

THE « CAMERATA FIORENTINA »: A REAPPRAISAL

Early historians of music felt the compulsion to assign concrete causes to the sweeping upheavals of musical style that they could observe. The personality of an individual, the influence of an important manifesto, or the concerted drive of a key group were enough to account for an extreme change. Probably by analogy to European political revolutions, it seemed natural that behind so apparently violent an explosion in musical style as the birth of monody must lie a conspiracy. So the Camerata legend arose. The more we come to know of the events in Florence in the last quarter of the sixteenth century, however, the more complex their history becomes and the less we are satisfied with simple causal explanations such as the story of the Florentine Camerata.

Still, the Camerata is not all legend. What it needs is to be isolated in time, its membership named, its activities circumscribed, and the beliefs and music that circulated in it and issued from it carefully documented.

*Chronology*

The first to refer to a group as « the Camerata » was Giulio Caccini. In dedicating the score of *L'Euridice* (20 December 1600) to his patron Count Giovanni de' Bardi, Caccini recalled that « ne gli anni, che fioriva la Camerata sua in Firenze » Bardi had spoken of a style of music that the ancient Greeks used in representing their tragedies and other « favole ».<sup>1</sup> He referred to it again in the preface to *Le nuove musiche* (1602) in recalling those times « che fioriva in Firenze la virtuosissima Camerata dell'Illustrissimo Signor Giovanni Bardi de' Conti di Vernio ».<sup>2</sup> No other contemporary of Bardi used the term « Camerata » in reference to the meetings, though Vincenzo Galilei wrote in 1581 in the *Dialogo della musica antica, et della moderna*

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<sup>1</sup> *L'Euridice composta in musica in stile rappresentativo* (Florence, G. Marescotti, 1600), fol. 2 r.

<sup>2</sup> *Le nuove musiche* (Florence, Marescotti, 1601 [i.e. 1602]), fol. A/v.

that Giovanni Bardi stimulated many noblemen to the study of music « molti de quali son soliti andare in casa di lui, et ivi in dilettevoli canti, et in lodevoli ragionamenti con honesto riposo trapassare il tempo ».<sup>3</sup>

After Bardi's death in 1612, his son Pietro de' Bardi wrote at Giovanni Battista Doni's bidding in 1634 a short account of what he knew of the activities of his father and his associates. There he recalled that Giovanni « aveva sempre d'intorno i più celebri uomini della città, eruditi in tal professione [della musica], e invitandoli a casa sua, formava quasi una dilettevole e continua accademia, dalla quale stando lontano il vizio, e in particolare ogni sorta di giuoco, la nobile gioventù fiorentina veniva allettata con molto suo guadagno, trattenendosi non solo nella musica, ma ancora in discorsi e insegnamenti di poesia, d'astrologia, e d'altre scienze, che portavano utile vicendevoles a sì bella conversazione ». Later in the same letter Pietro mentions that « era allora nella camerata di mio padre Giulio Caccini, d'età molto giovane . . . ».<sup>4</sup> Pietro Bardi would have had first hand knowledge of the circle's activities, since he probably reached eighteen around 1584.<sup>5</sup>

Caccini's choice of the term *camerata* rather than *accademia* was judicious; it was an informal group, an « adunanza di gente, che vivono, e conversano insieme ».<sup>6</sup> The Camerata had both an educational and recreational function. It served to introduce sons of noblemen to literature, philosophy, science, music, and antiquities, and to induce them to study these in depth. Some of the older members of the set acted as preceptors, while others mainly listened and debated. It probably prepared young men for participation in the more formal academies and for university studies.

As the Camerata was not formally chartered or organized, no specific date can be assigned to its initiation. Already in the early 1560's Bardi was sponsoring the studies of Vincenzo Galilei, who tells us in the

<sup>3</sup> *Dialogo di Vincenzio Galilei nobile fiorentino Della musica antica et della moderna* (Florence, G. Marescotti, 1581), p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Letter, Firenze, 16 December 1634, printed in ANGELO SOLERTI, *Le origini del Melodramma* (Turin, Fratelli Bocca, 1903), pp. 143-145.

<sup>5</sup> *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani* (Roma, Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana), article « Bardi, Giovanni », VI (1964), 300-303, gives the date of Giovanni Bardi's marriage to Lucrezia Salviati as 1562. According to SALVINO SALVINI, *Fasti consolari dell'Accademia Fiorentina* (Florence, G. Tartini, 1717), p. 275, Pietro Bardi lectured there in 1584; he was also a leader in the defense of Ariosto by the Accademia della Crusca in the mid-1580's, so that he must have been born around 1566 or earlier.

<sup>6</sup> *Vocabolario degli Accademici della Crusca compendiato* (Venice, Lorenzo Baseggio, 1761).

*Dialogo* that Bardi sent him to Venice to study with Zarlino before the latter took over the position of choirmaster at San Marco in 1565.<sup>7</sup> Before this time Galilei must have entertained Bardi's guests with his lute playing and singing.

The earliest record of a meeting of musical amateurs at Bardi's house is an entry in the *Diario* of the Accademia degli Alterati of January 14, 1573. It is recorded there that the Regente, Cosimo Rucellai « mandò à dire per un suo familiare che non poteva venire per che era in Casa Monsigr. de' Bardi à far musica . . . ».<sup>8</sup> Bardi's interests, ranging widely, must have guided the discussions. The focus on ancient Greek music probably became most intense from around 1572 to 1578, when Vincenzo Galilei was corresponding with Girolamo Mei, who addressed some of his letters also to Bardi, each of the letters bringing fresh discoveries about Greek music to stimulate new rounds of debate.<sup>9</sup>

It was in 1578 that Galilei sent a discourse under a pseudonym to Zarlino with a request that he give him his opinion of it. It was evidently a draft of the first part of the *Dialogo*, probably the section on tuning, and it grievously wounded the old Chioggian in his most vulnerable spot.<sup>10</sup> From 1578 also probably dates the discourse of Bardi addressed to Caccini, because it utilizes numerous insights into Greek music gained from the letters of Girolamo Mei, and, moreover, echoes Mei's condemnation of modern counterpoint. Two years later Galilei's *Dialogo*, the drafts of which were probably read to the Camerata, was delivered to a printer in Venice. The manuscript waited at the printer's from October 1580 until Galilei retrieved it, because Zarlino tried to prevent the book's publication. Another press was found in Florence,

<sup>7</sup> This date derives from a letter of Galilei quoted by ZARLINO in *Sopplimenti musicali* (Venice, Francesco de' Franceschi, 1588), p. 5. See footnote 10 below and FABIO FANO, *La Camerata fiorentina*, in « Istituzioni e monumenti dell'arte musicale italiana », IV (Milan, 1934), xxvi. Galilei in *Dialogo*, p. 1, expresses his gratitude to Bardi for having given him « la comodità . . . di potere con quieto animo attendere à quelli studij a' quali da primi anni mi diedi ».

<sup>8</sup> Florence, Bibl. Medicea-Laurenziana, Ms. Ashburnham 558, Vol. II, fol. 3 v. The entry is dated 1572, *ab incarnatione*.

<sup>9</sup> See C. PALISCA, *Girolamo Mei; Letters on Ancient and Modern Music to Vincenzo Galilei and Giovanni Bardi* ([Rome], American Institute of Musicology, 1960).

<sup>10</sup> GALILEI, in *Discorso intorno all'opere di messer Gioseffo Zarlino* (Florence, G. Marescotti, 1589), p. 14, refers to this as « il breve Discorso, parimente mandato al Zarlino l'anno 78 sotto nome d'altri ». ZARLINO, in *Sopplimenti*, p. 5, quotes from a letter of 7 June 1578 which he says he received with a « Trattato di Musica, fatto da un'Autore, il quale . . . si manifesta essere stato mio Discepolo ». GALILEI, *ibid.*, p. 17, asserts that the substance of his argument (evidently about tuning) was already laid out in the *Discorso* of 1578: « v'è a disteso il contenuto di questo negotio ».

and the book finally saw the light at the end of 1581 or early in 1582.<sup>11</sup>

The *Dialogo* did not summarize conversations held in the Camerata, nor did most of the ideas stem from Bardi's inspiration, as was once assumed. If Bardi holds forth as the preceptor, he is a personage through which Galilei speaks.

Galilei continued to meet with Bardi's circle after the publication of the *Dialogo*, for he desired to see « his speculations corroborated by a practical act », as he confessed to the Duke of Mantua later. Pietro Bardi tells us that « this great genius [Galilei] saw that one of the principal goals of this academy [the Camerata] was by rediscovering ancient music . . . to improve modern music. . . . Therefore, he was the first to allow to be heard singing in dramatic style [*in istile rappresentativo*] . . . Singing over an ensemble of viols accurately played, he let be heard the lament of Count Ugolino of Dante. This innovation generated as much envy among a great part of the practitioners of music as it pleased those who were its true lovers. Galilei, following up on this beautiful project, composed part of the lamentations and responses of Holy Week, which were sung in this same manner in devout company ». These lamentations and responses can be dated quite precisely through a letter Galilei wrote to the Duke Guglielmo Gonzaga of Mantua on 13 March 1582. Describing these compositions for the Duke in the hope that he would request to hear them, he says he has just composed them « according to the usage of the ancient Greeks, which, among other characteristics, . . . is to have a single singer recite, and not so many as (contrary to every right) is customary today ».<sup>12</sup>

How long Galilei continued to meet with Bardi's company is not known. In his *Discorso* of 1589 he wrote of the circle in the past tense, relating that he had composed the *Dialogo* « per solo mostrare ad alcuni Gentil'huomini con i quali *mi trovo all'hora* (with whom I then found myself), la differenza che è dall'uno all'altro Sistema [di dividere la diapason], senza l'uso del Mesolabio, o della Regola harmonica ».<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Concerning the actual date of publication see F. Fano in the preface to the facsimile edition of GALILEI, *Dialogo* (Rome, Reale Accademia d'Italia, 1934), pp. vi-vii. Galilei says in a letter to Guglielmo Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua, 2 January 1582, that he is sending him a copy. However on 13 March 1582 he writes to the Duke: « A' di passati io feci porgere a V.A. uno de' miei dialoghi, scritto intorno l'antica e la moderna musica . . . ». So the book may have been delayed until around March. The letter is quoted in SOLERTI, *Gli albori del melodramma* (Milan, Remo Sandron, 1904; reprint, Hildesheim, G. Olms, 1969), I, 39.

<sup>12</sup> SOLERTI, *Le origini*, pp. 144-145.

<sup>13</sup> GALILEI, *Discorso intorno all'opere di G. Zarlino*, pp. 51-52, italics mine.

Consequently, by the time this discourse was written – the dedication to Zarlino was signed August 1588 – either the Camerata was no longer united, or Galilei had ceased to frequent it. The latter is more likely, since Galilei's *Fronimo* of 1584 is dedicated to a new and younger patron, Jacopo Corsi, a maecenas of the arts and leader of his own *cénacle*.

With the decline of influence of Giovanni Bardi under Duke Ferdinand's reign, it was no longer prestigious to frequent Bardi's house. Bardi had endorsed very visibly the marriage of Duke Francis with the adventurous Bianca Capello, of whom Ferdinand, then a cardinal in Rome, disapproved. Moreover, Ferdinand had brought with him the Roman Emilio de' Cavalieri, who assumed many of the functions at court that had been Bardi's natural preserve, such as the masterminding of entertainments and spectacles. 1587, the year of Ferdinand's succession, probably marked a decline, if not the end, of Bardi's *ridotto*. Bardi in those years courted the favors of the Duke of Ferrara and, when the opportunity presented itself in 1592, left Florence to become the Maestro di Camera and Lieutenant-general of the pontifical guard for newly elected Pope Clement VIII. In this capacity he fought against the Turks under Gian Francesco Aldobrandini, the Pope's nephew, in the siege of Esztergom and Viszgrad in Hungary. Leo XI, to whom Bardi had a family relation, renewed his appointment, which, however, was withdrawn by Pope Paul V in 1605.<sup>14</sup>

Another reason for suspecting the decline of the Camerata in the late 1580's, or at least of its musical discussions, is that Bardi in 1585 became deeply involved with the Accademia della Crusca – he was initiated 12 March 1585 – and for a time it met in his house. He soon became one of its councilors and in 13 September 1588 was elected archconsul, which he remained until 3 August 1589.<sup>15</sup>

That the Camerata was still active, nevertheless, in the late 1580's, is attested by Caccini, who stated in 1600 that he was composing songs in the new manner as far back as fifteen years before.<sup>16</sup> In the foreword to *Le nuove musiche* Caccini named three madrigals and an air that he composed « in those times » and performed to affectionate applause in the « Camerata ». Later – and this must have been in 1592 – he sang them at the home of Nero Neri (probably the Florentine Nero del Nero) in Rome for the gentlemen who were accustomed to

<sup>14</sup> *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, VI, 300.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 301.

<sup>16</sup> *L'Euridice*, fol. 2 r.

gather there.<sup>17</sup> The Bardi circle must have continued to meet, sporadically at least, until about the time Bardi moved to Rome and took Caccini along with him as a secretary.

The period of activity of the Camerata, therefore, may be established as running from around 1570, certainly from 1573, to around 1592. It reached its height between 1577 and 1582, and was declining in the mid-1580's.

### *Membership*

Pietro de' Bardi named only two musicians as frequenting his father's circle: Vincenzo Galilei and Giulio Caccini. Although he named Jacopo Peri, Ottavio Rinuccini, and Jacopo Corsi elsewhere in his letter in connection with later developments in Florentine music, he neither stated nor implied that they attended Bardi's private academy. One other person can be securely linked to the circle, Piero Strozzi, since he appears as an interlocutor in the role of disciple in Galilei's *Dialogo*.

What other musicians besides these few may have been members of the Camerata? Jacopo Peri has often been mentioned, but, born in 1561, he would have been too young to join the group before around 1579. Other musicians with whom Bardi collaborated in court festivals, such as Alessandro Striggio, Cristoforo Malvezzi, Emilio de' Cavalieri, Francesco Cini, may have been invited occasionally or even regular attenders, but of this we have no positive knowledge. Certainly Caccini's assertion that the best musicians of the town gathered at Bardi's makes it plausible that they too gravitated to his house.

Of the poets, Ottavio Rinuccini, born in 1562 would not likely have been active in the group before around 1582, though the proximity of the Rinuccini palace at 6 Via de' Neri at the corner of Via de' Rustici to that of Bardi on the Via de' Benci would have made his frequent presence likely. Giovanni Battista Guarini was one of Bardi's closest associates, and among his other friends were Gabriello Chiabrera, and Giovanni Battista Strozzi the younger. Among other literary men, most closely associated with Bardi were Marcello Adriani, Leonardo Salviati, Alessandro Rinuccini, Nero del Nero, Lorenzo Giacomini, and Baccio and Filippo Valori. Among the scientists Bardi befriended was Galileo Galilei, who, however, was not born until 1564.

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<sup>17</sup> *Le nuove musiche*, fol. Alv.

### Giovanni Bardi

The key to the character of the Camerata is the personality and interests of Giovanni de' Bardi, Count of Vernio. Born in Florence on 5 February 1534, he received a well rounded education, but in his youth devoted himself to arms. He was sent to the war with Siena for Duke Cosimo in 1553-54, and in 1565 to fight the Turks in the defense of Malta. He was one of the captains who commanded Tuscan troops that went to the defense of Emperor Maximilian II against the Turks in Hungary. In 1562 he married Lucrezia Salviati, daughter of Pietro. They had four sons: Filippo, who became Bishop of Cortona; Cosimo, who became Nunzio to Pope Urban VIII and archbishop of Florence; Alfonso; and Pietro, whose letter to Doni was quoted above.<sup>18</sup>

Little is known about his early literary efforts. Bardi's name first appears as director or producer of a *Mascherata del Piacere e del Pentimento* presented at the Medici court in February 1573.<sup>19</sup>

Bardi apparently was admitted to the Accademia degli Alterati in 1574.<sup>20</sup> On 3 January 1575 he is named in the minutes as having improvised a sonnet, « Fera stella ». The oration in Bardi's honor by an unknown member who sponsored his nomination to the Alterati survives, and it is said of him there:

Della prontezza, vivacità del suo ingegno basterà a dire che egli agevolmente, bene, e presto ha potuto imprendere molte nobilj Arti e scientie le quali sempre sono state il nutrimento suo, et il diletto; la notitia delle più pregiate lingue Greca, Latina, e Toscana ci rende vera testimonianza del suo sapere, e molto più la buona pratica et intelligenza della Matematica, Astrologia giudiciaria, e cosmografia, scientie nobilj, utilj e dilettevolj tenute ne modernj tempi, e negl'antichi in somo pregio e stimate da tutti . . . La

<sup>18</sup> The above information is from *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, vi, 300-303. The article on Bardi by R. Cantagalli and L. Pannella contains the best information available.

<sup>19</sup> Letter from Giorgio Bartoli to Lorenzo Giacomini, Florence, 20 February 1572 (i.e. 1573): « Lunedì se ne aspett'un altro [canto] del Piacere del quale è capo S.<sup>r</sup> Giovanni Bardi ». Bibl. Riccardiana, Ms. 2438, Vol. III, No. 57. In the next letter, No. 51, of 27 February 1573, Bartoli adds this information: « Con le lettere della settimana passata vi mandai la canzona et la mascherata degli affetti, con questa vi mando quella del Piacere e del Pentimento, accioche sappiate quel che qua s'è fatto. Dicono che questa seconda mascherata è costata da quattro mila. Le parole sono di M. Anton degli Albizzi Consolo de la Academia [Fiorentina] ».

<sup>20</sup> *Diario*, Ms. Ashburnham 558, II, fol. 18 r, 30 Dicembre 1574: « Al Sig. Gio<sup>ni</sup> comendò che la pross<sup>a</sup> tornata dovesse portare il suo nome acciò sia approvato dal'Accad<sup>a</sup> la seconda tornata ord<sup>a</sup> haver portata l'impresa ». He adopted the academic name « Il Puro », and his device was a flask used for distilling brandy, with the motto « Alterato, io raffino ».

nobile Arte della Poesia . . . così fattamente invaghì l'Animo suo gentile, mente buono et intendente componitore, . . . e si vede chiaramente che c'ha egli in essa quasi del continovo esercitandosej ottenne farsene agevol-scuno ama quelle cose le qualj in qualche parte sono convenienti e proportionate alla sua conditione, di qui è che l'Iracundo desidera le contentionj il sanguino gode nelle cose piacevoli et allegre, il maninconico ama la solitudine et il flematico sopra a ogni cosa la tranquillità e la quiete. Però non è maraviglia se il nostro Sig.<sup>or</sup> Giovannj tutto bene proportionato nell'Animo, ne nel corpo, ha portato sempre singolare affettione alla soave e dilettevole armonia della Musica, Arte degl'Antichi Greci, appresso i qualj fiorivano tutte le nobilj Arti e le virtù, talemente che chi di essa non era intendente, e pratico, era con poca gratia di tutti reputato mal costumato e vile. In questa si è egli con artificiosi componimenti esercitato in modo tale, che molti i quali per loro particolare professione l'adoperano vince assaj . . .<sup>21</sup>

The catholicity of interests attested by the author of this eulogy is documented by Bardi's publications and his recorded participation in this and other academies. Of his music, only three works were published, the madrigals, *Lauro obime*, *lauro*, *Cantai un tempo*,<sup>22</sup> and *Miseri habitator del cieco averno* from the Intermedio IV for the wedding in 1589 of Duke Ferdinand and Christine of Lorraine.<sup>23</sup> The first soprano part only of another madrigal, *Questo è siren*, not previously noticed in musical bibliographies, survives in a manuscript.<sup>24</sup> For the intermedii in the wedding of Vincenzo Gonzaga and Eleonora de' Medici in 1584 Bardi set to music a madrigal of G. B. Strozzi, *Mentre gli acuti dardi*, which is not extant.

Bardi's poetry is scattered among various manuscripts.<sup>25</sup> Bardi was author of the comedy, *L'amico fido*, performed for the marriage of Virginia, daughter of Cosimo de' Medici, and Cesare d'Este in 1586. The comedy, performed by the best available actors, was interspersed with five intermedii, for the last of which Bardi also wrote the music. The memory of this brilliant entertainment must have still been glowing in 1588, for Bardi was asked to direct the intermedii for the comedy to be presented in honor of the marriage of Duke Ferdinand

<sup>21</sup> Florence, Bibl. Med.-Laur., Ashburnham 559, item 24.

<sup>22</sup> *Lauro obime* in *Lauro secco, Libro primo di madrigali a 5 voci di diversi autori* (Ferrara, Vittorio Baldini, 1582); *Cantai* in *Di Pasquale Trista Bocca da l'Aquila il secondo libro di madrigali a 5 voci* (Venice, G. Scotto, 1586).

<sup>23</sup> *Intermedii et concerti* (Venice, Giacomo Vincenti, 1591).

<sup>24</sup> Vatican City, Bibl. Apost. Vat., Ms. Vat. Mus. 11.

<sup>25</sup> Venice, Bibl. Marciana, Ms. ital. ix 113 (6745); Florence, Bibl. Riccardiana, Ms. 2725, fols. 86-94; Florence, Bibl. Naz. Cent., Magl. vii, 877.



and Christine of Lorraine in May, 1589. The ultimate responsibility for these, the most spectacular ever offered in Florence, rested with Emilio de' Cavalieri, but they were apparently conceived and staged by Bardi, and there is evidence that he even planned the protocol for the marriage ceremony.<sup>26</sup> Bardi wrote also the poetry for the opening song by Harmony in the first intermedio, and the madrigal, *E noi con questa bella* in the fifth intermedio. In addition to these occasional works there survives a prose comedy in five acts, *L'Idropico*.<sup>27</sup>

Bardi jostled with his literary colleagues in one of the most heated controversies of his day: between the partisans of Ariosto and of Tasso as to who was the greater epic poet. Bardi entered the debate with a lecture, « In difesa dell'Ariosto », delivered to the Accademia degli Alterati on February 24, 1583.<sup>28</sup> He argued that a modern poet could stand comparison with the ancients, Homer and Virgil, and, indeed, Bardi found Ariosto superior on numerous counts. In the ease with which his verses may be sung, and in imitating nature according to the taste of the times with a view to giving pleasure Ariosto surpassed Tasso.<sup>29</sup> It was Bardi who provoked Francesco Patrizi's entry into the quarrel by a letter of December 29, 1584, with which he sent a copy of the pro-Tasso *Carrafa, o vero de la epica poesia* by Camillo Pellegrino, just then published. This stimulated Patrizi's important *Parere in difesa dell'Ariosto*, which takes up Pellegrino's charge that Ariosto used too great a multitude of action and mishandled character in the *Orlando furioso*.<sup>30</sup>

Bardi wrote on a variety of other subjects as well: on the Florentine game of *calcio*, on the beauties of Rome and Florence, on Galileo's experiments with hydraulics, and, of course, on music.

The purpose of recounting the activities of the protean leader of the Camerata is to show that such a man did not concentrate on any single purpose – such as the reform of music – but was dedicated to the advancement of knowledge on many fronts. Any academy revolving

<sup>26</sup> Florence, Archivio di Stato, Carte Stroziane, Ser. 1, filza 24, fols. 1 r-2 v: « Nota del Ordine che si deve haver dal partir' di Piazza per andar' a levar la G. Duchessa Cristina di Lorena della Torre delli Agli ». The document, not in Bardi's hand, bears his signature.

<sup>27</sup> Bibl. Med.-Laur., Ms. Ashburnham 577, 46 fols. It is signed on the last page: « di V. S. III<sup>ma</sup> ecc<sup>ma</sup> serv<sup>te</sup> humiliss<sup>mo</sup> e ubb<sup>mo</sup> Giovanni bardi de vernio ». This work has not previously been noticed by biographers of Bardi.

<sup>28</sup> Florence, Bibl. Naz. Cent., Ms. Magl. vi, 168.

<sup>29</sup> See BERNARD WEINBERG, *A History of Literary Criticism in the Italian Renaissance* (Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1961), II, 985-987.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 997 ff.

around him had to keep pace with his many interests, theatrical, literary, musical, scientific, sportive, military, and civil. The horizons of the Camerata must have been as wide open as that.

### *Musical Thought*

Was there a Camerata point of view on music? It would be dangerous to assume one. Ideas change as new facts and possibilities are presented, as they were continually before these gentlemen. They met at a time when both poets and musicians were delightedly discovering the potential of music wedded to poetry and theater. One can only assume as a starting point a dissatisfaction with the polyphonic music of the day, which left most literary men unmoved and perplexed. Slowly there emerged the realization that a music more satisfying, more immediately meaningful and directly expressive of feeling was possible.

These fluctuations and tendencies can be studied in the main documents associated with the three key members of the group, Vincenzo Galilei, Piero Strozzi, Giulio Caccini, and Bardi himself.

The earliest fruit of Bardi's musical bent was the sponsorship of Vincenzo Galilei's study of music theory and the history of Greek music. Galilei's study with Zarlino when Galilei was already in his forties marks the beginning of a new career for the lutenist who for twenty or so years had been playing, singing, and teaching for various noble families in Florence and elsewhere. The manuscripts of the Galilei collection in the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale in Florence document his research in the 1570's into Greek music and his attempts to make a compendium of Zarlino's *Le Istitutioni harmoniche*, probably for Bardi and his circle.<sup>31</sup> Besides this treatise, *Compendio nella Theorica della musica* (Ms. Gal. 4), there is a series of translations into Italian: of Carlo Valguglio's Latin discourse on Plutarch's *De musica*, of Plutarch's treatise (in Galilei's hand but probably not by him) (Ms. Gal. 7), and of the *Harmonics* of Aristoxenus from Antonio Gogava's Latin (Ms. Gal. 8) – all witnesses to Galilei's investigations at this time. These manuscripts can be dated by watermarks as belonging approximately to the period from 1572 to 1574.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Florence, Bibl. Naz. Cent., Ms. Gal. 4, 7, 8. These were formerly known as Mss. Anteriori a Galileo, Vol. iv, vii, viii.

<sup>32</sup> The watermarks can be dated by comparison to those on paper used in documents in the Archivio di Stato of Florence and in the Bartoli letters to Giacomini (see footnote 19).

The *Compendio* follows for about 25 folios Zarlino's Parts I and II – that is the theoretical foundations of music. But then, instead of pursuing, with Zarlino, the instructions in counterpoint of Part III, Galilei takes another tack, leading into an investigation of the Greek « modes », *tonoi*, or *harmoniae*. The manuscript breaks off in the course of a discussion of the difference between the presentation of the species of diapason by Ptolemy and Boethius, and the errors concerning them of Gaffurius. The bewildering complexities of the Greek tonal system – always the stumbling block for a student of Greek music theory – must have stimulated Galilei to embark on a systematic reading of the Greek sources: Plutarch, Aristoxenus, and – through Gogava's faulty Latin translation – Ptolemy. Then he heard about Girolamo Mei, a literary scholar who had also stumbled on the problem of the modes ten years earlier and had devoted to it the best part of the intervening years before finding a solution that satisfied him, which he would report in the treatise *De modis musicis antiquorum*, completed in 1573.<sup>33</sup>

It must have been around 1572 that Galilei compiled the list of questions that appear in the first folios of the volume that contains the *Compendio*.<sup>34</sup> Among the questions are some that were answered in Mei's letters. They ramble over the history of Greek music: whether the diatonic, chromatic, and enharmonic were sung pure or mixed; why was the Proslambanomenos of the mixolydian higher in pitch than that of the hypophrygian; how many modes were there, and which were higher, which lower; what was the range of each; questions on the terminology used by Aristoxenus; why did Pythagoras consider intervals smaller than the diatessaron dissonant; why did the ancients not use consonant chords among the parts of their songs (« per qual ragione gl'antichi non usassero gl'accordi delle consonanze tra le parti delle loro cantilene »); why did they not arrange their monochord in such a way as would permit them to hear intervals simultaneously; whether instrumental sounds had any power without the accompaniment of the human voice; did the Greeks distinguish between perfect and imperfect consonances; when did this distinction begin; how did the modern practice of counterpoint begin; and many others.<sup>35</sup>

Bardi undoubtedly encouraged this direction in Galilei's studies, away from the practical discipline of counterpoint, toward the redis-

<sup>33</sup> See C. PALISCA, *G. Mei*, p. 31.

<sup>34</sup> The watermark throughout this volume is identical to that on Bartoli's letters of January to December 1572. See footnote 19.

<sup>35</sup> Ms. Gal. 4, fols. 1 v-4 v.

covery of Greek musical theory. Bardi well understood how important Aristotle's *Poetics* and other ancient treatises had been to the criticism and even rebirth of poetry and drama in the sixteenth century. He made it possible for Galilei to visit Mei twice in Rome and kept in such close touch that Mei assumed that Bardi would read the letters and even addressed one of them to him.

Of the more than thirty letters that Mei and Galilei exchanged, six survive in copies made by Giorgio Bartoli, namely Mei's letters to Galilei dated 8 May 1572, 22 November 1577, 17 January 1578, 15 May 1579, an undated letter probably of 1581, and one of 17 January 1578 to Bardi.<sup>36</sup> In a letter of 19 May 1582 to Giovanni Vincenzo Pinelli Mei stated that he and Galilei had exchanged thirty very long letters between them in five years, and Galilei twice visited him in Rome.<sup>37</sup>

Whether it was preoccupation with other projects or that Bardi and his colleagues were too stunned with Mei's confident pronouncements, there is not much evidence until 1577 that they had come to any strong convictions about either Greek music or the reform of modern music. By that year Bardi was probably at work on his discourse to Caccini, for he appealed to Mei on December 9 to clarify Ptolemy's description of the synemmenon system. Bardi was evidently struggling with Ptolemy's *Harmonics* himself, because Galilei did not know Greek and had only Gogava's Latin.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> The letters are published in C. PALISCA, *G. Mei*, pp. 89-179.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 184. It may seem a contradiction that Mei in his letter to Pinelli said that their correspondence lasted five years, when it began in 1572 and ended in 1581. Moreover, there is a strange lack of momentum from Mei's letter of 1572 to 1578, when Galilei sent his first discourse to Zarlino, and Bardi addressed his to Caccini. If the copyist, Giorgio Bartoli, had mistaken 1572 for 1577, there would indeed have been five years: the first letter in May 1577, the two visits in June and July, then Galilei's five letters of August to November, 1577, answered in Mei's of 22 November 1577, clearing up matters not covered in the meetings. A number of facts, however, militate against any such revision of the dating of the first letter: Bartoli in a letter to Lorenzo Giacomini dated 5 March 1574 (i.e. 1575) mentions that Messer Damiano died that day, having just returned from the jubilee at Rome. Mei named Messer Damiano in the first letter as having assured him of Galilei's «goodness and sincerity», which he could not have done in 1577. In the letter of 1572 Mei says he is almost at the end of his project on the modes, which could only mean *De modis musicis antiquorum*, completed in June 1573. Indeed, he says he is on the important question of how the modes were used, which is the subject of Book IV, the only one that still remained unfinished in 1572, since Book III was completed in April 1571. Moreover, if Book IV had been completed at the time of the first letter, Mei would surely have referred Galilei to the treatise, a copy of which was circulating in Florence. The date 1572 must, therefore, stand and one is left to wonder why it took Bardi, Galilei, and their colleagues five years to begin to put the information and ideas received to use.

<sup>38</sup> In his dedication of the *Dialogo* to Bardi, Galilei expresses his thanks to him for having «many times set aside his most weighty and important projects to explicate

The first document to emerge from the Camerata was the essay of Bardi known as « Discorso mandato a Caccini sopra la musica antica e 'l cantar bene » published by Antonio Francesco Gori in *Lyra Barberina* along with other works left behind by Giovanni Battista Doni.<sup>39</sup> A manuscript of this discourse, though probably not that on which this edition was based, is in the Barberini collection of the Vatican Library. Probably from the sixteenth or early seventeenth century, it has escaped notice until now.<sup>40</sup> In this source Bardi's discourse follows three folios of notes on the life of Girolamo Mei headed « Relatione della Vita del Sig. Girolamo Mei fatta dal Sig. Zenobio Mei ». <sup>41</sup> Doni's copy was probably editorially emended by Gori to produce the printed version, which has some modernizations of syntax and orthography, but in all substantial details agrees with the Barberini manuscript version, except where the scribe obviously erred. Bardi's essay lacks a title and attribution in the Barberini manuscript.

There is no reason to doubt the attribution to Bardi. No one else would have begun a discourse with these words:

Poiché io penso di non farvi se non cosa grata, molto mio amato S<sup>r</sup>. Giulio, se gl'infiniti ragionamenti havuti insieme in varij luoghi, et in varij tempi della musica per mio avviso quasi piccioli fasci sparsi per lo campo del vostro ingegno andrò raccogliendo ad uno ad uno, et insieme legandogli: farò di maniera che quasi unito e ben proportionato corpo in un'occhiata possan esser da voi compresi, e considerati.

One recognizes immediately the ornate academic style, which was foreign to Galilei, for example, and the patronizing tone adopted toward « Signor Giulio », which, combined with the fact that only Bardi and Galilei in Florence had pursued the study of Greek music to the necessary point, excludes any other attribution than to Bardi.

The discourse begins with basic definitions, of music, harmony, and rhythm, but the definitions, completely aberrant from those of contemporary theorists, rely exclusively on the ancient writers: Plato, Aristotle, and their successors. Thus music is a combination of words

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*viva voce* the obscure opinion of the ancient and serious authors. You so punctiliously commented on the poorly understood concepts of these authors that one might well have thought that you had lived in those happy centuries . . . ».

<sup>39</sup> (Florence, 1763), II, 233-248. A partial translation is in OLIVER STRUNK, *Source Readings in Music History* (New York, W. W. Norton, 1950), pp. 290-301.

<sup>40</sup> Vatican City, Bibl. Apost. Vat., Ms. Barberinianus latinus 3990, fols. 4 r-13 v. My quotations will be from this version.

<sup>41</sup> This is a very clear copy of the notice copied also in Florence, Bibl. Naz. Cent., Ms. II, II, 140, fols. 46 r-47 v, 50 r.

arranged in verses according to various meters through long and short syllables, set varyingly to fast, slow, or intermediate and high, low or intermediate sounds, sometimes sung by a voice alone, sometimes accompanied by an instrument.

He proceeds to the twenty-seven tunings or shades of the diatonic, chromatic, and enharmonic genres. He does not detail them all, because his purpose is « to adapt these antique things to our practice for our enlightenment ». <sup>42</sup> He then describes the seven species of octave, which he takes to be the *harmoniae*. To each, he shows, a different « tuono » (*tonos*) or key is assigned, so that a song in a given *harmonia* falls in a low, intermediate, or high pitch range.

The exposition of this system is accompanied with charts. One set of charts shows the seven octave-species, while an oblong chart on an eleven-line staff in the manuscript presents the seven tonoi side by side, with the *mesai* and transpositions indicated (see plate 224).

The point of this exposition is that modern music, with only two species of octave, by comparison to this system, lacks variety. Whereas the ancients could represent a sluggish character by assigning to him a low tonos, a calm or majestic person by an intermediate tonos, while a lamenting character would sing in a high one, in modern contrapuntal music not only is the choice of species limited and undifferentiated with respect to pitch but several melodies in several modes are sung at the same time. Composers seem to regard it a mortal sin if the parts sing the syllables together and with the same longs and shorts. In Bardi's opinion, independent part-music is more suitable to instrumental music, where fugues and double counterpoints are welcome to alleviate boredom.

Bardi counsels Caccini in his songs to declaim the words as intelligibly as he can, never making a short syllable long and a long one short, keeping in mind the dictum of Plato, that the sound and « counterpoint » should follow the text and not the contrary. Each line should be expressed properly and not be split up into segments. If he wishes to make some *passaggi*, they should be on long syllables, as on the sixth and tenth syllables of the hendecasyllabic line. This would afford him a generous sixteen *passaggi* in a stanza of eight lines. The ladies of Ferrara, whom Bardi has heard sing at least 330 madrigals by heart without ever spoiling a syllable, should be his models. In singing to a harpsichord, lute, or other instrument, one may at pleasure contract or expand the measure: « si puote à suo piacer' la battuta

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<sup>42</sup> Ms. Barb. Lat. 3990, fol. 5 r.

stringere, e allargare, avvengale à lui stia guidare la misura à suo senno ». <sup>43</sup> The melody should be limited as much as possible to a few notes, centered around the *mese*.

Andrete altresì ricercando poche voci aggirandovi intorno alla media del tuono che metterete in atto quanto più potrete, rammentandovi che l'huomo nel favelare poche voci ricerca, e di rado forse, o, non mai per salto ragiona, se non forse turbato da colera, o da altra repentina passione; imitando il gran musico Olimpo, il quale in molte centinaia de canzoni che egli diede in luce, alla parte principale, non fece mai più che quattro corde toccare. <sup>44</sup>

The program of reform for vocal music outlined in these pages was inspired by the image of Greek music communicated by Mei. The singing of the ancients was always a single air, even when a choir sang, or when instruments accompanied. <sup>45</sup> The ancients expressed the passions through the choice of a *tonos* in the proper region of the voice – low, high, or intermediate – and a rate of articulation that fitted the text. <sup>46</sup> By mixing together simultaneously several airs modern composers combine contrary natural properties of the voice and of rhythm and thereby fail to achieve any movement of feeling in the listener. <sup>47</sup> With respect to the songs of Olympos, Mei expressed in 1572 his opinion that Plutarch should be taken literally when he said « che ne l'aria de lor cantarsi non ricercassero salendo e scendendo più che tre corde ciascuna, tanto erano semplici e naturali; . . . et non che essi cantassero con tre corde, cio è in tre arie à un tempo medesimo, ò le sonassero, come habbjam sentito à nostri tempi farsi qualche volta da alcuni grandi artefici, i quali hanno et ingegnosamente certo sonato sopra una medesima viola con l'arco tre ò quattro parti e arie à un tratto insieme ». <sup>48</sup>

Bardi tended to embroider upon Mei, for he was not fully convinced that Olympus composed monophonic songs, speaking as he does of a « principal part ». He also stretches the number of strings to four. The system of *tonoi* as set forth by Bardi appears to be derived from charts that Mei sent to him in a letter of January 17, 1578. <sup>49</sup> Bardi's chart of Ptolemy's system was intended to make the system comprehen-

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 12 v.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> Letter No. 1, in C. PALISCA, *G. Mei*, p. 90.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 91-94.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 96-100.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 110-111.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 154. The charts are missing from Bartoli's copy in the Vatican. Mei's chart of Ptolemy's system probably resembled that of Galilei's *Dialogo*, p. 64.

sible to a practitioner such as Giulio Caccini, but in the process of bowdlerization he gives a misreading of Mei, who in turn slightly misrepresented Ptolemy.

Bardi's utilization of the charts of the Greek system sent to him in January 1578 permits a more precise dating of the discourse than the « circa 1580 » usually assigned to it. It was probably completed in 1578, because, had Bardi written in later, he would certainly have mentioned the Greek hymns and the tables of Alypius by which they could be read, the latter sent to Galilei with Mei's letter of 15 May 1579.<sup>50</sup> Surely, also, Bardi would have attempted a transcription to give Caccini some idea of a Greek musical setting. There is evidence that Bardi did grapple with the problem of transcription, because Francesco Patrizi in his *Della poetica* of 1586 cites Bardi's opinion on how a detail of the notation of the Hymn to the Muses should be sung or played. Undoubtedly the two exchanged views on Greek music when Bardi visited Patrizi in June 1584.<sup>51</sup>

Despite its dependence on Mei, the discourse articulates a personal vision of a music that is pleasing to the ear, yet worthy of the Greek model. Bardi's conception was a pragmatic one rooted in the practice he knew. It did not give up the several simultaneous parts, but they moved together, and one melody dominated. Most of the music of the *intermedi* of 1589 would have fulfilled his requirements. His vision, at least in the discourse of 1578, did not promise anything beyond this. Bastiano de Rossi was probably not misquoting when he reported that for the *intermedi* of 1585 Bardi « volle principalmente, che risplendesse la pompa, e la finezza del suo poema. Perciocchè, e copiosissima, pienissima, variissima, dolcissima, e artificiosissima, oltre ad ogni altra, ed insieme (il che s'ha quasi per impossibile) chiarissima, ed agevolissima ad intenderne le parole, volle che riuscisse quell'armonia . . . ».<sup>52</sup>

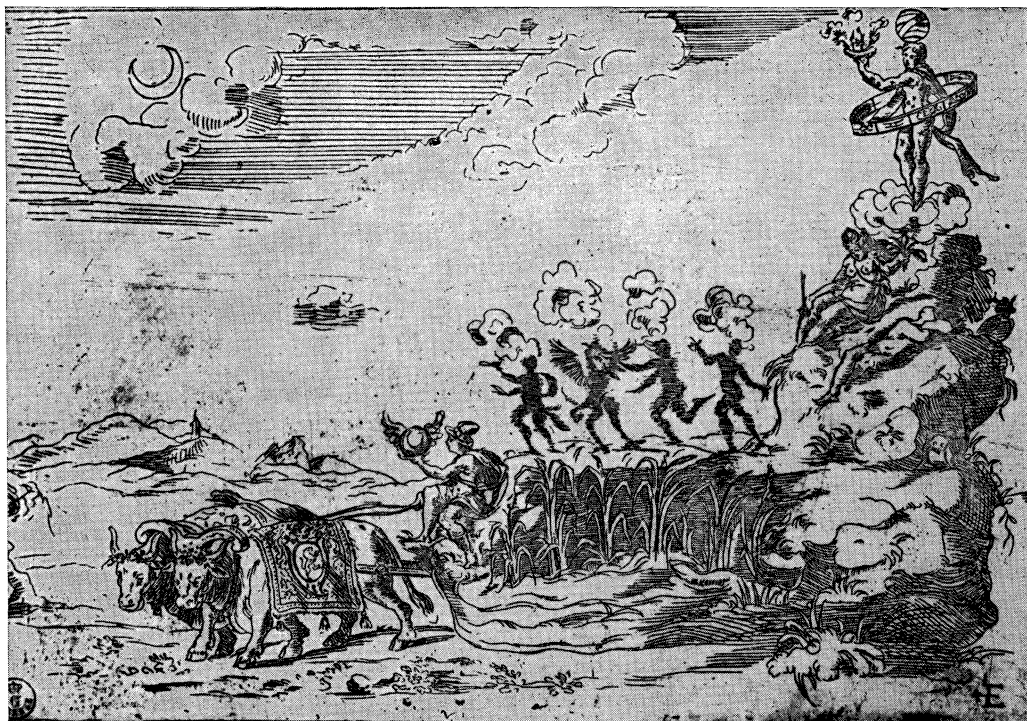
One subject barely broached in Bardi's discourse must have occupied a large place in the Camerata's discussions. This is the problem of tuning instruments and joining them in ensembles. Bardi notes that while the viol and lute are tuned according to the tuning of Aristoxenus – a kind of equal temperament – harps and harpsichords are tuned in

<sup>50</sup> Eventually the tables of Alypius were published in GALILEI's *Dialogo*, pp. 92-94, and the hymns on p. 97. The hymns were sent to Galilei in an earlier letter the text of which is not extant. See my *G. Mei*, p. 156.

<sup>51</sup> See C. PALISCA, « The Alterati of Florence, Pioneers in the Theory of Dramatic Music », in WILLIAM W. AUSTIN, ed., *New Looks at Italian Opera, Essays in Honor of Donald J. Grout*, p. 21.

<sup>52</sup> BASTIANO DE ROSSI, *Descrizione del magnificentiss. apparato e de' maravigliosi intermedi* (Florence, G. Marescotti, 1585), p. 3.

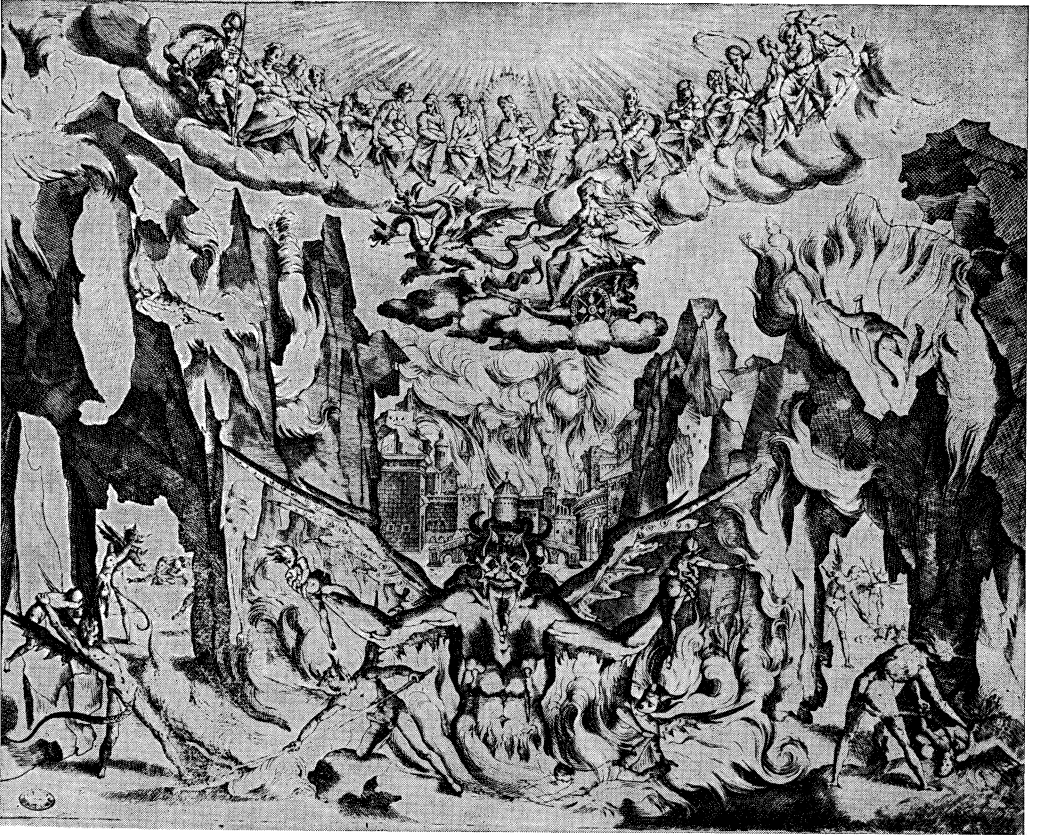




Il Carro della Notte. Firenze 1579.

« Il Carro della Notte » accompagnò la comparsa di una squadriglia di venturieri nella *Sbarra* combattuta a Firenze, nel cortile di Palazzo Pitti, in occasione delle nozze di Francesco I con Bianca Cappello. La musica era di Pietro Strozzi su testo di Palla Rucellai, e la parte della Notte era interpretata da Giulio Caccini. L'incisione, su invenzione di G. Gualterotti, figura nella descrizione delle *Feste nelle nozze del Serenissimo Francesco Medici* (Firenze 1579).

Nella pagina seguente: *L'Intermezzo dell'Ade*, quarto dei componimenti musicali che accompagnarono *La Pellegrina* di G. Bargagli, rappresentata nel T. degli Uffizi di Firenze, per le nozze del granduca Ferdinando I (1589). Gli intermezzi, su invenzione di Giovanni de' Bardi, celebravano i concetti platonici della « musica mundana » e della « musica humana ». Il quarto, *dell'Ade*, fu musicato dal Bardi con qualche intervento, pare, di Giulio Caccini. Le scene e i costumi erano di Bernardo Buontalenti. L'incisione di Epifanio d'Alfiano si trova alla Marucelliana di Firenze.



L'Intermezzo dell'Ade. Firenze 1589.

a system of unequal tones and semitones. This makes it impossible to have the two genres of instruments blend well in intervals except the unison and octave. It is a highly important problem, he says, that has gone unnoticed. The challenges of finding a tuning for the advancing chromaticism excited the interest of a number of authors: particularly Galilei, Ercole Bottrigari and Giovanni Maria Artusi.<sup>53</sup>

Bardi's remarks undoubtedly reflect Galilei's preoccupation with tuning. His master Zarlino, and his fellow pupils – Willaert, De Rore, and Vicentino – all became embroiled in the tuning question. The most assiduous of the group was Galilei, who wrote on it over a period of about twenty years. At the time Bardi was writing his *discorso*, Galilei sent off to Zarlino a draft of a treatise that must have been at least partly a critique of his teacher's doctrine about tuning. This started a battle of books that was to last until Zarlino died in 1590.

The first problem that Galilei listed in the codex containing the *Compendio* referred to the tuning used in the music of his day: « In the genre that is sung today there cannot arise the shortcomings considered in the syntonic of Ptolemy because it [Ptolemy's] is not the one [sung today] ».<sup>54</sup>

Zarlino had stated categorically that the tuning currently employed in vocal music was this very syntonic diatonic of Ptolemy, which Galilei recognized to have serious shortcomings. Galilei was still worrying over this in 1578, when he asked Mei's opinion about it. Mei advised him to make a simple experiment on a lute, dividing the frets on two different strings, one according to Ptolemy's syntonic, the other according to the Pythagorean diatonic ditoniaion and comparing the tones produced with those used in singing.<sup>55</sup> Galilei probably made the experiment and discovered that singers did not follow either system. If he reported his finding in the discourse to Zarlino, this would have been enough to incite the master to disown his disciple, for it was one of Zarlino's most stubborn tenets that only the syntonic, which yielded

<sup>53</sup> ERCOLE BOTTRIGARI, *Il Desiderio* (Venice, R. Amadino, 1594) concentrates on this problem, which he earlier introduced in *Il Patricio* (Bologna, V. Benacci, 1593). Giovanni Maria Artusi in his dialogues *L'Artusi, ovvero delle imperfezioni della moderna musica* (Venice, G. Vincenti, 1600) and *Seconda parte dell'Artusi* (Venice, G. Vincenti, 1603) develops extended debates on this subject.

<sup>54</sup> Florence, Bibl. Naz. Cent., Ms. Gal. 4, fol. 1 v: « Nel genere che si canta hoggi non possono nascere gl'inconvenienti considerati nel syntono di Tolomeo per non esser quello questo ».

<sup>55</sup> Letter of January 15, 1578, in G. Mei, pp. 67, 140. Also see C. PALISCA, « Scientific Empiricism in Musical Thought » in HEDLEY H. RHYS, ed., *Seventeenth Century Science and the Arts* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1961), pp. 91-137.

the largest possible number of pure perfect and imperfect consonances, must be used in vocal music.

It is this problem which is the point of departure for Galilei's *Dialogo* of 1581. Fifty-one out of its 149 pages are devoted to it. In these pages he first demolishes the contention of Zarlino that the syntonic diatonic is the tuning in current use for vocal music; then he shows that the practiced tuning must be a compromise between the Pythagorean, with its pure fifths, and the syntonic, with its consonant thirds, but that it cannot be defined precisely, because it must be flexible enough to allow for the introduction of chromatic alterations.

In the next thirty pages (51-80) Galilei covers ground that Bardi passed over briefly: the system of *tonoi* and octave species. Galilei transmits the interpretation of the system communicated to him by Mei. In the course of the dialogue he shows how this system differs from the conception of it presented by Gaffurio and Glareanus, and how, further, the Greek *tonoi* differ from the modes of the church.

The critique of counterpoint, to which this dialogue owes its immortality, occupies the next relatively brief section of ten pages.<sup>56</sup> In it Galilei attempts to show why the rules of counterpoint are inimical to the natural function of all human utterance, the expression of the conceits of the mind. He considers how the practice of counterpoint might have arisen and attributes it to the ostentation of instrumentalists bent on showing off their technique. With time, the ancient practice of singing was buried, together with other arts and sciences. The rules of counterpoint, the interlocutors agree, are fine to achieve a full, varied, and smooth harmony, particularly in instrumental writing, but they are of no avail for the expression of the thoughts and feelings of poetry; indeed they constitute an impediment. The ancients managed to attain their goal by varying the tonos and octave species according to the character of a song, staying close to the *mese*, and using relatively few notes. Galilei suggests that just as the poet-singers of ancient times moved people with their recitations of heroic poems, so in his day too able practitioners can expressively sing impromptu to a lute or keyboard instrument, provided they avoid the disadvantages of counterpoint. As Mei had done in his letters, Galilei shifts constantly between describing the model – Greek music, even to the point of explaining its notation – and showing how modern music might benefit from emulating it.

The last dozen pages of the dialogue are devoted to a critique of

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<sup>56</sup> This section of the *Dialogo* is translated in STRUNK, *Source Readings*, pp. 305-319, with a few passages omitted.

the practice of instrumental music in his time. Galilei develops a thought brought up in passing several times before, but now he finally adduces for it documentary support – the ancient Greeks sang their tragedies and comedies in their entirety, accompanied in unison by the « tibia » (i.e. aulos), cithara, or other instrument. The principal proof is the same that Mei had supplied, Aristotle's Problem 49, in which Aristotle compares the *tonoi* used by the chorus and those used by the actors.<sup>57</sup> His comments imply that both sang their speeches.

Mei's theory that the ancient tragedy was sung throughout was well known in Florence, having been expounded in his *De modis musicis antiquorum*, which Mei sent to Piero Vettori in 1573, and encouraged him to pass around to his friends.<sup>58</sup> Many disagreed with this theory, but Bardi and his circle must have been confirmed in their opinion when Francesco Patrizi concluded, mostly on the basis of Aristotle's *Problems*, that « chiarissimo appare, che le Tragedie in rappresentando si cantavano . . . Che in theatro si cantavano i Nomi; che le Tragedie si cantavano, con voce alta, e grande, e come Cicerone disse, *vox tra-goedorum* ». <sup>59</sup>

It is this belief in the continuous musical recitation of the ancient Greek tragedies that earned the Camerata its immortality. Rinuccini justified the setting of an entire dramatic poem to music by the example of the Greeks: « È stata opinione di molti, Cristianissima Regina, che gli antichi Greci e Romani cantassero sulle scene le tragedie intere . . . ». <sup>60</sup>

As to the style of singing used in the ancient drama, Peri, referring also to the hypothesis of musically intoned speeches in the tragedy, defended the style he used in *Euridice* by saying:

. . . stimai che gli antichi Greci, e Romani (i quali, secondo l'opinione di molti, cantavano su le Scene le Tragedie intere) usassero un'armonia, che avanzando quella del parlare ordinario, scendesse tanto dalla melodia del cantare, che pigliasse forma di cosa mezzana . . . E per ciò tralasciata qualunque altra maniera di canto udita fin qui, mi diedi tutto a ricercare l'imitazione, che si debbe a questi Poemi; e considerai, che quella sorte di voce, che dagli Antichi al cantare fu assegnata, la quale essi chiamavano Diastematica (quasi trattenuta e sospesa), potesse in parte affrettarsi, e prender

<sup>57</sup> ARISTOTLE, *Problems*, 922 b. 10-27, now usually numbered 48. Galilei used the translation supplied by Mei, apparently with the letter of September 1581 (*G. Mei*, p. 178).

<sup>58</sup> See C. PALISCA, « The Alterati », p. 33.

<sup>59</sup> FRANCESCO PATRIZI, *Della poetica* (Ferrara, Vittorio Baldini, 1586), p. 292.

<sup>60</sup> *L'Euridice*, dedication to Maria de' Medici, 4 October 1600 (Florence, Cosimo Giunti, 1600).

temperato corso tra i movimenti del canto sospesi, e lenti, e quegli della favella spediti, e veloci, et accomodarsi al proposito mio (come l'accomodavano anch'essi, leggendo le Poesie e i versi Eroici), avvicinandosi all'altra del ragionare, la quale continuata appellavano...<sup>61</sup>

The concept of « diastematic » and « continuous » voice, used by Peri to describe his style of monody, is derived from Aristoxenus (*Harmonicorum* i. 8-9). Peri probably read of it in the *Dialogo* of Galilei, who in turn was taught by Mei that the goal of the ancients was « lo esprimere interamente et con efficacia tutto quello che voleva fare intendere col suo significato il parlare per il mezzo et ajuto de la acutezza e gravità de la voce, detta da loro à differenza de la continua con la quale altri continuamente ragiona nel idioma loro diastematica, quasi per dir così intervallativa, accompagnata con la regolata temperatura del presto et adagio, pronunziare le parti de suoi termini, secondo che l'una e l'altra qualità, ciascuna da per se per propria natura è accomodata à qualche determinato affetto ».<sup>62</sup>

The notion that dramatic singing should realize a compromise between song and speech must have crystallized in Bardi's circle. Galilei already around 1590 expressed the belief that « il cantare nel ricercare delle voci ha da essere solo differente dal parlare quanto basta a distinguere quello da questo ».<sup>63</sup>

### *Musical Style*

Much of the theoretical basis for sung drama and a new style of dramatic music was already formulated in Galilei's *Dialogo* and in conversations that took place at Bardi's house and at the Alterati academy in the late 1570's and early 1580's. Yet they did not begin to be applied to actual dramatic productions until the 1590's. The earliest short pastorales completely set to music were the *Satiro* and *La Disperazione di Fileno* of Cavalieri, produced for the carnival of 1591. No trace of either the text by Laura Guidiccioni ne' Luchesini or the music by Cavalieri remains, but Alessandro Guidotti claims that Vittoria Archilei, reciting her part in the second of these – that is singing it – « moved [the audience] wonderfully to tears, while the character of

<sup>61</sup> PERI, *L'Euridice*, « A' Lettori », fol. 3 r.

<sup>62</sup> Letter No. 1, in G. Mei, p. 116.

<sup>63</sup> *Dubbi intorno a quanto io ho detto dell'uso dell'enharmonio, con la soluzione di essi*, Ms. Gal. 3, fol. 62 v.

Fileno moved [them] to laughter». <sup>64</sup> Then in 1594 Jacopo Corsi and Jacopo Peri began their first experiments in setting to music the *Dafne* of Ottavio Rinuccini, which was not performed until 1598. Meanwhile Cavalieri had produced another short work with a text adapted from Guarini's *Pastor fido* by Laura Guidiccioni, *Giuoco della cieca*, set to music by Cavalieri and performed on 29 October 1595 in the Hall of Statues of Palazzo Pitti. Finally, through the sponsorship of Jacopo Corsi, whose wedding present it was to Maria de' Medici in her marriage to Henry IV of France, Peri and Rinuccini collaborated again in *L'Euridice*, performed on 6 October 1600 under Cavalieri's direction. Bardi's protégé Caccini also insisted on participating, because a number of his singers took both major and minor parts.

These productions, though inspired by ideas that circulated in the Camerata, took place outside of its sphere and mainly after it had ceased to exist as a circle around Bardi. Jacopo Corsi also held open house to gentlemen of the city who wished to pursue literary and artistic discussions. Like Bardi, he was a member of the Alterati. But his interests seem to have been more limited to the literary and musical. He evidently had greater financial resources, for at his house was first produced *Dafne*, and not only did he offer *Euridice* to the wedding guests of 1600, but when it looked as if negotiations were breaking down for the marriage with Henry IV he offered to help raise the money needed as a dowry. <sup>65</sup> Whereas Bardi preferred Ariosto, Corsi was a friend of Tasso. While Caccini was Bardi's favorite, Corsi sponsored Peri. There is reason to believe Bardi and Corsi were also rivals at court. So Corsi's group cannot be said to have absorbed the Camerata. As Nino Pirrotta has shown, the two *ridotti* were somewhat mutually exclusive. <sup>66</sup> A link between them, however, besides Rinuccini, was certainly Vincenzo Galilei, who dedicated the second edition of the *Fronimo* (1584) to Corsi, noting that the book contained « molte delle cose che lei ha da me (a sua richiesta) udite, et molte altre di quelle ch'ella desidera udire et intendere, come in legendolo potrà sensatamente vedere ». <sup>67</sup>

If the Camerata represented a musical style, that style must be

<sup>64</sup> EMILIO DE' CAVALIERI, *Rappresentatione di anima, et di corpo* (Rome, Nicolò Mutij, 1600), fol. 3 r.

<sup>65</sup> See C. PALISCA, « The First Performance of "Euridice" », in *Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Festschrift*, ed. ALBERT MELL (New York, Queens College of The City of New York, 1964), pp. 1-23.

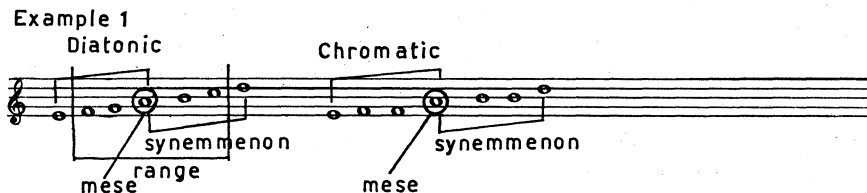
<sup>66</sup> « Temperaments and Tendencies in the Florentine Camerata », *The Musical Quarterly*, XL (1954), 169-189.

<sup>67</sup> (Venice, l'herede di G. Scotto, 1584), dedication.

sought in works other than the pastorals of Cavaliere and of Corsi's circle. It is fitting, again, to begin the search with Bardi.

The chorus which closes the fourth intermedio of 1589, on a poem by G. B. Strozzi, *Miseri habitator del cieco' averno*, probably represents an attempt by Bardi to model his music on a Greek ideal. The poem addresses the wretched inhabitants of « the blind world of darkness, the kingdom of pain », warning them that no one will join them any more from among the dead, for the gates to the cruel prison are closed forever. The poem is set line by line in a manner that Bardi later described as « according to my usual method, keeping the line intact, and with the expression of the words and the conceit ». <sup>68</sup> Each line of text, indeed, is given an unbroken line in the canto, while the other four voices follow along homophonically, all coming together in a cadence. The poem has seven lines, mixing seven and eleven syllables, rhyming abbaacc. After the seventh line Bardi repeats lines 5 to 7, with their original music. Otherwise there is neither textual nor melodic repetition and only a short moment of polyphonic imitation. In his zeal to preserve the longs and shorts of the poetic meter, Bardi freely mixes groupings of two and three minims and of two and three semibreves, as reflected in the groups of two, four, and six quarters in the transcription of Example 2.

Recalling that Bardi advised Caccini to follow Olympus, who in the « parte principale » of his songs did not use more than four strings or notes, we may observe that the range of the canto part is limited to a fifth. The melody appears to be written in the Greek Dorian *tonos*, using a mixture of the diatonic and chromatic genera in the synemmenon system. The following scheme sums up the tonal system used:



The range of the canto melody is low, from  $f'$  to  $c''$ , with the *mese* on  $a'$ . The repeat aside, four of the seven cadences of the canto

<sup>68</sup> In a letter to the Duke of Ferrara in which Bardi sent him a composition, 3 October 1595, Modena, Archivio di Stato, Corrispondenza Musicisti, Busta 1: « second'il mio solito col verso intero e, con la spressione delle parole e concetto ».



part end on A, although the whole piece could best be described as in g minor. Of the other three cadences, one ends harmonically on the dominant of g and another on the tonic. The strange atmosphere of the piece is engendered partly from this conflict of ancient *mese* and modern tonic. The main expressive means used is the mixture of the diatonic and chromatic systems, which produces cross relations in the voices and melodic tritones in the canto part. In only one place is expressive dissonance used, in m. 10, where a C is suspended over E-G # for one beat, before resolving on B.

Example 2: G. Bardi, *Miseri habitator*.

Canto  
Alto  
Tenore  
Settimo Basso

Mi - se - ri ha - bi - ta - tor del cie - c'a - ver - no,

Giù nel do - len - te re - gno Nul - l'al - tro scen - de -  
Nul - l'al - tro

Nul -  
Nul - l'al - tro scen - de -  
Nul - l'al - tro scen - de -

- ra ch'in - vi - dia e sde - gno. Sa - rà l'hor -

scen - de - ra ch'in - vi - dia e sde - gno.

- l'al - tro scen - de - ra ch'in - vi - dia e sde - gno.  
- ra ch'in - vi - dia e sde - gno.

- ra ch'in - vi - dia e sde - gno.

ror sa - rà il tor-<sup>10</sup> men - to e - ter - no. Du - ro

ror sa - rà il tor - men - to e - ter - no. Du - ro

ror sa - rà il tor - men - to e - ter - no.

<sup>15</sup>

car - cer in - fer - no, A te non più ver - rà la gen - te

<sup>20</sup>

mor - ta. Chiu - d' in e - ter - no la tar - ta - rea por - ta.

(Original note values have been cut in half. Original unbarred in  $\phi$ . Punctuation is the editor's.)

All of the interest is concentrated in the top voice, except for one moment of imitation on the phrase « Null'altro scenderà ». The bass serves as harmonic foundation, while the other parts complete the triadic harmony.

The philosophy behind this method of composition is expressed by Galilei in a short essay appended to his counterpoint treatise:

Vedesi ultimamente che il ricercare poche corde è cosa naturale et in ragionando, et cantando; perché il fine dell'uno et dell'altro è solo l'espressione de' concetti dell'animo con il mezzo delle parole . . . si nel cantar solo come ancora nel cantare al suono di qualsia strumento . . . et se alcuno mi replicasse sendo naturale all'huomo il potere con la sua voce ricercare senza fatica otto, diece, et più corde saranno adunque oltre le tre o le quattro che ricercava Olimpo tutte le altre otiose. Laonde io rispondo non esser così; imperoché le tre o quattro che ricerca Olimpo in una cantilena non era essa sola atta a esprimere tutte le passioni et l'affettioni dell'animo. et quelle tre o quattro corde che ricercherà un'animo quieto, non sono le medesime di quelle che convengono al concitato, o a quello che si lamenta overamente al pigro et al sonnolente. perché il quieto ricerca quelle di mezzo, il querulo le acute, et il pigro e sonnolente le gravi; sì come ancora questo usará i numeri tardi, il quieto i mediocri, il concitato i veloci; di maniera che il musico si verrà a servire hora di queste, et altra fiata di quelle secondo l'affettione ch'egli cercherà di rappresentare per imprimerla negli uditori.<sup>69</sup>

To accompany a melody constructed according to these principles the composer should strive for what Plato called *prosborda*, or unison. In polyphonic music this could be approximated by having vocal or instrumental parts accompany with simple triads that do not aspire to melodic identity or independence:

Et questo è quando un solo canti allo strumento del quale siano percosse più corde (tra le quali sia ancora la parte di quello che canta) nel tempo medesimo disposte, sì che faccino tra di loro diverse consonanze; et ciò parimente si può fare in due maniere una che è la principale et la vera, segue tutta volta che l'aria di quello che canta allo strumento sia di maniera uniforme alle consonanze di quello, che poi è tutt'un' corpo et un istesso suono.<sup>70</sup> The accompanying consonances thus form a single block with the solo voice. To achieve such an harmonization Galilei encouraged the composer to apply « only that part of the rules of counterpoint which is adequate

<sup>69</sup> *Dubbi*, Ms. Gal. 3, fols. 67 r-67 v. A translation into English of this entire passage is in C. PALISCA, « Galilei and Links Between "Pseudo-Monody" and Monody », *The Musical Quarterly*, XLVI (1960), 347.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, fols. 65 v-66 r. Galilei gives an example of what he means by *prosborda* or « unisono » and compares it to another, illustrating a more diversified type of part movement that he calls « consonanza ». He also cites a number of popular airs that exemplify this simple style of harmony. These examples are given in PALISCA, « Galilei and Links », pp. 348 ff.

for this end », and not to go beyond this to fashion independent « airs ». <sup>71</sup>

Bardi in his madrigal followed yet another principle that Galilei observed to be effective in making harmonic music expressive. When « the bass part descends by a fifth or ascends by a fourth », he finds, « this has a cheerful and excited, and – as it were – a virile and natural effect », while when the bass part descends by a fourth or rises by a fifth the effect is « sad and humble » (*mesto e rimesso*), and the same happens with the semitone in the upper parts. <sup>72</sup> Despite the fact that the ascending fourth and descending fifth are required for the familiar full cadence, this composition (omitting the repeat) contains twice as many ascending fifth (12) as there are ascending fourths (6), and more descending fourths (8) than fifths (7).

Bardi's use of false relations should be viewed in the context of another passage from Galilei's writings, the end of his manuscript treatise on the use of dissonance in counterpoint. Here he says that there are two ways of making a song hard and harsh, one is to use dissonances and the sixth to the bass in counterpoint, the other is to allow false relations to occur among the parts.

Siccome l'arte del bene scrivere, di quella parte intendo io al presente che toccha farne il giuditio alla vista; in due cose principalmente consiste; che sono come di sopra si disse, la bella forma de' caratteri, et il vago composto che risulta dall'ugualità et proportione che tra di loro hanno; una delle quali due parti mancando, è atta à cagionare che la vista non si compiace di esso; anzi che gli dispiaccia grandemente. così adunque dico io potersi la Cantilena fare dura et aspra in due maniere. una con l'uso delle Dissonanze et della Sesta con la parte grave, et ciò viene à corrispondere alla forma che può havere ciascun carattere in sè stesso, et l'altra con le male relationi che havere possano fra di loro le parti nel procedere successivamente di queste corde in quelle, corrisponderà al sordido composto che risulta dalla disugualità et sproportione di essi caratteri per ben formato ch'egli fusse qual sia di loro in sè stesso. et questa parte è quella che gli antichi Musici Greci dissero principalmente Harmonia; et non la semplice adunanza di molti suoni insieme tra di loro diversi in acutezza et in gravità com'hanno creduto et detto alcuni. et ch'ei sia vero, domandavano Harmonie le loro Cantilene, et le Cantilene loro erano da un solo cantate, et non da

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 66 v.

<sup>72</sup> *Dialogo*, p. 76.

molti come hoggi si costuma . . . imperoche le Cantilene composte nel modo che io dicevo: et sono per mostrare al presente, con piu ragione si possano domandare senz'Harmonia, che Cromatiche, come hanno altri sognato, et scritto dopo l'esser desti: atteso che il Cromatico è ciaschedun'altra cosa che questa, come ho io altrove mostrato et mostrerò maggiormente al suo luogo. tale adunque è la Cantilena proposta. l'esempio di che dimostra ancora dell'importanza che hanno le mali relationi nel contrapunto a quelli che per semplicità loro si rechano di esse mercie del non intendere ne gl'effetti ne le cagioni delle cose.<sup>73</sup>

The example described here is a setting of the first five lines of Dante's canzona *Così nel mio parlar* [emended by Galilei to cantar] *voglio esser aspro*.<sup>74</sup>

Exmple 3 : V. Galilei, *Nel mio cantar*, Florence,  
Bibl. Naz. Cent. Ms. Gal. 1, fols. 147v - 148v.

Co - si nel mio can - tar vo - gio es - se - re as - pro; Co - me ne -  
- gl'at - ti è que - sta bel - la pie - tra; tra; tra; La  
que - sta bel - la pie - tra;  
qua - le o - gni ho - ra im - pie - tra; Mag - gior du - rez - za et piu na - tu - ra

<sup>73</sup> GALILEI, *Discorso intorno all'uso delle dissonanze*, Florence, Bibl. Naz. Cent., Ms. Gal. 1, fols. 147 v-148 v.

<sup>74</sup> For the complete text see Dante, *Canzoniere*, ed. E. Moore (Oxford, 1894), Canzone XII, p. 163. Among other settings of this canzone are those by Bernardo Pisano, around 1525, in Florence, Bibl. Naz. Cent., Ms. Magl. XIX, 164-167, and Marenzio, ninth book of madrigals, 1599. Galilei's setting is printed in F. FANO, *La Camerata Fiorentina*, pp. 277-278.

(Original note values here cut by half. Original is unbarred and in  $\phi$ ; all voices have text.)

Like Bardi's madrigal, Galilei's setting has a narrow range in the canto – a minor sixth – from  $f \sharp'$  to  $d''$ . Its scale –  $f \sharp' g' g \sharp' a' b' b' c'' d''$  – is a mixture of diatonic and chromatic genres, and of the soft and hard systems. The tonal system behind this composition is not clearly defined. Galilei seems to be shifting between two *tonoi*, that of two sharps, which he and Mei called the Hypodorian, and that of one flat, which they called Hypophrygian.<sup>75</sup> However their *mesai* in these two modes would be  $e$  and  $f$  respectively, which are missing from the melody, though they do figure prominently in the bass. Complicating the picture is the fact that Galilei considered the ancient chromatic tetrachord to be divided in practice into semitones throughout. Interpretation from the standpoint of the Greek tonal system is not, therefore, productive.

The Galilei composition is Greek-inspired, nevertheless, in the intermodulation between a sharp and a flat key. It is this which produces the cross relations that give the piece the hard and harsh tone demanded by the text. Pseudohellenic also is the avoidance of counterpoint and chords of the sixth in imitation of *proschorda* style. By using this means instead of dissonance and sixth-chords, the composer is able to give a crude sound to the whole stanza rather than only to individual passages or words like « aspro », « durezza », or « cruda ».

Galilei, like Bardi, avoids the cadential progression of the descending fifth or ascending fourth, though they occur non-cadentially. With Bardi, he is extremely attentive to text rhythm. Taught by Mei that the Greeks used short and long durations in the proportion of one to two, Galilei freely combines minims and semibreves, extending the durations of the longs to breves at the main cadences.

The piece is frankly experimental. It has no parallel in any of the other known works of Galilei, whether his madrigals or intabulations. In the absence of the lost lament of Count Ugolino and the lamenta-

<sup>75</sup> See G. Mei, chart facing p. 49.

tions and responses of the Holy Week, we must content ourselves with this fragment as a paradigm of what Galilei considered to be an appropriate adaptation of the Greek style.

The songs that Caccini related he sang to the Camerata and those Caccini and Piero Strozzi composed for wedding entertainments constitute the most significant musical heritage directly attributable to the group. But they are also the most difficult to associate with the new thinking that was emanating from Mei, Galilei, and Bardi. Piero Strozzi's *Fuor dall'umido nido*, composed for the *Carro della Notte* in honor of the marriage of Francesco dei Medici and Bianca Capello in 1579, survives in a sketch for voice and bass in a manuscript in the Magliabecchi collection.<sup>76</sup> As Leo Schrade has pointed out, the madrigal was named in a contemporary description of the event as having been sung by Caccini, accompanied on his viol and joined by an ensemble of viols in the *carro*. The sketch lacks the middle voices, as do other similar examples in the manuscript. It was probably intended for an instrumentalist who improvised an accompaniment from the bass and voice parts. Otherwise the piece is hardly distinguishable in style from many others in which the voices move homorhythmically and in which the rhythm of the text dictates a grouping of notes in varyingly duple and triple patterns. As in Bardi's madrigal for 1589 each line of text is given its coherent melody, and text repetition is avoided except for the climactic phrase « La Nott'io sono » and the repetition of the last line with new music.

The three madrigals that Caccini mentioned in his preface to *Euridice*, *Perfidissimo volto*, *Vedrò il mio sol*, and *Dovrò dunque morire*, as having been composed « many years before » and sung in the Camerata are printed in that order in *Le Nuove musiche*. The fourth piece he mentioned, the eclogue of Sannazaro, *Itene all'ombra degli ameni faggi*, does not survive. The versions published in 1602 probably represent polished reworkings of these early songs, particularly with respect to ornaments and to subtle expansions and contractions of rhythm, if we may judge from comparing some skeletal versions of certain of the 1602 songs that exist in manuscripts to the printed edition.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>76</sup> Florence, Bibl. Naz. Cent., Ms. Magl. XIX, 66. See facs. in LEO SCHRADER, « Les fêtes du mariage de Francesco dei Medici et de Bianca Cappello », *Les fêtes de la renaissance* (Paris, Editions du CNRS, 1956), p. 120. A transcription, with the missing voices reconstructed, is in N. PIRROTTA, *Li due Orfei* (Turin, Edizioni RAI, 1969), pp. 253-254.

<sup>77</sup> The best edition of *Le nuove musiche* is that of H. WILEY HITCHCOCK (Madison, A-R Editions, 1970), which contains an extensive introduction and a translation into English of the preface.

The most notable feature of these songs that can be associated with the Camerata's ideology is the suppression of all melodic interest in the accompanying part that would compete with the expressive contours of the voice. The figures in the basso continuo call for root-position triads, or what Galilei called *proschorda*. Dissonances are limited to cadential suspensions, as in the cadences of frottole and similar airs that Galilei considered models for the reform of vocal music. Sixth-chords are few and are introduced mainly for smoothness of harmonic change and variety. The principal expressive device is the false relation, resulting from what Galilei calls an « unharmonic » sequence of chords, as in Examples 4 and 5.

Example 4 : G. Caccini, Perfidissimo volto.

Musical score for Example 4, showing the vocal line and basso continuo line. The vocal line is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The lyrics are: "Ahi, ahi, che spen\_to è'l de\_ si\_ o,". The basso continuo line is in bass clef with a key signature of one flat. The bass line consists of root-position triads. The first measure has a B-flat bass note. The second measure has a G bass note with a sharp sign above it. The third measure has a B-flat bass note with a sharp sign above it and a "11" above it, and a G bass note with a sharp sign above it and a "10" above it.

Example 5 : G. Caccini, Vedrò'l mio sol.

Musical score for Example 5, showing the vocal line and basso continuo line. The vocal line is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat. The lyrics are: "Ma sen\_za mor\_ te io non po\_ trò sof\_ fri\_ re". The basso continuo line is in bass clef with a key signature of one flat. The bass line consists of root-position triads. The first measure has a B-flat bass note with a sharp sign above it. The second measure has a G bass note with a sharp sign above it. The third measure has a B-flat bass note with a sharp sign above it and a "6" above it. The fourth measure has a G bass note with a sharp sign above it.

The only affective use of suspension outside a cadence pattern is on the words « O volto troppo vago e troppo rio » in the first of these songs, producing the very same augmented chord as in Bardi's madrigal.

Example 6 : G. Caccini, Perfidissimo volto.

Musical score for Example 6, showing the vocal line and basso continuo line. The vocal line is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat. The lyrics are: "O vol\_ to trop\_ po va\_ go, e trop\_ po ri\_ o". The basso continuo line is in bass clef with a key signature of one flat. The bass line consists of root-position triads. The first measure has a B-flat bass note. The second measure has a G bass note. The third measure has a B-flat bass note with a sharp sign above it and a "10" above it, and a G bass note with a sharp sign above it and a "11" above it. The fourth measure has a B-flat bass note with a sharp sign above it and a "1" above it, and a G bass note with a sharp sign above it and a "10" above it.



Concentration of interest in a single melodic line yields the fruit Bardi promised. By careful attention to the register of the voice Caccini achieves his most powerful effects. In the three songs the voice is held within a small range of a fifth or sixth except for passages that depart for expressive reasons from this central register. Caccini goes below the central fifth in *Perfidissimo volto* for the words « Rivolgo à te, sì bell'e sì pietose » and « L'abbandonato core ». He stirringly reaches for the high notes on exclamations like « O volto troppo vago », or in *Vedrò'l mio sol* at « O mia luce, o mia gioia ». In keeping with its complaining tone, *Dovrò dunque morire* remains almost throughout in the high range of the voice.

*Perfidissimo volto* is the most faithful to the principle of maintaining the integrity of the poetic line. Each line ends, in the manner of the formulas for singing verses, with two long notes, the first of which is sometimes decorated. There is no text repetition in this song, except in association with a slightly varied repeat of the music of the last four lines. *Dovrò dunque morire* breaks a line to repeat the words « io moro » in a beautifully symmetrical phrase.

Example 7: G. Caccini, Dovrò dunque morire.

The musical score consists of two staves. The upper staff is the vocal line in G major, 3/4 time. It begins with a quarter note G4, followed by a half note A4, and then a quarter note B4. The lyrics are 'io mo - ro, io mo - ro ?'. The final note is a half note G4 with a fermata. The lower staff is the basso continuo line, starting with a quarter note G2, followed by a half note A2, and then a quarter note B2. It includes figured bass notation '11 #10 5' and a fermata over the final note.

The last line of the poem is repeated three times, once in company with the penultimate line; the final time, the cadential passage, « moro, mia vita », is further repeated. The scheme of repetition of text and music is more complex in *Vedrò'l mio sol*, but the line is broken for internal repetition only twice, for the opening words and for « Di veder mai d'un sì bel dì ». Caccini's restraint in repetition and in interrupting a poem's train of thought helps him achieve the discursive manner that was undoubtedly an agreed upon goal of the Camerata.

The most affecting feature of Caccini's style, his graceful *accenti* and *passaggi*, cannot be attributed to the Camerata. But the economy and elegance of ornamentation that he achieved in the madrigals of the *Nuove musiche* may owe something to its constructive criticism. At least one word of advice issued by Bardi in his *discorso* seems to have been driven home. He suggested there that *passaggi* on the long

sixth and tenth syllables of a hendecasyllabic line were quite enough. In *Io che dal ciel cader* from the fourth intermedio of 1589 Caccini applied groups of *accenti* or short *passaggi* on the short fifth syllable of the first line, and even on second, third, and fourth syllables, as in the last line. In the three songs of the *Nuove musiche*, on the other hand, Caccini consistently postponed extended *accenti* or *passaggi* to the penultimate syllable. Bardi in a letter to the Duke of Ferrara could well take pride in the refinement that the virtuoso Francesco Rasi gained from spending a summer with Caccini: « e se la si degnerà d'ascoltare l' signor rasi tengo pur costante che la conoscerà che l'esser stato questa state a firenze dal s. giulio gl'habbia giovato assai . . . ».<sup>78</sup>

This has been an attempt to summarize on the basis of present facts and documents what can fairly be accredited to the Camerata as its contribution to esthetic doctrine and musical innovation. It is evident that the Camerata did not realize a reform of music within its sphere. No distinct style of monody, as the recitative was to become, emerged during the years of its life. It spoke for, and to some degree achieved, a style of song imitative of impassioned speech, a kind of melody that could stand alone to project a text with characteristic affective means, pitched to the contours of the speaking voice and measured to the cadence of a state of mind, harmonized by simple chords that seconded the melody and were faithful to its restricted means. It was a style intermediate between sung poetic recitation and the monodic performance of polyphony, from which it grew, and dramatic recitative, toward which it was moving.

It must be remembered that the Camerata was not an isolated group. Whatever its actual membership, discussions spilled over into other circles and academies – the group around Corsi, the Alterati, the Accademia Fiorentina, the professional musicians at the court and in the chapels. What was said about musical practice undoubtedly filtered out to musicians and composers generally, both resident in Florence and passing through the city. The Camerata, with its research into Greek music, kept the caldron of ideas about the nature of music boiling, and positive convictions were distilled that would soon be translated into action.

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<sup>78</sup> Letter to the Duke of Ferrara, 3 October 1595. See footnote 68.

Canto          410          Tenore          Organo          Viola          Violino

C  
D  
E  
F  
G  
A  
B  
C

questo è il primo modo  
che comincia in C la terza  
parte della mano e  
si nota in C, G, D, E, F, C

questo è il secondo modo  
che comincia in C la terza  
parte della mano e  
si nota in C, G, D, E, F, C

questo è il terzo modo  
che comincia in C la terza  
parte della mano e  
si nota in C, G, D, E, F, C

questo è il quarto modo  
che comincia in C la terza  
parte della mano e  
si nota in C, G, D, E, F, C

Le note segnate di nero sono quelle dell'ottava della propria specie del tuono. Le bianche sotto e sopra sono quelle che riempiono la quinta dec. a di ciascun tuono.

*Discorso sopra la musica antica di Giovanni de' Bardi.*

« Le note segnate di nero sono quelle dell'ottava della propria specie del tuono. Le bianche sotto e sopra sono quelle che riempiono la quinta dec. a di ciascun tuono ».

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## LA « CAMERATA FIORENTINA »: UNA RIVALUTAZIONE

(Sinossi)

Gran parte di quanto è stato scritto sulla *Camerata fiorentina* deve essere ripreso in esame alla luce di fatti verificabili. Il termine *Camerata* fu introdotto nell'uso da appena due scrittori di quanti vennero a diretto contatto col gruppo: Giulio Caccini e Pietro Bardi. Sia l'uno che l'altro ci descrivono la *Camerata fiorentina* come un'accademia alla buona dedicata al 'far musica' e alla discussione di una vasta gamma di argomenti. Gli anni della sua attività sono incerti. Giovanni Bardi cominciò a patrocinare gli studi di Vincenzo Galilei dopo il 1560, allorché Galilei venne probabilmente impiegato a intrattenere gli ospiti del Bardi coll'arte del suo liuto e del suo canto. La prima riunione documentata è quella del 14 gennaio del 1573, menzionata nel *Diario dell'Accademia degli Alterati*.

L'interesse per la musica greca, che divenne caratteristico del gruppo, crebbe sempre più nel periodo che va dal 1572 al 1578, periodo in cui il Galilei fu in corrispondenza epistolare con Girolamo Mei, ed ogni lettera annunciava nuove scoperte sulla musica degli antichi. Le prime opere di critica musicale prodotte dal gruppo portano la data del 1578: un discorso di Galilei scritto sotto uno pseudonimo e inviato a Zarlino – probabilmente un abbozzo della prima parte del *Dialogo* del 1581 – e un discorso di Bardi indirizzato a Caccini. Quest'ultimo riutilizza numerose intuizioni che affiorano dalle lettere del Mei e riecheggia la condanna del Mei del contrappunto.

Tutti e due i discorsi sono di natura didattica e furono probabilmente letti alla compagnia riunita dagli autori stessi. Poco dopo la pubblicazione del *Dialogo*, Galilei sensibilizzò il gruppo a un nuovo stile monodico e drammatico del canto.

Non sappiamo per quanto tempo ancora Galilei continuasse a far parte del gruppo, ma ci sono le prove che se ne era già staccato nel 1588. Probabilmente il prestigio del *Ridotto* del Bardi diminuì dopo la successione del Duca Ferdinando avvenuta nel 1587. L'ultima notizia che ce ne è pervenuta è contenuta nella relazione del Caccini dalla quale risulta ch'egli cantasse diversi suoi madrigali (probabilmente composti verso la fine degli anni Ottanta) alla *Camerata* del Bardi prima di replicarli in casa di Nero del Nero a Roma, forse nel 1592. Quest'anno Bardi lasciò Firenze per stabilirsi a Roma.

Soltanto tre musicisti si possono ritenere sicuramente legati al circolo Bardi: Galilei, Caccini e Piero Strozzi. Altri probabilmente si aggregarono saltuariamente. La chiave per capire il carattere del gruppo la dà il Bardi stesso con i suoi interessi proteiformi. Secondo un panegirico del tempo, Bardi conosceva il greco e il latino, conosceva ed esercitava la matematica, la magistratura, l'astrologia e la cosmografia, nonché le arti della poesia e della musica.

Soltanto tre dei suoi madrigali furono pubblicati e ci resta manoscritta la parte composta per soprano di un quarto madrigale.

Del Bardi sopravvivono ancora delle poesie ed una commedia. L'accademia deve essere stata l'espressione dell'ingegno poliedrico del Bardi: non è pertanto il caso di parlare di un punto di vista unico della *Camerata*.

Con gli anni evidentemente emerse l'opinione generale che la musica dovesse essere più convincente, immediatamente significativa e direttamente espressiva del modo di sentire di quanto non si potesse dire per la musica di quel tempo. La

ricerca di un modello nella musica greca è evidente nel trattato giovanile di Galilei intitolato *Compendio nella theorica della musica*, che è del 1572 circa. Il discorso di Bardi rivela alcuni risultati di questa ricerca, particolarmente per quanto riguarda il suo consiglio al compositore di imitare la caratteristica del *tonoi* greco che collocava una melodia in un'estensione di toni bassi, intermedi, oppure alti, a seconda dei vari sentimenti espressi dal testo. E altresì consiglia di fare attenzione alla declamazione del testo e alla moderazione nell'uso dei passaggi. L'interesse di Bardi è chiaramente diretto alla voce solista accompagnata da uno strumento.

Un argomento appena toccato da Bardi diviene il tema centrale del *Dialogo* di Galilei: quello dell'accordatura. Galilei non poteva accettare né l'accordatura pitagorica, né quella sintonica-diatonica di Tolomeo esposta da Zarlino.

La sua interpretazione del *tonoi* aderisce più strettamente di quella del Bardi alla dottrina del Mei.

La critica del contrappunto, cui Galilei deve la propria fama, occupava soltanto dieci pagine delle 149 del *Dialogo*, ma la difesa in favore del ritorno alla figura ideale del poeta-cantore greco viene pronunciata con passione e convinzione. Un punto chiave, verso la fine del *Dialogo*, trasmette la teoria del Mei che le tragedie e le commedie antiche venissero cantate da cima a fondo. Questa teoria fu citata sia da Peri sia da Rinuccini per sostenere su basi logiche le loro pastorali in musica, *Dafne* ed *Euridice*.

La musica che si può ritenere associata alla *Camerata* e che tuttora ci resta, risulta composta in un linguaggio polifonico simile all'accordo come è il caso del *Miseri habitator* di Bardi. Tale musica è caratterizzata da un profondo rispetto per il metro e la forma del verso, da uno sfruttamento espressivo dell'estensione e della mescolanza dei modi diatonici e cromatici, particolarmente attraverso quanto Galilei definì le progressioni non-armoniche.

Galilei illustra alcune di queste stesse tendenze nella sua interpretazione musicale della canzone di Dante, *Così nel mio cantare*. Anche le canzoni di Caccini del periodo della *Camerata* sono chiari esempi delle teorie dei due principali rappresentanti del gruppo.