Symposium on Seventeenth-Century Music Theory: Italy
Author(s): Imogene Horsley
Source: *Journal of Music Theory*, Vol. 16, No. 1/2 (Spring - Winter, 1972), pp. 50-61
Published by: Duke University Press on behalf of the Yale University Department of Music
Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/843326
Accessed: 11/12/2009 21:24

50

SYMPOSIUM ON SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY

Although radical changes in the way music was composed had already taken place in the latter part of the sixteenth century, it was the publication in 1600 of G. M. Artusi's L'Artusi, overo delle imperfettioni della moderna musica that set in motion the forces which brought about the transformation of music theory. The battle between the proponents of the seconda pratica and the defenders of the prima prattica that Artusi sparked did little to change the direction of active composers. The two practices existed side by side for a number of decades and, if the new style eventually became dominant, it did not do so by destroying the old. The prima prattica arose again, a phoenix in a new and more durable form, for the very concept of a second practice depended upon the existence of a primary, ideal style from which a composer could depart in order to express certain emotions. The rules of strict counterpoint un-

MUSIC THEORY:

ITALY

IMOGENE HORSLEY

derwent some changes as time moved on,*1 but it remained the basis of the composer's studies throughout the Baroque — and, in fact, never did disappear from the repertory of pedagogical theory.

The new attitude toward musical styles and the way of training composers was as radical in the realm of music theory as were the several new styles in composition which appeared in the early Baroque. In later periods, as other new styles and forms took the lead, more outdated practices, such as figured bass and strict fugue, were preserved in the theory curriculum and were considered essential to the training of composers. The underlying assumption that the musical expression of mood was brought about by a departure from the accepted norm contributed to the acceleration of stylistic changes that

took place in the next few centuries. The effect on Italian theory in the seventeenth century was even more drastic. In the first part of the century the new styles were discussed and described intelligently and perceptively by those who defended the second practice and those who attacked it. Certain practical details — such as manner of performance, the realization of the basso continuo, the tonal materials used — were discussed in detail. However, the actual process of writing in the new style was not codified theoretically. As a result, by the last quarter of the century there was a complete retreat into the prima prattica in treatises meant for the instruction of composers. There were always a few comments, here and there, making it clear that these rules did not hold for the new style, but no procedure for writing in this new style was given. While this is disappointing for scholars working in late seventeenth-century Italian music (who must turn to German sources for a theoretical analysis of the style), we must concede that this lack of theory had no dampening effect on Italian composers of opera, oratorio, sonatas and other new forms which grew up in their homeland. Evidently, the mastery of strict counterpoint and the pragmatic rules for thoroughbass, combined with a practical knowledge of the new style gained from performing and listening to it was, indeed, a successful and sufficient training for a composer in that day.

It should not be assumed that because there was a clear cleavage between the two styles, there was a parallel division between two factions of composers. In some cases this was so, especially early in the century, but for most composers and theorists there existed two valid styles, each having its appropriate use. The pedagogical relation between the two was defined by Adriano Banchieri in his Cartella musicale (Venice, 1614)*2: the student should first learn the rules of strict counterpoint as taught by Gioseffo Zarlino (Le Istitutioni armoniche [Venice, 1558]) and Artusi (L'Arte del contrapunto ridotta in tavole [Venice, 1586]; Seconda parte dell'arte del contrapunto, nella quale si tratta dell'utile + uso delle dissonanze [Venice, 1589]; L'Arte del contrapunto . . . novamente ristampata, + di molte nuove aggiunte, dall'auttore arrichita [Venice, 1598]). After this he could work more freely, setting aside certain rules in order to express the words. Citing a comment made by Girolamo Diruta in Secunda parte del Transilvano (Venice, 1609)*3 that, in addition to the strict rules of osservato counterpoint, there existed a freer type that disregarded certain of the rules, Banchieri goes on to remark that even in his time

no rules for the freer type had been evolved beyond the broad principle of expressing the text set. He, himself, cannot give rules, but he does define a process the composer can follow once he has mastered the primary style. He should copy out single voice parts from the works of good composers (such as Rore, Lasso, Marenzio and Palestrina) and write a second part against these without looking to see what the original composer did. Banchieri does this himself using two famous sestina settings — Rore's Alla dolce ombra and Lasso's Sovr'una verde riva.*4 His numerous comments on the score are a great boon to scholars of early Baroque music, and, along with Artusi's precise quotations from and detailed comments on Monteverdi's madrigals (... Delle imperfettioni della moderna musica [Venice, 1600] and Seconda parte . . . delle imperfettioni della moderna musica [Venice, 1603]), they provide our greatest fund of concrete information about the relation of the second practice to the first.*5

Once the relation between the first and second practices had been pragmatically defined, there apparently was no need to redefine it as stylistic changes took place in the freer style. Camillo Angleria, in La Regole del contrapunto, e della musical compositione (Milan, 1622), listed a number of passages accepted by usage (buona per autorità), but not yet by rule, in the section on counterpoint.*6 However, in the later part of the century, theorists simply gave the osservato rules, while making it clear that these did not apply to all styles. Some changes did occur within the conservative practice,*7 and in the freer style the dissonance treatment became more conservative. The gap between the two practices in melody, rhythm, medium, and tonal materials became extreme, yet in the improvised realization of the basso continuo and in the composed concertos, arias, ensembles, and so on, the treatment of dissonance — and especially voice leading — tended more and more to follow the procedures learned in strict counterpoint. As a pedagogical process, the empirical approach to theory was clearly a success.

On one important aspect of seventeenth-century theory, the recognition of the supremacy of the major and minor modes, Italy was far in advance of the other nations. Nowhere is the pragmatism of the secunda prattica theorists more evident than in their organization of the tonal materials used in their music. Henry Glarean's presentation of the twelve modes in the natural diatonic system was accepted by Zarlino and most

later Italian theorists,*8 but the effect on composers was not as much the legalization of Ionian and Aeolian (which had long been used on F and D with a B♭ signature) so much as a separation of Aeolian on A from Phrygian and the attempted use of true Lydian in polyphonic music. Mode-conscious composers used Lydian in madrigals — the opening of Marenzio's five-voice Perchè la pioggia*9 being a particularly clear example — and the twelve modes were used in a number of cycles of instrumental toccatas, ricercars, and fantasias.

In actual practice, however, Lydian was not successful; after a brave opening, the B♭ tended to creep in. By the seventeenth century the basso continuo was becoming general and the use of chordal accompaniment weakened the Phrygian mode. Banchieri was the first theorist to break with the past. In the beginning of the Secondo Registro of L'Organo suonarino (Venice, 1605), he discusses briefly the development of the new twelve modes. Then he breaks off, saying that this is not the place for speculation but, rather, the place for giving the real practice followed by organists in accompanying the church chant. He proceeds to give a new set of eight tuoni.*10 Each of these corresponds to a psalm tone, having for its final the final note of the seculorum amen of that psalm tone and bearing the same number as the psalm tone with which it agrees.

Two of these, the second and fourth, are transposed by means of a B♭ signature — the second up a fourth, and the seventh down a fifth. The fifth tone is moved down a fourth, but not exactly transposed. Its seculorum amen — c', d', b, c', a — becomes g, a, f, g, e, changing the Lydian into Ionian by not sharping the f. Also the alternate final for this psalm tone (f in the original, c in Banchieri's system) becomes the final for this mode.*11

All but one of the tuoni correspond to modes from the old system:

1. D Dorian
2. G Hypodorian (B♭ signature)
3. A Aeolian
5. C Ionian
6. F Hypoionian (B♭ signature)
7. D Aeolian (B♭ signature)
8. G Hypomixolydian

The fourth mode has the structure of Hypoaeolian on A, but makes its final cadence on E. This is the most unstable of all, going through changes in later theorists which reflect closely

the practice of their times.

These modes clearly represent the necessity for fixed pitch patterns, no doubt brought about by the use of the continuo to accompany the chant and figural solo and polyphonic music used in the church service. Continuo parts published for performance of music from the sixteenth century, such as Alessandro Nuvoloni, Basso principale co'l Soprano del Quarto libro delle messe a quattro, e cinque voci. dell' Eccellentiss. Gio. Pietre Alvigi Palestrina (Milan, 1610) presents the works in similar transpositions into comfortable choral ranges.

If these new tuoni had related solely to church music, they might have had little acceptance, but they represented as well the particular modes and transpositions also found in secular vocal music. In Cartella musicale Banchieri detailed both these new tuoni and the twelve modes,*12 associating the first with liturgical music and the second with secular,*13 but for Angleria in 1622,*14 and Lorenzo Penna (Li Primi albori musicali, Bologna, 1672)*15 these were the new, modern modes. The twelve modes were relegated to the past. With Giovanni Maria Bononcini (Musico prattico [Bologna, 1673]) begins the retreat into the prima prattica with the old twelve-mode system.*16 Bononcini does, however, mention the modes most used by composers in his day — and these are the seven listed in the above table. The new fourth mode has disappeared, having no parallel in the twelve, although in actual practice the slow movement in Aeolian ending with a half cadence on the dominant is characteristic of the music of his day.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of this new eight-mode system was that it represented, in embryo, the basic key relationships of the coming major-minor system — tonic, dominant and subdominant keys: C, G, and F major; D, A, and G minor. (The use of Dorian and Aeolian signatures for minor, and Ionian and Mixolydian for major, was common throughout the century.) The fact that these tuoni were basically defined by cadences rather than scales also indicates their relation to the new tonal system. It is enlightening to observe the changes made in these cadences as the century moved on. Banchieri and Angleria both followed the ruling of Zarlino that inner cadences should fall on degrees 5 and 3 of the mode, except in the eighth mode (Hypomixolydian) where a cadence on C replaced the theoretical one on B, and in the fourth mode which

— despite a final cadence on E — had inner cadences on A and C. Penna, writing a full fifty years after Angleria, presented a significant change. By his time, in the major modes, the regular inner cadences fell on the dominant and subdominant chords.

In actual practice these inner cadences were often the focal points for inner modulations, but there is no suggestion on the part of these theorists that under certain conditions these cadences might themselves act as a final cadence in some other mode. We can, however, find how some composers thought about this by investigating the instances of modal modulations cited by Giulio Cesare Monteverdi in his gloss on the letter his brother had printed in his Fifth Book of Madrigals (Venice, 1605). This gloss was published along with the original letter in Claudio Monteverdi's Scherzi musicali (Venice, 1607).*16a

It is easy to follow his modal analysis of Rore's Quando signor lasciate.*17 It opens in Ionian, established by a C-major triad. Starting in measures 13 and 14, where there is a cadence on D, there is a series of entries on D and A, leading up to a cadence on D in measure 27 establishing Hypodorian (plagal because of the range of the voices). In this same measure, entries on an A-minor triad lead to a cadence on A in measure 40 followed by more entries on A and E, clearly establishing Hypoaeolian. The final cadence of the first part which follows these entries on A and E is on D, and this bears out his assertion that this first part ends in Dorian. It is clear that he considers all these cadences to be final cadences in a mode whether or not it is preceded by entries in that mode. Despite the fact that both the second and first parts of the madrigal begin in Ionian, he considers the final cadence on G to make it end in Hypomixolydian. Earlier, sixteenth-century theorists would be likely to consider the madrigal to end on a regular cadence in the mode, rather than in another mode. From this analysis we may assume that a change has taken place and that the cadences which seventeenth-century theorists assigned as proper inner cadences were, in fact, arrival points on the tonics in other modes. Certainly this is what occurs musically in compositions of the time; it is, indeed, quite obvious in music written in the last half of the century when Penna and Bononcini were composing as well as writing theory texts.

The establishment of mode by the initial notes of fugue entries (on 1 and 5) which was so common in the sixteenth century was

made even more emphatic by Diruta (Secunda parte del Transilvano, 1609)*18 and Banchieri (Cartella musicale, 1614)*19 who insisted also that the theme itself should outline the fifth or fourth of the mode (1–5; 5–8) and be given a tonal answer. Early in the century the middle of a piece was characterized by statements of the theme itself or of other themes in other modes. Angleria, in 1622, gives examples of a theme moved to different degrees of the scale and appearing in different modes.*20 The exact reproduction of a theme on a different pitch — in our terms, presenting it in the same mode transposed to another pitch level — appears later in the century. Giovanni d'Avella (Regole di musica [Naples, 1657])*21 calls this "multiplying the fugues," making exact reproductions of the theme on other pitches by using accidentals. Penna (Li Primi albori, 1672)*22 considers it preferable to hear the theme on other pitch levels after the opening entries, but made exactly like the first statement by the use of accidentals. Thus, while they used different terms, these theorists described clearly the elements of transposition and modulation. This beginning of tonal form was brought about by the cutting down of possibilities, the moving away from a twelve-mode system to a two-mode system transposable to twelve pitch levels. The process of transposition, mentioned by all these theorists, must also have played a strong part in the transformation. But the harmonic basis of the new key system, which was the strongest element involved, was not subject to theoretical rationalization.

This concentration on the new should not obscure the contributions made by the advocates of traditional vocal counterpoint, both written and improvised. From the time of Antonio Brunelli (Regole e dichiarationi di alcuni contrapunti doppii [Florence, 1610]), Ludovico Zacconi (Prattica di musica seconda parte [Venice, 1622]), G. B. Chiodino (Arte prattica di far contrapunto à mente [Viterbo, 1624]) and Silverio Picerli (Specchio secondo di musica [Naples, 1631]) through Angelo Berardi's Documenti armonici (Bologna, 1687), singers, composers and theorists researched and discovered nearly all the possible types of invertible counterpoints, obscure canons, difficult obblighi and artifices possible within their musical system. These were also a part of Baroque music. They represent the other side of the Baroque temperament — the love of skill, and of technical problems solved, and the desire to move the listener to admiration and astonishment as well as to awaken in him the passions expressed in the text and in the music.

REFERENCES

1 Claude V. Palisca, "Kontrapunkt," MGG VII, 1538–42; Ralph Harold Robbins, Beiträge zur Geschichte der Kontrapunkts von Zarlino bis Schütz (Berlin: Triltsch and Huther, 1938).

2 pp. 165–66.

3 Book II, p. 14.

4 pp. 170–200.

5 See: Palisca, "The Artusi-Monteverdi Controversy," Denis Arnold and Nigel Fortune, eds., The Monteverdi Companion (New York: Norton, 1968), pp. 133–166.

6 pp. 4–74.

7 Palisca, "Kontrapunkt"; Robbins, Beiträge.

8 Nicola Vicentino, Illuminato Aiguino, and Pietro Pontio were the main exceptions.

9 Luca Marenzio, Il Secondo libro de madrigali a cinque voci (Venice, 1581), No. 2.

10 p. 41.

11 This ending can be found in earlier theorists such as Franchino Gaffurio, Practica musicae (Milan, 1496), Book I, Chap. 12; and in the 17th century in Cerreto, op. cit., p. 133, and Angleria, op. cit., p. 83.

12 pp. 68–87; 111–136.

13 p. 88.

14 pp. 80–82.

15 pp. 128–29.

16 p. 121ff.

16a Francesco Malipiero, ed., Tutte le opere di Claudio Monteverdi, X, pp. 69–72.

17 RISM 1557^{23} No. 7. In Bernard Meier, ed., Cipriano Rore, Collected Works (Rome: American Institute of Musicology), IV, pp. 96–100.

18 Book III, p. 12.

19 pp. 72–87; 111–135.

20 Op. cit., p. 78f.

21 p. 71f.

22 p. 26f.

A CHECKLIST OF SOURCES

Andrea di Modona. Canto harmonico in cinque parti diviso. Modena, 1690.

Angleria, Fra Camillo. La regola del contrapunto, e della musical compositione. Milan, 1622.

Antonelli, Abundio. Copia de lettera con mano scritta, mandata dal sig. Abundio Antonelli . . . a me Romano Micheli . . . con la risposta fattagli nella presente stampa, dove si contengono l'esperienze di diversi studi di musica. Venice, 1621.

Artusi, Giovanni Maria. L'Artusi, overo delle imperfettioni della moderna musica ragionamenti dui. Venice, 1600.

Artusi. Seconda parte dell'Artusi, overo delle imperfettioni della moderna musica. Venice, 1603.

Avella, Fra Giovanni d'. Regole di musica, divise in cinque tratti. Rome, 1657.

Banchieri, Adriano. Cartella musicale nel canto figurato, fermo, et contrapunto. Venice, 1614.

Banchieri. L'organo suonarino . . . Opera terza decima. Venice, 1622. Facsimile reprint. Bologna: Forni, 1968.

Banchieri. L'organo suonarino opera ventesimaquinta. Venice, 1622.

Banchieri. L'organo suonarino . . . opera XXXXIII. Venice, 1622, 1627, 1638.

Berardi, Angelo. Arcani musicali . . . ne' quali appariscono diversi studii artificiosi, molte osservationi . . . (Bologna, 1687).

Berardi. Miscellanea musicale. Bologna, 1689.

Berardi. Il perchè musicale. Bologna, 1693.

Berardi. Ragionamenti musicali. Bologna, 1681.

Berardi. Aggionta . . . alli suoi ragionamenti musicali, nella quale si pruova, che la musica è vera, e reale scienza. Bologna, 1681.

Bianciardi, Francesco. Breve regola per imparar' a sonar sopra il basso con ogni sorte d'istrumento. Siena, 1607.

Bononcini, Giovanni Maria. Musico prattico. Bologna, 1673, 1688; Venice, 1678; German trans. Stuttgart, 1701.

Bontempi, Giovanni Andrea Angelini. Historia musica . . . e come dalla teorica e dalla pratica antica sia poi nata la pratica moderna, che contiene scientia del contrapunto. Perugia, 1695.

Bottrigari, Ercole. Dialogo de Annibale Meloni. Milan, 1601.

Bottrigari. Il Melone, discorso armonico. Ferrara, 1602.

Brunelli, Antonio. Regole e dichiarationi di alcuni contrappunti doppii utili alli studiosi della musica, et maggiormente à quelli che vogliono far contrappunti all'improviso. Florence, 1610.

Cerreto, Scipione. Della prattica musica vocale et strumentale. Naples, 1601.

Chiavelloni, Vincenzo. Discorsi della musica. Rome, 1668.

Chiodino, Giovanni Battista. Arte pratica . . . di far contrapunto à mente, et à penna. Venice, 1610.

Crivellati, Cesare. Discorsi musicale nelli quali si contengono non solo cose pertinenti alla teorica, ma etiandio alla pratica. Viterbo, 1624.

Diruta, Girolamo. Seconda parte del Transilvano. Venice, 1609, 1622.

Doni, Giovanni Battista. Compendio del trattato de' generi de de' modi della musica. Rome, 1640.

Doni. Annotazioni sopra il compendio de' generi e de' modi. Roma, 1635.

Doni. . . . Lyra Barberina. Florence, 1673. 2 vols.

Liberati, Antimo. Lettera scritta . . . in risposta ad una del signor Ovidio Persapegi che gli fà istanza di voler vedere, ed'essaminare i componimenti di musica . . . Rome, 1685.

Magone, Giovanni Battista. Ghirlando musicale. Pavia, 1615.

Micheli, Romano. Certezza d'artificii musicali . . . con la risposta fattagli all'oppositione, fatta dal sig. Abundio Antonelli . . . sopra la quantità di essi oblighi. Venice, 1621.

Penna, Lorenzo. Direttorio del canto fermo . . . con la maniera di comporre il canto fermo, ad una, due, e trè cori. Modena, 1689.

Penna. Li primi albori musicali per li principianti della musica figurata; distini in tre libri . . . dal secondo spiccano le regole del contrapunto; dal terzo appariscono li fondamenti per suonare l'organo, ò clavicembalo sopra la parte. Bologna, 1672, 1679; ed. Felina, C. M., Bologna, 1684, 1696; Antwerp, 1690.

Picerli, Silverio. Specchio primo di musica. Naples, 1630.

Picerli. Specchio secondo di musica . . . di fare con nuove regole in ogni sorte di contrapunti, e canoni, di formar li toni di tutt'i generi di musica reale e finta, con le loro cadenze à proprii luoghi . . . . Naples, 1631.

Pisa, Agostino. Battuta della musica dichiarata. Rome, 1611.

Rodio, Rocco. Regole di musica. (1600?) Naples, 1609.

Rodio. Et altre cose di novo poste dal detto Olifante per complimento di detto libro. . . . Naples, 1626.

Sabbatini, Galeazzo. Regola facile, e breve per sonare sopra il basso continuo. Venice, 1628, 1624, 1669.

Sabbatini, Pietro Paolo. Toni ecclesiastici colle sue intonationi, all'uso romano. Modo per sonare il basso continuo. Rome, 1650.

Scacchi, Marco. Breve discorso sopra la musica moderna. Warsaw, 1649.

Scacchi. Cribrum musicum. Venice, 1643.

Zacconi, Lodovico. Prattica di musica seconda parte. Venice, 1622.