

MEMORIA, PRONUNCIATIO AND THE ART OF COMPOSING IN THE MIND

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RESUMO:

Memória é, na renascença, a relação conceitual que une performance e composição musical. Uma análise destes dois aspectos a partir do ponto de vista da memória possibilita compreender o valor operacional deste sistema mnemônico no processo de acumular e relembrar o material musical relacionado ao ato de produzir/compor e executar música.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE:

memória; performance; composição improvisada; oralidade; escrita.

ABSTRACT:

Memory is the conceptual link, which unites performance and composition of music in the Renaissance. Analyzing these two related aspects from the point of view of the art of memory, is possible to reveal the operational value of this mnemonic system in the process of the storing and reminiscence of musical material related to the act of producing/composing and playing music.

KEYWORDS:

memory; performance; improvised composition; orality; writing.

I.

The rhetorical *pronunciatio*, subdivided in *vox* and *gestus*, was often evoked in the musical sources of the Italian Renaissance. It represents the last part of rhetoric, which together

with memory, the part immediately preceding it, presides over the performance of the orator's discourse. For centuries, *pronunciatio* has constituted the behavioral paradigm that translates the perception of sound into visual perception, the rule that organizes the 'sensory diffraction' between the noble senses, the code that links the intangible dimension of the sound to the material dimension of the body, through the mediation of the face, at the same time flesh and soul. In rhetoric as well as in music, *pronunciatio* is memory translated into performance: the performance of the orator, ideal model of the performance of the musician.

In a context, in fact, in which musical performance, usually, involved hearing and sight, at the same time, the resources of rhetorical *pronunciatio* are a necessary support in order to structure the musical event. Silvestro Ganassi refers to its precepts, for example, in a famous passage of his treatise *Regola Rubertina*:

There are two reasons why one should move one's body - first, so as not to appear like a piece of stone and second, for the reason that music is composed to words. Therefore, your motions should be proportioned to the music and to the word setting. Whenever music is set to words, the limbs of one's body must move accordingly. Furthermore, there should be appropriate movements of one's eyes, hair, mouth and chin; the neck should be inclined more or less toward the shoulders according to the mood suggested by the words. With words and music in a happy vein or in a sad one, one must draw the bow either strongly or lightly, according to the mood; sometimes it should be drawn neither strongly nor lightly, but moderately, if that is what the words suggest. With sad music, the bow should be drawn lightly and at times, one even should make the bowing arm tremble and do the same thing on the fingerboard to achieve the necessary effect. The opposite can be done with the bow in music of a happy nature, by using pressure on the bow in proportion to the music. In this manner, you will see how to make the required motions and thereby give spirit to the instrument in proper proportion to every kind of music. This discussion would suffice, although I could have said many more things were it not for my wish to be brief. If you consider what I have said carefully, you will find it increasingly gratifying, as you become more familiar with the concept. What I have said has as much purpose and necessity for a viol player as for an orator, to express *audacity and shouts as*

well as to make gestures and movements, and sometimes to imitate laughing and crying or to do whatever else seems appropriate, according to the theme. If my reasoning is correct, you will find that the orator does not laugh while uttering tearful words. By the same token, the performer of music in a happy vein will not bow his head or use movements suggesting sadness, because that would not be an artistic rendering of nature. Instead, it would be a denigration of the true purpose of art. Therefore, you must always represent the mood in music composed to words, under all mentioned circumstances and to practice it until you have thoroughly mastered the method of holding the viol and the proper position of your body, together with the motions required for a beautiful total effect (GANASSI, 1542, c. VIr).²

For him, indeed, the performance of the viola da gamba player is, consciously, shaped on the performance of the orator. The structural link that unites musical and rhetorical *pronunciatio*³ is the shared necessity to vary the sound's quality according to the affect's quality, adjusting the body gestures and the vocal nuances in an almost magical way.

If, for Ganassi, the orator is the ideal model of the musician, Quintilian, inversely, invites the musician to assist the orator in the understanding of the expressive power of the nuances of voice and sound. For the author of *Instituio Oratoria*, music, in fact, is capable of moving the listeners' soul, also without the use of words, uniquely with the power of the sound of the musical instruments:

Music has two modes of expression in the voice and in the body; for both voice and body require to be controlled by appropriate rules. Aristoxenus divides music, in so far as it concerns the voice, into *rhythm* and *melody*, the one consisting in measure, the latter in sound and song. Now I ask you whether it is not absolutely necessary for the orator to be acquainted with all these methods of expression which are concerned firstly with gesture, secondly with the arrangement of words and thirdly with the inflexions of the voice, of which a great variety are required in pleading. [...] Because the musician does vary both tone and rhythm, expressing sublime feelings with elevation, pleasing feelings with sweetness, and ordinary with gentle utterance, and in every expression of its art is in sympathy with the emotions of which it is the mouthpiece. Similarly, it is by the raising, lowering or inflexion of the voice that the orator stirs the emotions of his hearers, and the measure, if I may repeat the term, of voice

2. “È di necessità per duoi ragioni doversi muovere con la persona: uno per non parer essere di pietra, l'altra per causa de la musica ben composta su le parole: però il muovere suo sarà proportionato alla musica ben formata su le parole, dove se la musica sarà mistevole per parole tal ancora gli membri farà la sua moventia conforme, e l'occhio come principal in giustificar la conforme moventia sera compagno dal peio e bocca, e mento della faccia & il collo appressati alla spalla più e manco secondo il bisogno a simile soggetto formato a tal parole. Così nelle parole over musica allegra come parole e musica mesta, & hai da calcar l'arco forte e pian e tal volta ne forte ne pian cioè mediocramente come sera alle parole, e musica mesta operare l'archetto con leggiadro modo, & alle fiate tremar il braccio de l'archetto, che è alla musica allegra calcar l'arco con modo proportionato a tal musica, & a questo modo verrai a far la moventia & con dar il spirito all'istromento con proportioni conforme ad ogni sorte di musica, e questo discorso ti basterà volendo io seguitar la brevità molte cose si potria dire: ma questo basterà: perché se tu lo considerai di molto verrai in cognitione che restarai contento, e questo mio ragionamento è in tanto proposito necessario, quanto è ne l'oratore audacia esclamation, gesti, movimenti, & alle volte imitar il ridere, & il pianger per la conformità de la materia, & altre cose conveniente: e se tu

poni la ragione in regola non trovarai che l'oratore rida per le parole del pianto il simile il sonatore alla musica allegra non praticarà l'archetto leggier, e movimenti simili e conformi alla musica mesta perché l'arte non imiteria la natura, & seguiria il denigrar il vero effetto de l'arte che è d'imitar la natura, però il si debbe imitar l'effetto in musica cavato dalle parole con tutte le circostantie sopraditte infin' a qui sei ammaestrato da quanto il tenir la viola, & il portamento della persona con gli movimenti in proposito ne l'effetto della bellezza". Ganassi, (1542, c. VI^r), English translation (with my modifications) in Ganassi (1981, pp. 18-19), italics is mine.

3. The rhetorical canon consists of *inventio*, *dispositio*, *elocutio*, *memoria* and *pronunciatio*.

4. "Numerus musice duplices habet, in vocibus et in corpore: utriusque enim rei aptus quidam modus desideratur. Vocis rationem Aristoxenus musicus dividit in *ρυθμὸν* et *μέλος*, quorum alterum modulatione, alterum canore ac sonis constat. Num igitur non haec omnia oratori necessaria? Quorum unum ad gestum, alterum ad conlocationem verborum, tertium ad flexus vocis, qui sunt in agendo quoque plurimi, pertinet [...]. Namque et voce et modulatione grandia elate, iucunda dulciter, moderata leniter canit totamque arte consentit cum eorum, quae dicuntur, adfectibus.

or phrase differs according as we wish to rouse the indignation or the pity of the judge. *For, as we know, different emotions are roused even by the various musical instruments, which are incapable of reproducing speech*⁴ (QUINTILIAN, 1933, v. I, pp. 170-171).

The structural link, which unites music and oratory, consists in the shared necessity to vary the sound's qualities according to the affect's qualities: a privileged relationship which, perhaps, also goes beyond the general trend of the Sixteenth century to conceive rhetoric as a shared technique available to all arts.

II.

The impossibility "to render in writing all vocal nuances, and bodily motions that can make an orator, when delivering his speech"⁵ (MASCHER, 1560, 201v), nourishes the comparison with the musical performance, which shares with the *actio*, the same constitutive unspeakability. The relationship established by Ganassi recognizes the presence of a common unknown territory represented by those orator's qualities, which, above all, the musician should acquire: "Audacity, exclamation, gestures, movements" ("audacia, esclamation, gesti, movimenti"). The acquisition of these qualities should not be seen as a generic exhortation to an effective communication, but as an invitation to use specific rhetorical techniques, witnessing the deep knowledge of the distinguishing features of *persuasio* by the Venetian musician.

In particular, audacity is the explicit search for 'estrangement' promoted by the orator in order to avoid monotony through the use of *audacior ornatus*, which pertains to the domain of *movere*, the most radical and extreme category of rhetorical affectivity. The etymology from which the *ornatus* derives –the ornaments that adorn the table of a banquet– reminds us that rhetorical discourse, as well as musical performance, are a kind of "food for the eyes and the ears" to consume. The rhetorical audacity produces an increase of intensity of *vox* and an increase of movement of *gestus*, that make the communication effort more effective.

The need for beauty of *musical ornatus* is satisfied by the successful interaction of the *vox* –represented by the beauty of hearing, produced, in this case, by the skillful management

of the expressive potential of bowing— with *gestus*, the visual beauty promoted by the equally clever poses of the body, and in particular of the face, of which the eye is the most noble organ. The eyes receive and record the phenomenal world and move it inside the subject, and then, again, outside the subject to reveal it, again, to the world. The musical and rhetorical *pronunciatio* activates, exactly, this relationship between inside and outside, which allows the physicality of sound, body and voice to speak on behalf of the spirit: the sound-body-voice reflects the affective dimension, establishing a kind of analogical relationship that allows passions to declare to the world.

This mimetic correspondence, between internal and external affects, activates the metaphorical transformation: to express an emotion is not simply to manifest it, but to engage the audience in experiencing the same emotion.

III.

Which kind of performance practice we could approach to the rhetorical *audacia* required by Ganassi? Referring to the musical *ornatus*, the practice of diminution, i.e. the habit of embellishing *ex tempore* a melodic line, can be well interpreted according to the rhetorical *ordo*. A practice well known by Ganassi, who has the merit of having opened, with his *Fontegara* (1535), the vast collection of Italian treatises on diminutions that will extend to the second half of the Seventeenth century.

The *Avviso al lettore* from *Il secondo Libro delli Motetti di Bartholomeo Barbarino da Fabriano detto il Pesarino* (1614), is one of the several sources that testifies to the perceptive inefficacy of simply playing the notes written on the score:

Because I have heard from many [singers] that in my first book of motets for one voice, already published, there are some [of the motets] which are difficult to sing for those who don't have the ability to make diminutions, therefore in this second book, I have published two different versions of the same motet: simple (*semplice*) and diminished (*passaggiata*). The simple version is for those who don't have the ability to sing diminutions, and for those who have the ability to sing diminutions and know counterpoint, who can do themselves diminutions and all other

Atqui in orando quoque intentio vocis, remissio, flexus pertinet ad movendos audientium adfectus, aliaque et conlocationis et vocis, ut eodem utar verbo, modulationem concitationem iudicis, alia misericordiam petimus, adfici animos in diversum habitum sentiamus." (I, 10, 22-25). English translation (with my modifications) in QUINTILIANO (1933, v. I, pp. 170-171); italics is mine.

5. "Di poter porre in iscritto tutte le sorti delle voci, & moti del corpo che può fare un Oratore parlando". English translation is mine.

6. “Perché ho inteso da molti che nel primo Libro di Motetti, che già diedi alla stampa per cantarsi da una voce sola, ve ne siano alcuni di essi che riescono difficili à potersi cantare da chi non ha dispositione di passaggiare. Per tanto ho voluto in questo secondo far la parte che canta in due modi, e semplice e passaggiata. La semplice per quelli che non hanno dispositione, & per quelli che hanno contrapunto e dispositione, che da loro medesimi potranno formare i passaggi, e l’altre circostantie che si richiedono per la buona maniera di cantare. La passaggiata poi, per quelli che havendo dispositione, non hanno contrapunto da poter formare la diminutione come regolatamente si deve”. English translation is mine.

ornaments that are required for the proper way of singing. The diminished version then, for those who having the ability to sing diminutions, but not knowing counterpoint, don’t have the capacity to make diminutions according to the rules⁶ (BARBARINO, 1615, *Avviso ai lettori*).

The part without written ornamentation, is conceived for those who have neither the disposition of ‘gorgia’, neither the knowledge of counterpoint, and therefore must play exactly what is written; and, inversely, for those who, having the ability to perform extemporaneously their own *passaggi*, possess both; while the embellished part is designed for those who, although having the disposition of ‘gorgia’, don’t have a sufficient knowledge of counterpoint to elaborate their own diminutions.



Fig. 1: BARTOLOMEO BARBARINO, *Il secondo Libro delli Motetti*, Venezia 1615.

Beyond their modality of production, ‘passaggi’ activate a necessary mechanism of amplification of the musical object that pertains to the musical and rhetorical *pronunciatio*, since it is only to prevent the possible inadequacy of singers, that the composer feels the need to intervene by fixing on paper what, strictly speaking, should not concern writing. So, the author displays, on the same page, the bare musical text, and the ‘recording’ of a possible, or perhaps ideal, performance, or, if we would like to rhetorically reformulate this bi-dimensionality, the written oration and its oral declamation [fig. 1].

The function of *amplificatio* absolved by diminutions is thoroughly discussed in theoretical sources: in the *Compendi-*

um musices descriptum (1552) by Adrian Petit Coclico, for example, the chapter *De elegantia et ornatu, aut pronuntiatione in canendo* distinguishes between *simplex* and *elegans* melody. The latter term, as witnessed the link suggested in the title with *pronuntiatio* and *ornatus*, is understood in its specific rhetorical meaning of ‘efficient cause’ of the eloquence: the musician to be eloquent must to be *elegans*, and to be *elegans* must conveniently embellish his singing (COCLICO, 1552, pp. Biiijr.-Biiijv)⁷.

Elegance is a feature of the *ornatus* that can characterize both the virtues of *puritas* and *perspicuitas*, typical of the *genus subtile*, as those of *gratia* and *suavitas* related, instead, to the *genus medium*:

Many princes of musicians, such as Josquin de Pres, Peter de la Rue, James Scampion and others lived among us, who should be admired for having composed the most elegant and soave cadences⁸. (COCLICO, 1552, p. Hiiijv).

The allusion to the sound qualities of the cadences of the famous musicians quoted, described by the explicit matching of *suavitas* and *elegantia*, might suggest, unlike Ganassi, a moderate use of ornamentation, as shown by this example of musical elegance in the treatise of Coclico [fig. 2]:

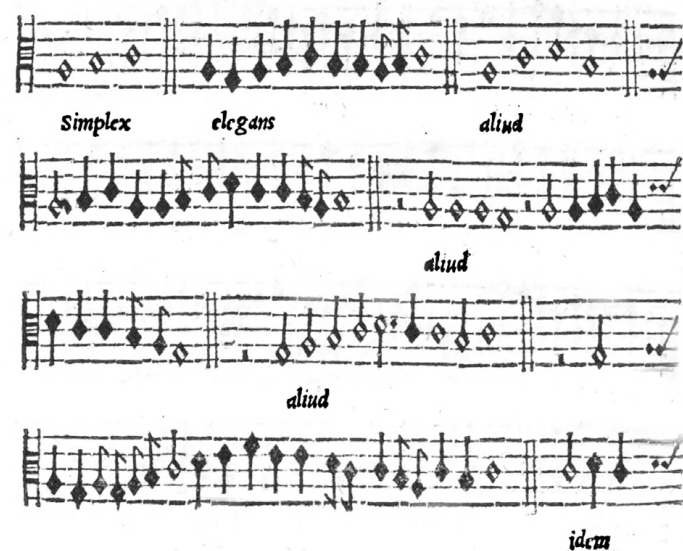


Fig. 2: ADRIANO PETIT COCLICO, *Compendium musices descriptum*, Nüremberg, 1552.

7. On the concept of elegance cf. HARRÀN, 1988.

8. “Vixerunt apud hos Musicorum principes plurimi, Iosquinius de Pres, Petrus de La rue, Iacobus Scampion, et alij, qui admirandis, et suavissimis clausularum elegantijs usi sunt”. English translation is mine.

In any case, the widespread use of these techniques produces a substantial change in the ‘pronunciation’ of the musical text, which undergoes a sort of ‘perceptive amplification’ that derives from the written text, but at the same time transcends it. This perceptive amplification constructs a new interactive oral text modelled by the laws of performative declamation that partially hides the written text, allowing it to arrive, only intermittently and episodically, at the threshold of perception.

According to this perspective, the sensorial fascinations triggered by an adequate use of *ornatus*, not merely reproduce the musical object, but rewrite it according to ornamentation’s identity: musical *ornatus* is conceived, in fact, as the driving force of musical beauty, as Zacconi states in his *Prattica di Musica*: According to Zacconi (1596, I, 58r), the continuous embellishing of music prevents its decadence, always giving it new perceptive virginity.

This relationship between ornamentation and beauty has a long history. Because the aim of eloquence is admiration, the continuous embellishment of the discourse is the greatest aspiration of the rhetorician, as Quintilian says quoting the words of Cicero to Brutus (QUINTILIAN, 1979, VIII, 3, 6, v. II, pp. 144-145). The *ornatus* confers beauty, efficient cause of admiration, since, as Dante says in the *Convivio*, “beauty consists in the ornament of the words” (1928 [1304], II, 11, 4), a phrase, perhaps retained in the mnemonic archive of the Augustinian father: likewise, the beauty of music consists in the ornamentation of figures.

IV.

If the art of diminution is one of the favourite means of musical *pronunciatio*, how does it work in performance? To embellish performance, the diminutions’ patterns have been previously stored in the mnemonic archive of the musician. According to a rhetorical perspective, in fact, *pronunciatio* does not exist without *memoria*. The relationship between memory and improvisation is exemplarily expressed by these words of Giovanni Luca Conforti written at the end of his treatise on diminutions, which, like all the others treatises on the same subject, adopts a very effective structure, capable of shortening, according to his author, the long learning process

of memorization to just a couple of months: knowing, in fact, “the genre of the diminution patterns, [and] how to write down them, [...] their diversity will remain in the memory, and having practiced them a lot, you can use them, *ex tempore*, in ensemble performances” (CONFORTI, 1593, *Dichiaratione sopra li passaggi*).

These treatises are organized according to a structure that systematically lists a series of intervals, defining for each of them many patterns of diminutions. This system of visual and spatial memorization, which activates reminiscence, is perfectly readable according to the precepts of the classical and medieval *ars memorandi*. The latter, as is well known, is based on places and images. *Locus* is a place that can be easily grabbed from the memory, *imagines* are *formae*, *notae*, *simulacra* of what we desire to remember.

The structure of diminution treatises probably reflects the structure of the mnemonic archive settled in the minds of their authors: in this context, *loci* are constituted by the bare melodic intervals, while the *imagines* are constituted by the melodic figures that are relevant for each place. This system develops mnemonics automatisms by virtue of which, when the musician finds in a melody certain intervals (*loci*), he can diminished them using the patterns (*imagines*) previously stored in relationship with *loci*.

Since the art of memory is like an inner writing, the long-weighed decision, by Giovanni Dalla Casa, “to take one day pen in hand, demonstrating the true way to play diminutions”⁹ (DALLA CASA, 1584, *Ai lettori*), might allude to the decision to transfer to the ‘outside’ what is already written in his mind, in order to reveal it to the world. This process generates an effective osmosis between orality and writing: the author’s path, that proceeds from writing in the mind to writing on paper, has the opposite direction to the path of the user, who assimilates what is written on paper to store it in the mind: the master ‘pulls out’, what the student must ‘put in’.

9. “Di pigliar un giorno la penna in mano, & mostrar il vero modo di diminuire”. English translation is mine.

V.

The *ars memorandi* technique may be activated when singing to the book («cantare a libro»): from the written page that the composer has given to the singer, the singer produces

another oral artefact that is, at the same time, an amplification and a betrayal of the written text. But this is not the only way in which memory interacts with musical *pronunciatio*:

Last week I sent to Your Serene Highness *Cor mio mentr'io vi miro*, equipped with diminutions according to the commission of Your Serene Highness. Now I send you the other [madrigal], *Per voi, lasso, conviene*, and I believe that they will succeed if they are learned by heart, and that words are well spoken, and conducted by Messer Giulio [Caccini]¹⁰ (*apud* DURANTE and MARTELOTTI, 1989, p. 165)

10. “La settimana passata io mandai a Vostra Altezza Serenissima *Cor mio mentr'io vi miro*, aconcio con i passaggi secondo la comissione di Vostra Altezza Serenissima. Hora li mando l'altro *Per voi, lasso, conviene* e crederò che averanno a riuscire quando siano imparati a la mente, et che le parole siano ben proferite e consertati da messer Giulio [Caccini]”. Florence State Archive, Archivio Mediceo, filza 768, 24th August 1584, Alessandro Striggio letter to the Grand Duke Francesco de' Medici. English translation and italics are mine.

11. Cf. LORENZETTI (2012), and BESUTTI (2003, pp. 281-300).

Already equipped with “passaggi” included by the composer in the written text, the madrigals of Striggio, for a compelling effect, have to be learned and performed from memory. Rhetorically speaking, they require the most difficult and dangerous side of *ars memorandi*, the *memoria verborum*: the exact storage of an entire speech.

The orator's custom of reciting the oration by heart, fits well with the typical context of the performance of the Ladies of Ferrara, to which the madrigals were addressed: in the narrow Ferrarise ‘camerini’, in fact, the reduced distance between musicians and listeners requires the singers to free the face of any visual interference that singing to the book could introduce, leaving the hands free to gesture. Moreover, singing from memory is extremely functional in nourishing the rhetorical fiction of a completely extemporaneous performance¹¹.

According to Giovanni Bardi the Ladies were able to sing “more than three hundred and thirty madrigals from memory, a miraculous thing [...], never missing even a syllable” (BARDI, 1763, II, p. 245). In doing so, they will not need to open a book, to find the desired composition, to turn the pages during the performance: it will be sufficient to open their mouth and to pour out the sound into the room, transforming the artifice into nature, through the miracle of an art apparently learned without effort, by divine gift.

The custom of singing by heart will become an essential requirement of the new theatrical music of the early Seventeenth century, which had made the madrigal, according to Della Valle, a genre old-fashioned, albeit still practiced:

Today, we don't compose many madrigals because it is rarely used to sing them. There aren't, in fact, occasions where we have to sing madrigals, because the public loves much more singing by heart, with *frankness*, with musical instruments in hand. To see four or five companions singing to the book at the table is considered too typical of school life and study¹² (DELLA VALLE, 1903 [1640], p. 171)

Franckness (franchezza) is the term used by Della Valle to connote, in summary, the peculiarities of singing by heart. The term contains a multiplicity of meanings that allow us to understand the distinguishing features of this practise: first of all, the word refers to freedom from a state of servitude or dependence, in this case freedom from the written page, then to nonchalance, and, finally, to ease of expression and performance. Singing from memory is a *thesaurus* of freedom and easiness that develops all the potentialities of *vox* and *gestus*, powerful tools of performative *pronunciatio*.

VI.

Nearly a century earlier, in a completely different context, Nicola Vicentino, as the good humanist he was, wrote his praise of singing by heart. There is an ideal relationship between his words and those of Silvestro Ganassi, quoted at the beginning of this paper: the aims of the viola player are, in fact, essentially the same as those of the singer:

Singers, therefore, have consideration of the Latin or vernacular tongue, and they must imitate the composition with their voices by using as many diverse techniques of singing as there are diverse styles of composition. When they use such techniques, they will be considered by the audience to be men of judgement and masters of many styles of singing. They will also demonstrate the abundance and richness of their many singing techniques with their talent for *gorgia*, or diminution, matched to the appropriate passages in the composition¹³ (VICENTINO, 1555, c. 88r, recte 94r).

These words are in praise of the intelligence of the singer, who combines the careful recitation of the poetic text with the fascination of the sound 'passaggiato', in an unrepeatable dialectic between *ratio* and *sensus*. The rhetorical aim is, in

12. "Oggi non se ne compongono tanti perché si usa poco di cantare madrigali, né ci è occasione in cui si abbiano da cantare; amando più le genti di sentir cantare a mente con gli strumenti in mano con franchezza, che di vedere quattro cinque compagni che cantino ad un tavolino col libro in mano, che ha troppo del scolaresco e dello studio". English translation is mine.

13. "Così il cantante dè considerare la mente del Poeta Musico, et così del Poeta volgare, ò latino, & imitare con la voce la compositione, & usare diversi modi di cantare, come sono diverse le maniere delle compositioni, & quando userà tali modi, sarà giudicato da gli oditori huomo di giuditio, & di havere molte maniere di cantare, & dimostrerà esser abundante, & ricco di molti modi cantare con la dispositione, della gorga, ò di diminuire accompagnata con le compositioni, secondo li passaggi, in suo proposito". English translation is mine.

14. “Un certo modo di procedere, nelle compositioni, che non si può scrivere, come sono, il dir piano & forte, & il dir presto, & tardo, & secondo le parole, muovere la Misura, per dimostrare gli effetti delle passioni delle parole, & dell’armonia”. English translation is mine. Cf. MOMPELLIO (1973).

15. “Se bene si considera nelle compositioni, che nel mezzo, & nel fine, si muove la misura, con la proportionione, di equalità, avvenga che alcuni sono d’opinione, che battendo la misura alla breve, non si dè mutare misura, & pur cantando si muta; et non è gran male, et come cessa la proportionione di equalità, si ritorna in un’altra misura, sicché per l’uso già fatto, non è inconveniente la mutatione della misura, in ogni compositione”. English translation is mine.

fact, to persuade the audience to be finally considered “to be men of judgment”. The judgment is the ability of the performer to understand and implement, “a certain method that cannot be written down, such as uttering softly and loudly or fast and slow, or changing the measure in keeping with the words, so as to show the effects of the passions and the harmony”¹⁴ (VICENTINO, 1555, c.88v, recte 94v).

Particularly significant is the advice to adopt a flexible *tactus* that produces *varietas* and *gratia* in a performance modelled on the orator’s declamation:

It is well to take care when the measure is changed through the proportion of equality in the middle or at the end of compositions. Although some believe that you should not change the measure when beating *alla breve*, it is nonetheless changed in singing, which is not such a terrible thing¹⁵ (VICENTINO, 1555, p. 88v., recte 94v)

But what is the meaning of “proportion of equality”? Vicentino explains that “proportion of equality” consists in adopting the same *mensura* by all the voices, and gives the following example [Fig. 3]:



Fig. 3: NICOLA VICENTINO, *L'Antica musica ridotta alla moderna prattica*, Roma 1555.

For Vicentino, in the transition from *tempus imperfectum diminutum* to *proportio sequialtera*, an acceleration of *tactus*, although in conflict with the rules, was not only permitted but also desirable. The flexibility of the concept of proportion, witnessed by Vicentino in the mid Sixteenth-Century, is a relevant component of these unwritten customs that are outside the domain of writing: “a certain method that cannot be written down”, Vicentino calls them. And it is precisely to

take possession of all the potentialities of this method that it will be imperative to sing from memory:

It is much more pleasing if music is sung from memory than from written parts. Take the example of preachers and orators. If they recited their sermons or orations from a script, they would lose favour and face a dissatisfied audience. For listeners are greatly moved if glances are matched with musical accents.¹⁶ (VICENTINO, 1555, c. 88^v, recte 94^v)

In full agreement with rhetorical *pronunciatio*, which functions as the driving force of generalization and legitimisation of musical performance, it is the mutual interaction between visual and aural dimensions that produce the satisfaction of the public and the success of the musician. But musical performance is so ideally far from the written text, that to appear in public with music in hand is paradoxical for the musician, as paradoxical is for preacher and orator: if the context makes essential singing to the book, as is often the case for large liturgical music ensembles, Della Valle advises musicians to conceal themselves from the public, to avoid for the listeners any visual contamination between sound and writing: “in churches and other places where it is necessary to sing and play with scores, the choral musicians are covered with curtains and jealousies, so that they are not seen” (DELLA VALLE, 1903 [1640], p. 171)¹⁷.

Musical performance, like rhetoric, cannot be related to writing, but only to memory: the memory of things (*memoria rerum*) and the memory of words (*memoria verborum*).

VII.

But the art of memory’s world equally affects the compositional process, as these words by Adriano Banchieri testifies:

One hundred different diminutions patterns accented in the modern style, in Latin and the Vernacular, taken from the [works of the] most celebrated composers of our time, and with the simple notes [provided] for the use of composers, applied in terms of local memory¹⁸ (BANCHIERI, 1614, p. 216).

16. “Quando la Musica sarà cantata alla mente sarà molto più gratiata, che quando sarà cantata sopra le carte, & si piglierà l’essempio dalli predicatori, & da gli Oratori, che si recitassero quella predica, et quella oratione, sopra una carta scritta quelli non havriano né gratia, né audenti grata, perché i sguardi, con gli accenti musicali muoveno assai più.”. English translation is mine.

17. “Nelle chiese ed in altri luoghi, dove è necessario di cantare e sonare con le carte innanzi, i musici ne’ cori sempre si cuoprono con panni o con gelosie, acciocché non siano veduti”. English translation is mine.

18. “Cento variati passaggi Accentuati alla moderna, [...] dedotti in celebri compositori [*sic*] de i nostri tempi, & con le note semplici à giovamento di chi compone, applicate in termine di memoria locale”. English transl. in CRANNA, (1981, p. 413).

Not only Banchieri certifies the existence of musical memory places' ("memoria locale"), but he calls for their application by the composer. In other words, he codifies the artificial memory as the system that, on the one hand, makes it possible to store a whole series of musical images in the musician's mnemonic archive and, on the other hand, promotes their reuse and their new implementation in the construction of a musical object [Fig. 4].

216 C A R T E L L A.
CENTO VARIATI PASSAGGI
Accentuati alla moderna, Latini, & Volgari;
Dedotti in celebri compositori de i nostri tempi, & con le note semplici à giouamento di chi compone, applicate in termine di memoria locale.
Del P. D. Adriano Banchieri Monaco Oliuetano.
Et diffiniti in quattro ordini cioè
Vinticinque alla Voce Soprana. 25. Alla Voce Contr'Alta.
Vinticinque alla Tenora, & 25. Alla Parte Graue.

ALLA VOCE SOPRANA.

	MEMORIA.	PASAGGIO.
1	In Deo In Deo.	De o.
2	Sperabo spe	ra bo
3	Homo factus est Ho	mo fa ctus est.
4	Et iterum & i	terum.
5	Flos virginatus	Flos vir ginita ts.

Fig. 4: ADRIANO BANCHIERI, *Cartella musicale nel canto figurato, fermo e contrapunto*, in Venetia 1614, p. 216.

The dialectic between *memoria* and *passaggio* is identical to that employed by treatises on divisions. They employ, in fact, the same logical patterns organized, as we have seen, in a taxonomy of music intervals (*memoria*) each corresponding to a multiplicity of melodic figurations (*passaggi*). Consequently, not only the structure, but also the content of this musical archive can be shared by the composer and the performer, as Banchieri explicitly affirms:

4. Having these [*passaggi*] in mind, a shrewd singer, finding himself with a part in hand with accompaniment of organ or

whatever [other instrument], when he encounters simple notes similar to [those of] the *memoria* we have seen, he can sing the [corresponding] *passaggio*. This will produce a good effect, and a graceful singer will thereby acquire a [good] reputation.

5. In singing these [*passaggi*] in two voices to practice them and make them [familiar] to the ear, they produce a good effect; that is to say, for study, the teacher sings the *memoria* and the student sings the *passaggio* at the same time, both together.

6. Finally the young composer can change the Latin words to the vernacular, and the vernacular ones to Latin, and he can do so with other [*passaggi*] with [the help of] these clear examples¹⁹. (BANCHIERI, 1614, p. 229)

If the mnemonic archive of the singer-instrumentalist and the composer share the same logical and mnemonic system, as well as the same melodic material, then the singer-instrumentalist who embellishes a melody that already exists on paper, and the composer who ornaments a virtual melody that potentially exists not yet fully formulated in his mind, are two conceptually similar activities which differ in degree and intensity, but not in nature: to write and rewrite, to compose in the mind and to compose on paper are not separate realms, but only different refractions of a same universe. Also performance, in fact, is not conceived, as today, as a fundamentally interpretative and reproductive activity, but as a means of re-creating music, conferring on it an always different perceptive identity.

The relationship between the art of memory and the compositional process can be further testified through a paradigmatic example of a musical *inventio* modelled on a rhetorical *inventio*, provided by Giovanni Battista Chiodino's treatise *Arte pratica latina e volgare di far contrapunto a mente e a penna*. Giovanni Battista Chiodino was a little-known master of theology, orator and inquisitor from Belluno, who published, in 1610, this short treatise on counterpoint: the beginning of an ideal path that, in a few years, would bring him to edit handbooks of grammar and rhetoric, and finally to summarize much of Aristotelian philosophy, considered by him the *climax* of knowledge: "the works of Aristotle are precious daisies, enjoyment, delight and consolation of the intellect that the whole world proclaims"²⁰ (CHIODINO, 1613, *Praefatio Chiodini*).

19. "4. Havendogli alla mente, ritrovandosi un accorto Cantore una parte in mano sopra l'organo ò altrove, trovando le note semplici simile alla Memoria veduta potrà farvi il Passaggio, qual farà buono effetto & il leggiadro cantante ne acquisterà reputazione. 5. Cantandogli a Due voci così per praticargli & farvi l'orecchio, fanno buono effetto, cioè per studio il Maestro canti la Memoria & il Discepolo il Passaggio nell'istesso tempo amendui insieme. 6. Il Novello compositore per ultimo potrà mutare le parole latine in volgari, & le volgari in latine, & farne anco de gli altri con questo lume esemplare". English transl. in CRANNA, (1981, pp. 427-428).

20. "Studia Aristotelis sunt praetiosae Margeritae, voluptates, delectationes, solatiaque intellectus toto orbe vociferante". Aristotle's physics is summarized in CHIODINO, (1617), English translation is mine.

According to the cultural trends of the late sixteenth century, Chiodino feels imbued with the ethical and pedagogical mission to summarize knowledge, to reduce it to formulas, to restructure it in view of its immediate reuse: exactly the same process that he extends to music. Because of the shortness of life, rhetorical *brevitas* is the most effective method of teaching and learning counterpoint (CHIODINO, 1614, p. 4). In his treatise, Chiodino presents only the *purum corpus materiae*, only what cannot be omitted. From this organization of knowledge, by abstract analysis, one arrives at the bare schema: the subject for *amplificatio* provided by *loci communes*. The need to restrict to a minimum the notions to be learned, derives from the conceptual identity that the author established between written counterpoint and *contrappunto alla mente*: what it is possible to write in the mind is substantially the same as what it is possible to write down on paper.

The first seven books of the treatise are strictly organized according to a variable number of *praecepta*: the text of each is minimal, immediately converted into musical examples; the order of the arguments proceeds from the general to the particular, from the simple to the complex. The ninth book, entitled *De locis communibus musicalibus*, consists exclusively of musical *loci*, which are mnemonic-generative archetypes of contrapuntal writing to be internalize. The structure of the *Loci* is designed to be easily stored and combined: they are constituted, in fact, of short cadential segments, which can be used according to the progression of a *cantus firmus* [Fig. 5].

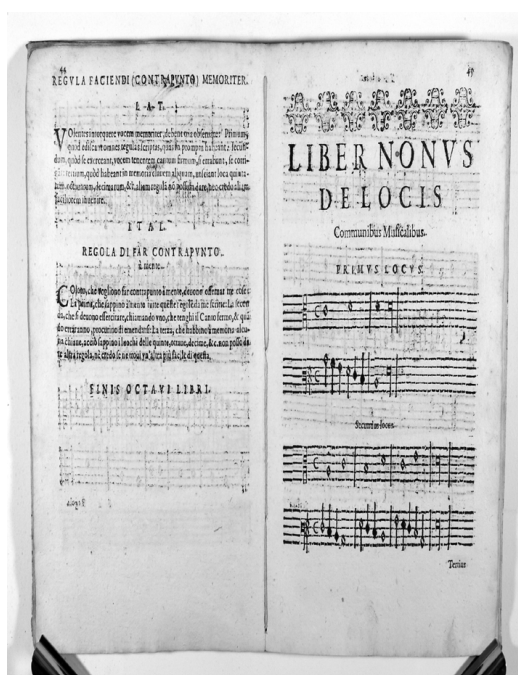


Fig. 5: GIOVANNI BATTISTA CHIODINO, *Arte pratica latina e volgare di far contrapunto à mente, & à penna*, in Venetia, 1610.

Chiodino introduces the concept of *locus* at a basic educational level: *loci* allow the student to create mnemonic automatisms that govern the performance of *contrappunto alla mente*. Chiodino's memorization process of *loci* is structured according to the criteria of the classical art of memory: the short sequences of a *cantus firmus* serve as mnemonic places in which it is possible to store different images (the contrapuntal formulas), as revealed, in particular, by the *Decimus locus* [Ex. 1]:



EX. 1: GIOVANNI BATTISTA CHIODINO, *Arte pratica latina e volgare di far contrapunto à mente, & à penna*, in Venetia, 1610.

The *loci* can be used independently, but they are also readily adaptable to the multiple possibilities of reciprocal integration. Conceptually speaking, this is their most significant

feature, as the following hypothetical examples of this *ars combinatoria* demonstrate [Ex. 2].

This organization permits construction of a spatially organized storage and the subsequent logically ordered reminiscence that ensure the generative function of the entire system: despite a completely different context and a different level of complexity, the system described by Chiodino is conceptually exactly the same as the system used by Banchieri and equally used, a century later, by Moritz Vogt in the description of the technique of production of improvised keyboard imitative works.



EX. 2: GIOVANNI BATTISTA CHIODINO, *Arte pratica latina e volgare di far contrapunto à mente, & à penna*, in Venetia, 1610.

In his *Conclave thesauri magnae artis musicae* (1719), Vogt utilises, in fact, for the intervals a term particularly eloquent: *phantasia*. By long tradition the word can be synonymous with memory. According to Giordano Bruno if “the imaginative faculty allows us to shape images associating them with appropriate mental content [...], the main task of *fantasia* is to represent the places and seats on which the images are attached”²¹ (BRUNO, 2004, T. I, 3, p. 666-667).

“*Fantasia* or memory”: how does Giordano Bruno re-interpret this relationship? In re-elaborating Avicenna’s physiology of the “internal senses”, localized in four cells in the brain, Bruno assigns a specific, fundamental role to *fantasia* in the process of memorization and remembering, a role which mnemonically circumscribes the functions of this process in comparison with Aristotle²².

Bruno’s conception of music seems to presume the existence of a typology of reminiscence specific to music: “Music,

21. “Imaginativa enim perficit imagines cum rationibus suis, phantasia vero praesertim atque proprie loca atque sedes imaginum”. English translation is mine.

22. Cf. WATSON (1982).

more than ever *fantasia*, can combine forms of harmony and consonance”²³ (BRUNO, 2002, v. II, p. 299). Music, activated by the “pure architect of *fantasia*” (BRUNO, 2004, p. 140-141), is based on an ordered combination of forms – musical figurations committed to memory, reproducible in continually varying sequences – which give rise to the aforesaid “harmony and consonance”²⁴.

This interpretation of *fantasia* finds a degree of confirmation in the use of the term in technical and theoretical sources. Here, *fantasia* seems to denote not a form, as has frequently been claimed, but a process of improvised elaboration of contrapuntal material whose essential feature is *freedom*: “Every work in this book, of whatever kind, is denominated *fantasia*, because it derives only from the *fantasia* and industry of its author” (MILÁN, 1535, c. [VIIr]).²⁵

A *freedom* not to be interpreted as free will, with corresponding lack of external conditioning: “[Organists] use *fantasia* to draw inspiration for harmonious *preambula* not unworthy of praise and improvise with elegance and inventiveness during the appropriate parts of the mass, while preserving a solid musical structure throughout”²⁶ (ROSSETTI, 1529, p. 93).

The subjectivity of *fantasia* derives from the musician’s handling of the ‘inner being’. Thus, writes Thomas Morley, *sonar di fantasia* is a difficult practice which, more than any other, requires art, since the musician is anchored to nothing but the fragility of his own imagination: “in this may more art be shown than in any other music because the composer is tied to nothing, but that he may add, diminish, and alter at his pleasure” (MORLEY, 1952 [1597], p. 292).

Gioseffo Zarlino, in chapter LXIII of the 1589 edition of his *Institutioni harmoniche*, uses the expression “di fantasia” as a synonym of “improvisation *a mente* without subject”²⁷ (ZARLINO, 1589, p. 327). What, we may ask, is the constructive principle of «*fantasia a mente* without subject»? The inner musical being must be suitably constructed on the basis of ordered assimilation of *res facta*: Bermudo advises students not to play fantasias before having assimilated a sufficiently large repertoire to permit *extraction* of musically adequate images.²⁸

The creation of a musician’s personal archive necessitates the choice and memorization of suitable musical figurations.

23. “La Musica, più che mai fantasia possa combinar forme di concerti e simfonie”. English translation is mine.

24. On the mnemonic aspects of *fantasia* cf. LORENZETTI (2009, pp. 132-142).

25. “Qualquiera obra deste libro de qual quier tono que sea: se intitula fantasia: a respecto que solo procede dela fantasia y industria del auctor que la hizo”. English translation is mine.

26. “Alios videas ex suis imaginationibus praeambula non improbanda concinne colligere, super missarum partibus ex tempore de sua industria eleganter vagari, servato tamen undique musices vigore”. English translation is mine.

27. Chapter LXIII is entitled “Delle varie sorti de contrapunti à tre voci, che si fanno à mente in conseguenza sopra un soggetto; & d’alcune conseguenze, che si fanno di fantasia; & quel che in ciascheduna si hà da osservare” [“Of various kinds of three-part counterpoint improvised in consequence upon a subject; and of certain consequences which are made *di fantasia*; and of that which must be observed in each of these”]. Zarlino

defines «consequences which are made *di fantasia*» as «double consequences which are made à *mente* without subject"]. English translation is mine.

28. BERMUDO (1555, c. 60v): “Digo, que no tañessen fantasia basta que supiesen muchas obras: y despues sacarian fantasia”. (“I say that [musicians] must not play *fantasie* until they have got to know many works; and afterwards they can extract *fantasie* from these works”). English translation is mine.

29. “Item illud maxima praecipuum est, ut quantum poterint memoriae commendent, ad minus locus sive fugas aut fantasias magis idoneas: sic tandem efficient ut in viros evadano: quo facilius fiat, noverino exercitatione opus esse, & multarum musicarum rerum percurritatione. Unde fiet ut quod iam ossequi non valuerint, olim reminiscatur cum maxime oblitos opus esse, oblivionique tradidisse exstimaverint”. English translation is mine.

30. “Et primo ordine continetur automata quae fantasiae dicuntur”. The phrase appears on the title-pages of the *Hortus musarum* (1552), *Luculentum theatrum* (1568), *Teatrum musicum* (1571) and *Pratum musicum* (1584). The Greek term designates a self-propelled machine which contains the principles of its own motion and, at the same time, describes the state of recklessness characteristic

A passage from Claudio Sebastiani’s *Bellum musicale* seems to allude to this complex mechanism of appropriation and revision of the ‘existing’. The same text also evokes the idea of “musical cliché”:

Likewise, it is of the maximum importance to memorize as much as possible, or, at least, the clichés, these being the most appropriate fugues or *fantasie*: for this reason, these must be adopted so that they take root in the mind. This will be more easily accomplished if [musicians] are aware of the necessity to exercise in this practice, playing many musical passages. Though they are presently unable to understand this, once they have done it they will remember it, even when they think they have completely forgotten (SEBASTIANI, 1563, XXX, p. 22).²⁹

A comparative reading of Bermudo and Sebastiani illustrates the complexity and, at the same time, the productivity of a mechanism by which musical images are extracted from reality – i.e., extrapolated from a vast array of pre-existing finite objects – and impressed on the memory in the unreal, infinite form of *loci communes*. They are shared rhetorical thoughts and ideas, which, expressed in abstract and decontextualized form, can contribute to the construction of a finite artistic object. *Loci communes* are organized in the memory as a conceptual map that generates a new reality through a process of amplification. In this context, ‘neutral’ ideas are the most functional.

Consequently, improvised music is the product of a reminiscence which permits the logical assemblage of *imagines mentis* that converts the ordered memorization into the ordered construction of new and unrepeatable artefacts.

Phalèse defines *fantasia* as *automaton*³⁰. This term, more than any other, denotes the particular self-generating function of the *fantasia* mechanism and the apparently unconscious nature of this function. Perhaps more than any other form of memory, the musical declination of *reminiscere* is problematic and necessitates the construction of an adequate network of automatisms linking thought and action; the student must practice this art “many times each day, with great perseverance and without ever despairing”³¹ (SANCTA MARIA, 1565, p. 58r) if the inner being is to become audible. This may easily elude the musician if his mental *fantasia* is not accompanied

by adequate performance skills – “when”, in the words of Gerolamo Diruta (1593, p. 36), “a talented player with excellent *fantasia* is hindered in showing it by inappropriate use of the hand”.³³ Automatism miraculously transforms “perseverance and desperation” into extemporization; through the latter, artifice becomes nature and gives rise to the game of dissimulation, itself an effective producer of astonishment.³⁴

Images relating to the practice of *sonar di fantasia* are abundantly present in keyboard compositions. These are frequently based on the varied iteration of long sequential episodes in thirds, sixths or tenths, evident products of an inextricable relationship with ‘improvised counterpoint’. Sequential elements and easily invertible intervals, indeed, form a natural basis for improvised counterpoint, as can be seen from Lusitano to Chiodino, Muffat, Werckmeister and Mauritius Vogt.

An example is the descending motivic element, based on *cantus firmus*, which pervades *Ricercare X* (C216). Ex. 1a (*ornatus*) reproduces Gabrieli’s original which, in Ex. 1b (*simpler*) is reduced to its basic framework; in Ex. 1c (*invertitus*), the intervals are inverted (3rds become 6ths); and Ex. 1d reproduces a similar motivic procedure from Georg Muffat’s *Regulae concentuum partiturae* (1991 [1669], p. 61-62). Together, these examples illustrate to what extent these mental and fingertip ‘loci’ were conceived as neutral materials, shared experience to be relived and constantly restructured in the ephemeral and elusive universe of extemporary sound [Ex. 3].

of those who act without due consideration. In the early nineteenth century, Pietro Colletta uses the same term with reference to his work as a translator, in a way which perfectly reflects Phalèse’s definition: “rules, long practice and a good memory had made me into an automaton”. COLLETTA (1953, vol. I, p. 5): “le regole, la lunga pratica ed una memoria facile mi aveva fatto traduttore automata”. On this concept, cf. BUTLER (1974, p. 610).

31. “Muchas vezes cada dia, con gran perseverancia, nunca desconsiando”. English translation is mine.

32. “Muchas vezes cada dia, con gran perseverancia, nunca desconsiando”. English translation is mine.

33. “quando si trovarà un valent’uomo che sappi bonissima fantasia, & che pata difficoltà di sonarla per il mal’uso della mano”. English translation is mine.

34. On the related concepts of *sprezzatura* and dissimulation applied to music cf. LORENZETTI (2003, pp. 77-83).

Ex. 3 consists of four staves of musical notation, each representing a different variation of a descending motivic element. The notation is in G-clef (treble clef) and C-clef (bass clef) positions. 3a is the original ornate version, 3b is a simplified version, 3c is an inverted version, and 3d is a version from Georg Muffat's Regulae concentuum partiturae.

Ex. 3: GIOVANNI GABRIELI, *Ricercare del X tono* (C216).

Confirming the spread of such procedures, we can find an analogous sequence, for example, in the Ricercar in C in by Johann Ulric Steigleder [Ex. 4].

Ex. 4: JOHANN ULRICH STEIGLEDER, *Ricercar in C*, (*Ricercar Tablatura*, 1624)

The *longue durée* and vast geographical dissemination of these mechanisms, at the roots of extemporary keyboard technique, are confirmed by their reappearance, also, in Muffat's *Regulae* [Ex. 5].

Ex. 5: GEORG MUFFAT, *Regulae concentuum partiturae* (1699).

The sequential structures of Ex. 5a, 5b and 5c are literally re-assembled in the subject of Gabrieli's *Ricercare* C221 [Ex. 6].

Ex. 6: GIOVANNI GABRIELI, *Ricercare*(C221)

This subject is entirely constructed on the basis of mental and practical automatisms in multiple combinations. At bars 19-22, for example, two sequential *topoi* –stepwise descent and descent by thirds (with intermediate stepwise ascent as in Ex. 5c) – are brought together to form an archetypal framework of 6ths and octaves. The same structure is reformulated à 3 in bars 33-35, where the two upper voices enter at the distance of a semibreve with stepwise descent in parallel 4ths.

VIII.

What are, in conclusion, the relationship between extemporary and written practices according to both the composer's and the performer's perspectives?

Though the relationship between extemporary and written practices has by no means escaped the attention of musicologists, the tendency has been to emphasize the distance between them, rather than the fluid interaction and intellectual communion between neighbouring actions, which are not always easy to distinguish. Thus, unwritten practices continue to attract a lesser degree of dignity and are relegated, on the one hand, to a marginal role in the construction of authorial identity, and, on the other hand, to a marginal role in the construction of performer's identity. To this day, historical musicology mainly associates the idea of "author" with a *writer* of music, not a *producer* of music and the idea of the singer-instrumentalist with a performer of *written* music not with a *re-writer* of music in performance.

At least for the organist, his professional duties did not include writing or performing written music, but rather to produce music according to different rules. For the organist, the role of the instrument is similar to that of the *cartella* on which the composer works out his contrapuntal figures, as Zaccaria Tevo, paraphrasing a statement of Diruta³⁵, reaffirms, further underlining the conceptual similarities between 'organ' and 'writing material':

These rules, given for accompaniment upon the movement of the bass part, must also be observed by organists, because playing the organ is equivalent to *composing with the fingers*, and the keyboard represents the organist's *cartella*.³⁶ (TEVO, 1706, p. 201)

35. "Et io ancora hò poco dormito, pensando quale modo dovesse tenere nell'informarvi dell'arte del Contrapunto sopra il nostro instrumento, perché quello hà da essere la nostra cartella". DIRUTA, (1593, parte II, libro II, p. 1): "And, again, I have slept little, thinking about the best way to inform you of the art of counterpoint on our instrument, because this will necessarily be our *cartella*". On counterpoint at the keyboard in Diruta's teachings cf. GUIDO (2012).

36. “Queste regole date per li accompagnamenti sopra li moti della parte bassa si dovranno anche osservare dagli organisti, poiché il suonare l’organo è un componere con le dita, e la tastatura serve ad essi per cartella”. My warmest thanks to Arnaldo Morelli for bringing this passage to my attention. English translation is mine.

If organ playing is *composing with the fingers*, the primary function of the surviving keyboard written sources is not that of generating performances but, on the contrary, ‘recording’ them, in accordance with the schematic forms of written notation. Once committed to paper, ‘performances’ were undoubtedly capable of generating further performances. It is, however, unlikely that organists needed written music to perform in the same way as modern musicians. More than simple generators of fundamentally identical performances, these ‘recordings’ may have acted as didactic models for the art of *ex tempore* composition.

The same perspective can be applied to musical performance. There is a neglected dimension of musical performance, which doesn’t pertain to writing, but only to memory: it belongs to a cultural memory which, nourishing a performative tradition, is the driving force of transformation and variation, the driving force of the possible different articulations of a sound, of the possible different declamations of a musical phrase, of the possible different amplifications of a musical text, which, although fixed on the page, without the memory of “a certain method that cannot be written down”, appears as a lifeless body of which the soul has been removed. This kind of repertoire, in fact, couldn’t be simply reproduced through performance: it is, instead, a more or less ‘open work’ which performance deeply rewrites according to the contextual necessities and the choices of the performers, showing the forceful transformative and creative potential of the performative act, which enacts real effects into the world.

Scholars tend to read the past in the light of modern necessities, with the conviction that written music necessarily represents the apex of Western musical experience and the focal point of authorial identity. Without denying the importance of written sources, a deep rethinking of the nature, use, role and function of written sources in Renaissance music would be necessary.

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- _____. *Speculum, et declaratio ad praxim. quatuor librorum rhetoricæ Aristotelis, & eiusdem poeticæ ad usum tragicarum, & comediarum: cum compendijs, topicis, tropis, figuris (vulgo coloribus) indicibus capitum, & sententiarum*. Venetiis: apud Ambrosium & Bartholomeum fratres, 1613.
- _____. *Pupilla Phylosophiae Aristotelis Metheorum, & Parvorum Naturalium [...] libri decem agitur de Nubibus, Pluviis, Nivibus, Grandinibus, Terremotibus, Torritruiis, Corruscationibus, Fulminibus, Cometis, Metallis, Quinque Sensibus, Memoria, Reminiscencia, Somno, Vigilia, Somniis, Iuventute, Senectute, Respiratione, Longitudine, & Brevitate Vitae*. Venetiis: ex typis Ambrosii Dei, 1617.
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