The Bel canto war: a critical and annotated translation of Vincenzo Manfredini’s Regole armoniche, Part III (1797) with relevant essay

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THE BEL CANTO WAR:
A CRITICAL AND ANNOTATED TRANSLATION OF
VINCENZO MANFREDINI'S
REGOLE ARMONICHE PART III (1797)
WITH RELEVANT ESSAY

by

Virginia Croskery

An essay submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the
Doctor of Musical Arts degree
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Essay Supervisor: Professor Stephen Swanson
CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

D.M.A. ESSAY

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The *bel canto* era is surrounded by an aura of myth. For singers, it represents a 'magical time' when the art of singing was perfect. Yet what did it involve? We are told that the *bel canto* style is to be found in the music of Bellini, Donizetti, and Rossini. However, the music of Bellini is in many ways very different from that of Rossini, so the technique must have allowed for stylistic variations.

Current voice teachers of diverse backgrounds claim to teach the *bel canto* style of singing. 'Mozart' specialists to 'Wagnerians' claim to use the *bel canto* technique, yet their performance practices seem diametrically opposed. An in-depth study of the time period divulges the inconsistencies inherent within the style itself. Perhaps that is the secret. *Bel canto* singing technique required facility with diverse types of technical production, thereby forming a balanced voice, capable of florid singing as well as sustained legato.

I have been fascinated with this 'secret' technique since my days as a student at Indiana University. I studied with Virginia Zeani, who although of Romanian heritage, spent her performing years in Italy, primarily in Rome. Her repertoire centered on Italian operas of the nineteenth century and she was very much a proponent of the *bel canto* technique. Several years later I worked as an apprentice at the Lyric Opera of Chicago and studied with the renowned Wagnerian soprano Margaret Harshaw, who also claimed to teach *bel canto*. Miss Harshaw could trace her 'vocal heritage' directly to Manuel
Garcia II, often referred to as the 'father of bel canto.' Miss Harshaw studied with Anna Schoen-Rene, a student of Pauline Viardot, who was the sister of Manuel Garcia II.

I wish I could say the vocal techniques of these two bel canto pedagogues were similar. They were not. In fact, they were vastly different. I was left wondering, what is the 'real' bel canto style? Two decades later, I have come to the conclusion that it encompassed both of their techniques. These seemingly diametrically opposed styles of singing can actually be united to form a well-balanced vocal technique. An in-depth study of eighteenth century vocal pedagogy offers great insight for the student of bel canto.

Vincenzo Manfredini was a first generation bel canto musician. His treatise Regole Armoniche o sieno Precetti Ragionati per apprender la Musica, second ed. (1797) includes a section on learning to sing (Part III, Delle regole più essenziali per imparare a cantare) which is one of the few extant documents on vocal pedagogy from the late eighteenth century. It is worthy of study for its insight into the style of teaching employed in that 'hallowed' era. It has never been translated into English, and therefore is like a buried treasure for the student of vocal pedagogy.

Regole armoniche o sieno precetti ragionati was first published in 1775 as a treatise on harmony and techniques for playing keyboard instruments. Manfredini does not include a section on singing in his first edition of Regole Armoniche, but does reference current pedagogy in his footnotes, mentioning his distaste for current vocal
practice and the teachings of “Signor Mancini.” He is referring to his contemporary, Giambattista Mancini the renowned teacher of singing in Vienna. These few comments incited a public feud which culminated in Manfredini’s treatise on singing translated here. The writings of Manfredini and Mancini are immensely valuable in that they offer the reader a rare glimpse of how singing was taught during the bel canto period.

Manfredini was not a world renowned musician in his own time, and his works are little known today. However, his public feuds with Esteban de Arteaga and Mancini have recently come to light in publications by Patricia Howard and Julianne Baird. In recent years there has been a resurgence of interest in music of the Baroque and the bel canto masters. Lyric Opera of Chicago and the Metropolitan Opera in New York have programmed eighteenth and early nineteenth century masterpieces rarely performed in the last two centuries. Handel’s Alcina (1725) was not heard in Chicago until 1999, and his Rodelinda (1725) was first performed at the Met in 2004. Even bel canto masterpieces such as Rossini’s La Cenerentola (1817) and Bellini’s Il Pirata (1827) were not premiered at the Metropolitan Opera until the last decade (1997 and 2002, respectively). In consideration of this trend, it is all the more interesting to investigate the primary sources on vocal pedagogy from the bel canto period.
INTRODUCTION: A NOTE ON THE TRANSLATION

Manfredini wrote in a very flowery style, with rambling sentences, as was not uncommon in his time. I have tried to maintain the literary meaning, while dividing some of the sentences and eliminating repetitive phrases when necessary for clarity. In the original text the intent of a phrase is often obscured by the numerous ‘asides’ included in the same sentence. This is exceedingly difficult for contemporary readers and was quite possibly a challenge even for Manfredini’s audience. In my attempts to decipher Manfredini’s primary intention, it was often helpful to separate disparate thoughts and eliminate redundancies.

Regole Armoniche second ed. (1797) Part III has been translated in its entirety in chapter four. This portion focuses on vocal technique and was not included in the first edition. More than likely, it was added in 1797 as a public retort to assertions by Giambattista Mancini. I have also included some quotations from Regole Armoniche, first ed. (1775). Manfredini’s references to singing technique in the first edition are primarily found in his footnotes. In citing these references, I have included the original text in Italian as well as an English translation.
CHAPTER I
VINCENZO MANFREDINI

Vincenzo Manfredini was born into a family of professional musicians on October 22, 1737. As was so often the custom in the eighteenth century, the Manfredinis passed knowledge of their craft from generation to generation, creating a rather lengthy family legacy. Indeed, the family’s association with the cathedral music in their native town of Pistoia extended well over a century. There was at least one Manfredini on the cathedral roster of musicians continuously from 1684 to 1803.¹

Pistoia is an ancient Roman city, nestled at the foothills of the Apennines in northeastern Tuscany. A mere twenty-three miles from Florence, it has largely been overshadowed by its better known sister. Recent interest in Baroque music has once again unearthed the musical history of this region and the activity which flourished in the Pistoia cathedral. Musical families such as the Melani, Rivani, Magagni and Gherardeschi join the Manfredini’s in their Pistoian roots. The city also has the infamous reputation of instigating the schism between the Black and White Guelphs after it was conquered by Guelph Florence in 1254.² Pistoia was:

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² Medieval Italian political rule centered on a struggle between the parties of the Guelphs and Ghibellines. Derived from the Germanic names Waiblingen (Franconian) and Wölf (Bavarian), the Guelphs and Ghibellines came to represent the struggle between pope and emperor. Generally speaking, the Guelphs were the party of the pope and the Ghibellines of the emperor. Pistoia, along with its sister city Florence were Guelph strongholds by the mid-thirteenth century. Gradually, the political parties lost their original meaning and the struggles became personal feuds. See Oscar Browning’s Guelphs & Ghibellines. A Short History of Medieval Italy from 1250-1400. London: Methuen & Co., 1893, for an lengthy discussion on the subject.
“always celebrated for the violence of its revolutions. Here two families were at constant war with each other, like the Montagues and Capulets in the Verona of Shakespeare. The Cancellieri were at the head of the Guelphs, and the Panciatichi of the Ghibellines. In the general preponderance of the Guelph party throughout the valley of the Arno, the Cancellieri had driven out their rivals and taken possession of the town. This family, excluded, it is true, from office, but very rich and powerful, became divided, owing to a domestic quarrel, into two factions, the Bianchi and the Neri. The safety of the whole town was endangered by their reckless strife.”

Eventually the heads of the two parties were ordered to leave Pistoia and took up residence in Florence, taking their contention with them. The two principal families of Florence, the Cerchi and Donati inherited the personal acrimony (and names) of the Bianchi and Neri. The Cerchi sided with the Bianchi and became promoters of the Ghibelline cause. The Donati joined the Neri in support of the Guelph agenda. Generally, “the Ghibellines supported the principles of strong governance, and the Guelphs those of freedom and self-rule.”

Though the city of Pistoia is lesser known today, its role in the history of Italian political struggles is significant. Perhaps Manfredini’s penchant for conflict is an innate part of his Pistoian heritage.

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1 Ibid., 49.

4 Ibid., 6.
Vincenzo was the tenth child of Francesco Onofrio Manfredini (1684-1762) and Rosa Degli Antonii (perhaps from the Bolognese family of musicians of the same name). Francesco is best known as a composer and violinist who had returned to his birthplace of Pistoia to serve as maestro di cappella at the cathedral. The son of the cathedral trombonist (Domenico Maria), Francesco likely began his musical education at an early age. He was barely a teenager when he journeyed to Bologna to study violin with Giuseppe Torelli and composition with Giacomo Perti. By the time he turned twenty, he was an accomplished orchestral violinist in the orchestra of San Petronio and had published Concertini per camera (1704). For the next two decades he worked in Monaco under the patronage of the Grimaldi prince Antoine. It was a fruitful time for him, during which he added five children to his family and published his most notable compositions, a set of concertos dating from 1718. By the time he returned to Pistoia in 1724 he was quite a celebrated musical talent, and although his tenure there was riddled with conflict and struggles with the administration, it appears his first ten years were relatively peaceful. However, by 1737, the year of Vincenzo’s birth, Francesco was enmeshed in an acrimonious battle with the cathedral clergy which would not end until his death in 1762. Thus the young Vincenzo was well educated in the politics of musical opinion at a tender age.

Like his father, Vincenzo went to Bologna to complete his musical studies. He was only fifteen years old when he left the family residence in Pistoia to work with Giacomo Perti, his father’s professor of composition. From there he went to Milan to

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study with Giovanni Andrea Fioroni, who served as *maestro di cappella* at the Duomo of Milan from 1747-1778. As Bologna and Milan were cities *par excellence* for musical training, one may assume that Vincenzo’s studies were rigorous and thorough, if not inspirational.

In 1758 he followed his older brother Giuseppe Maria, a castrato (b.1729), to Moscow. Giuseppe had joined the opera troupe of the Italian impresario and librettist, Giovanni Battista Locatelli. With Italian singers and conductors, as well as impressive productions, Locatelli introduced *opera buffa* to the delight of the Russian patrons. It is not known in what capacity Vincenzo accompanied the troupe, perhaps as a keyboard player. At any rate, Russia was to become his home for the next decade, which was his most prolific period of composition (see Appendix A for a list of works).

From Moscow, the troupe went on to St. Petersburg, where Vincenzo became *maestro di cappella* to the tsarevich, Pyotr Fedorovich. He was subsequently elevated to the post of *maestro* of the court’s Italian opera company in 1762, when Pyotr Fedorovich was named Peter III. Less than a year later, he was confirmed in this position by Catherine II, who ascended to the Russian throne upon the death of her husband. Manfredini’s duties included the composition of operas and occasional works, and this was by outward appearances a gratifying time for him. He married the singer Maria Monari and their only son Giovanni was born. Unfortunately, Manfredini’s favored position was not to last. In 1765 the celebrated Venetian composer Baldassare Galuppi arrived at the imperial Russian court, overshadowing his compatriot. Galuppi’s operas
were preferred by Catherine, and Manfredini was relegated to serving as harpsichord
instructor to her son and heir to the throne, Paul Petrovich, and composing ballets to be
performed with Galuppi’s operas. Manfredini, no doubt with a wounded ego, returned to
Bologna in 1769 on a pension from the Russian court.

The next three decades of Manfredini’s life were devoted to teaching and didactic
writings. *Regole Armoniche, o sieno Precetti Ragionati* was first published in Venice,
1775. This first edition was written in two parts: an introduction to the basic elements of
music and a section on keyboard accompaniment. Although this treatise did not
ostensibly address the art of singing, Manfredini’s peripheral comments on the topic
instigated a life-long feud with Giambattista Mancini (1714-1800), the singing master at
the imperial court of Vienna. Mancini was by all accounts a second rate castrato,
performing in Italy and Germany as early as 1730. His musical reputation was built not
on his gifts as a performer but as a pedagogue. A former student of Bologna’s prominent
maestro of singing Antonio Bernacchi, Mancini also studied counterpoint and
composition with Giovanni Battista Martini. In 1757, with his reputation as a teacher
increasing, Mancini was called to Vienna by the empress Maria Theresa to teach her
young daughters, and would remain there for the rest of his life. His current legacy rests
primarily on his influential treatise of singing, *Pensieri, e riflessioni pratiche sopra il
canto figurato* (Vienna 1774; enlarged 1777). It is in the second edition of this work that
the ‘Manfredini/Mancini feud’ goes public. Mancini addresses Manfredini by name on
numerous occasions, mocking his opinions and challenging his authority. Although it

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6 *Practical Reflections and Thoughts on the Figurative Art of Singing* was published in an English
took almost twenty years to complete, Manfredini responded with a second edition of *Regole Harmoniche, o sieno Precetti Ragionati*,\(^7\) much revised and expanded, with additional sections on the proper art of singing and counterpoint. With a seeming desire to have the last word, Manfredini indirectly addresses Mancini's concerns in a rather patronizing fashion.

From 1785 to 1789 Manfredini was also a contributor to the *Giornale enciclopedico di Bologna*, a journal dedicated to promoting cultural renewal. It was in his capacity as a reviewer for the *Giornale* that he promulgated another longstanding feud, this time with the Jesuit priest Esteban de Arteaga (1747-1799), who like Mancini, studied composition with G. B. Martini in Bologna. Arteaga's three volume *Rivoluzioni del Teatro musicale italiano dalla sua origine fino al presente* (Revolutions of the Italian musical theatre from its origin to the present) is the work which ignited the controversy. It is a rather difficult feud to follow, due to the multiple publications of the various editions of Arteaga's original document.

Arteaga's first volume was published by Carlo Trenti in Bologna in 1783. Shortly after its release, the author quarreled with his publisher and issued a revised edition in Venice, with a new publisher, Carlo Palese (1785). This was followed by a second volume published first with Carlo Trenti in Bologna (1786) and later that year in Venice with Carlo Palese. Manfredini reviewed the second volume of the Bologna edition in April of 1786 for the *Giornale enciclopedico di Bologna*, harshly criticizing the author.

\(^7\) Neither edition of "Rules of Harmony or Rational Precepts" has ever been translated into English. The translation of Part III of the 1797 edition (included here in chapter four) is the first such attempt of any part of it.
and his opinions. Arteaga then responded with a third volume, published in Venice (1787) in which he answers Manfredini’s criticisms, point by point. Finally, Manfredini, as if to once again have the last word, published his *Difesa della musica moderna*, Bologna, 1788. Here he prolongs the debate, citing portions of his original review, Arteaga’s responses to them and a reply to Arteaga’s objections.⁸

Both of the aforementioned debates are rooted in the argument of “ancients against moderns,” which was frequently discussed as pertains to the style of opera in the latter half of the eighteenth century. Vocal pedagogues such as Tosi, Bacilly, Mancini and Manfredini argued over the merits of ornamentation, so prevalent in the Renaissance and Baroque styles of singing. What makes Manfredini’s comments so interesting (and disturbing) is his tendency to argue both sides. With Mancini he advocates “nature over artificiality” referring to the “modern school” which favors singing “from the heart” over the vocal gymnastics of Baroque ornamentation. However, in his debate with Arteaga he seems to argue the opposing viewpoint, defending contemporary opera against Arteaga’s insistence on a return to the simplicity of ancient Greek classicism.

In 1796 Manfredini’s Russian harpsichord pupil became emperor Paul I, and summoned his childhood teacher to court. Manfredini arrived in 1798, but the voyage exhausted him and he died the next year in St. Petersburg on either August 5 or 16 (sources vary). In his autobiographical notes on his father, written in 1846, Giovanni Manfredini relates that “he was a caring father and had only undertaken the second trip

⁸ See Patricia Howard’s 2002 translation of this document for a fascinating discussion of this public quarrel.
for the benefit of his family” and that “he was given one thousand rubles for his travel and had his pension increased to 3000 rubles.”\(^9\) After his death the tsar graciously granted fifty percent of Manfredini’s salary to his widow Maria, evidence of the esteem in which he held his former teacher. Though his life was plagued with controversy, Vincenzo Manfredini was also highly regarded and influential. His legacy was perpetuated by his son Giovanni and daughter Antonia Elisabetta. Giovanni later published *Alcune notizie biografiche di Vincenzo Manfredini* (Some biographical notes on Vincenzo Manfredini) and Antonia Elisabetta enjoyed a very successful career as a prima donna during the Rossinian period. Vincenzo Manfredini’s personal memoirs are held at the Accademia Filarmonica in Bologna, Italy.

CHAPTER II
THE BEL CANTO STYLE OF SINGING

"That magic system which every self-respecting teacher of singing professes to teach and which every self-respecting newspaper critic says is an extinct art."¹⁰

The bel canto era is unquestionably the most frequently discussed and venerated time period in the history of singing. The major difficulty lies in defining the term, for it has been "used without specific meaning and widely varying subjective interpretations."¹¹

The term did not refer to a specific musical style until the mid to late nineteenth century, and did not appear in dictionaries until 1900, a full fifty years after the time period to which it currently refers. Literally translated as "beautiful singing" it has been used to describe "that lost tradition," the "golden age of singing," a style of singing "performed with finished ornamentation and sensitive exactitude,"¹² and "perfect legato production throughout the range, the use of light tone in the higher registers and agile and flexible delivery."¹³ It is also frequently used to describe the operatic music composed by Gaetano Donizetti (1797-1848), Vincenzo Bellini (1801-1835) and Gioacchino Antonio Rossini (1792-1868) and appeared in the title of an 1840 collection of songs by


¹³ Jander and Harris, "Bel Canto," 161.
Nicola Vaccai. To complicate the subject further, German musicologists in the early twentieth century applied the term to Venetian opera and Roman cantatas of the 1630’s and 1640’s.

The Harvard Dictionary of Music defines bel canto as “the Italian technique of the eighteenth century, with its emphasis on beauty of sound and brilliance of performance rather than dramatic expression or romantic emotion.”\textsuperscript{15} The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians sums up the entry with “the term is best limited to its nineteenth century use as a style of singing that emphasized beauty of tone in the delivery of highly florid music” that is “usually set in opposition to the development of a weightier, more powerful and speech-inflected style associated with German opera and Wagner in particular.”\textsuperscript{16} Whatever definition one chooses to use, aside from the German musicological usage, the relevance of Manfredini’s treatise to this celebrated art of singing is indisputable. For the purposes of this essay, the latter definition will be loosely applied. Thus, the seeds of bel canto are sown in early eighteenth century Italian opera and the style flourishes a century later with the music of Donizetti, Bellini and Rossini.

Is bel canto a style of singing or a style of composition? Did singers influence the composers of the time or did the composers specify a style of singing in their manuscripts? Such questions are impossible to answer with any certainty, but in truth,

\textsuperscript{14} Nicola Vaccai (1790-1848) was an Italian composer and singing teacher. His publications include several operas, numerous songs, ballets, sacred works and pedagogical manuals. The publication named is entitled \textit{12 ariette per camera in chiave di violino per l'insegnamento del bel canto italiano} (Milan, 1840).


\textsuperscript{16} Jander and Harris, “Bel Canto,” 161.
the singers must have influenced the composers, who in turn influenced the singers, and all were equally influenced by the ever fleeting fashions of the day. Singing styles gradually changed with the tastes of the time. “Italy’s theatergoers did not know they were going from ‘baroque’ to ‘classical’ to ‘romantic’.”

It is impossible to ‘draw a line in the sand’ between the periods, as music is on a continuum and constantly evolving. In terms of our loose definition, bel canto touches all three eras and harmoniously meshes their stylistic elements at its peak. “Rossini, Bellini and Donizetti were likewise linked with the singers whose style they helped shape and who helped in turn to shape their scores.”

More helpful in understanding its importance to the art of singing is a comparison of bel canto vocal music with that which precedes and follows it in terms of style, range, compositional notation and performance practice.

As the dawn of bel canto approached so did the prominence of the solo voice. Perhaps as a reaction to the centuries of florid motet singing so highly favored in the Renaissance, the early Baroque brought a return of the solo voice and bel canto music became the venue for the ‘star’ singer, frequently a castrato. While the practice of castration is abhorrent to contemporary readers, castrati played an integral role in the development of bel canto opera and indirectly bel canto vocal technique.

Castration of young boys prior to puberty for the purpose of singing dates to the eunuch priests of antiquity. Although there is no evidence of it in the Middle Ages,

18 Crutchfield, “The Bel Canto Connection,” 32.
castrati were common in Western churches by the mid-seventeenth century. Pope Paul IV issued an edict in 1555 excluding all married men from the Sistine ranks and by 1609 only castrati were trained as sopranists. As opera developed, castrati were prized for their unique skills.

If castrated before the glandular functioning of the testicles begins, a boy develops a feminine bone structure within a physical frame that has grown larger than it would otherwise. The chest becomes rounded, the muscles softer and the body hairless. Even mammary glands may develop. As women were not permitted to perform in church, castrati were the ideal solution for female characters in oratorios, subsequently making their operatic debuts in female roles. The most notable characteristic of castrati was the abnormally small size of the larynx. During puberty, a boy's larynx increases around thirty percent in size, due to the influx of male hormones. By castrating before puberty, the laryngeal mutation is greatly slowed or even halted, resulting in a much smaller larynx devoid of the thyroid notch or 'Adam's apple.' With an abnormally large chest and small larynx, a castrato was capable of a high vocal range, a robust sound and the ability to sustain long phrases. Castrati were capable of extraordinary vocal feats and were often elevated to 'star' status, as in the case of Farinelli (Carlo Broschi, 1705-1782). It is no accident that the majority of writings on vocal pedagogy from this time period were produced by castrati. Mancini, Porpora, Tosi and Giuseppe Manfredini (Vincenzo's

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19 See Philip A. Duey's, *Bel Canto in Its Golden Age* for a lengthy discussion on the history of the castrati and their role in opera during this time period.

brother) were all castrati. They dominated the Italian musical atmosphere in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and were revered as both performers and teachers.

Gradually, the Age of Enlightenment flourished (Italy far behind France), introducing new conceptions of individual liberty and the practice of castration began to wane. “As Kant made clear in his often-quoted popular piece of 1784, ‘Was ist Aufklärung?’ (What is enlightenment?), it was the process of discovery, the active and critical engagement of the individual, that mattered, not necessarily the end result.”\(^{21}\) Such a philosophy directly attacked the practice of castration, where a permanent life change was made for the individual rather than by the individual. The arts became a vehicle for promoting the eighteenth century idea of the ‘science of man’ or ‘moral philosophy’ which was central to the interests of the European enlightenment.

“In essence the ‘science of man’ dealt with civil society the moral principles of civic rights and obligations, and the mechanics whereby progress towards stability might be achieved...And probably everyone—even Rousseau-agreed that the arts (especially music and literature) could make a vital contribution in improving moral instincts and raising the self-consciousness of mankind.”\(^{22}\)

Manfredini was strongly critical of the castration practice and chastised his compatriots for promoting it.


\(^{22}\) Ibid., 14.
"Italians! Italians! When will you ever stop this most unfair, most cruel and disgraceful custom, so contrary to nature, and to your honor? What need has music of such subjects [castrati], if high voices can be supplied by children, or women, whose natural voice is always beautiful, and more pleasing than the artificial voice of the castrati?"

However, the last operatic castrato, Giovanni Battista Velluti did not retire until 1830 and parts were written for him in Rossini's *Aureliano in Palmira* (1813) and Meyerbeer's *Il crociato in Egitto* (1824). Castrati made the Sistine Choir world famous and continued to sing in Italian churches until well into the twentieth century (the last was Moreschi who died in 1922). *Opera buffa* developed, *opera seria* declined and the 'unnatural' ones were relegated to obscurity.

The public's desire for 'star' performers naturally led to a market for singers. By the 1750s this was firmly established. As the operatic genre was thoroughly Italian, so were most of the singers, and more specifically from the regions of Milan, Rome and Trieste. As productions became more elaborate and fees increased, singers frequently became the property of "the impresarios, who subsidize them up to a point....but also control them." Impresarios paid their expenses and salaries in exchange for exclusive rights to their performances. If not the property of a patron, a singer might be promoted by their teacher. As early as 1591, it was not uncommon for teachers to 'adopt' pupils,

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24 Rosselli, *Singers of Italian Opera*, 5.
offering to house, feed, clothe and train them in exchange for a percentage of their future earnings. Traditionally, a fixed amount of time was stipulated, six years being the norm. The daily regimen of an apprentice might include up to four hours a day of practice, "an hour for 'difficult things,' an hour to practice trills, an hour for passage work [coloratura] and an hour before the looking-glass to control posture and facial expression."\textsuperscript{25} A student who left his studies early, without fulfilling his 'contract' was required to pay a penalty, and inevitably invited future conflict.

The system was more complicated for women however, as social norms prevented them from being alone with a man with whom they were not related. Women could only study with another woman or a relative, so if an aspiring girl was not born into a musical family her possibilities for learning the craft were greatly limited. Singing 'families' began to arise, passing their craft from one generation to the next. The Scarlattis and Manfredinis are such examples, but most notable for current readers is the Garcia family, whose legacy extends well into the twentieth century: The father, Manuel, was a highly esteemed tenor, who sang the role of Almaviva in the premiere of Rossini's \textit{Il barbiere di Siviglia}. His son Manuel II, is often referred to as the 'father of \textit{bel canto}' for his invention of the laryngoscope (1854) and his numerous pedagogical publications. His elder daughter Maria Malibran was a celebrated mezzo-soprano in the \textit{bel canto} repertoire, particularly in the works of Rossini. His younger daughter Pauline Viardot, just eleven years old at the time of her father's death, was a composer, teacher and mezzo-soprano best known for her dramatic singing in works of Massenet, Halevy and Gluck. Pauline was also a piano student of Franz Liszt and greatly influenced musical

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., 101-2.
circles of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. She was an influential singing teacher, and one may assume a source of the *bel canto* technique of her father and brother (Manuel II) with whom she studied. She also promoted vocal composers such as Gounod, Massenet and Fauré.

As performers became more skilled so did the demands placed upon them. Arias began to require greater ranges and the ability to ornament became an essential skill. Lengthy cadenzas were standard fare for finales and offered the singer opportunities to demonstrate their prowess with *passaggi*.\(^{26}\)

Ornamentation skills became somewhat of a competition between various performers. How high a singer could sing and how long they could sustain a phrase or cadenza without breathing became benchmarks. Inevitably, it led to excess such that the original melodies were scarcely recognizable. This in turn affected notational practices of the composers. Rossini vowed to write out all of his ornaments after a frustrating experience with the castrato Giovanni Velluti, in which he “covered the melodic line with ornaments.”\(^{27}\) Hence, singers were left less frequently to their own devices and composers began to dictate precisely what should be performed.

Vocal range is worth noting when discussing *bel canto* singing. Along with the prevalent use of “free cadenza” came demands for an expanded vocal range. “Two-

\(^{26}\) Eighteenth century Italian vocal pedagogy treatises refer to ornaments as *passaggi*.

\(^{27}\) Edward Foreman, *Late Renaissance Singing* (Minneapolis: Pro Musica Press, 2001), xvi.
octave-plus spans are routine” for the soprano “as is the use of chest voice.”28 Wide
leaps of up to two octaves were not uncommon, as in the Rossini aria “Bel Raggio” from
Semiramide. The contralto voice (no doubt sung by a male falsettist) became nearly
extinct in favor of the modern lyric mezzo-soprano, and the natural male voices were
stretched beyond the demands of their precursors. In the early nineteenth century it
became fashionable for tenors to develop a very high falsetto (perhaps better termed head
voice in modern pedagogical terms). While a Mozart tenor must be comfortable in a
relatively high tessitura, the highest pitch is usually A. The late bel canto masters
expected tenors to perform roles which extended from low A-flat to high C. Tonio’s
famous tenor aria “Ah! Mes amis” from Donizetti’s La Fille du Regiment has an
astounding nine high C’s! Such a range poses a much greater challenge for modern
tenors who are expected to sing all of their high notes in chest voice, which was unheard
of until 1831, when Gilbert Duprez sang the first “do di petto” (high C in chest voice) at
the Italian premiere of Rossini’s Guillaume Tell (Lucca).29 The introduction of the “do di
petto” perhaps more than any other single event of the time, promoted the greatest change
in performance practice and vocal pedagogy. After hearing a full-throated, robust high C,
the public had no tolerance for the lighter quality of one produced in falsetto.

28 Crutchfield, “Bel Canto,” 35.

29 This feat is also attributed to Adolphe Nourrit in various sources. About his performance of Aménophas
in the Paris premiere of Rossini’s Moïse et Pharaon (March 26, 1827), Evan Walker writes, “Moïse
marked a turning-point in singing at the Opéra, as the singers turned to the more open-voiced, italianate
production favoured by Rossini. Here, as in all the scores written for Nourrit, the dynamics and the
thickness of the orchestration below his voice part indicate that he could not have been singing in falsetto in
his upper register (as has often been stated). ‘Nourrit, Adolphe Grove Music Online. (Accessed. 11 March
A consideration of harmonic rhythm is also helpful in gaining an understanding of bel canto style. Unlike the active bass lines of Scarlatti and Handel, the harmonic rhythm of a Bellini aria is almost stationary at times, which "gives the singer much more freedom to explore above and below the notes,"\(^{30}\) greatly increasing the possibilities for ornamentation. The slower harmonic movement also left more time to incorporate the dissonance of appoggiaturas which are so prevalent in late bel canto style. Although the use of appoggiatura was prevalent before the era and continued to be a feature of music which followed it, the way in which they were used differs. Bel canto composers and singers used the ornament as much to 'color' a piece as to 'decorate' it. The 'leaning' on the dissonant tone might be given more time, and thus, more emphasis than the consonance to which it resolves. With the dissonance in a sense elevated above the consonance, it sounds less like an ornament and more a part of the melody.

Contemporary vocal teachers frequently claim to teach the bel canto technique without defining exactly what that means. Is it a technique of wider ranges, longer phrases and greater ornamentation? Is it the technique of castrati? Is there something that the bel canto masters knew that has been lost to modern pedagogy? More than likely there is not. The mystique that has come to surround the term bel canto has elevated it to an almost sacred place. Unfortunately, the "golden age of singing" had passed before the invention of the phonograph in 1877, and we can only try to imagine how a castrato might have sounded. Additionally, much of bel canto pedagogy was taught through oral tradition. Extant primary sources are scarce, making the Manfredini treatise all the more

\(^{30}\) Crutchfield, "Bel Canto," 34.
interesting. Finally, the reappearance of the castrato, which had such a great influence on bel canto opera is unlikely to ever occur again.
CHAPTER III
A BRIEF HISTORY OF VOCAL PEDAGOGY TO THE TIME OF MANFREDINI

The desire to sing and listen to beautiful singing has existed since the dawn of Western Civilization. Writings of ancient Greece clearly indicate that singing was already an improvisatory art at that time.\textsuperscript{31} Homer's \textit{Odyssey}, written in the ninth century B.C.E. introduces us to the "famous bard Demodocus, whom the muse dearly loved....she had endowed him with a divine gift of song."\textsuperscript{32} Choral performances of poetry were widespread in ancient Greece and tragedy probably developed out of them.\textsuperscript{33} Even the word \textit{tragedy} implies a reference to singing, coming from the Greek word \textit{tragoidia}, literally 'goat-song.' "The most commonly accepted etymology for the word (tragedy) now is that it means 'song for a goat,' and that a goat was offered to the winning playwright as a prize."\textsuperscript{34} It appears that competition in the art of singing dates to the sixth century B.C.E. Athens, and the theatrical competitions of the City Dionysia, an annual festival in honor of the god Dionysus. Readers of contemporary publications need only glance at any edition of the Bible to find numerous references to singing. Jubel and his lyre, David and his harp, and the Song of Solomon all attest to the long history of the art. It is generally accepted in current theology that the Psalms were sung by the ancient Hebrews and Puritans alike.

\textsuperscript{31} Duey, \textit{Bel Canto}, 25.


\textsuperscript{34} Vandiver, "Greek Tragedy," 6.
If great vocalists were celebrated for their performances in ancient times, it is reasonable to assume that some sort of vocal pedagogy also existed. Indeed the writings of Plato and his student Aristotle, indicate that the mechanism of the voice was a subject of interest. Although most of ancient Greek references to singing are commentaries on style and performance, in Aristotle’s *De Audibilibus*, “there is considerable evidence that vocal technique received more than passing attention.”35 He discusses voice quality and breath control and although accurate knowledge of how the larynx functions lay two thousand years in the future, the ancient writings display a great interest in the voice and how to make it more pleasing.

As one might expect, interest in vocal technique is closely paralleled in the science of laryngology. Vocal pedagogues naturally cite current theories on anatomy and physiology as foundations for vocal technique. Thus, an overview of the history of laryngology is pertinent to the subject of vocal pedagogy.

*The History of Laryngology*

The earliest references to vocal anatomy appear in the fourth and fifth centuries BCE, commonly referred to as the Hippocratic Age.36 Although specific knowledge of the larynx was almost non-existent, the early Greek physicians reasoned that “air implemented voice… and that the tongue, palate, teeth and head cavities were

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36 Named for the famous Greek physician Hippocrates (460-377 BCE). Known as the “father of medicine,” he believed that illness had a rational and physical explanation and was not caused by superstitions and disfavor of the gods. He based his teachings on observations and the study of the human body.
instrumental in speech." Aristotle addresses voice production in *De Anima*, *De Audibilius*, *Politics* and *Problemata*. "In the *De Audibilius*, we are given a remarkably extended discussion of the physiological phenomena of phonation, including the lungs, windpipe, mouth, breathing, breath control, diction, etc. His comments here as well as in the *Problems* disclose opinions that, although of a speculative nature, are remarkably consonant with those of today." It was not until Galen (ca. 130-200), however, that precise information on the anatomy of the larynx was known.

Claudius Galenus of Pergamum (modern-day Bergama, Turkey) better known as Galen, was the greatest anatomist of antiquity. He performed numerous vivisections on animals and stressed the importance of human dissection, although such a practice was discouraged in his time. As the first physician to carefully examine the larynx, he is justly called the "founder of laryngology." Galen described the three principal laryngeal cartilages (thyroid, cricoid and arytenoids) and both the external and internal musculature. He studied how the organ was innervated, giving particular attention to the pneumogastric and recurrent nerves. One of his methods involved dissecting live animals in public. When he cut a porcine laryngeal nerve, the pig stopped squealing. Consequently, that nerve, the recurrent laryngeal is also known as "Galen’s Nerve." "It was Galen who gave the name *glottis*, or tongue, to the vocal cords and says that it is like

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38 Duey *Bel Canto*, 14.

Although not technically accurate, his theory of phonation does note that changes in pitch and volume must be attributed to adjustments in the width of the glottis.

"In order, however, that the animal may emit voice it requires, no doubt, the motion of the breath, but none the less the narrowing of the channel in the larynx; not a simple narrowing, but one which can by degrees be constricted and by degrees relaxed. Such is what the body we are dealing with effects accurately, and hence I call it the glottis or tongue of the larynx."

In the sixteenth century the larynx again became a topic of special interest. Vesalius of Padua (1514-1564) performed careful laryngeal dissections and produced almost thirty woodcuts of the organ's anatomy. Concurrent with the opening of the Baroque period and a great enthusiasm for vocal music, anatomist Julius Casserius (1545-1616) dedicated his research to the careful study of the larynx, publishing highly detailed engravings of his observations. While knowledge of laryngeal anatomy was largely accurate at this time, how the larynx functioned acoustically (producing changes in pitch, timbre and volume) was only speculative. There were basically two theories. The first, which was advocated by Leonardo da Vinci, compared phonation to an organ pipe, concluding that "the pitch of the human voice is dependent upon the length and diameter of the trachea." The second followed the reasoning of Galen, that is, the size of the glottis determined pitch.

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40 Duey Bel Canto, 14.

41 Galen, quoted by Holmes, "Laryngology," 72.

42 Duey, Bel Canto, 16.
The science of acoustics achieved notable advances with the work of the Jesuit priest Marin Mersenne (1588-1648). One of the leading thinkers of the day, Mersenne was a mathematician, philosopher, music theorist and savant, who devoted a large part of his work to the science, theory and practice of music.43 “For him music was capable of being analyzed and rationally explained….six of his twenty-four published works are devoted either entirely or in large part to music.”44 His Traite d'Harmonie Universelle (Paris, 1627) and Harmonie Universelle (Paris, 1636-7) are dedicated to music, instruments and acoustics, including the acoustics of the voice. Mersenne discerned the nature of partials as related to a fundamental tone, accurately described sound transmission as pure motion rather than substance, and formulated the first rules governing vibrating strings. His work disproved the ‘organ pipe’ theory of vocal phonation as being a physiological impossibility (a vibrating column must double in size to produce a tone an octave lower), and he reasoned that the voice functioned more like a musical reed, with the edges of the glottis acting as vibrators.

A century later the first acoustic experiments with a vibrating larynx were performed. In 1741, Antoine Ferrein (1693-1769), using natural larynxes of both animals and humans, proved that “in order to phonate, the lips of the glottis had to come together, second, that vibration of the lips was the essential factor since by touching them the sound stopped, and third, that difference in tension of the edges of the glottis caused the changes in pitch. He thus demonstrated that the vocal bands function more like vibrating

44 Ibid.
strings and so he gave the name of *cordes vocales* or vocal cords to the lips of the glottis.\(^4\)

At the time of Manfredini’s treatise, the science of laryngology was still in its infancy, as no one had yet observed the vocal cords in motion. Thus, the entire field of vocal pedagogy to this point, including the celebrated period of *bel canto*, was based on somewhat erroneous theories of vocal production. With this in mind, one might begin to question the role of science in the art of singing. While the physics of sound cannot be denied, it was obviously possible for the great singers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to develop a highly successful technique purely on the empirical knowledge of the time.

*Early Vocal Pedagogy*

The first extant treatises on vocal pedagogy date from the middle of the sixteenth century. Almost nothing on the subject exists from the time of Plutarch (ca.45-125 AD) until the 1550’s, save a couple of noteworthy references. Isadore of Seville (570-636), classified voices “as (1) *acuta*, sharp, like a stringed instrument, (2) *dura*, hard, like a thunder or a hammer against an anvil, (3) *aspera*, raucous and not smooth (uneven and broken up), (4) *coca*, blind, i.e., it stops as soon as it is sounded (it is dull and unresonant), (5) *vinnola*, delightful, i.e. sweet, soft and flexible, and (6) *perfecta*, high

\(^4\) Duey, *Bel Canto*, 17.
sweet and clear."  The terms *acuta*, *dura*, and *perfecta* were still in use at the time of Manfredini, although their meanings were somewhat different. Isadore seems to have had little regard for female voices, writing of voices in general, "they [voices] are sharp, clear and penetrating, as those of women, children and sick people, or full and ample as men." While he used the term *acuta* to mean sharp and pointed, later pedagogues use it to refer to high voices. *Perfecta* as a description of beautiful singing remained in existence until the eighteenth century, in much the same manner. To Isadore, "The perfect voice is high, sweet and clear; it is high so as to be adequate in the upper range; it is clear so as to fill the ears amply; it is sweet so as to delight the spirits of the listeners. If any of these is lacking the voice is not perfect." For Manfredini, and other eighteenth-century pedagogues, a *perfecta* (or perfect) voice was the ideal.

The other Medieval reference of interest to students of vocal pedagogy is a passage on vocal registers by John of Garland (ca. 1193-ca.1270). "It must be known that the human voice exists in three forms: it is a chest voice, throat voice, or head voice." His observation is noteworthy, for eight hundred years later teachers still argue about the number of vocal registers.

Although the art of song had been studied for millennia, it was not until the Renaissance that the dissemination of printed documents became a reality. Gutenberg

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46 Ibid., 32.


48 Coussemaker, *Scriptorum I*, 158.
invented movable type in 1436, but it is not surprising that a hundred years would pass before documents on singing would be mass produced. Vocal pedagogy, still largely an oral tradition, was not a topic of great interest to the general population. The first books to show up in print shops were bibles and religious tracts. Students of singing would have studied with family members or in cathedral schools and most likely had little use for printed treatises. Even if they had an interest, the dissemination of such documents would have been very limited. Inexpensive paper was not readily available and the distribution system for printed texts was poorly organized. Finally, the Medieval mindset, which discouraged scholarship and individual creativity was slow to dissipate. “Throughout the Middle Ages the vast majority of human intellectual energy was diverted to questions of doctrinal minutiae and ‘holy’ war. Instead of exploring new lands, innovations and ideas, the best minds engaged in debates on how many angels could fit on the head of a pin, and the church rarely hesitated to torture anyone who questioned its dogma.”49 Any and all intellectual pursuits, including science and music, began and ended with theological study. Philosophy, science, art, and music all began to flourish in the late fifteenth century. Concurrent with the return of a passion for scholarship and the ability to mass produce printed documents, appear the earliest treatises on singing.

Sixteenth-Century Vocal Pedagogy

There is a substantial number of sixteenth century works on vocal pedagogy, including the writings of Vicentino, Maffei, Zacconi, and Zarlino. These authors offer extensive advice on the proper way to sing, but very little on how to achieve those ends. For instance, they may clearly state when and when not to breathe, but offer nothing on how to increase one’s breath capacity. The Renaissance study of singing was “a kind of apprentice program…mastery of rudiments of technique followed by practicing of passaggi” (ornaments). Treatises are devoted primarily to ornamentation with little mention of physiology. Nevertheless, they are invaluable resources for the singer, particularly for their instruction on Renaissance style.

Nicola Vicentino (1511-c1576) was an Italian composer and theorist. He wrote several books of madrigals and motets, but his fame rests primarily on his treatise L’antica musica ridotta alla moderna prattica (Rome, 1555-7). Although the references to singing are few, they offer technical instruction that is of interest. Vicentino advised singers to perform in a very moderate range. “For the convenience of singers and in order that every common voice can sing its part commodiously…no ledger lines should ever be added to the five lines of the stave, neither above nor below, in any voice-part; nor indeed should the clefs be changed.” Like other pedagogues of his time, Vicentino indicates that the chest register is superior to the head register. He also makes a

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50 Edward Foreman, Late Renaissance Singing (Minneapolis: Pro Musica Press, 2001) vvi.

distinction between church singing, "one will sing with full voices and with a large number of singers"\textsuperscript{52} and camera or chamber singing, where "one sings more softly and gently without doing any shouting."\textsuperscript{53} Vicentino also offers a discussion on the art of pronunciation and the best vowels to use when singing.

"The composer will note these vowels that will facilitate runs in the bass parts, like A, O and U, and will give the pronunciation a large tone, particularly in the churches, where one will sing with full voices and with many singers. And some other vowels in the middle parts will be very good, like the vowels A, E and O. And others in the loud and high parts the vowels A, E, and I will be very suitable."\textsuperscript{54}

Vicentino goes on to chastise singers for substituting open vowels for closed ones in order to make a bigger sound and "fill the ample space of the churches." He cautions singers that the sung word in church serves a ritual function and such a practice sacrifices the comprehension of the sacred text.

One of the more intriguing Renaissance works on vocal pedagogy is found in Giovanni Camillo Maffei's (fl. 1562-73) \textit{Delle lettere del Signor Gio. Camillo Maffei da Solofra. Libri due. Dove tra gli altri bellissimi pensieri di Filosofia, e di Medicina, v'è un discorso della voce e del modo d'apparare di cantare di Garanto, senza maestro, non}

\textsuperscript{52} Uberti, "Vocal Techniques," 492.

\textsuperscript{53} "Si canta con voce più sommessa e soave senza far alcun strepito."

\textsuperscript{54} "Il compositore avvertirà.....queste vocali che alcune saranno agevoli correndo nelle parti basse, come A, O et U, et daranno la pronunzia di grande intonazione, et principalmente nelle chiese, ove si canterà con le voci piene et con multitudine di cantanti. Et alcune altre vocali nelle parti di mezzo saranno molto buone, come le vocali A, E et O. Et altre nelle parti acite et acute saranno molto in proposito le vocali A, E, et I."
più veduto, ni’istampato (Naples, 1562). Maffei “appears to have been the first physiologist-musician, and examined vocal physiology before explaining his actual method of cantar di garganta”55 Maffei was employed by Giovanni di Capua, the count of Altavilla as court physician and musician (singer/lutenist). His discourse on singing is contained in this volume of letters, and was written to fulfill a specific request of his employer, who was, by all accounts, a great patron of the arts. Maffei is generous with his praise for Altavilla, crediting him both with the exemplary music at the court, and the afore-mentioned discourse. The Count evidently requested an explanation of the mechanics of the voice, and this eighty-one page letter was written as Maffei’s response.

Maffei’s knowledge of vocal anatomy harkens back to Galen and he held Aristotle in high esteem for his thoughts on singing. He states that the voice requires three things, “the master, the instrument, and material.” The master of the voice is the soul, the instrument is the trachea and the material is air.56 Maffei concludes that “the motive Power of the chest is the principal cause of the voice”57 and hypothesizes that inhalation ‘cools’ the heat of the heart and blood, and rids the body of fumes and excrement. Other observations of interest include his opinion that the low voice is “more perfect” and that a large voice is caused by slow movement of the air. Maffei believes that timbre (harsh or mellow) is determined by the material of the pipe (hard or soft) and


57 Ibid., 9.
that the agile voice is created by "changing the minute and ordered repercussions of the
air in the throat." He notes that "the place where passaggi are produced is that very one
in which the voice is formed." Although working with an erroneous knowledge of
laryngeal physiology, Maffei still manages to intuit mechanics that are reasonably
accurate. "Vocal agility does in fact depend upon the ability of muscles within the larynx
to modify rapidly the tension of the vocal cords."

Finally, Maffei believed that the "true method of noble singing and pleasing the
ear is agility singing" and "Nature has given everyone the means to conquer this skill." He gives us ten rules for singing agility, which are surprisingly useful to this day. The singer should:

1) 'Flee from affectation,' and the infatuation of one's own ability.
2) Practice in the morning, or four or five hours after eating. When the stomach
is full, the pipe cannot be clean.
3) Sing in a place with a solitary echo, to better judge the sound of his voice.
4) Have no movement in other parts of the body, so as not to distract the listener.
5) Sing with a mirror.
6) Touch the tongue to the lower teeth.
7) Open the mouth appropriately (no more than when speaking with friends).
8) Press the breath little by little-not through the nose or by the palate, which are
very great errors.
9) Converse with those persons who sing agility with charm.
10) Practice frequently.

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58 Ibid., 17.
59 Uberti, "Vocal Techniques," 492.
60 Ibid.
61 Maffei, Delle Lettere, 29.
62 Ibid., 18.
These are followed by some exercises in agility, to be sung on O [ɔ], and five rules for singing passaggi:

1) Perform them only at cadences.
2) Not more than four or five in a madrigal (not continually).
3) Perform them on the penultimate syllable of the word, the passaggio ends when the word does.
4) It is best to use the vowel O [ɔ]. U [u] is like a “howling wolf” and I [i] like a “small animal which has lost its mother” (though it is less ugly in the soprano).
5) When four or five are singing together the passaggi should be limited to one part.

*Le istitutioni harmoniche* (Venice, 1558) by Gioseffo Zarlino (1517-1590) is primarily a treatise on music theory, but also includes a discussion on singing. Zarlino was an ordained Franciscan priest and a composition pupil of Adrian Willaert (1490-1562). He served as maestro di cappella at San Marco in Venice from 1565 until his death in 1590. Well known for his composition of vocal music, Zarlino is explicit in his remarks on cappella and camera singing, which are reminiscent of Vicentino’s views, “in churches and public cappelle one sings in one manner, and in private camere in another; for there in cappelle one sings in full voice and in camere one sings with a more submissive and suave (gentle) voice, and without yelling.” He also reminds the singer of the importance of clear pronunciation and vowel purity, “if on some occasion we hear people...saying what would be ‘Aspra cara, e selvaggia e croda vaglia’ (‘Bitter darling, and savage craggy value’) when they should have said “Aspro core, e selveggio, e cruda voglia’ (‘Bitter and savage heart, and crude wilfulness’), who would not laugh?” Like Maffei, he addresses the issue of appearance: “The singer should not sing with movements of the body or actions or gestures which produce laughter from those who see

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and hear them." His greatest contribution to vocal pedagogy however, may be the influence he wielded on later theorists, particularly Zacconi.

Lodovico Zacconi (1555-1627) is perhaps more interesting for his comments on culture and gesture than for his knowledge of vocal technique. An ordained Augustinian priest, Zacconi was also trained in plainsong and sang under Orlando di Lasso in Munich. His musical education was by all accounts incomplete, and he was criticized by Zarlino for his lack of formal training. The Pratica di musica (Venice, 1592) was Zacconi’s response to Zarlino’s criticism. Written in two parts, it addresses various musical issues ranging from the Guidonian hand to vocal embellishment and improvised counterpoint. He was a remarkably thorough writer and included opinions on numerous aspects of vocal technique. Like Zarlino and Vicentino, Zacconi specifically addresses the styles of cappella and camera singing, criticizing both unduly soft and unduly loud singing. He addresses the issue of breathing, referring to the mechanism as “chest.” “Two things are to be sought in whoever wishes to follow this profession: chest and throat; chest in order to be able to carry their proper termination...a large number of notes; and then throat so that one can render them with ease; since many having neither chest nor body (fiancho), in four or six notes find it convenient to interrupt their melodic designs.” Zacconi echoes Vicentino’s preference for the chest register, writing that “many have what is called a head voice, which is produced by singers with a certain fragile sound, and breaking is a certain thing which every so often is heard; and yet let them be advised to

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64 Duey, Bel Canto, 38.
moderate it in order not to outstrip the others and also because this ‘head voice’ is usually offensive.”66 He asserts that chest voices do not have the intonation problems of head voices, probably referring to the falsetto of the male voice, which can at times be precarious. Zacconi suggests that solfège is fruitless for singing, but, like Maffei, provides various examples of ornamentation. Zacconi, however, advocates practicing them on all of the vowels. He is not specific in his instructions, advising only that “singers should not sing too high, not too low, too loud nor too soft, too fast nor too slow.”67

Of great interest are Zacconi’s comments on the role of women in singing. He writes that “one should not lead women to learning [to sing]…only in the years in which they remain Virgins, they don’t have much to do: but after they are joined in the Sacrament of matrimony, work begins to pile up and children disturb them in a way that they never lack for something to do.”68 He later adds that “men are freer, adapt more easily and are more sincere in the adornments than are women.”69 If his comments on women are not sufficiently disturbing for contemporary readers, one can add his criticism of the elderly, and the physically unattractive;

“For this reason I say first that the art itself, and the profession of Music, has more of nobility than of mechanical things, and having more nobility as everyone can

66 Ibid.
67 Duey, Bel Canto, 42.
69 Ibid., 48.
see it should be prohibited to learn it, and if learned to exercise it, if one is occupied in the mechanical arts......In order not to weary people by making lists of singers, I say, they should be young, neat, well-dressed, not ignorant of everything, not impeded in their speech, not satirical in speech, but well-bred, courteous, worldly and handsome; their adornments should not exceed good taste...Everyone ought to exhibit all the beautiful physical qualities which he has." 70

As a conclusion to the pedagogy of the sixteenth century, one should note the works of Giovanni Luca Conforto (b. 1560) and Giovanni Battista Bovicelli (fl. 1592-4). Conforto’s *Breve et facile maniera d’essecitarsi a far passaggi* (1593) and Bovicelli’s *Regole passaggi di musica* (1594) offer very little in the way of technical advice on singing, but are excellent ornamentation manuals.

**Seventeenth-Century Vocal Pedagogy**

Seventeenth-century pedagogy was greatly influenced by Giulio Caccini’s seminal remarks in his preface to *Le Nuove Musiche* (1601). This publication was followed shortly by Ottavio Durante’s comments on sacred solo songs, published as a preface to his *Arie devote* (1608). Other documents worthy of discussion are Francesco Rognoni’s *Selva de vari passaggi* (1620) and Bénigne de Bacilly’s *Remarques curieuses sur l’art de bien chanter* (1668). As one might expect, the pedagogy mirrors the style of

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70 Ibid., 47.
the period. With the florid ornamentation of the Renaissance firmly planted in current vocal style, it is the primary topic of these writings.

Caccini’s preface to *Le Nuove Musiche* is one of the most important documents of the time, perhaps more for its comments on ornamentation than on vocal technique. Giulio Romolo Caccini (1551-1618) was a composer, singer, teacher of singing and instrumentalist. He was closely associated with the Florentine Camerata under the patronage of Count Giovanni de’ Bardi. Caccini was lavish in his praise of the ideals of this group, claiming that

“I learned more from their learned discourses than I did in thirty years of counterpoint study. These most intelligent gentlemen always encouraged me, and they convinced me with the clearest reasons not to value music which spoils the thought by not allowing the words to be well understood. In that music the syllables are sometimes lengthened, sometimes shortened, to accommodate the counterpoint, so that the poetry is distorted. Instead they urged me to hold to that way so much praised by Plato and other philosophers, which insists that music should be first speech and rhythm and then lastly melody and not the other way around.”

This viewpoint became the battle cry of Caccini and proponents of his “new style” of monody which “had more power to move the affect of the soul and delight the senses.”

As a reaction to the highly ornamented style of Renaissance motets, the Florentine Camerata encouraged the composition of vocal music which would "imitate the sentiments of the words, searching out those chords more and less affecting which will intensify the mood and have especial charm."73 Thus began the rise in popularity of monody, or songs for the solo voice. *Le Nuove Musiche* is a collection of twelve madrigals and ten arias. A subsequent volume, *Nuove musiche e nuova maniera di scriverle*, containing sixteen madrigals and thirteen arias was published in 1614. The latter volume is notable in that Caccini wrote out most of the embellishments which would have formerly been improvised, calling this a "new way of writing them" (*nuova maniera de scriverle*). Caccini wrote that he "composed the songs to get away from that old style of passage work which formerly was customary, and which is more suitable to wind or string instruments than to the voice. But I saw many of them mutilated and ruined, with those long vocal roulades both single and double badly introduced."74

Despite his claim of moving away from excess ornamentation, Caccini describes the use of "such fine ornaments to good style as crescendo and diminuendo, esclamazioni, trilli, gruppi, and the like."75 In these descriptions we find the major part of his technical advice. It seems that vocal prowess at this time hinged, at least in part, on one's ability to properly perform ornaments. Caccini states that

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74 Ibid., 14.

75 Ibid.
“the first and most important fundamental is the attack on all notes, not only to avoid sharping and flatting, but also to do so with good style... Thus there are some who, in attacking the first note, begin a third low, while others begin on the note itself and always crescendo, saying that this is good style in singing gracefully....since it is more unusual, I would choose the second manner with the crescendo.”\textsuperscript{76}

Next he explains the \textit{esclamazione};

“I have found that beginning to sing with a motion contrary to the above [i.e. with a diminuendo on the first note] is the most essential means for making an effect. Now the \textit{esclamazione}, properly speaking, is nothing more than a lessening of the intensity of tone followed by a strengthening of that intensity somewhat.... Moreover, as a general rule the \textit{esclamazione} can be used in emotional music on all half notes, as well as dotted quarters, when the following note descends.”\textsuperscript{77}

For this, Caccini supplies an example of how the \textit{esclamazione} can enhance the mood on such a word as \textit{languire} (to languish).

Finally, the \textit{trillo} (increasing speed of repetition on one pitch) and the \textit{gruppo} (alternation between two pitches a second apart, as in the modern trill) are described.

“This trill on a single note...should begin on a quarter note and each note should be struck with the throat on the vowel ‘a’ until the final whole note. The \textit{gruppo} is treated similarly. The \textit{trillo} and \textit{gruppo} are necessary steps leading to many things

\textsuperscript{76} Ibid., 16.

\textsuperscript{77} Ibid.
that are described, effects of such charm that they are much sought after for good singing."\textsuperscript{78}

Caccini includes here some examples of ornamentation in the “noble style,” which will appear fairly ornate to contemporary singers. (See Appendix B, Ex. 1.)

Caccini’s other comments on vocal style consist of references to breath, vowel color, and registers. “A good voice is not as necessary as breath control when it is needed.”\textsuperscript{79} Unfortunately, the student is left to his own devices in finding the best method to gain breath control. Like the Renaissance pedagogues before him, Caccini advocated using open vowels: “of course the open vowels are more sonorous than the closed, and also more suitable and easier for training aptitude.”\textsuperscript{80} He also advocated singing in the chest register; “from the falsetto the nobleness of good singing can never rise; that can only come from a natural voice singing in whatever range the artist can manage, depending on his ability.”\textsuperscript{81}

Ottavio Durante’s \textit{Arie devote} consists of about thirty sacred solos and duets. The preface is dedicated to his patron Cardinal Montalto, and instructs the singer on how to sing “with grace” and the “manner of writing passaggi and other affects.”\textsuperscript{82} Very little is

\textsuperscript{78} Ibid., 17.
\textsuperscript{79} Ibid., 18.
\textsuperscript{80} Ibid., 15.
\textsuperscript{81} Ibid., 18.
known of the author, other than he appears to have been born in Rome and lived for a
time in Viterbo. He died sometime after 1614, but the year of his birth is not known. He
was in Cardinal Montalto’s service when *Arie devote* was published in 1608.

Durante’s instructions are as much to the composer as the singer and again
emphasize the need for the text to be understood. He cautions that “passaggi ought not to
be inserted at the beginning of a composition, or at any place where they ‘impede the
sense of words.’ Cadenzas should be designed to fall on long syllables and favorable
vowels; the music should be as easy as possible, for the more beautiful it is, the more
desire there will be for performing and hearing it.” 83 Durante insists that the *passaggi*
should not diminish the comprehension of the text and, like Caccini, advocates using
open vowels when singing them.

“The passaggi should not impair the meaning of the words, especially on short
syllables, nor be sung on the odious vowels, which are the ‘i’ and ‘u’, the first of
which resembles a whinny, the second a wail; the singer should insure that he
sings *passaggi* only on the long syllables and on the other vowels, ‘a’, ‘e’ and
‘o’.” 84

Durante then encourages the singer to consult the writings of Caccini, calling his own
work a “small river which arises from the fountain of his [Caccini’s] virtues.” 85

83 Foreman, *Comparison*, 92.

84 Ibid., 93.

85 Ibid.
Francesco Rognoni (died before 1626), a knight and Count Palatine, was head of instrumental music at the ducal court and maestro di cappella at Santo Ambrogio in Milan. His father, Riccardo Rognoni, was the author of an important treatise on ornamentation some thirty years previous. Francesco describes himself as an instrumentalist, but his legacy lies in his diminution manual, Selva de varii passaggi (1620). Written in two parts, with the first devoted to singing, the Selva addresses the principal problems for the singer. It states that “beautiful singing consists above all of expressing the text, not of an excess of ornamentation” and stresses the “importance of breathing from the abdomen when performing coloratura.”

Like Caccini and Durante, Rognoni emphasizes the importance of the text over the music. He advises that “three concerns must be kept in mind: 1) to avoid passaggi, using instead small-scale ornaments or ‘graces,’ such as accenti and esclamazioni; 2) to use crescendos and diminuendos; and 3) to make the voice at times ‘melancholy and dolorous,’ matching the sense of the text.” A table of ten different ornaments is included as well as a discussion on their usage. Most notable is his mention of portar della voce (portamento), where he instructs the singer to “drag” (strascinare) the voice, “little by little, almost imperceptibly, from the low to the high [note] or the reverse, through the said limits of three or five quarter tones. [This] is [also] done by some common diatonic melodies, principally [in] ascending, for certain

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mournful and sad effects, but with other [i.e. diatonic] intervals, which is a sort of ‘carriage of the voice’ [portamento di voce] more appropriate to women than to men.”

Any contemporary student of bel canto singing would cite the portamento as one of the principal stylistic elements of the period.

Other ornaments discussed include the accento (akin to the contemporary appoggiatura), the trillo and tremolo (both ornaments of tone repetition, the tremolo being a shortened version of the trillo), the gruppo, the esclamazione and the cascata or “fall.” Rognoni’s illustrations are derived from Caccini’s, with the exception of the tremolo, which seems in this instance to be a measured vibrato.

While essentially a diminution manual (all but three pages of part I are devoted to passaggi), Rognoni does make some observations pertinent to vocal technique. In paragraph nine, he writes, “There are certain singers who at times have a way of ornamenting in the Moorish style, beating the passaggio in a certain way displeasing to all, singing a a a, so that it seems that they are laughing...showing how many teeth they have in their mouths. From this, learn that embellishment should come from the chest, and not from the throat.” Here, it appears that he is criticizing singers who articulate their ornaments with separate syllables, similar to tongue articulations used in wind instruments. Although the majority of his contemporaries advocated singing from the “throat,” he specifies the need to use the chest. It is possible that by this time the

88 Ibid., 14.
89 Ibid., 26.
approach to ornamentation was beginning to change; ornaments such as *portar la voce*, *esclamazione* and *cascata* would have involved a legato production, while *trillo*, *tremolo* and *gruppo* an articulation in the throat. Such a change would be a natural progression towards the apex of *bel canto* style.

An overview of seventeenth-century vocal pedagogy should not omit Benigne di Bacilly’s *Remarques curieuses sur l’art de bien chanter* (1668). While a French treatise does not at first glance appear related to the Italian style of *bel canto*, a careful reading of the text reveals its debt to earlier pedagogues, such as Caccini, and presages the reciprocal influence of French and Italian singing. Bacilly (c.1625-1690) was a French composer of airs, but was primarily known for his work as a vocal pedagogue. He felt that singers must know not only how to sing “properly” with all of the vocal ornaments performed perfectly, but also how to compose and sight-read difficult pieces as well.

“Proper vocal style” required:

“proper pitch, proper sustaining of the voice, good carriage and support, the proper performance of *cadences* and *tremblement* (tremolos), proper throat pulsation when necessary (and the omission of this technique when it is not called for; i.e. knowing when to slur over certain notes), the proper performance of accents and the proper performance of *passages* and *diminutions*.“\(^9^0\)

Although Bacilly’s *Remarques* is primarily a diction text, dedicated to detailed instruction on how to perform the long and short syllables of the French language,

\(^9^0\) Benigne de Bacilly, *Remarques curieuses sur l’art de bien chanter*. 1668. trans. and ed. by Austin B. Caswell (Brooklyn: The Institute of Medieval Music, Ltd. 1968) 6.
Bacilly also makes some interesting observations concerning vocal production. Contrary to general opinion in later centuries, Bacilly claims that big voices are best suited to ensemble singing, for they lack the subtlety necessary for solo singing. "Vocal defects are more apparent in big voices, thus they are required to sing better than others."91 In a statement diametrically opposed to the opinions of the sixteenth-century pedagogues, Bacilly advocates the use of falsetto, claiming that "vocal art owes everything to this high falsetto voice, because of the fact that it can render certain ports de voix (portamento), intervals and other vocal decorations in a fashion entirely different from the normal tenor."92 This too indicates the changing tastes of the audiences. As noted in the chapter on bel canto, the range of tenor parts continued to expand upward throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, fueled by the public's delight with the higher tessitura.

Bacilly is very specific in his list of necessary qualities for the voice teacher and the proper method for learning to sing. The voice teacher must:

1) Have a good voice himself.  
2) Above all, have good pitch.  
3) Have the proper disposition for the performance of vocal ornaments.  
4) Never sing through the nose.  
5) Be able to discern between strong and weak voices.  
6) Know French well.  
7) Know music (notations, meters, correct ornaments), poetry and how to perform airs.  
8) Have diligence, kindliness, and be able to sing without making faces.  
9) Have proper pronunciation.  
10) Compose acceptable airs.

91 Ibid., 42.  
92 Ibid., 46.
On the proper vocal method, he says that there are “as many different vocal styles as there are tempi and expressions,” but “certain vocal qualities (are)…never satisfactory:”

1) Singing through the nose.
2) Bad breath support.
3) Bad cadences and accents or plaintes (appoggiaturas).
4) Use of inappropriate ornaments at the end of an air.
5) Incorrect placement of ports de voix.
6) Making passages with the tongue or in uneven rhythm
7) Above all, bad pronunciation and a lack of discernment between long and short syllables.

Bacilly then lists the ornaments not ordinarily printed in the music and how to perform them. They include the port de voix (portamento), cadence, double cadence, soutien de la voix (sustaining of final and other long notes), expression, animer (almost imperceptible repetitions with the throat, like a light trillo), accent or aspiration, and diminution. The last half of the treatise is an extensive discussion on French pronunciation in singing. Although a useful tool for the student of French performance technique, it is less relevant to the topic of vocal pedagogy. However, Bacilly’s treatise provides evidence that French and Italian singing styles had begun to share ornamentation techniques. During the course of the next century, more Italian operas would be performed in France and more French singers will be engaged to sing them. The fame of French tenors Adolphe Nourrit (1780-1831) and Gilbert Duprez (1806-1896) extended throughout the continent in their time.

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93 Ibid., 88.
The eighteenth century brings us to the time of Manfredini. The most influential writings on singing during this century were the treatises of Tosi (translated and annotated by Agricola) and Mancini. Nicola Porpora was a highly influential voice teacher of the time, but we are left with only a collection of vocalizzi to indicate his vocal technique. (See Appendix B, Ex. 2. for an example of his writing.)

Pier Francesco Tosi (1654-1732) was an Italian castrato, teacher and writer. His Opinioni de’ cantori antichi e moderni o sieno Osservazioni sopra il canto figurato (Bologna, 1723) is perhaps the most influential eighteenth-century treatise on singing. Tosi’s writings greatly influenced the works to follow, particularly the treatise by Mancini.  

The majority of Tosi’s treatise is devoted to the performance of ornaments. Considering his career as a teacher and performer, the reader might expect more insight into his vocal technique, but this document privileges performance aesthetic, specifically in regard to ornamentation. Of the eleven chapters of the book, five are dedicated solely to ornaments: Concerning Appoggiaturas, Concerning Trills, Concerning Divisions, Concerning Cadenzas, and Concerning Improvised Variations of Melodies.

94 The most recent translation of the Tosi, by Julianne Baird appears in a rather unusual format. In 1757, Johann Friedrich Agricola, musicographer, organist and singing master, published a German translation of Tosi’s Opinioni..., adding commentaries and emendations as extensive as the original text. It is this “translation of the translation” that has been employed, offering not only the Tosi script, but Agricola’s commentary as well.
The first chapter, ‘Observations for One Who Teaches a Soprano,’ is interesting for its commentary on voice teachers, who might easily lead a young mind astray, and therefore must exemplify good taste and good singing.

“Above else, listen with a disinterested ear, whether he whom one wishes to teach has a voice and a disposition toward singing, that one may not be constrained to render account to God for money ill-spent by parents, and to have led the boy into the irreparable loss of that time, which might be better spent in some other profession.”

This sentiment is later echoed in the writings of both Mancini and Manfredini. Other advice to the teacher includes careful attention to intonation (again repeated in Mancini and Manfredini) and an extensive discussion of registers. Tosi emphasizes the necessity of using the falsetto and the importance of uniting the falsetto with the chest register. Here, he offers some technical advice.

“One curious to discover the falsetto in one who knows well how to conceal it, should observe whether he does not use the vowel ‘I’ on the high notes with more vigor and less fatigue than the vowel ‘A’. The head voice is facile of motion, possessing the upper notes more than the lower, has a ready trill, but is subject to being lost through not having strength, which maintains it.”

This discussion in favor of the use of falsetto is a radical change from the views of earlier pedagogues. Of those previously discussed, only Bacilly is in agreement with

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95 Foreman, *Comparison*, 33.

96 Ibid., 35.
Tosi, perhaps an indication of the changes in musical taste occurring at the turn of the eighteenth-century. Tosi blames the scarcity of good sopranos on their inability to unite the registers, and the consequent strain on their voices. He continues with the importance of sustaining the breath and is credited with the introduction of the term *messa di voce*.

Chapter two of Tosi’s *Opinioni* is dedicated entirely to the *appoggiatura*. He writes: “Of all the ornaments of singing, none is easier for the master to teach or for the student to learn than the *appoggiatura*. In addition to its pleasing quality, it alone in the art enjoys the privilege of being heard frequently without becoming tiresome.”97 Every possible employment of the *appoggiatura* seems to be explored in this very lengthy discussion before Tosi moves on to the next chapter, “Concerning Trills.” Of the trill, Tosi stresses its great importance to the art of singing. “Since the trill is so indispensable to singers, the teacher must take pains through oral instruction, through reflection, and through the aid of one or another instrument to bring the student to the point that he can produce a trill; even, clear, flexible and moderately quick, for these are the principal qualities of the trill.”98 Tosi’s instruction on trilling involves eight different types of trill: major, minor, half, rising, descending, slow, double and mordent. He, like Manfredini, cautions against the “goat trill” (*caprino*, or bleat), and indicates where and how to perform the others.


98 Ibid.
Chapter four is on the two types of divisions, detached and slurred. Like Caccini and Durante, Tosi notes that the open vowels are greatly preferable to [u] and [i]. Breathing in the middle of a word is discouraged, which again, is reiterated by Mancini and Manfredini. Tosi’s comments on recitative offer an interesting and rather unique viewpoint. Rather than the customary division into two styles (secco and accompagnato), Tosi states that there are three kinds of recitative: church, theatrical and chamber. Church recitative must be performed with “sanctity,” theatrical recitative with the “stately decorum with which princes and those who consort with them speak” and chamber recitative “almost always requires a special artistry with regard to the words.” It is here that Tosi comes closest to Caccini’s support of music to “move the affections.”

In chapter six, “Observations for One Who Studies,” Tosi turns his attention to advice for the student. First, he warns the student to seriously consider his choice of profession and whether or not he is suitably endowed by nature. He then advises the study of Tuscan pronunciation, the harpsichord, and the principal rules of counterpoint. The student is instructed to study in the morning, unless more time is needed later in the day. Once more, Tosi provides the foundation for the writings of Mancini and Manfredini, who offer similar advice.

There remain only his chapters on arias, cadenzas, remarks for the professional singer and ornamentation. Of arias and cadenzas, Tosi suggests that “verbal instruction is not much use, for these are always designed for the particular ‘manner in which the

99 Ibid., 171.
author brought forth his voice’ which is of course different with every singer.” What is most notable here is Tosi’s restraint in naming specific singers. Unlike the later treatises of Mancini and Manfredini, which are full of names of contemporary singers, Tosi avoids personal criticism of performers, though he heaps criticism on the “modern” theatre.

In his “Remarks for the Professional Singer,” Tosi both echoes earlier opinions and lays the foundation for later pedagogues. He admonishes singers who are “vulgar and insolent,” encouraging prudent behavior. Singers who “make excuses” are harshly chastised; “The singer who has good judgment will never, without just cause, utter the words that are so often used and are so repugnant to everyone: Today I cannot sing because I have caught my death of cold.” Both Mancini and Manfredini also frown upon such behavior. Tosi also warns of the artifice of pride, the foolishness of arrogance, and the great error inherent in imitating the ornamentation of others.

Lastly, Tosi’s comments regarding improvised melodies state, “the most beautiful that a singer can conceive of introducing and the most pleasant that the connoisseur can hear, it is necessary that a singer should consider very seriously how he may learn the art of skillfully inventing them.” The bulk of Tosi’s advice is then summed up in the five essential qualities: “knowledge of harmony, invention, observance of the rhythm, judgment and taste” and the five non-essential embellishments, “which are always

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100 Foreman, *Comparison*, 41.
102 Ibid., 232.
available to further ornament the improvised variations. These are: the appoggiatura, the various essential graces, the portamento of the voice, the slur and the drag."\textsuperscript{103} As a proponent of the "old school," Tosi considers the art of ornamentation an essential tool for the successful singer. Thus the seed of conflict between 'modern' and 'old' is planted. The argument continues for the next century, and is primary issue of contention between Manfredini and Mancini. Perhaps the issue never is resolved. Music of the early nineteenth-century seems to advocate both, by combining the two opposing styles in the form of aria and cabaletta.

The final pedagogue to consider in this discussion of eighteenth century vocal technique is Giovanni Battista [Giambattista] Mancini (1714-1800), ideological enemy of Manfredini. Mancini was a castrato and student of the famous singing teacher Antonio Bernacchi in Bologna. Never more than a "second rank singer, though no doubt a musicianly one"\textsuperscript{104} he sang in Italy and Germany and was elected to membership in the Accademia Filarmonica di Bologna. His treatise \textit{Pensieri, e riflessioni pratiche sopra il canto figurato} (Vienna, 1774) was highly influential, though largely a more systematic version of Tosi's \textit{Opinioni de' cantori antiche e moderni}.\textsuperscript{105} A second edition, listed as the 'third edition' was issued in 1777, with only minor changes. Most striking to this study is the number of negative references Mancini directs towards Manfredini. The

\textsuperscript{103} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{105} Ibid.
writing style is akin to that of Manfredini, incorporating ‘flowery language’ and lengthy sentences.

Mancini divides his work into fifteen chapters, including two on the history of music and singing in the eighteenth century. Here he goes into great detail about the various teachers, schools and famous singers. He then discusses the moral obligation of singing teachers, much in the same vein as Tosi. Mancini, however, takes the issue a step further, advising the teacher to examine the “real organs of the voice... larynx, glottis, uvula, tongue, palatine arch, hard palate and lips”\(^{106}\) as well as the importance of a “sweet and pleasing face.”\(^{107}\) This reference to the anatomy and physiology of the voice is quite remarkable, all of the previous treatises having been almost entirely empirical. Although the function of the larynx was still largely speculative at this time, Mancini is somewhat of an innovator in considering science in his teaching method.

Next, Mancini addresses the registers, and like Tosi, notes that “the great art of the singer consists in acquiring the ability to render imperceptible to the ear, the passing from one register to the other.”\(^{108}\) It is worth noting that Manfredini’s language on the subject is surprisingly similar. Poor intonation is regarded as the worst of faults and proper opening of the mouth is considered essential to producing a good tone. Mancini’s comments on “The proper way to draw out the voice” address the issues of breath and


\(^{107}\) Ibid., 56.

\(^{108}\) Ibid., 59.
sustained tones. He advocates using mezza di voce exercises to increase breath capacity and teach sostenuto.

Chapters eight through twelve are devoted entirely to ornamentation; appoggiatura, portamento, messa di voce, trillo and mordente, cadenzas and agility of the voice. Mancini, like Caccini leans towards the ‘old school’ of ornamentation, in which the singer’s technique is dependent upon his ability to ornament. Finally, Mancini addresses the concerns of the performer; acting ability, languages (the Tuscan dialect), recitative (semplice and instrumentato), posture, movement, and facial expression.

Although Mancini closely parallels Tosi in his pedagogical advice, he distinguishes himself with a more ‘technical’ approach and by his style of writing. His negative references to his colleague Manfredini are numerous and will be discussed in chapter five.
CHAPTER IV
RULES OF HARMONY
(TRANSLATED FROM VINCENZO MANFREDINI'S
REGOLE ARMONICHE PART III, 1797)

On the most essential rules for learning to sing

Chapter I

I. On the correct way to teach singing

The execution of singing is certainly easier than that of playing [an instrument], since
the natural instrument, namely the voice, does not demand the great length of study that
is required of a manufactured instrument before one can become acquainted with its
respective qualities and acquire the skill to perform a piece of music on it correctly. And
indeed, many are capable of learning to sing quickly. For example, one may learn an aria
without knowing how to read the music, but by only hearing it. One could never
follow such a method when wanting to perform a violin sonata, or another composition
on any instrument. But the great ease that one indeed feels in learning to sing rather than
play an instrument, is perhaps the primary reason that few singers who learn to sing at
first sight become truly skillful afterward. In fact, as a result of the ease with which one
learns to sing, one does not study singing in accordance with the proper rules and does
not dedicate sufficient time to such study in order to perfect oneself, but instead hurries
ahead by ear, imitating more often the bad rather than the good [qualities] of the most
renowned musicians. Therefore, one rarely and almost never reaches the point of singing
correctly, with one’s own perfect technique. It is also true that the execution of singing is

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109 Manfredini refers to "singing by ear," or singing by rote.
easier than that of playing. There is no instrument with which one can perform the correct measurement of the intervals of every scale, or tone, and the gradations of musical colors, that is the various degrees of piano and forte, better than the human voice, when it is fluid and well formed, and when the person that possesses it in such a way is not lacking in theory, ear or expression. Nonetheless, though it seems incredible, despite many advantages, one finds fewer truly adept singers than adept instrumentalists! Two other things, in my opinion, are the reasons for such a paucity of perfect singers.

I. The great scarcity of beautiful voices, and of propensity in those who study singing.

II. The imperfect method of teaching singing.

The first of these reasons is unfortunately almost inevitable, because it is dependent upon nature, which on very rare occasions, or almost never, is generous in granting to one person all of the necessary gifts. And in fact, many musicians who have beautiful voices do not have the manner, the expression, that is to say, the power and soul to move the affections. They sing without taste and without color, and recite with such indolence that they seem like plaster statues. But it is not the same with the second reason, which one can easily remedy. I would say therefore, that when the teacher has discovered in his pupil a bad voice, or a hard ear, and uncertainty as to intonation and rhythm-things that one can recognize within a short time - he should without further

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110 Manfredini refers to the inherent intonation problems of the tempered scale, which every 'manufactured' instrument will encounter. Only the voice is capable of minute adjustments in every key.

111 The "doctrine of affections" was formulated in the eighteenth century by such writers as A. Werckmeister, J.D. Heinichen, J. Mattheson, J.J. Quantz and F.W. Marpurg. Mattheson detailed some twenty "affections," such as sorrow, hate, hope and courage in his Der vollkommene Capellmeister (1739). Each affection was to be expressed by specific conventions in the music. Manfredini refers to the skill a singer must acquire in order to successfully deliver the text with expression and "move the affections."
hesitation dissuade the student from the study of singing, because certainly [that student]
will never develop into a perfect singer. If, on the other hand, the teacher discovers in the
student much disposition, and a favorable ear united with a beautiful voice; then he will
diligently examine whether it is the voice of a soprano, or of a contralto, or of a tenor, or
of a bass, and of how many [vocal] cords it is formed. Then the teacher will begin to
have the student sing in that key which is most comfortable and natural for him. The first
lessons must consist of having him do a certain scale repeatedly. This I call the Figured
Scale, as it is composed of figures, or different notes, which because of its variety, is
not boring, and helps more than a little to learn tempo, and to free and clarify the voice.
This scale, see plate X, example 4, needs to be executed by the students on all of the
pitches of their range, and in a motion, or tempo that is rather slow. I can assure quite
frankly that the same is so advantageous for maintaining the fluidity and clarity of the
voice, that not only students, but likewise singers that are already polished should
perform it every day, two or three times at least. Be advised however, that the notes in
measures 28, 29 and 30 being of short duration, should not be sung in solfège, but
vocalized only with the vowel A ( [a] ), or with E ( [ɛ] ) or with O ( [o] ); and it would
not be at all a bad idea to ‘sing’ them occasionally, softly however, with one of the other
two vowels ( [i, u] ). Thus would one accustom oneself to performing them all with

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112 During Manfredini's time, the function of the vocal mechanism was not accurately known. The
laryngoscope was invented in 1854 (Manuel Garcia II) which allowed viewing of the mechanism in motion
for the first time. Manfredini inaccurately describes the different voice types as having varying amounts of
"cords", when in reality they have different masses (of muscle).

113 In later vocal pedagogy this is often referred to as the "Great Scale", in which a singer slowly ascends
and descends an octave or an octave and a fifth, often performing a "messa di voce" on each note, see the

114 See Appendix C, Ex. 1.
complete ease and clarity, enabling oneself to bring pleasure with them, precisely as do those few musicians who truly know how to sing. But as for solfège: the ancients, having only six names designated for this use,\textsuperscript{115} made use of the ‘rule of mutations’ that consists of giving different names to the same pitch, or the same name to different pitches. That rule [of mutations], being confusing and contradictory, made it so that one might almost never finish learning solfège. Hence, this defect was remedied by adding another name to the six already noted, so that each of the seven pitches of the scale would have its own name, and every pitch would always have the same name.\textsuperscript{116}

This new rule certainly facilitated and abbreviated the study of solfège, though it was not approved of by a certain antiquarian, who believes that nothing that is ancient is imperfect.\textsuperscript{117} The teacher then, will never suggest to his student with his own voice, or with any instrument, the intonation of the intervals, but will see that the pupil always finds them on his own by means of the scale. The teacher will also see that he learns well of how many tones or semi-tones every interval is composed, so that he always knows immediately what he must sing, if it is major or minor, if it is a second, a third, a fourth etc. Using this method, he will learn the foundations of singing, and not to sing by ear [rote].

\textsuperscript{115} The ancient Greek system of solmization was “rediscovered” by the Benedictine monk, Guido d’Arezzo in the 11th century. Six syllables were employed in his nomenclature; \textit{ut, re, mi, fa, sol and la}. An elaborate system of modulation could be employed to extend to pitches beyond these six. The seventh letter was added by the early 17th century, when \textit{ut} became \textit{do}. This is the system still used today. See Gustaf Reese, \textit{Music of the Middle Ages} (New York: w.W. Norton & Co. 1940): 151-3.

\textsuperscript{116} Rameau discusses this “new” system of solfège in his \textit{Treatise of Harmony}, 1725.

\textsuperscript{117} Manfredini appears to be making a personal jab at his public rival Esteban de Arteaga, who advocated a return to the simplistic style of the ancient Greeks, see Howard, xxxi-xxxvii.
It is one thing to occasionally sing a few notes, or some passages with the student, in order to support him and strengthen him in intonation, but it is another to suggest every sound to him. Likewise, it is a very different thing to perform the notes as they are written, and to perform them with grace and expression, which is called 'singing with style.'

In this case it is well that the teacher demonstrates to his disciple in what manner he must perform, and it will be even better if he can demonstrate it to the student with his own voice. On the other hand, if the teacher continuously lets him hear all of the pitches sung to him, he will certainly ruin the student, since from this pernicious custom it ends up that without such help the student no longer knows how to sing four notes correctly. If only what I say were not true! It happens often though, and especially to more than a few of those ladies, that illicitly call themselves virtuosos. The true virtuoso in fact, does not ever sing with an embouchure like a canary, but is rather one who knows how to sing without the help of anyone. It is even more praiseworthy, if when needed, she knows how to accompany herself on her own.

Since I have already mentioned 'singing with style' above, I want to say a few words about this phrase, which I hear spoken on everyone's lips, but rarely do I hear performed. Such a defect is born, as are so many other defects, that is to say, from not understanding and from not knowing the true meaning of the terms. Many singers, believing that to 'sing with style' consists of performing variations, ornament so often, and so badly, that they ruin every piece they sing. Oh how they are mistaken! 'Singing
with style' then, means nothing more than singing with sentiment, with spirit; supporting
and shading the voice, and above all, expressing every piece of music according to its
true sense and character. The ornaments then, undoubtedly enter into 'singing with
style,' but consist only of some beautiful trills, performed in their place, some
appoggiaturas, a few gruppettos,\textsuperscript{118} and also in varying at times some trills and some
brief passages,\textsuperscript{119} so long as one does so with great prudence, so as not to ever forsake the
text. For good music, namely music that is truly expressive, does not allow for more than
very small changes.

When the student becomes confident in performing the afore-mentioned \textit{figured scale} alone, he may begin to learn the intervals, commonly called leaps. At first
however, he should be made to learn the easier intervals, that is to say, the consonances.
(Table XII, Example I)\textsuperscript{120} From there he will move on to the solmizations, (which are
like arias without words)\textsuperscript{121} provided that they are not too difficult, and always adapted to
his age and ability. After some time, do not fail to teach him the figured scale in the
minor mode (ibid. Example II) and the dissonant intervals, including the most difficult,
that is to say, the diminished and augmented (Plate XIII, Example II). Likewise, one must
make him practice the chromatic scale sometimes, which is also called the semi-toned
scale, since it is composed of all of the major and minor semi-tones. But above all, one

\textsuperscript{118} The gruppetto is similar to the trill, but is shorter. See Caccini’s preface to \textit{Le Nuove Musiche}.

\textsuperscript{119} Contrary to the practice of the day, of rewriting basic melodies for the purpose of ornamentation,
Manfredini advocates rewriting only short passages of ornaments.

\textsuperscript{120} See Appendix C, Ex. 2.

\textsuperscript{121} Renowned eighteenth-century voice teacher Nicola Porpora composed such ‘vocalizzi’ for his students.
They are arioso-like studies to be practiced on one vowel and are still in print today. See Appendix B, ex. 2.
must with great attention see that he observes and does not neglect to keep well in mind the following rules.

II. On the Manner of Opening the Mouth

The way to open the mouth is a most essential rule, since the production of a clear voice and the pure and clear pronunciation of the words depend upon it. Nevertheless, few singers observe this important rule with exactitude, certainly due to the negligence of their first teachers and for other reasons, which I will discuss in another place. One must not open the mouth then, when singing, too much, nor too little, but just the right amount, holding it open as in the act of smiling. Neither should one push the tongue against the lips, which causes singing through the nose and pronunciation like one who stammers.

III. On Intonation

Intonation (namely the proper and precise degree of voice on every sound and interval) is certainly also a very essential part of singing, because there is no other thing in music which is as displeasing as false intonation. The voice then, must not ever be forced, for example, by singing with the cords too shrill [sharp] or too heavy [flat], but should always use those cords that one is able to easily tune. Observing this rule with attention then, and breathing, that is taking breath in the proper time and place, and having the training and the theory necessary for all the leaps, or intervals that are the primary substance of every melody, one cannot do less than tune exactly. This assumes

122 Here again, Manfredini does not understand the action of the vocal mechanism, but accurately notes that the use of a heavy mechanism (too much vocal cord muscle) causes poor intonation.
however, the absolute necessity of an ear suitable and favorable to music, as this is the principle prerequisite for performing with correct and perfect intonation (34).\footnote{The (34) refers to Manfredini’s endnote, which I have included in the body of the text.}

(Endnote 34) It is a very necessary thing for singers to distinguish and to execute perfectly the precise measure of every interval, on which the entire merit of the intonation depends. For the most part, the singer who sings out of tune, excuses himself, saying he has a cold, or is tired, or hoarse, or that he cannot hear the instruments, or the accompaniment, etc. Singing out of tune however, if it does not stem from imperfection of the ear, surely arises from lack of preparation, or from ignorance of the theory of the intervals. Even without any accompaniment and with little voice, one can and must sing in tune. A great deal of well-founded study is therefore needed, and above all one must not ever skip a day of practice, just as the skillful singers do. But how many good singers are there really? Ah! Unfortunately, not many, and again, that happens because of so many bad habits that are truly the ruin of singing. For example, not accustoming oneself enough to ‘drawing the voice,’ in carrying it; not performing exactly the gradations of piano and of forte, that mean so much in music; playing and not singing, that is, performing too many notes, too many deviations \cite{flights}, too many ornaments, etc. These are notable faults, it is true, but there also exists a worse one, and it is that of permitting the castration of so many unfortunate young boys in order to preserve the high voice. For the greatest part of these, not having the natural disposition, only shame remains, and pain that they, unlike the instigators and cruel promoters of their misfortune, certainly do not deserve.
Italians! Italians! When will you ever stop this most unfair, most cruel and disgraceful custom, so contrary to nature, and to your honor? What need has music of such subjects [castrati], if high voices can be supplied by children, or women, whose natural voice is always beautiful, and more pleasing than the artificial voice of the castrati?

Chapter II

I. On Drawing the Voice and Singing with Portamento

By 'drawing the voice' is meant sustaining it as long as possible, and holding the notes for their full value. From this results the most beautiful style of singing, that undoubtedly consists of singing legato, and carried (portato) as one is wont to say. For this reason, one would call this style singing with portamento, or portamento of the voice. In recitative, and in certain parlante arias, sometimes one must separate and 'staccato' the notes; but generally, and above all in vocalizing, this practice is very bad. Therefore I leave it up to those who truly know what the true and most beautiful way of singing is to decide how great must be the displeasure of listeners with good taste to hear singing in such a manner; to hear certain passages beaten and pointed, produced in the throat, that sound like a whistle, that imitate the cackle of hens or the crowing of roosters, never drawing the voice, etc.

124 In parlante or "spoken" arias the voice must approximate speech, a common characteristic of comic opera.
II. On the unification of chest voice and head voice, which is commonly called falsetto.125

Those persons that have more than twelve or thirteen notes in chest voice are rare, and since one still finds those who have a greater range in head voice than in chest voice, it is necessary to unite them in such a way that the voice seems entirely of one register, so that it is completely equal. One seeks to achieve this, by making sure, to as great a degree as possible, that the highest notes of chest voice (which for the most part are between the fourth and fifth staff lines in the respective keys of the singers) are united with the first [lowest] notes of falsetto, in such a manner that the difference between the two voices is less apparent. This is done by not straining the cords in the upper tones of the chest, but rather, strengthening the low notes of the falsetto, or by doing the opposite, if the chest voice is weak and lacking, and the head voice is full and strong. It is certain then that by never tiring the voice too much, and from the strength of continuous but moderate exercise, one can with time acquire additional notes in chest or in head. But doing the opposite, that is, forcing the voice too much, pushing the chest voice too high or the head voice too low, and not knowing how to breathe, namely taking a breath how and when one should, the voice will certainly decline, and one risks losing it.

III. On the manner and time to take a breath.

This is a very important rule, and many would sing better, and more easily, if they did not ignore the correct manner of taking a breath. One should therefore not overlook this rule, which consists principally of taking breath with great quickness and in a way that no

125 In modern pedagogy, falsetto is a different register than head voice. Manfredini uses the word to describe what is currently called head voice. See Miller, op. cit. 120.
one can notice. Breath is taken for the most part at weak times, and when the word is
finished, but it is not necessary that full value of the note is sustained, if after the note
there is no pause. Otherwise, one could not attend to another very important rule, that of
beginning every note in tempo. If then, the weakness of the voice, or the quality of the
melody, should oblige one to breathe occasionally in the middle of a word, one does so,
but with great caution, so that the breaking of the words might be heard as little as
possible. In such a case, one breathes as if doing a kindness, or of sighing. From that
one can obtain an advantage; namely one increases the strength of expression. Breathing
rather often in order to tire oneself less, and to always have available the strength to
express the *chiaroscuro*\textsuperscript{126} of the voice, in other words the shading of the voice, is a
praiseworthy thing. It is necessary to pay careful attention not only not to breathe in the
middle of a word (which, as I have said, one can only do in some special cases), but not
after a trill either; nor before having finished the sentiment of a melody, and having
ended a cadenza. There are some other rules about this interesting topic to be observed,
depending on the various situations, that one cannot suggest clearly with words, but
rather with example. The young student will be able to learn them more easily by
listening to the singing of his teacher and the best musicians.

\textsuperscript{126} "The whole concept of *chiaroscuro* is taken over from the technique of visual art in which modeling in
light and shade replaces line drawing, so that definite sharp lines are avoided in favor of a combination of
shadows and highlights. The vocal realization of this technique involved the use of a method of tonal
emission which had both components, light and shade, in it, and is impossible to describe verbally beyond
observing that it was neither a light, airy, bodiless tone nor a heavy, dark and gutteral sound, but a sound
which, because of the way in which it was emitted, partook of both qualities." (Edward Foreman, *A
Comparison of Selected Vocal Tutors of the Period 1550-1800*. DMA diss. Music: Univ. of Illinois, 1969,
143). The term *chiaroscuro* is still used in contemporary vocal pedagogy in much the same fashion.
IV. On the trill and the turn

I have already described these two embellishments, when I spoke of the ornaments of the melody (see page 21). Thus now I will indicate only the mode of perfecting the trill in those voices to which nature was not very generous in granting it. Having then a beautiful but not very agile voice, one seeks to release it, vocalizing fast music with various gradations of rhythm, namely in a tempo not too fast in the first lessons, and speeding it up a little at a time, according to the ease which one acquires with frequent exercise. One should also use the same method to obtain a beautiful trill. For example, the first time the trill goes rather slowly. As soon as one performs well in such a mode, one seeks to speed it up, little by little, and with the tempo, step by step, one attempts to perform it in its correct manner, which consists of doing it quickly, clearly and evenly. Its duration must be similar to that of the notes over which it is placed; and in the fermatas and free cadenzas, it should last a reasonable [amount of] time, so as not to lose all of its strength. One can still not hold it for the full value of the notes, and imitate the progression of the bass. That is to say, finish the cadenza with a leap of a fifth down, or in another manner, provided that everything is done with expression and perfect intonation. Likewise, it is necessary to observe carefully when performing a trill, and in the singing of agility (that one would call also singing of bravura), to always keep the

127 Manfredini discusses ornamentation of the melody in part I of his treatise, which is dedicated to basic music theory and keyboard instruments (instrumenti da tasto) such as piano, harpsichord and cembalo. On page 21 of Part I, the reader will find section two of chapter four, entitled “Degli ornamenti della melodia” (On the ornaments of the melody).

128 Manfredini is in concurrence with Tosi on the qualities of a ‘good trill.’ Tosi felt it must be “eguale, battuto, granite, facile, e moderamente, veloce,” (equal, beaten, solid [even], and moderately fast). See Tosi’s Opinioni, 25.
tongue and chin still. Otherwise it results in that very ugly trill, called *trillo cavallino* [little horse] or *caprino* [goat] trill.\textsuperscript{129}

\textit{V. On the free cadenza.}

The free cadenza is that short melody which the singer creates on the spot, and performs at the end of an aria, or other piece of music, while the other parts stop for the purpose of allowing him the freedom to exhibit his talent. Hence I call it the free cadenza.

The correct way to do a beautiful cadenza is to insert into it some short passage of the composition that one has already sung, or instead at least something that has a melody similar to the character of the said composition. One must likewise do it without taking a breath, and never make it so long as to bore the listener. In fact, the free cadenza is not ever necessary, and is none other than a license, which often greatly damages the perfect energy of the music and text.

\textbf{Chapter Three}

\textit{I. On the appoggiatura.}

I have also explained the substance of the appoggiatura in the afore-mentioned paragraph on ornaments of the melody. Whence now, I will only say that while an instrumentist is not rigorously obligated to perform an appoggiatura that is not indicated by the composer, the same is not always true of the singer. The singer, seeing two notes of equal value and pitch [especially in recitative] must consider the first of these,\textsuperscript{129} *Trillo cavallino* (little horse trill) or *caprino* (goat) is often referred to as a bleat.
especially when it is written on a strong beat, as an appoggiatura from above. That is, perform it a tone or semi-tone higher, according to the nature of the scale in which the aforementioned two notes are written. When performing such an appoggiatura, one must pay attention not only to the notes, but likewise to the words, since, to offer an example, if in the first of the aforementioned two notes of equal value and pitch, the word should end, or a passage or a cantilena should begin, one then performs the note as it is written. Likewise, words composed of a consonant and two vowels, such as mai, fai, sai, Dei, etc., that at times are made monosyllabic by poets, and which as a result maestri place under only one note, the singer should always consider bi-syllabic, and perform an appoggiatura from above, in the afore-mentioned manner.

II. On the ‘messa di voce’

The ‘messa di voce’ is one of the most beautiful ornaments of singing and playing; while also on instruments of the breath and of the bow one can perform the ‘messa di voce.’ It consists in sounding a note at first softly, adding strength gradually up to fortissimo, then, little by little, returning to the first grade of strength which one began it. One understands therefore that this ornament can only be done on a note of great value, such as a breve, a semi-breve or a minima, when one would sustain the note more beats without taking a breath, in a fermata, and in a cadenza. Indeed, this is a good thing.

130 These words are monosyllabic diphthongs in spoken Italian. Manfredini advocates singing them as bi-syllabic words with two distinct vowels, thus creating ease for performing an appoggiatura, involving two pitches.

131 A breve is equal to two whole notes, a semi-breve to one and a minima to a half note. Obviously the tempo of a piece determines the value of a note as much as the orthographic symbols of the note values. Manfredini’s point here is that this ornament must be performed without a breath.
for one ‘messa di voce’ alone followed by a note with a trill, is enough to form one of the best cadenzas.

III. On the deportment of the person

When one sings, the head must always be held high, still and erect. Nor should one make any unseemly motion in the shoulders, the arms, or other parts of the body. It is necessary to hold oneself in a noble posture,\textsuperscript{132} standing up straight, so that the voice goes out more easily, above all when one studies and or when one has a performance and wishes to be heard.

IV. On the very great necessity of using an exact and clear pronunciation in singing.

Exact pronunciation I would say, is almost the first and most essential of all of the rules of singing, since the non-observance of it is certainly the worst of singing faults and the ruin of good vocal music. How could it ever be possible to give perfect pleasure to the listeners, and to oneself, if one does not pronounce clearly, and does not make clearly understood what one is saying, even when singing? To avoid then such a great defect, one must pronounce fairly strongly, and not half voice, or between the teeth—not swallowing the syllables, so to speak, pronouncing them all distinctly, above all the last syllable of every word, but not affectedly however, and with caricature, as do some modern singers. The words then must be read more than once before one sings them, and pronounced in the correct idiom of every language, which for Italians is that of Tuscany. In vocalization, or singing, always pronounce the E and O vowels open, and the I and U

\textsuperscript{132} The term “noble posture” is common in current books on vocal pedagogy. See Miller pg. 30.
sweetly. He who would pronounce exactly, and with precision must read a lot, learn
the languages theoretically and practically, and listen often to those who speak well and
enunciate. One must not be lacking in literature, in poetry, and of all that which adorns
the spirit of a cultivated and well-educated person, because if the singer does not hear,
and does not himself understand the strength and sentiment of what he says, he will not
be able to inspire it to others in a manner that is truly expressive and sensitive. Si vis me
fiere dolendum est primum ipsi tibi.

Chapter Four

I. On shading; that is the gradations of voice to perform forte and piano in
singing and playing.

The soul of music being in its variety, then singing and playing of one color, that is,
not shading, and not giving to the sounds more or less strength, according to the demands
of good taste, and the sentiment of the song, and especially the words, is a notable defect.
Since in singing and playing with expression and with feeling, nature collaborates more
than art or skill, there are even fewer rules over it, but an infinite number of examples.
Practice often with some sentimental music, that is, music that is expressive and
meaningful will always be the best thing to work on in order to succeed in this most

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133 The International Phonetic Alphabet used in contemporary diction texts, classifies these vowels as
[e] and [o]. As an interesting aside, Caccini addresses the same topic in his preface to Le Nouve Musiche
(1601) p. 3. He states that “la vocale, u, fa migliore effetto nella voce del Soprano, che del Tenore, e la
vocale, i, meglio nel Tenore, che la vocale, u, essendo le rimanenti tutte in uso commune, se bene molto più
sonore le operte, che le chiuse” (the vowel “u” is better in the soprano voice than the tenor, and the vowel
“i” is better in the tenor than the “u” and the remaining vowels in common use are sound much better when
open than when closed).

134 Manfredini harkens back to the words of Lodovico Zacconi (1592), when he advocates that the study of
singing be limited to the nobility.

135 “If you would have me weep, weep first yourself.” From Horace’s Ars Poetica, v. 102.
essential aspect of singing and of playing. If the music is truly good, and the singer, or player has the skill and soul necessary to express it as it should be done, the music itself will allow that he [the singer or player], almost without being aware of it, will sing or play with expression. This he will do by performing the shades of the voice, or of the sound, of piano, pianissimo, forte, fortissimo, sforzato, smorzato, crescendo, diminuendo, etc. that are suggested by the character and nature of the music in question. To express then, everything exactly, and in [the correct] tempo and place, there is not a more important rule to follow than the intentions of the composer, and those of the poet, giving great consideration also to the text. For example, the person who would sing softly and sweetly words such as barbarian, unjust, tyrant etc. or loudly, and with vehemence, those [words] of sadness, such as dark, unfortunate etc. would be acting contrary to good sense. Despite that, there can be some cases and moments where one must do so. This depends on the various situations, and on the quality of the melody. For the most part, if the notes ascend by steps, one reinforces the voice, and diminishes [it] when descending. When one sees a passage doubled, or immediately repeated, if it is preceded by a forte, one should perform it softly the first time, and forte the second, or vice versa, according to the case.

II. On the manner of singing Recitative

The recitative consists almost more of speaking than of singing. Nonetheless, since one speaks musically, and in music that at times is more affectionate and powerful, than that of certain weak and insignificant arias, great attention must be paid to the manner of singing recitative, and above all in seeing that one does not sing it too much. There is, in
fact, a great difference between the singing of recitative and that of arias. The first is almost always the same, and is only performed freely, speech-like, excited or languid, according to the occasion. The second varies greatly with every aria, and is expressed for the most part, legato and with portamento. In this case, one can use at times a passaggio, or fioratura\textsuperscript{136} that in recitative is absolutely out of place.

The recitative is of two types, namely, semplice or obbligato.\textsuperscript{137} In recitative semplice, which is thus called because it is accompanied by only Bass [continuo], there is not another rule for the rhythm other than not to deviate too much from the value of the notes, so as to not excessively alter the value of the syllables. Much is the same for the duration of the pauses, and the beats. One may lengthen, or shorten them, according to the demands of the sentiment of the text, or the expression of the song.

The recitative obbligato is thus named because it is accompanied by all of the instruments, which obliges the actor to perform strictly in tempo. In both of these two recitatives it is always necessary to remember that one does not only sing, but one speaks in a singing manner. Therefore, the most essential aspect of both is that of being well understood, pronouncing clearly every syllable, and every word, tuning perfectly every interval, and above all, singing with soul [feeling] and expression. As to the action, that is, the gesture, I advise the young actors to read what Chiar. Ab. Rubbi, who following

\textsuperscript{136} Manfredini uses the words "vocalizzare" and "gorgheggio," which I have translated as vocalize and fioratura. Vocalizzo means vocalism, but would have referred to sections sung on vowels, without words. Gorgheggio literally means trilling, or warbling, but in the eighteenth century was used to connote florid passages in singing, see Comelati & Davenport. A new dictionary of the Italian and English languages based upon that of Barelli. London: Whittaker, 1854. 279.

\textsuperscript{137} Also known as secco and accompagnato, respectively.
the example of Cav. Planelli, wrote on this subject, in his booklet entitled *Il Bello armonico teatrali*. Venice 1792. pg.103.  

A great pitfall into which some of the best modern singers have fallen is that of having introduced *fioratura* into the recitative, which is very repugnant to good sense, given that recitative is truly a spoken music. When one speaks, and reasons, one certainly does not sing fioratura. Hence, instead of studying and looking for every means of good direction, and trying to recite, and express the affections with strength, and with the subtleties of the voice, they neglect those values that are so necessary. What is worse still, they ruin the recitative with their warbling, with their affectations and with their caricatures. Sometimes however, in recitatives with texts that are not very interesting or are indifferent, a bit of ornamentation is permitted. That is to say, a short vocalization, such as a *volare* [run], a little *groppetto* [turn] or other charming embellishment. But the recitatives which are lively and affectionate, and with expressive words, for example, *anxiety, cruel, grief, barbarous, wicked, scorn, fury, pity, sorrow*, etc. will always be badly done and ridiculous if performed in such a way. Singers of merit then, and much accreditation, should take caution in the introduction of certain extravagant, out of place novelties, since they are favored by many who do not know how to distinguish between that which is useful to imitate, and that which must be spurned. It results in grave, almost

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138 Andrea Rubbi, (1738-1817) wrote commentary on the Italian theatre and literature. I was not able to locate the booklet entitled *Il Bello armonico teatrali*, but his *Parnaso italiano; ovvero, Raccolta de’ poeti classici italiani d’ogni età, d’ogni metro e del più scelto tra gli ottimi, diligentemente riveduti sugli originali più accreditati, e adornati di figure in rame* (1784), *Redi, Soldani, Rosa, Menzini ditirambici e satirici de secolo XVII* (1789) and *Rusticali dei tre primi secoli* (1788) are available at the Library of Congress. Antonio Planelli (1747-1803) was an Italian author, best known in musical circles for his book *Dell’opera in musica*. Napoli: Stameria di D. Campo, 1772.

139 Literally “flight,” *volare* was used in eighteenth century pedagogy to indicate a short ornamented passage.
irreparable damage, to the art of song. Likewise, in arias, if one alters some passage with florid singing, one must do it with great prudence, so as not to abandon the character of the music which one performs, and not to incur certain modes of singing, and certain whims, shall I say, that are rather more suitable to the violin than the human voice. Changing the arias almost entirely and spoiling the most beautiful melodies that the composer has taken such great pains to invent and make expressive and significant, as unfortunately one hears very often, is truly an unpardonable error. Those who behave in this fashion probably know that it is not the true manner of singing, and to justify themselves, perhaps allege the same reason as that Spanish poet Lopes de Vega\(^{140}\) who wrote:

> And since the common fool applauds, it is right
> To sing foolishly in order to give him delight.\(^{141}\)

The text reads:

> Y puesque paga il vulgo necio es justo
> Neciamente iscrivir por darle gusto.\(^{142}\)

But I have changed the above to serve my purpose. Some will also say that the public is that which spoils them, since the more they alter [the music], the more they are

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\(^{140}\) Manfredini refers to Lope de Vega (1562-1635, the Spanish poet and dramatist, considered the founder of the Spanish theatre. Though usually referred to by his Christian name alone, he was born Lope Félix de Vega Carpio.

\(^{141}\) Manfredini's Italian translation of this text preserves the rhyme of the original Spanish:

> E poiché applaude il volgo sciocco, è giusto
> Scioccamente cantar per dargli gusto.

\(^{142}\) "And since the common fool pays, it is just to write foolishly to give him pleasure."
applauded by [the public]. I however say, and support the contrary. That is, they are what spoils the public, accustoming it to trifles and to a false method of singing. Praise that is not merited is not true praise. The audience is one thing, the masses another. No, one must never betray the beauty and truth of things for any reason, and especially to please the commoners. This error has unfortunately existed for a long time. Fux,143 who lived in the last century and at the beginning of this one, complained of it loudly, and as an already inveterate error.

“Please God,” he says, “that this cupidity of varying would remain within the limits of modesty, whence the musicians would vary rather, but not change the substance. How happy the composers would be! But they submit too much to this unbridled desire and audacity to vary that turns the substance of the harmony upside down, (for which one aspired with great tenacity and hard work) such that even the composer would have difficulty recognizing his harmony.”

*Salita al Parnasso, or Treatise on Counterpoint* by Fux, translated from Latin into Italian. Carpi 1761, pg. 193.

Therefore, if from the times of Fux up until ours, no one has ever thought to repair so great fault, it is about time that we think seriously about doing so. The only means to succeed, it seems to me, is suggesting with great haste to young singers that altering [ornamenting] too much is a corruption, and not a perfection. They will sing better, and will please many more, if they will sing less, that is, if they will not do so many

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143 Johann Joseph Fux (1660-1741); organist, composer and theorist whose *Gradus ad Parnassum* (Steps to Parnassus, 1725) became the most influential textbook on Palestinian counterpoint for the next two centuries. See Donald Jay Grout and Claude V. Palisca, *A History of Western Music*, 5th Ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1996) 299.
ornaments. They should attempt to procure passable originals, instead of bad copies, and not forget to learn their counterpoint, as well. This they should do, not in order to compose continually, since such an exercise compromises the voice, and is not necessary for them, but because, knowing the substance, and the value of what they sing, they will perform with more energy, and expression, and will at least know to respect it.

III. Advice for those who teach; and for those who study Singing.

I will finish these rules of singing by reminding one more time, that the solmizations should be adapted to the intelligence and the age of the pupils. Above all for beginners they should be clear, easy, and mingled with big notes. That is, [they should use] notes of long duration, and yet some of equal value, especially in the beginning. After a year of such study, I would almost say that one need not more solminize, but only vocalize. Very many are the singers that have the pernicious vices of opening the mouth too little, of bad pronunciation, and of not singing out as one must. All of this frequently derives from having too much solmization.

When one does not study, but sings for one's own pleasure, or to make oneself heard, one does not say Do, Re, Mi, etc. or vocalize much, especially in sentimental or

144 Music of this time period was frequently copied by hand, and thus incorporated the tastes and errors of the copyist.

145 Manfredini addresses the pivotal argument of performance practice of the eighteenth century, the subject of vocal ornamentation and its excessive use by famous singers. Manfredini aligns himself with the view of Christolph Willibald Gluck, who in his radical preface to Alceste (1769), stated that he "determined to strip it [music] completely of all those abuses, whether introduced by the mistaken vanity of the singers, or by the obligingness of the composers, that have long been disfiguring Italian opera and have turned the most magnificent and beautiful of all the spectacles into the most ridiculous and boring. I determined to restrict music to its true function, namely, to enhance poetry in terms of expression and the situations it relates, without interrupting the action or numbing it with useless and superfluous ornaments."

146 Manfredini advocates eliminating the solminization syllables, i.e. do, re, fa in favor of pure vowels and/or texts.
expressive music, which is certainly the best of all. Therefore, after two years, or a little more, I would say that one should begin to sing with words, using however sustained and basic compositions, as are, for example, the *Stabat*, and *Salva Regina* of Pergolesi, the songs of old Scarlatti, reduced into duets by Durante, those of Porpora, of Sassone, and Marcello, as well as other psalms of this distinguished writer, the duets of Clari, etc.

After an exact and continuous study of three years, one should know how to sing with improvisation, this not being very difficult, as I have said elsewhere. But it is very difficult to sing with good taste, and style, without having the gifts of nature: a beautiful

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147 Giovanni Battista Pergolesi (1710-1736) was an early master of the intermezzo and a leading figure in the rise of Italian comic opera in the eighteenth century. The *Stabat Mater* and *Salva Regina* were his last works, composed during a fatal illness the last year of his life.

148 (Pietro) Alessandro Scarlatti (1660-1725) was the most important opera composer of his generation in Italy.

149 Ottavio Durante, flourished 1608-1618. He published a collection of monodies called *Arie devote, le quali contengono in se la maniera di cantar; con gratia, l'imitation' delle parole, et il modo di scriver' passaggi, et altri affetti* (Rome, 1608). They are similar in style to those of Caccini in his *Le Nuove Musiche* (1601/02) and the volume contains an extensive preface (paying homage to Caccini) on the art of singing.

150 Nicola Porpora (1686-1768), castrato, composer (of a wealth of vocal music) and renowned voice teacher. His most famous student was the castrato Farinelli. His 25 *Vocalizzi* are still available through the publisher Ricordi.

151 Sassone refers to Johann Adolph Hasse (1699-1783), a German composer who wrote *opera serie* for the leading Italian and German opera houses. He was immensely popular and became known as 'il caro Sassone' (the dear Saxon).

152 Benedetto Marcello (1686-1739) wrote a wealth of secular music for voice and continuo and four oratorios but no opera. He was a successful teacher and probably taught the prima donna Faustina Bordoni, universally renowned mezzo-soprano and wife of Johann Adolph Hasse. Marcello was said to be "preoccupied with the cultivation of good taste in singing." See Eleanor Selfridge-Field: "Benedetto Marcello", *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy (Accessed 20 July 2005) <http://www.grovemusic.com.proxy.lib.uiowa.edu>

153 Giovanni Carlo Maria Clari (1677-1754) was an composer of vocal music and *maestro di cappella* at the Pistoia Cathedral from 1703-1724. There are no extant copies of his compositions.
and flexible voice, a good ear and disposition, and the gift of fortune, that is, of having a
good teacher.
CHAPTER V
THE MANFREDINI/MANCINI CONFLICT

The conflict between Manfredini and Mancini appears to have been quite acrimonious. Mancini was perhaps more vocal in his disdain, mentioning Manfredini no less than seventeen times in *Riflessioni Pratiche sul Canto figurato* (1777), but Manfredini was no less patronizing. Their feud was played out in public, within their respective publications. For contemporary readers it is an unusual way to debate ideology. In our current 'Information Age' pundits assail each other on the radio, on television, or even in the newspaper. Manfredini and Mancini spent decades arguing about seemingly inconsequential issues such as solfege notation and the aesthetic value of the trill. The reader was forced to wait until the next publication to read the next adversarial response.

The controversy over vocal pedagogy begins in 1775 with the publication of the first edition of Manfredini’s *Regole Armoniche*. Reacting to Mancini's assertions in *Pensieri, e riflessioni pratiche sopra il canto figurato* (1774), Manfredini does not hesitate to hurl a few insults. Ironically, *Regole Armoniche* (first edition) does not include a section on vocal pedagogy. Written in two parts, it is dedicated solely to music theory and keyboard instruments. However, Manfredini could not resist addressing Mancini with some thoughts on singing in his footnotes. His references are not substantial in the grand scheme of things, but they were more than enough to incite Mancini’s wrath. Mancini responded in *Riflessioni Pratiche sul Canto figurato* (1777). He speaks directly to Manfredini numerous times and systematically attempts to discredit
him. Mancini's repudiation is then answered with a dialogue on singing, included in the second edition of Manfredini's *Regole Armoniche*, published in 1797 (translated here in chapter four). Although Manfredini never mentions Mancini by name, the inferences are apparent to the reader of the previous documents. In truth however, the careful student will discover far more similarities than differences between the two. The issues of 'disagreement' center on use of solfège, singing with "muted" instruments (such as the harpsichord or clavichord, as opposed to the cembalo), and the importance of the trill. The issues of 'agreement' far outweigh these points of contention. For this reason, it is more appropriate to begin a comparison of their commonalities. One need only glance at the chapter subjects of the Manfredini and Mancini treatises to ascertain the similar topics addressed by the pedagogues (See Appendix D). Both authors discuss teaching, opening the mouth, intonation, registers and blending, the trill, cadenzas, *appoggiaturas*, *messa di voce*, recitative, pronunciation, and advice for students of singing.

It is not uncommon that different teachers would address the same topics. However, the two 'opponents' seem to give largely the same advice. Both believe that there are two registers (chest and head or falsetto) which must be blended or 'united' so that the difference between them is imperceptible. Compare the comments below.

Mancini writes,

"...the voice ordinarily divides itself into two registers, one called chest register and the other head register, or falsetto...The great art of the singer consists in
acquiring the ability to render imperceptible to the ear, the passing from one register to the other."154

Manfredini's text reads,

"Those persons that have more than twelve or thirteen notes in chest voice are rare, and one still finds those who have a greater range in head voice than in chest voice. It is necessary to unite them in such a way that the voice seems entirely of one register, so that it is completely equal."155

They also agree that poor intonation is the worst fault in singing. Mancini says, "There is nothing worse than to hear one singing out of pitch."156 Manfredini, in complete accord, claims, "...there is no other thing in music which is as displeasing as false intonation."157

Both stress the importance of opening the mouth to the proper degree; Mancini's words "...upon the opening of the mouth depends the clearness of the voice,"158 are remarkably similar to Manfredini's, "...the way to open the mouth is a most essential rule, since the production of a clear voice and the pure and clear pronunciation of the words depend upon it."159

154 Mancini, Riflessioni, 58-59.
156 Mancini, Riflessioni, 61.
157 Manfredini, Regole Armoniche 2nd ed., 7
158 Mancini, Riflessioni, 89.
159 Manfredini, Regole Armoniche 2nd ed., 7.
Mancini and Manfredini both caution that the tone of the voice must be in accordance with the text and that the Tuscan idiom must be used when singing Italian. Mancini observes:

“This is easily proven by listening to a singer, who, in rendering an aria, which demands great passion and anger, as suggested by the words Tyrant, Cruel and Heartless, would instead use a sweet appoggiatura on these words, thus taking the meaning and emphasis completely away,”¹⁶⁰ and later, “An actor or singer cannot express passions and feelings nor transmit them to the public if he does not comprehend the value and meaning of each word; if he does not know and speak well the pure Toscany tongue.”¹⁶¹

Manfredini echoes this sentiment by stating,

“For example, it would be contrary to good sense to sing softly and sweetly, words such as barbarian, unjust, tyranny, etc.”¹⁶² In discussing diction he writes,

“The words then must be read more than once before one sings them; pronounced in the correct ‘dialect’ of every language, which for Italians is that of Toscany.”¹⁶³

Two types of recitative (as opposed to the three named by Tosi), semplice and obbligato (instrumentato),¹⁶⁴ are cited in both treatises. Mancini informs us that

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¹⁶⁰ Mancini, Riflessioni, 115.
¹⁶¹ Mancini, Riflessioni, 167.
¹⁶² Manfredini, Regole Armoniche 2nd ed., 16.
¹⁶⁴ Currently referred to as secco and accompagnato.
"...we have two kinds of recitatives; one is 'Semplice' and the other is 'Instrumentato'. 'Semplice' is the one that is accompanied only by bass...The other style of recitative is called 'Instrumentato' (with orchestration), because it requires an orchestral accompaniment."\textsuperscript{165}

Manfredini concurs:

"The recitative is of two types, namely, \textit{semplice} or \textit{obbligato}. In recitative \textit{semplice}, which is thus called because it is accompanied by only Bass (continuo)....The recitative \textit{obbligato} is thus named because it is accompanied by all of the instruments."\textsuperscript{166}

Even when discussing ornamentation, which is probably the greatest issue of contention, the two pedagogues offer very similar advice. Both name the 'goat trill' and 'horse trill' as common faults and reiterate Tosi's description of a good trill, "equal, distinctly marked, solid (\textit{granito}) and moderately quick."\textsuperscript{167} On cadenzas, Mancini suggests,

"...a Cadenza must be prepared first with Messa di Voce, and that which follows must be a recapitulation of the song, in which the different passages of the melody are entwined. All of them must be well distributed, even and sustained in one breath, and added to them must be the customary trill."\textsuperscript{168}

Manfredini's comments read:

\textsuperscript{165} Mancini, \textit{Riflessioni}, 179-80.

\textsuperscript{166} Manfredini, \textit{Regole Armoniche} 2\textsuperscript{nd} ed., 17.


\textsuperscript{168} Mancini, \textit{Riflessioni}, 142.
"The correct way to do a beautiful cadenza is to insert into it some short passage of the composition that one has sung; or instead at least something that has a melody similar to the character of the said composition. One must likewise, do it without taking a breath"\textsuperscript{169} and "only one messa di voce followed by a note with a trill is enough to form one of the best cadenzas."\textsuperscript{170}

With such a wealth of agreement on basic issues, one may begin to contemplate the source of the conflict. Was it as much personal as ideological? As we are all products of our past experiences, this is perhaps a consideration worthy of note. Mancini was a castrato, a performer, and a student of the renowned Bolognese teacher Antonio Bernacchi (1685-1756), whose performance aesthetic "stressed an extraordinarily acrobatic technical virtuosity, bordering on instrumental use of the voice."\textsuperscript{171} Manfredini was primarily a keyboard player and composer who resented the disregard singers displayed for written compositions in regards to ornamentation. It is also noteworthy that his brother Giuseppe was a castrato. This may have contributed in part to his harsh criticism of the then current practice of castration.\textsuperscript{172} Manfredini appears to have been a product of the 'Enlightenment,' offended by practice of castration and the role of castrati in the theatre. Mancini, by virtue of his very being, promoted the 'old style' of extensive ornamentation in performance practice.

\textsuperscript{169} Manfredini, \textit{Regole Armoniche} 2\textsuperscript{nd} ed., 12.

\textsuperscript{170} Ibid., 13.

\textsuperscript{171} Baird, "An 18\textsuperscript{th}-century controversy," 36.

\textsuperscript{172} See Manfredini's endnote 34, included in the accompanying translation on pp. 61-2.
The major issues of contention begin with the use of solfège. Manfredini finds it to be a useful tool for beginners, but the 'ruin' of many a voice when used too long.

"After a year of such study, I would almost say that one need not more solminize, but only vocalize. Very many are the singers that have the pernicious vices of opening the mouth too little, of bad pronunciation, and of not singing out as one must. All of this frequently derives from having too much solmization."\(^{173}\)

As a keyboard player, he questions the veracity of calling F-double sharp, G (\textit{Fa con doppia diesis}, \textit{Sol}). This was in fact, the point of contention which seemed to incite the entire feud. In the third footnote of his first edition of \textit{Regole Armoniche} (1777), Manfredini attacks the current usage of solfège as a tool for teaching singers. His objections concern the tempered scale and the practice of renaming enharmonic tones. He writes;

"...and especially the F (Fa) with a double sharp, which cannot be called G (Sol), as Signor Mancini says on page 60; but as it is truly a F in the harmony and occupies that place on the staff, it cannot and must not be called other than F, and only through the expressing it, shall it be raised a half tone, or a tone according to the accidental, with which it is marked."\(^{174}\)


\(^{174}\) "...e specialmente de Fa con doppio Diesis, il quale non va chiamato Sol, come dice il Sig. Mancini alla pag. 60; ma siccome egli è un vero Fa nell'armonia, e ne occupa il posto sulle righe; non si può, e non si deve chiamare, se non Fa; e solamente nell'esprimerlo si alzerà un mezzo tono, o un tono, secondo l'Accidente, col quale farà segnato." Manfredini, \textit{Regole Armoniche} 1st ed. 6.
This passage, highly technical and difficult to translate, asserts that F-double sharp is a different pitch than G. As it occupies the space of F on the staff, it therefore cannot be called a G. Manfredini goes on to say that the performer will know accidentals are meant to be inserted simply by a knowledge of the harmony. In other words, one should sing Fa for F, F-sharp, and F-double sharp. He reminds the student that although the cembalo uses a tempered scale, the voice should not.

"The other five tones, that are placed between those of the octave on the cembalo, do not enter into the quality of the tone; they don’t even occupy a different place on the lines or spaces, and a simple sign of sharp or flat is enough to make them known. So, they do not need a different name, and if it were necessary, one would not be enough for each key, but rather two would be necessary, one for C-sharp, and another for D-flat, since these two tones are totally different, although they are not as such on the cembalo."\(^{175}\)

Manfredini, the composer and music theorist, displays his training here with his attention to the differences between the intonation of the tempered scale and that of the ‘pure’ scale.

Mancini is incensed by Manfredini’s comments. He finds solfège to be an essential tool in learning the art of singing. He discusses the system in depth (pp. 64-86) and how it is to be employed by the teacher. Included in his discussion is a diatribe on

\(^{175}\) “Gli altri cinque suoni, che nel Cembalo si trovano interposti fra quelli nell’ottava, non entrando nella qualità del Tono, non occupano nemmeno sulle righe, o negli spazi un diverso posto; ed un semplice segno, come il Diesis ovvero il Be-molle basta per farli conoscere. Dunque non hanno nemmen bisogno di un nome diverso, e quando fosse loro necessario, uno non basterebbe per ciascun tasto; ma ve ne vorreber due, cioè uno per l'Ut Diesis, e l’altro per il Re Be-molle essendo questi due suone totalmente diversi, abbenché tali non sieno nel Cembalo.” Manfredini, *Regole Armoniche* 1st ed., 6.
Manfredini's viewpoint, insisting it is completely unrealistic for singers. As a summary, he states:

"The important thing is this: that invariably upon that determined key of the cembalo whether it be natural, chromatic or enharmonic (if the latter is used) there is always the same monosyllable written that has been assigned to it. This is to help the student memorize the exact pitch of the sound of that key." 176

He goes on to praise his early teacher Leonardo Leo, and particularly Leo's use of solfeggios.

"This great man wrote a new solfeggio for each pupil every third day, but he was careful in writing one suitable to the age and talent of each....These solfeggios are very useful to the profession, not only because they were written during the period when the principle of singing was founded on precision and great respect for the rules of art." 177

The next point of contention continues the 'intonation debate' and concerns singing with 'muted' instruments. Mancini asserts that when singing with 'muted' instruments the singer cannot hear the accompaniment well, thereby jeopardizing his intonation.

"Another cause for the student's singing out of pitch, is when he sings accompanied by instruments using the mute. The singer, not hearing the instruments, takes the bad habit of attacking the tone by himself, without the aid of the instruments. This habit renders him incapable in the future of attacking a

176 Mancini, Riflessioni, 75.

177 Ibid., 188.
tone perfectly, when he sings with instruments....Signor Manfredini, in his book
“Regole Armoniche,” published in Venice in the year 1775, page 11, discusses
my proposition and states that the mute on the instruments is very suitable in
accompanying voices.” 178

Manfredini in fact, was extremely pointed in his criticism of Mancini’s assertion:
“The afore-mentioned Signor Mancini is of the opinion that the musician becomes
accustomed to singing out of tune when he is accompanied by a spinet [small
harpsichord], or a clavichord; these instruments not being able to suggest
sufficiently to him the intonation, because they are not loud. To the contrary,
such instruments are more appropriate to accompany than the large cembalo,
which, with its loud sound, if it is not played by an expert hand, can impede the
singer’s hearing just the same, [as he cannot hear] if he sings in tune or not.”179

Perhaps the most important issue of contention concerns the use of ornamentation.
In this case it is best to view the Manfredini/Mancini conflict within the parameters of
late eighteenth-century musical style. This was a time of change and controversy
between those in favor of ‘free’ ornamentation and those opposed to giving singers such
freedom. Caccini alluded to a stylistic change as far back as 1601 in his preface to Le
Nuove Musiche, “I composed songs to get away from that old style of passage work
which formerly was customary, and which is more suitable to wind or string instruments

178 Mancini, Riflessioni, 64.

179 “Il Mentovato Sig. Mancini è di opinione, che il Musico s’avezzi a stonare, quando è accompagnato con
una Spinetta, o Sordina; non potendo questi strumenti suggerirgli abbastanza l’intonazione, perché hanno
poca voce. Peraltrio questi tali strumenti sono assai più propri per accompagnare, che non è un gran
Cembalo, il quale con la sua voce forte, se non è suonato da mano maestra, può impedire al Cantante di
sentire da se medesimo, se canto giusto, o nò.” Manfredini, first ed. 11.
than to the voice."\textsuperscript{180} Nonetheless, he continued his preface with a rather lengthy discussion on the ‘effective’ ornaments. In fact, his examples of the ‘preferred style’ will appear very florid to twentieth-century singers (See Appendix B), though Caccini was promoting a style free from “long vocal roulades.”\textsuperscript{181} Obviously, the art of ornamentation did not die with the rise of the solo song and the ‘Theory of the Affections.’ Quite the contrary, ‘star’ singers of the eighteenth century were prized for their ornamentation skills above all other qualities. When reading descriptions of the great voices of the day, one inevitably learns of their perfect trill, or sensitively executed messa di voce, or innovative cadenzas. Da capo arias offered the ideal venue to exhibit vocal acrobatics and virtuosic cadenzas. From the lengthy published discussions on the ‘decadence’ of the singers (by numerous composers, pedagogues, and critics), one may assume that it was frequently taken to extremes.

In 1769, the musical world was shaken by a ‘preface’ published with the opera Alceste by Christoph Willibald Gluck (1714-1787). Although his opinions on the state of vocal music were perhaps not novel, Gluck’s short essay succinctly and unequivocally states that the current trend is unacceptable. It is an extremely important document, and worth an in-depth study. A portion of it reads,

“When I undertook to write the music for Alceste, I determined to strip it completely of all those abuses, whether introduced by the mistaken vanity of the singers, or by the excessive obligingness of the composers, that have long been disfiguring Italian opera and have turned the most magnificent and beautiful of all

\textsuperscript{180} Newton, trans. (Caccini) 14.

\textsuperscript{181} Ibid.
the spectacles into the most ridiculous and boring. I determined to restrict music to its function, namely to enhance poetry in terms of expression and the situation it relates, without interrupting the action or numbing it with useless and superfluous ornaments....Therefore, I have taken care not to halt a singer in the heat of his dialogue to make him wait through a boring ritornello, nor stop him in mid-word on a favorable vowel, either to display the agility of his beautiful voice in a long melisma, or to wait for the orchestra to give him time to catch his breath for a cadenza. ....In short, I have attempted to do away with all those abuses against which common sense and reason have been crying out in vain.”

This document summarizes the changes in performance style that would occur over the latter part of the *bel canto* period. As previously mentioned in chapter three, composers began to write their desired ornamentation into the scores. What had been improvised by the singer became prescribed by the composer. The *da capo* aria, such a great vehicle for ‘variation’ with its numerous repetitions, was abandoned in favor of through-composed forms. Thus, though ornamentation skills were still necessary and esteemed, the singer’s era of ‘free reign’ came to a close.

While Manfredini and Mancini both discuss the proper execution of the ornaments, they differ greatly in their philosophies of style. Manfredini is very critical of singers who, in order to ‘please the masses’ insert unnecessary ornaments into the music, to the degree that “even the composer would have difficulty recognizing his harmony.”

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Mancini, on the other hand, was very much a product of the ‘ornamentation era.’ His treatise discusses ornamentation in detail. He cites the eight trills described by Tosi, writes twenty pages on ‘agility,’ and indeed, dedicates almost a third of his book to ornamentation. The vitriolic argument of the trill centers on whether it is ‘essential’ or not. In Pensieri, e riflessioni pratiche sopra il canto figurato, Mancini gives homage to the trill;

“...among the most necessary qualities, and beautiful embellishments of the art with which every singer should be furnished. there is, in my opinion, no quality more interesting of embellishment sweeter, than that which is commonly called the trill...Oh trill! Sustenance, decoration and life of song!”

Manfredini, perhaps amused by Mancini’s melodramatic tone, responds with;

“[To say] that the trill is the most interesting quality in music is to accord it more merit than it deserves. Singing with portamento, the drawing [sustaining] of the voice, the purity [filtering], the spinning [of the sound], the covering [shading] at the right time and place [in time and place], these are the true beauties of singing; and the trill is but a pure ornament which is appropriate [goes well] when it is natural, in a cadenza, and in certain other places, but one can also do without it. How many times have I heard singing from the heart, without having heard within the performance even one trill.”


184 “Che il trillo poi sia le qualità più interessante della Musica è un accrescer il di lui merito più del dovere. Il cantar di portamento, il fermar la voce, il colarla, il filarla, lo smorzarla a tempo, e luogo ec. queste sono le vere bellezze del Canto; ed il Trillo n’è un puro ornamento che fa bene quando è naturale, in una Cadenza, ed in certi altri luoghi, ma si può anche farne di meno. Quante volte ho sentito cantare al cuore, senza avere inteso eseguire nemmeno un Trillo.” Manfredini, Regole Armoniche, 1st ed., 7.
As a final note on this conflict, it is interesting to note the inconsistencies of the authors. Manfredini, for all his promotion of ‘singing with style,’ exercising ‘prudence’ with ornamentation, and rejection of castrati, was one of the only writers of his time to criticize Gluck. In reaction to the preface of *Alceste*,

“Manfredini...rejected the criticism of inappropriate ritornellos, unnecessary cadenzas and *passaggi*, and in one particularly telling response defended the ornamentation implicit in the da capo aria form, asserting that ‘the greatest merit consists in knowing how to vary.’ (The inconsistency between this statement and his liberal approach to the use or neglect of the trill is typical of Manfredini’s impromptu approach to theory).”¹⁸⁵

Twenty-five years passed between the publishing of Gluck’s preface and the second edition of *Regole Armoniche*. It is possible that Manfredini’s opinion changed during this time. However, the radical difference in approach is noteworthy.

Mancini, who one might expect to reject Gluck’s ideas, instead praises him. He writes:

“Let us also investigate the works of Chev. Cristoforo Glück, who was also in the service of the Imperial Court. His creative genius enabled him to not only discover and master the hidden depths of arcanus and lights of philosophy and science, but he unearthed from the bosom of immensity, that which is most rare and interesting in music, especially in French music, of which he was the reformer and autocrat. How can I praise so much merit? What can my feeble

voice add to his glory! Not only in his own country, but in every land of Europe, his name is held in reverence as a protector of music."\textsuperscript{186}

Perhaps Mancini’s support of Gluck’s reforms can be reasoned in his reference to Gluck as a ‘French’ composer. It is possible that he believed French opera was appropriately different stylistically from Italian opera. Or, perhaps he was praising the ‘pre-reform Gluck.’ “Gluck was forty-eight when Orfeo ed Euridice was first produced. Between that year and his death at seventy-three, he wrote six more reform operas and at least seven retrogressions to his earlier style.”\textsuperscript{187} Mancini may even have felt a kinship to Gluck as a compatriot in Vienna. Gluck became the Viennese Kapellmeister in 1754, and Mancini was called to Vienna in 1757 to serve as the singing master to Empress Maria Theresa’s daughters. During this time the Italian operas of Hasse reigned supreme, and both Gluck and Mancini may have been in accord in their appreciation of his work.

“Although Gluck had from his earliest operas shown a tendency to simple means and inconspicuous technique, there is no single indication that he was dissatisfied with the opera his contemporaries were producing, or that he wished to disassociate himself from them.”\textsuperscript{188}

Finally, Mancini may have simply enjoyed debating one more subject with his adversary Manfredini.

\textsuperscript{186} Mancini, \textit{Riflessioni}, 175.


\textsuperscript{188} Ibid., 7.
CHAPTER VI
SUMMARY

Is there a special formula for singing that was born with the bel canto period? Did the bel canto singers and teachers know some secret to beautiful singing that has been lost in the centuries since that time? With all of the technological advantages available to contemporary pedagogues, are we substandard in our method? Probably not. Musical tastes, styles and customs are constantly changing. Bel canto technique developed over a long period of time. It incorporated the vocal techniques and physiological knowledge of voice that preceded it. Current musical style and pedagogy incorporates the vocal techniques and physiological knowledge of the voice gained since the time of bel canto. We now have a much better understanding of how the laryngeal mechanism works. What is drastically different today is the system of teaching. Gone are the ‘apprentice’ days, when a student lived with a teacher for years, and received intense training daily. Eighteenth-century vocal pedagogues, such as Manfredini, would be astounded that so many students at our universities never learn to trill, and hope to learn the art of singing by practicing only one hour per day. This is perhaps the crux of the issue.

Critics have been decrying the decline of singers since the art of criticism began. Plato complained of the “deterioration of music in the hands of the professional musicians due to their ‘disorderly tastes’.”189 Caccini wrote of singers who “mutilated

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189 Duey, 25.
and ruined” music with their “vocal roulades.” Mancini tells us “that in spite of the fact that we still have so many great artists flourishing all over the world, the idea has taken root not only in Italy, but abroad, that our vocal art is in decadence and that we lack worthy schools and good singers. I must deny such an opinion concerning our schools, but unfortunately it is true as to singers.” Manfredini complains of the paucity of great singers. “But how many good singers are there really? Ah! Unfortunately, not many, and again, that happens because of so many bad habits that are truly the ruin of singing.” Twentieth-century pedagogues may hold the bel canto style of singing in great esteem, but the bel canto pedagogues did not!

Is there then a bel canto vocal technique? I believe there is, and I believe one may find its fundamentals in Manfredini’s treatise on singing. Within this relatively brief essay, the author addresses breathing, intonation, diction, registers, vocal control, deportment and expression; all of which are essential elements of contemporary vocal pedagogy, though perhaps with a different emphasis.

Breath support is generally considered basic to a healthy vocal technique. Manfredini stresses ‘where’ to breathe more than ‘how’ to breathe but also notes that the singer must take a breath “with great quickness and in a way that no one can notice.” This simple sentence contains some very valuable technical advice. In order to breathe “in a way that no one can notice,” the singer must to do in a relaxed manner. Many

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190 Newton, 14.
191 Mancini, Riflessioni, 43.
young singers and students 'gasp' for breath, which results in tension in the breathing mechanism that is inevitably transferred to the vocalism which follows. More advice on breathing is included in his section on deportment. Manfredini advocates standing in "noble posture," that is, head "held high, still and erect....so that the voice goes out more easily." This has become a universally taught method of stance, allowing the singer to open the rib cage and expand lung capacity with the descent of the diaphragm.

Manfredini also prioritizes correct intonation in his characteristics of good singing. Certainly this premise is unanimously supported by all. He cites the students disposition toward a "suitable ear" as the "principal prerequisite," but there is also some technical instruction included in his advice. Singing out of tune is often caused by a 'poor ear,' but may also be the result of faulty technique, that is, by employing too much (or too little) vocal mass or by a lack of breath support. Manfredini reminds us that "the voice then must not ever be forced, for example, by singing with the cords too shrill [sharp] or too heavy [flat]." He instructs the teacher to perfect intonation using the \textit{figured scale} (in major and minor modes), the chromatic scale, and all of the interval leaps (major, minor, diminished and augmented).

Clear diction, which requires a relaxed jaw and freedom of the 'articulators' is another Manfredini essential. He writes, " How could it ever be possible to give perfect pleasure to the listeners, and to oneself, if one does not pronounce clearly, and does not make clearly understood what one is saying, even when singing?" With his insistence on clarity comes the technical instruction to "pronounce fairly strongly, and not half voice,
or between the teeth—not swallowing the syllables.” He also advocates (as does Caccini, Mancini, Tosi and countless others) the use of open vowels and the correct dialect for every language (that of Tuscany for Italian). He stresses the importance of understanding the sentiment of the text and instructs the singer on the proper way to open the mouth, “as in the act of smiling.”

Unification of the head and chest voices was an issue to Manfredini just as it is to many teachers today. Manfredini’s advice could easily be included in a contemporary treatise on singing, instructing the singer to unite the registers “in such a way that the voice seems entirely of one register, so that it is completely equal.” This one should do by “strengthening the low notes of the falsetto, or by doing the opposite, if the chest voice is weak and lacking, and the head voice is full and strong.”

Finally, the majority of Manfredini’s pedagogical advice concerns vocal control, achieved by practicing ornamentation and dynamics (shading). He instructs the student on the correct performance and placement of the trill and turn, the *appoggiatura*, the *messa di voce*, the *portamento*, and the free cadenza. He emphasizes the need for mastering the gradations of the various dynamics. It is not difficult to ascertain the subtle control a singer would gain through such practice. With the mastery of ornamentation comes the potential for extreme expression. The contemporary reader must remember that *portamento* and *messa di voce*, as well as the trill, *appoggiatura* and free cadenza were considered ‘ornaments’ to the *bel canto* pedagogues. Such a variety of style teaches a wealth of choices for expression.
What is the *bel canto* technique? I would surmise that it is a vocal technique which emphasizes a legato line, ease of production, great facility in ornamentation, clear expression of the text and sentiment of the music with an even timbre. One may achieve such a technique by careful study and practice of the fundamentals: breathing, posture, diction, register unification, dynamic control, scales and arpeggios, and ornamentation.

*Bel canto* vocal pedagogy is inherently tied to *bel canto* repertoire. As the technique developed concurrently with the musical style, the two are inextricably linked. The primary element included that is not stressed in contemporary pedagogy is the emphasis on ornamentation. Most of the vocal repertoire composed in the last century does not require great facility in *fioratura*. Emphasis has changed from 'vocal fireworks' to vocal timbre, size and expression. With the growth of the accompanying orchestra, the ability to project one’s voice became a primary goal for the singer. Thus, expertise in the 'free cadenza,' so essential in the *bel canto* period is largely unnoticed by contemporary audiences. That is not to say that every student of singing cannot incorporate *bel canto* basics into their vocal technique in other musical styles. However, I believe that the pedagogy of Manfredini and his *bel canto* contemporaries is limited when the style of the music requires a vocal production that prohibits accuracy and ease in the performance of agility.

Much has also changed in the art of teaching singing since the eighteenth century. For instance, writing exercises for individual students seems to be a lost art. Many contemporary teachers cannot even play piano accompaniments, much less compose
vocalizzi. While the notion is admirable, it is neither necessary nor reasonable. Countless valuable exercises are available in current publications. Though our technical knowledge has increased exponentially, the art of teaching singers is still largely empirical. No two students have the same problems or respond in the same way to instruction. A good teacher must learn to uncover the best method required for each individual.

What can be learned from our ancestors? I believe that the most important lesson is that learning to sing is a long and difficult process, and cannot be hurried. With the current mentality of 'higher, faster, louder,' it is perhaps a difficult concept to accept. If we can access information from all over the world in a nanosecond, why does it take years to learn to sing? Today's students, accustomed to the lightening speed of current technology, look for a 'magic pill' to cure their problems in an instant. Unfortunately, the musculature of the larynx is not so quickly trained. Bel canto repertoire maintains a balance of florid and sustained singing. Both are necessary skills for the well-rounded performer. Practicing the compositions of the bel canto masters will always be a valuable endeavor in pursuit of a well-balanced voice. And of course, learn to trill!
APPENDIX A
WORKS OF VINCENZO MANFREDINI

Vocal Music:

Operas
Semiramide (Metastasio), St. Petersburg, 1776
Olimpiade (Metastasion), Moscow, 1762
Carlo Magno (L. Lazzaroni), St. Petersburg, 1763, revised 1764
La Pupilla (drama giocoso, Goldoni) St. Petersburg, 1763
La Finta ammalata, St. Petersburg, 1763
Armida (G. Durante), Bologna, 1770
Artaserse (Metastasio), Venice, 1772

Cantatas
La pace degli eroi (cantata, Lazzaroni), for peace with Prussia, St. Petersburg, 1762
Le rivali (cantata, Lazzaroni), 1765
Cantata, for the inauguration of the building of the Academy of Sciences. St. Petersburg, 1765

Sacred
Requiem, for Empress Elizabeth, 1762

Messa funebre
Laudate Dominum

Arias and Duets
So che fido a me tu sei, aria (Sop. and orch.), circa, 1770
Conservati fedele, aria, 1772-1785
Fra cento affanni e cento, aria (Sop. and orch.), 1772-1785
Sarebbe mai quello che mi trattiene, duet, (2 Sop. and orch.)

Ballets
Les amants réchappés du naufrage, St. Petersburg, 1766
Le Sculpteur de Carthage, St. Petersburg, 1766
La Constance recompense, Moscow, 1767

Instrumental
Concerto for Harpsichord in B-flat, The Hague and Amsterdam, 1769
Six Symphonies, (1, 2 and ?6 extant), Venice, 1776
Six String Quartets, Florence, circa 1781
Six Harpsichord Sonatas, St. Petersburg, 1765
Fourteen Preludes for Harpsichord (in Regole Armoniche), Venice 1775
Harpsichord Sonata in G
Fugue for Harpsichord
APPENDIX B
EXAMPLES FROM CACCINI AND PORPORA

Example B1. Giulio Caccini, Le Nuove Musiche
Example of tasteful ornamentation

Example B2. Nicola Porpora, Vocalizzo 2., from 25 vocalizzi
Example C1. Vincenzo Manfredini, Plate X, ex. 4 Scala Figurata
Regole Armoniche, second ed. (1797)
Example C2. Vincenzo Manfredini, Table XII, ex. 1. and 2. Intervals

*Regole Armoniche*, second ed. (1797)
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APPENDIX E
REGOLE ARMONICHE, PART III (1797)
(Reprinted from the copy held by the Music Division, Library of Congress)

REGOLE ARMONICHE
PARTE III.

DELLE REGOLE PIU’ ESSENZIALE PER IMPARARE A CANTARE.

CAPITOLO PRIMO

I. Della vera maniera d’insegnare il Canto.

L’esecuzione del canto è certamente più facile di quella del suono, mentre lo strumento naturale, ossia la voce, non esige quell lunghissimo studio, che chiede uno strumento artefatto, avanti di conoscerne le qualità rispettive, ed acquistarne la pratica; e di poter su di esso eseguire un pezzo di musica a dovere. E che ciò sia vero, molti son capaci d’imparar con prestezza a cantare, per esempio, un’Aria senza saper la musica, e col sentirla solamente; lo che non seguirà mai in tal maniera volendo eseguire una sonate, o altra composizione su qualunque istrumento. Ma la maggior facilità che appunto retrovasi nell’apprendere il canto piuttosto che il suono, è forse la cagione primiera, che pochi cantanti sanno cantare a prima vista, e riescono veramente bravi. Infatti nasce dalla medesima, che non si studia il canto conforme le buone regole, e non s’impiega in tale studio il tempo necessario a perfezionarse; ma si corre avanti a forza di orecchio,
imitando più il cattivo, che il buono dei musici più rinomati; quindi si giunge di raro, e quasi mai a cantar fondatamente, e con stil proprio, e perfetto. Egli è poi tanto vero che l’esecuzione del canto è più facile di quella del suono, che non v’è strumento con cui si possa eseguir la giusta misure degli’intervalli di ogni scala, o tono, e la gradazione dei colori musicale, dirò così, o sieno i diversi gradi del piano e del forte, meglio della voce umana, quando è fluida e ben formata, e che la persona che la possede in tal guisa non è mancante di teoria, di orecchio, e di espressione. Eppure, cosa che sembra incredibile, malgrado tanti vantaggi, si trova un minor numero di cantanti veramente abili, che non ritrovasi di abili sonatori! Due altri ancora, secondo me, sono i motive per cui si scarceggia tanto di cantori perfetti. I. scarsità grande di belle voci, e d’inclinazione in quelli che imparano il canto. II. modo imperfetto d’insegnarlo. Il primo di questi motivi, pur troppo è quasi inevitabile, perché dipende dalla natura, la quale rarissime volte, o quasi mai è generosa nel concedere a un soggetto solo tutti I doni necessari. Ed infatti, molti musici che hanno bella voce, non hanno poi la maniera, l’espressione, ossia il potere, e l’anima per muovere gli affetti; cantano senza gusto, e senza colorito; e recitano con tanta indolenza, che sembran figure si stucco. Ma non è lo stesso del secondo motivo, al quale si può benissimo rimediare. Direi dunque, che quando ili maestro ha scoperto nel suo discepolo una cattiva voce, un orecchio duro, e incerto per l’intonazione, e pel ritmo; cose che le può conoscere in poco tempo; dovesse senz’altro indugio sconsigliarlo d’imparare il canto, perchè certamente non arriverà mai ad essere un perfetto cantante. Se poi scopre in esso molta disposizione, e un orecchio favorevole, unito ad una bella voce; allora egli esaminerà diligentemente, se è voce di Soprano, o di Contralto; oppure di Tenore, o di Basso; di quante corde è formata; e comincerà a farlo cantare in quella
chiave, che sarà a lui più comoda, e naturale. Le prime lezioni consistono debbono in fargli eseguir ripetutamente una certa Scala, ch’io chiamo Scala figurata, essendo composta di figure, o note diverse, la quale, a motivo della sua varietà, non annoia, e giova non poco a apprendere il tempo; a sciogliere, ed a rischiarare la voce. Questa Scala (vedi Tav. X. Esem. 4.) bisogna farla eseguir dagli scolari in tutti quei toni su de’quali si estende la loro voce, e in un movimento, o tempo piuttosto largo. Io posso asserir francamente, che la medesima è tanto vantaggiosa per mantenere la fluidità, e la chiarezza della voce, che non solo gli scolari, ma eziando i cantanti già formati dovrebbero eseguirla ogni giorno due, o tre volte almeno. Avvertasi però, che le note delle battute 28, 29, e 30, essendo di poca durata, non vanno solfeggiate, ma vocalizzate solamente con la vocale A, ovvero con l’E, o con l’O; e non sarebbe ancora malfatto vocalizzarle talvolta, dolcemente però, con una, o con l’alta delle altre due vocali, per assuefarsi ad eseguirle tutte facilmente, e con chiarezza; potendosi recar diletto anche con esse, come fanno appunto quei pochi musici, che sanno veramente cantare. Ma in quanto al solfeggiare; gli antichi, avendo solamente sei nomi destinati a quest’uso, si servivano della regola delle mutazioni, che consiste in dare diversi nomi allo stesso suono, o lo stesso nome a diversi suoni; la qual regola essendo confuse, e contradittoria, faceva che non si finesse quasi mai d’imparare a solfeggiare. Onde fu già rimediato a un tal difetto coll’aggiungere un altro nome ai sei nomi già noti; di modoché ognuno dei sette suoni della scala avesse il suo nome proprio, ed ogni suono avesse sempre lo stesso nome.

Questa nuova regola ha facilitato ed abbreviato certamente lo studio del solfeggiare, quantunque ciò non si approvi da un qualche antiquario, che crede niuna cosa essere
imperfetta quando è antica. Il maestro poi non suggerirà mai al suo scolare colla propria voce, o con qual si siasi strumento, l’intonazione degli’intervalli, ma procurerà sempre ch’ei la retrovi da se stesso col mezzo della scala, e farà che impari bene di quanti toni, o semitonî è formato ogni intervallo; e che conosca prontamente se è maggiore, o minore; se è una seconda, una terza, una quarta ec, quello che ogni volta ei deve intonare.

Usando questo metodo, egli imparerà il canto fondamento, e non a orecchio.

Altro è cantare talvolta qualche nota, o qualche passo con lo scolare per sostenerlo, e fortificarlo nell’intonazione; ed altro è suggerigli ogni suono. Come altresì è cosa assai diversa, eseguir le note come sono scritte, dall’eseguirle con grazia ed espressione, lo che dicesi cantar di maniera.

In questo caso è ben fatto che il maestro dimosti al suo discepolo in che modo ei deve regolarsi, e sarà meglio eziandio, se potrà indicarglielo colla propria voce; ma all’incontro, se gli farà sentir di continuo l’intonazione delle note, lo rovinerà certamente; poiché da quest’uso pernicioso ne risulta, che mancandogli un tale aiuto, egli non sa più cantar, quattro note giuste. Così non fosse vero quello ch’io dico! accade però sovente, e soprattutto a non poche di quelle donne, che abusivamente appellansi virtuose. Infatti la vera virtuosa non è mai quella, che canta per imboccatura, come fanno i canarini; ma bensì quella che sa cantare senza l’aiuto di nessuno; ed è ancora più stimabile, se al bisogno sa accompagnarsi da se medesima.
Giacchè ho motivato qui sopra il *cantar di maniera*, voglio dir due parole sopra questo vocabolo, che lo sento sempre in bocca di tutti, e odo tanto raramente cantar di maniera. Un tal difetto nasce come nascono tanti altri diffetti, cioè dal non intendere, e non sapere il vero significato dei termini. Molti cantanti, credendo che il cantar di maniera consista nelle variazioni, variano tanto spesso, e si malamente, che rovinano ogni cosa. Ma quanto s’ingannano! Cantar di maniera dunque non vuol dir altro, che cantar con sentimento, con anima: sostenere, ed ombreggiare la voce; e sopratutto esprimere ogni pezzo di musica secondo il suo vero senso, e carattere. Gli ornamenti poi, entrano senza dubbio nel cantar di maniera; ma consistono solamente in qualche bel trillo fatto a suo luogo; in qualche appoggiatura; qualche groppetto; ed anche in cambiare talvolta qualche gorgheggio, e qualche breve passo, purchè ciò si faccia con gran giudizio per non tradir mai le parole; e perché la buona musica, ossia la musica veramente espressive, non permette che pochissimi cambiamenti.

Allorchè lo Scolare sarà franco nell’intonar da se stesso la suddetta scala figurata, gli si faranno apprender gl’intervalli, volgarmente chiamati salti. Prima però gl’intervalli più facili, vale a dire i consonanti; (Tav. XII. Esem. I.) indi si farà passare ai solfeggi, (che sono come tante arie senza parole;) ma che questi non siano tanto difficili, e sempre adattati alla sua età, e intelligenza. Dopo qualche tempo non va mancato di fargli apprendere la Scala figurata del modo minore, (ibid. Esem. 2.) e gl’intervalli dissonanti, inclusivamente i più difficili, vale a dise, i *diminuiti*, e gli *accresciuti*. (Tav. XIII. Esem. I) Come altresì bisogna fargli eseguire qualche volta la Scala cromatica, (ibid. Esem.2.) la quale appellasi anche Scala semitonata, essendo composta di tanti semitone maggiori, e
minori; ma soprattutto si deve procurare con grande attenzione ch'egli osservi, e non trascuri di porsi bene in mente le regole seguenti.

II.  
Della maniera di aprir la bocca.

La maniera di aprir la bocca è una regola essenzialissima, dipendendo molto da essa il formar la voce chiara, e la schietta e chiara pronunzia delle parole. Eppure questa regola tanto importante, pochi cantanti l’osservano con esattezza, per trascuraggine certamente dei primi loro maestri, e per altri motivi, che dirò in altro luogo. La bocca dunque, cantando, non si deve aprire nè troppo, nè poco, ma una cosa giusta, tenendola aperta come in atto di sorridere; nè si ha da sporgere la lingua sulle labbra, lo che fa cantare nel naso, e pronunziare da scilinguato.

III.  
Dell’intonazione.

L’intonazione (ossia il grado di voce giusto, e preciso di ogni suono, e di ogni intervallo) è certamente ancor essa una parte essenzialissima del Canto, perchè non v' è cosa nella musica, che dispiaccia tanto, quanto una falsa intonazione. La voce adunque non bisogna mai sforzarla, cantando, per esempio, nelle corde troppo acute, o troppo gravi; ma sempre vanno usate quelle corde, che si possono intonar facilmente. Osservando con attenzione questa regola; respirando, cioè prendendo fiato a tempo e luogo; e avendo la pratica, e la teoria necessaria di tutti i salti, o sieno intervalli, che sono la prima sostanza di ogni cantilena, non si può fare a meno di non intonare esattamente;
premesso però sempre il dominio assoluto di un orecchio idoneo e favorevole alla musica; essendo questo il requisito principale per eseguire una giusta, e perfetta intonazione (34).

CAPITOLO SECONDO

I. *Del fermare la voce, e del cantar di portamento.*

Fermar la voce s’intende sostenerla più che sia possibile, e tener le note tutto il tempo che vagliono. Da ciò poi ne risulta la più bella maniera di cantare, che certamente consiste nel cantar legato, e portato, come si suol dire; quindi per questo motivo dicesi ancora cantar di portamento, o portamento di voce. Nel recitative però, e in certe arie parlanti, talvolta si debbono sciogliere, e staccar le note; ma generalmente, e sopratutto nel vocalizzare, quest’uso è cattivissimo. Onde quanto sia grande il dispiacere degli uditori di buon gusto a sentir vocalizzare in tal maniera; sentir certi passaggi battuti e acuti, fatti in gola, che sembrano un fischiamento; imitare il coccodè delle galline, o il chicchirichi dei galletti; non fermar mai la voce ec. lo lascio decidere a chi sa veramente in che consiste il vero, ed il più bel modo di cantare.
II. *Dell’unite la voce di petto colla voce di testa, la quale volgarmente chiamasi falsetto.*

Essendo rare quelle persone che abbiano più di dodici, o tredici corde di petto; e trovandosi ancora chi ha più corde di testa che di petto; egli è necessario di unir queste e quelle in tal modo, che la voce sembri tutta di un registro, che vuol dire tutta eguale. Ciò si cerca di ottenere, procurando più che sia possibile che le ultime corde di petto, (le quali per lo più son quelle poste fra la quarta, e la quinta riga nelle rispettive chiavi dei Cantanti;) si uniscano colle prime del falsetto in tal maniera, che si scopra men che si può la differenza delle due voci. Questa cosa si fa non sforzando le corde acute di petto, e rinforzando piuttosto le corde basse del falsetto; o facendo il contrario, se le corde di petto fossero mai deboli, e mancanti; e quelle di falsetto, abbondanti, e forti. Egli è poi certo, che non faticando mai troppo la voce, e a forza di un esercizio continuo, ma moderato, si può acquistare col tempo qualche altra corda di petto, o di falsetto. Ma facendo all’opposto, cioè, sforzando troppo la voce; fermandosi molto sulle corde troppo acute, o troppo gravi; e non sapendo respirare, ossia prender fiato come, e quando si deve; la voce certamente declina, e si arrischia ancora di perderla.

III. *Del modo, e del tempo di prender fiato.*

Questa è una regola tanto importante, che molti canterebbero meglio che non cantano, e più facilmente, se non ignorassero la vera maniera di prender fiato. Non bisogna dunque trascurar questa regola, la quale consiste principalmente nel prender fiato
con gran prontezza, e in un modo che nessun se ne possa accorgere. Egli si prende per lo
più nei tempi deboli, e allorchè la parola è finite; ma non bisogna che sia finito tutto il
valor della nota, se dopo di essa non evvi una pausa; altrimenti non si potrebbe attendere
ad un altra regola importantissima, che è quella di cominciare in tempo qualunque nota.
Se poi la debolezza della voce, o la qualità della cantilena, obbigasse talvolta di dover
prendere fiato a mezza parola, si prenda anche così, ma con gran cautela, affinchè si
faccia sentire men che si può lo spezzamento delle parole. In tal caso si prende fiato come
in atto di fare una grazia, ovvero di sospirare, dal che ricavasi un vantaggio, cioè si
accresce forza all’espressione. Il prender fiato piuttosto spesso per straccarsi meno, ed
aver sempre la forza pronta ad esprimere il chiaro-scuro della voce, ossia la gradazione di
essa è una cosa lodevole. Bisogna però osservare attentamente, non solo di non prendere
fiato a mezza parola; lo che, come ho detto, può farsi solamente in qualche caso
particolare, ma nemmeno dopo il trillo; nè prima di aver finito il sentimento di una
cantilena, e di aver terminato una cadenza. Vi sono delle altre regole su questo
interessante argomento da osservarsi secondo i diversi casi, le quali non potendosi
suggerir chiaramente con parole, ma piuttosto coll’esempio; il giovine studente potrà
apprenderle più facilmente sentendo cantare il suo maestro, ed i musici migliori.

IV. Del Trillo, e del Groppetto.

In che consistono questi due abbellimenti l’ho già detto, allorchè ho parlato degli
ornamenti della melodia; (Vedi pag. 21) onde adesso indicherò solamente il modo di
perfezionare il trillo a quelle voci, cui la natura non è stata troppo generosa in concederlo.
Avendo dunque una voce bella, ma non molto agile, si procura di scioglierla,
vocalizzando della musica allegro con gradazione di ritmo, cioè in un tempo non tanto
veloce nelle prime lezioni; e stringendolo a poco per volta, a misura della facilità che si
acquista dal continuo esercizio. Lo stesso metodo devesi usare eziandio per ottenere un
bel trillo. Per esempio, le prime volte egli va fatto piuttosto lentamente. Allorchè si
eseguisce bene in tal modo, si cerca di stringerlo a poco a poco; e col tempo, e a grado a
grado, si tento poi di eseguirlo nella sua vera maniera, che consiste certamente nel farlo
veloce, limpido, ed eguale. La sua durata ha da esser simile a quella delle note su delle
quali egli è posto; e nelle fermate, e cadenze libere, deve durare un tempo discreto per
non perdere in esso tutta la forza. Si può ancora non tenerlo tutto il valor delle note, e
imitar l’andamento del basso, vale a dire, finir la cadenza col salto di quinta in giù, o in
altra maniera, purchè il tutto si faccia con espressione, e perfetta intonazione. Come
altresì bisogna bene osservare nel fare il trillo, e nel cantar di agilità, (che dicesi anche
cantar di bravura), di tener sempre ferma la lingua, e fermo il mento; altrimenti ne risulta
quel cattivissimo trillo, chiamato trillo cavallino, o caprino.

V. Della Cadenza libera.

La cadenza libera è quella breve melodia, che il cantante crea sul fatto, ed
eseguisce alla fine di un’aria, o altro pezzo di musica, mentre le altre parti si fermano a
questo oggetto, lasciandogli la libertà di agire a suo talento; quindi per ciò io la chiamo
cadenza libera.
Il vero modo di fare una bella cadenza egli è quello d’inserire medesima un qualche brevissimo passo della composizione che si ha cantata; o in vece, fare almeno che la sua melodia sia analoga al carattere della detta composizione. Bisogna farla altresì senza riprendere il fiato, e mai troppo lunga, per non annoiare che ascolta. Infatti la cadenza libera non è mai necessaria; e non è altro che una licenza, la quale assai volte pregiudica moltissimo alla perfetta energia della musica, e delle parole.

CAPITOLO TERZO

I. **Dell’Appoggiatura.**

Anche dell’appoggiatura ne ho spiegata la sostanza al suddetto paragrafo degli ornamenti della melodia. Onde ora dirò soltanto, che, se il sonatore non è rigorosamente obbligato di eseguire un’appoggiatura, che non è indicata dal compositore, non è lo stesso del cantante, il quale (specialmente nel recitativo) vedendo due note uguali di valore, e di suono, la prima di esse, soprattutto quando è posta in un **tempo forte**, deve considerarla come un’appoggiatura all’insù cioè eseguirla un tono, o un mezzo tono più alta, conforme la natura della scala in cui sono scritte le suddette due note. Facendo poi una tale appoggiatura, va badato non solo alle note, ma eziandio alle parole; poiché, se a cagion d’esempio, nella prima delle suddette due note uguali di valore, e di suono, terminasse la parola, o cominciasse un passo, ossia una cantilena, allora si eseguisce la nota com’è scritta. Come ancora, le parole composte di una consonante, e due vocali, quali sono, per
esempio, *mai, fai, sai, Dei*, ec. che talvolta i poeti le fanno monosillabe, e, per conseguenza, i maestri le pongono sotto una sola nota; tanto e tanto, il cantante deve considerarle sempre come bisillabe, e fare ad esse l’appoggiatura all’insù nel modo suddetto.

II. *Della messa di voce.*

La messa di voce è un de’ più bei ornamenti del canto; e del suono; mentre anche su gli strumenti da fiato, e da arco si può eseguir la messa di voce. Dessa poi consiste nell’intonare una nota piuttosto piano; rinforzarla gradatamente sino al maggior forte, indi a poco a poco ritornare al primo grado di forza, in cui s’incominciò ad eseguirla. Si comprende dunque abbastanza, che quest’ornamento non può farsi che I una nota di molto valore, com’è, per esempio, una *Breve*; una *semibreve*, o una *minima*; allorché la nota si vuol sostener più battute senza prender fiato; in una fermata, e in una cadenza. Anzi in questa fa tanto bene, che una sola messa di voce seguita da una nota col trillo, basta per formare una delle migliori cadenze.

III. *Del deportamento della persona.*

Quando si canto va sempre tenuta la testa alta, ferma, e diritta; nè va fatto nessun moto sconvenevole colle spalle, le braccia, o altra parte del corpo; ma bisogna tenersi in una nobile attitudine, e cantare in piedi acciò la voce esca fuori più facilmente; soprattutto quando si studia, e allorché si ha impegno, e premura di farsi sentire.
IV. Della grandissima necessità di usare un’esatta, e chiara pronunzia nel Canto.

L’esatta pronunzia direi quasi che fosse la prima, e la più essenziale di tutte le regole del Canto; poiché l’inosservanza di essa è certamente il maggior de’ suoi mali, e la rovina della buona musica vocale. Come mai sarà egli possibile di dare un perfetto piacere agli ascoltanti, ed a se stessi, se non si pronunzia chiaramente, e non si fa bene intendere ciò che si dice, anche cantando? Per isfuggir dunque un si gran difetto, bisogna pronunziare discretamente forte, e non a mezza voce, o fra i denti; ne inghiottir le sillabe, dirò così, ma debbonsi pronunziarle tutte distinte, soprattutto l’ultima sillaba di ogni parola; non però affettatamente, e con caricatura, come fanno alcuni Cantori moderni. Le parole poi vanno lette più di una volta prima di cantarle; vanno pronunziate nel vero idioma di ogni lingua, che per gl’Italiani è l’idioma toscano; e nel vocalizzo, o gorgheggio, le vocali E, e l’O, proferirle sempre aperte; e l’I, e l’U, dolcemente. Chi vuol pronunziare esattamente, e con precisione, deve molto leggere; imparar le lingue teoricamente, e praticamente; ascoltare spesso chi ben parla, e pronunzia; e non esser privo di letteratura, di Poesia, e di tutto quello che orna lo spirito di una persona colta, e ben’educata. Poiché se il Cantante non sente, e non comprende egli stesso la forza, ed il sentimento di quanto ei dice, non potrà neppure inspirarlo agli altri in una maniera veramente espressiva, e sensibile. Si vis me flere dolendum est primim ipsi tibi.

CAPITOLO QUARTO
CAPITOLO QUARTO

I. Dell’ombreaggiare, ovvero della gradazione di voce per eseguire il forte, ed il piano nel Canto e nel Suono.

L’anima della musica essendo la varietà; cantare, e sonar sempre di un colore, cioè non ombreggiare, ossia non dare ai suoni più o meno forza, secondo richiede il buon gusto, il sentimento della cantilena; e specialmente quello delle parole, è un difetto notabile. Ma siccome a cantare, e sonar con espressione, e con anima, coopera più la natura, che l’arte; sono ancora pochissime le regole sopra di ciò, ma quasi infiniti gli esempi. Esercitarsi spesso con della musica sentimentale, cioè, espressiva, e significante, sarà sempre la miglior cosa da farsi per riescire in questa parte tanto essenziale del Canto, e del Suono. Imperocchè, se la musica è veramente buona, e che il Cantante, o il Sonatore abbia la maestria, e l’anima che richiedesi per esprimerla a dovere; ella stessa farà ch’ei, quasi senza accorgersene, canti, o suoni con espressione, eseguendo solamente la gradazione della voce, o del suono, cioè quel piano, pianissimo, forte, fortissimo, sforzato, smorzato, crescendo, mancando, etc. che gli verrà suggerito dal carattere, e dalla natura della stessa musica. Per esprimer dunque tutto ciò esattamente, e a tempo, e luogo, non v’è regola migliore, ch’entrare nell’intenzione del Compositore, e in quella del Poeta, avendo molto riguardo anche alle parole. Per esempio, farebbe una cosa contraria al buon senso, chi cantasse piano, e dolcemente, le parole barbaro, ingiusto, tiranno etc. o forte, e con impeto, quelle di dolore, quali sono p. e., moro, manco etc. Nonostante ciò, possono esservi dei casi, e dei momenti di dover fare anche così. Questo dipende dalle
varie situazioni, e dalla qualità della melodia. Per lo più, se le note ascendentono di grado, va rinforzata la voce, e va diminuita allorché discendono. Quando poi vedesi un passo raddoppiato, o replicato immediatamente, si eseguisse piano la prima volta, e forte la seconda, s’egli è preceduto da un forte; o vice versa, conforme il caso.

II. Della maniera di cantare il Recitativo.

Il recitativo consiste quasi più nel parlare, che nel cantare; ma nondimeno, siccome si parla musicalmente, e in una musica, che talvolta è più affettuosa, ed efficace, che non è quella di certe Arie deboli, e insignificanti; va posta una grande attenzione nella maniera di cantare il recitativo, e soprattutto osservare di non cantarlo troppo. Evvi in fatti una gran differenza fra il canto del recitativo, e quello delle arie. Il primo è quasi sempre lo stesso; e solamente va eseguito sciolto, parlante, vibrato, o languido, conforme le occasioni; ed il secondo varia moltissimo in ogni aria, e si esprime per lo più, legato, e portato; come ancora in questo qui si può usar qualche volta il vocalizzo, o gorgheggio, che nel recitativo egli è assolutamente fuori di luogo.

Il recitativo è di due sorta, cioè, semplice, e obbligato. Nel Recitativo semplice, il quale chiamasi in tal guisa per essere accompagnato dal Basso solamente, non v’è altra legge per il tempo, se non quella di non allontanarsi troppo dal valor delle note per non istroppiare il valor delle sillabe; ma in quanto alla durato delle pause, e delle battute, dessa si può allungare, o abbreviare, secondo ch’esige il sentimento delle parole, o l’espressione della cantilena.
Il Recitativo obbligato chiamasi così per essere accompagnato da tutti gli strumenti, i quali obbligano talvolta l'attore di eseguirlo a rigor di tempo. Nell'uno, e nell'altro di questi due recitativi bisogna sempre ricordarsi, che non si canta solamente, ma si parla cantando; quindi la cosa più essenziale di tutte si è quella di farsi bene intendere, pronunziando chiaramente ogni sillaba, ed ogni parola; intonando perfettamente ogni intervallo; e soprattutto cantando con anima ed espressione. Intorno poi all'azione, ossia il gesto, io consiglio il giovine attore di legger ciò che il Chiar. Ab. Rubbi, seguendo l'orne del Cav. Planelli, ha scritto molto a proposito nel suo opuscolo intitolato Il Bello armonico teatrali. Venezia 1792. pag. 103.

Un gran difetto, in cui son caduti alcuni dei migliori Cantanti moderni, è stato quello di avere introdotto il gorgheggio nel recitativo, cosa che assai ripugna al buon senso; mentre, essendo il recitativo una vera musica parlante, allorchè si parla, e si ragiona non si gorgheggia certamente. Quindi in vece che adesso si studi, e si cerchi ogni mezzo di ben gestire, e si procuri di declamare, ed esprimer gli affetti con forza, e colla gradazione della voce; si trascurano questi pregi che son tanto necessari, e ciò ch'è peggio ancora, si guasta il recitativo con dei gorgheggi, delle leziosaggini, e delle caricature. Alcune volte però nei recitativi con parole non molto interessanti o indifferenti, è permesso un qualche ornamento, vale a dire, un brevissimo gorgheggio, come sarebbe una volatina, un groppetto, o altro abbellimento grazioso; ma il recitativo animato ed affettuoso; e con parole espressive, quali sono, per esempio, affanno, crudele, pena, barbaro, perfido, sdegno, furore, pietà, duolo ec. ec. sarà sempre una cosa malfatta e ridicola, di eseguirlo nel detto modo. I cantanti di merito adunque, e molto accreditati.
dovrebbero ben guardarsi dall’introdurre certe novità stravaganti, e fuori di luogo, perchè essendo secondati da moltissimi, i quali non sanno distinguere ciò che giova imitare, e ciò che va disprezzato, ne risulta all’arte del Canto un danno gravissimo, e quasi inreparabile.

Nelle Arie eziandio, se si muta qualche gorgheggio, o qualche passo, bisogna farlo con gran prudenza per non escoire dal carattere della musica che si eseguisce, e per non incorrere in certi modì di cantare, e certi ghiribizzi, airò così, che sen piuttosto adattati al violino, che alla voce umana. Ma cambiar le Arie quasi intieramente, e guastar le più belle melodie, che il Compositore ha tanto sudato per inventarle, e formarle espressive, e significanti, come pur troppo odesi molte volte, egli è un errore veramente imperdonabile. Sapranno forse quelli che agiscono in questo modo non esser tale la vera maniera di cantare; e per discolparsi adduranno forse la stessa ragione di quel poeta Spagnuolo, (Lopes de Vega) il quale scrisse:

E poiché applaude il volgo sciocco, è giusto
Sciocamente cantar per dargli gusto.

Il testo dice:

\[ Y \text{ puesque paga il vulgo necio, es justo} \]
\[ Necciamente iscrivir por darle gusto. \]

ma io l’ho cangiato come sopra per farlo servire al mio intento. Diranno ancora, che il Pubblico è quel che li guasta, mentre più che mutano, vieppiù sono applauditi da lui. Io
dico però, e sostengo il contrario, cioè, che son essi che guastano il Pubblico, avvezzandolo a delle inezie, e a un falso metodo di cantare: che la lode non meritata. non è vera lode; e che altro è volgo. Nò, non si deve mai tradir la bellezza, e la ragion delle cose per qualunque motivo, e specialmente poi per contentare il volgo. Questo male, pur troppo egli è un gran tempo che sussite, poichè il Fux, che visse nel secol passato ed al principio di questo, ancor esso se ne lagna fortemente, e come di un male già inveterate.

"Piacesse a Dio, (egli dice) che questa cupidigia di variare fosse rimasta entro i limiti della modestia, onde i musici variassero bensì, ma non mutassero la sostanza. Quanto felici sarebbono i Compositori! Ma inoltrassi a tanto questa sfrenata voglia, ed audacia di variare, che non solo viene messa sossopra la sostanza dell'armonia, (a cui si è atteso con tanta gelosia, e sudore) ma ancora duri fatica il compositore a conoscere il suo concento.

"(Salita al Parnasso, ovvero, Trattato di Contrappunto del Fux, tradotto dal latino in italiano. Carpi 1761. p. 193.) Sicchè se dai tempi del Fux fino a noi non si è mai pensato di riparare a un mal si grande, sarebbe ora finalmente, che ci si pensasse da vero; e l'unico mezzo per riuscirvi sembrami quello d'insinuare con somma premura ai giovani cantanti, che il cambiar troppo è una corruzione, e non una perfezione; che canteranno meglio, e piaceranno molto più, se canteranno meno, cioè, se non eseguiranno tante note: che procurino di esser passabili originali, piuttosto che cattive copie; e non manchino di apprendere anche il contrappunto. Ciò poi non l'hanno da fare per compor continuamente, poichè un tale esercizio pregiudica alla voce, e non è ad essi necessario; ma perchè conoscendo la sostanza ed il valore di ciò che cantano, lo eseguiranno con più energia, ed espressione; e sapranno almeno rispettarlo.
III. Avvertimenti per quelli che insegnano; e per quelli che imparano il Canto.

Terminerò queste regole di canto rammentando un’altra volta, che i solfeggi siano sempre adattate all’intelligenza ed all’età degli scolari; ma soprattutto per li principianti siano chiari, facili, ed intrecciati di note grandi, cioè di quelle note che son di lunga durata; e taluni ancora di note uguali, specialmente i primi. Dopo un anno di un tale studio direi quasi, che non si dovesse più solfeggiare, ma vocalizzar solamente. Moltissimi sono i cantanti che hanno i perniciosi vizi di aprir poco la bocca, di mal pronunziare, e di non metter fuori la voce come si deve. Tutto ciò molte volte deriva ancora dall’aver troppo solfeggiato.

Quando non si studia, ma si canta per proprio diletto, o per farsi sentire, non dicesi Do, Re, Mi, ec. e poco si vocalizza, soprattutto nella musica sentimentale, ossia espressiva, ch’è certamente la miglior di tutte. Quindi dopo due anni, o poco più, io direi che si cominciasse a cantar con parole; ma però servendosi di composizioni sostenute, e di fondo, come sono, per esempio lo Stabat, e Salve Regina del Pergolesi; le Cantate del vecchio Scarlatti, ridotte a Duetti dal Durante: quelle del Porpora, del Sassone, e del Marcello; come altresì alcuni Salmi di questo egregio Scrittore; i Duetti del Clari ec.

Dopo un esatto e continuo esercizio di tre anni dovrebbero saper cantar all’improvviso, non essendo questa una cosa tanto difficile, come ho detto altrove.
Ma egli è bensì difficile assai cantar di buon gusto, e di maniera, senza avere i doni della natura, che sono una voce bella, e pieghevole; buon’orecchio, e disposizione; e il dono della sorte, che è quello di avere un buon maestro.
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