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Agazzari and the Improvising Orchestra

By GLORIA ROSE

One of the most tantalizing accounts of instrumental methods in early 17th-century Italy is that found in Agostino Agazzari’s Del sonare sopra ’l basso con tutti li stromenti e dell’uso loro nel conserto, printed in Siena in 1607.1 We can see the importance of his famous distinction between instruments “like a foundation,” whose improvisations are mainly harmonic, and instruments “like an ornament,” whose improvisations are mainly melodic. But what kind of melodies, and in what kinds of music?

The very title tells us that many instruments realized the bass part. Francesco Bianciardi’s Breve regola per imparar’ a sonare sopra il basso con ogni sorte d’istumento (also Siena, 1607) confirms this well-accepted fact; and its title page shows illustrations of a guitar, harp, lira da braccio, trombone, psaltery (?), theorbo, treble viol (or violin?), organ, gamba, cittern (?), lirone and lutes.2

Agazzari clearly does not describe a novelty, but an established practice. He does not even define “conserto”; but since he himself composed sacred and secular music (motets, masses, psalms, etc., madrigals, and one short opera), he may have had a wide field in mind.3 His entire treatise was reprinted in his Sacrarum cantionum, quae binis, ternis, quaternisque vocibus concinuntur, Liber II, Opus V, Motectorum, Cum basso ad organum (Venice, 1608), to which it must therefore have been thought relevant. His motets Sacre laudes de Jesu, Liber secundus (Rome, 1603) name the continuo part “Bassus ad Organum et Musica instrumenta.”

Adriano Banchieri wrote in the preface to his Ecclesiastiche sinfonie dette canzoni in aria francese, a quatro voci, per sonare, et cantare, et sopra un basso seguente concertare entro l’organo (Venice, 1604):4

If you wish to perform them with voices and instruments . . . I should not neglect to say that within a few days [actually three years] Signor Agostino Agazzari, the very famous musician and organist, will publish a treatise which is a work useful for those who play concerted music, and necessary for those who wish to learn how to play freely over the basso seguente.


3 An excellent list of Agazzari’s works is contained in G. Barblan, “Contributo a una biografia critica di Agostino Agazzari,” Collectanea historiae musicae II (Florence, 1957), pp. 33-63.

4 Quoted in Catalogo della Biblioteca del Liceo Musicale di Bologna, II (Bologna, 1892), p. 373.
Banchieri’s *Conclusioni nel suono dell’organo* (Bologna, 1609) contains the “Copy of a letter written by Signor Agostino Agazzari to a compatriot, an accomplished Sienese; from which one arrives at a knowledge of the style to be observed in concerting organ, voices and instruments.” This letter, dated 25 April 1606 in Rome, is identical in substance with the corresponding parts of Agazzari’s treatise. Agazzari describes his letter as “a draft of the style which these Roman gentlemen musicians use in concerting voices, keyboard instruments, bowed and stringed instruments with organ.” Peri, Caccini and Cavalieri were all born in Rome; but Agazzari seems to have a broader context in mind than early opera alone. Again, Banchieri must have thought Agazzari’s advice relevant to his own *Conclusioni*, of which the primary concerns are the organ and various aspects of sacred music.

Secular madrigals in the 17th century could be described as in Giovanni Priuli’s *Third book of madrigals for five voices, in two manners: one for voices alone, the other for voices and instruments* (Venice, 1612); Pietro Pace’s *Madrigals for four and five voices, a part with Sinfonia if desired, and a part without . . . those with Sinfonia, however, cannot be sung without playing them, whereas the others can be* (Venice, 1617); Giovanni Valentini’s *Fifth book of madrigals, divided into three parts: in the first, there are madrigals for three parts concerted with instrument; in the second, scherzi for six parts concerted with instrument; in the third, madrigals for six parts to be sung without instrument* (Venice, 1625).

Domenico Mazzocchi had his *Partitura de’ madrigali a cinque voci, e d’altri varij concerti* (Rome, 1638) printed in score so that “if it is anyone’s taste (this being different in everyone) to give an instrumental accompaniment likewise to madrigals which do not require it, he will be able to do so without effort.” This cannot refer to mere instrumental doubling, for which a score offers no particular advantage. Moreover, Mazzocchi asks his performers to “concert the madrigals with deliberation before presenting them in public.” The contents are eight “concerted” madrigals; eight “to be sung without instrument”; and eight “variously concerted.”

Agazzari’s instructions may well have a bearing upon “variously concerted” madrigals.

In opera, Monteverdi’s extensive orchestra for *Orfeo* in 1607 was exceptional only in being so specifically described. It is, of course, in the direct tradition of the *intermedi*, with which the originators of opera were

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5 Facsimile of the *Conclusioni* published at Milan, 1934. Agazzari’s letter appears on pp. 68–70.
6 *Conclusioni*, p. 68.
8 *Partitura de’ madrigali*, p. 4.
so closely associated. In the intermedi, for example, of Bargagli's Pellegrina, at the wedding of Ferdinando de' Medici and Christine of Lorraine in Florence, 1589, Caccini played the harp, Peri sang to a chitarrone, Cavalieri composed music and choreography for a dance, Giovanni de' Bardi composed a madrigal, and Vittoria Archilei sang to a large lute and two chitarroni and again to a lute, a chitarrone and a lirone. The instruments employed in these intermedi were large and small lutes, chitarroni, liras [da braccio], arciviolata lira [lira da gamba], harps, psalteries, cittern, mandola, Spanish guitar, Neapolitan guitar, violins, sopranino viol, tenor viol, bass viols [gambas], double bass viols, viola bastarda [lyra-viol], bass viola bastarda, transverse flute, cornetts, trombones, bass trombones, cembalino adorno di sonagli d'argent [? chimes, or tambourine, adorned with silver bells], organo di pivette [? regal organ], and the three chamber organs of wood which played in all compositions. The instruments were combined in the most various manners, and in madrigals they were chosen for their appropriateness to the text.10

Early operas were not printed primarily as performing scores for future use, but as tributes to patrons and records of great occasions which had taken place. In Orfeo, published two years after its first performance, most of the directions for instruments are in the past tense.11 Peri's Euridice ends with the note: "And with this order, which has been described, it was performed."12 This leaves the possibility open that on another occasion it might be differently performed.

The record, as published, might be more or less incomplete. Peri merely states that "behind the scenes music was played by gentlemen illustrious for their noble blood and their excellence in music" on a harpsichord, a chitarrone, a large lira and a large lute.18 But this cannot have been the whole orchestra. There are several Ritornelli for one or two treble instruments besides the basso continuo. There is the mysterious "triflauto" named over an eight-measure piece for two treble parts and continuo. There may well have been a typical intermedi orchestra, including what Agazzari would have called instruments for "ornament" (i.e., melodic) as well as for "foundation" (i.e., harmonic).

We only know that numerous instrumentalists took part in Caccini's Rapimento di Cefalo (presented in Florence, 1600), and by inference probably in his Euridice as well, because he included in his Nuove

13 Ibid., preface.
musiche, among other excerpts, the "Final Chorus of the Rapimento di Cefalo, concerted among voices and instruments by seventy-five persons in a half moon, as well as the stage provided . . . ."\textsuperscript{14}

The preface (probably by Alessandro Guidotti) to Cavalieri's Rappresentatione speaks of "instruments more or less numerous according to the place, whether it be a theater or a hall," which "if it is to be proportionate to this recitation in music, should not be capable of holding more than a thousand people."\textsuperscript{15} A thousand people! Only a few continuo instruments are specifically named in this general preface; yet the instructions which follow it include this advice:\textsuperscript{16}

At the beginning, before the curtain falls [open?], it will be well to have a full piece of music, with the voices doubled and a very large number of instruments: Madrigal No. 86, "O Signor santo et vero," which is for six voices, can serve very well . . . . The Sinfonie and Ritornelli can be played by a large number of instruments; and a Violin, which plays the soprano [part] exactly, will make a very good effect.

The end can be done in two ways, either with a dance, or without. If a dance is not desired, it must end with No. 91, for eight parts, doubling the voices and instruments as much as possible . . . .

Wishing to end with a dance . . . The stanzas of the dance should be sung by everyone, behind and on the stage; and all the instruments, as many as possible, should play in the Ritornelli.

The Sinfonie and Ritornelli have one or two soprano parts, one or two alto parts, tenor part, basso continuo part. The "Violin" must therefore have been mentioned by way of example; other melodic instruments are also required. One surviving copy of the score has "Tiorba" written on the first page, but "Tace" at the start of all pieces for solo voice.\textsuperscript{17} The general preface merely states that "a double lira, a harpsichord, a chitarrone or theorbo, as they say, make an excellent effect together, as does again a soft [chamber] organ with a chitarrone. And Signor Emilio would commend changing the instruments in conformity with the sentiment of the singer."\textsuperscript{18} In short, the instrumentation was worked out in rehearsal; and here again, we may take account of Agazzari's treatise.

Marco da Gagliano in the preface to his Dafne (Florence, 1608) asks the instrumentalists to "make sure that the harmony is neither too much nor too little, but such that it supports the singing without impeding the understanding of the words"; this might well include varying the number of instruments from time to time. "Before the curtain falls [open?], in

\textsuperscript{14}G. Caccini, Le nuove musiche (Florence, 1601 [i.e. 1602]; facs. ed. F. Mantica, Rome, 1930), p. 19.
\textsuperscript{15}E. de' Cavalieri, Rappresentatione di anima, et di corpo (Rome, 1600; facs. ed. F. Mantica, Rome, 1912), preface, first section.
\textsuperscript{16}Ibid., "Avvertimenti per la presente Rappresentatione, à chi volesse farla recitar cantando."
\textsuperscript{17}Copy in S. Maria in Vallicella, where the Rappresentatione was first performed: noted by F. Mantica, \textit{ibid.}, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{18}Ibid., preface, first section.
order to make the listeners attentive, there should be played a sinfonie composed of various instruments, which [also] serve to accompany the choruses and to play the ritornelli."

When Filippo Vitali, in the foreword to his Aretusa (Rome, 1620), speaks of singers "accompanied, according to the needs of the harmony, by two harpsichords, two theorbos, two violins, a lute and a viola da gamba," he likewise seems to imply varying the number of instruments. (No instruments are named in the score.)

In all such operatic scores, the possibilities include: (a) instrumental parts written, and instruments specified by name; (b) instrumental parts written, but instruments not specified (very common, especially as Sinfonie and Ritornelli);\(^\text{19}\) (c) staves left blank for instrumental parts, but never filled in (e.g. in the Venetian manuscript of Monteverdi's Incoronazione di Poppea [1642] most of the Sinfonie and Ritornelli show blank staves above the basso continuo);\(^\text{20}\) (d) nothing except basso continuo shown, but instruments implied or highly probable; (e) instruments named, but no music given; (f) dances named, but only a basso continuo, or no music at all, given.

Thus, in Francesca Caccini's Liberazione di Ruggiero (Florence, 1625), of the many written-out Ritornelli in three or four parts, one is "played by three flutes"; another is for "4 Viols, 4 Trombones, [chamber] Organ of Wood and Keyboard Instrument [harpsichord]"; this follows a five-part chorus "concerted with 5 Viols, Archviol [lira da gamba], Organ of Wood and Keyboard Instrument."\(^\text{21}\) A later five-part chorus has written beneath it "Basso continuo to play,"\(^\text{22}\) which may again mean many instruments. But this is the only chorus in concerto style, and it may have been deliberately singled out, as an exception, for accompaniment by "foundation" instruments alone.

In the fourth Intermedio of Girolamo Giacobbi's Aurora ingannata (1607) only a basso continuo is given for the two Ritornelli.\(^\text{23}\) The score of Marco da Gagliano's Flora (Florence, 1628), like so many others, includes written but unspecified Sinfonie and Ritornelli; Act IV includes

\(^{19}\) To name only some examples available in modern editions: the facsimiles of Peri's Euridice and Cavalieri's Rappresentatione; Francesca Caccini's Librazione di Ruggiero (Florence, 1625), ed. D. Silbert (Northampton, Mass., 1945); excerpts from Domenico Mazzocchi's Catena d'Adone (Venice, 1626) and Loreto Vittori's Galatea (Rome, 1639), in H. Goldschmidt, Studien zur Geschichte der italienischen Oper im 17. Jahrhundert (Leipzig, 1901-04), I, pp. 151-173, 273-294; Act I of Cavalli's Giasone (1649), ed. R. Eitner (Leipzig, 1883); excerpts from several other operas of Cavalli, in E. Wellesz, "Cavalli und der Stil der venetianischen Oper von 1640-1660," Studien zur Musikwissenschaft, I (1913), pp. 58-101; Act I of Cesti's Dori (1663), ed. R. Eitner (Leipzig, 1883).

\(^{20}\) See the facsimile, ed. G. Benvenuti, Milan, 1938.

\(^{21}\) F. Caccini, La liberazione di Ruggiero dall'isola d'Alcina, ed. D. Silbert (Northampton, Mass., 1945), pp. 54, 74, 73.

\(^{22}\) Ibid., p. 117.

"The Chorus of Tempests is repeated here; let them play," no music, however, being given nor instruments mentioned.24 Luigi Rossi's *Palazzo incantato* (1642) opens with a Sinfonia notated for basso continuo only.25 In Agazzari's own *Eumelio* (Venice, 1606) the solo voices are printed above an unfigured bass; the choruses have no written accompaniment; the Ritornelli consist of a few bars of continuo. We can assume that the composer directed a considerable amount of instrumental improvisation, on the lines of his treatise, at the performance in Rome in 1606.

Among the manuscripts of the Contarini Collection in the Biblioteca Marciana, Venice, Cavalli's *Didone* (performed in 1641) has "All the instruments enter," no instrumental parts being written; an "Aria with all the instruments" is accompanied in the score by basso continuo only.26 Pagliardi's *Numa Pompilio* (1674) gives no music for "trumpets which sound."27 Franceschini's *Oronte di Menfi* (1676) has basso continuo only for many of the instrumental sections.28 Legrenzi's *Totila* (1677) gives only a bass part for the Sinfonia of Act III.29 Similar examples abound; and most of the dances in the operas, even where named, have no music given (occasionally a bass part is given for a "Ballo" or "Balletto").30

Cesti's *Pomo d'oro*, though presented in Vienna (1667), is certainly rooted in Venetian opera. In one Ritornello, upper parts are given for only the first bar; when this Ritornello returns, its notation is further reduced to basso continuo alone.31

Stefano Landi's *S. Alessio* (Rome, 1634) begins with a Sinfonia for first, second and third violins [i.e., instruments of the violin family]; harps, lutes, theorbs, violins [i.e., cellos] on a single stave; basso continuo for harpsichords; and the orchestra is indicated for Ritornelli, dances and choruses. Michelangelo Rossi's *Erminia sul Giordano* (Rome, 1637, just three years later) begins with a Sinfonia for first, second, third and fourth violins [i.e., instruments of the violin family] and "basso continuo for all the instruments"; the orchestra is indicated for Ritornelli but not for choruses, where, however, it is unlikely to have been silent. In both operas, the arias and recitatives have an accompaniment written for basso continuo alone; but again it is likely that some or all of the arias were accompanied by the orchestra. It is likely because of evidence such as the following.

In two out of five manuscripts (Biblioteca Vaticana, Fondo Barberini, MSS Lat. 4388 and Lat. 4389), the Prologue of Luigi Rossi’s *Palazzo incantato* (1642) is shown sung to a figured bass. In the other three (Bibl. Vaticana, Fondo Chigiano, MS Q.V.51; Bologna, Civico Museo Bibliografico Musicale [the former Liceo Musicale], MS BB/255; London, Royal College of Music, MS 546 I and II) there is an accompaniment for seven written-out parts and figured bass. In the Chigi manuscript, however, the seven parts drop out on folio 6, to the revealing comment: “with the usual accompaniment”—after which the basso continuo proceeds alone for the rest of the Prologue.32 The source which I consulted in its entirety (Royal College of Music) shows the recitative portions of the Prologue with figured bass only; the aria portions with the seven parts. A similar distinction may have been made throughout the opera.

In the same opera, separate parts (usually seven) are written out for some Ritornelli and dances; for others, only treble and bass, so that middle parts have to be supplied. The following in Act I, Scene 10, is actually marked “Ritornello with all the instruments”:

Ex. 1

That massed continuo instruments were used quite late in the 17th century is confirmed by hints such as the payments made to three keyboard and two theorbo players among the orchestral musicians at Venice for the season of 1665.33 These still correspond to Agazzari’s “foundation” instruments; but what of his improvising “ornament” instruments? What of the melodic instruments such as violins, flutes, cornets, or trumpets needed to play the unspecified parts in the operatic scores, and also the parts missing but intended to be supplied? How much of Agazzari’s instructions for such parts remained applicable at these later dates?

We may first notice a strong resemblance to Agazzari in Pietro della Valle’s essay, “Della musica dell’età nostra,” written about 1640:34

Playing in the company of other instruments does not require the artifices of counterpoint so much as the graces of art; for if the player is good, he does


not have to insist so much upon making a display of his own art as upon accommodating himself to all the others. . . . Those who sing and play well have to give time to one another [when performing] in company, and they have to sport with gracefulness of imitations rather than with too subtle artifices of counterpoints. They will show their art in knowing how to repeat well and promptly what another [player] has done before; and in then giving room to the others and fit opportunity for them to repeat what they have done; and in this way, with a varied and no less artful manner, though [a manner] neither so difficult nor [requiring] such deep knowledge, they will make known to the others their own worth. This is done nowadays not only by the most excellent, but also by the ordinary players, and they know how to do it so well that I do not know how it could have been done better by those of the past, whom I have not heard. When one plays in the company of voices, the same thing I said about [playing with] instruments must take place, and much more so: because instruments when serving voices, as it were the leaders in music, must have no other aim than to accompany them well . . . Playing in order to support a chorus has to be the most simple of all, with no artifice of counterpoint, but only with good concordances and pretty accompaniments, which should follow the voices gracefully.

Della Valle, who is clearly talking, like Agazzari, of parts more or less improvised, wants the players "to sport with gracefulness of imitations rather than with too subtle artifices of counterpoints." Comparable sentences in Agazzari include:35

Like an ornament are those [instruments] which, sporting and making up counterpoint, render the harmony more agreeable and sonorous. . . . Instruments which are combined with voices in various ways are so combined, in my opinion, for no other purpose than to ornament and embellish, indeed to season the consort. For as the first [group; i.e. instruments like a foundation] were to maintain the tenor [continuo bass-line ?] and a firm harmony, now they [instruments like an ornament] must flourish with a variety of lovely counterpoints, according to the capacity of each instrument, and make the melody pretty. . . . [The lute player must not] do nothing but play runs and divisions from beginning to end, and especially in the company of other instruments, which do the same, so that nothing is heard but a muddle and confusion . . . He must, then, use sometimes gentle strokes and repercussions; sometimes slow or quick or repeated passages; sometimes a drone; sometimes lovely competitive figures and persistent ones, repeating and bringing out the same imitations at different pitches and in different places . . . taking care judiciously not to let one impede the other, but allowing time to each . . . But everything must be done prudently: for if the instruments are alone in the consort, they must do everything, and season the consort; if they are in company, one must regard the other, giving it room and not impeding it; and if they are many, they must each await their turn.

Doni's Trattato della musica scenica, written about 1635, is a further invaluable source of first-hand information. He complains that:

the use of body instruments, as they are called (that is, instruments which produce more consonances) [cf. Agazzari's "instruments like a foundation"]

35 A. Agazzari, Del sonare sopra 'l basso (Siena, 1607), pp. 3, 8, 9.
proceeds, in addition to the causes stated, from the [composers’ habit of] sparing [themselves] the trouble of instrumental pieces written expressly. In these [instrumental pieces] the tablature of a simple Basso continuo suffices.36

[Appendix:] But this superfluity of ornamentation [by the singers] would be avoided very well by expressly writing the sinfonic [in this context, the accompaniments].37

[Text:] As for this custom of employing so many varied kinds [of instruments] to make a filling, as they say . . . all this multitude of instruments, in the manner it is used, renders so little sound that it can scarcely be heard by those nearest the stage . . . the result is, at the very most, that their sound reaches the ears of those who are in the middle of the hall. But if it is so powerful that it can reach the ends, no doubt it will excessively cover the voices (which are usually heard but little); and those who are in the foremost places will be unable to endure it.38

[At rehearsal] The pains, the disgusts, the anxieties and the griefs that the poor musicians feel in arranging together so many players and sounds in so narrow a place, would scarcely be believed. For, with much loss of time and [much] confusion, they must arrange the instruments, distribute the lamps, order the seats, erect the music stands, and tune the instruments. And God knows if, after tuning them well, they don’t often have to do the whole thing again from the beginning, because of the multiplicity of the strings and their slackening on account of [the heat of] the lamps, and as well as they can be readjusted while the others are playing. To say nothing of the trouble and time it takes to make so many copies of the tablature of the bass, and of other disorders which result from this miscellany, introduced without any ground.39

Even allowing for the exaggerations, we have here an unusually immediate and convincing description. The word “tablature” (intavolatura) in contemporary discussions of figured bass usually meant a short score of the vocal parts, or simply the written-out notes of chords. Luigi Torchi believed that the melodic instrumentalists improvised their ornamental parts from such written-out harmonizations, each following the line which best suited him, and that this was Doni’s meaning here.40 Torchi argued that (a) the division between foundation and ornamenting instruments was clearly understood, embellishments being delegated [at rehearsals] to special instruments and players; (b) rehearsals, as Doni attests, were numerous and exacting [Monteverdi’s letter of 9 January 1620 to Alessandro Striggio states that Arianna required five months of intensive rehearsal];41 (c) the composer, who was usually present at the first performance [and directed the rehearsals], indicated suitable embellishments and moderated the players in case of excess.42

Now a curious musical phrase occurs in the score of Marco da

37 Ibid., Appendix [first draft of the treatise], p. 24.
38 Ibid., p. 110.
39 Ibid., pp. 110-111.
40 Torchi, op. cit., p. 37.
41 See the letter in G. F. Malipiero, Claudio Monteverdi (Milan, 1929), pp. 185-186.
42 Torchi, op. cit., pp. 33-34.
Gagliano's *Dafne* (Florence, 1608). This same phrase is inserted three times in Apollo’s aria “Non curi la mia pianta.” The aria is in strophic variation form, and this phrase appears before each of the three strophes:43

![Ex. 2](image)

Obviously, the phrase was intended for instrumental performance. Equally obviously, it was not intended for the continuo players alone, who would not have needed this harmonic realization in the upper stave. It is possible that we have here an example of Doni’s “tablature of the bass.” It is almost inconceivable that the phrase was played as three chords, for such chordal interjections were not used to separate the sections of arias. Ritornelli, on the other hand, were used for just this purpose. If these three chords furnished a basis on which melodies were improvised, the result would have been none other than a ritornello, serving its usual function. This could be part of what Agazzari had in mind for his players of “ornament” instruments when he wrote that they “must compose new parts, and new and varied [ornamental] passages and counterpoints over the same bass.”44

A further instance which seems similar comes in the score of Luigi Rossi’s *Palazzo incantato* (1642). Prasildo's recitative in Act I, Scene 12, is interrupted by a phrase marked “Here all the instruments play”:

![Ex. 3](image)

A second and a third interruption are marked “it is played” (Exx. 4 and 5):

![Ex. 4](image)

43 *La Dafne*, pp. 49, 50, 51.
The above passages are copied exactly as they appear in Royal College of Music MS 546. As they stand, they do not make musical sense. We must again regard them as only starting points for the performers.

So long as opera remained a private and courtly affair, singers and players were in regular employment, with ample opportunity to prepare and rehearse their parts. When opera (notwithstanding its continued financial dependence on the nobility) took on a more public character, singers and players had commonly to be recruited from various cities, and from recently founded travelling companies. Less rehearsal time was therefore available. Producers tended to concentrate on finding singers for the leading roles. If the chorus and the orchestra received less attention, it was probably for reasons of administration, or of taste. Although musicologists continue to say that the orchestra was reduced for economic reasons, no evidence for this has been produced, and no such spirit of economy seems to have moved the patricians of 17th-century Venice. They spent great sums to build and maintain opera houses, to pay leading singers, to enjoy scenery and stage props of extreme luxury.

It is quite certain that the orchestras for Venetian operas in the late 17th century remained larger and more varied than has generally been supposed. When Pallavicini’s *Nerone* was produced at the theater of S. Giovanni Crisostomo in 1679, the *Mercure galant* reported that “forty instruments, of the best that could be found, played the Simphonie... a quantity of all sorts of instruments were present: recorders, trumpets, drums, viols, and violins.” The Contarini collection mentioned above (112 manuscripts of operas produced in Venice from 1639 to 1692) calls for the following instruments: harpsichord, organ, violins, viol, trumpets, flutes, bassoons and drums. And manuscripts preserved at the National-

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48 Wiel, *op. cit.* The list of instruments in Goldschmidt, *op. cit.*, p. 146, is not quite accurate, although it is drawn from Wiel’s book.
bibliothek, Vienna, show that horns, cornetts, trombones and theorbos were also used in Venetian operas.\textsuperscript{49}

The performance of Cesti’s \textit{Pomo d’oro} in Vienna, 1667, has already been mentioned. It is true that special circumstances attended it, and that on this sumptuous occasion no expenses were spared. But since Cesti began his operatic composition and maintained connections in Venice, the \textit{Pomo d’oro} must reflect in some measure current practices in Venetian opera. The score calls for strings of both violin and viol families (in all sizes), flutes, trumpets, cornetts, trombones, bassoon, harpsichord, regal organ and \textit{graviorgano} [\textit{? positive organ, like Monteverdi’s \textit{organo di legno}]}\textsuperscript{50} The instruments are designated with care, e.g., flutes, then viols and \textit{graviorgano}, then harpsichord in a pastoral scene (Act I, Scene 9); trumpets with a chorus of celebration (Prologue) and in scenes of warfare and victory (Act II, Scene 14 and Act IV, Scene 12). Act I, Scene 1, set in the Underworld, is scored for two cornetts, two trombones, and a continuo of trombone, bassoon and regal organ: a combination strikingly similar to two which are used at different points in the Underworld scene of Monteverdi’s \textit{Orfeo}.\textsuperscript{51} In Act IV, Scene 1 of the \textit{Pomo d’oro}, viols and the \textit{graviorgano} play as Ennone falls asleep; in \textit{Orfeo} Caronte falls asleep to a Sinfonia for strings and chamber organ of wood.\textsuperscript{52} These are suggestive comparisons. Were other instrumental settings associated with particular dramatic situations? Was there, in fact, a whole tradition of specific orchestration in 17th-century opera?

In sum, we have a quantity of fragmentary evidence circling round two great gaps in our knowledge: the kinds of music to which Agazzari’s account applies, and the instrumental music missing in 17th-century opera scores. Might these be partly the same gap seen from opposite sides? Might Agazzari’s players of “ornament” instruments sometimes have been reading from Doni’s “tablature of the bass”?\textsuperscript{50}

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\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{49} Goldschmidt, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 147-148.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{50} G. Adler suggests a combined organ-harpsichord for the “graviorgano” (Cesti, \textit{op. cit.}, p. ix). Although such instruments did exist and were known in Vienna, they were rare and posed special problems. An ordinary positive organ, far more common and practical, was almost certainly intended here.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{51} In Act III: “Chorus of Spirits, to the sound of a Regal Organ, [chamber] Organ of wood, five Trombones, two Bass viols, and one Double Bass Viol”; at the end of Act IV: “The Cornetts, Trombones and Regals are silent . . .”}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{52} In Act III: “This Sinfonia was played pian piano, with Violins [i.e. instruments of the violin family], an Organ of wood, and a Double Bass Viol.”}