

Caccini, *Le Nuove Musiche* (1601)

Translated by Sion M. Honea

Translator's Preface

As is my usual practice, I completed an entire translation and revision of Caccini's foreword before consulting any other translation, so as not to be influenced unduly. The three translations that I consulted subsequently are those by Playford (1674), Murata (1973) and Hitchcock (1970/2009), though Murata's only in its incomplete state as found in the Strunk/Treitler *Source Readings*. Of these three, Playford's is incomplete, heavily paraphrased, and difficult to collate with the original. It is interesting primarily for its insights into Playford's own time but of little use as a faithful translation. Hitchcock's translation in its 2009 (posthumous) edition I find particularly useful for his extremely valuable annotations and recommend it highly for that. Otherwise, and curiously, he seems at times overly influenced by Playford, most particularly that passage concerning the exclamation (page 6), and toward the end allows too much interpretation to slip in for my comfort. It is curious that Hitchcock did not profit more from Murata's 1973 translation, which followed his first edition but preceded the last. It appears from the preface to the second edition that he may not have been able to be as closely involved in the preparation of the edition as he might have liked. Overall, so far as I can judge while lacking the complete text, Murata's translation is generally somewhat better than Hitchcock's. From this the reader may find reassurance in the fact that my own entirely independent translation achieved the same understanding as Murata in regard to the exclamation, and to both Murata and Hitchcock in regard to the intonation issue. Extensive notes in my text explain these issues; this does not, however, mean that I am always in total agreement with either previous translator, but I feel that the differences are minor. These also are explained in notes.

Also distinct from either Murata or Hitchcock but consistent with my usual practice, I intend to produce a translation that is more "skeletal," in which the original Italian is more apparent. Murata's own is more elegant English prose and admirable for its fidelity, as is Hitchcock's for the most part, and neither really sacrifices much if any for that elegance. In general, however, mine enables the reader much more easily to identify the original passage for comparison and to judge the reliability of my work. Caccini's prose is quite difficult, which makes the ability to consult it directly all the more important when using a translation. My notes give more than a small glimpse into the confusing difficulties that he repeatedly provides the translator. I have tried to clarify more of these by the inclusion of explanatory amplifications in brackets where I feel they are particularly necessary. I believe that this feature along with the comparisons that I provide on divergent understandings among all three translations together render sufficient justification for the contribution of this new translation.

My purpose here is to make widely available a complete and reliable English translation of Caccini's foreword, toward which end I feel that the musical examples are actually less important. The facsimile edition of *Le Nuove Musiche* is currently in print among the publications in the Broude Brothers *Performers' Facsimiles* series. Hitchcock's edition including a modern transcription of the music is also in

print. Additionally, most if not all of the really critical music examples are printed along with Murata's translation in the ubiquitous Strunk/Treitler *Source Readings*.

To the Reader

If the studies made by me of the noble style of singing learned from the famous Scipione de Palla, my teacher, my other compositions—mostly madrigals and arias, composed by me at various times—have not up until now demonstrated, this has happened because I didn't think it worthwhile, since it appeared to me that the said music had received quite enough honor and it is much more creditable to them¹ to see them continually performed by the most famous singers of Italy, both men and women, and by other nobles, connoisseurs of this profession. But, now seeing many of them going around tattered and spoiled, badly making use of those long vocal girations, simple and double, even redoubled, one twisted up with another, when they [my songs] were invented by me in order to avoid that antiquated style of *passaggi* formerly the custom, but [which is] more appropriate for wind and string instruments than for voice. Likewise, I see used indiscriminately vocal crescendos and decrescendos, exclamations, trilli and gruppi and other such ornaments in the good style of singing. I have been required and also moved by my friends to have the said music printed and to show the reader in this first edition by means of this discourse the reasons that have induced me to such a manner of song for one voice alone, so that—music in recent times past not being accustomed to be of the complete charm² that I feel resonates in my soul, as I know—I may be able in these writings to leave some vestige of it, and so that someone else may be able to reach that perfection, like a great flame from a small spark.

Truly, I, at the time when there was active in Florence the most excellent camerata of the illustrious signor Giovanni Bardi, Count of Vernio, where not only a great part of the nobility were coming together but also the foremost musicians, ingenious men, poets and philosophers of the city, I also having frequented it am able to say that I learned more from their learned reasonings than in more than thirty years I have done in counterpoint. In as much as these most learned gentlemen have always supported me and convinced me with the clearest reasons not to value that sort of music that does not allow the words to be understood well, spoils the meaning and the verse, now drawing out the verse and now shortening the syllables in order to accommodate the counterpoint, tearing up the poetry, but

¹ Hitchcock gives "indeed much more than they merited." I see nothing in Hitchcock's reading that strains credulity as to Caccini's grammar and syntax, or even approaches the degree of violence that Caccini himself consistently commits. Nevertheless, I have some grounds for proposing an alternative. Caccini tends to use *essi/esse* as third plural nominatives, if that is how Hitchcock takes *loro* and not as the dative, which latter presents a little more difficulty to construe as the subject of the noun *merito* being understood with verbal force. Caccini also more often uses the comparative with *che* in all circumstances rather than that with *di*. For Hitchcock's understanding of the wording "*molto più del merito*" "*essere degno di*" would seem more natural, whereas the same original reads very naturally as the comparative partitive construction "more." Finally, Caccini is quite capable of false modesty, but the point seems to be to show their value, not detract from it, since he is concerned to introduce his songs as a remarkable *nuove musiche*.

² No English word adequately conveys the sense of *grazia*. I have translated it variously according to the context, but mostly as "charm," which in its modern sense alone is also inadequate. I hope to revive a little of the word's early sense of a kind of mystical affective power, which is close to what I take Caccini to mean by *grazia*, but for which the reader's understanding is, unfortunately, dependent on this note.

to direct myself to that manner so much praised by Plato and the other philosophers, who maintain that music is nothing other than the text and the rhythm and the sound last and not the reverse, in desiring that it be able to penetrate into another's intellect and produce those wonderful effects that the authors marvel at and which were not able to be produced by means of counterpoint in modern music and particularly when singing a solo with some string instrument, when its words aren't intelligible because of the multitude of *passaggi*, both on the short syllables as on the long ones, and in every kind of music, provided only that by means of these they [the singers] might be praised by the crowd and proclaimed grand singers!

It is clear then, since I say that such music and musicians weren't giving any other pleasure apart from that which the harmony was giving to hearing only, because it wasn't possible to move the intellect without the understanding of the words, there came to me the thought of introducing a kind of music by means of which someone could, in a way, tell a story in harmony, using in it (as I have said on other occasions) a kind of lofty *spezzatura*³ of song, at times passing through dissonances but maintaining the chords⁴ steady in the bass, except when I want to make use of it for ordinary practice, with the middle parts played by the instrument in order to express some affect, they not being good for anything other. Whence the beginning was made in those times for these songs for solo voice, since it appeared to me that they would have more power to delight and move than [do] more voices together, I composed in this time the madrigals, "*Perfidissimo volto*," "*Vedro'l mio sol*," "*Dovrò dunque morire*," and similar ones, and particularly the aria on the eclogue of Sanazzaro, "*Itene à l'ombra de gli ameni faggi*" in that particular style that I used then for the favole, which were being presented then in song in Florence. Which madrigals and the aria were heard in that camerata with fond approval and encouragement to follow up my intended goal, they encouraged me for that journey to transfer to Rome in order to give proof there also, where the aforesaid madrigals and aria were given a hearing in the house of signor Nero Neri to many gentlemen, who assembled there, and particularly to signor Lione Strozzi, all of whom can give good witness as to how much they encouraged me to continue the undertaking I had begun, saying to me that up until that time they had never heard harmony of one voice alone with a single string instrument such as had had so much power [page 2]⁵ to move the affections of the soul (*animo*) as did those madrigals.

Thus—on account of the novelty of their style as well as because it was fashionable at that time for madrigals for many voices to be printed for solo voice—it didn't seem good for them that, with the artistry of the parts corresponding to each other, the soprano part alone sung by itself would have in itself any emotional effect. So after I returned to Florence and considered that also at that time canzonettas were being performed by musicians, mostly poor poems, which appeared to me not to be suitable for each other [i.e., music and text] and that among intelligent people they would not be valued. There came to me also a thought, to raise my spirits at times of depression, to compose some canzonettas in the style of an aria in order to be able to use them in ensembles with several string instruments. When I communicated this thought of mine to several gentlemen of the city, I was favored

³ *Spezzatura* is usually understood as a kind of rhythmic freedom for expressive purposes.

⁴ The Italian *corda* can mean both a chord and a single pitch, both of which meanings Caccini uses at different times, making contextual any particular instance.

⁵ These numbers in brackets refer to the original, unnumbered pages of Caccini's text.

with many canzonettas in various metrical verses, so as even to be overwhelmed by signor Gabriello Chiabrera—because in number and diversity from all the others I was favored—he providing me the wonderful opportunity to keep setting them, all of which having been set to diverse melodies from time to time, they have not then been disfavored even throughout Italy, everyone now making use of that style who has wanted to compose for one solo voice, particularly here in Florence, where I have been for thirty-seven years in the service of these most Serene Princes⁶ thanks to their generosity, whatever one has wanted he has been able to see and hear all that pleases him, which continually I have produced in regard to such studies, in which both in the madrigals as in the arias I have always taken care to imitate the ideas in the words, searching for those sounds more or less affective according to their sentiment, and which particularly had charm, having hidden in them as much as possible the art of counterpoint and placed the harmonies (*consonanze*)⁷ on the long syllables and avoided the short ones and observed the same rules in making *passaggi*, though for the sake of a certain adornment I used at times some few eighth-notes up to the value of a quarter- or half-measure (*battuta*),⁸ most on short syllables for the most part, which—because they pass quickly and are not *passaggi* but a kind of increase of charm—can be permitted and also because careful discretion makes each rule subject to some exception.

But, because I said above that these long girations (*giri*) of the voice are badly used, and warned that *passaggi* were not invented because they are necessary for a good style of singing, but I believe, rather, for a kind of titillation to the ears of those who understand less what affective singing is, which if they did know, undoubtedly the *passaggi* would be abhorred, there being nothing more contrary than they to the affect, for which reason I have said these long vocal girations (*giri*) are badly used, but that I have introduced them so as to make use of them in such music that is less affective or on long syllables, not on short ones, and in final cadences, no other observation further being necessary in regard to the vowels, as to the said long girations, except that the vowel “U” makes for a better effect in the soprano voice than in the tenor, and the vowel “I” better in the tenor than the vowel “U,” all the remainder being in common use, although the open ones are much more sonorous than the closed ones and so more proper and easier to execute the *disposizione*.⁹ So that, even if these vocal girations must be used, let them be made by some rule observed in my works and not by chance or according to the practice of counterpoint, where [in the latter cases] it would be necessary to think of them beforehand in the works that someone wants to sing solo and produce the style in them, pledging in that regard that the

⁶ The Medici.

⁷ The Italian *consonanze* here does not mean our “consonances” but con-sonants, pitches sounding together, so harmonies.

⁸ I reluctantly translate *battuta* here as “measure,” despite the fact that it introduces a degree of anachronism. Murata and Hitchcock prefer *tactus*, which is not only justifiable but historically correct. Nonetheless, I would like this translation to be accessible to a more general reader, including those not likely to be entirely familiar with the concept of the *tactus*, which did eventually evolve into our idea of measure, as is indicated by one meaning of the German term *Takt*. It must be remembered that the *tactus* was the development of a variable rhythmic quantity involving pulse. The idea of a “measure” is, I argue, an acceptable analog for the non-specialist, and this note will alert the specialist to any potential misinterpretation.

⁹ The *disposizione* refers originally to the physiological capability or “disposition” for execution of the throat articulation technique for singing *passaggi*. Thus by extension the term came to refer to the technique itself.

counterpoint is sufficient, but that in a good style of composition and singing in this style a knowledge of the thought [in the text] serves much more, as well as the sense of the words, and the imitation of it in affective sounds, as in the expression of it [the text] with affect in singing, which the counterpoint does not serve. Because I have made use of it [counterpoint] in order only to reconcile the two parts together and to avoid certain notable errors and to connect some harshnesses [dissonances] more for the accompaniment of the affect than for making use of art, as it also is evident that an aria will make a better effect and delight more, or a madrigal, in such a style when composed according to the sense of the meaning of the words by such [a one] as has a good singing style than another will do with all the art of counterpoint, of which no better reason can be rendered than the proof itself.

Such then were the reasons that induced me to a similar manner of song for solo voice, where both on which syllables [long and short] and on which vowels the long vocal girations ought to be used, it remains now to say the reason for why crescendo and decrescendo of the voice, the exclamations, trilli and gruppi and the other effects mentioned above are used “indiscriminately,”¹⁰ because they are now said to be used indiscriminately every time that someone makes use of them as often in affective music, where they are more required, as [well as] in canzonette à ballo [i.e., dance songs, where they are not appropriate]. The root of this defect—if I am not mistaken—is because the musician does not first master well what he wants to sing, which if this were the case [i.e., that he had mastered it] then undoubtedly he would not run into such errors, since such a one incurs [page 3] such things [errors] more easily who formed a manner of singing, for example, entirely affective by general rule, in which [the use of] crescendos and decrescendos of the voice and exclamations is the foundation of that affect, [so that he] always makes use of them in every kind of music, not distinguishing whether the words require it, where [i.e., on those occasions when] there are those who well understand the meanings and the sentiment of the words, recognize our defects and make a distinction where more and where less the effect is required, whom one ought to take care with every effort to please greatly and to value more their praise than the applause of the ignorant crowd.

This art does not suffer mediocrity, and the more refinements for its excellence that there are in it, with that much more labor and diligence we professors of it ought to strive after with all zeal and love, which love has moved me (seeing that we receive from writings the light of every skill and every art) to leave this little glimmer of it in the notes and discourses following, intending to demonstrate as much as is relevant to the one who makes a profession of singing solo over the harmony of a chitarrone¹¹ or other string instrument, provided that¹² one has been introduced to the theory of that music and plays sufficiently well.

¹⁰ He is resuming the judgment that he first introduced and which appears in paragraph one of this translation.

¹¹ Though the term is etymologically related to “guitar,” the instrument alluded to here is the archlute. I see no reason to avoid the use of chitarrone.

¹² Caccini’s text is “*pur che*” by which he usually means the modern *purché*, “provided that” introducing a clause of proviso. Hitchcock and Murata both understand this as equal to the modern *Pure*, the concessive conjunction, “even though.” Both are plausible, but my translation implies that such training is a prerequisite, whereas theirs indicates that the training is still valuable for those who already possess it. Since both are plausible, I include this reference to both.

Not that there were not those who acquired it to some degree even by long practice, as one sees that many have done, both men and women, up to a certain point. But, because the theory of these writings is necessary up to the point mentioned, and because in the profession of singing (for its excellence) particular points do not alone serve, but all taken together improve it, in order to proceed then in good order, I will say that the first and most important fundamentals are the intonation (*intonazione*)¹³ of the voice (*voce*)¹⁴ in all the notes (*corde*)¹⁵, not only that none should fail low [go flat] or increase too much [go sharp], but have a good style (*maniera*)¹⁶ as it ought to be intoned [*intonare*], which style, because mostly there are two in use, we will see both of them, and with notes written below we will demonstrate that which appears to me more appropriate for the other effects, which follow it hereafter. There are some, then, who in the (*intonazione*) intoning of the pitch of the first note, intone a third below and some others intone this said first note, on its actual pitch with a continual crescendo, because it is said this is the good manner for placing the voice with elegance, which as to the first [from a third below], because there is no general rule, since in many concords it does not fit the harmony, even where it can be used it has become at this time a style so ordinary that instead of having elegance (also because some sustain the third below for far too long, when it ought barely to be sung) I would say that it would be quite unpleasant to the ear, and that for beginners particularly it ought to be used rarely and as more of a novelty, for myself I would choose instead of it the second of making a crescendo on the note.¹⁷

But, because I have never rested quietly within the ordinary bounds used by others, rather, I always have kept searching out more novelty as far as I can, provided that the novelty has been appropriate for being able better to achieve the goal of the musician, namely to delight and to move the affections of the soul (*animo*). I have found a style more affective is to intone (*intonare*) the pitch (*voce*) by an effect contrary to the other [i.e., the crescendo], that is to start the first note by making a

¹³ I am much indebted to Murata's translation for confirming my own impression that Caccini was actually talking about two different things in this passage, i.e., (1) the intonation of pitches necessary in good singing (*intonazione*), and (2) the various ways of initiating a pitch (*intonare*) or intoning it: *Intonare* has the range of meanings : intoning, intonation [tuning], intonation [to intone], tuning, tuning up, etc. (see Cambridge). I have chosen the translation of "intoning" for the manner of initiating a pitch. Caccini, as is his wont, confuses the passage greatly by utilizing these two senses without clarifying that fact. It is typical not only of Caccini but of authors of this period, as well as before and beyond, that their prose does not exhibit a reflection on their own method of expression; they apparently seldom stop to consider whether what they write is intelligible to the reader.

¹⁴ The Italian word *voce* means both "voice" and "pitch." In the latter case Caccini seems to use it somewhat like *nota*, rather casually, to mean either a musical pitch or the symbol that communicates that pitch.

¹⁵ To complicate matters, Caccini also uses the term *corde*, which means both chord and note. Only the individual context suggests the translation for a specific use, and sometimes not even then. See also note 4.

¹⁶ Yet another problematic term, it can mean a manner (way of doing something) or a style, as in the interpretative style. I have chosen almost always to translate the word as "style" even where its specific sense is somewhat ambiguous. The reader is hereby alerted.

¹⁷ There are two styles of intoning a note: (1) to begin it a third below, or (2) to begin it on the pitch but with a crescendo. Of these Caccini prefers the latter because the first is overused. Then Caccini goes on to discuss the second, which he further subdivides. Thus, *intonazione* is the more generic term, of which the *esclamazione* is one type that is subdivided into two sub-types (or perhaps 3, see below note 24) the crescendo and the decrescendo. As will be seen, however, the passage is quite problematic.

decrecendo on it, because the exclamation—which is a quite important means for moving the affect, and the exclamation is properly nothing other than permitting the pitch to strengthen somewhat¹⁸ and such an increase of the pitch in the soprano part, especially on falsetto pitches—often times becomes sharp and insufferable to the hearing, as on many an occasion I have heard. Undoubtedly, then, as an affect more appropriate for moving [the affections], it is a better effect to make the intonation of the pitch with a decrecendo on it than to crescendo on it,¹⁹ because in the said first style, [that is,] a crescendo on the pitch so as to make the exclamation, it is necessary, then—in permitting it to crescendo too much, and indeed as I have said—[in that case] it appears forced and harsh. But, a decrecendo on it will produce an entirely contrary effect, since in permitting it [to decrecendo], it gives to it a little more spirit to render it always more affective, as well as one can vary by using sometimes one and sometimes the other, variation being most necessary in this art, provided that it is directed to the said purpose.²⁰ So that if this is the greater part of elegance in singing suitable for

¹⁸ This can be quite confusing to the reader because, after Caccini introduces the idea of the exclamation with a decrecendo, he describes the exclamation with a crescendo as a preparation for his critique of its effectiveness.

¹⁹ At this point Caccini returns to a discussion of the exclamation by decrecendo.

²⁰ This very vexed passage unfortunately requires an extensive note, especially in regard to the fact that my translation and that of Murata depart from those of both Playford and Hitchcock. In the case of both of these latter translations the problem lies in the fact that their first translation of the first style of exclamation does not seem consistent with their subsequent translation of the passage—I believe because they missed the point I describe in notes 18 and 19—in which Caccini discusses the weakness of the first style. The first translation is reasonably clear; [as translated here] “the exclamation is properly nothing other than permitting the pitch to strengthen somewhat,” i.e., to perform a crescendo on it, which is consistent with the understanding of Playford and Hitchcock. Then Caccini goes on to critique this first style of exclamation (the crescendo) with the second style that he prefers (decrecendo). In the course of this critique the problematic passage occurs: “*peròche nelle detta prima maniera, crescendo la voce per far l’esclamazione, fa di mestiero poi nel lassar di essa crescerla di vantaggio . . .*” The main problem lies in the sense of the verb “*lassar*,” the modern “*lasciare*,” which Playford translates as “slacking” and Hitchcock as “relaxing.” Both of these translation seem like plausible metaphorical extensions of the word’s senses, but unfortunately I find no attested use of them as such in the *Harper Collins Sansoni* (unabridged) or *Cambridge Italian Dictionary*, though *Harper Zanichelli: Il Ragazzi* does recognize “relax” as an extension of the sense of *lasciarsi*, but in the reflexive form only. The transitive forms, as here, cannot communicate that meaning; thus, the most plausible meaning is that of the basic transitive sense, i.e., leave, release, let, permit, allow. It is translated here as “permit,” as in “It is necessary, then, in permitting it to crescendo too much.” A further problem arises in connection with “*di vantaggio*,” which Playford and Hitchcock understand in its positive, or at least neutral, adverbial sense of “more.” Here Cambridge, which is very much superior to the two more recent dictionaries in regard to archaisms and obsolete meanings, comes to the rescue with the specifically Tuscan idiomatic meaning for “*di vantaggio*” as “too much,” a sense very plausible for Caccini, who, though probably born at Rome, was in service, as he claims, for thirty-seven years in Florence. The meaning of the passage and Caccini’s dislike for the crescendo exclamation become clear “it is necessary, then, in allowing it to crescendo too much, and indeed as I have said, [in that case] it appears forced and harsh.” This also solves the logical quasi *non sequitur* that results for Hitchcock in Caccini’s description of the result as a negative one, which in turn probably explains why Playford ignores the phrase completely. The syntax of the passage is clearly tenuous, but this is the case throughout the preface, which is exasperatingly diffuse and casual. Fortunately, Hitchcock’s misunderstanding of this single phrase that so confuses the reader does not affect his understanding of the exclamation by decrecendo.

moving the affections of the soul in those ideas truly where it is more suitable to use such affects;²¹ and [further] if one demonstrates with such vivid reasons [that] there comes from it something new in consequence,²² which one learns from the writings likewise that more necessary charm than can be described in a better manner or greater clarity by his own intellect, and nonetheless can be acquired perfectly, provided that²³ after the study of theory and stated rules, [then] one puts in action that practice by means of which in all the arts one becomes more perfect, but particularly in the profession of the perfect singer, both man and woman.

[page 4]

Music Example: Esclamazione

In regard to that, then, which can be intoned with greater or lesser grace in the aforesaid manner, one can get some experience of it in the example above with the words below²⁴ “*Cor mio deh non languire,*” since on the first dotted half-note one can intone “*Cor mio*” [1] by making a gradual decrescendo, then on the descent of the quarter-note [i.e., on the quarter-note, lower pitch of the descending interval] to make the pitch louder with a little more breath (*spirito*), [2] and the exclamation will be made quite affectively even on the note alone that descends by step,²⁵ [3] but it will appear much more spirited on the word “*deh*” by sustaining the note, which does not descend by step,²⁶ and quite the sweetest, then, for recovering [i.e., ascending from] the major [*sic*] sixth that descended by leap, which I wanted to observe in order to demonstrate to someone else not only what kind of thing the exclamation

²¹ This entire concluding passage from “So that . . .” is one long tortuous sentence consisting mainly of two conditional protasis (if) clauses continually interrupted by parenthetical intrusions, and finally concluded by a not particularly obvious apodosis (then) clause.

²² This clause possesses two finite verbs that do not constitute a compound predicate and so demand that one be understood in subordination, though Caccini does not supply any subordinating word or clue to one. “That” is suggested here. This paratactical structure is typical of spoken languages—extremely common in modern spoken English—and not unusual in Caccini’s casual prose style.

²³ Here Hitchcock has chosen to translate *pur chè* as “provided,” contrary to his translation of it referred to above, note 12. Truly, a word is often translated differently according to context, but usually not in cases where the range of typical usages is so narrow, as in this case. Muratas’s translation in Strunk/Treitler does not include this passage.

²⁴ Caccini suggests three different methods, numbered in brackets in the text:

1. A decrescendo on the dotted half-note with a subsequent crescendo on the following quarter-note, on the text *Cor mio*.
2. Only by means of a crescendo on the quarter-note on the same text.
3. On the following word “*deh,*” sustain the dotted-half and crescendo on the rapid ascending passage that recovers the minor sixth leap down from the dotted-half.

Note that Caccini is here describing as special ornaments devices of musical expression that a trained singer today would likely execute almost unconsciously. It is an interesting insight into the evolution of performance practice..

²⁵ A crescendo on the quarter-note C.

²⁶ Caccini merely says to “sustain” the dotted half-note E, not to crescendo on it, but to crescendo on the ascending line beginning on the G# that constitutes the lower member of the following sixth, minor not major as he incorrectly calculates.

is and whence it is produced, but also that they can be of two kinds, one more affective than the other, thus by the manner in which they are written, either intoned in one way or another according to the imitation of the word when, however, it [the exclamation] has signified the idea.

In addition, exclamations in all affective music, according to a general rule, can always be used on all dotted half-notes and quarter-notes when descending, and they will produce more affective ways for the following note that passes quickly, which they will not produce on whole-notes, on which the crescendo and decrescendo²⁷ will take place on the pitch without using exclamations, it being understood in consequence that in arioso music or *canzonette à ballo* instead of these affects, one ought to use only the liveliness of the melody, which is accustomed to be brought forth from the melody itself, in which, although sometimes there take place some exclamations, one ought to allow them the same liveliness and not give them any affect, which might convey something languid. For this reason we come to understand how very necessary for the musician is a certain judgment, which is accustomed to prevail at times in the art, as likewise we can understand from the above written notes how much greater elegance the first four eighth-notes have, those on the second syllable of the word “languire,” thus delayed by the second dotted eighth, than the last equal four, thus described in the example.²⁸

But because there are many things that are used in the good style of singing, which—because there is found in them a greater charm, when written in one style—[but] make a contrary effect [in a different style]the one [style] from the other, so that one says someone sings with greater or less elegance.²⁹ These will now be demonstrated³⁰ first in what way the trillo has been written by me, and

²⁷ Hitchcock translates “*il crescere, e scemare*” as “crescendo-and-decrescendo,” which he explains in his note 29, significantly omitting the comma in the original when he quotes it. Hitchcock understands this as a combination like a *mesa di voce*, though he does not allude to the term. First, he ignores Caccini’s punctuation in order to combine the two terms. It is true that Caccini like all authors at the time is working with emphatic punctuation, not syntactic, but it seems that if Caccini had meant to combine the two, even he would have omitted the comma. That Hitchcock omits the comma in order to facilitate his understanding is unfortunate. All translation requires some degree of interpretation, but it appears here that Hitchcock has “pushed the envelope” a bit too far. What is legitimate for speculation in a note has been transferred too concretely into the text.

²⁸ The description is bedeviled both by Caccini’s typical casualness and by the example itself. The rhythm is not four “*crome*” as he says, but *croma—croma col punto—semicroma—croma* = eighth—dotted eighth—sixteenth—eighth. The musical example itself is typical of the time and runs together alternate versions so as to look too much like one continuous line of music.

²⁹ Murata provides the translation “*in order to find in them a greater elegance, are notated in one way, but have a different effect, whence it is said that a person sings with more or less grace.*” Italics are mine and indicate the crux of my dispute, which centers on the proper translation of *trovarsi*, which Murata takes as transitive with the direct object, elegance. *Trovarsi*, however, is reflexive and cannot be used transitively, hence my own “is found in.” A full grammatical discussion beyond this observation is not justified because the distinction results in only a slight change in perspective. Murata’s wording places the emphasis on a misinterpretation of notation, whereas mine places the emphasis on a misinterpretation of performance practice. It is only a slight difference, but I feel that mine is more consistent with Caccini’s emphasis on style. Hitchcock’s translation of this—admittedly confused—sentence is essentially a paraphrase that does not seem quite to get to the sense of the passage. Obviously, I have supplied a good deal of editorial conjectures to make sense of it.

³⁰ The phrase is printed as “*mi faranno ora demonstrate*” and is almost certainly a misprint for “*si saranno ora demonstrate,*” which is suggested by a similar phrase below.

the gruppo, as well as the method used by me for teaching it to those concerned in my house, and in addition next all the other effects most necessary, so that there remains no excellence that I have observed but not demonstrated.

Musical Example: Trillo & Gruppo

The trillo³¹ described by me on one note only, has been demonstrated in this way for no other reason, except because in teaching it to my first [late] wife and now to the other living one, along with my daughters, I have observed no other rule than this very one in³² which it is written, both the one and the other [i.e., both the trillo and the gruppo], namely commencing from the first quarter-note and striking each note repeatedly in the throat on a vowel “a” up to the final breve, and similarly the gruppo.³³ To what extent this trillo and gruppo were learned by my late wife I will leave to him to judge who heard her sing during her life, as likewise I leave to anyone else’s judgment who is able to hear to what excellence it has been made by my other, living wife, which, if it is true that practice is the master of all things, I can with some confidence affirm and say that one cannot use a better means of teaching it, nor a better form for [page 5] describing it, than how it has been expressed, both of them.

This trillo and gruppo, because they are a necessary step toward many things that are described and effects of that elegance that is much to be sought after in good singing, and, as said above, when written in one style, but in another gives a contrary effect than that which is necessary; I will show not only how they can be used but even all the effects described in two styles with the same note values, so that nevertheless we may come to an understanding, as is repeated quite often, that by these instructions together with practice all the excellences of this art can be learned.

Musical Example

Since by means of the examples above written in two styles, we see that there is more charm in the second than in the first, so that, then, we may be able to make better practice of them, some of them will be written here below along with texts beneath and together with a bass line for the chitarrone, all most affective passages with whose practice anyone will be able to be experienced in them and acquire from them every greater perfection.

[page 6] Musical Example [page 8]

³¹ Hitchcock changes the term trillo to tremolo and gruppo to trill in his translation. Though he provides an explanatory note as to why, I see no justification for the exchange within the translation, for which a note on the matter was quite sufficient to clarify that Caccini’s understanding of the term, especially the trillo, differs from some other sources. This latter fact is, rather, obscured, by Hitchcock’s substitutions. The reader may wish to consult the foreword to Francesco Rognoni’s *Selva di varii passaggi* (1620), which gives both verbal explanations and musical illustrations of ornaments.

³² Strangely, Strunk/Treitler omits the passage up to this point, beginning in the middle of a sentence.

³³ Caccini’s illustrations show the trill as a single repeated pitch on notes of decreasing duration up to the conclusion of a breve. The gruppo, similarly, is an alternation at the half-step between two pitches, likewise on decreasing note values up to the conclusion on a breve.

Because in the last two lines on the words “*Ahi dispietato amor,*” an aria *di romanesca*, and in the following madrigal “*Deh dove son fuggiti,*” are found in them all the better affects that can be used in connection with the high style of songs, I wanted to write them out in this way, so as to show where one ought to crescendo and decrescendo the pitch in making the exclamations, trillos, gruppos and, in sum, all the jewels of this art, so as not to have to demonstrate this at other times in all the compositions that follow hereafter, in order that they may serve as an example for recognizing in this music the same places where they will be quite necessary according to the affects of the words, it may happen that the high style, as called by me, gets used without being subjected to strict measure, many times making the value of the notes less by half according to the idea of the words, so that there is produced that song then “*in sprezzatura*” as it is called, where, since so many are the effects for the excellence of the art, for which a good voice is as necessary for these, as is the respiration of the breath for its use, where it is necessary. For this reason it will be useful advice that the professor of this art, since he ought to sing solo with a chitarrone or other string instrument without being forced to accommodate himself to anyone else, so that he should choose for himself a key in which he can sing in full and natural voice in order to avoid using falsetto, in which by using falsetto voice or at least in forcing it, requires that he use breath so as not to make them [the falsetto notes] too obvious (since mostly those usually offend the ear)³⁴ and indeed it is necessary to use it in order to give more air for the crescendo and decrescendo of the voice for exclamation and all the other effects that we have demonstrated. Let it be done thus so that it may not come less at the time when it is needed.

But, from falsetto it is not possible to produce the high style of good song, which comes from a natural voice appropriate for all the notes, which anyone will be able to adapt to his own talent without making use of the breath, moreover, for anything else than for demonstrating mastery of all the better affects that require to be used in such very high style of singing, the love of which and generally of all music kindled in me by the [page 9] inclination of nature and by the study of so many years.

Give me your pardon if I have allowed myself to be transported farther than, perhaps, is appropriate for one who values learning no less than to communicate what was learned and for the reverence that I bear for all professors of this art, which is the most beautiful and naturally delightful, and is at the same time so admirable and so wins entirely anyone’s love when they, who master it, both by teaching it and by delighting others in exercising it often, disclose it and reveal by example and a true semblance of that irresistible celestial harmony from which derive so many good things on earth, awakening the intelligent listeners to the contemplation of the infinite delights offered in heaven.

Since I am accustomed, in all my compositions that are published, to be at pains to indicate³⁵ the numbers above the bass part for thirds and sixths, major by a sharp and minor by a flat, and similarly

³⁴ I accept and am indebted to Hitchcock’s understanding of this—once again—confusing passage as referring to the falsetto voice (*voce finte*, a feminine plural). The feminine plural conjunctive pronoun *le* with *discoprirle* refers back to *voce finte*. The sense is that in falsetto, or forced notes, it is necessary to control the breath so as not to make the falsetto notes unpleasant. My wording is slightly different from Hitchcock’s.

³⁵ Hitchcock’s reading is “that have come from my pen,” which is quite plausible and quite possibly the correct reading. The original is “*che son fuori in penna di denotare.*” For my reading I can only adduce a subjective feeling that Caccini is not emphasizing the nature of the production of the compositions but the trouble he has taken to give them a figured bass at a time when the idea of the specifically figured bass was fairly new. (Agazzari’s *Del sonare sopra’l basso*, one of if not the first treatise on figured bass, did not appear until 1607.) My reading

that the sevenths or similar dissonances may be in the accompaniment in the middle parts. There now remains to say that the ties in the bass part have been used by me in this style because after the chord one should strike again only the designated note, it being the most necessary (unless I err) in the chitarrone's own particular manner of playing³⁶ and the easiest for use and practice on it³⁷, it being that instrument most suited for accompanying the voice and particularly that of the tenor, than any other, leaving, nevertheless, to the judgment of the one who better understands the repetition with the bass of those notes, which can be better known to them, or that will accompany the solo song better,³⁸ it not being possible to be written with greater facility, apart from tablature, so far as I know.

Now, in regard to those internal parts mentioned already, a particular practice has been noticed in Antonio Naldi, called "il Bardella," a most gracious servant to these Serene Highnesses, who since he truly has been the inventor of it, and so he is reputed by all for the highest excellence that up until our times has ever played such an instrument, as professors by their advantage bear witness, and those who take pleasure in the practice of the chitarrone, if formerly it had not happened to him that which many times befell others, namely that others are ashamed at having learned from another's teaching, as if each could or ought to be inventor of everything, and as if there had been taken from the intelligence of men the ability always to keep finding new disciplines for the increase of their own reputation and common benefit.³⁹

involves taking *penna* as an alternative spelling for *penna*. Caccini's text, as other texts at the time, know no standard orthography and provide alternative spellings even within the same treatise. Casual doublings for singlings and vice versa are very common. Thus, I merely present mine as a possible alternative; effectively Caccini is saying "in all the compositions I have made public, I have gone to the trouble to provide a figured bass [i.e., that novel new invention]." It seems to me at least worthwhile to consider it as an alternative in the context of Caccini's emphasis on the fact that he is presenting *nuove musiche*.

³⁶ The Italian is *posta* for which Cambridge recognizes a musical sense "*posta di voce*,--placing the voice," which (in some degree of desperation) I have extended to the chitaronne.

³⁷ This appears to refer to how best to finger the necessary chords on the chitaronne, a fretted instrument. Indeed, Hitchcock understands this passage as referring to a fretted instrument's practice of repeating upper but not bass notes, which he clarifies with the help of several editorial additions (page 9). I am indebted to his clarification.

³⁸ That is, how to realize the harmony implicit in the figured bass and what realization may be better to accompany the voice.

³⁹ It seems suspiciously like Caccini has introduced this comment on Naldi's ill-treatment, somewhat unnecessary to the context, as a means of slyly claiming the same unjust treatment toward himself, which some of his comments suggest.

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