes to her physical attractiveness and her performance genius substantiate this status. Her voice and corporeal enactments and the fame she won from audiences gave her the “illusion of availability,” especially in the intimate performance space of *Novissimo*. The It-Effect she possessed is evident in the mass appeal of her performances in *La finta pazza* where throngs of potential ticket buyers were turned away at the door (Sartori 445). Many patrons returned to see the production multiple times for, as Rosand quotes one contemporary:

The public’s desire to see [*La finta pazza*] again never ended; and thus, however many times it was repeated, the place was crowded with people, and many were led to curse their own laziness when they arrived and had to leave because they could not find any place to sit. Nor did the long period between the end of Carnival and Easter lessen the desire in the city to see such an applauded work again ... and thus it was necessary to reopen the theater and perform it a number of times, which further spread the fame of this delightful spectacle to the cities of Italy and beyond, and was the reason that, quite exceptionally, Venice was filled ten days early with the crowds that normally gather for the devotions and ceremonies of Ascension Day. (*Opera in 98*)

The kind of acclaim showered on the professional performers by audiences was traditionally reserved only for women of high birth. But on the operatic stage, women of low birth could portray goddesses and royalty while also earning amounts of money that normally only women in the upper economic eschelon would have access to. On the other hand, this exalted status was still tempered by the social reality that their wealthy male “admirers” saw them as objects to be seduced and as little more than cultured courtesans. In any case, Federica Ambrosini holds that the early women performers embodied “a new public role that may well have awakened the self-awareness of their female contemporaries” (“Toward” 435). And, as I have demonstrated, in commercial public theatres, women inevitably comprised part of

Renzi's audience.

In a migration of a performance episteme, the morphing of the madwoman scene by librettists, composers, actors, and singers is apparent. This migration operated as a repertoire archived in the body that slipped across genres to avoid a strictly enforced gender binary. The trope of the madwoman as a repertoire was stored and transmitted through the extraordinary sounding bodies of early modern divas like Isabella and Renzi, whose performances functioned as affective conduits successfully subverting early modern gender norms for women. In everyday life, a parallel migration of gesture occurred in the learned gestures of cultural status and gender performance memorized and done differently in public spaces. Renzi's body, her sound, and the presence of her intelligent *sprezzatura* or virtuosic abilities, enacted what Butler deems "a tacit form of performativity" as a "citational chain lived and believed at the level of the body" (*Excitable* 155). In her skilled performance of power, and as the diva takes command of the stage "[her] body exceeds the speech act it also performs" (155). The near two-hundred-year activity of professional commedia dell'arte women and their operatic successors to the 1660s verifies their pioneering and perseverant spirits. One lasting trace that women like Renzi, Vittoria, Virginia, and Isabella left behind is their uncompromising insistence on living extraordinary lives, on their own terms, as forerunners for professional women of the future working in whatever roles they choose.

Anna Renzi's real name is not known because, as Sartori postulates, "Anna Renzi" was a stage name, a name she went by in all of her official business, and presumably, out in the city. Therefore, she was actor/singer "Anna Renzi," singing the role of Deidamia cross-dressed (and veiled?) as Ergindo – these names are ephemeral layers of anonymity concealing an unknown identity. What is known is the record of her performance as "Anna Renzi" negotiating contracts for marriage and work and living arrangements, singing and acting roles for which documents survive, travelling, and then disappearing to whereabouts unknown. We know she existed and something about where she was. We know the sound of some of the musical compositions and roles that she sang. We know what she looked like as an androgynously dressed young singer, and we know how witnesses described her personality, her sound, and her acting. We know that she helped to break the field of operatic performance open for professional

women singers. She accomplished this feat through a persistent force of will, powerful virtuosic resonance, celebrity personality, and acting mastery in astonishing ways while contravening what must have seemed insurmountable barriers. Roach contends that the “trace left behind by the It-Effect” should be “called the *afterimage*” [or even the *aftersound*?]. The residual effects remain as sensation in the body after the performance is over “like the shape of a flame that lingers in the eye after the candle has gone out” (91). The afterimage and sound sensations of performance, the “auric presences” – as resonance and physical presence in the theatrical space – flickered and buzzed persistently in audiences’ corporeal memories.

**CHAPTER IV: THE SENSE-ODOLOGY OF PAST PERFORMANCE, OR INTO
THE SONIC *MISCHIA CON LA DIVA!***

*Music is not the origin of language, as people have so often wanted to think,
but what withdraws and sinks into it.*

—Jean-Luc Nancy, *Listening*

Anna Renzi raised her social status to an internationally known operatic celebrity because of the effect her sound and vision had on others as she subverted gender norms for women. Those who observed her onstage performance of gender received it as a powerful haptic sensation. They perceived the presence of her sounding body as sensation in the room simultaneously across multiple sense receptors inducing affective states. Her resonant body, moreover, was a liminal space where written text, musical notation, and the performance practice of stage acting was transformed into a seductive and virtuosic sound and vision expertly directed by her and absorbed by listeners' bodies in new and important ways. Thinking of music this way, Marianne Kielian-Gilbert identifies how, rather than just a text functioning only to bear affective qualities, the process of making and receiving musical sounds entails "something of one pass[ing] into another" (200). In this transfer, the receiver absorbs the energy and transforms what is produced by the sounding agent – like the performer – into something new in an interactional encounter (203). Applied to music making and hearing, Kielian-Gilbert advocates thinking of the listener's experience in the "philosophical/experiential practice of music" (203).

Butler defines Bourdieu's term *habitus* to mean "those embodied rituals of everydayness" by which a given culture produces and sustains belief in its own "obviousness" ("Performativity's" 113-4). Here, "Bourdieu underscores the place of the body, its gestures, its stylistics, its unconscious 'knowingness' as the site for the reconstitution of a practical sense ... The practical sense is a sense of the body, where this body is not a mere positive datum, but the repository or the site of incorporated history" (114). Butler furthermore merges Bourdieu's binary of "the social and linguistic dimensions of ... performative speech" with "the 'generative' dimension of the habitus," or, the body as "the site of their convergence and productivity" (115). The "bodily transmit[ed]" repertoire of singing technique, and the

technologies used to record performance like manuscripts, and descriptions – like the audience accounts in *Le glorie di Anna Renzi* – afford me ways to reconstruct their sounds in spite of temporal remoteness (105). The diva performs, with performance being the event of the performance of music and role. Renzi's presence as performative, in contrast, consists of elements read by receivers of the event going beyond what was performed to what was sensed and made meaning of regarding bodily received elements, like resonance, intensity, and gender – as social citation.

Even when the intention is to sing beautifully what is printed in the score, operatic singers in performance loosen and circumvent the fixity of notation and text with energetic resonance received by the listener as a physical phenomenon with affective qualities. This process induces internal emotional reactions in the listener. Generating energy in stage performance is inventive and intangible and so differs from inscribing musical sounds into fixed symbols. Indeed, as singers generate energy in the form of soundwaves and bodily presence – as an energetic electrical field that witnesses perceive, absorb, and remember, consciously or not – it affects them on physical, emotional, intellectual, levels through sensual perception, in waves like “divine rays” of lightwaves. Thus, the experience of making and receiving music is an intersubjective process actualized in liminal spaces like *Novissimo*. It was Renzi's performance furthermore, as a sounding vision, that overrode as surplus meaning, master narratives fixed into text and musical notation by seventeenth-century opera librettists and composers.

Mid-seventeenth-century performance scores are unedited and document adjustments for stage rehearsals used by composers to play and direct from during performance events (Rosand, *Readying* 121). They were not conceived of as permanent records but were rather textual and musical sketches, like commedia dell'arte scenarios, from which to perform and alter during rehearsals and performances. Only in our current time are the edited scores of Cavalli's operas, for instance (often comprised of compiled performance scores from different performances of the same opera), published as finished products from which to perform. The manuscript performance scores I have examined here were expected to change and morph with the physical circumstances and personnel of particular performances. Otherwise, while these

early scores didn't necessarily record singers' exact vocal embellishments, they were tailored for the singer's vocal abilities.

Expert operatic performance consists of mental and physical energy, effort, and a precise control of sound and gesture. The performer's body archives sound and gesture learned from someone else – like singing teachers, other performers, and the opera composers and librettists – but it is done differently, passed on and mimicked, revisited, and renewed. Indeed, the consummate diva, like Renzi, performed new embodiments while her sounds, gestures, and movements superseded the written text and musical composition in a new and extraordinary way. When Bisaccioni published *Il Cannochiale*, he offered a telescope into the physical production of *La finta pazza* meant to stir visual and sensual imagination in those who were either too far from the stage to “feel” its intensity, or who were not present for the performance event. He detailed and translated his phenomenological experience of the performance to generate virtual experience in readers. Physical structures and thoughts about the performance of *La finta pazza* can be mined from Bisaccioni's virtual descriptions and Torelli's depictions to illuminate situations “like the image produced in a telescope by the passage of light rays” (270).

The sound and vision of her performance as the *virtuosa* Renzi costumed, made-up, and moving in and with Torelli's moving sets, in the performance space of *Novissimo*, within the social and built architectural space of Venice at Carnevale, burgeoned beyond any curtailment of the female-role-type-as-written and composed. For instance, if the diva's sounding body was received as multidimensional significance, her stage performance as the warrior queens Artemisia or Cleopatra, for instance, was occupied by a trace of an extraordinary historical personage that countered a normalized text diluting or nullifying the historic queen's militaristic power. By conjuring up the matrix of the social network as virtual experience, the vital social impact of the novel performance events at *Novissimo* can be grasped on a deeper physiological level. The stunning impression and the newness of what was felt by those in the room, in the presence of the diva sounding and moving within Torelli's stage inventions, was carried out with audiences into the cultural field. With the power of celebrity in performance, immersed in the

miraculous stage effects moving and changing “in time” with the music, while clothed in set design coordinated costumes, the splendid virtuosic singer/actors sounded out difference.



Fig. 13. Cover of Apparati Scenici per lo Teatro Novissimo (1644) facsimile. (author's reproduction).

Beyond this inquiry, what kinds of affective interactions occurred in the social/acoustic space of *Novissimo* filled with tourists, foreign ambassadors, and Venetians all in disguise? How did that interact with the diva's sounding body on a social level? How might this intersubjective atmosphere have intermingled with the emotional and intellectual effect of her presence in the room? What meanings did auditors make of her particular sound and presence in the social space? Millie Taylor contends that “Sound is a physical phenomenon in space that does not only enter the ears, but that interacts with the space and communicates about it, creating an atmosphere that is both communicative and corporeal. Through the impact of vibrations on the receiving body, sound is perceived as a gesture or touch that is impossible to avoid” (“Exploring” 290). Milla Tiainen maintains that the “sonic turn” of recent research into the aspects of sound in performance requires “encounters ... between sounds, their frameworks, the specific questions each sonic sphere provokes, and cultural theoretical redefinitions of subjectivity” (149).

Tiainen posits, furthermore, a twofold directionality involving bodies in space where “singing bodies as material aggregates of variables ... are ... not only spatial but also temporal” and opera culture itself is a “field, an open-ended space, for continuous production of sexual differences” (149). She advocates theorizing “live music and subjectivity as material and sexed,” where “body movements, corporeal intensity levels, concepts, exchanges with other subjects (both physical-affective and symbolic)” and “connections to broader surroundings intermingle, creating situation-bound constellations” as the “varying micro-layers of subjectivity, sex, and the body” (150).

Tiainen furthermore conceptualizes “actual musical moments” with the lenses of “sexed singing bodies/subjects as *open materiality*” and as “*assemblages ... of a thousand tiny sexes*” [italics original] (151-2). To assemble fragmented traces of historical evidence into new assemblages, moreover, calls for archaeological work that entails gathering “performance and social practice, and their subsequent documentation or representation, through surviving traces and fragments, [that] constitute heterogeneous assemblages” (Pearson and Shanks, *Theatre* 55). In doing so, previously overlooked aspects can be restored. Piercing the veneer of the theatrical past requires gathering and splicing together various data framed by a multi-directional/dimensional compilation of methodologies to render a more vivid sensuous and sonorous sound picture of the diva in her socio-political matrix. Such intervention marries formalist musical analysis with cultural, social, and performance studies. The impetus responds to Tiainen’s assertion that “music analytical approaches ... have abstracted music from the *socio-culturally* signifying and material forces that necessarily inform its existence” (153). Tiainen further posits that “textual-discursive approaches examine how music acquires cultural existence [and significance] through linguistic operations ... this stance bypasses music’s equally powerful, material modalities of existence, such as its emergence with/as musicians’ body movements in live situations of sound making” (154). Seeing the performance as event replete with performative elements clarifies the socio-musical work of *all* the artists involved in the process of music and theatre making, including the great diva.

The figural notation composed into organized sound patterns by composers like Cavalli provided the perfect sonic opportunity for the diva to move and impact audiences. The liminal theatrical space

presented the opportunity for social mobility to divas who, as de Certeau maintains, “accept the change offering of the moment, and seize on the wing the possibilities that offer themselves” (37). With the invention of *dramma per musica*, the young Renzi seized the opportunity to establish her professional status. Heller details some of the musical characteristics that Renzi possessed like “dazzling virtuosity, impassioned lyricism” and celebrity power, including “lush chromaticism, austere recitative, startling tonal shifts ... utilized in a variety of ways to depict different types of women” (*Chastity*, 4). Composers’ musical innovations constitute a major component of the compiled assemblage set into motion here. The composed sonic prescriptions of performance scores were musical innovations that facilitated the incredible abilities that Heller enumerates. To understand the reception of this pairing entails parsing and setting out the extra-lingual, extra-notational emissions Renzi performed and the interlocking audience experience of it. This investigation corresponds to Ludger Schwarte’s proposition that audiences must interpret and imaginatively complete what they are experiencing. Schwarte explains that “In music, ... it is neither the sheet of music nor its interpretation which is decisive, but the performance transforming into sounds to which the audience is listening” (“How” 70). In this way, audiences “transform what they see,” hear and feel to “leave their own mark on the work of art that emerges in this process”—in what Schwarte calls “fulfillment” (70). Fulfillment entails experiencing “Non-Identity, a heterogeneous perception unfolding between the senses and the thing that presents itself” where “viewers,” as sensing auditors complete it with “something imaginary, something purely potential” (70). And, of course, imaginaries can take any form.

But in the specific case of Renzi performing the mad and cross-dressed Deidamia, socially imagined possibilities also form in my present-day imaginary. Again, the great array of past imagined possibilities is impossible to know as they are unavailable to current day researchers. However, with sufficient contextual evidence, it is possible to build an epistemologically rich assemblage from which to glean and discover new meanings. It is possible because the “qualities perceived and the impressions that they evoke” become constellations “rather than ... actual arrangement[s] of things,” as Schwarte insists (72-3). The newly assembled constellations, moreover, can be re-composed by “going beyond what is

actually there” to “make sense of what we perceive” by adding a “third dimension” (72-3). Constructing such an imaginative assemblage requires intuition that “tears a hole in the representation of the world” (Schwarte 72 -3). Intuition carves a “fissure in the world,” allowing “things that force themselves into existence” – like the resonant sensation of the diva’s body – “which were previously excluded from the structure of reality” to arise (74). The process is “a creative act initiated by intuition” (74). Hence, I intuit that something beyond the plain factual details of Renzi’s activities and the notation of the music she sang is yet to be discerned. To excavate the socially performative elements of her story, my intuition leads me to construct an “architectonic presentation” and discover “the perception of heterogeneous qualities” as more than “that which simply appears” (74).

Male critics worried about the intense intimacy of women performing live before an audience. This stance is exemplified by Catholic father Carlo Borromeo’s comments, mentioned in chapter V, that a woman’s “live speaking voice” harms “the minds of adolescents,” revealing his fear that women’s performances on public stages could harm young boys’ minds. For, as Richard Leppert contends, “music’s most virulent enemies have often condemned music ... precisely for the pleasures it provides and the effects of its audition on the social fabric” (27). The women who first performed publicly were alluring, albeit threatening, displaying an agency with which their audiences were unused. Their agency came as a result of the extraordinary energies they expended in training, onstage performance, and in forging their careers in everyday life. This was true for early modern women performers and the audible intimacy of tantalizing vocal ability. Indeed, concerning the newly constructed operatic heroines, as Heller elaborates:

By deriving its heroines from the realms of myth and history, opera gave visual and aural prominence to the very same women known to early modern audiences as emblems for female behaviour, and whose virtues and vices had been explored in countless writings on the nature of women and femininity. Opera not only reflects the various polemics about women that had infected early modern Europe; it was itself a vital voice in the midst of the controversies. (2)

The divas who performed these vital roles transcended prohibitions against women's agency with powerfully autonomous action. Renzi's performance raised "questions concerning the worthiness of women and their relationships towards men ... to instruct on their appropriate position in society" – even in counterpoint to the curtailment of agency inscribed into the roles she sang (Heller 12). This epistemology is worth peeling back – layer by layer – as part and parcel of the textural energetic field intrinsic to the historical record. Before this layered energetic field can be examined, I must re-assemble it. The musical composition for Deidamia's mad scene in *La finta pazza*, for example, offered a scaffolding on which to sonically and somatically flesh out its turbulent ravings that was likewise received by other bodies in the wooden sound box that was *Novissimo*.

Biggi suggests that the Incogniti partnership was a "collective art experiment" meant to attract the *cittadini* class into the rarified almost private space at *Novissimo* ("Torelli" 34). Thorburn, too, posits that the consumers of Venetian commercial opera consisted of a "musically interested yet unsophisticated audience" (272). de Certeau contends that communities must "vigilantly make use of the cracks that particular conjunctions open in the surveillance of the proprietary powers" ("The Practice" 37). With an audience consisting of various classes – including foreigners – the price of a ticket meant that goings on at the opera were unpredictable and offered a way to subvert the control of "proprietary powers." Indeed, the overall success of the operation depended on public taste driving market demand for celebrity performances that undercut aristocratic oversight. Strozzi wrote about how in domestic or everyday scenes, "the pleasures of contemporary Venetians are reflected," as the production of opera fit perfectly into the Venetian world of nocturnal pleasures like night regattas, gambling casinos, and "comedies in the

night” all familiar to Venetian audiences (Guarini, “Torelli a Venezia” 45). Otherwise, the acoustic archaeology of *Novissimo*, submits Bianconi, performed a broader political message, meant to “penetrate the arcana of power to dominate one’s own and others’ passions, while reality seems to manifest itself only through a play of mirrors that confuses and dissolves at the very moment in which it reveals itself” (80). Performances featured the excess and disorder that the young Libertines revered. The buildings where commedia dell’arte, and then opera troupes, performed constituted perpetual mutability with unstable liminal identities adapted to changing cultural tastes. And, within opera theatres, opera boxes were liminal spaces where social behaviours like political deals, business with courtesans, and gambling



Fig. 16. Details from a model of Torelli’s Teatro della Fortuna in Fano (Milesi, “Giacomo Torelli” 347-50)

transpired.

As there are no known renderings of *Teatro Novissimo*, it is impossible to know much about what the experience in the auditorium was like. The model pictured above is of Torelli’s *Teatro della Fortuna*, located in his hometown of Fano. He designed and built *Fortuna* thirty years after *Novissimo*, so his approach would be greatly modified for this space. It is still Torelli’s design, however, so it does offer a sense of the style and the type of space that he may have created for *Novissimo*. As a wooden structure, *Fortuna*, like *Novissimo*, would produce a particular acoustic feel, look, sound, and smell. Wood modifies and conducts sound molecules while it reflects sound waves as a soundboard. It is also not certain that there was an orchestra pit separated by a wall from the audience, as shown above. However, the orchestra did likely sit directly before the stage apron creating a close rapport between orchestra and singer.

For onstage scene changes, a below-ground wench was used at *Novissimo* to “change the ceilings and to lift a counterweight which, once freed, descended to the left of the stage itself” (Bjurström 30). As Bjurström explains, “The weight was connected by a rope to a cylinder of large diameter, inserted on a tree that extended under the stage from the front to the rear ... Releasing the counterweight, therefore, obtained the simultaneous change of all wings, these being connected by cords to the central shaft” (30). Bisaccioni, who wrote about the production, describes the miraculous effects of Torelli’s scene changes for *La finta pazza*:

Marvellous was the artifice of th[e] mutation[s], since a single young man of fifteen years gave it motion, leaving a counterweight held by a little iron; this weight moved around a little ring under the stage, for which, according to the need, all the canvases were going backwards or forwards, which were sixteen, eight on each side, accommodated in the space of thirty-five feet of ground, for which, turning all the parts to one and very fast motion, it made great the wonder of art ...

(Bisaccioni qtd. in Ruini 287)

Bisaccioni’s description illustrates how new and miraculous the scenes and scene changes were to behold. Venetian painter Giancarlo Tarsio painted the scenes for *La finta pazza* onto sixteen flats. In all, there were five scene changes, including three partial mutations, all continuously multiplying and dividing into new configurations. They included: a seaport; a courtyard with the inner scene of the gynoecium of Olympus; a royal garden; an inferno with a cave; and a palace with open atriums, apartments, loggias and gardens. The chariot and pole system, with its weights, winches, pulleys, and below-stage-track with attached flats, enabled quick, miraculously seamless changes of scenery, providing spectacular special effects not seen before. At *Novissimo*, there were sixteen wings split into eight per side, and the system enabled the wings to magically shift scenes (Larson, “Giacomo” 450). Nicola Badolato describes how two or three rhythmically timed changes per act were integrated into the overall dramatic structure:

The scaffolding of the drama is based on blocks of adjacent scenes, sequences arranged as panels [or flats] that alternate actions carried out ... indoors or outdoors. These sequences include usually two to five scenes – understood as distinct segments of the dramatic text from the exit and

entry of the characters – and made more compact by an application ... quite consistent with the *liaison des scenes*. (Badolato 14)

Changing scenes seemed to dissolve or morph, one into another in time, with the music and with the sense of the dramatic text. Biggi confirms too that the scenic apparatus was designed to move in time with the music, text, and dramatic action. Because the scenery changed smoothly and automatically, it worked with the on-stage action and music as an active character in the drama.

The scenic morphology attests to how Torelli worked to astound and transfix the audience. For his part, Bisaccioni describes how the experience affected the viewers, writing, “*girando tutte le parti ad un solo e velocissimo moto, rendeva grande la meraviglia come di arte non mai più usata in simile occorrenza di scene, ... et, in vero, che fuori dei questo ingegnoso artificio l'intelletto non s'adegua alla credenza che tanti tellari possano tutti in un punto, in un baleno, anzi in un atomo, accomodarsi a suoi luoghi per variare un scena*” (“all the parts [turn] in a single, very fast motion, causing great wonder as of art never having seen in a similar occurrence before in a Scene ... and in truth, outside of this ingenious artifice the intellect cannot adapt itself to believing, that so many canvases can be all in one place and, in a flash, indeed in an atom, come down in their places to vary a Scene”; qtd. in Ruini 287).

On the interaction of musical and dramatic temporal dynamics, Susan McClary connects specific musical and rhythmic manoeuvres to temporal manipulation where, by delaying tempo and key changes indefinitely, seventeenth-century composers simulated temporal stasis (*Desire* 101). To produce this effect, they employed a repeating ostinato rhythmic pattern in the bass that I have described to “stimulate a trancelike affective state” (101). This aspect relates as well to the overall architectonic/rhythmic features of the stage structure. McClary likewise attributes the ability to create “trancelike psychological states (laments or erotic or religious ecstasy, for example) in which the character no longer experiences time in a linear or progressive fashion...” requiring that, “the performer, listener, or analyst ... be prepared for a radical change of temporal orientation at any moment” (44). This description applies to Deidamia’s mad scene and to Doriclea’s lament. The dynamic scene-changing technology, in tandem with the musical elements, added likewise to the perception of temporal disorientation.

These early operas were constructed by integrating visual and auditory elements with an uninterrupted narrative through-line unified and coordinated with music and spectacle elements in a new way. The immersive quality and experiential reality in *Novissimo*'s musical space became "an enveloping sound field" where audience behaviours, stage actions, and sounds intermingled (Blessner and Salter, *Spaces* 152). It is important to unpack how the social sensory atmosphere of the musical space at *Novissimo* bound together the events it contained. Deleuze transmits that in the Baroque period, "harmony goes through a crisis that leads to a broadened chromatic scale, to an emancipation of dissonance or of unresolved accords, accords non brought back to tonality" ("The Fold" 82). In this way too, at the earliest stage of Baroque music making, in *Novissimo*, Cavalli's dissonant harmonic shifts, embodied and sounded forth by the novel performers interacted with the novel set and the novel space.

While *Novissimo* was built and designed by Torelli to fulfill the specifications for his grand machinery, it was built specifically to house the operatic form. Torelli would want to "enhance social and visual communications, especially between the musicians and the audience," and in this case, the primary musicians were the singers (Blessner and Salter 148). Furthermore, sightlines facilitate "the organic vitality of a shared emotional experience" by creating "social cohesion" in a way that "depends on all the senses" (148). In "aural architecture," as Blessner and Salter contend, the listener is enfolded and immersed into the spatial acoustics of reverberant sound energy (153). And, the experience of "sonic events" and "acoustic spaces," requires a process of "auditory perception" having to do with "neurobiology and learning" that has changed little since the early modern period (70). The following is a compilation of elements known and speculated to have comprised the performance experience in *Novissimo* for *La finta pazza*.

In the following section, I present Torelli's original designs for *La finta pazza* and *Deidamia*. In this first scene, the set fills the stage as we see a great ship in full sail on the right of the stage sailing over manufactured waves consisting of rolling blue cylinders operated by a hand crank (Zanon 250). On each side of the stage are five rows of flats receding back from the stage apron to the backdrop. Each one is painted with docks, towers, ships, and the backdrop depicts the city of Rhodes. A soldier is seen

descending from the ship down a plank onto the stage. The sea border seems to ascend diagonally from the plank up to the back of the second tower on the left with a playing area for performers. Bisaccioni describes the appearance and movement of the ship, writing “*l'arrivo d'una nave fatta all' antica la quale, spuntando dalla destra parte, pareva che solcasse a vele piene i falsi flutti di Nettuno. Giunta ch'ella fu nel mezzo del porto, calò l'atenna, raccolse la vela e gettò l'ancora; era il legno carico di gente*” (“an ancient wooden ship full of people, popping up from the right side, seemed to sail the false waves of Neptune



Fig. 19. Giacomo Torelli, *La finta pazza "Porta della Città di Sciro" I.I (Milesi 209). Arrival of the Greek Ambassadors*

with full sails. When she was in the middle of the port, down the atenum, she picked up the sail and threw the anchor”; Bisaccioni qtd. in Ruini 286). Floating in the air are Juno and Minerva on clouds. Tethys rides a chariot in front of the ships below. Bisaccioni conveys, “the air began to widen almost to yield to new wonders ending up with a sky full of splendour and gold opening in high perspective ... in various positions sat the major deities, of which the most sumptuously adorned was Jupiter” (286). Out of the ship come King Lycomedes wearing an emerald coloured breastplate covered with iridescent talc (286). On his head is a helmet covered with jewels and feathers of green and red also coated in iridescent talc (286). The Greek ambassadors are followed by eight men (286).

Phosphorescent talc was used to illuminate the actors by reflecting the light from strategically placed lamps (287). Torelli had lamps placed in the seabed and on the flying machines and other stage machines and between the canvas wings and the backdrop (Zanon 286). The lighting was thus interspersed about the stage to better illuminate the scene and the characters. Bisaccioni details the

costumes of the disembarking people writing, *“i più riguardevoli erano due vestiti: l'uno di corazza arabescata d'oro, con piume et ornamenti rossi, e l'altro pure armato, ma adornato con colore turchino”* (“the most noteworthy had two types of dress: one of gold-plated arabesque armour, with feathers and red ornaments, and the other also armed, but adorned with a turquoise colour”; 286). The men wore green and red caps decorated with gold, and their tunics were green and red as well. Four accompanying pages wore green robes covered in leaves and helmets with gold-flowered ornaments (287). According to Bisaccioni, the transformation to the next scene transpired as follows: *“cominciò l'aria ad allargarsi quasi per ceder a nuove meraviglie che a punto si terminarono con aprirsi in alta prospettiva un cielo pieno di splendori e d'oro”* (“the air began to widen yielding new wonders that ended up filling the sky full of splendour and gold and all in high perspective”; 288). Bianconi submits that Torelli's lively scene changes are “eminently baroque” and meant to achieve “maximum splendour with the minimum effort” (77).

With the women, in the background, stands Achilles, dressed as a woman with Deidamia. In the air Jupiter, Victory, Venus, and other gods sit on clouds. They discuss the Greek war, and the Trojans argue about which side to support. The libretto states that when the Trojans lost the war, they fled to the lagoon where the “glorious Venetian people” descended from them (Strozzi, *La finta* 10). Venus decides they should resolve the conflict between the gods by descending to Earth and intervening in the war. Hearing that Troy will nevertheless be destroyed, she becomes enraged and flies about on her cloud – crossing left to Jupiter – and then moving *“avanti verso il popolo per lo spazia di circa dodici piedi”* (“forward towards the people for a distance of about twelve feet”; qtd. in Ruini 288). At this point Love appears on a cloud in the sky moving towards Venus; they met together and then *“calando et avanzandosi fino a terra verso il mezzo del palco, dove svani”* (“lowered and advanced to the ground towards the middle of the stage, where they vanished”; 288).



Fig. 22. Giacomo Torelli “Cortile delle reggia del re Licomede di Sciro.” *La finta pazza*. 1.3 & II. 3,7 (Milesi 210). The ambassadors are shown the women of the city. Diomedes: *O Bellissima scena, o nobili choro di Donzelle!* “O beautiful scene, o noble chorus

In scene 5, a Royal Courtyard appears lined with statues and columns decorated in bronze. For this change, Bissacioni writes “*Et in un batter d’occhi sparì la scena marittima e si cagiò in un bellissimo e ben regolato cortile ripieno di logge e statue di bronzo, nel cui prospetto vedevasi un arco, ad uso de’ trionfali, la protat del quale era coperta d’una cortina di nobile broccato d’oro,*” (“And in the blink of an eye you saw the maritime scene that became a beautiful and well-regulated courtyard filled with loggias and bronze statues, in whose façade you could see an arch used for triumphal[s], the door of which was covered with a curtain of noble brocade of gold,”; 287). A golden curtain conceals the women working in the gynoeceium.

The ambassadors now arrive with an entourage of soldiers. Some are costumed in the red armour and silver helmets indicating they are with Diomedes while Ulysses’ soldiers wear green, red, and gold. Three pages arrive costumed in green decorated with gold flowers (Zanon 276). The ambassadors remark that they would like to see the royal maidens of the city for whom they have brought gifts. King Licomedes accordingly orders that the curtain be raised to reveal the women. The group includes Achilles dressed as a woman in his green gown. Deidamia’s two pages are dressed in gold and red velvet fur (Zanon 276). The Eunuch wears a colourful satin robe and matching beret, and the Nurse wears a crimson

coloured Greek damask, and Deidamia's two sisters and bridesmaids are all dressed in red and green robes decorated with gold arabesques (Ruini 289).

Bisaccioni describes what is seen behind the women, "*Nel mezzo, in prospettiva, si vedeva una porta reale che dava l'adito all'occhio di mirare quattro stanze, l'una dentro l'altra, che tutte aperte mostravano in lontananza un giardino, con arte così meravigliosa accomodato e compartivi i lumi che dimostrava una distanza di più miglia*" ("In the middle, in perspective, we saw a royal door that led the eye to see four rooms, one inside the other, which all open in the distance showing a garden, with wonderfully arranged art and the lights made it seem miles away"; 289). The Eunuch, Deidamia, and Achilles, unaware that they are being observed, sing a trio and dance while the King and Ambassadors comment on the scene before them. Ulysses, suspecting that Achilles is hiding with the women, conceals



Fig. 25. Giacomo Torelli, "Gran Piazza della città Sciro," *La finta* (Milesi, 210). Deidamia is pictured being chained and taken away by the guards at bottom left.

a dagger in with a batch of fabrics meant for the women. He is certain that when Achilles sees the knife, he will immediately take it for himself. After the dance, the Ambassadors offer their gifts, and as predicted, Achilles seizes the dagger. His male identity is revealed, and he is invited to join the fight in Troy.

The second act opens with the Grand Piazza of Sciro. Jupiter, on an eagle with Victory to his left, is seen in the sky above. Jupiter has decided to fly down and comfort Deidamia. He also sends Victory to

her. According to Bisaccioni, Victory flies quickly to the right side of the stage, makes an ellipsis, then flies forward to the audience and stops within ten feet of them, sings four verses, flies away again and disappears magically into the clouds (Ruini, 290). Bisaccioni comments that nothing like it had been seen before in the theatre (291). In the last scenes of the act, Deidamia learns there will be a musical comedy put on to entertain the Ambassadors and declares they could use her expertise with the set and singing. She then feigns madness and the chorus of buffoons, costumed in brightly coloured clothes, dances. The Nurse complains disapprovingly to the Eunuch that she can't believe that the court puts up with the clowns' effrontery. Licomedes enters the scene and, seeing Deidamia raving about, orders his soldiers to take her to the Royal Garden to be held there in chains. On her portrayal of madness, one anonymous author of the long poem titled *ABOZZO DI VERACI LODI ALLA SIGNORA ANNA RENZI Romana cantatrice singolare Idilio d'incerto Autore* (SKETCH OF TRUE PRAISE TO THE LADY ANNA RENZI Roman singer singular Idol of an unknown Author) wrote:

In Deidamia cangiata, D' Acchille innamorata, E dai gesti amorosi, L'alma nostra rapita, Come a suo proprio centro, A te volò, e ..., con mente devota, Simolacro votivo il cor ti porse. Al tuo leggiadro moto, Si mossero incessanti, Come piccioli il Cieli, i nostri affetti, Così, che tutti Amanti, Di te, cara diletta, ... Sembravano esser teco anco insensati. Questa Cittade angusta, Al tuo valor, à cui, Per contenerlo è brevè giro il Mondo, Si vedeva d'intorno, E riempita, e calcata, Per ammirar in te doni divini, Che'l fattor di natura/ In te sola rinchiuse, E con benigna mano in te profuse. Così volgendo gl'occhi, Al tuo gentilaspetto, E prestando l'orecchie, All'armoniche tue voci celesti, S'udi, si vide; oh Dio! Violenza soave, Che opprime, e non offende, ... che incatena, E al fin voce canora, ... alletta e prega, Ma con legami d'or annoda, e lega. Se con duol simulato, Con tue lagrime finte, I lucidi zaffiri, De gl'occhi tuoi turbando, Tra hevi all'hor d'altrui pianti veraci, Co'i mentiti sospiri, ... Volesti ancor, volesti, ... Soggiogasti l'orgoglio, Di chi già al tuo valor credea uguagliarsi, Poiche precipitarsi, Nel fondo dell'oblio si vide all'hora, Al paragon di te voce canora. Quanti sconuoglimenti, V' animi, e di pensari, Quante rovine, e quante, Si videro sortir sol per haverti; Che di se stessi incerti/ Rimasero, e confusi, Che nel Teatro loro, Non

*hebbèr la beltà del tuo Tesoro, con maniere ornate, Per contraponer anco, All'insana saviezza, A
 quel attion, che di anzi, Da per spicace ingegno era composta, ... Con giar è metro, e stile,
 Saggia pur ti fingesti, Onde pensar ben puoi, Che sè la tua modestia, Mentre da manto insano
 era coperta, Qual offuscato lume, O qual sol, che frà nubi arda, e sfavilla, ... Nelle tue guancie
 vidi, In superbir frà i gigli, Quelle vermiglie rose, Ove sono d' Amor le gratie as cose (In
 Deidamia singing, lover of Achilles, You fooled yourself ... And with lovely gestures You
 kidnapped our souls, As if from its own centre, To you flew, and ... With devoted mind, the heart
 handed you a simulated votive. And your graceful motions, Ceaselessly moved, Our affections,
 like the heavens, Thus, that all Lovers, Of you, dear beloved, ... Even they seemed to be
 senselessly with you. This cramped city, Contains your valour, of which I travelled the world, To
 admire your divine gifts, That factor of nature Is shut up in you alone, And with benign hand you
 lavish it. So turning his eyes, To your kind aspect, And lending his ears, To the harmonious
 heavenly voice, Listening, he saw himself; Oh God! Gentle violence, Which oppresses, and does
 not offend, ... who in chains, with a singing voice, ... entices and prays, But with bonds of gold,
 is tied. With simulated pain, In your fake tears, The shiny sapphires of your disturbed eyes,
 Caused others to cry, With your false sighs ... You subjugated the pride Of those who already
 believed in your equal valour. Since having rushed to the depths of oblivion at the hour of your
 singing. How many discomforts Of spirit, and thought, How many ruined, and how many ...
 remained, confused That their Theater Holds the beauty of your Treasure, ... with ornate
 manners, ... [she] counters ... Insane wisdom, with action, which, ... made of
 ingenuity, ... With ... metre, and style, Wise while you pretended ... well you hid, ... your
 modesty, beneath an insane blanket, a clouded light, O what sun, which among clouds burns, and
 sparkles, whose light you scattered, and spread; ... In your cheeks I saw, Superb between the
 lilies, Those little pink roses, Where the graces of love are ...; *Le Glorie* 41-6) (See Appendix C)*

This writer's sexually charged poem invites us in to experience Renzi in performance detailing gesture,
 movement, voice, physical beauty. She "subjugated" her awed audience and "kidnapped" their "souls"

with the expertise that “ruined” their pride and brought them to see themselves. The following author signed The Academic Vigilante. C, explains that while Torelli’s scenes transfixed the viewer, Renzi’s sensational voice exceeded even the splendour of the set with the “subtle accents” of her “legendary song.” Vigilante’s commentary is thus:

Fisse vidi io le spettatrici genti, D'un' ingegnier maestro al dotto vanto, Quando per forza di fatale incanto, Furo al moto le macchine impotenti, Ma poi ch'articular soavi accenti, Anna, s'udi dal tuo leggiadro canto, Cadè disfatto ogni difetto, e intanto, Le delitie del Ciel furon presenti, ... Musica intelligenza, i Cieli ancora. (The spectating people gaze fixedly, About the engineering master the learned boast, When by force of fatal enchantment, Driven by the motion of impotent machines. But then, when you utter subtle accents, Anna heard from your legendary song, every defect was destroyed, and meanwhile, the delights of Heaven were present, ... Musical intelligence, that stills the Heavens. ; 17)

These first-hand accounts attest to just how powerfully Renzi moved them with sensational and moving sound and vision of her performing in *La finta pazza*.



Fig. 28. Giacomo Torelli, “Inferno,” *Venere gelosa* (1643) (Milesi, 127).

While the above depiction is from *Venere gelosa*, it was likely repurposed for the Inferno set that appears in Act 3 in *La finta pazza*. In the scene, Tetide, Achilles’ mother, begs Pluto to intervene and to prevent Achilles from going to Troy. Charon scolds her telling her that for the good of the country Achilles must go. Bisaccioni describes the scene thus, “vedevasi un orso ... e dagli occhi uscirne fuoco; qua vedevasi ...

una spaventosa caverna piena di fiamme al naturale imitate dalla pittura (“we saw a bear ... and fire came out of its eyes; here we saw ... a frightful cave full of natural flames imitated by painting”; qtd. in Ruini 292). The set transforms from Hell into a Royal Garden. About this scene, Bisaccioni writes,

il giardino reale così ben regolato e delizioso che gareggiavano l'Architettura, la Scultura e ... Flora. V'erano fontane, spalliere e vòlta di verzure e, nell'ultima e più lontana parte, un



Fig. 31. Giacomo Torelli “Giordano della regia corte di Sciro” *La finta* (Milesi 211). *Deidamia is seen chained at the base of the lifelike caryatid as parrots fly above.*

bellissimo et ammirabile palazzo, ... pareva a' spettatori che questa scena superasse tutte l'altre (the royal garden so well regulated and delightful that architecture, sculpture and flora competed. There were fountains, espaliers and walls full of greenery and, in the last and most distant part, a beautiful and admirable palace ... it seemed to the spectators that this scene surpassed all others; 293)

The caryatides seem alive and as if commenting on the drama. It is clear in these scenes how Torelli integrated characters into the scenery, while the scenery itself became a sort of live character moving, reacting, and interacting with them.

Another encomiastic poem signed with only F.M. again extols Renzi's effect on the witnesses to her performance again indicating how much more her singing moves people than even the "regal" set:

Celebre Cantatrice di Roma, rappresentante in Venetia. LA FINTA PAZZA, Sù le regie Scene del Teatro Novissimo. Ben del Tebro à ragion lasci l'arene, Per bear d'Adria le famose sponde, ... E' dato in sorte il riscettar Sirene. Ecco il tuo piè fa insuperbir le Scene, Nettare à detti tuoi l'aria diffonde, ... E ... d'oblio gli altri stupori, Ch'oprar co' i mostri i favolosi Orfei. Che son del cantar tuo glorie maggiori (Celebrated Singer of Rome, representing in Venezia. In *La Finta Pazza*, In the regal Scenes of the *Novissimo* Theater. Goodness of the Tebro you cause reason to leave the arena, To the famous shores of the Adria, ... The ... Siren is given to Fate. Behold, your foot improves the Scenes, Nectar of your airs spread, ... obliterating other amazements, That may be seen with the monsters of the fabulous Orfeo, Who sing of your greatest glories.; *Le Glorie* 14)

In the final two scenes, constantly dividing clouds descend, filling the stage from above are brightly illuminated with candles set all about them. A singing celestial choir appears in the sky, and they gather up Deidamia's chains and hang them up among the twinkling stars (Strozzi 21). About this Bisaccioni writes,

nubi ... con tanta industria illuminate che mai più belle furono quelle della naturale aurora o del cadente giorno; e, se fossero vere le chimere de' poeti, potrebbesi dire che Giunone, la dea dell'aria, avesse avuta invidia a così bella vista e si fosse confessata vinta dall'arte Nel mezzo di questa macchina grande e per meraviglia e per corpo si vide il coro ... che, più che mai soavemente accordando le voci alle sinfonie de' musici instrumenti si rispondevano con altre menti che in quattro altri sfondri si vedevano celeste, ... tirava in alto soavemente le catene (the clouds ... were lit with such industry, that never better were those of the natural dawn, or of the drooping day, and if the chimeras of the poets were true they could say, that Juno, Goddess of the air, envied the beautiful sight, and confessed herself defeated by art in the midst of this great Machine, and out of wonder, we saw the Chorus ... which more than ever soothingly tuned their voices to the symphonies of instrumental musicians, were answered with other [choruses] that

were seen in four other openings meanwhile the celestial [beings] ... gently pulled the chains up.;
294)

Finally, Licomedes, Deidamia, and the entire cast arrive to celebrate her marriage to Achilles. Deidamia is dressed in a crimson satin gown embellished with golden flowers (294). Bisaccioni remarks that the spectators – dumbfounded by what they had experienced – “*di tante vaghezze imbevuto, partisse con l'animo da nuove meraviglie circondato, onde avesse da discorrere con se stesso nella rimembranza di tante cose e con gli amici da discorrere a chi pi`u si dovesse di pregio: alla favola, alla musica, al pittore o all'ingenero ... Ma non terminò il desiderio nel popolo di rivederla, onde, quante volte fu replicata, altrettante fu di ... gente ripieno il luogo*” (“departed surrounded by the soul of new wonders, [so that] one had to talk with himself in order to remember all the many things and to talk with friends about what was more valuable: the story, the music, the painter or the action ... But that did not stop the peoples’ desire to see it again ... how many times was it replicated, so many ... [with] people filling the place”; 293-4).

Torelli’s metamorphosing sets were brought to life with candles or torches set into revolving lighting units secured onto large beams fixed to the floor so the lights could be directed, and the light intensity could be dimmed or brightened, as needed (Zanon 283). The Baroque effect of *chiaroscuro* was emphasized with the interplay of light and shadow creating dramatic contrasts and 3-D effects. The flickering candlelight must have imbued the figures with a glow of liveness. All of this intertwined with the elliptical and diagonal flights of gods, birds, and the opening dragon timed with the rhythmic movement of the set cast a mesmerizing spell. The scene paintings in perspective lead the eye to a vanishing point offering an opportunity to imagine a vision of what might come.

The extravagant expense of *La finta pazza* likely prompted the repurposing of sets and costumes at *Novissimo*. Indeed, as costumes were meant to indicate types like soldiers, gods, or royalty rather than



Fig. 34. Giacomo Torelli. Giovanni Giorgi (painter) “Porto della Citta,” *Bellerofonte* (Milesi 101).

individual characters, they could be modified for different shows (Zanon 278). Sets, too, as indicated above, were modified and reused. In all, *La Deidamia* (1644) used twelve sets with repurposed painted flats from *La finta pazza* (1641), *Bellerofonte* (1642), and *Venere gelosa* (1643).

To offer a sense of Torelli’s scenes, their movement, and Renzi’s interaction with them, I present three scenes recycled from previous shows for *Deidamia*. In 1642 Giulio del Colle, who witnessed the opening scene of *Bellerofonte* wrote: “I saw [Neptune] rise from the sea in the model of the City of Venetia so exquisitely and vividly formed, that each one confessed it to be an effort of art: it deceived the eye with the Piazza and the natural public buildings in it, [they] enjoyed every transformation more and more almost forgetting what was fake and what was real ...” (qtd. in Nicola Mangini, *I Teatri Venezia* 65). Colle’s description gives us a good sense of the awe that the scenery inspired.



Fig. 37. Giacomo Torelli, Marco Boschini (painter) "Il Porto di Rodi" Deidamia Featuring the Colossus of Rhodes. Prologue. (Milesi 142).

The opening scenography for *Deidamia* depicts the Port of Rhodes with the statue of Elio at the entrance protecting the city. This scene was repurposed from the opening scene of *Bellerofonte* seen above. Here, blue revolving cylinders again simulate waves. Beneath Elio's left leg is the figure of the goddess Teti depicted floating on a shell, and to the right is the goddess Fortune holding a wheel as Cupid flies above with bow and arrow. After singing the Prologue, Cupid disappears into the clouds, Teti sinks down into the water, and Fortuna glides off stage across the waves (Zanon 253).

An anonymous author wrote of Renzi's portrayal in this drama: "*Gesti, aspetto, maniere, e voce hai grata; E se fingi la stolta, O la saggia, o la semplice, ò l'irata, Haver Anna dimostrati Arte, senno, valore, e gratia molta; Mà divenuta Ergindo, a gli occhi nostri, D' Ergindo piacerà/ Più la maschia belta; Fingiti Ergindo, ò Deidamia, se brami, Che Demetrio più t' ami.*" ("You have graceful Gestures, looks, manners, and voice; And if you pretend to be foolish, Or wise, or simple, or wrathful, Anna has demonstrated Art, sense, value, and much grace; Having become Ergindo, before our eyes, Then we like

even more the beautiful male Ergindo; Pretend to be Ergindo, or Deidamia, if you crave, May you love Demetrio more.”; *Le Glorie* 12).



Fig. 40. Giacomo Torelli, Rendering by Marco Boschini “Valle Solitaria,” *Deidamia*. I.1-4 Deidamia stands on the left wearing a white fur fringed hat and a long red tunic. Deidamia and Shepherd. (Milesi 143).

The “*Deliziosa boschereccia*” by Marco Boschini is from *Venere Gelosa* and was repurposed for the “*Valle Solitaria*” of *Deidamia* (Biggi, *Deidamia* 139). The colour prints featured are the engraver’s renditions, so they may not reflect the colours employed by original scene painters. *Deidamia* was remounted in 1647 as the final opera produced in *Novissimo*.



Fig. 43. Giacomo Torelli, Marco Boschini, “Cortile con Villa” I, 1-3. *Deidamia* (Milesi 146).

With Torelli’s designs, inanimate sculptures were imbued with human features seeming to express human emotion as they viewed the scene like onstage spectators. The production was multilayered, and the moving sets presented a virtual reality of three dimensions as the music – and extra-

musical – sounds added another sensual dimension. Rather than serving only as a backdrop or simply providing an atmosphere or setting, the set became a character moving with music, actions, and the narrative of the story. The “anachronism” of the set – featuring local architectural spaces in the city – hybridized time periods as the recycling of sets and costumes created familiarity to audience members returning to different productions.

Further bringing the scenic painting alive were Torelli’s matching and dazzling costume designs coordinated to the luminous scenery. All was enveloped in the behavioural vortex of a heterogenous and colourfully costumed Carnival audience linking the ecology of performance with site. On this, as Pearson and Shanks contend, “It is the ecology of performance – that matrix of environment, people and events and the narratives generated – which may represent its basic descriptive and analytical unit ... site is as much a temporal as spatial concept ... scenography works with the multidimensional temporality of memory, event and narrative” (*Theatre* 55). Torelli’s technological innovation afforded audiences a totally new experience of time, dimension, and space. In the newly built theatre space, the virtuosic artistic productions of painter, composer, librettist, scenic architect, costumer, singer, theatre architect, and orchestra generated a sensorium of affective experience replete with visual stimulation and resonant energies. The mixture heightened awareness and sensual/emotional pleasure, lighting up brains and stimulating the bodies of those collectively engrossed in the rhapsodic friction.

Early modern theatre spaces were built as “sonic instruments,” extending “actor’s mouths” where sound, especially that of operatic singers, floods the space and enveloping the listener (Blessner and Salter 98). In the “aural architecture” of commercial theatre, music became a consumable product for sale to the public (102). For Blessner and Salter, “aural architecture” constitutes spaces where universal physical acoustic principals apply, but in musical spaces, “the aural architects,” namely, the musicians, conductors, composers, and the audience uniquely dictate its values (128). Enclosed acoustic spaces are resonance chambers with surfaces that reflect and produce resonant sound particles that touch bodies which likewise generate refracting sound (134). There, singers actively emit energy in concert with passive resonators like wood that shape “the spectral timbre” and “temporal spreading,” fusing performance and listening

spaces into one (145). The listener is involved in a disorienting “sound generation process” where the air mass holds and conducts sonic energy (146). The small horseshoe-shaped space of *Novissimo* made sung text clear with sound waves travelling short distances to listeners near to the source. The orchestral ensemble for both *La finta pazza* and *La Deidamia*, as with all of the Cavalli operas examined here, was the size of a ten-piece chamber ensemble, so quite small. The instruments employed were relatively quiet compared with today’s instruments because the violins, harps, and theorboes often took catgut strings. Even when metal strings are used for harpsichords, they have no sustaining pedals, so the sound carries for a short duration and distance. This rendered a comparatively delicate sound in comparison to the one-hundred-piece opera orchestra with a brass section and percussion of today’s grand opera houses, for instance.

In Venetian opera, the singer, as the primary instrument, was not overwhelmed by the orchestra. The singer led the musical tempo while the composer “conducted” and performed at the harpsichord or other instrument. As the small, tightly coordinated ensemble centred their focus on the singer, their relationship was intimately bound. Therefore, when general attention was turned to the stage, the musical ensemble and the dynamism of its harmonies and pulsating rhythms in close proximity to the stage was viscerally palpable to audiences. The mutual intimacy of the acoustic space makes audiences and performers intimately aware of other sounding-presences in the room, creating a sonic-social dynamic. Taken together, the elucidation of these multifarious elements nears us physio-imaginatively to the sensual experience of performance events at *Novissimo*. The close quarters of the acoustic space, filled to the brim with participants during the performance event, added layers of sound-absorbing material, movement, and extra-musical noise to it. Many people worked in the theatre space. For the 1658 production of *Antioco* in Teatro San Cassiano, for example, there were thirty-eight extras, or *impiegati*, and six flying “putti,” along with dancers, singers, and members of the orchestra (Bianconi and Walker, *Production 225*). Painters, machinists, and tailors were also involved in opera production. Indeed, just by virtue of their personal participation and experiences with the opera, they too were affected by these performance events and most certainly spread word of them about the city.

While performing difference, the diva affected others. She enraptured and enveloped them with consumable/purchasable sound, bodily presence, and vision. She powerfully moved emotion, stirred endorphins and imaginations, aroused desire, and raised blood pressure with quickened heartbeats. In its temporal/durational aspect, music disorients listeners while inviting them to suspend “real” time – like disbelief – and immerse themselves into the experience. Operatic performance institutes a distorting temporal vortex of theatrical time, musical time, and “real” time. Music is durational, occurring in “sounding-ecosystems,” so, rather than seeing music only as notes on paper in mathematical series and hierarchical orders, it can be understood as a total “dynamic experience” (Hulse, “Thinking Musical” 31). Reducing music to abstract symbols on paper means that it is severed from the act and experience of expression and sensation. Sensation ties feeling to thought, and thought is tied to the realm of the virtual (31). For Deleuze, the virtual “literally saturates experience,” whereby “coalescences above raw duration (at the level of phrase, etc.) are also virtual; which is to say that these larger tone-formations are not structures or hierarchies but virtual *affects* – which cannot be thought or experienced without the actual sounds that summon and receive them” (qtd. in Hulse 36). The temporal back and forth of memory, sensation, and sound contains information about the socio-political effects engendered in the exchange of affective energies. This is important to the performance historian because sensual memories based in experiential knowledge help us to trace what of that past resonates today, what has changed, and why. Music is hybrid and intertemporal too.

For Deleuze, time itself is hybrid in its ontology, as “a passing present which is always open, destabilized, in flux, and in-process” where musical sound, without temporal or spatial limits, describes the present (qtd. in Hulse 39). Nancy furthermore regards “the sonorous present” as “the result of space-time,” as it spreads out and even opens up new spaces of its own (13). Listening happens simultaneously with the “sonorous event,” so when I listen, I enter into the sonorous space of the event while absorbing it as it opens spaces inside of me (13). He further submits that the ““living present”” constitutes resonance itself as a “resonance of instances,” occurring together in the reverberant sound within sound and instant within sonorous instant (19). The resonance of performance resides multi-temporally in such instances.

Audience responses and descriptions of the performance space and its occupants in the sonorous event of *Deidamia*, for example, offer a way into those sonorous instances.

Hulse conveys Deleuze's interest in "how multiple events, both past and yet to come, constitute coextensive dimensions of a present becoming" (37). Germane to this idea is the nomadic hybridity of itinerant operatic troupes as their movement and travels aligned and crisscrossed with the meandering commedia dell'arte troupes. At the same time, stock characters and other overlapping commedia dell'arte elements in *La finta pazza* included the Nurse and the Captain of the Guard and the Buffoons, all employed with libidinal humor, mockery of the gods and scatological allusions. A year before *La finta pazza* opened, Monteverdi's *Arianna* was revived at the *Teatro San Moisè* in 1640 (Ossi 250). As I have indicated, *Arianna*, the role that commedia dell'arte artist Virginia Ramponi created, is imbued with the traces of her performance that influenced Monteverdi's construction of the operatic lament that Cavalli later expanded. The *Arianna* revival coincided with Monteverdi's production of *Il ritorno di Ulisse in patria* that same season, and in 1643, Renzi performed Ottavia in his final opera *L'incoronazione di Poppea*. Additionally, the innamorate characters of Deidamia and Achilles embody the Incognito taste for irreverent humor, sexual innuendo, and transvestite disguise while skirting around and about the edges of bi- and homosexuality.

The temporal and genre morphology encompasses a fluid drift at the borders of genres where styles mix and borrow, in this case, at the interstice between commedia dell'arte and *dramma per musica*. The stock comic and lower-class characters, furthermore, such as "princely gardeners," servants, warriors, old men, the comic old woman, and the hermaphrodite are all featured in early Venetian opera (327-29). Indeed, Guglielmina Tieri provides the following quote from Strozzi in his libretto for *La Delia* (1639), where he explains his inclusion of a hermaphrodite character: "I introduced here ... the playful Hermaphrodite, which between the severity of the Tragic and the comic face, stands out very well in our scenes" ("Il Teatro Novissimo" 568). Tieri also mentions the characters Diomedes, the Eunuch, Deidamia's Nurse, and the court musician as comic stock characters in *La finta pazza* (1641), with roots lying in the "humanist" theatrical tradition of the sixteenth century (568).

From another perspective, in a letter to his brother Grand Duke Ferdinand of 1641, Prince Mattias referred to *La finta pazza* as a “commedia” (570). Indeed, the opera libretto for the first Venetian opera *Andromeda* (1639) was referred to as a “commedia” and libretti continued to be referred to in this way for two more decades (Selfridge-Field 92). As well, the earliest opera performers were routinely referred to as “comici” in terminology demonstrating how the terms used to describe the two genres were practically interchangeable at this early stage. The new *dramma per musica* enfolded older traditions of madrigal, comic mad scenes, warrior women, cross-dressing, and dance within porous boundaries as it introduced a new tradition. In “*process, connection, and improvisation,*” *commedia dell’arte* practices wafted across the socio-economic shift to the novel operatic genre as it drifted off into new musical and dramatic territories (Hulse 48, italics original). Hybrid performance is a viable place to discern the becoming of commercial opera and, with Renzi’s performance, after Andreini and Ramponi, a glimmer of women’s agency. *Novissimo*’s performance space contained and functioned as a liminal, sounding ecosystem and as a fertile ecology of becomings, both musical, architectural, and social (93).

Music theorists have devised intricate systems for understanding, categorizing, and conceptualizing musical sounds. Thinking of music in ways other than as systematized tone combinations and musical sounds reveals “blind spots that call for deeper and more creative thinking” (Hulse 49). To re-enliven some possible “blind spots” missing in the historical record of the diva in early modern performance, I must “capture a multisensory dimensionality and materiality (multiplicity) that cannot be reduced and from which new sounds (and ideas) emerge” (Kielian-Gilbert 221). Leppert, too, substantiates that music in performance combines sound and sight and that, absent recording technology, this is the only way to really understand music of the past (*The Sight* 64). This is what the analytical framework of performativity reveals as it complements conventional music theoretical approaches.

In examining socio-physical theatrical spaces, Gay McAuley stresses, “[W]hatever notions of belief or disbelief prevail among the spectators, theatre is an activity” separated from everyday life (*Space* 39). To contextualize this liminality, she suggests that the theatre building itself frames off outside activity, transforming “actions from ‘unmarked’ to ‘marked’” (39). McAuley draws on Erving Goffman’s

notion that “in many social situations multiple frames may be operating simultaneously (frames within frames)” (39). Thus, like musical keys, social behaviours, already keyed to a “primary framework,” are dynamically adjusted to pattern an activity but are seen and heard by participants to be something quite different causing cognitive dissonances enriched by musical dissonance (39). This idea is germane to my thesis. Renzi embodied social change enabled by the commercial aspect of, and contained within, the bounds of *Novissimo* theatre, in the local space of the *Campo Giovanni e Paolo*, situated within Venice’s geographic and architectural terrain. She did so as a result of the cultural celebrity status she achieved but allowed only during the marked off Carnevale time. The marking out of her liminal musically and socially keyed performance was overlapped and interlaced with the outside frame of carnival occurring in narrow passageways between marble Renaissance *palazzi* and thronging *piazze* surrounded by lapping canals filled with ships, boats, and gondolas bumping and moving with the water’s motion. The officially sanctioned cross-dressed and disguised revelers encroached on the ludic theatrical space with the cross-dressed and disguised performers framed by the proscenium arch and by the stage paintings and machinery.

As alluded to in chapter I, Venetian audiences interacted audibly with each other and with the performers. Their activities included vending, card playing, diplomatic exchange, interactions with prostitutes, and gun and sword fights – all occurring as interconnected elements of the performance event. In this way, external atmosphere and behaviours spilled into the space of the theatre. Thinking about *Novissimo* within its socio-cultural maelstrom and urban setting at the space-time of Venetian Carnevale entails imaginatively evoking shifts in tactical and proxemic interaction having to do with surfaces, light and hue, smells, temperature, how movements are bounded and the difference in vocal emissions both outside and in the space (Pearson and Shanks 125). I envisage *Novissimo*’s U-shaped, chamber-sized interior enfolding and facilitating audience members’ proximity, and their sightlines to each other and the stage, with performers brought into close, haptic proximity to them. The performance space contained bodily smells, dripping wax and candle smoke, tobacco smoke, burning talc, perfume, food, wine, wood, paint, and more, intermingling with audience laughter, coughing, card shuffling, mumbling, whispering,

or shouting in response to each other and the dramatic performance. Perhaps the mechanisms of Torelli's stage machines were discernable in their sounds, smells, and motions. The smells and sounds of lacquered wooden instruments strung with catgut and metal strings rubbed by horsehair bows vibrated out in distinct timbres, the clacking of wood and enamel keys, the motions of bowing and the plucking of strings. The whistling of stage crews during set changes. The dynamic synesthesia of differently classed and sexed bodies, sounds, smells, colours and the movements of human and machine intermingled to create the "sounding-ecosystem" of the theatrical space (Hulse 46).

In singing, human voices are often characterized as "dark" or "bright" along with tactile descriptors such as "velvety," "smooth," "rich," "rough," "thick" or "thin." In the noise of conversational vocalizations, as de Certeau insists, voices clamor, overrun, and "break[] up the field of statements" to become "a mumble that escapes the control of speakers and that violates the supposed division between speaking individuals" ("Vocal Utopias" 30). How much was "said" or "mumbled" in the "sounding ecosystem" and the sonic weave and waves of *Novissimo*? Audience activity did stop, however, to sense the impressive resonant vision and motion of the extraordinary diva. In the betweenness of performance, the diva composed herself by adjusting and fine-tuning her sound to the musical notation and the acoustic environment while directing her sonic energy to flow out to the receiving audience. Because she could not hear what her voice sounded like to others, she relied on their reactions to perceive how, and if, it "worked."

In the physics of sound, a rubbed atom's electrons cause friction that produces indestructible energy, transferred as vibrant sound molecules in waves interacting sympathetically with listener's eardrums (New Mexico Solar Energy). The New Mexico Solar Energy Association website characterizes sound waves as "shimmering air" (N M S E A). The affective force and "shimmering air" generated by professionally trained operatic singers is extraordinary. Moreover, as Parker and Abbate assert, "Vocal virtuosity is not just a matter of pure voice appealing directly to pure emotion ... Once singers are trained to overcome the limits of what was thought possible – in terms of pitch, speed, agility, power, endurance – they pass beyond what the audience can plausibly imagine itself capable of doing" (*A History* 51).

Renzi's trained voice was powerful. Historical descriptions of it and its impression on listeners nears us to the quality of her vocal print. Strozzi described Renzi's singing thus: "*Hà una lingua sciolta, una pronuntia suave, non affettata, non presta, una voce piena, sonora, non aspra, non roca, ne che ti offenda con la soverchia sottigliezza*" ("She has a flexible [fluent] tongue, a suave, unaffected pronunciation, with a full, sonorous voice neither harsh nor hoarse, nor does it offend with too much subtlety ..."; *Le Glorie* 9). Strozzi's description brings us closer in to understanding the sonic characteristics of Renzi's vocal quality, production, and delivery. While his account still leaves little tangible evidence with which to relive her actual sound, it expertly describes important characteristics on her integration of a reliable vocal technique providing effortless delivery marking her out as an impeccable artist.

Strozzi's details, combined with the knowledge that operatic singing is composed of supercharged sounding effort and will be directed with energetic propulsion to witnesses, draw us closer to the voice in its socially meaningful totality. This is because, even with conscious efforts to "suspend disbelief," something undeniably pleasurable and dangerously powerful, free, intelligent, and beautiful played outside of the dramatic text – even beyond Renzi's virtuosic control. Something ineffable and ungovernable sailed forth to entice and enter bodies, tearing through spatial frames at moments when the voice overflows or even nullifies the utterance of text. Indeed, as Henri Lefebvre contends, "Space is a social morphology: it is to lived experience what form itself is to the living organism, and just as intimately bound up with function and structure" (qtd. in McAuley, *Space* 41). McAuley aligns this thought to the idea that theatre spaces contain and contextualize performances for performers' and spectators' interpretations as places designated for the performance of theatre and is understood as such by the participants (41). The theatre space becomes "an active agent" by shaping what happens in it as a continuously evolving and dynamic "social entity" (41). The social spheres of theatre and city reciprocate in an affectual sensology; so, whether the building's framework demarcates inside from outside or vice versa, the energetic force of affectivity fluidly breaches and departs the threshold with the people.

In the letters of Alfonso Antinori to Prince Mattias, to which I have referred, Antinori repeatedly uses the Italian word *sentire*, meaning “listening” but entailing both tactile sensation and hearing. And, as we know, audiences were so struck by the memory of Renzi’s shimmering performances in *Novissimo*, they returned in droves to re-*sentire* and *feel* her sound and presence in the dynamism of the spectacularly moving set. They anticipated the thrill of the event, aware that it would differ from the past event, and they anticipated proximity to the star performer all within the matrix of social interaction and the sounding theatre resonance chamber. In the “plane of immanence” of the performance event, the force of the voice is its energetic propulsion, the waves of which are absorbed by attending bodies (Deleuze, *Spinoza*). For Deleuze, as Jean-Godfroy Bidima interprets him, “force is ... *pure difference*,” and it is “the will to power” that frees the way for “the form of intensity” [author’s italics] (147). For Deleuze, “*intensity* is the means by which *musical art secures the renewed creation of affects*” [author’s italics] (148). Applied to the live diva, she performed “*a flux of matter*” as intensity, as vibrating radiance – or radiating matter – or even “divine rays” – that invades her audiences’ corpo-realities and of which they might be aware [author’s italics] (148). Hence, the diva’s will to achieve and entertain powered an intensity – as a result of its resonant affective force – that moved others who osmosed her sound and vision that some authors of the encomium poems describe. Her performance of the warrior woman or the madwoman aroused a confusion of sound, signals, and feelings to decipher and interpret. This is, in part, because the first operatic divas resonantly outperformed and resisted the normative status of women in Venetian society.

Men may have projected and mapped out their fears while women might have projected and mapped out their hopes and dreams onto the diva’s body. Renzi was seen as an object of sexual desire, but she also exuded intelligence, will power, acting prowess, and ravishing sound. This added extra layers of complexity to decipher in her iteration as a figure of public celebrity. The diva’s body exemplified an alternate realm of possibility for women and men. It offered men the possibility of relating to and perceiving women in new ways beyond as sexual objects subservient to them. In a patriarchal system built to keep women contained and under male control, it could hold out the option for men to liberate

themselves from the burden of maintaining the oppressive system and even, perhaps, to reconcile their differences with the women in their lives. Misogyny dies hard as does the will to conquer it and win freedom from patriarchal injustice. The hateful fear that misogyny perpetrates suggests a terrible conclusion of sadistic terror and abuse to its victims. Much as the institutionalized system of slavery has proved to do. The spectre of the independent woman presented the threat of rendering irrelevant men's purpose in the system of patriarchal privilege.

Otherwise, if Anna Renzi performed chaste, virtuous behaviours in her reserved observations of others, in her off-stage life, as Strozzi described, did silently privileging men's rhetorical eloquence serve her well by making them feel comfortable in and with her off-stage presence? But what happened when she embodied and performed the eloquent emblem, or dramatic role? What did the character's eloquence, enacted and embodied by the great diva, say? What did the virtuosic musical sounds and physical movements, gestures, expressions, and affects say or do for women or for the diva herself? Perhaps even, in the virtual realm of possibility, these elements held out multiple implications regarding the potential for freedom, and the exercise of free will, that such agency could bring to their lives. If Renzi did not have the privilege, or the inclination, to openly express herself in public discourse, she had, nonetheless, won the right to sing and act eloquently in public and for good pay.

If the dramatic role of cross-dressed, mad, or warrior woman is ultimately curtailed to fit patriarchal imperatives like silence, chastity, and subservience to male characters (whether or not the male roles were curtailed by "weak," "feminine" characteristics) how might the independent professional singer have counteracted that curtailment? The character trait for the dramatic role as *femme fatale* or sex object was something that wrought keen audience fascination. But what happened when the singer's capable skills as independent *virtuosa* and entrepreneur surpassed this one aspect? If she was sexy, there was something in it for men (and even some women). But, did her added capacities amplify the misogynist's terror of losing his social entitlement in his control over women, over society, the means of production, and economic gain, to even invert the structure of power?

In the flux of radiant performance, Renzi invented and adjusted her sound and movements differently in each instance of performance – even as it was part of an inherited genealogy of performance – for a live audience. I have tried to enter with the reader and occupy the ludic liminal space to imaginatively feel and co-experience the affective performance event within the Spinozan “immanent plane.” The diva was a nomadic sound source filled with the joy of personal power empowered, and powerful enough, to profoundly move her public. Her intense sonic emissions are apprehend-able nomads. The question remains: what happens to the diva’s energy when it enters audience members’ bodies? Does it become a trace or influential impression working in their memories to affect thinking, consciously or not, by stirring emotions and bodies? What happens to energy when it flows through bodies and is stored as – or is transformed into – thought and memory? This intensive social force is part of the diva’s work needed to round out our knowledge of her social significance.

The energetic force of the diva’s sonic emissions, unlike external instruments, is channeled and directed through her body’s fleshy apparatus as a resonance chamber carrying waves of sound partials containing her unique timbre and tone colour out to receiving bodies (Nancy 31). Therefore, Renzi’s sound and voice were “of her” and carried off something significant “of her” as the “body and soul of someone new and unique” to invade others in the resonant interstice of Other and self (18). Ineffable intensity lies in the in-between where creative force and sound are unleashed while connecting and dividing separate “points,” where musical sounds wander and de-territorialize (Bidimi 158). The after-effects of performance and its reception regarding attitudes about women can be unpacked and reconstructed. It is possible to create a topography of the terrain of lived emotion, movement, visual reception, and the emission of sound both as musically notated and as extra-verbal communication. Music, like iconography and printed writing, is a kind of temporal record of the sounds that might be performed at a moment in time. And in unedited Venetian “performance” scores, something of the performer, too, for whom they were composed and adjusted, remains.

That Renzi pioneered the operatic stage career for women is no small achievement. Her Venetian début performing feigned female madness in the ludic space of the operatic venue was novel. Novelty

demarcates modernity as new and different from the antique past. Part of the aesthetic mission of the Incogniti was to spread and enjoy the new. Indeed, *meraviglia* was an all-important concept of early modernity, as “novelty” in Emanuele Teasuro’s (1591-1675) estimation “causes wonder” (qtd. in Brosius, *Il suon* 229). Renzi embodied and sounded this new operatic *meraviglia*. As del Colle described her, she was the “true embodiment of music and unique marvel of the stage” (qtd. in Rosand, *Opera in* 101). Interlacing cultural realities and facts of the singers’ lives with the reception of magnificent virtuosic celebrity and readings of the roles and manuscript scores exposes what Elin Diamond calls “the radical textuality” and performative polyvalence of the singer’s body in its cultural context. This process fashions an assemblage in what Nick Nesbitt calls a “unit of ‘collective enunciation’ and of ‘incorporeal transformations attributed to bodies’” brought “into a “machinic assemblage” where bodies intermingle and react together (161). Furthermore, bodies operate not individually but “in cultural networks of action,” and, as a collection of psyches, society is constituted of the conscious – and subconscious – psyches actively forming concrete concepts while being troubled by ideas that unsettle the concrete even subconsciously (Tiainen 156).

Each time Renzi, in her uniqueness, performed Deidamia, night after night, she improvisationally adjusted her sounding body to conform to the conditions of the performance event including the weather, audience composition, sounds, and behaviours, technical changes with the set, and to other performers among other unpredictable things. She forcefully occupied the liminal theatre space and the shared psychic space between singer and receivers, bodies and air, bodies and culture in new and potent ways (Neumark 92-3). And following Deleuze, di Matteo posits that “the notion of *delirium* from the ideological trap-lines of the pathological, [takes] us on a foray ... which lies at the limit of language, where language shows itself to be capable of leading to a *barbaric point*, with the creation of a *foreign language within your own language*” [original italics] (93). So, as the character Deidamia in *La finta pazza* seemingly teeters about on the *barbaric point* of madness, she is brought under control with chains and dragged off stage sounding out a terrifying scream for help. Yet, Renzi’s foray into feigned delirium proved her formidable bodily/intellectual control of sound, movement, and expression to induce

exhilarating delirium playing out polyphonously in audiences' physiological and psychic corpo-realities touching and affectively moving them with the new and foreign language of her sounding body. What if, while mesmerizing them, she affectively infected or "touched" them monstrously with the terrifying freedom of her madness?

So too, when Renzi sang, she likely adhered to Strozzi's language – in fact, the recitative singing she performed was composed precisely to mimic the inflections of speech – more so than when singing an aria. As the anonymous author quoted in the last chapter confirms, "*Quei numeri sonori, Ben aggiustati al senso, Di quel soave, e natural discorso, Erano proferiti, Con melodia celeste, Dalla tua bocca; in cui, Le delitei d' Amor stanno riposte, Che diveniva a quel gentil concerto, Dolce ogn' amaro, e gioia ogni tormento*" ("Those musical sounds, Well-adjusted to the meaning, Of sweet, and natural speech, They were uttered, With heavenly melody, From your mouth; in which, The delights of love are placed ... Sweetened every bitterness, turned all torments into joys"; *Le Glorie* 46). Renzi's forceful somatic and sonic material as vocal particulates or partials was the residue of her "speaking [or singing] body" (Felman, *The Scandal* 109). Such residues work as the resonant intensity of forceful kinetic energy travelling out to touch – and be absorbed by – audience members' corporeal materiality. Her voice and the sensual power of her "auratic presence" in the "sensory milieu" of the theatrical space conveyed the truth of her self-sufficient capability like no other singer in her time and across time to us (Derrida, *Limited* 308).

Renzi's melodious performance penetrated witnesses' physiology in formidable and convincing ways with a sonorous sensual power that operated on socio-political levels (Leppert, *The Sight* 64). The "musical" gaze was sexually supercharged encoded simultaneously with pleasure and anxiety (64). As the sensations were pleasurable, witnesses willingly gave themselves over to the unknown consequences of her power, and it was accepted fact that women were deceitful and capricious or unstable by nature and so should never wield power, especially over men. Moreover, powerful impressions are integrated and assimilated by the collective cognitive imaginary to influence social habits. And when multiple individuals witnessed Renzi's powerful performance, it produced manifold cultural implications affecting

the collective cultural imaginary, tilting towards attitudinal change and societal transformation. With vibrant multiplicity, Renzi called into reality a new profession and social status for women with her reverberant body. These accomplishments were a result of her virtuosic vocal performance and acting prowess. They remain, as vivid sense-memory of the energetic electrical exchange traversing temporal barriers, gender boundaries, economic limitations in the continuum of lived experience, and in the historical record.

The idea that performing music and texts as a singer and/or actor arouses certain affects and that particular tonal combinations represent specific moods was commonly accepted in early modern practice. Bonnie Gordon writes that, in his musical experimentation, Cavalli's teacher Monteverdi – as indicated earlier – discovered a way to musically represent “contrary passions,” listing three “primary affections” as “anger, temperance, and humility” corresponding to high, medium, low voice ranges and expressed stylistically as *concitato*, *temperato*, and *molle*. (Monteverdi's 188). Apparently, the *concitato* style was thought the most cognitively challenging of the three to perform. Cavalli quite likely followed Monteverdi's thinking on these three main affects to continue the musical experimentation with the performance of his musical configurations. The sounding affects realized by configuring note combinations into specific patterns were to arouse emotional states in the crowd as the onstage characters felt and portrayed them (Whenham, *Duet* 37-8).

In experimenting with chordal homophony and progressions, early modern composers tested out how they could physiologically stir their audiences' passions. To do this, they combined tones in new ways to create “Harmonic clashes” so that, as John Whenham contends, “the use of augmented and diminished intervals [was] justified because, precisely, of their expressive powers” to move auditors (37-8). The British Royal Society “discussed the minutiae of the degrees and qualities of sadness capable of differentiation through music” so “once the choice of mood was made, then the music had to express every degree or aspect of that state of mind, the mood itself being represented by an initial phrase in the score ... it became the key to the text, not so much the servant” (138). Therefore, compiled chords and

harmonic progressions became associated with “certain states of mind” whereby “chromatic phrases” could evoke grief while ornamentation could “heighten the tension” with “marvelous intensity” (140).

The expectations of musical innovators and dramatic librettists were tried out empirically, and rewarded, or not, by the public’s reactions. The published encomiums to Renzi, for example, were proof positive that they were a success, and so reified their inclinations about affect and harmony. To realize the truth of their theoretical propositions, they had a public ready and willing to undergo experimentation and even to pay for it. And, while Venetian audiences may have submitted by opening themselves passively to receive the new sonorities heard in the performance event, the rules of reception and the “proper” affections that the new sonorities should arouse were yet to be codified. Thus, the previously accepted polyphonic sounding traditions of madrigal performance were learned along with socially acceptable habits of reception.

Rethinking and reconfiguring music and its ability to move the affections and/or human passions was a topic of great debate and philosophizing early modernity as was human agency. Thinkers reassessed what Church doctrine espoused concerning fixed categories of human capacity. And, as Amy Cimini relates, Baruch Spinoza (1632-77) surmised that “The world of sense data” could “no longer be properly called an ‘outer’ world because, in Spinoza’s ontology ... sensory data enjoys a *constitutive* relation to mental life” where “‘outer world’ becomes the mind’s proper object and the ideas the mind forms as a result of bodily affections ... constitute the mind itself” (“Gilles Deleuze” 134). Furthermore, the affections of the body – and the body’s ability to absorb sensual stimuli – in turn, stimulates the intellectual formation of ideas and concepts (134).

Whether the musical composer and the librettist’s intended effects took root or not, audiences experienced the affective force, sound and image of the diva in the inter-sensorial communication of the performance event. As Cimini maintains, Spinoza does not separate affect from the rational so that experiencing the affect of joy is always part and parcel of the acquisition and pursuit of intellectual “capacities” (135). The diva was a superbly capable conduit for joyfully intensive affective experience as she “turned all torments into joys” (*Le Glorie* 47). First-hand accounts and encomiums dedicated to Renzi

attest to her superior ability to instill *meraviglia* [marvels] in her audience, all while she “read” them and their reactions to her. Author G. B. confirms that Renzi was a “*Maga gentil, sì strano incanto Ch' à l'anime rapite... Sembra volar per meraviglia in Cielo*” (“Gentle sorcerous, [whose] strange enchantment sends rapt souls ... flying in wonder to Heaven”; *Le Glorie* 70). Strozzi’s description of Renzi’s vocal characteristics singing Ottavia in Monteverdi’s *Poppea* – again with the rhetoric of the humors – conveys that her voice “varies from the temperament of her chest and throat, for which ... much warmth is needed to expand the passages and enough humidity to soften it and make it tender” (qtd. in Gordon, *Monteverdi’s* 22). Gordon explains that ornamenting music was linked to the “feminine,” as being superfluous, and with sex (for men’s pleasure only) (31). She writes: “When women like Anna Renzi ... performed the fabulous passaggi, moving sighs, and other vocal flourishes ... they demonstrated a well-developed facility with body parts directly linked by medical practitioners to sex,” those parts being the throat and the vagina (31).

In the early modern medical imaginary, because women’s body temperatures usually run cooler than men’s, they were thought to be passive, requiring hotter, active men to heat them up for sexual reproduction. But, when women performed on stage, they heated themselves up and became active by “taking control of their bodies ... both raising their temperatures and manipulating their voices” in ways that “went against sexual and moral codes” (34-5). And, when a *virtuosa* ornamented notated music, she heated her audience up with “the unsettling force” of her voice (49). Renzi’s “soft song,” as author F.M. confirms, made “rock stiff” (“*Fatto rigido scoglio il molle canto*”; *Le Glorie* 13). When she opened her vocal apparatus to sing, she drew her audience into an intimate relationship with her sounding body. Moreover, her intensely sensitive, sensual, and sentient performance superseded the intended affective mood – or state – that the composer prescribed. In the thrall of the diva’s presence in performance, individuals could surrender themselves, allowing the resonant bodily sensations to wash over, into, and through them. So that, as F. M. verifies, “*La Sirena del Tebro un ma di pianto. Deh cadete ad ogn' hor lacrime belle, Che più mirar lo sguardo mio non vuole*” (“Siren of the Tebro and of tears ... Let all your tears fall beautifully, Till my gaze does not want to look anymore”; 14). In such moments, the

extraordinary performer produces and transmits rich knowledge and sensual experience, causing audiences to crave re-immersion again and again, as they did with Renzi.

Theatre goers thronged to experience the “ethics of joy” embodied and performed by the diva, and her joyful freedom re-performed as visceral thought and memory. Perhaps, it was even translated into new behaviour – or at least the possibility of new behaviour – out in the urban environs (Cimini 144). This connects with Nancy’s suggestion that meaning’s “*sense*” is to be discerned in resonance and resonance carries sensual meaning [original italics] (*Listening* 7). Hence, Renzi provided uncommonly intensive resonance that could arouse awareness, at some level, of individual “imperatives and affective impediments,” prompting auditors to translate arbitrarily constructed and incorporated cultural norms as “affective impediments” and perhaps discover the imperative to seek out joyful new freedoms in everyday life.

To know how Renzi’s corporeal resonance affected her audience, it is important to think about the inherent properties of sound and its effects on human bodies as experiences sensed and processed by the body in the context of the performance event. When we sense the presence of the sound source, we come into a relationship with it in the interactive space of the sound producer, the acoustic space, and the bodies who receive and respond to it. When the source is the human voice, moreover, the response is intensified when the person receiving it is moved to relate to the singer as a human source with whom they might empathize in the reciprocal process of human communication. As Tiainen articulates, because the *sound* of the voice is produced in the spaces and chambers of the body, it is “*spatial*” (“Corporeal Voices” 158). In the process of operatic singing, the physical spaces of the diaphragmatic area, the ribcage, chest cavity, and lungs coordinate so that the vibrations of the vocal folds radiate out to fill them and are modified in the facial resonators before travelling powerfully out to fill the theatre space while moving into other bodily cavities in ways not likely forgotten. The writer signed M.T. attests that “*Quel chiaro bel, ... avanza. Mentre d’ ANNA la voce, In Deidamia conversa, Discioglie à l’aure un musico passaggio, Divinissimo raggio, Benche racchiuso entro à un terreno velo*” (“That beautiful light, ...

advances. While ANNA's voice, In Deidamia converses, Teaching the aura in a musical passage, Most divine ray, Even enclosed within a dark veil"; *Le Glorie* 63).

Renzi's performances occurred in the sensorium of *Novissimo's* socio-theatrical space where sensate bodies mingled and merged together with the enveloping physical elements of the acoustic space (Tianen 158). There is no way of knowing the unique sonic colouring and timbre of Renzi's particular vocal print, but we do know the range and character of the pitches she sang, and the effect – or imprint – that her auditors describe. All of this prompts me to think and feel through how Renzi's resonant body as it interacted with the other bodies in the room and with the inanimate aspects of *Novissimo's* theatrical space might have affected them. Such imaginings include considering the space of the theatre and how the diva overturned a normative social hierarchy with her powerful position on stage while auditors' bodies were arranged to focus on her and absorb her sounding body. The bidirectional energetic exchange educes Freud's terms of "cathexis" and "innervation." Derrida defines cathexis as "the libidinal energy invested in some idea or person" working as "a psychic analog of an electrical charge" (*Limited* 267). Innervation is "the supply of nervous energy or ... nerve stimulation sent to a part" (267). The diva supplies innervating vibrational stimulation as the audience invests libidinally electric energy in the form of attention to her. For Derrida, "energy cannot be reduced" and, in fact, produces meaning by causing receivers to interpret the electric stimulation (268). Freud, according to Derrida, claims furthermore that the forceful electrical charge opens spaces up in "effraction," breaking through resistances, rupturing and irrupting, to become a route that violently inscribes a subconscious "memory trace," that continues on as "supplementary delay" (268). Derrida calls this trace "itinerant" as it forges pathways through the brain (269).

In attending to the performance of the diva, audience members direct their attention to her and the stage, to consciously block out any other thing. They allow themselves to receive her image, her presence in the room, and tactilely feel the physio-logical touch of her resonant sound as it affects their nervous systems. Based on the disorienting synesthesia described by several writers detailing their immersion in the performances in the *Novissimo* theatre, those experiences could very well have felt dreamlike. Within

the ecstatic synesthesia of the performance event, participants can lose touch with mundane life so that what the body seems to know as normal or true can be altered or even abandon. And when the sound is transmitted by the densely compounded and viscerally potent material of the extraordinary diva in riveting live performance, potential imaginative transpositions of previously accepted reality are manifold. Translating dreamlife is one of Freud's famous subjects. So, while the impressions they opened themselves up to certainly offered audiences "conscious memory" traces to ponder, "memory trace[s]" remained to work *itinerantly* as intensities breaking open neurological pathways, as *supplementary delay*, operating to reconstitute meaning through deferral, even in sleep and dreams, subsequent to the performance event. Music, like the commedia dell'arte and operatic performers, is itinerant and nomadic and can arouse suspicion to authority figures because, in its rootlessness, it resists the discipline of the state (Pearson and Shanks 149). Celebrity operatic performance operates as an extraordinary, anomalous energy source invading human bodies, thoughts, and dreams with surging electrical force beyond the control of church or state. Music migrates.

This involves the process of neural synapses where the "trace" as chemical/electric signal forces open new neural pathways in the neural network of the brain. Essentially, every new experience and event etched into memory alters the brain's neural circuitry and physically alters its material structure (Luke Mastin, "Neurons and Synapses"). Such traces are not lived in the present but, in this case, are the performance aftermath encoded in memory as image, sound, and physical sensation consolidated and stored and re-emerging when retrieved as the past brought into the present. This is so even if the individual who experienced the performance does not, or cannot, process into conscious/concrete thought all of its inherent meanings either during the performance event or afterwards. Simply put, whether the auditor/spectator forms a concrete opinion about the performance or not, the effect of the intensely energetic impression remains within qualitative/sensate memory as supplementary delay.

On a broader level, creative imagination morphs social relations as a liminal-ly mediating context both physically in what is present and what is not while temporally binding both past and future that participants must process physio-logically and in a shared social context to re-create the broader "cultural

imaginary” (Huppauf and Wolf, *Dynamics* 16). So, if the performance of the celebrity figure is multiplied many times, where multiple people experience the intensity of her corporeal performance, then a collective social awareness, including supplementary subconscious impressions and memory formed by individual witnesses, ripples out into the world. If word of mouth, printed word, and image circulate in the social field, they generate a social consciousness of the performer and of the event, causing a multiplication of the effect of the performance in the cultural field. Therefore, if the impression of the event is potent, it remains in the cultural imaginary, and collective social memory, as a timeless trace of memory, thought, and action. In the aftermath of the event featuring the diva in performance, and in the wider social field, audience members likely reflected on what they experienced of her person and performance. Renzi’s performances of the altered, but repeatable “social performative” emblem of Woman eloquently enacted for these spectators the contingency of “language and its institutional conditions” (Bulter, “Performativity’s” 12). The diva performed a shimmering mirage of social alterability.

In *La finta pazza*, Deidamia’s fictional scream symbolized a powerfully out-of-control woman, while her sounding body aroused ecstatic thoughts, emotions, and bodily sensations in her audience. She raised the tension until the emotional peak of the sung scream was brought to a coerced halt. The woman on stage was fictional and real, and she was every woman when brought under subordination to patriarchal control. Deidamia is able to deceive the other fictional characters with her psychobabble and the sound of erratic musical lines. Renzi was a powerful actor and virtuosic professional singer who was herself attractive and able to lure audiences into momentarily believing she *was Deidamia*. As Deidamia she moved about the stage under her own volition, saying/singing anything and everything until hauled off the public stage musically crying for help with a compelling visual image. The outrageous sounding force of her cry held the potential to counteract the force of the violent binding and dragging. And at that moment, she most intensely touched those who occupied the space with her. Furthermore, her sound, language, and movements conveyed madness, so she was also “touched” and touched the audience with her madness in a dangerous social transfer. Indeed, author G.B. calls her a “Rare monster of love” (*Raro*

mostro d'Amore"; *Le Glorie* 70). Another, signed F.B., insists "*Può la Musica tua toglier à Morte/ La forza, e la ragion; ... Turbar il fato, e temperar la sorte. Se i miracoli tuoi son ... tanti Del mio penoso inferno apri le porte, E cangia in gloria i miei dogliosi pianti*" ("Your Music takes away Death Force, and reason; and upsets fate. Your miracles are so many... they open the doors of my painful hell, And my glittering cry melts in glory"; *Le Glorie* 58).

However, Renzi as Deidamia returned to the stage intact and stable, and while Deidamia is brought under male control in fictional marriage – in the aftermath of the performance – Renzi walked off into the nocturnal urban complex and with the sovereignty of celebrity played out with the independence of her public persona. In the relatively circumscribed Venetian urban space, audiences were undoubtedly aware of that status. Unlocking what Derrida coins "the night of secret difference" reveals that, in the body of the diva, multiple performatives coalesced (337-8). This analytic manoeuvre awakens the transgressive sovereignty of her emotive sound and motion as it does the memory of socio-political complexities embedded as the "tissue of differences" that she embodied (337-8). Identifying and revealing her reverberant trajectory entails contextualizing it in the historical and social setting in order to discern its "performative character" within the historical cultural milieu (Butler, *Excitable* 2-3). The powerful singing force of the diva's physical resonance produces an extra-lingual meaning whereby "The force of the speech act is separable from its meaning, an illocutionary force is secured through convention ... the convention governing the institution of promise-making is verbally honored even in the case of a promise that no one intends to fulfill" (24). Ostensibly, whether or not Renzi intended to liberate women from oppression, the force of her sounding image held *the promise*. That force also encompassed a threat because, as Butler notes, "Although the threat is not quite the act that it portends, it is still an act, a speech act, one that not only announces the act to come, but registers a certain force in language, a force that both presages and inaugurates a subsequent force" (9). And that voice is genealogical as a propagational impetus for future force (25).

Spinoza's philosophy embraces the promise of experiencing joy (Cimini, "Gilles Deleuze" 144). In *Le Glorie Anna Renzi*, one author signed M.T. attests: "*In nobile Teatro ah che si sera, Quanta gioia*

può dar, e Cielo, e Terra ... Coder fà in terra l'armonia del Cielo... ANNA ...Che del tuo dir canoro, à un solo accento, Si ferma de le sfere il moto eterno" (" In the noble Theater ah that evening, How much joy does she give, on Heaven, and Earth ... she brings the harmony of Heaven to Earth ... ANNA ...That of your singing, with a single accent, Stops the eternal movement of the spheres."); *Le Glorie* 63-4). When Renzi performed, she evoked the *affect* of joy in audiences. If they did not immediately see, feel, and think of women differently as an effect of their encounter with the diva, they broke the reciprocal promise of that joy. Yet, because the diva's beautifully resonant sound was undeniably effective in moving people to a joyful state, she could loosen the "fixed" idea of the early modern Woman. Even if the joyful promise of independence and freedom to attain personal potential and self-fulfillment remained elusive for most women, her existence shivered fissures into the foundations of patriarchal authority.

Renzi's performance of gender adapted given gender roles, be they theatrical, or every day to alter her social field by reconstituting the in-corporated history of gender roles within the institution of the theatre and outside of it as a professional woman. As Butler posits:

The performative is not merely an act used by a pre-given subject but is one of the powerful and insidious ways in which subjects are called into social being, inaugurated into sociality by a variety of diffuse and powerful interpellations. In this sense the social performative is a crucial part not only of subject *formation*, but of the ongoing political contestation and reformulation of the subject as well. In this sense, the performative is not only a ritual practice: it is one of the influential rituals by which subjects are formed and reformulated. (125)

Accordingly, when Renzi and her commedia dell'arte predecessors performed virtuosic verbal, physical, and sonic feats in cross-dressed roles, they called a new social subject into being. In everyday life, they reformulated how women could live as professional businesswomen by reconstituting the idea of Woman. The celebrity status they wrested for themselves, moreover, gave them an influential position from which to reformulate their social roles and become new role models for women. They did so by "acting in accord with the objective field," even as the gender they performed onstage and in everyday life contested the "rules" of the "social game" (115). Isabella, Vittoria, Virginia, and Renzi were praised by men who

extolled their “virtue” as women; this indicates that out of necessity, they had learned to play by accepted rules of female submission to male control. They also proved the rules transposable by exceeding them even within newly regularizing “ritual practices” ordained by authoritative male figures (117). Male authority allowed their performance in venues where they enacted “regulated improvisations of the *habitus*” while embodying “resistance to the norm” (117-18). They reformulated the “grammar of action” in their gestural dramatic and everyday performance of gender to meet with broad public exposure and win public approval from the anonymous crowd outside the control of authority figures.

Strozzi qualifies Renzi’s private personality as a “melancholy” “Lady” exposing how she earned admiration for exhibiting the correct “embodied rituals of everydayness” to secure her place as a good and virtuous Woman in the *habitus* of her social field. Published attestations of womanly virtue by “gentlemen” were crucial to these women’s survival, both onstage and on the streets, in witnessing and/or arranging and backing up business contracts, and by facilitating their negotiation of social hindrances. Authoritative testimonials in support of their moral uprightness afforded them the freedom to exercise their professions. Strozzi’s maleness granted him the power to authorize Renzi’s social and professional appropriateness in a way that he, as a man, did not require. What is more, her celebrity status authorized her performance of gender in the new commercial field because she was paid well. That celebrity status gained her access to performance venues and high social status. Celebrity status, and popular demand, enabled her to produce the “effect of authority where there [was] no recourse to a prior authorization” (Butler, “Performativity’s” 123). This is because “through the exercise of a technical competence” as a virtuosic singer/actor, “a social competence [was] exercised,” enabling her to “speak [and sing] with authority” in a society that valued the silence of women (123).

By winning international celebrity status in the public market, Renzi compelled “collective recognition” as a newly legitimized professional performer (123). Her tour de force performances seemingly magically transposed the “social rituals” of seventeenth-century womanhood as she continually transgressed behavioural gender boundaries within the institutional boundaries of the theatre industry. The “‘social magic’ of the performative is ... extra-lingual” and is “figured in a mimetic relation to the

linguistic practices that it authorizes” within the “institutional conditions” of the “extra-linguistic domain” (124). In performance, she accomplished this at least momentarily by virtue of the spell she cast on listeners inducing them to forget what she should or should not be doing. The anonymous poet of the *Abozzo* featured in the last chapter affirms that “by magical enchantment, she was transformed, with pretended disdain” (“*Che per magico incanto, Trasformato diceva essersi in quello, All hor fingendo sdegno*) in *La finta pazza*”; *Le Glorie* 46). Hence, Renzi’s sound and vision performed an extra-lingual authority within the “institutional conditions” of the theatre and the public square that worked as a magical force to influence changes in paternalistic attitudes. All this is *not* to say that there was immediate social change for *all* women. It is more to say that Renzi and the other divas affected incremental, generational changes and impressions – as new models of independent agency – within their social environs that forged links in the long-term project of women’s liberation. And, while this point has been made by other scholars, the performative aspects of Renzi’s sound and movements have not been targeted for deep investigation and analysis.

Despite social regulation of women’s lives and close scrutiny of their work, the divas’ performance succeeded. Even when people or buildings are no longer tangibly present, the transcribed memories – and narrative – of those who experienced them contain sedimented, readable, energies experienced corporeally as sensation (Pearson and Shanks 156). Opera is a cultural artifact embedded in the social performance and affective web of experience. While audiences came to the opera informed by experiences outside the theatre, they experienced the diva’s body in performance in the bodily hexis of the immanent plane. After experiencing the socially resonating field of the theatre, they carried the sensation out with them into the socio-architectural field of the city. After the show, the memory of Renzi in the frame of Torelli’s luminous stage settings, the rhythmical movements of his machines, the scenically colour coordinated costumes, and the rhythmically sonic texture of the composer’s musical arrangements became sensate memory. The live diva, too, passed through the liminal threshold to carry her difference off into the swirl of Venice at Carnival and into the theatre of everyday life.

To re-sonate the sounding visual fabric of the urban past, I have imagined the immanent plane of *Novissimo*'s aural architecture as a social echo-sphere of seventeenth-century Venetian opera. Leppert maintains that "desire" provides the key to unlocking sounding landscapes of the past inhabited by embodied and intermingled social relationships of private and public (18). In etching out Renzi's milieu, I have worked to create a "deep map" (Pearson and Shanks, *The Sight* 64). This work entails juxtaposing fact and fiction, politics and poetry, what is spoken with what is felt, and the contemporary with the historical through a process of recording, representing, and interpreting the data to render the "the grain and patina of place" (64). It calls for occupying the conjunctions of biography and oral testimony, scores and sounds, librettos and interpretations, performance and reception (94). My mapping of operatic practice and reception is framed contextually, while plunging deeply into the interactive melee of sound energy, visual impression, and physical presence. Here, I have attempted to turn Desire's key to enter and transcribe the dynamic sonic architecture of *Novissimo*, Renzi the great diva, Torelli's scenography, and the paying Carnival crowd all enveloped in the matrix of Venice's sonorous socio-sphere.

**CONCLUSION: TRACKING THE SONTOLOGY OF RESONANCE IN TIME
AND SPACE**

In the warp and draw of one time in another ... the site of history is a body-to-body transmission of affective transmissions.

- Rebecca Schneider *Performing Remains*



Fig. 46. Stills from the film Wonder Woman. <https://www.stuff.co.nz/entertainment/film/76126279/wonder-woman>

The film *Wonder Woman* (2017), starring Gal Godot, was directed by Patty Jenkins. Godot served in the Israeli army. The character Wonder Woman is patterned after a mythical Amazon warrior woman named Diana. Based on relatively recent cinematic flops like *Catwoman* (2004) and *Electra* (2005), however, critics worried that “audiences are reluctant to see female superheroes on the big screen,” and expected this film to suffer a similar fate (Di Christopher). The expenses for making *Wonder Woman* were exorbitant, at around 120 million dollars, but the film earned over 100 million dollars on its US opening weekend. But because Godot tweeted pro-Israeli statements, the mega-hit was controversially

banned by the Lebanese government (McKerman). On the Lebanese banning of the film, *Comic Stash* film critic Anthony Sargon said that it made Lebanese culture seem “regressive,” adding that “Lebanon is one of the most progressive countries in the Middle East” (McKerman). Sargon stated that the film is important because it is one of the “first major female lead super-hero films,” mentioning that it is a “rare, block-buster film directed by a female director” and that “a lot of young girls have been waiting to see this film.” He thought that it should be seen by those who anticipated its opening in Lebanon (McKerman). *Wonder Woman* opened one year after Donald Trump came to power in a US election where Hillary Clinton decisively won the popular vote. This was in spite of debates over her qualifications for becoming the next “commander in chief” of the US military. Ironically, her perceived “hawkishness” was the “weakness” for which she was most egregiously criticized by the political left. Voters on both right and left together found something untrustworthy about candidate Clinton in one way or another as broadcast, and social media made very clear. I was glad to be doing my part in researching and studying the operatic warrior woman after the election. The warrior woman and women in power have been hot topics of public debate throughout Western history, for at least as far back as Artemisia of Caria. It continues to be so today and seems likely to be so in the future. Misogyny dies hard.

Concerning the work of the historic star performer performing *dramma per musica*, Berta Joncus following Reinhard Strohm maintains, “‘the work performed’ is made up from a ‘conglomeration of voices,’” requiring the integration of “musical analysis with information about historical reception to illuminate how a work came to assume a specific form” and in order to apprehend its complexity (“Producing Stars” 277). Joncus writes that such work “calls for an act of reconstruction based on evidence about performers and audiences as well as authors, texts and source” (277). Furthermore, “Because *dramma per musica* was so frequently designed around a famous singer, a methodology accounting specifically for the vocalist’s contribution is vital” (277). Harkening back to my introduction, Joncus asserts that a “star” performer is both “product and producer of product” and embodies multiple contradictory meanings that are “open to countless interpretations” (279-81).

In this dissertation, I have applied and examined all six of the areas Joncus enumerates. Regarding the genre of *dramma per musica*, Joncus quotes Franco Piperno, who writes that compared to other contemporary forms *dramma per musica* was “‘a compromise between the absolutest [sic] ethic’ and the ‘commercialism of the [operatic] system’ ... Commercialising [sic] the spectacle of the privileged introduced market pricing to it, expanded the numbers of potential performers, gave rise to specialization within its production, and fostered widespread coordination” (283). The novel commercial form as a vehicle for the social advancement of women *virtuose* is a frame employed throughout this study. And as Joncus refers to eighteenth-century *dramma per musica* as “nascent,” her rubric for analyzing and defining the genre also applies to my study on its seventeenth-century arrival. Joncus lists another essential aspect which I have delved into in my study on Renzi having to do with how “The star singer realized full affective display through artistry and [how] the audience generated transformative energy largely through spontaneous response” (288). The published post-performance descriptions and responses have served here to enliven the sense-ology of her reception with Venetian audiences. On the whole, the phenomenon of Renzi fulfils Joncus’ criteria for star status in her performance of *dramma per musica*, as established in this dissertation. Certainly, the symbol of the Amazon, and by extension, the cross-dressed singer-as-warrior, offered early modern women a model signifying other ways to be and live, if not for themselves, then perhaps for their daughters. For, as Herodotus posited, for “the Amazons ... [i]t was not marriage, but the prospect of having to behave as wives, that was abhorrent to them” (Kleinbaum, *The War* 7). Otherwise, as Kleinbaum suggests, the Amazon character “Marfisa ... Like her twentieth-century daughters, Wonder Woman and the Bionic Woman, the results of her contests were never in doubt. Ordinary blows of ordinary men had neither the power nor the possibility of harming her” (88).

Beyond bringing the ancient warrior queen to life, if only for the duration of the performance, the diva who sang her emanated powerfully moving, affective sound and physicality. Audience members could attend to her body and affective force if moved to do so. If they did, they opened themselves to the intensity of that force to stir and move them corporeally, emotionally, and intellectually. As established, Renzi accomplished such effects. She did so with vital “life-force” whereby, as Derrida avers, following

Artaud, “the disincarnated voice” in its sonorous intensity is the essence of tactile sensation or “life force” transferred from body-to-body in the circumstance of performance (“Intensity” 226). Butler too proffers that, as something done by the body, speech acts “say” more than they “can ever intend or know” because the body is also being read and interpreted by the receiver (*The Scandal* 114). Certainly, the early modern diva costumed as a warrior or, even as a man, demonstrated gender variability so that what was said (or sung) passed through her performing body to betray its understood “truth,” thus breaking the constative promise of biologically determined gender (Butler, *Undoing* 6). Alternatively, the diva’s performance of socially constructed gender identity operated as “iterability [that] ruins ... the very identity it renders possible” (Derrida, *Limited* 76). The diva did this: 1) in her performance of the powerful amazon and/or warrior woman, learned as historically proscribed physicality and gestural vocabulary, but done differently by her; 2) as a professionally trained and sonically powerful operatic performer who exceeded the textual or musical composition, and 3) as a self-reliant businesswoman. By occupying “the norm in myriad ways,” early modern divas exceeded and reworked gender norms performatively in transformation by becoming something, or someone, new in powerful ways that were transgressive and readable as such (Butler, *Undoing* 217). Women as warriors, warrior queens, or cross-dressed, acting as men, or as madwomen for that matter, were concepts antithetical and abhorrent to contemporary Venetian life but were a fascination within patriarchal culture. So, when Renzi and other women played these roles on stage, they offered women compelling possibilities to contemplate. Here, the resonant body of the skilled woman performer “in all its otherness, ma[de] itself felt to consciousness” by contradicting contemporary gender norms for women (Diamond, *The Scandal* 154).

Added to Renzi’s celebratory status and her radiant magnetism, she performed a “radical textuality” and performative polyvalence, forcing audiences to translate the text that her body and sound enacted, either consciously or unconsciously (Diamond, *The Shudder* 164). It was the diva’s visceral affective force – specifically, the presence of her sounding body in the performance venue – that reverberated politically in audience’s minds to affect their attitudes about women on a broader social scale. The fact that women like Giulia Masotti followed Renzi as consummate professional operatic

performers and acclaimed operatic divas as did many, many women after her verifies this point. On another social level, by the eighteenth century, as I conveyed in chapter I, unmarried patrician women could more and more choose life-long celibacy as a way to lead independent lives. And while this level of independent choice may not be ideal, or the sort that women in Western countries take as a given, I argue that it played a part in the long-term change in social status begun by early modern women at the start of the modern era that continues today. I submit furthermore, that the performative force of the diva's sounding body, perhaps intended only to create a powerful aesthetic effect, "misfired" to forcefully resist cultural restrictions on women's movement and political power in Italian society (Felman, *The Scandal* 57). On such misfires, Derrida writes, "The parasite parasites the limits that guarantee the purity of rules and ... intentions, and this is not devoid of importance for law, politics, economics, ethics, etc." (*Limited* 98). Thus, as part of the movement to liberate women from oppression, the diva parasite-ed the limits of the rules and laws governing women's freedom of movement and decision in Venetian society. Renzi, at least for a time, accomplished a powerful social position on her own merits as a great singer-actor along with the assistance of the novel Incognito marketing strategy. It was left to heterogenous audience members to decipher and interpret the various meanings assembled in the intertextual, multivalence that Renzi performed. Therefore, even while operatic roles, as written, might reify women's oppression, Renzi's autonomous agency defied it performatively. For, as Butler maintains, "No act of speech can fully control or determine the rhetorical effects of the body which speaks ... [and/or] the possibility of an agency that emerges from the margins of power" (*Excitable* 155). Likewise, "The performative is not only a ritual practice: it is one of the influential rituals by which subjects are formed and reformulated" (160). Accordingly, the diva's performed ritual of the warrior woman as gesture and sound was reformulated and particularized through her sounding body for audiences who, at some level, also reformulated it and were likely influenced by it.

In a dichotomous matrix, the diva's gender performance as an actor interlaced performatively with the historic warrior woman character in its social citation of past gender behaviours, while her seventeenth-century iteration worked as an affective force to defy seventeenth-century normativity. I

argue furthermore that the energy of her bodily sonic resonance, as a sensed corporeal presence in the theatrical space and in the city, impacted such notions. Yet, in the flux and flow of performance, the virtuosic diva embodied “the foreign element in the midst of the performance of cultural translation” and, in this way, transported “newness into the world” (Benjamin qtd. in Bhabha 226).

By examining Venetian social structures, the warrior woman role, and the performance of Anna Renzi in *Teatro Novissimo*, I have assembled the following: the inter-workings of voice, notated music, text, embodiment, sound environment, sounding architecture, sounding gender, sounding politics, moving scenes and bodies, crowd sounds, human and inanimate smells, the acoustic space of *Novissimo* as vehicle for transmitting the philosophy of the *Accademia degli Incogniti* all within the social sphere and vortex of Venice at Carnival time. I have traced human movement across theatrical thresholds into urban spaces and across geographies, and the migrations of repertoire and practice – as a performance genealogy – across the borders of commedia dell’arte to *dramma per musica*. In this, I have also sought to animate missing performative aspects of Renzi’s life and work both as a star public performer and as public persona to re-store a missing “third dimension” of her story.

Sound, for Ovadija, is performance that can be read as a text in its physical theatricality; voice is “not only a carrier of speech and sound ... but also, as an autonomous stage-building material” on a stage “inhabited by moving bodies” in a “flexible matrix” of performance and in the “interactive environment of the theatrical event” (4). Each operatic singer has a unique vocal sound and specialized virtuosic delivery. Luckily, as this study demonstrates, the repertoires of musical and embodied singing technique enable researchers to go beyond pure conjecture. The archive of the repertoire paired with musical notation, affords a significantly closer approximation to the sound and affectual presence of historic singers holding the potential to conjure a virtual synesthesia of performed events. Such conjuring functions as a way to think about the pioneering women singers, and the actual ancient warrior queens, so as to discover sensate knowledge about how they were translated and perceived over time.

Like Patrick Finelli, I would like to “inspire further research on topics like linguistic and paralinguistic voice/body expression, deictic sound effects in staging [and] premodern theatre acoustics”

as “historical and theoretical research in aurality for theatre performance” (457-8). I think of the historical voice as a sonic text in its potential as a “performance-based archive” (Schneider) to be read as such and theorized as a social force. My exploration has been driven by the following questions. How did Renzi and other women singers voicing the male author’s written text interact with that author’s voice? Was Strozzi’s authorial voice, for example, not subsumed by Renzi’s virtuosic sound, vision, and physical presence? If so, didn’t she take possession of the written words to transform them into multiple meanings? How, as the executor of performance, did she override text and notation, with the specific particulates of her vocal sound energy, her movements, gestures, and facial expressions and the energetic production of them in her skilled delivery? What about when she did so cross-dressed or as a “madwoman?” What would she have been so mad about? She was certainly crazy enough to blaze her own path while forging it for future women, madly, audaciously, even courageously, claiming her right to move freely and independently across the stage and about the public sphere. What did the diva’s performance of madness “say” or sound out about, or in spite of, the librettist’s written work? It took the forceful adrenaline rush of a madwoman to demolish patriarchal barriers – and sometimes even – to cry out for help and solidarity. She was the author of her sound, and the librettist was the author of his thoughts on paper but, didn’t she generate meaning and sonic dimensions of her own? If so, then this presents a rich epistemological field calling for attention, examination, and the acknowledgement of its importance to the historical record. Therefore, the intangible and densely layered features of past performance wait to be uncovered, examined, and theorized.

Not only did the divas carry off and induce forceful psychological impressions in their own time, but the performative traces as extraordinary women remain. The dynamic and intelligent faculties that these women performed on stage and in the everyday realm is evidenced by the persistent debate over the place and social status of women in the public stratum. The early divas awakened desire and adoration, but they also stirred up opposition proving their performances to be an important subject for analysis. The debate continues to this day over women’s capabilities in political positions of power or even their abilities to regulate and lead their own lives. This is a struggle within which the great divas took part, and

this study contends that experience and its social operation is the persistence of the past in the present oscillating with and into the future.

Heller features an encomiastic tribute to Renzi singing Ottavia in Monteverdi's *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* by an anonymous author in *Le Glorie* who writes "*Con tua voce divina, Disprezzata regina, E seguendo il lament, Facevi di dolore, Stillar in pianto, e sospirar Amore.*" ("With your divine voice, O spurned queen, And continuing your lament, You forced Love, To burst into tears and sighs"; trans. Heller, *Emblems* 175). On this, Heller contends, "What better way for the anonymous writer to praise Renzi than to note the effect of her singing on Love himself? Here the passive becomes active: the audiences do not merely love Renzi; rather, Renzi herself moves Love itself to tears" (175). Benedetto Ferrari describes Renzi singing Ottavia in the following way: "*Esuale, esposte a le spumose arene, È un mostro, che note alte, e profonde, Acrescer vâ lo stuolo di le Sirene*" ("Exiled, exposed on foamy shores, It is a monster, who with notes high and deep, Augments the company of the Sirens"; *Emblems* 174). As Heller argues, "Ferrari and Strozzi also remind us, this woman whose wordless cries are heard from the foamy shores is not Ottavia. She is another creation: a monster and a siren, a singer whose voice was so powerful that it could even transform history, bringing Love to tears ..." (*Emblems* 176-7). Strozzi too describes how in gesture, movement, and sound Renzi caused people to swoon writing, "*Non proferiva sillaba, che l'Orecchie non invaghisse, non formava pianto, che non havesse compagni nelle lagrime, Non gestiva, non moveva passo, che non spirasse Leggiadria, e come tutta era miracolo, generava meraviglie, e stupori, che forzavano le lingue non al semplice final applauso, mà alle numerose acclamazioni, e quasi le ginocchia ad inchinar la Da de'Teatri*" ("She did not utter a syllable, that Ears did not weep, and join in tears, she did not gesture, she did not move, she did not breathe ... as all was miraculous, she generated marvels, and wonders, that forced tongues to wait not only for the final applause, but for numerous acclamations, causing knees to bend and bow to the Goddess of the Theaters"; *Le Glorie* 6). She brought audiences to tears, acclamations, and to their knees before her. That is regal power. She slayed them. Her power constituted intelligently directed sound and motion as electric energy radiated forcefully and devastatingly forth.

In a tribute titled *Alla mostruosa Sirena de Teatri* (To the Monstrous Siren of Theatre), the author signed Francesco Marie Gigante, substantiates this claim that, upon experiencing Anna as Ergindo, “in amazement, those who hear lift their eyelashes, [and] languishing in her force, seem disheartened” (*per stupor, chi sente alza le ciglia, Languendo a forza par disanimato*”; *Le Glorie* 88). So too, an anonymous author remarked that she had the power to “subjugate ... the pride of those who already believed your valor to be equal” (“*Soggiogasti l'orgoglio Di chi già al tuo valor credea uguagliarsi*”; *Le Glorie* 44). Here authors gush not only about Renzi’s forceful execution of the role, but they characterize this ability as “monstrous.” What was monstrous about it? Her forceful performance caused them to “languish” out of self-control as she monstrously held power over them. That was something to fear but still compelled them to stream back for more. Throngs returned, as Strozzi attests with, “*dall’ infatiabile desiderio di rivdire ogni sera questa de cima sorella delle Muse*” (“an unceasing desire to re-discover every evening this first of the Muse’s sisters”) to be turned away from the door of a theatre filled to capacity (*Le Glorie* 6). The ultimate fear, however, was in her power to subjugate male pride by forcing men to acknowledge the power of her valor to equal, at least, their own. So, it was not only her characters who tricked and manipulated the men around them, but the real woman Renzi who powerfully held real men in her thrall.

Nancy writes that “a voice is modulated in which the singular of a cry, a call, or a song vibrates by retreating from it” (22). I have endeavoured to capture Renzi’s resonant musical vibrations, calling out for full recognition as a potent agent for social change. Deidamia’s iterative operatic cry for help in *La finta pazza* is an ancient cry streaming across the flux of time-space, inherited from ancient cries, ringing out today as an oppression-defying scream where “the presence of sense as resonance, sonorous impulse, call, outcry, address” as Nancy articulates, remains (*Listening* 37). Indeed, the writer signed ZBV proclaimed, “This cry is heard, ... Stopping the eternal rotation of the heavens.” (“*S'questa il grido, ... E si ferma de' Cieli il giro eterno.*”; *Le Glorie* 56). Renzi’s sonic traces are to be found in the memories of those present to her “live” performance, documented in their accounts and impressions, in the transcription of the tones she sounded forth, in the singing technique and style that others learned, emulated, and transported across and within the void of her absence.

The indexical imprint of her individual sound as “performance-based archive” is the energetic force and indestructible particulate grains of sound energy found in the archive of Renzi’s embodied repertoire and emblazoned in the repertoire of the archive. Her sound, as energetic body-to-body transmission, journeys trans-temporally through musical notation and the archived repertoire of Italian *stile rappresentativo* (that she specialized in) to the *bel canto* singing technique. The power of her performance too is discernible in the record of its reception and in the traces of her remarkable movements as an accomplished professional woman in early modernity as “traces of singular actions” abiding in “the unplanned touch of history’s passing” that abides in this document’s aggregate assemblage (Pearson and Shanks 135).

Implications for future study and practice are multiple. By re-enlivening historical documents and texts found in archives, students of performance can re-discover ancient practices while allowing those practices to inform their own in rehearsals, acting classes, voice workshops, and other spaces (Finelli, “Sound Studies” 448). Such study would offer a new and dynamic way to introduce and experience what Patrick Finelli calls “broad transhistorical ... categories” to incorporate the areas of voice, sound, and embodiment into performance and scholarly curriculums (456). So, while we cannot immediately experience the first operatic divas’ sounds in performance, we can, by re-contextualizing their socio-historical moments, approximate the effects that their virtuosic performances had on early modern audiences. In this, students could cultivate what Dell’Antonio calls “embodied expertise,” to make “audible [and visible] the concerns of early modern bodies” (“Performances of Identity” 24). Such embodied research generates knowledge gleaned from embodied experience to produce reflection and prompt classroom discussion concerning the diva’s embodiment of warrior queen or madwoman roles and her socially transgressive performance, among other salient topics.

As a teaching tool, this inter-subjective process could prompt in-depth explorations of historical and current attitudes on women’s agency and power. Specifically, embodying the roles or experiencing the peer-turned-warrior-queen in performance could induce critical thinking on personal and social attitudes about women as warriors and/or political leaders. This can include thinking about and enacting

roles with men playing warrior-queens, as castrato singers historically did, to facilitate conversations on transgender possibilities and rights, for instance. This approach could usefully bridge areas like gender and performance studies, theatrical performance and theatre history, and musicology with music performance. Another productive cross-pollination might include studying the physics of sound, acoustics, and singing as affect. In this, students of voice and students of sound and acoustics could explore the mechanics in, and vibrational-emotional impact of, the trained singer in performance. This embodied research ties physics with affect and emotion and can take place in the classroom.

For as Finelli advocates, we can re-visit and re-evaluate theatre and opera history by applying the theoretical tool of “aurality” and think differently about the performative social implications at work in the reception and transmission of voice and sound (446). Additionally, as Andrew Kimbrough posits, “a verifiable reality exists and can be known ... the sounds of the human voice compose a tangible component of that reality” and can be found in the reception of the vocal sounds of historical singers nestled in the reality of their socio-historical moment (*Dramatic Theories* 4). Thus, while we cannot immediately experience the first operatic divas’ sounds in performance, we can gain an approximation of the effects that virtuosic sound engendered in early modern audiences by contextualizing and embodying their performances. This would entail not only learning the performance practices but also researching the historical contexts within which the early performers circulated. Such research could include re-creating virtual environments, in conjunction with students of computer graphic design. They might re-create early modern Venice with virtual reality equipment to allow students to experience performing in a recreated *Teatro Novissimo*, or *Teatro Santi Giovanni e Paolo* for which we have more detailed information. They could re-enact scenes from an opera performed in the midst of Torelli’s scenic inventions, and even re-enact the kinds of audiences for whom Renzi performed. Students would undertake detailed research in groups working together to virtually reconstruct the socio-cultural milieu and environs. This embodied research and performance could render a deep and visceral knowledge of the time, place, and performance practice embedded in their corporeal memories in a way they would not likely forget.

Another potential area for further research stemming from my own would be to take Diana Taylor and Rebecca Schneider's ideas about the archive and apply them to the migration from the early modern Italian *stile rappresentativo* singing technique to the later *bel canto* style. Learning Italian singing technique involves a "body to body" transfer as archived repertoire (Schneider). In this, singers train and embody a singing lineage in a performance genealogy from the seventeenth-century *stile rappresentativo* into *bel canto* technique transmitted from historical singers and their teachers even to singers today. *Bel canto* technique gained in disciplined training constitutes embodied traces, and gestural codes carried on performatively in practices that continue the traditional form while varying it by virtue of the different cultural and social bodies which performed it and passed it on to new generations (Roach, *Cities* 11). Informed with musical scores, specialists trained in the Baroque musical style might embody and re-voice the sound of historical singers' vocal traces to re-enact, awaken, take note of, and examine the "sounding-body" of the historical diva in performance across temporalities. Finally, archival study remains to be done to unearth the facts of Renzi's life, including the circumstances of her upbringing and training as well as her whereabouts and activities after 1660. Otherwise, there is great potential for applying a multi-disciplinary approach like that used in this dissertation to analyze performativity and the sonic ontology of other historical performers.

Several years ago, I stepped inside a lovely little Venetian chapel and noticed a palimpsest on the wall of an ancient chipping fresco revealing an artist's cartoon sketch beneath. That is when I experienced the multi-temporal nature of the city where "The remains of the past surround us" (Pearson and Shank 150). And while the physical remains of *Novissimo* are long gone, the memory of early modern operatic activity and the aural architecture of Renzi's performance and its reception lie – like a hidden cartoon sketch – beneath the veneer of the un-finished subject. Likewise, the resonant effects of performances held in theatres and their reception remain.

Experience as cultural agent and the sensorium of past performance events is the intangible yet examinable epistemology I have attempted to explore. The evidence of the experience of performance and reception lies within archived documents. The assemblage I have constructed here by applying disparate

theoretical frames to factual evidence comes alive in my imagination that I have tried to convey and enliven in others. This assemblage contains information impossible to glean if the various parts have been dissected and rendered inert. Performance is about liveness, but I have tried to argue that it never really dies when we look at it with the lenses of performance theory, as Rebecca Schneider insists. By assembling the factual information and artifacts and applying the lenses of performativity, liminality, hybridity, gender, sound and motion, embodiment, and affect, I conjure up a phenomenologically rich epistemological field to view, experience, and analyze. I felt that I could not otherwise gain a complete enough understanding of the diva in her socio-cultural context. This is the beauty of transdisciplinary study. By merging performance studies, historiography, musicology, and sociology together at the site of the diva in the performance of madwomen, cross-dressed, and in warrior roles, along with her performance of gender in everyday life in Venice and beyond, I have discovered a multifaceted multidimensionality revealing the social significance of her dynamic existence in her time and even in mine. Performance theory provides the foundation for my scholarship and for this study.

Renzi was not only a vehicle for the operatic genre, but she was a miraculous electromagnetic force field of performance that mesmerized and deeply moved others as they absorbed the vector of her resonant presence. This approach tells me more about her than what I can glean from scores and scattered archival documents alone. By reconstructing her socio-cultural milieu, I have worked from the outside in to know more about her. This approach sets her existence into high relief to reveal the impactful difference she made for music, theatre, and for women. I have tried here to re-imbue the historical place of Venice with the ephemeral cultural value of Anna Renzi in resonant performance along with the unknown women playing the roles of mythical or historical warrior women while theorizing the meaning of these performers and performances as they transmitted new or resurrected/re-presented practices to the cultural field of the historical moment. I do this by training my focus on the exceptional body of the performer and its reception. Such practices were transmitted through a dense, socially charged aggregation of gesture, movement, and sound – learned – but done differently, as Butler maintains. They also transmitted polyvalent socio-political meanings about which it is impossible to know everything but

is still worth attempting to discern. So, for instance, while I can play and sing music that Renzi might have performed and I can read the encomiums describing their effect on listeners, but when I add details of the performance event framed by Joe Roach's behavioural vortex including the Venetian theatre space, its dimensions, inhabitants, with granular description of the sounding space as a sensorium of sensory stimuli, I come closer to experiencing something of the imminent plane of the performance event. When I combine that with knowledge of the philosophical and political ideology of the people and place like the Incogniti and the proto-feminist writers along with sociological information on women's work and social status, I understand much more about the social epistemology of the divas' presence, movement, and impact on the broader culture and maybe even something of its impact on her.

To reclaim Renzi's legacy, my composite approach is meant to forge links between disparate theoretical and historiographic methodologies interlacing formal close readings of scores and libretti to feminist and materialist analyses and critical theoretical strands with philosophy. Such an approach weaves a multifarious complexity otherwise unattainable because more formalist or strictly historical approaches miss important aspects of performance, both artistic and cultural, thereby avoiding important social aspects of the performer's significance. The interlocking methodology quickens performative socio-cultural forces lying dormant in the narrative of Renzi's life and work. Ultimately, this approach is meant to add to the great work already accomplished.

Thinking of performance history in context reveals how performance encodes cultural history. The after effect or aftermath of performance offers a way into remote past performances where, as Schneider maintains, "collecting detritus and arranging the bits for re-engagement" reveals "The altered shapes of aftermath" that informs the archive and the repertoire "and ... the spaces between" ("Reactuals" 143). The collected arrangement of the nebulous somatic detritus surrounding Renzi's resonant performance is couched in her early modern social milieu meant to re-construct a schematic of electrical force traced out in a reciprocal circuitry of performance and reception. I have traced the aftermath of its circulation through the "body politic" of early modern Venice to integrate and extend research already accomplished on the lives and work of the great early-modern divas and the warrior woman operatic

roles. I refer to the crucial work of scholars like Wendy Heller, Beth Glixon, Ellen Rosand, Andrea Garavaglia, and Rosalind Kerr.

The trans or interdisciplinary methodology employed here should uniquely wrest the dynamism of her sounding body as “resonant subject” both in the theatre and in Venetian society from the historical record and is therefore unique in studies on the early modern diva (Nancy 21). The sonic ontology, or sontology, of performance is a sonorous domain where sonority is “time” and “meaning,” as Nancy suggests (20). Referring to Plato’s cave, Nancy asserts that it was a place where, not only shadows played on the wall, but where bodies sounded within it (75). Such sounds remain as the “echo of voices and those who move them” (75). For me, Nancy’s notion implies that the excavation of powerful sound and movement as performativity in past performance has only just begun.

If the value of historic warrior queens like Cleopatra and Artemisia, mythical Amazons, or the diva is reduced by historians, playwrights, and librettists to one aspect of sexualized object as, *femme fatales*, wives, or seductresses, the full truth of her story and her accomplishments are nullified. But if the diva’s multiple acting, musical, and entrepreneurial skills as hard-won accomplishments work to supersede the reduction, she effectively counteracts it. Courage, intelligence, stamina, persistence, and fortitude are major character traits Renzi shared with the historical figure of the Bellatrix warrior queen Artemisia. Fictional characters like Doriclea, Veremonda, and Wonder Woman also share the traces of these same traits. Like both Artemisia I and Artemisia II, who gained new territories for their country in battle, Renzi heroically won new territory for women as professional singers in the social arena. She accomplished this feat by facing down the monstrous patriarchal tyranny of her culture and time, like the tragic but brilliant Tarabotti, to win fame and forge a new path for women. Utilizing the weapons of illocutionary force, luminous stage acting presence, and vocal resonance, she triumphed. Again, this is not to say that she totally dismantled the misogynist social structure. That is clearly demonstrated by Hillary Clinton’s experience and the reality of the patriarchal system still in place today. But the totality of the gains that Isabella, Renzi, and Clinton accomplished for women is tremendous.

The example of the Wonder Woman character and the towering figures of the warrior woman and the Amazon still loom large in our cultural imagination remaining to inspire the will to social change in the fight against oppression. It is in the sound of voices like Renzi and Clinton's, and the silent voice of Tarabotti heard only in reader's minds, or in Deidamia's musical cry, calling out for self-determination, and claiming emancipation for women – perhaps, even, for men. This idea is summed up in Clinton's profound proclamation at the 1995 United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women that "Human rights are women's rights and women's rights are human rights, once and for all," a speech which still can be experienced on video: <https://youtu.be/BlsUFRw7gBU> ("Women's Rights" 100).

Today, I sit and contemplate beautiful Venezia threatened by rising sea tides and thronging visitors in huge cruise ships whose mighty engines rumble cracks into the foundations of her grand and glorious palazzi. And I mourn the terrible scourge of the modern plague coursing through empty walkways and canals. I think of the magical lagoon nestled in her watery milieu that outlines a fish swallowing a fish. I remember the sound of regenerating water lapping about ancient sinking marble steps, swashing back and forth through time with the re-sounding echo of the great diva. I think of all the times I have visited in body and in mind imagining the wonderful marvels she has encompassed. I feel deep gratitude for all she has taught me, envisioning her shimmering brightly, resonating with the joyful sounding energy of new and marvellous things to come. *Ciao bella, mille, mille grazie ...*

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APPENDIX A

Images referenced in Chapters II and III

Photos are taken by the author from pdf of the original score unless otherwise indicated.

La Doriclea

Acto Primo. Scena 1.^a

Doriclea, Sigrane, Choro di Soldati Armeni.

Doriclea. Può la virtù del core ne le scigurre in tutto superar delle piaghe il rio dolore, ma non è già bastante à dar il moto al trardo più trafitto egl' in-belle l'avverta e vacillante, e il tiranneggio in dorno che mi rendono dolce il Concor-te compagna di tua fuga e di tua sorte.

Sigrane. fatti appoggio ben mio di questo

Fig. 52. *La Doriclea*, page 9.

prego o Caro di tua salute il precisi - tio amaro segui il corso primiero ne sù
 questo sen tiaro al Cartho uincitor tanto uicino della tua Doriclea pietà t'arresto
 forse curadiahaurandi lei quei Celi che giran sempre, che giran sempre sempre alle tue glorie
 in fetti: *Tigrane* ch'io parto e t'abbandona? ch'io fuggo e qui ti laro di uita in
 forse è de nemici in preda? ah! che non son già nato d'una gelata rupe né dalle

poppe di rabbia Lupo nutrimento di latte ho mai succhiato. pria di qui par tiranno quert'im-
 mobili sardi ch'altroue dritti i passi senza di te, senza di te che sei quarto de spiriti
 mie- i ^{ardite} Voi, uoi che pugnate Corraggiosi e fieri la patria G-
 mune fortunati Guerrieri già che portai in un fiume ogni nostra salute han le stelle ad-
 rate frotolosi quel ponte hor dissipa te. **Scena II.**
Orente. Tigrane, Doriclea.

Fig. 53. La Doriclea, page 10.

mano avri or ti tributti al mare Ercano. Cedi o Zigrane
 Cedi a quella Dea che da te usciò. Vine che Parthia è dico- nuta à tue ru- ne Non
 vender di so- rata di libertade à nostri Armeni. Come Vini il è del Regno sceth
 ti à la soeme fuggi il à l'Aviro Amico è à me che la tua foggasù require non
 posso o mia diletto tra fuggi il è exena il petto non sara in Parthia prigionera i

veraa la moglie di Zigrane l'Armenia la Reina ad' avvertare i Letti à tesser manti
 del Rè nemico alle lasciuie Amanti. Sì sù gene- roso ardisci fiero nella pa-
 sade pietà- sa crudelade eccotti ven il pria di fuggir il fe-
 vici. Oran. o magnanimo cor Animo grande. Zigrane. Nimi

Fig. 54. La Doriclea, page 13.

Handwritten musical score for page 14 of *La Doriclea*. The page contains three systems of music. The first system includes a vocal line with the lyrics "chi, chi mi richiama a' miei? chi, chi nega agli infelici" and a piano accompaniment. The second system continues the vocal line with "Vici uarcar de Regni inferni i tetri riu: dispietati nemici mi togliete al mio" and piano accompaniment. The third system features a vocal line with the lyrics "In p. riscorbarmi trofeo delle vostre armi. Non temer il Cavaliero" and piano accompaniment. The word "Doriclea" is written above the first system, and "Doricea" is written above the third system.

Fig. 55. *La Doriclea*, page 14.

Handwritten musical score for page 15 of *La Doriclea*. The page contains five systems of music. The first system includes a vocal line with the lyrics "ma che posso, che dico felice marito efemi-rato Amate dunque quel bel semblante" and a piano accompaniment. The second system continues the vocal line with "Arco e face d'Amore se n'andra' prigioniero ad infiammar del rio Tiranno il core? che uui" and piano accompaniment. The third system features a vocal line with the lyrics "tu eh'Arta bano se ti leuo' l'armonia scettro ancora l'honor ti toglia? Ah! mora pure ah" and piano accompaniment. The fourth system continues the vocal line with "mora ma latte infra l'honore indietro e gelo di si atroce pensiero ah" and piano accompaniment. The fifth system features a vocal line with the lyrics "crudo Gel. Tirano dir il miei te stesso Amor cedac'pieta' via mi" and piano accompaniment. The number "15" is written in the top right corner of the page.

Fig. 56. *La Doriclea*, page 15.

Doriclea.

ch' che piangi ch' che rudi sono inutili i pianti dannose la timore pro-
 ciatano l'ore è il bartho di te avaro à noi sen viene deh' deh' mi ragiscan un colpo sol ti
 prego à servir lacci in frà quest'orme arène. *Tigiane.* Misero che farò nelle
 viscere amate il ferro immergerò? no' n' quest' infansto giorno spettator non sarò di si inu-
 ditac' bar- cara impietà Dina il ne parca sia del suo stame uital la spada mia

Fig. 57. La Doriclea, page 17

ritorbar fra mia cura il prigioniero. *Ore il guerriero.* **Scena. X^a** 29
Doriclea, Farnace.

Doriclea. *Cav.* *Rei-na* come ti ti servo fatto della fortuna è
 gioia, e serbo. *Doriclea.* Sono in odio al Dettino ma con averti infanti ei pur m'ac-
 cida che in sua trofei degli ody suoi coruttibile spoglia è fragil alma che
 di sue tiranie non teme, non teme l'alma. *Doriclea.* *Cav.* *Rei-na* è alio? *Rei*

Doriclea. *Cav.* *Rei-na* non l'Amico Amica il piè fuga-ce oh Rè più ch'infelice a cui ric-
 corri lo tuo scampo? *Doriclea.* *Cav.* *Rei-na* ohime che? *Rei-na* poi che lo uideà
 pena ne gl'altre primieri è rotto è unto spregiarati di lega i sacri pati mal-
 uaggio è fraudolente l'uni col uincitor secretamente onde sei colà giunge l'inuidia pri-
 gione a l'Amico Astabano il Rè fello-re. *Doriclea.* *Cav.* *Rei-na* Ancor il non cammarco-

Fig. 58. La Doriclea, page 29.

ra delle minaccie il Cielo. E ch' hai pietade in petto oppra il ch'io mora
 meglio col morire uoir di pene che uiuar, e mirare il mio Consorte circondato da lacci
 e da Ca-tene. che pensieri di morte spora Reina, perra, chi piange sul ma-
 tin uide la sera spora Reina, perra chi piange sul matm uide la sera Quell
 Arabo Sabari uo' lasciarti alla felle, ed io seguire uer l'India fuggire accio' t'incan-

op nel suo grave esilio fugga il uicin periglio spora Reina, perra chi piange sul ma-
 tin uide la sera Dal proceloso mar di tanti guai al mio lor quasi ab-
 sorto le le promesse tue spirano homai Aue dolci di speme, e di con-forto.
Scena xi. Sabari. ogni forte guerriero che preggio fama e che l'honori
 Sabari. Tarnace.
 Doriclea.
 cura hor s' inuia lo tentat d'esser primiero sal- tor delle mura e tu sig-

Fig. 59 La Doriclea, page 30.

31

ch'auido sei di lode non ti uogli colà raiudo, e prode. *Var.* Troppo habia combat-

tuto la ragione d'Eurinda à pro de parthi troppo il: D'Amor seguaci controgl'Amici

nostri ah! segni di perfidia habia noi mostri mira il: sabari mira qui dell'Ar-

menia ogni splendor raccolto. conosci il: questo uolto? Ecco qui Doriclea.

Fig. 60. La Doriclea, page 31.

Act II

53 14

mile il mio nemico inchini perché negli ch'io bacci o' Re su o' l'ime, quella
 man gene - rosa è così forte che fabbrica i sepolchri anco alla morte con l'erpenti di
 gloria all'alto cime! non uò del tuo valore, sudditi orre qui, e figi
 com' amico t'abbraccio al petto stringo sen' di duea morcar di sangue a presso
 tua condanza in martiale aringo. Doppo il signor m'honorì

non merita no non merita privato Cavalier tanti fauori Dell'Anima tua
 pregi meri - teusti l'ono d'averer riueriti in sin da Regi:
 Di Athenea parevero ogni hora più da gli occhi tuoi uitali m'auenta m'a
 uenta accuti strali Doni. che non concentro il ferro pigra mano in que
 sono che putre un or hostile: trafiggi uia trafiggi arida e presta che

Fig. 61. La Doriclea, page 53.

54

parli: Dori-clea se uoglie arretra commolte i tradimenti A-

nimo uile. Sarai de miei piu cari e se natura auara non

t'adoro di Dia - dema il Crine ne ti diede alla destra aurato pondo la me gl'han-

rai di tanti Regni abbondo. Doria. D'oferte così ualto gratie ti

rendo immense non uoglio ch'auri per mi ricardin la strada, cui de' terni-

Sure. o magnanimo ho-

ta uasi al Verubro scetro della mia destra e questo iuda. o magnanimo ho-

roi dona gl'imperi l'un l'altro rifiuta. Eur. la signoria dell'almè a lui do-

giace. Aria. Più che ti mostri di uirtu fecondo più ti preggio et ammira.

Anfianne e sempr'el franco rami la gloria trasformata in Vir.

Doria. Eur. Princi possa gentile m'ofro tuo Cavaliero lo t'accetto il

Fig. 62. La Doriclea, page 54.

Act III

Doriclea:

Se ben mai non mi vi - de Que - sta cit - tà, pur te - mo D'es - ser ri - co - no -
 -sciu - ta, on - de m'in - vo - lo À le re - gie a - da - nan - ze, e a - com - pa -
 gna - ta Da mil - le gra - vi, et a - gi - ta - te cu - re, Tra so - li -
 ta - rij, e ta - ci - ti sog - gior - ni, Trà re - mo - ti si - len - tij io
 trag - go, io trag - go i gior - ni. Eu - rin - da, Eu - rin - da, e qua - le A - mo -
 ro - sa fol - lia nel pet - to al - ber - ghi? Ti de - lu - de un fan - ciul - lo, e di - spe -
 ra - te So - no le tue spe - ran - ze in me - zo à l'on - da A - ri - da,

7 6 4
 6
 16 6 7 6

Fig. 63. *La Doriclea*. From Rosand, *Opera in Seventeenth-Century Venice*, p. 637.

Ah ple-be de-gli De-i, Su-per-bis - si-mi_A-stre-i. In ve-ce di por-
 -tar-le à lui se-cre-te A l'ae-re le get-ta-te, e di-sper-de-te? Nel-le con-ca-ve
 rup-pi Eo-lo vi ser-ri, V'an-no-din sem-pre ad'a-man-ti-ni fer-ri. —
 Ohi-mè Ti-gra-ne, ohi-mè, del-l'em-pio_As-si-ro Pri-gion io vi ri-mi-ro,

Fig. 64. *La Doriclea*. Rosand 641.

Do-ve lo scu-do, do-ve lo scu-do e l'ha-sta, Chi mi da l'ar - mi ò là, Ri - tor-ni in li-ber

tà Il mio ca - ro si-gno - re, La-scia-lo, la-scia-lo tra-di-to - re.

Che va - neg - gio in - fe - li - ce? e quai mi

det - ta Fu - ne - sti au - gu - ri il duol? la spe - me si - a De

7 6 †

l'e - gro spit - to mio me - di - ca pi - a.

[54]

Fig. 65. *La Doriclea*. Rosand 642.

Ma qual o-blio di Le - te m'al-let-ta j sen-si al son-no e à la quie-te? I lu-mi,

ur - ne del pian - to, Stan - chi di la - gri - mar — l'an - go - scie mi - e, Di mil - le

fi - ri in sen la - scia - no, la - scia - no il di - e.

7 6

Fig. 66. *La Doriclea*. Rosand 643.

Atto Terzo. Scena I.^{ma} 76

Giardini.
Doriclea.

Se ben mai non mi uide questa Città, pur torno d'aver ricono- sciuta
 onde m'inuola à le Regie adunanze è accompagnata da mille grauiet
 aggrato cure tra soli- tarij è taciti soggiorni tra remoti si-
 lentij io traggo io traggo pianti. Eurinda è quale amo-
 rosa folla nel petto a' borchij: ti seclude un fanciulo è dispe- rato sono le tue po-
 ranze in mezzo a' foglie arida: sarai sempre è sibi- bonda.
 A che bado? à che penso? e la memoria puote esercitarsi in cose cot-
 ti leggere, è uane è abbandonar l'igrane è fuggi: mi s'è il Nuro
 chime fuggilo dico egli è nato nemico In danno è io grido non

Fig. 67. La Doriclea, page 36.

77

don non pon gl'accenti miei non pon gl'accenti miei giunger due tu sei.

Accompagnamen

Accompagnamen

Accompagnamen

Accompagnamen

Deh voi. *f.* correte uci. *f.* Arrivate ni pro go - al

mio Conso - te o' uenti - que - te que - te que - te uoci. *f.* *da len*

Fig. 68. La Doriclea, page 77.

78

— *ti* —
 Ah plebe degli dei super-
 tullimi d'irei in uoce di portarla in secreto a l'aere la gettato è dipor-
 dote! nello concaue ruggi d'olui serri u'annodin sempre adamentini

79

serri. ohime Tigrane ohime Dell'empio Avaro prigione io ti rimiro dou'è lo

Fig. 69. La Doriclea, page 78.

79

f *scudo* *ff* *è latta chi mi da larai o la ritorni in libertà il mio proffignere*

f *lascialo* *ff* *tradito-re.* *che un'aggio infu-lice è quai mi det-*
ta funeri auguri il duole la speme sia de l'egro spirito mio medican

Fig. 70. La Doriclea, page 79.

80

zia. ma qual oblio di leto m'alletta i sensi al sonno e a la quiete?

i lumi arno del quanto stanchi di lagrimar - l'angoscie mie di mille

Fig. 71. La Doriclea, page 80.

impor tuna > tema ui sconsiglia! uacciar' uia, uia, uia, uia, Sacciate che non gusto già

mai timido Core le dolcezze d'A- more Sabari: oh-

me. Doric: quini' a che ueni? è quale agghiacciato timor ti fiede il

petto: Sab.: Un mio fiere nemico d'arco armato mi segue p' rapirmi la

uita bella bella Guerniana aita a'ra. Doric: Dou' è costui lue-

Fig. 72. La Doriclea, page 81.

fiori in ten lasciano lasciano il diè. Scena. ii. Sab.: Oser-

Sabari. Doriclea. uai che qui uenne la mia bella Re- ina è qui uongh'io p' narargli la

perve el pianto mio ma l'ho io non la miro Doue il piede drizzo'

Fig. 73. La Doriclea, page 82.

Doric. *And. Mos. to*
 e Parthia, o pur Armena? tu tu quella sei che m'ardi co'
 raggi de tuoi lumi mia Reina mia Dixa, e mi consumi so' che da te
 Doric. *And. Mos. to*
 concentra nel pit' cupo del seno si temerarie uoci ui!
 Livino Plebeo di cento morti red. *accelerato* sen hai lin
 fame girto a par del uolto adusto se mai piu tanto ardisci spegnerai con il
 languo il foco orsono et ogni accento ti sara mortale perfidissimo seruo
 Scena. iii.
 è dislo-alo. Sabari. *Perfidissimo seruo*

Fig. 74. La Doriclea, page 84.

Esinda. Ben mio! lontano sempre da me dimori? vuoi tu forse ch'eu-
Doriclea. mio for?
 rinda proua forza crudel? De tuoi rigori? t'amo piu che me stesso.
Es. bramo eterna mente esser ti aggerito. o' fortuna nata fortu-
 nata Aman te se ti detalle Amoro note si Dolcissimo languente

Fig. 75. *La Doriclea*, page 95.

re reti dell'are Amore: il: noto si: dolci al mio languente

Co-re che temi tu mia vita esser da me schernita? ga-

uenti ch' il mio foco Anima mia sia finto? ah! nezzorella, io son pur troppo a-

uinto e chi m'auirò in testimonio in uso chiedilo il: a tue bel-

lezze re puote Oro simular lardore con il loro splendore m'hanno astigliato

si ch' amore ughesse, rimirar non poss' io fuor che le tue divine Dolo

Dolo il: mio. le tu m'ami io v'adoro se per me

miu' o' bella io per te moro. Dimmi ma dimmi il uer caro il: il mio

Cioe gli occhi il: tuoi mi feriro fosti il: Correo belli mi fatti loro?

Daue. si fui negar nol uoglio o' mio Tesoro. Dunque per peniten-

Fig. 76. La Doriclea, page 96.

97

za delle tue colpe baccina mè la bocca i bacci accoglierà l'Anima Amante è
 l'alma conosciuta il lor valore gl'apporta rā medicina al Core.

Scena. xii. Orin. *Cecoi trudi facciati* Arta. *Ah femina*
 Orindo. Artabano.
 Eurinda. Doriclea.

sema disonestà donzella indegna donā d'esser nata Reina, e d'esser uita
 così ti tu gl'Auti immiti? o pur così procura d'incenerir mal-

aggiar lor trofai l'impudico tuo Amar con fiamma impura: io che predo la
 gloria sogliore la una che dell'infamia è fatta preda? o o' del sangue d'incec-

Scena. xiii. Tigrane. *chi mi*
 Tigrane. Doriclea. Eurinda.
 Artabano. Orinda.

Dor. *Fermati trudi - tor fermati* Eur. *o' pèc.*
 Artab. *qui congiure son morte? egli è de miei* Tigr. *Ah! forsi, ah furia, ah*

Fig. 77. La Doriclea, page 97.

98

maestro horido, e immondo homai: di tue lascivie è pieno il mondo ohime
 sei tu signore? Euv troppo son quel misero tradito dalla tua
 sedo inganatrice e rea perfida di Doriclea
 perfida Ligr. - re? ch'ascolto: meraviglie queste
 mare, e Ligr. Doriclea? o' che prodigy in femine

si tramutano gl'humini? A me à me son note le tue colpe im-
 pure ne le puoi tu negar, che la difesa del tuo uogo le regere, o le palora.
 Dovic. A cori enormi accuse gela: il sangue repente è impetra il cor pa-
 dico ed inno - cente. o' cari Amor di crudele
 così di tu mi schernisci: così di tu mi ferisci? Ecco Doriclea

Fig. 78, *La Doriclea*, page 98.

99

Dole dell'Adultero tuo del tuo nemico prigioniero il marito sempre

e godi. O Ciel! di di Zigrane? Ammutisci malugia.

Zav. Zigr.

io che lo goder tra delitio, e paci l'Amante usoppa - cor del Regno

99

Al'acci

mio uorrai ch'io mora? Ammutisci malugia, ma surto errante, e frido con le ce-

ratte, e con la Zede ardenti tanto l'aggitore fra gl'impudichi Amori

che parli ohi-

e con l'arue d'horrori lo renderò funerti i tuoi conten- ti

Fig. 79. La Doriclea, page 99.

sono i tuoi studij egreggi / Szar p'humili e calpestrar i Regi.

Ligr. Vado perversa uado a ferriet alla morte / la giustizia del ciel uendica-

trice sarà un di de miei torti o traditrice. / Doriclea. Eurinda.

Dor. Nelle uene gettate disciolgari b'humor uoci gridate Ligrane

- in che peccai? / Dell'innocenza mia senti il le grida

Scena. xiiii.

Fig. 80. La Doriclea, page 100.

io ti fui sempre fida sempre te alo amai Signare in che peccai?

Amerà prima la natura il vuoto pria delle sfere arrestera il moto che

rea di colpa tali sia già mai Signare in che peccai?

Cur. La prudenza raffreni uolo - rova Re i - na il tuo cordoglio

Doric. non ti conobbi né nell'habito mento Dolci - sono Mari-

ta errò la mano e lei l'occhio inganni uno uirto ne mio di tradigion la

pinse oh Dio contro di te a di - fera del Re D'accusarmi nocente di larcini di

letti con fallaci argo menti ragion non hai Signare

Scena. xv.
Curinda. Cupido tradi - tore co -

si ingannasti un core con qual arti nauelle di crudeltà la liber - tà usurpi alle don

Fig. 81. La Doriclea, page 101.

102

zelle? Riedo it. al nodo mio primiero lascio l'ombra e seguo il vero cielo

it. al nodo mio primiero lascio l'ombra e seguo il vero.

Rit.^o

Rit.^o

Rit.^o

Rit.^o

Rotta chieder ben io marcade all' idol mio - o stille abbondanti, e pronte di dolce humor, il mio ardar i pevai d'arida fonte Riedo it. al nodo mio primiero lascio l'ombra e seguo il vero Riedo it. al nodo mio primiero lascio l'ombra

è seguo il vero Sarnace. Eurinda. sventurato it. ti

grace duna volubil zina miserabil it. esempio i miei natali

Scena. XVI. Sar. Sarnace. Eurinda.

Fig. 82. La Doriclea, page 102.

Veremonda

Example 5.8a Francesco Cavalli, *Veremonda l'amazzone di Aragona* (1652?3)
1.6, Veremonda, "Delle Amazzoni forse" (I-Vnm, It. IV, 407 [=9931], 23v-24r)

Veremonda:

1 Del - le A - maz - zo - ni for - se Il nu - me - ro è pres - crit to? In

4 mar ti - al con - flit - to Più d'u - na I - si - cra - tea Ro - ma già scor - se Non
[San - gui - gno]

7 mi spa - ven - ta il lam - po Del - le squa - dre guer - rie - re, Ne l'ar - co mi at - te - ri - sce del -
[spa - de] [lo - stral]

10 l'em - pie tur - be ar - cie - re, Ne men di ac - ces - sa pal - la ful - mi - nan
6

13 te ro - vi - na. Don - na son mà re - gi - na.

Fig. 83. *Veremonda*. From Heller, 1995, 586.

Example 5.8b Francesco Cavalli, *Veremonda l'amazzone di Aragona* (1652/3)
 1.6, "Donzelle all'armi" (I-Vnm, It. IV, 407 [=9931], 27v-28r)

23 Veremonda:
 Don - zel - le, all' ar - mi, all' ar - mi, all' ar - mi, all -

25
 ar - mi Già las - cia - ste le gon - ne; Già già fat - te guer -

27
 rie - re. Scor - da - te vi gl'A - mo - ri, e di es - ser Don - ne

Fig. 85. *Veremonda*. Heller 588.

29

Fig. 84. *Veremonda*. Heller 589.

Handwritten musical score for the first system of the piece. It features a vocal line with lyrics and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "Delle Amazzoni forse il numero e prescritto in".

Handwritten musical score for the second system of the piece. It features a vocal line with lyrics and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "martial con lieto più duna scierate a Roma già scorse Non mi spaventa il campo delle squadre guerriere ne l'arco mi avvisce dell' tempe turbe Arriere ne men diaccesa palla fulminar te ro li = na Donna An ma Regi na no, no, son tua sei mio e Joung n' andrai voglio esser reco anch' io".

Fig. 86. Veremonda, "Delle Amazzoni forse."

Handwritten musical score for the first system of "Delle Amazzoni forse". The system consists of four staves. The top two staves are for the piano accompaniment, and the bottom two staves are for the vocal line. The lyrics are: "on zelle all' armi" and "gia lasciate le donne gia gia fare le miete scordate".

Handwritten musical score for the second system of "Delle Amazzoni forse". The system consists of four staves. The top two staves are for the piano accompaniment, and the bottom two staves are for the vocal line. The lyrics are: "non e di esse donne". The system number "25" is written in the top right corner.

Fig. 87. Veremonda, "Delle Amazzoni forse," cont'd

Artemisia

Fig. 88. *Artemisia* Libretto Cover. Scanned Image pdf derived from the Center for Research Libraries.

This image shows the top half of a handwritten musical score on aged paper. The page number '61' is written in the top right corner. The score consists of several staves. The top two staves are vocal lines, with the first staff starting with the word 'Dura' and the second with 'Dura'. Below these are three staves for drums, labeled 'D. Trombe' and 'D. Trombe' with 'giamina' written below. The bottom two staves are vocal lines with lyrics in Italian: 'Desta il dain bar' and 'De ne an' a' d' a' nennem d' a' n' ad'. The notation includes various rhythmic values and bar lines.

This image shows the bottom half of the handwritten musical score. It continues the notation from the top half, featuring drum parts and vocal lines. The drum parts are labeled 'D. Trombe' and 'D. Trombe' with 'giamina' written below. The vocal lines have lyrics: 'bar - a' amil d' a' n' triumph' and 'Desta il dain bar'. The notation includes various rhythmic values and bar lines.

Fig. 89. Artemisia. page 61.



Fig. 90. Artemisia. page 62.

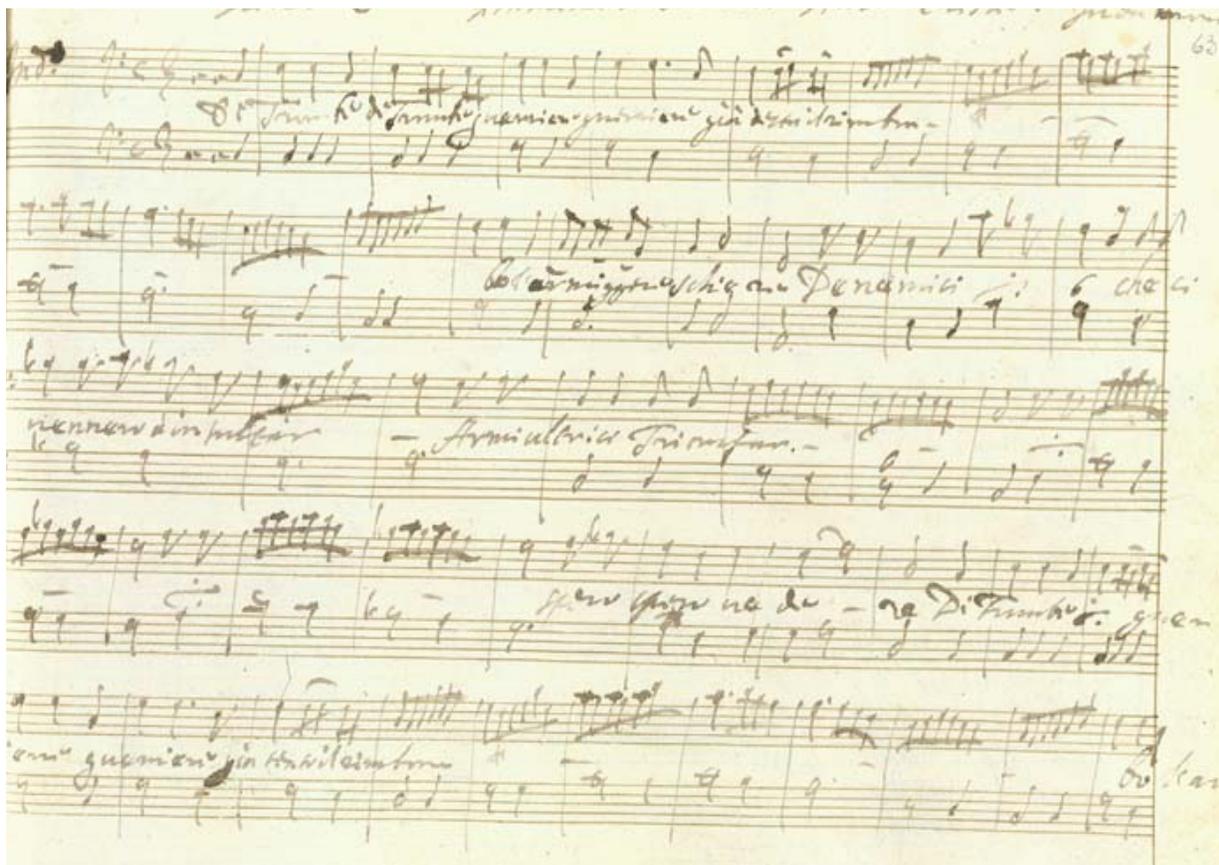


Fig. 91. Artemisia. page 63.

Photo images of *L'Artemisia* derived from Schultz Score, 79-82

Scena VI
INDAMORO, ARTEMISIA, EURILLO, NISO, ERISBE, [Eco I, Eco II].

[Aria] *

[Violino I]

[Violino II]

[Viola]

[INDAMORO]

[Continuo]

Di trom-be guer-rie-re, di trom-be guer-rie

10

re già de-sta il rim-bom-bo l'ar-mi-ge-re schie-

* See Appendix 4, p. 176.

Fig. 92. *Artemisia*. From Schultz, page 79.

80

18

-re de' ne-mi - ci che ci ven - ne-ro a in-sul - tar. Ar-mi-ul-tri - ci tri-on-

25

-far, tri-on - far spe-ro, spe - ro,

Fig. 93. Artemisia. Schultz 80.

25

-far, tri-on - far spe-ro, spe - ro,

32

spe-ro, spe-ro ve - de - re. Di trom-be guer - rie - re, di

Fig. 94. Artemisia. Schultz 81.

42

trom - be guer - rie - - - re già de - sta il rim - bom -

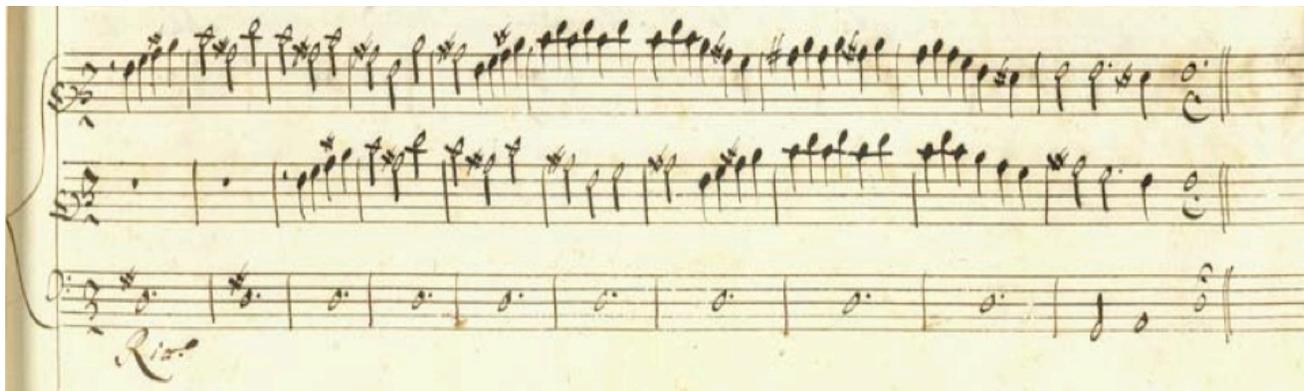
49

Ritornello

- bo l'ar - mi - ge - re schie - re.

[Dal segno al Fine]

Fig. 95. Artemisia. Schütz 82.

Erismena*Fig. 96. Erismena. Sinfonia.*

Cri: Quali dentro al mio Regno sospitok rimbombò d'io sonar d'alta letizia

Scena XIII Argippo Erimante.
Segno.

Sic Allegrezza che

Arg: Come nave Signor Liette d'opre Oriste il grade e genero

Orso Duce nella Reggia tua Corte hor hora e' giunto. (He d'fel)

Sic apparta! eccolo appunto

Scena XVI. Oriste Erimante Argippo.

Ha pur cielo cortese favorito i miei uok Io pur mi inchino al gran

Fig. 97. Erismena. Accompanied Recitative.

L'Elena

Fig. 98. Frontispiece for the *Elena* Libretto (1659) From *Wissner 49*.

6 Lotta

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

8
ecco il lo-co,

11

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

11
Ve- di la bel-la, che lot-tan-do sta.

Fig. 99. *L'Elena*. Wissner 195.

5

Per. *su.*

Tes. *su.*

Men. *su.*
Chim'im-pri-gio-na? Ahi-me!

El. Chimira-pi-sce? Ahi-me! Ahi-me!

Astia. Fer-ma-te, fer-

Eur. Fer-ma-te, fer-ma-te o

B.C.

9

Per.

Tes.

Men.

El.

Ast. ma-te, o la: co-si SirubbanPrincipesseAita,Ait-a, a-i- ta, o Cie-li, o Cieli, o Stel- le.

Eur. la, o la: co-si SirapisconDongelle, A-i- ta, A- it-a, o Cieli, o Stel- le.

B.C.

Fig. 100. L'Elena. Wissner 197-98.

84
Astiana sa
Chi mi rub- ba__ chi__ mi to- glie,___ Chi m'ac- co___ glie___

87
nel__ su- o sen. Son qua, son quali-ber-ta, e spe- di- ta Bra- mo anch'io d'es-

90
ser ra- pi- ta, Per go- der___ un__

93
di__ se__ ren. Chi mi rub- ba,___ chi___ mi to- glie,___

96
chi m'ac- co___ glie___ nel___ su- o sen.

#

Fig. 101. L'Elena. Wissner 199-200.

APPENDIX B

Images of contracts for Chapter IV.

12

g. Ste. in thera

Passarelli
 Helena ^{Passarelli} & thya di recitare l'esperenda
 anno nel Reato di S. Corrado nell'gera, che deve in
 esse rappresentar in thera, d'endo conff. con p'nta
 alle p'one, e alle reite di tutta p'ntalica, e d'li.
 genta ad ogni piacere, et requisitione de signori
 interstat; con un'auliche aleno; et all'
 p'nto gl'ff. in mare. Anse Corano, et thura
 d'udo; et il f. mano Fantini interstat nella
 go' opera si obligano di contribuire alla medes.
 ma d' requisitione delle sue un'itate fakehe
 doble celtanta d'ad un'otto buro; quali gli
 erano reborate nella nel caso delle reite
 et che finto il canone le con ff. Helena
 nella intieramente sodifato; et che dette
 parti niendevolmente si obligano in ogni p'nt
 anglo, o qualia forma; et d'la presente
 se erano fake due d' cantone delle parti?

{ Io Man Anse Corano affermo q' di sopra
 { Io Heise Duodo affermo q' di sopra
 { Io mano Fantini affermo quanto d' sopra
 { Io Helena Passarelli affermo quanto
 { di sopra.

Fig. 102. Helena Passarelli Contract. Author's photo copy of original document. Archivio di Stato Venezia, Busta 194, f. 12

APPENDIX C

Images for Chapter V and VI.

L'Argia

N. 3

L'ARGIA
 Dramma musicale, rappresentato à
 Insprugg
ALLA MAESTA
 della Serenissima
CRISTINA,
REGINA
 Di
 Suezia &c.



JNSPRUGG,
 Per Hieronymo Agricola, Anno 1655.

INTERLOCVTORI.

Teti } Prologo *Clemente Zaccanti*
 Amore } *Giuseppe Zaccanti*
 Atamante Rè di Cipro. *Padre Costo de faccia tutta la Musica*
 Dorisbe figlia d'Atamante. *Romana Cortesina di porcia la meda*
 Feraspe Principe di Negroponte. *sin. Stella Ricci et caporale*
 Aceste scudiero di Feraspe. *sin. Poligiano di len*
 Argia Principessa di Negroponte, Sorella di Feraspe in abi-
 to di Maschio, chiamata Laurindo. *altes. Danoso*
 Lucimoro figlio d'Atamante, creduto Selino figlio del Rè
 di Tracia. *monello Caporale*
 Solimano Aio di Selino. *Don Giulio Proce*
 Dema vecchia Nutrice di Dorisbe. *Dia nell'accio bullese*
 Lurcano buffone, seruo d'Atamante.
 Filaura cantatrice. *Giuseppe Castrol. di len in op.*
 Alceo Eunuco seruo di Filaura. *Clemente Madonna nom.*
 Osmano vecchio inabito di Pastore, Aio di Lucimoro. *sin. Proce*
 Vn Bambino figlio di Lucimoro, e d'Argia. *sin. Proce*
 Soldato della fortezza di Salamina. *Don Giulio Proce*
 Venere. *Tommaso Castrol fratello di len*
 L'Innocenza. *Giuseppe Castrol. sin. Proce*
 Coro di Marinari. *tra. Proce di len*
 Coro di Soldati.
 Coro di Numi.

Il Colonnello: Barycecrina matematica ple. in adire
sin. Proce
Padre Costo Giacuita Composit. LA
foella musicu

Figure 76. Front Page and List of Characters. Diego P. Lequile, *L'Argia Dramma musicale rappresentato a Insprugg*. Libretto. Staats- und Stadtbibliothek. <https://reader.digitale-sammlungen.de//resolve/display/bsb11231957.html>

La Finta Pazza.

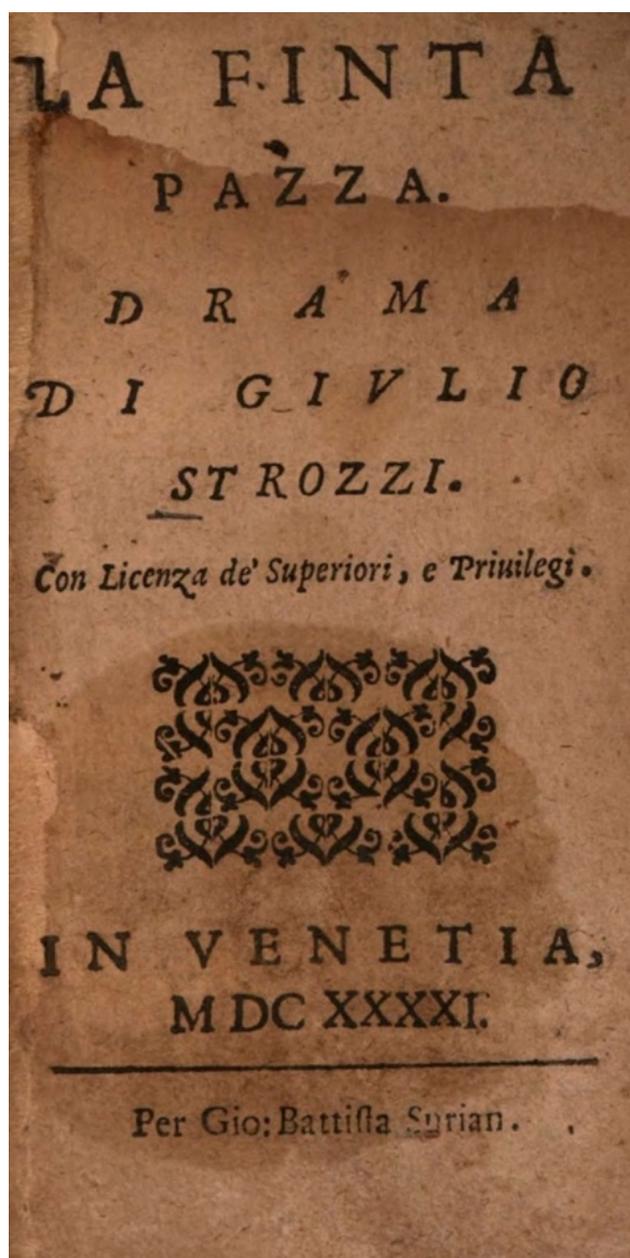


Fig. 77. Libretto front page for *La Finta Pazza*, Münchener Digitalisierungs Zentrum Digitale Bibliothek, Bayrischer Staatsbibliothek <https://daten.digitalisierungs-zentrum.de/~db/0004/bsb00047961/images/>



Fig. 104. Giacomo Torelli "Isola disabilitata" 1642. Milesi, Giacomo Torelli 103.
Here we see the sky opens up as a chariot, containing a God, descends to the stage.

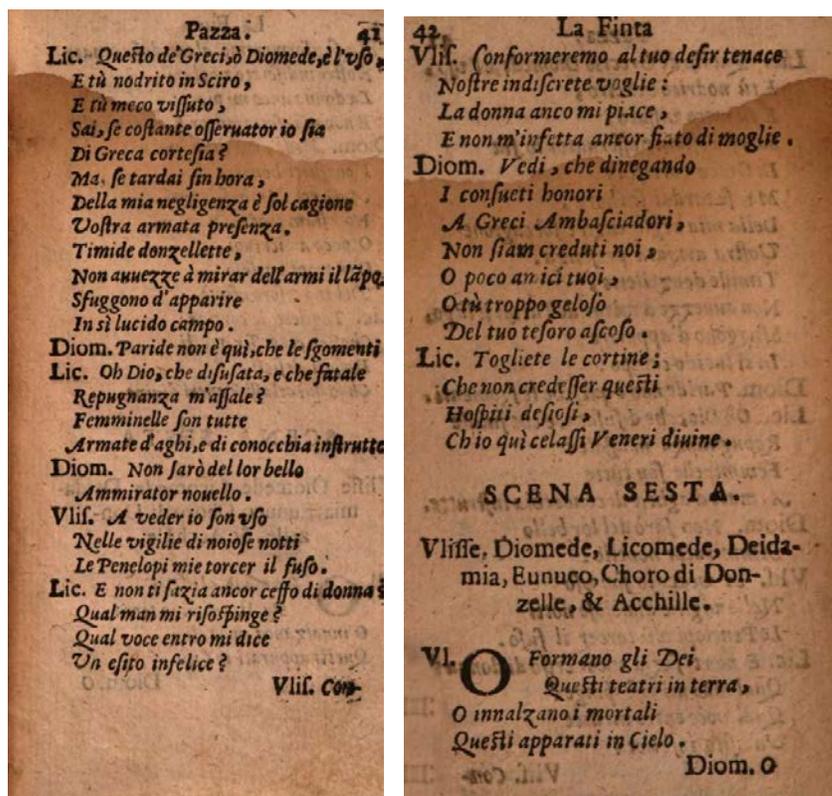


Fig. 79. La Finta Pazza, pages 41 and 42.

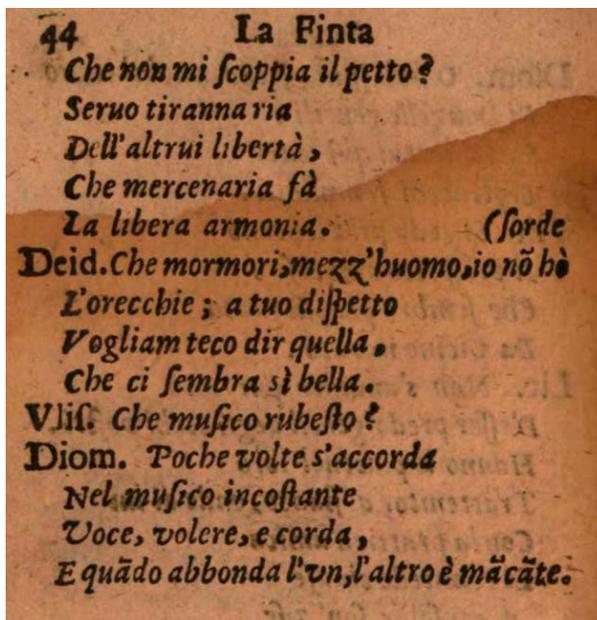


Fig. 80. La Finta Pazza, page 44.

Pazza. 75

SCENA DECIMA.
 Deidamia, Eunuco, e Diomede,
 Choro d'Isolani.

De. **G**Verrieri, all'armi, all'armi:
 All'armi, dico, all'armi,
 Oue stolti fuggite?

Ch. Io ben fuggir volea: ma tu più snello
 Il piede hai del cervello.

Deid. La fiera d'Erimanto,
 L'Erinne Acarontea,
 Il Piton di Tessaglia,
 La Vipera Lernea,
 Ci sfidano à battaglia.

Ch. Bellicosa pazzia.

Deid. Mugge il Toro di Pindo,
 Rugge il Nemeo Leone,
 Vdite, vdite Cerbero, che latra.

Eun. Io temo anco à mirarla.

Deid. Volete, che v'insegni,
 Ingegno di discipoli di Marte,
 A brā dir l'hasta, à maneggiar lo scudo?
 A ferir, a vibrar, di punta, in giro,
 Di dritto, e di rouescio,
 D 2 Questa

Deidamia:

Guer-rie - ri, al - l'ar - mi, al - l'ar - mi, al-l'ar-mi di - co, al - l'ar - mi,

O - ve, stol - ti fug gi - te? [Coro] La fie - ra d'E - ri - man - to, L'E - rin - ne - A - che - son -

- te - a. Il pi - ton di Tes - sa - glia, La vi - pe - ra ler - ne - a Ci sfi - da - no a bat -

- ta - glia, a bat - ta - glia. ci sfi - da - no a bat - ta - glia. [Diomede]

Fig. 81. La Finta Pazza, page 75, next to a copy of the section in the score from Rosand, "Operatic Madness," 249.

76 **La Finta**
 Questa fulminea spada?
 A farsi piazza, e strada
 Soura i corpi nemici? ecco vn fendente
 Come in testa si dona.

Ch. Lontano, ah, più lontano:
 Ch'oue è legghier l'ingegno,
 E' pesante la mano.

Diom. Specie non è più ria
 Degli stolti maneschi;
 E col pazzo, che dà, sauiò non treschi.

Deid. Sù stringete le file,
 Formate lo squadrone,
 Abbassate le picche.
 Soldato dormiglione,
 Camerata d' Achille,
 Destati, ch' il nemico
 Di quì poco è lontano.
 Armi, armi, armi alla mano.

Eun. Mi finsi addormentato:
 Ma contro vn pazzo desto
 Poco val finto sonno;
 Che se vegli, ò se dormi, ei t'è molesto.

Deid. Fermate, o là, fermate,
 Oh Dio, silenzio, oh Dio,
 Tacete, homai, tacete,
 Chetateui, chetateui, che chiede

Handwritten musical score for the opera *La Finta Pazza* by Nicola Ursula (1650). The score is written on multiple staves with lyrics in Italian. The lyrics are: "Guerrisci all'armi: all'armi: dice all'armi: me non fugirò: lo ben fugirò: la mia mi è nel petto il picca del cervello: manda l'innocenza il reon di s'agghia la piperia l'enea ci: non a baccata a baccata e non a baccata: Sù stringete le file: ma lo squadrone: abbassate le picche: soldato dormiglione: camerata d' Achille: destati: el nemico di quì poco è lontano".

Fig. 82. *La Finta Pazza*, page 76, next to the Nicola Ursula score of 1650.

Deidamia:

Ar-mi, ar-mi, ar-mi, ar-mi al-la ma-no, ar-mi al-la ma-no. ar-mi, ar-mi, ar-mi ar-mi al-la

Eunuco:

Ar-mi, ar-mi, ar-mi, ar-mi al-la ma-no.

Diomede:

Ar-mi, ar-mi.

Coro:

Ar - mi, ar - mi.

ma-no, ar-mi, ar-mi, ar-mi, ar-mi al-la ma-no.

ar-mi, ar-mi, ar-mi, ar-mi al-la ma-no.

ar-mi, ar-mi al-la ma-no. ar-mi, ar-mi, ar-mi, ar-mi al-la ma-no.

ar - mi, ar - mi al-la ma - no, ar - mi al-la ma - no. [Eunuco]

Fig. 83. *La Finta Pazza*. Rosand, "Operatic Madness," 250.

Deid. *Armi a la mano Armi a la mano armi armi*

Vion

Armi a la mano Armi a la mano Armi a la mano

Armi a la mano Armi a la mano Armi a la mano

Armi a la mano Armi a la mano Armi a la mano

Armi a la mano Armi a la mano Armi a la mano

oor garbano della voleraige gedi. *Armi a la mano Armi a la mano Armi a la mano*

Oltima bella io sono tu Paride laeno in rapisci mi di altro me =

icno mendi *Armi a la mano* ti picci - ti rap - ti - ti inoerice

met in polta oio e lazar il mio nome el ogni nome da meco

Armi a la mano Armi a la mano Armi a la mano

ma mano dal lungissimo camino d'io (De) con altro mi ri =

vol mantel il pro tonant con unacchioso amant

Vion. *Armi a la mano* Voune Voune Voune ui pa la menda

Prodele *Armi a la mano* Le mescuglio d'amari ele grottesche di gente

Pazza. 77

Il traditor perdono
 Della schernita fede.
 Elena bella io sono,
 Tu Paride Troiano,
 Sù rapisci mi, sù, Ladro melenso,
 Stendi, stendi la mano.
 Ti picchi? ti rannicchi? t'incroicchi?
 Giaccer io volca teco,
 E lasciar il mio Giove,
 Ch'ogni notte stà meco:
 Ma stanco dal lungissimo camino,
 Ch'ei fa dal cielo in terra,
 Mi vi sce souente il grā tonante (dōne,
 Vn sōnacchiofo Amate. Dio. Ab dōne,
 Doue vi va la mente?

Ch. Che mescuglio d'amori?
 Che grottesche di gente?

Deid. Deh dimmi, dimmi il vero,
 Se lo dicesti mai,
 Che fissa pecoraggine ti affale?
 Di che ti marauigli?
 Cutrettola, Frinquello, Ocha, Fruson,
 Barbagianni, Babbuffo:
 Non sò, per quale infuso,
 Ne' miei segreti amori,
 Vro ogn'hora in soggetti

D 3 Piu

te - de. E - le - na bel - la io so - no. Tu Pa - ri - de - la - sci - vo.

Sù, ra - pi - sci - mi sù la - dro me - len - so. Sten - di - sten - di - sten - di - la

ma - no. Ti pic - chi? ti ran - nic - chi? t'in - cro - cic - chi? Gia - cer io

Fig. 84. In this version of the manuscript (the only known extant one) score varies from the 1st printed libretto as can be seen above. The section starting with Deidamia's text *deh dimmi dimmi il vero...* where she names various birds is cut up to her text *canta tu dunque ...* Also, the chorus parts here are given to a single character seen above with the name K(?)nodele.

78 **La Finta**

Più stolidi, e peggiori?
 Non si può più parlare,
 Ognun, à quel ch'io sento,
 Hoggi mi vuol glossare,
 Mi vuol far il comento.
 A stride quiete, dunque,
 Ad intendersi à cenni,
 Alla muta, alla muta,
 Pronta man, occhio presto,
 Quel che diria la lingua, esprima il gesto.

Eun. Fra tanti linguacciuti,
 Sayemo amanti muti?

Diom. Nò per certo, che troppo
 Il silentio fa male
 A canoro animale.

Deid. Canta tu, dunque, canta,
 Ch'io ti presto l'orecchio.

Eun. Non posso senza musici istrumenti
 Accompagnar la parte.

Deid. In questo, amantemio,
 Non posso aiuto darte.

Diom. Non senti anco, non senti
 Que' cembali lontani
 Alla canzon chiamarte.
 Se de' padroni insani
 Non ferni alle richieste,

Pa-

A stri - de quie - te, dun - que, Ad in - ten - der si à cen - ni, Al - la

mu - ta, al - la mu - ta, Pron - ta man, oc - chio pre - sto, Quel che di - ria la lin - gua, quel che di - ria la

lin - gua e - spri - ma il ge - sto. [Eunuco, Diomede, then Uno del Coro]: Ohi mi - que -

Fig. 85. *La Finta Pazzo*. "Operatic Madness" 252. Above is the cut section from the 1650 score.

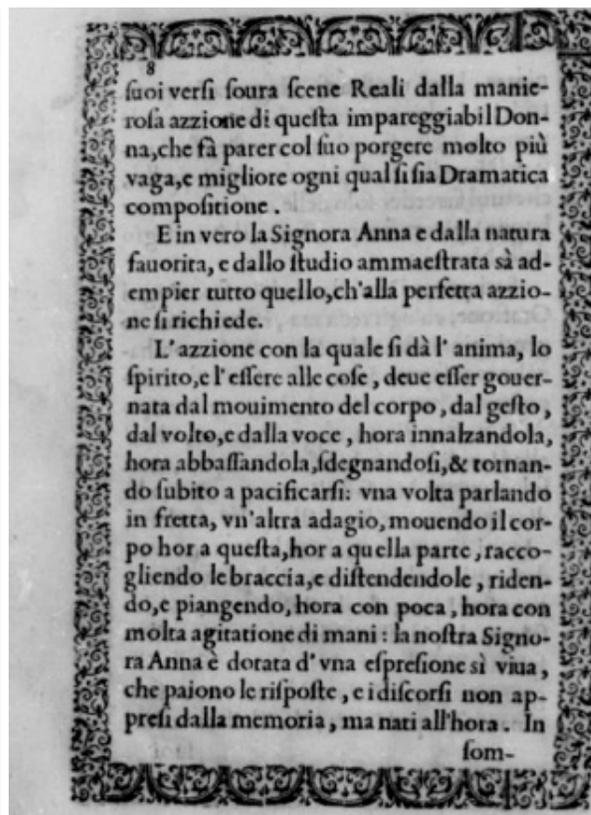


Fig. 87. *Le Glorie della Signora Anna Renzi Romana.*

La Deidamia

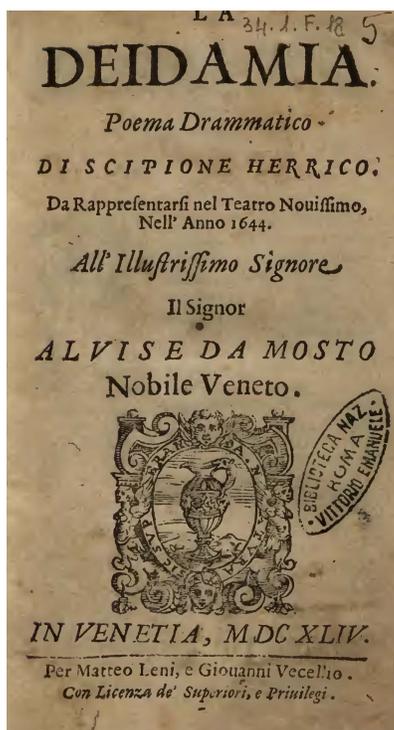


Fig. 88. La Deidamia Libretto Cover. Digital Figures derived from Biblioteca Nazionale Vittorio Emanuele Roma.

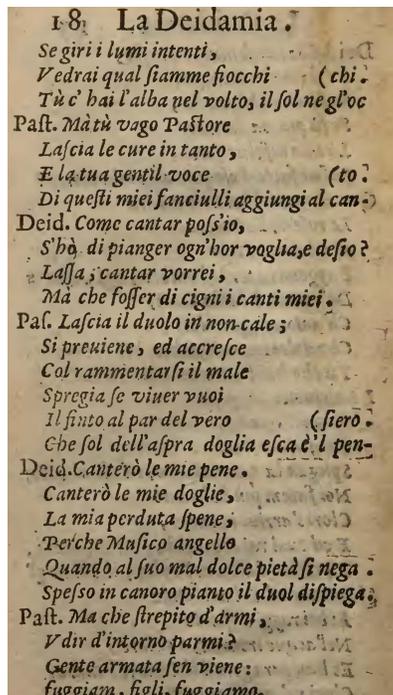
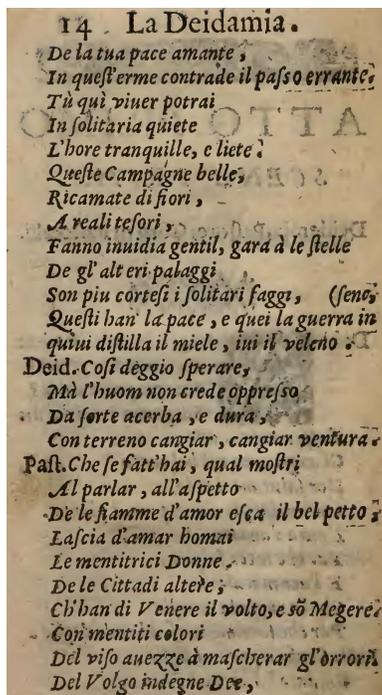


Fig. 89. La Deidamia. Pages 14 and 18.

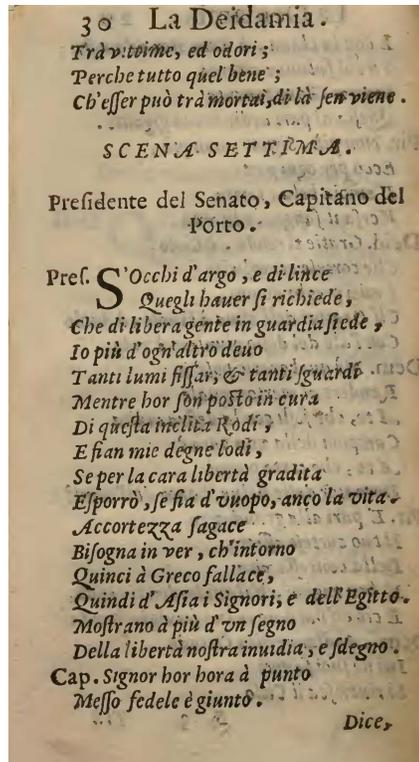
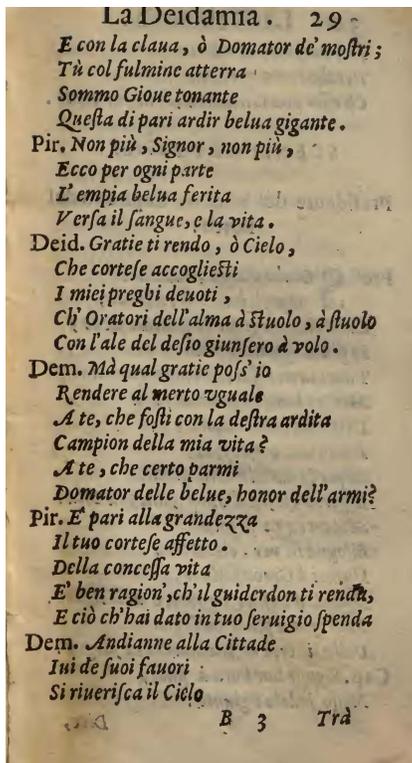


Fig. 90. La Deidamia, pages 29-30,

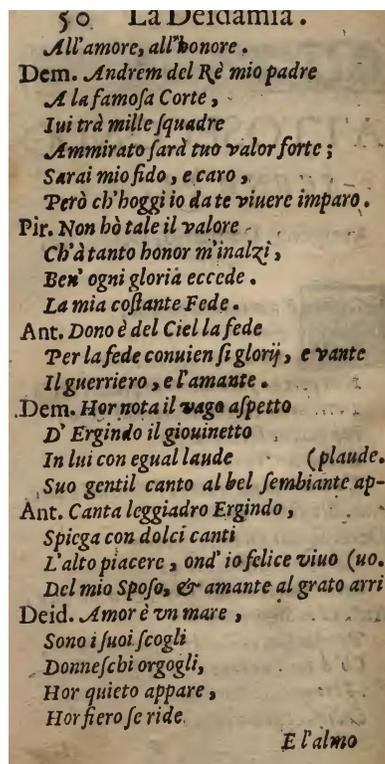
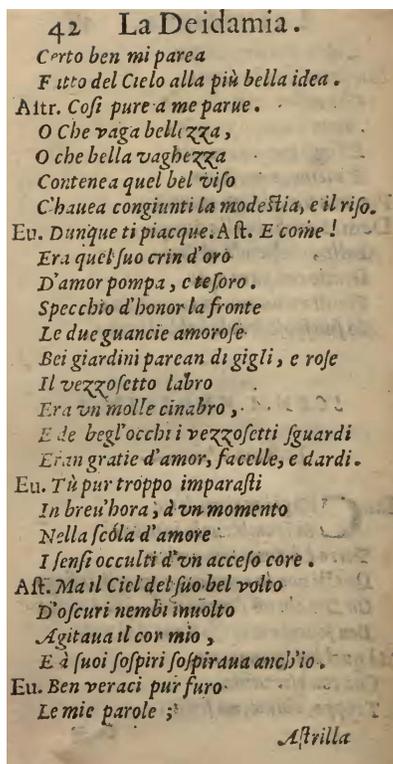


Fig. 91. La Deidamia, pages 42 and 50.

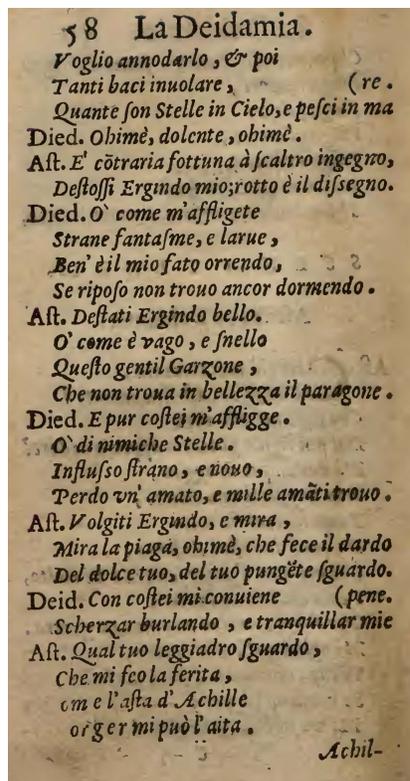
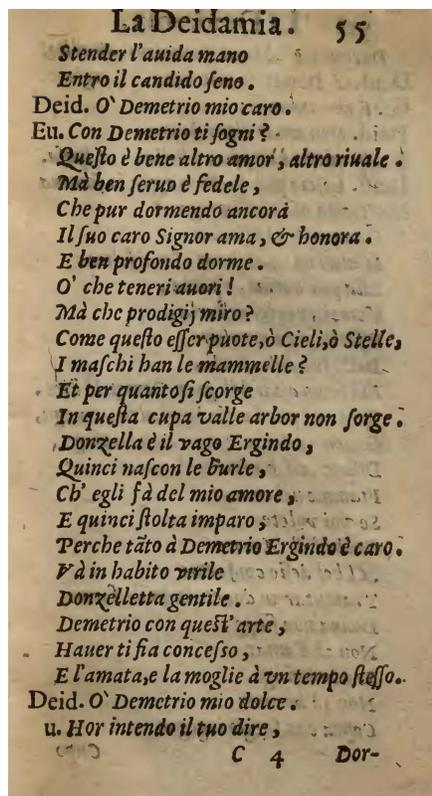


Fig. 92. La Deidamia. Pages 55 and 58.

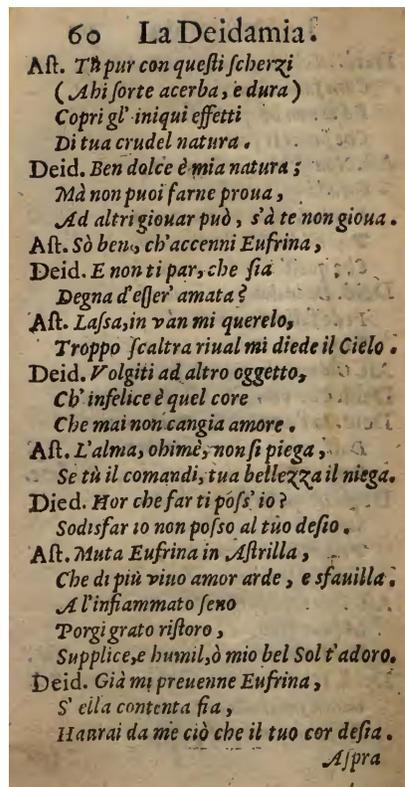
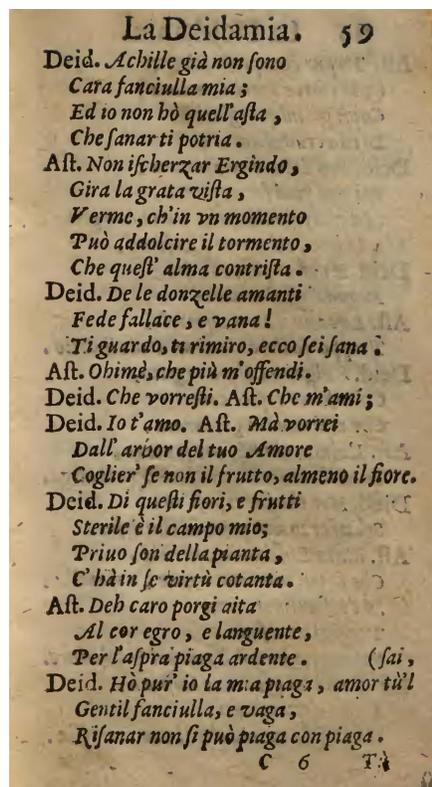


Fig. 93. La Deidamia. Pages 59-60.

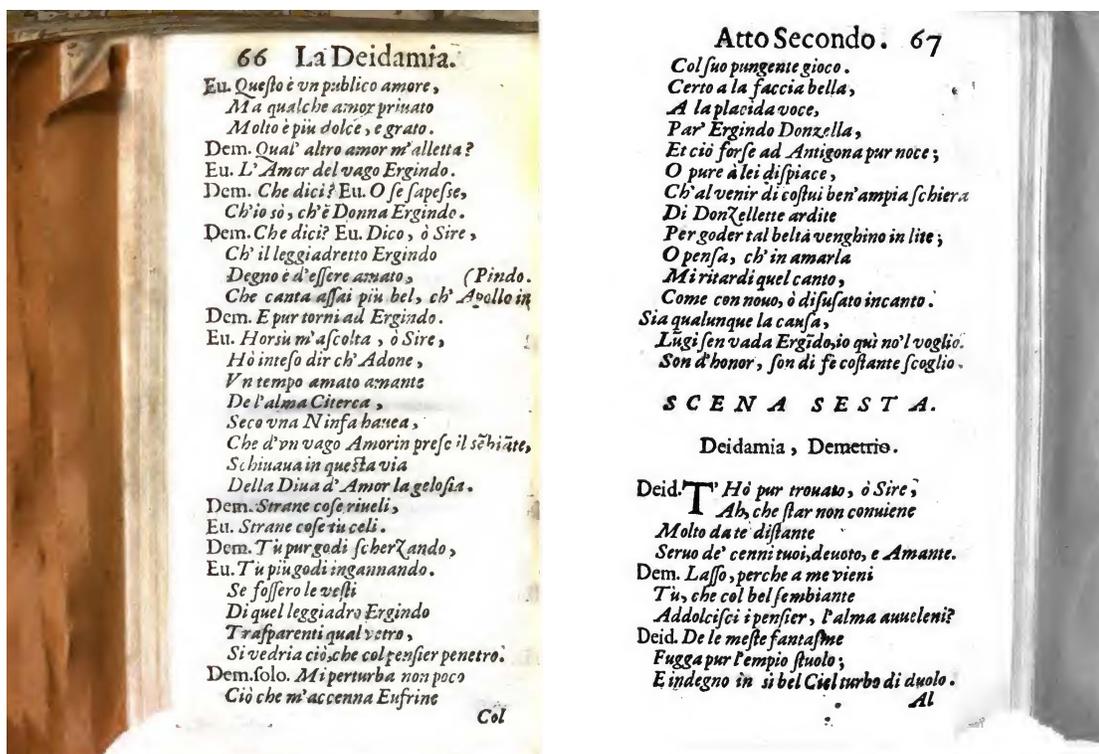


Fig. 105. La Deidamia. Missing pages 66-7 in 1st libretto print. Derived from 2nd print.

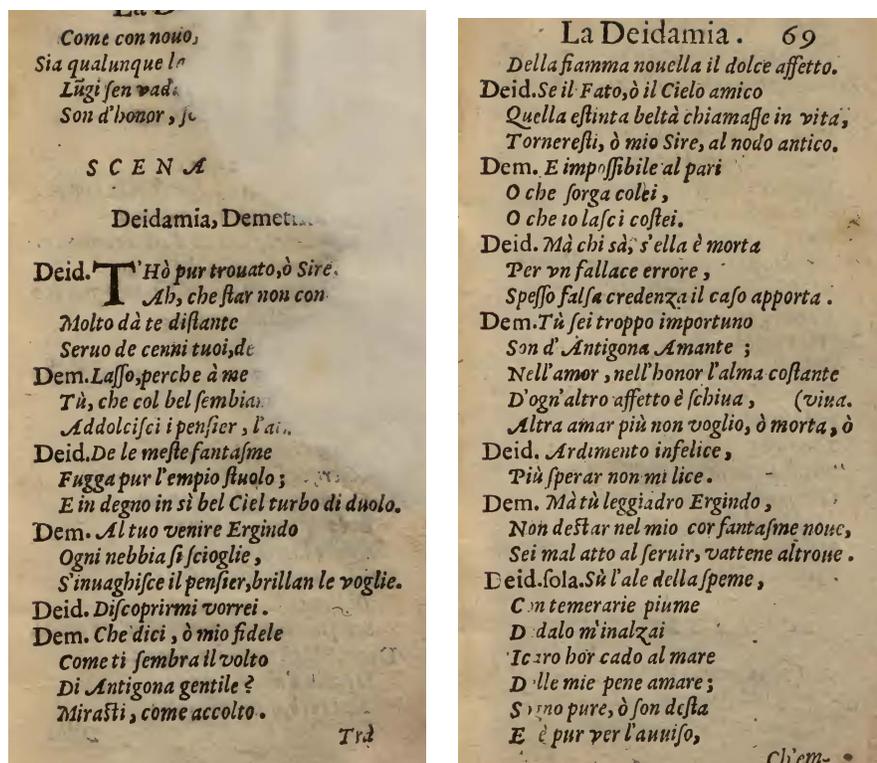


Fig. 95. La Deidamia. Pages from first printed libretto.



Fig. 96. Title page of long poem titled *ABOZZO DI VERACI LODI ALLA SIGNORA ANNA RENZI* (Sketch of True Praise to Signora Anna Renzi) (*Le Glorie* 34) Author's photo copy.



Fig. 97. Poem about Anna Renzi in *La Deidamia*.

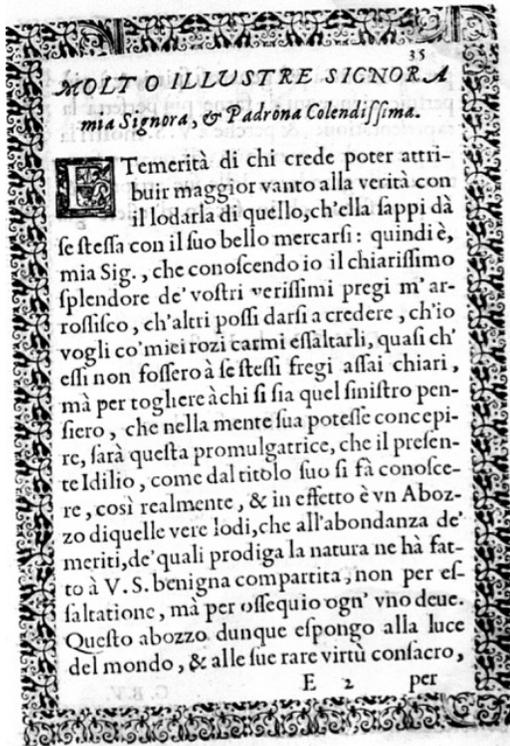


Fig. 106. Introduction to "Abbozo" (Le Glorie 35-6)

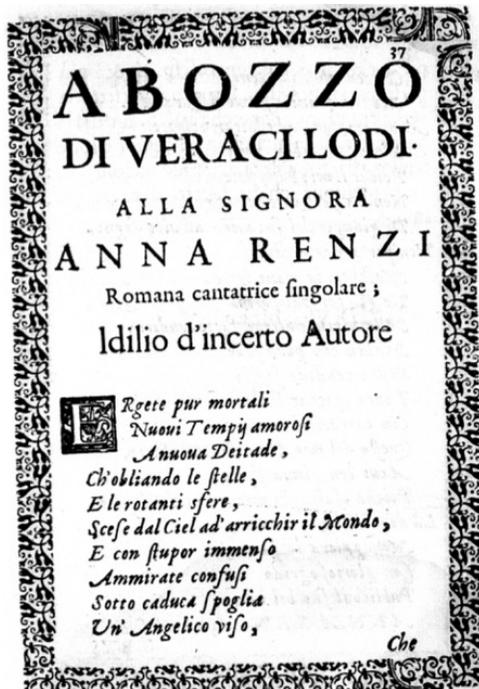
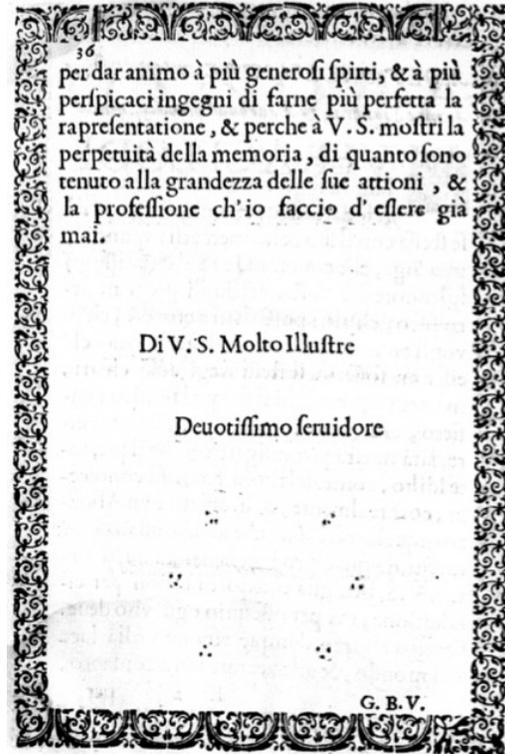


Fig. 99. First page of "Abbozo" (Le Glorie 37)