

JEFFREY KURTZMAN

MONTEVERDI AND SACRED MUSIC
IN HIS CREMONA AND MANTUAN YEARS:
RECENT RESEARCH AND
SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

ABSTRACT

Questo articolo esamina il ruolo di Monteverdi come compositore e interprete di musica sacra e nel suo ruolo di 'maestro della chiesa' da 1602 al 1612, e recensisce pubblicazioni ed edizioni scientifiche dall'inizio del Ventunesimo secolo a oggi, sulla musica sacra cremonese e mantovana di Monteverdi. L'autore discute contributi che ritiene importanti riguardo alla nostra comprensione della attività di Monteverdi in questo settore, ed esamina pure significativi studi recenti sulle uniche musiche sacre pervenute di questo periodo, le *Sacrae cantiunculae* del 1582 e del 1610, la *Missa in illo tempore* e il *Vespro della Beata Vergine*. L'autore discute e spiega i suoi punti di divergenza con alcune di queste pubblicazioni, e ne indica altre che giudica dannose per la ricerca monterverdiana e per una loro presentazione al pubblico. Il contributo offre suggerimenti per ricerche future, e propone altresì un appello a una maggior condivisione nelle prossime ricerche, in modo da evitare sfortunate e inutili deviazioni nonché vicoli ciechi, che sono conseguenza di indagini svolte isolatamente in alcune delle pubblicazioni analizzate.

PAROLE CHIAVE Vincenzo Gonzaga, *Sacrae cantiunculae*, *Missa in illo tempore*, *Vespro della Beata Vergine*, *Duo Seraphim*, *Sonata sopra Sancta Maria*, *Orfeo*, edizioni critiche, chiesa di Sant'Andrea, cattedrale di San Pietro, basilica di Santa Barbara, chiesa della Santa Trinità, chiesa di Santa Croce, chiavi alte (chiavette), trasposizione, notazione proporzionale ternaria, mottetto, Senza, mezzo punto, tutto punto, contrapunto alla mente

SUMMARY

This article explores Monteverdi's role as a composer and performer of sacred music and as *maestro della chiesa* from 1602 to 1612, and reviews scholarly publications and scholarly editions regarding Monteverdi's Cremonese and Mantuan sacred music from the beginning of the 21st century to the present. The author discusses those that he believes are important contributions to our understanding of Monteverdi's activities in the field as well as significant recent studies regarding his sole surviving sacred music from this period, the *Sacrae cantiunculae* of 1582 and the 1610 *Missa in illo tempore* and *Vespro della Beata Vergine*. The author's points of difference with some of these publications are examined and explained, while others which the author

considers detrimental to Monteverdi research and its presentation to the public are also noted. The article includes comments on possibilities for future research as well as a call for more communication and consultation in future research to avoid the unfortunate and unnecessary detours and dead ends that result from scholarly isolation in some of the publications reviewed.

KEYWORDS Vincenzo Gonzaga, *Sacrae cantiunculae*, *Missa in illo tempore*, *Vespro della Beata Vergine*, *Duo Seraphim*, *Sonata sopra Sancta Maria*, *Orfeo*, critical editions, Church of Sant'Andrea, Cathedral of San Pietro, Basilica of Santa Barbara, Church of the Holy Trinity, Church of Santa Croce, high clefs, transposition, triplet notation, motet, *Sensa*, *mezzo punto*, *tutto punto*, *contrappunto alla mente*.



Major anniversaries are an opportune time for reassessment, to pause and think about where we stand in relation to a subject, an evaluation of new research recently produced regarding that subject, what areas of research need increased attention, and what our prospects for success in the future might be in pursuing one direction or another. The topics and recent publications on which I will comment must be limited, since they could take us into many different social, economic, political and religious domains, expanding the scope of this article unmanageably. In reality, most aspects of Mantuan life in the period 1590-1612 bore some relationship to Monteverdi and his activities. However, I shall concentrate on particular recent writings and contributions to the field of Monteverdi's sacred music in the period of his youth in Cremona and his residence in the city of the Gonzagas. Before beginning, I want to acknowledge the generous and invaluable assistance I have received with details of this paper from my Mantuan colleague, Licia Mari.

With regard to Monteverdi's Cremonese and Mantuan sacred music, we have severely limited sources. Monteverdi's earliest publications were sacred music: his *Sacrae cantiunculae tribus vocibus*, published by Antonio Gardano in Venice 1582 when he was fifteen, and his *Madrigali spirituali a quattro voci* (if one includes spiritual madrigals in the category of sacred music), published one year later by Vincenzo Sabbio in Brescia, of which only the basso part-book survives. On both title pages our young composer identifies himself as a disciple of Marc'Antonio Ingegneri. Only recently has there been any significant interest in either of these prints, in conjunction with the 2012 critical edition of both publications along with the composer's *Canzonette a tre voci* of 1584, on whose title page he again declares himself a disciple of Ingegneri. All three of these early prints were published in critical editions by Anthony Pryer in 2012 as Volume I of the *Opera Omnia* issued by the Fondazione Claudio Monteverdi of Cremona, correcting the many errors in the *Sacrae cantiunculae* edition of Gian Francesco Malipiero. Pryer speaks of a single surviving

copy of this print in Castell'Arquato, Archivio Parrocchiale,¹ but when I visited the Church of Santa Maria Assunta in Castell'Arquato many years ago, there was a second, partial copy of the Cantus (missing title and dedication, containing the first 22 pieces, but missing the last four pieces and index), a second complete, water-damaged copy of the Tenor, and a second, partial copy of the Bassus (missing title, dedication and pieces 1-9).

Pryer is able to trace some of the text sources and their liturgical functions or associations through a limited set of liturgical books. There is clearly room for further research into the sources, as Pryer himself notes, and it may be that the motet repertoire of the sixteenth century, still poorly known, may furnish earlier examples of the same or related texts. In other words, Monteverdi's sources may not necessarily have been limited to liturgical books. My one concern with this edition is the practice, imposed by the General Editor of the *Opera Omnia*, of substituting fractional mensuration signs for Monteverdi's original signs, and reducing the note values of some triple meters.² Fortunately, the latter isn't an issue in these simple pieces and the use of fractions as mensuration signs doesn't create any confusion, though I would prefer to see Monteverdi's original signs positioned at the points he placed them in the score, in part because mensuration signs have implications of tempo and a long history of usage. Of course, the presence of a facsimile of the print enables the user to check the original notation there, but I don't see any particular advantage to substituting fractions for mensuration signs.

Pryer also notes three of the *Sacrae cantiunculae* written in high clefs (G₂, C₂, C₃) with ranges a fourth higher than the other pieces, suggesting that they might «invite downward transposition».³ I would be more inclined to say «require downward transposition» unless performed on instruments. In piece #10, the highest canto note is g^{''}, not a pitch any soprano voice would have expected to have to sing in pieces of this type. Similarly, the bass is often in the upper fifth of the G octave, reaching as high as g', not a pitch to be expected of a bass voice. The tenor part is in the seventh mode, which is typically transposed downward a fifth in sacred publications of this period. The tenor of piece #16, *Angelus ad pastores ait*, is in the sixth mode; the cantus reaches as high as f^{''}, an unlikely pitch to expect sopranos to sing in this style, while the bass extends as high as g', another excessive pitch for the bass voice. When sixth mode pieces are transposed it is most often by a third or a fourth, though some pieces have rubrics calling for transposition down a fifth. *Surgens Jesus*, piece #21, is in the transposed second mode. The second mode in this period is regularly notated a fourth higher with a one-flat signature. The soprano again strikes an f^{''} and the bassus g'. When transposed, the second mode is normally shifted down a fourth, returning it to the mode's original finalis of D.

¹ MONTEVERDI, *Sacrae cantiunculae*, ed. Pryer, p. 21.

² My objections to the handling of proportions in the Cremona *Opera Omnia* are explained in KURTZMAN, *Collected Works of Claudio Monteverdi* 2013. This essay is also published, with a few corrections, in KURTZMAN, *Collected Works of Claudio Monteverdi* 2015, pp. 69-96.

³ MONTEVERDI, *Sacrae cantiunculae*, ed. Pryer, p. 82.

With Monteverdi's employment at the Gonzaga court in Mantua in 1590 or 1591, we have three principal facets of his role in sacred music to consider: (1) the sacred music he composed there that doesn't survive, (2) his responsibilities from late 1601 or early 1602 not only as *maestro della camera* but also *della chiesa*, and (3) his sole surviving Mantuan sacred music, the Mass and Vespers of the Blessed Virgin published in 1610, which have been the locus of the vast majority of scholarship on Monteverdi's Mantuan sacred music and the subject of a very large number of recordings, especially of the Vespers.

The first association of Monteverdi's name with sacred music is during Duke Vincenzo's expedition to Hungary in support of imperial forces fighting the Turks in 1595. A mass in Sant'Andrea preceded the expedition's departure, likely under the direction of the *maestro di cappella* Giaches de Wert, which probably involved Monteverdi in some capacity as one of the duke's musicians. On the expedition itself, Monteverdi was listed as *maestro di cappella* for an ensemble that said mass four or five times per day, probably in plainchant, and sang Vespers accompanied by an organ on major feast days, likely in some form of polyphony, since the expedition also included four or five singers.⁴ Monteverdi also traveled with the duke on a trip to Spa in Flanders in the summer of 1599, and although we have no accounts of music on this trip, his role was again very probably as *maestro di cappella* for both secular and sacred music.⁵

On the basis of such activities of which we know so little, it is nevertheless unsurprising what we read in Monteverdi's first surviving letter, dated 28 November, 1601, addressed to Duke Vincenzo who was again at the head of his army in Kanizsa, Hungary in support of imperial forces fighting yet another campaign against the Turks. In this letter, Monteverdi requests, apparently for the fourth time since 1592, the position of *maestro de la camera e de la chiesa* upon the death of its former holder, Benedetto Pallavicino.⁶ Since the position of *maestro di cappella* at the ducal church of Santa Barbara was already occupied by Giovanni Giacomo Gastoldi and would be for another seven years, that position was obviously not what was meant by *maestro de la chiesa*.

Apart from the daily services at Santa Barbara, the duke would have participated in small private services in one of the small chapels in the palace interior, especially in the Capella del Rosario. Connecting to this chapel was the very small (*picciola*) church of Santa Croce with an oratorio above the principal chapel. Whether Monteverdi would have been involved here very often is

⁴ FABBRI, *Monteverdi*, p. 45; FABBRI, *Monteverdi*, trans. Carter, pp. 30-31. The expedition is described in ERRANTE, «*Forse che sì, forse che no*», pp. 29-34. Three musicians who accompanied Monteverdi on the trip are mentioned in CANAL, *Della Musica in Mantova*, pp. 89 and 92. Polyphony could have been in *falsobordone*, *contrappunto alla mente* against the psalm tone, or *canto figurato*. Psalm, hymn and Magnificat verses could have been sung *alternatim* or *integrale*. Antiphons could have been sung in plainchant or played on the organ unless Monteverdi provided one or more polyphonic motets (performed vocally or possibly with a single voice and organ).

⁵ PARISI, *The Brussels-Mantua Connection*.

⁶ MONTEVERDI, *Lettere*, ed. Lax, p. 2; STEVENS, *The Letters of Claudio Monteverdi*, p. 30.

unlikely, except on rare occasions, for the church was only large enough for a small contingent of monks or professional singers with a few people in attendance. Indeed, the very reason Guglielmo Gonzaga had given for building Santa Barbara (1562-72), the third version of which was the largest palatine basilica in Europe, was that Santa Croce was much too small for the kind of service music he and his consort Eleonora wanted to hear.⁷ I'll return to Santa Croce later in this essay.

But what did Monteverdi's role in Gonzaga sacred music include, other than directing and probably composing music for Vincenzo's ensemble when travelling? In fact, there is mounting evidence that the Gonzaga's sponsored festive celebrations on some major feast days and for special events in San Pietro, the cathedral of Mantua, or in Leon Battista Alberti's Church of Sant'Andrea, as well as in other churches of the city. The essay by Licia Mari in the present volume summarizes Monteverdi's *maestro della chiesa* role as «the premier musician in town, the only one who could direct solemn ceremonies under the Duke's aegis. At the same time, he was left without any fixed ecclesiastical role, and was linked directly to the Duke, subject to his demands, needs and whims».⁸ Many of these solemn ceremonies took place in Sant'Andrea. The afore-mentioned account of Vincenzo's travels to Hungary in 1595 tells of the mass in Sant'Andrea prior to the expedition's departure, as does the account of Vincenzo's second expedition in 1597.

The *Diario di Santa Barbara 1572-1602* describes the visiting cardinals Montaldo and Monte attending mass in Sant'Andrea on June 21, 1598, leaving Santa Barbara empty.⁹ On May 24, 1608, at a service in Sant'Andrea, Duke Vincenzo established a new Order of the Redeemer with Prince Francesco as its first member as part of the wedding celebrations between Francesco and Margharita of Savoy.¹⁰ On March 26, 1611, Monteverdi wrote to prince Francesco Gonzaga at Casale Monferrato, sending him a *Dixit Dominus* and two motets and promising that once Holy Week was over, he would send a couple of madrigals.¹¹ During Holy Week Monteverdi would obviously have been quite busy with music for the Triduo, including the Forty Hours Devotion, as

⁷ DONESMONDI, *Dell'istoria ecclesiastica*, vol. II, p. 201: «Sì per sua devozione, come anche per comodo della Serenissima Eleonora Arciduchessa d'Austria sua consorte, et per gusto ch'ambidue havevano d'assistere ogni giorno alle hore divine, per ragion di musica cantate (al che non bastava la picciola chiesa di Santa Croce) diede principio quest'anno medesimo [1562] alla sontuosa fabrica del nobilissimo tempio di Santa Barbara ...». [Duke Guglielmo], «both because of his devotion and also for the convenience of the most Serene Eleonora, Archduchess of Austria, his consort, and for the desire that both had to attend the divine hours every day, because of the sung music (for which the small church of Santa Croce was insufficient), he initiated in this same year [1562] the sumptuous fabrication of the most noble temple of Santa Barbara».

⁸ MARI, *The Music of Claudio Monteverdi*, p. 120.

⁹ MARI, *Il Diario di Santa Barbara*, p. 499.

¹⁰ FENLON, *The Monteverdi Vespers*.

¹¹ MONTEVERDI, *Lettere*, ed. Lax, pp. 12-13; STEVENS, *The Letters of Claudio Monteverdi*, pp. 77-78.

well as Easter Sunday (April 3rd in 1611). The Forty Hours Devotion was typically held at Sant'Andrea, and the church's most precious relic, a drop of Christ's blood, would also have made it the likely venue for some of the public services sponsored by the duke. Monteverdi would have been annually responsible for the music of Holy Week, a substantial body of his sacred compositions we shall never know.

We learn from a letter by a servant of Vincenzo's that emerged on the Herla project website, that on Ascension Day of the same year (May 6) Monteverdi composed and presumably directed a Vespers service in Sant'Andrea as part of the Mantuan Feast of the *Sensa* (short for Ascension Day), a feast better known to scholars for its prominence in Venice.¹² Not only does this letter inform us of a specific sacred service in which Monteverdi played a major role, with a description of the principal attendees and the special seating arrangements constructed in the church, the fact that it formed part of the Mantuan *Sensa* implies much more. The *Sensa* was a major annual civic and religious celebration of several days, complete with a fair, and according to the research of Licia Mari, the duke and the court celebrated the feast of the Ascension annually in Sant'Andrea, which once again included the exposition of the church's most famous relic, Christ's blood. As *maestro della chiesa*, Monteverdi would certainly have been heavily involved in all such services, likely composing new music for mass and/or vespers, and organizing, rehearsing and directing the duke's *cappella* and any adjunct musicians who may have been co-opted or hired for the service. A year later one of the funeral celebrations for Vincenzo organized by his son Francesco on the octave of the Ascension (June 7, 1612) took place in Sant'Andrea.¹³

In addition to the activities of the duke and his musicians in Sant'Andrea, there were clearly exchanges of musicians between the duke's *cappella* and musicians attached to the cathedral of San Pietro, as well as Santa Barbara.¹⁴ According to Iain Fenlon, after the foundation of Santa Barbara, «important state and family occasions continued to be celebrated at the cathedral» and that «there seems to have been an atmosphere of co-operation between the two institutions».¹⁵ Monteverdi may have played a role in performances involving the duke's *cappella* in San Pietro before 1602, and may well have assumed responsibility for them after his appointment as *maestro della chiesa*, even though San Pietro had its own *maestro di cappella*. It is likely that when the duke and his family celebrated feasts and events in San Pietro, that he brought his own *cappella* with him, perhaps supplemented by resident musicians of San Pietro.

¹² KURTZMAN – MARI, *A Monteverdi Vespers in 1611*.

¹³ MARI, *The Music of Claudio Monteverdi*, pp. 122-125.

¹⁴ FENLON, *Music and Patronage*, vol. I, p. 108.

¹⁵ FENLON, *Music and Patronage*, vol. I, pp. 24 and 105-106. Fenlon cites a «characteristic» letter indicating the temporary exchange of organists between the cathedral and the *cappella* of Duke Guglielmo (note 37). See also the account in TAGMANN, *Archivalische Studien*, p. 41.

Apart from Sant'Andrea and San Pietro, there are recorded visits of the duke to other churches in the city; on multiple occasions he visited the Jesuit Church of the Holy Trinity, which is hardly surprising given the Gonzagas' reverence for Santa Barbara, who was martyred by her father for her own devotion to the Trinity. The earliest record we have of a visit to the Jesuit Church was on the feast of the Holy Trinity on June 17, 1601.¹⁶ Given the allegiance of the Gonzagas to Santa Barbara and the Trinity, it is probable that the duke and his family worshipped at the church on the feast of the Holy Trinity on multiple occasions, if not annually. Any music performed at these services would have been provided by Monteverdi in his role as *maestro della chiesa*. In 1605 there were at least two ducal visits to the Church of the Holy Trinity, one to install Peter Paul Rubens's large painting of the Gonzagas worshipping the Trinity (now housed in the ducal palace), an obvious occasion for Monteverdi's trinitarian motet *Duo Seraphim*, and the other for the beatification of Luigi Gonzaga as part of the process of his eventually becoming a saint.¹⁷ *Duo Seraphim*, in fact, would have been suitable for any visit to the Church of the Trinity, and could have been performed there more than once.

The *Diario di Santa Barbara* mentions a number of processions to various churches in the city in which the duke and his family took part, as well as more private visits by the duke to other Mantuan churches, but before Monteverdi became *maestro della camera e della chiesa* (the diary's *terminus ad quem* is 1602). Nevertheless, as one of the duke's musicians, Monteverdi would likely have played a role in any music sponsored by Vincenzo during such events and visits. Similar processions and visits, of course, would have continued after Monteverdi was given responsibility for the duke's sacred music, and he would have been responsible for whatever motets, polyphonic masses, psalms or other liturgical music was performed at churches, monasteries and other stations on such occasions.¹⁸

With regard to the palace church of Santa Barbara itself we have at this point in time no documentary information regarding any activity there by Monteverdi. Giovanni Gastoldi was the *maestro di cappella* from 1588 to January 1609, succeeded temporarily by Antonio Taroni and for a longer term by Stefano Nascimbene.¹⁹ The only evidence of Monteverdi in association with Santa Barbara is his use of the Santa Barbara reformed chant in the hymn *Ave maris stella* of the 1610 Vespers.²⁰ Santa Barbara was not just the palace church, but was regularly open to the public as well, which, according to the Santa Barbara diary mentioned above, came in large numbers on major feast

¹⁶ MARI, *Il Diario di Santa Barbara*, p. 495, n. 103. The church's construction had only begun in 1587.

¹⁷ BOWERS, *Monteverdi at Mantua*, p. 62.

¹⁸ Accounts of processions and the duke's visits to other churches prior to Monteverdi's becoming «maestro della chiesa» are quoted in MARI, *Il Diario di Santa Barbara*, pp. 476, 489, 490, 497, 499, 500.

¹⁹ MARI, *Quale influsso sui musicisti di uno «stile»*, pp. 170-171.

²⁰ BESUTTI, «*Ave maris stella*».

days.²¹ The duke and court were typically in Santa Barbara on Christmas, Easter, and All Saints' Day, and while the music for those occasions may have been provided by the church's *maestro di cappella*, the aforementioned Giovanni Gastoldi, we can't prove a negative in the absence of documentation, and Monteverdi may well have participated in some capacity or another in exceptional services – those outside the regular schedule of duties of the *maestro* and singers, such as the *Te Deum* celebrating duke Francesco's coronation, celebrations of special events, or funeral observances, such as those for Giaches de Wert.²²

In sum, despite the pre-eminence of Santa Barbara as the ducal chapel, other churches in the city were the site of many festal celebrations either sponsored by the duke or in which he and his family participated, and Sant'Andrea seems to have been the locus of especially important extraordinary services as well as the annual celebrations of Holy Week and the feast of the *Sensa*. I would suggest that a major part of Monteverdi's role as *maestro della chiesa* was composing and directing music for such events in Sant'Andrea, San Pietro and other external churches and possibly even for special events in Santa Barbara. The amount of sacred music he would have had to compose would certainly have justified Giulio Cesare's remark in the *Dichiarazione* of 1607 that his brother hadn't had time to respond to his critic Giovanni Maria Artusi «because of his responsibility for both church and chamber music».²³

What we know at this time about major services performed at Sant'Andrea and other churches outside the palace under the sponsorship of the duke comes from a small number of documents. Can we hope to learn more through future research in various Mantuan archives? It would appear that the number of documents we can expect to emerge, based on the quantity of new documents unearthed in the past 20 years, is quite small. But even a single document can reveal important information not only about a specific event, but imply a much broader context, such as the letter describing Vespers by Monteverdi on Ascension Day in 1611 discussed above. A single document mentioning a single event can open the door to a considerably wider perspective on Monteverdi's responsibilities and potential activity in Mantua in the realm of sacred music.

Roger Bowers, in a chapter in *The Monteverdi Companion*, and a much more extensive article in «Music & Letters», has argued that the scene of much of Monteverdi's sacred music at the Gonzaga court was the palace Church of Santa Croce, which he insists was a space facing on the Piazza Sordello, larger than the Vatican's Sistine Chapel and the scene of «grand liturgical occasions

²¹ MARI, *Il Diario di Santa Barbara*, pp. 478-479 and 487.

²² See FENLON, *Music and Patronage*, vol. I, p. 104 regarding ducal musicians performing in Santa Barbara. The funeral of de Wert is described in MARI, *Il Diario di Santa Barbara*, p. 495. The coronation of Duke Francesco is described in a letter of June 15, 1612; see PARISI, *Ducal Patronage*, pp. 268-269.

²³ «Non solo per il carico de la musica tanto da chiesa quanto da camera che tiene» (MONTEVERDI, *Lettere, dediche e prefazioni*, pp. 395).

known to have been conducted within S. Croce church».²⁴ Bowers shows no sign of ever having seen the actual remnant of the tiny (*picciola*) Church of Santa Croce that can still be visited today. He dismisses the work of the architectural historian Stefano L'Occaso, who has published extensively about the ducal palace and the Church of Santa Croce²⁵ because it doesn't correspond to his central thesis based on his dubious reading of an ecclesiastical visitation report. Other contradictory documents are also described as irrelevant. Bowers's claim about Santa Croce as well as many other assertions in these two publications are a distressing setback for Monteverdi research, for his theses are not only poorly argued, he has distorted the sources and ignored those that contradict his arguments. The article is heavily footnoted, giving the appearance of scholarly rigor, but the author's methodology does not in my view meet the minimal standards for musicological research. I'm not speaking about the kinds of mistakes we all make in our scholarship and writing, such as some of my own that I note and correct in this essay, but his fundamental approach, which appears to ignore and misconstrue evidence in order to reach an *a priori* conclusion. Licia Mari and I demonstrated the fallacy of the Santa Croce thesis in a paper delivered at the Sixteenth International Conference on Baroque Music at the Mozarteum in Salzburg in July, 2014 and are preparing a much more detailed article refuting Bowers's arguments, claims, and methodology. This is an onerous, thankless, and time-consuming task, but just as in the sciences, when someone publishes in a major journal results based on flawed research and/or flawed analysis of data, it is the responsibility of others to make this known to the field so that such research and analysis aren't accepted into the general canon of the profession, distorting the work of other researchers who may be unaware of the problems with the author's methods and conclusions.

Now I turn to the only body of Monteverdi's sacred music for Mantua that survives, the Mass and Vespers of 1610. Much has been written about this print and its music since John Whenham and I²⁶ published our books on the Vespers. Some of this writing has advanced our understanding, but some of it is misguided and inaccurate, as I've already indicated with regard to Bowers and will discuss in connection with other publications below. There are also corrections to be made in details of my own book. In addition to expository writing on the 1610 print, new critical/performing editions have also expanded the means of access to both the Mass and the Vespers for performers.

The first item in the 1610 print, the six-voice *Missa in illo tempore*, is highly unusual in the mass repertoire of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries because of the rigor of its imitative textures based on ten motives from a more-than-75-year-old motet by Nicolas Gombert. Several detailed analyses

²⁴ BOWERS, *Monteverdi at Mantua*, pp. 55; BOWERS, *Claudio Monteverdi and Sacred Music*.

²⁵ BOWERS, *Claudio Monteverdi and Sacred Music*, p. 335, n. 21.

²⁶ WHENHAM, *Monteverdi Vespers*; KURTZMAN, *The Monteverdi Vespers of 1610: Music, Context, Performance*.

of the mass's unusual structure have been published,²⁷ yet there are aspects of the work that can bear comparison with north Italian masses of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-centuries. Rodobaldo Tibaldi's study of Ingegneri's masses suggests some structural similarities that point toward further exploration,²⁸ and Tony Newcomb has related Monteverdi's mass to one by Costanzo Porta.²⁹ Contrasts between Monteverdi's mass and the masses of Palestrina and Soriano have also been drawn by Jerome Roche.³⁰ Future research should aim to establish a broader contextual basis for understanding the compositional style, techniques and structure of the *Missa in illo tempore* in relation to both the sacred repertoire of other Mantuan court composers as well as the much wider circles of northern and central Italian and Roman sacred music through the middle of the second decade of the century. I say, «through the middle of the second decade» because many works, unlike the *Missa in illo tempore*, were only published several years or more after their actual composition. Thus, a mass, or other music, published in 1615 might well date from several years before 1610 and been available to Monteverdi in manuscript form.

In recent years, editions of the *Missa in illo tempore* and *Vespro della Beata Vergine* have appeared on the internet. Since these make no pretense at being critical editions, I will not comment on them here, though that is not to say that such editions are necessarily of poor quality or erroneous. Anyone wishing to perform any of this music from one of these sources would be advised to compare it with any of the available critical editions discussed below.

Several new critical editions of the Mass and the Vespers have been published in the past several years. The complete 1610 print constitutes volume 5 of the *Opera Omnia* of the *Fondazione Claudio Monteverdi*, edited by Antonio Delfino, under the general editorship of Raffaello Monterosso.³¹ The score is accompanied by an extensive introduction, full critical notes, a bibliography, a discography, the texts of all pieces and a complete facsimile of the 1610 Ricciardo Amadino print from one of the two exemplars (the other lacking the Bassus Generalis) at the Archivio del Capitolo della Cattedrale in Brescia.

To produce the facsimile of a complete print, Delfino had to reorder the part-books of the two copies that had been organized differently when I saw them many years earlier in their temporary storage at the Church of San Giuseppe in Brescia. His introduction examines several of the surviving copies closely (though overlooking the Altus at the Biblioteca Doria Pamphilj, given to Pope Paul V, which has handwritten corrections of several printing errors). Delfino, on the basis of the Capella Sistina manuscript of the *Missa in illo*

²⁷ See BORIN, *Relazioni motiviche*; FABBRI, *Monteverdi*, pp. 154-160; FABBRI, *Monteverdi*, trans. Carter, pp. 109-112; HUST, *Untersuchungen zu Claudio Monteverdis Messkompositionen*; KURTZMAN, *A Critical Commentary*; KURTZMAN, *Studies* I.

²⁸ TIBALDI, *Strutture compositive*.

²⁹ NEWCOMB, *A New Context*.

³⁰ ROCHE, *Monteverdi and the «prima prattica»*.

³¹ MONTEVERDI, *Missa da Capella a sei. Vespro della Beata Vergine*, ed. Delfino.

tempore and the edition published by Phalèse in 1612, both of which lack the Bassus Generalis part, assumes that they represent in their purely vocal sonority «a matter of principle» («una questione di principio»). Certainly, the Cappella Sistina, as a matter of tradition, sang without instrumental accompaniment of any kind. But the «unkown» reason the Phalèse edition, curated by Orazio Vecchi, was published without the Bassus Generalis was that the basso continuo was slower to make its way in northern Europe than in Italy, and Phalèse's first surviving publication with a basso continuo was not until 1613.³² Although Delfino's Introduction mentions the Brescian manuscript partitura of the mass, which transposes the work from its high clefs down a fourth, he doesn't comment on the role of high clefs in either the Mass or *Lauda Jerusalem* and the two *Magnificats* of the Vespers, and his edition leaves the Mass and the other three works at their originally notated levels. The reader would not know from the Introduction and edition that transposition is an issue to be considered.

The edition includes a realization of the Bassus Generalis part conceived for the organ in all of the pieces, though the use of other instruments, especially in the few-voiced motets, is, as Delfino notes, also possible. The thoroughgoing and insightful discussion of the realization of the Bassus Generalis in all its variety throughout the collection is one of the highlights of the Introduction. Similarly, there is a detailed discussion of the various rhythmic levels employed by Monteverdi in the Mass and the Vespers, and the different *tactus* that are appropriate to apply. Included in this discussion is the question of proportions, the inconsistencies in Monteverdi's notation of triple mensurations, and the differing interpretations the performer must ponder in order to make musical sense of the relationship between the notation in duple time and triple time. Such considerations involve the relative speed of passages in triple time rather than a rigid adherence to the mathematical relationship implied by the numbers constituting the mensuration signs themselves.

The one interpretation of Delfino's with which I disagree is the central section of the *Sonata sopra Sancta Maria*, which the editor refers to as *hemiola prolationis*, where notes that appear to be semiminims under the mensuration C are grouped in triplets by the numeral $\mathfrak{3}$ (see Figure 1). That these are actually colored (blackened) minims, rather than semiminims, is confirmed by colored semibreve-minim combinations in the trombones and semibreve and minim rests, which cannot be blackened (see Figure 2). Such notations caused considerable confusion among contemporary theorists.³³

³² GIACOMO MORO, *Concerti ecclesiastici, 1.2.3. et 4. Vocum cum basso continuo ad organum*, Pierre Phalèse, Antwerp 1613.

³³ WOLF, *Notation und Aufführungspraxis*, Vol. I, pp. 120, 128-130.



Figure 1. Monteverdi, *Vespro della Beata Vergine: Sonata sopra Sancta Maria* (Bassus generalis, excerpt with triplets)



Figure 2. Monteverdi, *Vespro della Beata Vergine: Sonata sopra Sancta Maria* (Bassus Trombone, excerpt with triplets)

Delfino interprets this colored notation as three minims in each C *tactus*, creating a 3:2 proportional relationship. But everywhere else in the *Sonata* Monteverdi writes this same proportion as $\frac{3}{2}$. What's the purpose of the radically different C notation with colored minim triplets in the central section if it carries no different meaning? The $\frac{3}{2}$ notation is a *sesquialtera* in which the even *tactus* of C becomes the uneven *tactus* under $\frac{3}{2}$. But the C with colored minim triplets suggests continuation of the same even *tactus* as elsewhere under C , whereby each triplet grouping constitutes half the *tactus*. As already

noted, coloration of the minims makes them indistinguishable from semiminims. The notation also results in original semiminims appearing as *cromae*, or quavers (eighth notes). But since the original semiminims were already black, they can only be accommodated to the new notation, not by blackening, but by reducing the note values one level to *cromae*. Colored minims might still be thought of, as Delfino does, as minims, but ‘colored’ semiminims resulting in *cromae* cannot be understood as anything other than a 2:1 diminution of note values. Thus, the notation of this central section is visually a 2:1 diminution. Maintaining the same *tactus* in this passage as elsewhere in the *Sonata*, in fact, confirms the notation as a diminution. Corroborating Monteverdi’s use of this notation to indicate diminution is the Cantus part-book, which contains in score both the Cantus part and the Bassus Generalis bass line (see Figure 3).

The image shows a page of a musical score. At the top, there is a treble clef and a common time signature (C). A '3' with a vertical line through it indicates a triplet. Below this, there are several staves. The first staff has a vocal line with the word 'bis' written below it. The second staff has a vocal line with the words 'sancta Maria' written below it. The third staff has a vocal line with the words 'a O ra' written below it. The fourth staff has a vocal line with the words 'pro no bis' written below it. The fifth staff is a Bassus Generalis line with a triplet of eighth notes. At the bottom of the page, it says 'Messa & Salmi di Claudio Monteverde' and a common time signature (C).

Figure 3. Monteverdi, *Vespro della Beata Vergine: Sonata sopra Sancta Maria* (Cantus, excerpt with triplets)

The colored minims in the Bassus Generalis part, consisting of continuous motion without colored semibreves or rests, would be indistinguishable to the singer from semiminims. A singer reading from this part would naturally have

identified the even *tactus* of two pairs of triplet semiminims under C with the even *tactus* of four semiminims under C occurring just four *tactus* earlier, as well as with the uneven *tactus* of the immediately preceding and following $\frac{3}{2}$. The result, again, is a 2:1 diminution, apparent in the vocal part as well, which only in this passage employs notes generally twice as long as other reiterations of the *cantus firmus*. The singer reacting to the colored triplets as semiminims would automatically diminish the note values in the Cantus part to bring them in line with the bass and the other reiterations, allowing the performers to maintain throughout the *Sonata* the same *tactus* pace, at times even, at times uneven.³⁴

In *Orfeo* Monteverdi used the same colored triplet notation in the ritornello of the canzonetta *Vi ricorda o boschi ombrosi?* (see Figure 4).³⁵ In the verse we find a colored semibreve-minim combination in the basso continuo part (see Figure 5). That the notation also uses single-flagged and double-flagged notes (quavers and semiquavers, or eighths and sixteenths) as the next subdivisions of colored minims, which appear as semiminims, can only be read in terms of a notation of diminution, as in the *Sonata sopra Sancta Maria*.³⁶

³⁴ There is some variation in the note values of the *cantus firmus* throughout the *Sonata*, in part stemming from variation, in part from differences between iterations in C and those in $\frac{3}{2}$. Only the penultimate version of the *cantus firmus*, in $\frac{3}{2}$, employs some notes as long as those in the central section with its instrumental triplets under C .

³⁵ In the 1615 second edition of *Orfeo*, the top *viola da braccio* part is notated in the G2 treble clef instead of the 1609 edition's C1 clef.

³⁶ Some theorists categorize this type of notation as *sextupla* or $\frac{1}{6}$ in diminution. See PRAETORIUS, *Syntagmatis musici ... tomus secundus*, pp. 73-77, where the author describes precisely Monteverdi's notation under the heading «Sextupla, seu Tacta Trochaico Diminuto». Engl. trans. in PRAETORIUS, *Syntagma Musicum III*, trans. Kite-Powell, pp. 86-90. Giovanni Battista Buonamente in 1627 also indicates a notation of semiminims in triplets, each group of which occupies a half-*tactus* and cites a practical example with a $\frac{1}{6}$ mensuration. See WOLF, *Notation und Aufführungspraxis*, Vol. I, p. 94, n. 399. Wolf cites this as an example of the identity of triplets and a $\frac{1}{6}$ mensuration; later (pp. 121-122) he insists that Monteverdi's notation in the *Sonata* cannot mean a quickening of the beat because of the white notation of the Cantus part. But, as described above, Monteverdi's notation of triplets under C does allow for maintaining the same *tactus* as elsewhere in the *Sonata*, but results in doubly faster *spacing* of the individual notes, denoting the diminution of the long notes in the Cantus. Monteverdi does use a $\frac{1}{6}$ notation in the ritornello of the balletto *Lasciate i monti* in Act I of *Orfeo* (pp. 11 & 16 in both the 1609 and 1615 editions) following after C and a $\frac{3}{2}$ *sesquialtera*. In this instance, there is no indication of colored notes (white minims are present and the *cromae* are not diminished semiminims). Here a tempo proportion of six semiminims under $\frac{1}{6}$ = three minims under $\frac{3}{2}$ is both feasible and logical, though a strictly proportional relationship is by no means required in performance. In Act II, the ritornello for *Su quel'herbosa sponda* (pp. 28-29) is notated in colored semibreves and minims, as well as quavers, following the brief *arioso* in C . The colored notation is clearly to notate hemiolas as well as alternating trochaic and iambic rhythms, which continue into the following duet, *In questo prato*. The typesetters of both editions were obviously confused about the mensuration of the ritornello. In the 1609 edition the top part is in C and the two lower parts in C $\frac{3}{2}$, while the three parts in the 1615 edition are, in descending sequence, in C , in C $\frac{3}{2}$, and in $\frac{3}{2}$. But the mensuration signs are present merely because the parts performing at that point have changed; the rhythmic organization is determined by the colored notation. Because

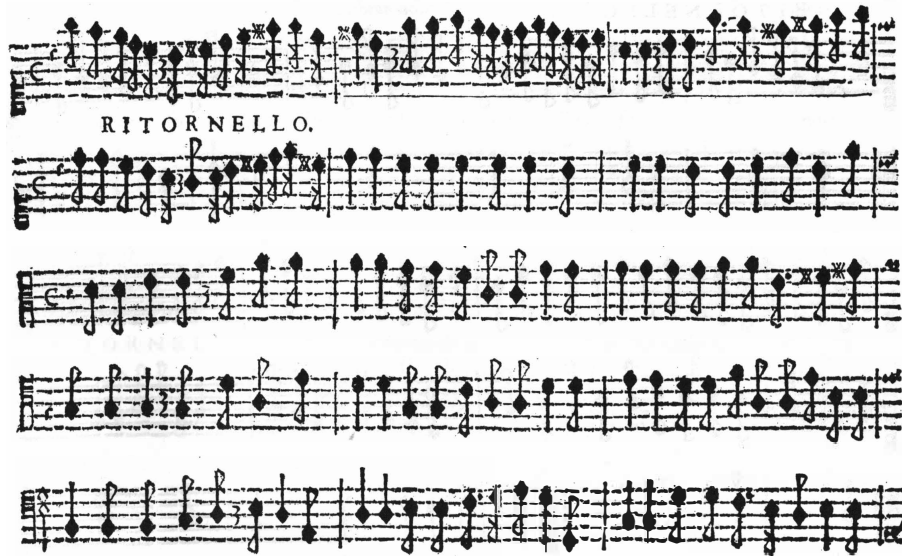


Figure 4. Monteverdi, *L'Orfeo*: *Vi ricorda o boschi ombrosi?* (Ritornello)

ORFEO. ATTO SECONDO. 33

Vi ricorda o bosch'ombrosi Vi ricorda o bosch'ombrosi Demici lugh'aspri torméti Quàdo i fassiai miei la-
menti Rispondean fatti pie tofi Vi ricorda o boschi ombrosi Vi ricor da o boschi ombrosi

Figure 5. Monteverdi, *L'Orfeo*: *Vi ricorda o boschi ombrosi?* (Verse)

It makes no sense to me for Monteverdi to have employed this unique notation in the middle of the *Sonata* to produce colored triplet units equivalent

the minims appear as semiminims, and quavers (eighth notes) are utilized as well, the ritornello and subsequent duet have the appearance of diminution, and a sensible relationship between the *arioso* and the colored notation is one minim under c in the *arioso* = three colored minims in the ritornello and duet. Thus, the colored notation is indeed a diminution, wherein the blackened minim actually does function rhythmically as a semiminim, with three such semiminims under c $\frac{3}{2}$ proportionally equivalent to two semiminims under c (though a precise tempo proportion is not required). Thus, in *Orfeo*, Monteverdi's colored notation does indicate diminution, but the $\frac{3}{2}$ mensuration does not.

to void triplet minims, which could more easily have been notated in the same minim note values under the same $\frac{3}{2}$ as the preceding and following passages without requiring a change of meter. The result would have been, as it is in Delfino's edition, a pacing identical to both the preceding and following passages rather than anything different (see Figures 6 and 7).

I am also in disagreement with another notational aspect of Delfino's edition, which was not his choice (though he may have agreed with it), but rather an editorial criterion established by the General Editor of the series, Raffaello Monterosso. While the *Opera Omnia* transcribes the notes in duple meter as *integer valor*, note values in the various triple meters are often (though not always) reduced and placed under modern numerical mensurations, sometimes with triplet or duplet indications in a manner that can become very confusing, both in themselves and in their relationship to surrounding duple meters.³⁷ In my view critical editions of music of this period should always maintain the original note values and mensuration signs. Explanations of their meaning, which are often flexible or ambiguous, can be provided in performing or critical notes, rather than trying to specify them in an inflexible modernized notation.

In 2010 Wiener Edition Alter Musik published another critical/performing edition of both the *Missa a 6 In illo tempore* and the *Vespro della Beata Vergine*.³⁸ The edition has a brief introduction, which mostly refers the reader to various articles and books dealing with the Vespers and the issues surrounding its performance and function in the liturgy. The score is as much a diplomatic transcription as is feasible for modern performers. *Lauda Jerusalem* and the two *Magnificats* are not transposed, though the issue of transposition is mentioned in the introduction, nor is there a continuo realization beyond reproducing what is found in the Bassus Generalis part-book. The editors favor a small ensemble or one-on-a-part performance and note the absence of any indication of instrumental doubling other than in *Domine ad adiuvandum* and the *Magnificat a 7*, and, curiously, *Dixit Dominus* (though they ignore contemporaneous practices of *ad libitum* use of instruments). The editors' interpretation of the colored triplet notation at the center of the *Sonata sopra Sancta Maria* is the same as Delfino's, my disagreement with which I've already explained in detail.

³⁷ Delfino provides a chart of his meter signatures and transcription values for all triple meter passages in the 1610 print on p. 34 of his *Introduction*.

³⁸ MONTEVERDI, *Missa da Capella a 6 In illo tempore. Vespro della Beata Vergine*, ed. Hofstötter – Rainer. I am not personally offended by the misspelling in the Introduction of my last name (with double nn at the end – it's not the first time this has happened), but it will make it more difficult for unwary users to locate the citations to my relevant publications named in the edition's footnotes or others not named.

Figure 6. Monteverdi, *Vespro della Beata Vergine*, ed. Delfino (mm. 128-131; triplet beginning)

Figure 7. Monteverdi, *Vespro della Beata Vergine*, ed. Delfino (mm. 152-155; triplet conclusion)

A new critical/performing edition of just the *Missa in illo tempore* was published by UT Orpheus in 2012.³⁹ The editor's introduction notes the basic historical facts regarding the mass, offers analytical commentary on several passages and a few remarks on contemporary performance practice. Although Fontana notes the transposition significance of the high clefs and mentions the Lorenzo Tonelli manuscript partitura in Brescia that transposes the entire mass down a fourth, as well as the same transposition of the *Agnus Dei* in the late eighteenth-century treatise of Giambattista Martini, the score itself is notated, like most other editions of which I am aware, including my own,⁴⁰ at the original pitch level complete with its high clefs.⁴¹ Fontana also cites the performing pitch of the early seventeenth-century as «approximately a half-step higher» than a' = 440 Hz as a further argument for transposition (see my commentary on early seventeenth-century pitch below). The critical notes take into account every surviving copy, whether in print or manuscript, whether complete or incomplete.

Two additional critical /performing editions of the *Vespro della Beata Vergine* appeared in 2013, one edited by Hendrick Schulze and a group of graduate students at North Texas State University,⁴² and the other by Uwe Wolf.⁴³ It is not my purpose to write a detailed review of these editions, which, on the whole are very fine. Rather I will confine myself to a few comments on their content and some disagreements I have with their introductions. The Schulze edition is remarkable in the constituency of its editors. To the best of my knowledge, this is the first critical edition produced by a graduate seminar to be issued by a major publisher, and Bärenreiter is to be commended for undertaking to publish their work. The Bärenreiter edition, which includes a continuo realization and occasional editorial continuo figures, places transposed versions of the psalm *Lauda Jerusalem* and the two *Magnificats* in the sequence of pieces and the original high-clef versions in an appendix at the end. The edition is also available on request as a vocal score (without the high-

³⁹ MONTEVERDI, *Missa in Illo Tempore for 6 Voices*, ed. Fontana.

⁴⁰ MONTEVERDI, *Missa in illo tempore*, ed. Kurtzman.

⁴¹ Only recently, scores of vocal music produced by the late Michael Proctor (MONTEVERDI, *Missa Sanctissimae Virgini*, ed. Proctor) have been made available for sale on the website edition-mp.com. Available are not only an edition at original pitch (indicated as «only suitable for instruments»), but also a version transposed down a fourth («for male voices») and another transposed down a third (in «A»).

⁴² MONTEVERDI, *Vespro della Beata Vergine*, ed. Schulze et al.

⁴³ MONTEVERDI, *Vespro della Beata Vergine*, ed. Wolf. Both editions are reviewed in «Early Music Review», the house organ of Clifford Bartlett's «King's Music»: the Schulze edition in BARTLETT, *Review of «Monteverdi: Vespro della Beata Vergine», ed. Schulze et al.*, and the Wolf edition in BARTLETT, *Review of «Monteverdi: Vespro della Beata Vergine», ed. Wolf*. The reviews are concerned almost exclusively with evaluating such issues as barring and the layout of parts with regard to their convenience for performance in comparison with Bartlett's own edition (1990). The Schulze score is also reviewed in BERGER, *Review «Monteverdi: Vespro» ed. Schulze et al.*

clef appendix), and the publisher offers a separate untransposed piano-vocal score of the high-clef pieces.

Wolf's Carus-Verlag edition is published both as a full score and reduced-size study score, which does not include the *Magnificat a 6* from the original source, and therefore cannot be considered a complete critical edition. Apart from the full and study scores, Carus-Verlag offers a vocal score, a choral score, and complete orchestral materials, including the basso continuo (which is unrealized in the full score, but realized in a simple chordal style in the basso continuo part). Moreover, the same materials, except for a study score, are available for the transposed versions of *Lauda Jerusalem* and the *Magnificat a 7*. Additionally, Carus sells a set of CDs entitled *Choir Coach* to assist in the preparation of performances.

Wolf's edition also aims at providing practical performance information for its users. The score includes a chart of suggested *colla parte* instrumental doublings for all five psalms, the six-voice section of *Audi coelum* and the hymn, as well as suggestions for instrumental substitutions or other modifications in the response and *Magnificat a 7*. While Monteverdi himself calls for *colla parte* doubling in the *Sicut erat* of the Magnificat, it should be noted that his later sacred music with notated instruments does not typically feature strict *colla parte* instrumental writing, but rather a mixture of unison doubling, octave doubling and the introduction of other harmonic tones. His typical approach to instruments in his sacred vocal music is thus more sophisticated than simple *colla parte* doubling.

Both the Bärenreiter and Carus-Verlag editions, along with the Hofstötter and Rainer edition noted above, interpret the central section of the *Sonata sopra Sancta Maria* in the same manner as Delfino, which, as I've explained in connection with the latter edition, is in my view, incorrect.⁴⁴ Both introductions declare that Monteverdi did not have responsibility for sacred music in Mantua, which is also incorrect, as indicated by the title of *maestro e de la Camera e de la Chiesa* he requested in his first surviving letter of November 28 1601,⁴⁵ as well as Giulio Cesare's statement in the *Dichiaratione* of 1607 about his sacred and secular duties, mentioned above.⁴⁶ Wolf, citing the inconsistent distribution of the instrumental parts for different pieces among the part-books, declares that the distribution «makes a 'continuous performance' in the sense of a coherent vespers impossible». But this statement ignores the fact that parts for performance were often copied out of part-books; examples include manuscript partituras, such the manuscript with a transposed partitura for the *Missa in illo tempore* in the Duomo archive in Brescia, or the extensive repository of manuscript organ tablatures and instrumental parts in the

⁴⁴ Wolf and Hofstötter – Rainer changes Monteverdi's black notation to white notation, while Schulze *et al.* maintain the blackened minims and bar the passage as if it comprised triplets of white minims.

⁴⁵ MONTEVERDI, *Lettere*, ed. Lax, p. 2.

⁴⁶ For the *Dichiaratione*, see note 23. See also KURTZMAN, *The Mantuan Sacred Music* and KURTZMAN, *Monteverdi's Missing Sacred Music*.

Düben Collection at the University of Uppsala.⁴⁷ Although the evidence for downward transposition of high clef pieces in this period is massive, Wolf calls its application in the *Vespro* a «legend». Wolf also cites the reason for transpositions as avoiding ledger lines in the notation, but that is only a byproduct of transposition, which fulfilled rather different purposes.⁴⁸ Nevertheless, his edition, like that of Schulze *et al.*, provides both untransposed and transposed transcriptions, «to meet the needs of today's performance practice». Schulze's edition takes the more historically appropriate position that the compositions in high clefs should be transposed and includes the untransposed versions in an appendix rather than in the sequence of pieces, while Wolf offers the transposed versions as separate publications.

Of the various editions discussed here, only the introductions to the Fontana edition of the *Missa in illo tempore*, the Hofstötter – Rainer edition of the *Missa* and *Vespro* and the Schulze *et al.* edition of the *Vespro* mention the issue of a performance pitch standard. Fontana, as noted above, declares the performance pitch at «approximately a half-step higher» than $a' = 440$ Hz.⁴⁹ Hofstötter – Rainer refer to $a' = c.472$ Hz without explanation,⁵⁰ while Schulze, citing the predominant pitches of recorders and cornettos in Venice, a center for the manufacture of these instruments, declares that «performance ensembles today have standardized the practice of playing at $a' = 466$ Hz».⁵¹ This concurs with the commentary on pitch in my book *The Monteverdi Vespers of 1610*, written c. 1992 and published seven years later,⁵² which drew from a variety of sources analyzing pitches of these instruments as well as contemporaneous north Italian organs, where a' was often pitched at approximately 460-470 Hz. However, my assumption that this was the pitch level at which north Italian choirs sang, matching the pitch of the instruments, was mistaken, as demonstrated by Bruce Haynes in his treatise, *A History of Performing Pitch: The Story of "A"*.⁵³ In fact, the primary purpose of pitching wind instruments and many organs at c. 460-470 Hz (called *mezzo punto* and most frequently at c. 464 Hz) was to facilitate their transposition downward by a whole tone to a vocal pitch, called *tuono corista*, of c. $a' = 415$ Hz, which appears to have been the most common vocal pitch in northern Italy.⁵⁴ Other instruments, pitched nearer $a' = 435$ -440 Hz could have served for performance at a vocal pitch of

⁴⁷ <<http://www2.musik.uu.se/duben/Duben.php>>.

⁴⁸ The avoidance of more than one or two ledger lines is the natural outcome of the principal purpose of different clefs, which is to situate the range of the voice in the most convenient manner on the five-line staff. The literature on transposition of high clefs is too large to cite here, but the most relevant studies of the subject are by A. Parrott (focused particularly on the Monteverdi *Vespers*), P. Barbieri, and J. Kurtzman.

⁴⁹ MONTEVERDI, *Missa*, ed. Fontana, p. XII.

⁵⁰ MONTEVERDI, *Missa. Vespro*, ed. Hofstötter – Rainer, p. X.

⁵¹ MONTEVERDI, *Vespro*, ed. Schulze *et al.*, pp. XVIII-XIX.

⁵² KURTZMAN, *The Monteverdi Vespers of 1610: Music, Context, Performance*, pp. 404-408.

⁵³ HAYNES, *A History of Performing Pitch*, pp. 58-75.

⁵⁴ HAYNES – CROOKE, *Pitch*; MEYERS, *Pitch and Transposition*.

c. $a' = 395$ Hz (a lower *tuono corista*). Obviously, the need for instrumental transposition depended on the actual ranges of notes for the choir in any given composition.

I fear that I've encouraged a large number of Baroque ensembles, as have Fontana, Hofstötter – Rainer and Schulze in following suit, to perform the Monteverdi Vespers at a pitch level a whole step higher than the most typical pitch of Monteverdi's day. That does not mean, of course, that such a pitch level is the only viable one for a modern performance, which most frequently uses female sopranos and altos rather than boys or countertenors, but it is an indication of the low sound preferred by Italian musicians of the early seventeenth century and cited by Praetorius.⁵⁵ It is also obvious that even if in Monteverdi's day the bass singer or singers available had difficulty negotiating the low pitches of the transposed psalm or *Magnificats*, the vocal part would not only have been doubled or replaced by the organ, but also possibly a string instrument, a trombone, a bassoon, and/or a chitarrone.

The introductions of the Hofstötter – Rainer, Schulze and Wolf editions all take the position that Monteverdi did not intend the *Vespro della Beata Vergine* portion of the print as providing virtually complete music for a single Vespers service.⁵⁶ This is a fashionable point of view in the musicological literature; it is still common among musicologists and performers to describe the organization of the Monteverdi Vespers as well as the intended use of the motets in the 1610 print as controversial. This view of the publication originated with Hans Redlich's explanation of its contents as an unrelated mixture of individual pieces back in the 1930s & 1940s and has never fully disappeared from sight, yet it makes no sense in the context of published Vespers music of the period or even in terms of Monteverdi's print itself.⁵⁷

I know of no serious scholar today that does not recognize that Monteverdi's *Vespro della Beata Vergine* comprises an assemblage of compositions written over an undetermined period of time, and understand that any sacred music print can serve as a source for individual compositions as needed by a choirmaster for a particular service or devotional use. It is also commonly accepted that a major purpose of the 1610 print was to advertise Monteverdi's capacities in a variety of older and newer compositional styles of sacred music

⁵⁵ PRAETORIUS, *Syntagmatis musici ... tomus secundus*, p. 16; PRAETORIUS, *Syntagma musicum II*, trans. Crookes, p. 32: «Some Italians quite rightly take no pleasure in high-pitched singing: they maintain that it is devoid of any beauty, that the text cannot be clearly understood, and that the singers have to chirp, squawk, and warble at the tops of their voices, for all the world like hedge-sparrows. Thus, sometimes they will perform in the Hypoionian mode of C (transposed down a 5th to "F" and then a 3rd down again on "D"), together with organs, positives, and doubling instruments». This low sound is another reason for transposing the *Missa in illo tempore*, *Lauda Jerusalem* and the two *Magnificats* which otherwise require sopranos to sing g' and a' , very high-pitched sonorities at odds with Praetorius's assertion.

⁵⁶ Apart from the three editions discussed here, this position is also taken in BOWERS, *Claudio Monteverdi and Sacred Music*, pp. 363-365 and WAINWRIGHT, *Case study*, pp. 448-453.

⁵⁷ Redlich's several articles and his edition of the *Vespers* are discussed in KURTZMAN, *The Monteverdi Vespers of 1610: Music, Context, Performance*, pp. 16-19.

with the view toward eventually obtaining a church position away from the hazards of life at a ducal court. But what seems to be less well understood, despite extensive available evidence demonstrating it,⁵⁸ is that Monteverdi's print follows in the footsteps of a large body of published Vespers music, almost all of which, in fact, displays some level of liturgical ordering. Instead, such terms as «miscellany», «quarry», and «pot pourri» have been applied to Monteverdi's print by a variety of musicologists, but such terminology is inappropriate. The interest in providing specific sequences of psalms (almost always including one or more *Magnificats*), as well as such elements as the response *Domine ad adiuvandum* and the hymn *Ave maris stella*, that fulfill the need for an extensively polyphonic Vespers service, is already manifest in a number of the earliest psalm publications from 1554-55.⁵⁹ Between 1590 and 1611 I have traced twelve prints whose contents include five psalms constituting the male cursus, the female cursus, the Sunday cursus, the Corpus Christi cursus or the cursus for second vespers on feasts of martyrs; some of these prints also include a mass and motets.⁶⁰ These prints make it obvious that Monteverdi was following a well-established tradition of providing more-or-less complete musical services for single categories of feasts. Thus, he conceived of everything after the *Missa in illo tempore* in his 1610 print and subsumed under the rubric *Vespro della Beata Vergine* as a complete liturgical service, elements of which, of course, could always be excerpted as a *maestro di cappella* might wish.

Nevertheless, the principal objection to considering this sequence an entire Vespers service has been the five *sacri concentus*, which are not strictly liturgical texts, and especially *Duo Seraphim*, whose subject matter is an excerpt from Isaiah used to introduce a celebration of the Trinity. Already in 1967, Stephan Bonta had suggested a perfectly rational and very well supported

⁵⁸ I first identified liturgical ordering in psalm collections of the 16th and early 17th centuries in KURTZMAN, *The Monteverdi Vespers of 1610 and their Relationship*, pp. 27-40, Appendices B-C: 414-425. The information there was expanded in KURTZMAN, *Why Would Monteverdi Publish a Vespers in 1610?*; KURTZMAN, *The Monteverdi Vespers of 1610: Music, Context, Performance*, pp. 83-108; and KURTZMAN, *Il «Vespro della Beata Vergine» di Claudio Monteverdi ed il repertorio italiano dei vespri*, pp. 16, 23-25, 29-30, 32, 34-35.

⁵⁹ See Domenico Phinot, 1554 and 1555 (RISM 2021a, 2022, 2022a), Cipriano De Rore and Jachet of Mantua, 1554 (RISM SD 1554¹⁷), and Adriano Willaert, 1555 (RISM W1123). These composers as well as their publishers Girolamo Scotto and Antonio Gardano, in 1554 and 1555, all believed there was a market for collections of Vespers music providing complete sets of psalms and *Magnificats* for specific categories of feasts. Although their intention to offer complete services is beyond question, that does not mean that a *maestro di cappella* couldn't select just one or two items from such prints to combine with psalms in plainchant, *falsobordone*, an organ psalm or *Magnificats*, or even a polyphonic psalm by another composer from manuscript or another print. Recognition of this possibility was of course part of the marketing strategy, but the subsequent editions of all these prints prove that supplying complete services was indeed a successful marketing approach.

⁶⁰ Orfeo Vecchi 1590 (RISM V1057), A. Pacelli 1597 (P24), F. Terriera 1601 (T537), V. De Grandis 1604, reprinted 1624 (G3480, G3481), S. Patta 1606 (P1036), G. Righi 1606 (R1540), L. Torti 1607 (T1013), P. Signorucci 1608 (S3431), B. Miseroca 1609 (M2876), C. Monteverdi 1610 (M3445), F. Christianelli 1611 (C4417), G. Finetti 1611 (F813).

explanation for the presence of these compositions between the psalms.⁶¹ But controversy over them continued. One problem, according to some, was that they didn't follow the texts of the post-Tridentine Roman breviary. Perhaps the problem here begins with the terminology Bonta introduced, calling the motets antiphon-substitutes. But even as Bonta stated at the time, the liturgy could be fulfilled by a priest speaking the liturgically appropriate antiphon text simultaneously with the motet. The *Caeremoniale Episcoporum* of 1600 prescribes exactly this solution if the organist wants to play between the psalms.⁶² Perhaps the term «antiphon-overlay» would have been more appropriate, but it's not essential that we think of these motets in relation to antiphons at all – that's not necessarily their primary function, though it's certainly possible Monteverdi's contemporaries did think of them as antiphon-substitutes or overlays because of their typical positioning between the psalms. Like other non-official interpolations into the liturgy, they are *principally* enhancements of the service – prayers and commentaries expanding and deepening the feast's and the service's import for the worshipper.

Studies of the post-Tridentine motet repertoire, most recently in a 2015 conference on the post-Tridentine European motet at the University of Nottingham, papers of which have just been published, have shown over and over again the frequent interpolation of responsory texts, enlarged antiphons and non-liturgical motets into the Mass and Office as a means of expanding upon the meaning of the feast in question.⁶³ The quantity of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century official complaints about this practice alone is proof enough of its frequency.⁶⁴ The idea that once the new Roman breviary and missal were issued in 1568 and 1570, composers, publishers, choirmasters, organists and the local priests, abbots, or abbesses under whom the musicians labored suddenly began adhering strictly to the liturgy of these books without reference to an institution's traditional ecclesiastical sources and general contemporary practices is untenable.

⁶¹ BONTA, *Liturgical Problems*.

⁶² «Si placuerit, finite quolibet Psalmo, poterit Antiphona per organum repeti, dum tamen per aliquos Mansionarios, aut alios ad id deputatos eadem Antiphona clara voce repetatur» (*Caeremoniale Episcoporum*, ed. Sodi – Triacca, pp. 135-136, § 547-548). («If desired, once any psalm has finished, the antiphon may be repeated by the organ, so long as, nevertheless, the same antiphon is repeated in a clear voice by some mansionaries or others assigned to this»).

⁶³ RODRÍGUEZ-GARCÍA – FILIPPI, eds., *Mapping the Motet*.

⁶⁴ From the middle of the 17th century to the end, three popes, (Alexander VII in 1657, Innocent XI in 1687, and Innocent XII in 1692) issued bulls requiring that all compositions performed in the churches and chapels of Rome use only words prescribed in the Breviary and Missal, or words taken from the Sacred Scriptures or Holy Fathers approved by the Sacred Congregation of Rites, even banning texts that had previously been approved by various church bodies and authorities. Innocent XII even required specifically that the Vespers antiphons that come before and after the psalm «should be sung without any alteration» (HAYBURN, *Papal Legislation*, pp. 76-81). Dire penalties were to be imposed on violators, but the need for reissuing the bull illustrates how ineffective such prohibitions were.

These recent studies reveal that the argument regarding the unsuitability of *Duo Seraphim* as an interpolation into a Vespers of the Virgin is misguided. A feast of the Virgin comprises not just a Vespers service, but a mass and all the office hours. Among the texts of such services are Gospel and Epistle readings and chapters. Any text from anywhere in the feast's liturgy could provide the impetus for some kind of discursive textual trope set to music. David Crook's studies note that interpolated compositions could arise out of a single word or idea in the Gospel or Epistle readings of the mass, or by extension, from anywhere in the feast's liturgy.⁶⁵ Their function is to provide commentary and additional prayers related to the significance of the feast and texts found within the feast – not just Vespers alone, but anywhere in the feast, since a feast is a unified whole, as the repetition of numerous texts and references throughout the feast confirm. Now, the Trinity is the single most frequent reference throughout the office liturgy for any feast, Marian or otherwise. In Vespers the Trinity is the subject of the doxology of the response, of every psalm and of the Magnificat. The Gloria and Credo of the mass on every feast name the Trinity. Several of the major Marian feasts also refer to the Trinity in their Gospel readings as well as in their hymns.⁶⁶ In sum, a motet on the Trinity is every bit as suitable to a Marian Vespers as a motet that names Mary specifically – and even more so in a Vespers related to the Mantuan court whose patron saint was martyred for her worship of the Trinity.

The other argument frequently cited for excluding the motets from the Vespers service is their separate naming on the title page of Monteverdi's print. This separation provided useful information for someone seeking a few motets to honor the Virgin for extra-liturgical devotional purpose or as part of an evening's entertainment in some palace. In fact, the title page (and the index) of a print may well differ from one another as well as from the order of pieces in the print – this is not uncommon in prints with complex contents where the title advertises the contents in one way, and different organizational schemes are applied to the index and the sequence of compositions in the print itself. All three elements serve different functions, which may or may not overlap. The title is obviously a print's principal marketing vehicle. The index helps

⁶⁵ CROOK, *The Exegetical Motet*; CROOK, *Proper of the day*.

⁶⁶ The final three words of the hymn *Ave maris stella* are «tribus honor unus», and the hymn *Nunc sancta nobis spiritus* at Terce for feasts of the B.V.M. names the Trinity (*Breviarium Romanum*, ed. Sodi – Triacca, p. 57, §125). This hymn is found in *Liber Usualis* (1963, engl. ed.) on p. 235 (referenced from other Marian feasts on pp. 1256, 1315, 1355, 1415, 1539, 1600^a, 1624, and 1754). In addition, at Mass on the Feast of the Annunciation, the Gospel reading, (Luke I: 26-38), names all three members of the Trinity (*Missale Romanum*, ed. Sodi – Triacca, pp. 476-477, §2510-2514), who also appear in the responsories at Matins and elsewhere in scattered form during the course of the feast (*Breviarium Romanum*, ed. Sodi – Triacca, pp. 757-759, §4671-4696). On the Feast of the Assumption, the hymn at Lauds, *O gloriosa domina*, names the Trinity in its last verse (*Breviarium Romanum*, ed. Sodi – Triacca, pp. 856, § 5441). On the Feast of the Purification, one of the prayers mentions the Trinity (*Missale Romanum*, ed. Sodi – Triacca, p. 466, §2405), as does the Gospel reading (Luke II: 22-32) at Mass (*Missale Romanum*, ed. Sodi – Triacca, p. 468, §2422).

users find the location of particular contents. The sequence of pieces in liturgical prints is typically designed, especially in psalm and holy week publications, to make the print as convenient as possible for performers to use for individual services with a minimum of leafing through the pages for the next piece in the liturgical sequence. The advantages for the consumer are obvious. In the case of Monteverdi's 1610 print, it is not the title page that reveals the function of its response, psalms, *sacri concentus*, hymn and *Magnificats*, but rather the order of the pieces in the indices and in the part-books themselves. The interpolation of each of the *sacri concentus* after each of the psalms under the heading *Vespro della Beata Vergine* speaks volumes.

From the mid-sixteenth century onward, we have evidence of the careful organization of the contents of many motet books, madrigal books and liturgical books under various criteria. The same is true of Monteverdi's madrigal books. Why would he be any less interested in the careful organization of the print he was dedicating to the Pope, in which he goes to such extraordinary lengths as the quotation of the Gombert motives that underlie his mass and the interpolation of the motets between the psalms? These interpolations under the heading *Vespro della Beata Vergine* are evidence *in favor* of Monteverdi intending the print to be usable as a complete service in the order printed, not *against* such an intention. The other possible uses of music from the print are, of course, equally valid – none of them is exclusive of the other. Indeed, as already suggested, they are an effective approach to marketing, and the survival of both complete and incomplete copies of the print in so many locations in Italy and in northern Europe, testifies to the quantity of sales this print enjoyed. To consider the primary purpose of the print as a miscellany, or «quarry» of Vespers music, as Wolf calls it,⁶⁷ which also, incidentally might be performed today as a single entity, is to get matters exactly backwards. If the primary purpose was as an anthology or miscellany, then there was no need to create a *Vespro della Beata Vergine*. Monteverdi's rubric tells the story – the print, in addition to the mass, contains a coherent Vespers service suitable for a grand celebration of a Marian feast, from which individual compositions might also be extracted for other purposes, such as in the chambers of princes, as indicated in the title.⁶⁸ It's high time we actually believe what Monteverdi himself said in the print, instead of trying to concoct other scenarios and intentions that contradict the historical and liturgical context of these prints for single categories of feasts.

Even if the *sacri concentus* are accepted as an integral part of Monteverdi's vespers service, questions have been raised about the position in that sequence of the *Sonata sopra Sancta Maria*. The most cogent argument has been made

⁶⁷ MONTEVERDI, *Vespro*, ed. Wolf, *Introduction*, p. XX.

⁶⁸ The phrase on the title page «ad sacella sive principum cubicula accommodata» advertises that the vespers psalms and *sacri concentus* are in an elaborate style «suitable for princely chapels and chambers» in contrast to the mass, which is designated «ad ecclesiarum chorus» in the Bassus Generalis title. See KURTZMAN, *Monteverdi's Mass and Vespers of 1610*, 2012², § 2 and 5.

by David Blazey, who argues that the *Sonata* is more properly an antiphon-substitute (or, in my terms, antiphon overlay) for the Magnificat antiphon rather than the antiphon for *Lauda Jerusalem*.⁶⁹ Blazey offers a number of reasonable arguments, including the relationship between the Magnificat antiphon *Sancta Maria* and the chant in Monteverdi's *Sonata* as well as relationships between the instrumental writing in the *Sonata* and in some of the verses of the *Magnificat a 7*. There is certainly logic behind his arguments, but the assumption that the *sacri concentus* were essentially randomly distributed in the Amadino print and that the relationships between the *Sonata* and the Magnificat demonstrate that the *Sonata* should directly succeed the Magnificat are not necessarily valid or proof that this is what Monteverdi intended. The only actual evidence we have of what Monteverdi may have intended is the 1610 print itself, where the *Sonata* follows the psalm *Lauda Jerusalem*, not the hymn *Ave maris stella* or the Magnificat. We would have to assume there was an error in Amadino's positioning of the *Sonata* in the part-books in order to accept Blazey's conclusion. I would argue that it makes just as much sense for the *Sonata sopra Sancta Maria* to complete the cycle of five *sacri concentus*, one following each psalm, as overlays to the plainchant psalm antiphons, with a Magnificat plainchant antiphon interpolated preceding the Magnificat. This also makes good aesthetic sense, since the plainchant antiphon would lead directly into the plainchant intonation of the Magnificat at the beginning of the canticle and does not assume an error or randomness in the print. Following the Magnificat with either an organ piece or an instrumental canzona or other similar composition, as both Adriano Banchieri and Giovanni Battista Fasolo suggested, could have concluded the polyphonic music of the service.⁷⁰

More active than anyone else in recent years writing about the Monteverdi Vespers, as well as Monteverdi's role as a director of sacred music in Mantua, has been Roger Bowers, who has produced a number of articles on the subject (see all Bowers's titles in the *Bibliography*). I'll skip the articles on proportions and transposition,⁷¹ in which it is apparent Bowers was not familiar with many of the relevant sources – articles which have been refuted by myself and others and appear to have had very limited impact on performances of the music.⁷²

I've already cited Roger Bowers's article entitled *Claudio Monteverdi and Sacred Music in the Household of the Gonzaga Dukes of Mantua* with regard to the author's claims about the Church of Santa Croce. Later he goes on to argue that Monteverdi's 1610 print is a miscellany of compositions rather than a vespers liturgical service (see my discussion about this above), and that the

⁶⁹ BLAZEY, *A Liturgical Role*.

⁷⁰ BONTA, *Liturgical Problems*, pp. 98-101.

⁷¹ BOWERS *Some Reflection; An «Aberration» Reviewed; «The high and low keys come both to one pitch»*.

⁷² See the responses in KURTZMAN, *Correspondence 1993* and *Correspondence 1994*; PARROT, *Monteverdi: Onwards and Downwards*, and *High Clefs and Down-to-Earth Transposition*.

motets and the hymn in this print have nothing to do with any vespers at all.⁷³ Here, as well as elsewhere, Bowers takes his point of departure from unsupported assertions of «fact», which are not facts at all, and the exclusion or distortion of evidence that contradicts his claims, as noted above. Nor is Bowers always careful about citing the sources of his «facts» when such sources do exist.

I will focus on one «fact» that simply appears in this article without any supporting footnote. This is Bowers's reference to «the state visit to Mantua made by Pope Paul V in 1607». The actual «fact» is, that there is only one original source that mentions such a visit by the pope to Mantua, my own book, *The Monteverdi Vespers of 1610*, cited earlier.⁷⁴ And that «fact» resulted from my own misreading of an entry in the Mantuan ecclesiastical chronicler Ippolito Donesmondi's diary,⁷⁵ the original text of which I quoted in *my* footnote. Donesmondi reports that «at the beginning of the year, Pope Paul V favored the Church of Sant'Andrea ... with notable indulgences», and continues with more details. I had misread Donesmondi's Italian to mean that the Pope had personally visited Mantua and proclaimed the indulgence in Sant'Andrea. A number of years later, an Italian colleague pointed out to me my mistake, and I have checked a copy of the diary for 1606 and 1607 of the Sistine Chapel's Master of Ceremonies, Paolo Alaleona, which confirms that throughout the first half of 1607 Pope Paul V remained in Rome, except for a few brief summer visits to cardinals' palaces near the Holy City, making no visit to Mantua.⁷⁶ I am mortified that my error was not only repeated (without citation) in Bowers's article, but has also made it more broadly into the introductions of the Carus and Bärenreiter editions of the Vespers, to a DVD narration about the Vespers, and probably into program notes of recordings. It's a cautionary tale about how a single error can propagate through the various forms of literature on the subject and become a well-known «fact», whose source is rarely, if ever, cited.

Bowers also argues that the vocal and instrumental resources of the Gonzaga court were such that few other institutions could perform Monteverdi's sacred music and that is why he published nothing before his 1610 print, which Bowers claims was not viable commercially.⁷⁷ That argument, too, is specious, as testified by the large number of collections of liturgical music published for eight, ten, twelve, sixteen and even twenty voices, including many with instrumental parts or performance prefaces describing the potential use

⁷³ BOWERS, *Claudio Monteverdi and Sacred Music*, pp. 364-367. In this passage, Bowers distorts and misrepresents the results of my own research to try to prove his point.

⁷⁴ KURTZMAN, *The Monteverdi Vespers of 1610: Music, Context, Performance*, p. 14.

⁷⁵ DONESMONDI, *Dell'istoria ecclesiastica*.

⁷⁶ ALALEONA, *Diaries*, fol. 98r ff.

⁷⁷ BOWERS, *Claudio Monteverdi and Sacred Music*, p. 357.

of instruments,⁷⁸ the documentation of the permanent instrumental ensembles serving a variety of large churches,⁷⁹ numerous pedagogically oriented prints of elaborate, virtuosic ornamentation, and the propensity for every ecclesiastical institution, confraternity and court of any size to celebrate its patron saint's feast day or preferred feasts with elaborate music, hiring virtuoso singers and instrumentalists from beyond the institution when necessary. In Italy alone, there were over 300 cathedral churches, not to speak of the many other churches and monasteries in every community, as well as the large quantity of princely courts that could at least on occasion assemble a large body of performers. The volume of liturgical music published in Italy during this period bears witness to the intense demand for it, including large works for important celebrations. That Monteverdi's print was commercially viable is demonstrated by the unusually large number of extant copies, five of which contain hand-written annotations testifying to actual performance, at least four of them not emanating from «princely chapels and chambers of princes» but from major churches.⁸⁰

A much more fruitful contribution to our understanding of Monteverdi's Mantuan sacred music is a brief but stimulating study by Tim Carter in 2009 on the relationship between Monteverdi's *Nisi Dominus* and the tradition of *contrappunto alla mente* on a *cantus firmus* documented in both practical examples and theoretical writings.⁸¹ The technique might also be ascribed as the conceptual basis of numerous other passages in the *Vespro* involving imitative parts, whether vocal or instrumental, against the *cantus firmus* in the response, all the psalms except *Laetatus sum*, and both *Magnificats*. Viewing these passages from this perspective underscores Monteverdi's proclivity for taking contemporary performance practices and extending them to new dimensions, including notating what was more typically improvised.⁸²

⁷⁸ A virtually complete catalogue of more than 2000 prints containing liturgical music published in Italy between 1516 and 1770 is published online in KURTZMAN – SCHNOEBELEN, *A Catalogue*.

⁷⁹ The principal literature on this subject is cited in KURTZMAN, *The Performance of Eight-Voice and Polychoral Psalmody*. See also BARONCINI, *Giovanni Gabrieli*.

⁸⁰ A complete copy survives at Bologna, Museo Internazionale e Biblioteca della Musica; a complete copy and another copy lacking only the Bassus Generalis at Brescia, Archivio del Duomo; a copy lacking only the Bassus Generalis at Lucca, Biblioteca del Seminario; a copy complete until three vocal part-books were destroyed during World War II at The University Library of Wrocław, Poland; and single part-books at Rome, Biblioteca Casanatense and Archivio Doria Pamphilj as well as at the Royal Library in Stockholm. All five of the complete or largely complete copies contain hand-written performance annotations. Of these, only the provenance of the Bologna copy is unknown. These eight exemplars surpass the number of surviving copies (complete and partial) of any of the sacred prints of two of the most popular and widely distributed composers of the early 17th century, L. Viadana and A. Grandi.

⁸¹ CARTER, «*Improvised*» *Counterpoint*.

⁸² The improvisatory basis of Monteverdi's writing upon the psalm-tone *cantus firmus* is also briefly mentioned in ZIEGLER, *Claudio Monteverdis Publikation*. Ziegler gives evidence of Italian improvisation-based compositional techniques influencing the music of northern

In 2012 Jonathan Wainwright provided a chapter devoted wholly to the Monteverdi Vespers in *The Cambridge History of Musical Performance*.⁸³ This is the most comprehensive and thoughtful recent account of the performance issues in the Vespers. Wainwright presents the various positions that have been taken by scholars over the years, and in some cases argues in favor of one solution over another. Where I disagree with his positions and conclusions are his acceptance of Bowers's theories about the Church of Santa Croce and another location where Monteverdi's sacred music was allegedly performed in the palace precincts, as well as the role of the *sacri concentus*, the liturgical function of everything under the rubric *Vespro della Beata Vergine*, and the various other assertions I've discussed above in the survey of the introductions to recent editions, which need not be reiterated here.

Also in 2012, I published an article in an issue of «The Journal of Seventeenth-Century Music», comprising selected papers from the Monteverdi Conference *Internationale Monteverdi-Interpretationen: Wissenschaft – Praxis – Vermittlung* held at the Musikwissenschaftliche Institut of the Wolfgang Goethe University of Frankfurt, July 2-4, 2009.⁸⁴ This article considers the economic, social and courtly context of Monteverdi's 1610 print by exploring various aspects and questions about the print, including its relationship to the contemporary market for sacred music in Italy, the title and dedication of the print, the relationship of the print to the Gonzagas, and the role of the five *sacri concentus*, as described above.

A couple of reprints of earlier published writings on the Mass and Vespers appeared in 2014 and 2015. The former comprises an essay of my own entitled *A Critical Commentary on the «Missa in illo tempore»*, analyzing the contrapuntal structure of the work and describing my view of its strengths and weaknesses.⁸⁵ The other publication is a set of collected essays on performance issues, not limited to Monteverdi, published by Andrew Parrott.⁸⁶ Included is a group of four articles, originally published between 1984 and 2004, focused almost exclusively on the transposition of the high-clef pieces in the 1610 Vespers of Monteverdi. These articles contain a wealth of theoretical and practical information about high clefs and their transposition in the early seventeenth century.

There is another, very different type of publication regarding the Monteverdi Vespers, issued in 2014, that I feel requires a critique in the present essay. This is a DVD published by the British Broadcasting Company entitled *Monteverdi in Mantua: The Genius of the Vespers*.⁸⁷ As a visual and sonic

European composers, but not Monteverdi's «manneristic qualities». Ziegler concludes that only in isolated instances can Monteverdi's Vespers be seen as influencing Protestant composers (pp. 299-301).

⁸³ WAINWRIGHT, *Case study*.

⁸⁴ KURTZMAN, *Monteverdi's Mass and Vespers of 1610*.

⁸⁵ KURTZMAN, *Studies I*.

⁸⁶ PARROTT, *Composers' Intentions*.

⁸⁷ KING-DABBS, *Monteverdi in Mantua*.

experience, it is a feast for eye and ear. The visual background of St. Augustine's Church in Kilburn, north London, where the gorgeous performances by Harry Christophers and The Sixteen were filmed, and Cremona, Mantua, Rome and Venice where the narrative of the historical background was filmed, is stunning. The narrative includes an interview with Paola Besutti on the subject of women singers at the Gonzaga court, that I wish had been much longer. However, in tandem with the visual imagery and sound of the music is a narrative about the Vespers and its context in Italian sacred music of the period that displays an orientation and a level of ignorance, including assertions of fact for which there is no evidence, that is an embarrassment to the BBC. The narration is by the Shakespearean actor, Simon Russell Beale, who apparently wrote the text, though no specific credit is given. Although the DVD gives the impression of being a documentary, Beale is intent on giving a sensationalized, freely dramatized version of Monteverdi, his life, the Mantuan court, and their relationship to the Vespers. His narrative ranges at one end from facts and observations that are true to others that are warped to fit a reading of Monteverdi as a revolutionary Romantic culture hero who single-handedly changed the course of music history forever by means of *Orfeo* and the Vespers, to others that are either distorted to make them more dramatic and sensational or invented from whole cloth. Beale clearly did not consult with anyone who has enough expertise in Monteverdi and this period in north Italian sacred music who could have guided him to an accurate historical portrayal of what we know and don't know. A more detailed account of these problems and errors is found in my review of the DVD.⁸⁸

Among the recent contributions to the literature on Monteverdi's 1610 print is another essay of my own based on a paper at the conference *Mapping the Post-Tridentine Motet* at the University of Nottingham (April 17-19, 2015) and published in a volume of papers from this conference.⁸⁹ This study takes its point of departure from *Duo Seraphim* and the other *sacri concentus* and their role in the *Vespro della Beata Vergine* to explore the contemporary motet repertoire and its functions in the liturgy.⁹⁰ This article demonstrates the identification between antiphons and motets by seventeenth-century Italian composers and publishers and the potential for many motets in the published repertoire, especially those of Palestrina and Victoria, to serve as interpolations in the vespers service and other offices as well as the mass. Included is my argument for the appropriateness of *Duo Seraphim* as a commentary on the liturgy of a Marian vespers, as outlined above. While the other articles in the volume have no specific relation to Monteverdi or his 1610 *Vespro*, there is considerable discussion of the various functions of the motet, including their role in liturgical services, especially mass and vespers. Of particular interest in this context is David Crook's *Proper to the Day: Calendrical Ordering in post-*

⁸⁸ KURTZMAN, *Review of «Monteverdi in Mantua»*.

⁸⁹ RODRÍGUEZ-GARCÍA –FILIPPI, eds., *Mapping the Motet*.

⁹⁰ KURTZMAN, *Motets, Vespers, Antiphons*.

Tridentine Motet Books.⁹¹ This article and another from a few years earlier⁹² on the relationship between motet texts and their role in the liturgy have stimulated and influenced my own thinking and understanding of this subject.

The papers from the 2017 Cremona/Mantua Monteverdi conference published in the present volume include one by Marco Mangani and Daniele Sabaino that deepens our understanding of Monteverdi's practical conception of modal organization in the 1610 Vespers.⁹³ The authors take their point of departure from the late Renaissance conception of mode, as codified by Zarlino, but open to extension, innovation and quite diverse treatments in the hands of Monteverdi. Their purpose is to investigate the specifics of Monteverdi's approach to mode in both the *sacri concertus* and in the compositions based on a *cantus firmus*. In order to avoid implications of tonality, especially as the term is used in Italian, the authors employ the phraseology «spazio sonoro», which might be defined as the vertical space occupied by the horizontal movement of the sound.

The most salient issues in the *sacri concertus* are the vocal ranges, which at times encompass both the plagal and authentic ambitus of the mode, without, however, compromising the integrity of the mode, and the cadential points Monteverdi emphasizes in his effort to provide a sonorous interpretation of the sacred texts and their allegorical significance. The *cantus firmus* in the psalms and *Magnificats* comprises, of course, the psalm or Magnificat tone, which is a concrete entity of its own that overlaps with the theoretical conception of mode, but also differs from it in several respects. In the *cantus firmus* compositions the primary focus of their investigation is the interaction between the *cantus firmus* as a constructive device and the overriding modal structure that informs every piece. Detailed analyses of several different pieces reveal the predominant role of modal organization and the remarkable variety and cleverness with which Monteverdi approaches this issue, not just from a purely musical standpoint, but also considering interpretation of the text. The «spazio sonoro» of *Ave maris stella*, which utilizes the hymn tune in the top voice in every verse, is determined by the *cantus firmus* and its natural cadential points, and is in that respect unremarkable. The chant in the *Sonata sopra Sancta Maria*, on the other hand, appears only sporadically and plays no significant role in the determination of the modal organization of the piece.

Mangani and Sabaino make an important contribution to our understanding of Monteverdi's approach to composition in the Vespers, joining a number of existing analyses that emphasize different aspects of this music. Their analysis overlaps in many respects with my own in *The Monteverdi Vespers*,⁹⁴ but also provides a more thoroughgoing modal perspective, and at times comes to somewhat different conclusions. Every analysis is shaped by what

⁹¹ CROOK, *Proper to the day*.

⁹² CROOK, *The Exegetical Motet*.

⁹³ MANGANI – SABAINO, *Condotte modali*.

⁹⁴ KURTZMAN, *The Monteverdi Vespers of 1610: Music, Context, Performance*.

the analyst views as important points of significance in a composition, and compositions of any complexity will have multiple, often intersecting, ways of explaining how they are constructed and why they are composed the way they are. In music with text, especially sacred texts with their long history of allegorical interpretations, the relationship between both the structure and potential meanings of the text is another factor in our intellectual and aesthetic comprehension. The multiplicity of analytical approaches and different perspectives, as long as they can be validated by the music itself, serve to enrich that comprehension. Mangani's and Sabaino's paper is an insightful and thought-provoking essay which does just that.

The foregoing survey of recent publications on Monteverdi's Cremonese and Mantuan sacred music has revealed a number of valuable contributions to our understanding of this subject as well as increased access to his surviving music. But I have also included in this essay critiques of problematic publications, my disagreements with aspects of the critical editions I've addressed, and some of my own earlier errors as a reminder of how difficult the search for the ever-elusive truth is regarding the complex subjects we study and how careful we must be in our research methods and our conclusions. Our discoveries are not going to change the world, but our commitment to the rigorous evaluation of our sources and to the integrity of our reporting and our arguments are a professional obligation whose maintenance is all the more necessary in a political and commercial atmosphere in which truth is often a great inconvenience and one of the first casualties of discourse. It is up to determined scholars to demonstrate what the standards of truth-seeking and truth-telling are through our work, and that is perhaps our most important contribution to contemporary civilization. Some of the publications discussed above in my view exemplify such truth-seeking and amplify our understanding of Monteverdi, but it is discouraging to find some that in one way or another fall short, and even, in a few instances, set back our professional and public understanding of Monteverdi. The problems in recent Monteverdi research I've described above often result, in my view, from inadequate consultation among scholars with expertise in the field. These problems might have been avoided by such consultations, even though differing views might still emerge and persist from such interchanges. At least the differences would be more fully supported by appropriate evidence and the broader weighing of that evidence. In the humanities, we are still too committed to the practice of working individually in our own narrow cells or circles without the kind of dialogue that takes place more regularly in contemporary scientific research. As a consequence, we deprive ourselves of the experience and viewpoints of other scholars and the opportunity for shaping our thinking in more comprehensive and subtle ways. My purpose in this essay is not only to offer information and commentary on recent research regarding Monteverdi's Cremonese and Mantuan sacred music, but to call for a better, more efficient way to conduct that research that can lead us closer to that complex and elusive truth without as many detours and dead ends as Monteverdi research has encountered in recent years.

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NOTA BIOGRAFICA Jeffrey Kurtzman è autore di libri, edizioni critiche e numerosi articoli su Monteverdi e sulla musica italiana del Cinquecento e del Seicento. Insieme ad Anne Schnoebelen ha pubblicato nella serie *JSCM Instrumenta* un catalogo dettagliato della musica liturgica per la messa, l'ufficio e la settimana santa pubblicata in Italia da 1516 a 1770.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE Jeffrey Kurtzman has published books, critical editions and numerous articles on Monteverdi and 16th- and 17th-century Italian Music. Together with Anne Schnoebelen he has published in the *JSCM Instrumenta* series a detailed catalogue of liturgical music for the Mass, Office, and Holy Week published in Italy from 1516-1770.