Academicism in Monteverdi’s *Orfeo*: oratory and symmetry as manifestations of the Accademia degli Invaghiti’s philosophy and practice

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by

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ABSTRACT

Academicism in Monteverdi's Orfeo: oratory and symmetry as manifestations of the Accademia degli Invaghiti's philosophy and practice

A dissertation presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences of Brandeis University
Waltham, Massachusetts

Joel Schwindt

This dissertation offers a reading of Alessandro Striggio and Claudio Monteverdi’s Orfeo as a reflection of the Accademia degli Invaghiti’s humanist philosophy, focusing on the topics of oratory and symmetry. Additionally, this study offers new insight on the Invaghiti’s views regarding music’s power and its function in theatrical representation that helps to reconcile apparent disparities between the view of this work as a "hymn" to music’s greatness and the failures of the musical protagonist. For example, on the subject of oratory—which served as one of the group’s primary areas of study—I demonstrate how Orpheus’s failure to persuade Charon through his aria-oration, "Possente spirto," results not only from his exhibitionism and affectation, but as suggested in academy member Stefano Guazzo’s writings, his substitution of clever sophistries and musical brilliance for morally sound arguments and modest displays of ability. On the topic of symmetry—which was commonly associated with beauty during the period—I demonstrate how this formal design was used to project the "beauty" of moral uprightness, reflective the academy’s Neoplatonic motto, "Nothing is more beautiful than virtue" (e.g., the symmetries of the first act representing Eurydice’s "morally upright" decision to relent from her disdain for Orpheus’s love, a "female vice" addressed by several of the academy members). I also consider the subject of gendering in relation to both of these topics, asserting that the marginalization of female characters not only "silences" them, but also creates an
Aristotelian structure found in academy member Ercole Udine's narrative, *La Psiche*, that draws focus to the protagonist's inherently gendered character flaws (in this case, "male" flaws such as pride and fits of romantic despair). I expect this research to contribute to discussions on the impact of humanism on the development of early opera, giving much-needed attention to the views and practices of the group that sponsored *Orfeo*'s creation.
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Introduction: The "Invaghiti Orfeo"

Introduction

In 1652, Jesuit theologian Giovan Domenico Ottonelli suggested a three-fold taxonomy for the categorization of works within the newly emerging opera genre, referring to them either as "academic," "princely," or "mercenary."¹ Like any ex post facto attempt to divide an entire musical genre into discrete classifications, these categories prove problematic, even for the relatively small number of operas that existed at the time. For example, Alessandro Striggio and Claudio Monteverdi's Orfeo was first composed and performed for the Mantuan Accademia degli Invaghiti as an exercise in humanist learning, though it also served a "princely" purpose as a show of noble power and sophistication within the political rivalry between the Mantuan and Florentine courts. (The work's first performance was given for the Invaghiti on February 24, 1607, "under the auspices" of the Mantuan prince Ferdinando Gonzaga as his first public entertainment.) This blurring of categories extends to social and philosophical goals as well, since like their noble sponsors (the Gonzaga), the Invaghiti sought to increase Mantua's fame and glory through a projection of the ruling family's moral uprightness.

For these reasons, I would suggest that even from the time of its creation, Orfeo existed on multiple cognitive levels. In addition to its academic and courtly functions (which I refer to as the "Invaghiti Orfeo" and the "Mantuan Orfeo," the latter borrowed from the title of Iain Fenlon’s study on the subject), the work likely served Monteverdi as a response in practice to the criticisms of Bolognese theorist Giovanni Artusi, a viewpoint I refer to as "Monteverdi’s Orfeo." Although none of these viewpoints should be considered more or less significant to our understanding of the work, my study focuses on the "Invaghiti Orfeo" through a consideration of certain manifestations of the Invaghiti’s social philosophy and academic practice. This analysis is based primarily on an examination of the academy members’ conversations, correspondences, and writings, as well as the writings of those admired by the group’s members. This approach offers insight on several subjects related to both "Monteverdi’s Orfeo" and the "Mantuan Orfeo," as they would have been understood from the vantage of these humanist academics. An issue that will be considered throughout this study is the apparent disparity between the choice of the ultimate "musical protagonist"—that is, Orpheus, the legendary singer and demigod of

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music—and his inability to use his artistic skill to recover Eurydice from the Inferno.

Another key issue considered here is the nature of the discourse that is represented in this work in relation to the Invaghiti’s practice and philosophy, including differences between the academic focus of the Invaghiti and other Italian academies (in particular the Florentine Camerata); specialized versus generalized discourse on subjects such as music, oratory, dramaturgy, aesthetics, and gender; and the proclivity among academics such as the Invaghiti to create messages and lessons comprehensible only by those who possessed the education and moral character (or virtù, to use the common parlance of the era) that these cognoscenti prized so highly.

There is an ahistorical view of Orfeo, which as Andrew Dell’Antonio has demonstrated, finds its roots in the musico-political rivalry between partisans of German and Italian opera at the end of the Romantic era. Joseph Kerman articulated this view in his monograph, Opera as Drama, in which he suggests that this work merely was a nascent "attempt" to realize the dramatic power of operas from the late nineteenth century, in particular those of Verdi and Wagner. Although one might reasonably refer to this view as "Wagner’s Orfeo," "Verdi’s Orfeo," or even "Gabriele D’Annunzio’s Orfeo," I would prefer to avoid the problems related to the analogical imperfections of such designations, and will therefore refer to it as the "modern Orfeo."³

³ Kerman’s commentary on Monteverdi’s Orfeo is found in Opera as Drama (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 20. The promotion of the "modern" Orfeo as it relates to Gabriele D’Annunzio’s attempts to promote Italian opera in response to the rise of "Wagnermania" in the early twentieth century—as well as Benito Mussolini’s appropriation of this narrative for his Italian nationalist propaganda—is discussed by Andrew Dell’Antonio, "Il divino Claudio: Monteverdi and Lyric Nostalgia in Fascist Italy," Cambridge Opera Journal 8, 3 (November 1996): 271-284. For additional context on "The Rediscovery of Orfeo," see Nigel Fortune’s chapter of the same name from Orfeo, ed. Whenham, 78-118.
Although several aspects of the anachronistic nature of this view have been addressed by scholars who have sought to place Orfeo within its proper historical context, I believe that its psychological remnants continue to impact our understanding of the work, often supporting a view that runs contrary at least to the humanist philosophy of the "Invaghiti Orfeo," and in certain ways that will be considered at length in the Conclusions of this study, the "Mantuan Orfeo," and even "Monteverdi’s Orfeo." At the heart of this view is the notion of Orfeo as a "hymn" to music’s greatness—or an "apotheosis of music," to use Silke Leopold’s frequently repeated phrase—which even in its latent form, has obscured our understanding of Orfeo’s treatment of music itself, as well as the role and significance of the play’s grand poetic and musical expressions (in particular Orpheus’s plea to Charon, "Possente spirto," discussed in Chapter 1).4

The Introduction to this study considers the social and academic philosophy of the Invaghiti from their founding in 1562 to the time surrounding Orfeo’s composition in 1607, offering an understanding of the cognitive framework within which the academy members likely would have viewed Orfeo. Chapter 1 addresses the topic of oratory in the work—a subject that, along with poetry, served as the academy’s primary focus—by analyzing the opera’s two formal orations (i.e., La Musica’s encomiastic Prologue and Orpheus’s "Possente spirto"), supplemented by an analysis of selected "musical orations" from elsewhere in Monteverdi’s catalogue. Through this analysis, I argue that the Invaghiti likely would have viewed these two selections as contrasting examples of successful Ciceronian oratory, offering object lessons on pride and exhibitionism, affectation, the "feminization"
of male orators, and most importantly, Orpheus's substitution of morally vacuous sophistries for proper moral instruction. Additionally, I contend that these examples offer a hidden, possibly ironic comment on the limitations of music's power, a message that is reinforced by the protagonist's inability to move the heart of his judge (Charon) through the brilliance of the music itself. Chapter 2 demonstrates how the use of symmetrical structures in Orfeo aligns with the academy members' conceptualization of physical and spiritual beauty within the Neoplatonic spectrum, expressive of the group's motto, "nothing is more attractive, nothing more beautiful than virtue" [Nihil virtute formosius, nil pulchrius]. This analysis begins with a consideration of the concept of beauty among Renaissance humanists, followed by a survey of works that embody both the concept's corporeal features and philosophical meaning, including examples likely known to the academy members. The chapter is concluded with an analysis of works whose symmetrical structure may have served as model to Striggio, in particular Virgil's Aeneid and Torquato Tasso's Gerusalemme liberata. Chapter 3 analyzes the presence and musico-dramaturgical function of analogous symmetrical structures in Monteverdi's setting of Striggio's libretto (that is, Monteverdi's creation of "musical allegory," to paraphrase Eric Chafe). Like my analysis of "musical orations" from Chapter 1, this analysis is supplemented by the analysis of similar musico-symmetrical structures from the composer's other works, including the "Combattimento di Tancredì e Clorinda." Although the topic does not serve as the focus of an entire chapter, my consideration of oratory and symmetry frequently addresses the topic of gender, in particular Orpheus's failure to conform to popular notions of masculinity. The Conclusions to this study consider both the possible reconciliation of the "Invaghtì Orfeo" with the "Mantuan Orfeo" and "Monteverdi's Orfeo," as well as certain
irreconcilable aspects of the "Modern Orfeo," drawing examples from the analyses given in the earlier chapters.

The surviving documentation that speaks directly to the Invaghiti’s meetings and activities is fairly sparse, including a handful of letters between the academy members, Eugenio Cagnani’s public letter of 1612 to the new Mantuan duke Francesco Gonzaga, and just a few of the numerous works that were composed by or for the academy members.5

5 Several letters between the academy members that describe the group’s activities are available in the Raccolta di Cinquantaquattro Lettere d’Accademici Invaghiti di Mantova dal 1563 al 1599. State copiate dagli originali che esistevano nell’Archivio di Guastalla da ignota mano, ed. unknown (Biblioteca Comunale Teresiana di Mantova, Ms. 995). Other letters are available in the Archivio di Stato di Mantova (I-MAa), including Eugenio Cagnani’s letter to Alessandro Strigio of May 18, 1612 (b. 2725, fasc. II, doc. 88); as well as in the Archivio di Stato di Parma, including Giulio Cesare Gonzaga’s letter to Cesare Gonzaga of 13 January, 1568 (b. 83). Also see Bernardino Marliani’s Lettere del Cavalieri Bernardino Marliani, mantovano distinte sotto i capi, Notati nella seguente facciata (Venice: Minima, 1601), including letters to academy members Giulio Cesare Gonzaga (139-140) and Annibale Chieppo (262-263). Eugenio Cagnani chronicles the academy’s activities in his "Lettera cronologica," from Raccolta d’alcune rime di scrittori mantovani fatte per Eugenio Cagnani, con una lettera chronological & alter prose, & rime dello stesso (Mantua: Osanna, 1612), 3-11 (see especially pp. 5-9). The letter is available in modern edition in Mantova. Le Lettere, ed. Emilio Faccioli, (Mantua: Isitutio Carlo d’Arco per la storia di Mantova, 1962), II: 615-23. Although the academy kept an extensive archive of works and writings created by and for the group during the period leading up to Orfeo’s composition, many of these works were lost when Mantua was sacked by German troops in 1640; additionally, many of the academy members’ letters and more of their works were lost in a fire in the Biblioteca nazionale di Torino in the early twentieth century. Writings on the academy’s activities are based on first-hand research of surviving documents include Michele Maylender, Storia delle Accademia d’Italia (Bologna: Capelli, 1926), 363-6; Girolamo Tiraboschi, Storia della letteratura italiana, 2nd ed., (Venice, 1787-1794), I: 280-4; Luigi Carnevali, "Cenni storici sull’Accademia Virgiliana," from Atti e memorie dell’Accademia Virgiliana di Mantova (1887-1888): 7-27; Carlo Cappellini, "Storia e indirizzi dell’Accademia Virgiliana," from Ibid: 199-213; Irene Affò, Vita del Cavalieri Bernardino Marliani (Parma: Carmignani, 1780); as well as Carlo D’Arco’s Notizie intorno alla Accademia degli Invaghiti and Notizie delle accademie (I-MAa, Mss. 48 and 224, respectively). Additional information on the group’s founder, and his role in the Academy’s activities, is available in D.A. Franchini et al, "Itinerarium Mantuæ: Mantova vista da uno scienziato del Cinquecento," from La scienza a corte, Collezionismo eclettico, natura e immagine a Mantova fra Rinascimento e Manierismo, ed. Franchini (Rome: Bulzoni, 1979), 185-212.
The small number of surviving documents, however, does not reflect inactivity within the group. On the contrary, the academy held a considerable collection of writings by 1607, which unfortunately was partially destroyed in 1630 by invading forces; additionally, many of the works and letters that survived the invasion were destroyed in a fire at the Archivio di Stato di Torino in the early twentieth century. Only a few of works published in the name of the academy (or dedicated to the group) are extant today, Orfeo the most famous of this group. The musical and dramaturgical activities of the Invaghiti have been addressed within the musicological literature primarily by Iain Fenlon, though he has not given sustained attention to specific connections between the group’s "emphasis on chivalric ceremonial and the arts of oratory and versification," and the content of Orfeo itself (it should be noted, however, that Fenlon’s discussions on the Invaghiti focus primarily on the sixteenth century, rather than the period in which Orfeo was composed).\textsuperscript{6}

Another resource on the views likely represented within the Invaghiti’s meetings is found in the works published by the academy members themselves. To this point, only Stefano Guazzo’s handbook on "civil conversation" (\textit{La civil conversatione}, printed in 1574 and reissued in 1607) has received significant attention in the musicological literature, in addition to occasional mentions of the plays of Leone de’ Sommi and Mutio Manfredi.\textsuperscript{7}

\textsuperscript{6} Fenlon’s quote is from \textit{Music and Patronage in Sixteenth Century Mantua} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 36. On the subject of music and the Invaghiti, also see Fenlon, \textit{Music and Culture in Late Renaissance Italy} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

\textsuperscript{7} Stefano Guazzo, \textit{La civil conversatione} (Venice: Imberti, 1574). Studies that have considered this work include Rebecca Cypess, "Instrumental Music and ‘Conversazione’ in Early Seicento Venice: Biagio Marini’s ‘Affetti Musicali’ (1617)," \textit{Music & Letters} 93, 4 (November 2012): 453-478; Andrew Dell’Antonio, \textit{Listening as Spiritual Practice in Early Modern Italy} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011); Laurie Straus, "Al gioco si conosce il galantuomo’: Artifice, Humour and Play in the ‘Enigmi musicali’ of Don Lodovico
reason that these works have been cited so infrequently for this purpose may be the
difficulty in determining which writings reflect the range of views held by the academy's
membership at any given time, or even those issues on which a general consensus may
have been held. In some works published by the academy members—though not published
in the name of the Invaghiti—the author identifies himself as a member of the academy,
such as Giovanni Francesco Pusterla's oration on the "cruelty of women," Oratone del S.
Gio. Francesco Pusterla, detto L'Assicurato Academico Invaghiti, in biasimo della crudelia
delle donne. Other authors identify themselves as a member of multiple academies,
however, further clouding the question of congruence with the academy members’ views,
including academy member Mutio Manfredi's play on the legendary female general
Semiramis, La Semiramis, boscareccia di Mutio Manfredi, il Fermo Academico Innominato,
Invaghito, et Olimpico.8

For this reason, I have restricted assertions that the viewpoints found in these
writings represent the Invaghiti's social or academic philosophy to examples that
demonstrate clear alignment with popular humanist thought (such as the equation of

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8 Giovanni Pusterla, Oratone...in biasimo della Crudelta dlle Donne...del S. Gio.
Francesco Pusterla, detto L'Assicurato Academico Invaghito (Mantua: Ruffinello, 1568).
Mutio Manfredi, La Semiramis, boscareccia di Mutio Manfredi, il Fermo Academico
Inominato, Invaghito, et Olimpico (Bergamo: Ventura, 1593).
symmetry with beauty), specific philosophies that can be demonstrated to have been held by the Invaghiti as a group (e.g., Neoplatonism), or a "consensus" found within the academy members' writings (for example, adherence to female istitutioni, such as the expectation of gratitude toward love from worthy male suitors). When such consensus or alignment cannot be established firmly (like the academy members' views on music, owing to the small number of surviving writings or conversations on the subject), I have attempted to demonstrate likely philosophical congruence through comparison of the views presented by an academy member with writers admired by a large number of academy members, such as Torquato Tasso.

Several modern authors have considered the impact of academicism and humanism on early opera, though these studies have focused almost exclusively on the views of Florentine academics, in particular the Florentine Camerata, a group whose scholarly focus—in particular in relation to the subject of music—was substantially different than the Invaghiti's (the exception to this trend among modern writers is found in the occasional citations of Benedetto Varchi, who was a member of both the Accademia Fiorentina and the Accademia degli Invaghiti). This is understandable, however, since several of these views and practices appear to have been shared between academics in these two Italian cities (in particular on issues related to poetic style, for which reason I have given only passing attention to the subject in this study). However, certain topics that received frequent attention from the Invaghiti do not seem to have drawn extensive interest from the members of the Florentine Camerata, in particular oratory, the nature of beauty, and issues related to gender. Additionally, these modern authors' assertions music's designation as the most powerful of the imitative arts, while accurate unto themselves, leave out a key
point on the subject that was commonly held by humanists regarding music's power and importance among the expressive media found in *Orfeo* (that is, poetry, oratory, dramaturgy, and of course, music).

Modern scholars have also commented on manifestations of popular humanist philosophies in *Orfeo*, including those related to the Neoplatonism and the Counter-Reformation (though again, these authors have rarely referenced the writings of the Invaghiti). Perhaps most well known among those on Neoplatonic philosophy is Jon Solomon's study of "Neoplatonic apotheosis" in *Orfeo* and Robert Donington's consideration of Neoplatonic symbology in early opera.\(^9\) The impact of Counter-Reformation philosophy on Striggio's libretto is addressed in the writings of several authors, including John Whenham and Tim Carter.\(^10\)

Discussions on the subject of gender in *Orfeo* have focused primarily on the "silencing" of female voices (in particular through the verbal passivity of Eurydice), as well as the denigration of the female voice and body by humanist philosophers.\(^11\)

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11 See for example Gordon, *Monteverdi’s Unruly Women*; Anne MacNeil, “Weeping at the Water’s Edge,” *Early Music* 27, 3 (August 1999): 407-417; Suzanne G. Cusick, "‘There Was Not One Lady Who Failed to Shed a Tear’: Arianna’s Lament and the Construction of
offer insight on connections between portrayals of women in the theatrical forum and the sociological impact of gender roles and patriarchy during the period, though again, with very little consideration given to the writings of the Invaghiti. The academy members’ writings, however, focus on the topic of gender more frequently than almost any other topic (oratory and poetry aside), with a particular focus on the "ugliest vice of ingratitude" [bruttissimo vitio dell’ingratitudine] (from academy member Pompeo Baccusi’s oration In difesa, et lode delle Donne). In addition to the suppression and denigration of female voices, my consideration of gender focuses on two manifestations of the Invaghiti’s discourses on gender in Orfeo, including object lessons on inherently "male" character flaws (a rare subject among works composed by or for the academy members, in comparison to those that focus on "female" flaws), and the use of symmetrical structural designs to emphasize actions that allegorically represent both male and female gender roles. As will be discussed below, the treatment of these issues offers an example of the overlap between the work’s function as the "Invaghiti Orfeo" and the "Mantuan Orfeo" as well.

Musicological studies that have considered the subject of rhetoric in Orfeo (too many to be listed here) address the subject of rhetorical style almost exclusively, focusing primarily on the arrangement and expression of rhetorical figures, as well as Monteverdi’s musical setting of these figures in relation to the seconda prattica style; in some cases, the


12 Pompeo Baccusi, In difesa, et lode delle Donne (Mantua: Ruffinello, 1571), unnumbered.
term has even been used in the more general sense of "artful speech" (a differentiation that will be discussed in Chapter 1). Only a few authors have offered suggestions on the question of why Orpheus fails to persuade his judge through his grand oration, "Possente spirto," and among these, only Joachim Steinheuer has addressed the question in relation to the Invaghiti (though in keeping with the modern tendency described above, he focuses exclusively on the protagonist's use of oratorical style). This focus on style, however, represents a reversal of priorities for academics such as the Invaghiti, who considered these ornamental features to be secondary in importance to the content of the oration itself, and the moral instruction that it offers. This view finds its roots in the teachings of Cicero, expressed in the Roman orator's famous maxim, "docere, movere, delectare" ("teach, move, delight," or as expounded upon by Cicero himself, "instruction is the first goal, followed by the delight of the senses, and the moving of the heart and mind").

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13 Joachim Steinheuer, "Orfeo," from The Cambridge Companion to Monteverdi, ed. John Whenham and Richard Wistreich (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 119-140. This subject is also considered by Paolo Fabbri in his aforementioned monograph on the composer (see especially pp. 63-70), and is discussed further by Tim Carter in the third chapter of Monteverdi’s Musical Theater. In the interest of dramatic verisimilitude, skillful speech making (such as formal oratory) was reserved for the more “artful” characters. As Aristotle writes, "a rustic and an educated man will not say the same things nor speak in the same way." Rhetoric III, vii. The Rhetoric and the Poetics of Aristotle, trans. Rhys Roberts and Ingram Bywater (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1984), 178. I have included the standard book and chapter numbers from the writings of the Ancients, in order to aid those readers who may wish to reference the information in a different edition of the work. This information is given after the title of the work, and before the reference information from the edition I have used.

14 Cicero articulates the priority of instruction over the moving of the heart and mind and the delight of the ears in De oratore, II, 28, and the Brutus, XLIX. Cicero on Oratory and Orators; with his letters to Quintus and Brutus, trans. J.S. Watson (Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1970), 116, 315.
Such considerations raise another important question, namely Monteverdi’s education in the oratorical arts, his understanding the protagonist’s oratorical failures, and whether his setting is meant to reflect the young orator’s shortcomings. As will be discussed in Chapter 1, the composer’s relatively low social station as a messere who made his living as a performer and composer makes it highly unlikely that he would have received a university education (despite early biographers’ attempts to link the composer to the nearby University of Padua). However, through an examination of the composer’s personal correspondence (a medium through which many "working artisans" acquired a basic knowledge of oratory), I suggest that the composer likely understood Orpheus’s failures, a conclusion from which I will consider the possibility that the musical setting of this famous aria is meant to support the "academic" commentary on Orpheus’s failure as an orator.\footnote{Other authors have addressed the topic of oratory in music as it relates to the period of Orfeo’s composition, without addressing the opera directly. Perhaps the best known of these studies is Claude Palisca’s essay on oratorical expression and form in music from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which discusses the two most well-known period source which speaks explicitly on the subject of rhetoric in music, namely Nicola Vicentino’s 1555 treatise, Ancient Music Reduced to the Modern Practice, and German theorist Joachim Burmeister’s Musical Poetics of 1600, "Ut oratoria musica: the Rhetorical Basis of Musical Mannerism," from The Meaning of Mannerism, ed. F.W. Robinson and S.G. Nichols (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1972), 37-62. Gerard LeCoat considers the incorporation of rhetorical strategies and styles throughout the visual and non-visual arts of the period, following the Horatian maxim, Ut pictura poesis ("as in painting, so in poetry"); the applications of this maxim in Renaissance art is discussed in Chapter 2. The Rhetoric of the Arts, 1550-1650 (Bern, Switzerland: Herbert Lang & Co., Ltd., 1975).}

The presence and symbolic meaning of symmetry in works from both the visual and non-visual arts have been considered in numerous studies from outside the musicological literature. My analysis on the subject includes examples from the visual arts of architecture, painting, and frontispiece design; closer to the realm of theatrical performance, tendencies
toward symmetrical design are also discussed in the media of dance, choreography, and music. The topic of symmetry in *Orfeo* is at least mentioned within the vast majority of musicological studies on the work, most often focusing the localized symmetrical shapes from the first act, the general symmetrical character of *Orfeo*’s plot (such as the corresponding placement of Eurydice’s first and final deaths in Acts II and IV, respectively), or connections between symmetrical forms and the Neoplatonic concept of beauty mentioned above (the most well known among the first group is Donald Grout’s suggestion of a symmetrical shape around the title character’s first words, “Rosa del ciel”). Writers such as Gary Tomlinson, Eric Chafe, Roger Bowers, John Whenham, Jeffrey Kurtzman, and Ellen Rosand have identified symmetrical formations in Monteverdi’s other works as well.

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Almost every one of these studies speaks of the centrality of Orpheus’s "Possente spirito" within the drama, a conclusion challenged in the present study in relation to the "Invaghiti Orfeo" through a precise reckoning of its location within the work’s symmetrical structure, Striggio and Monteverdi’s modeling of this structure after specific works admired by the Invaghiti (again, Tasso’s Gerusalemme liberata and Virgil’s Aeneid, the latter having been translated into Italian by academy member Ercole Udine less than a decade before the premiere of Orfeo), as well as its function in relation to moral instruction through the use of allegory. I will also address the impact of the endings found in the 1607 libretto and the 1609 score on the symmetrical structure and its allegorical function,


19 Ercole Udine, L’Eneide di Virgilio, ridotta in ottava rima dal Sr. Hercole Udine, al Sereniss. Principe il Sigr. Do Vincenzo Gonzaga Duca di Mantova di Monferrato etz. (Venice: Gotti, 1597). Within the musicological literature, the question of Striggio’s literary models has focused primarily on two earlier renditions of the Orpheus myth, namely Ottavio Rinuccini’s Euridice (Florence, 1600) and Angelo Poliziano’s La fabula di Orfeo (Mantua, c. 1480), both of which find significant echoes in both the structure and content of Striggio’s libretto. Among the earliest writers on this subject is Nino Pirrotta, a study that has served as the foundation for the majority of subsequent discussions on the topic. Music and Theatre from Poliziano to Monteverdi, trans. Karen Eales (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982). Also see Bojan Bujić, ““Figura poetica motlo vaga”: Structure and Meaning in Rinuccini’s ‘Euridice,’” Early Music History 10 (1991): 29-64; Whenham, "Five Acts," and F.W. Sternfeld, “The Orpheus myth and the libretto of ‘Orfeo,’” both from Claudio Monteverdi: Orfeo, ed. Whenham; and Hanning, Of Poetry and Music’s Power. For an overview of symmetrical structures in Ancient and Renaissance literature, see Mary Douglas, Thinking in Circles: an essay on ring composition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), and Roy Eriksen, The Building in the Text (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State Press, 2001).
as well as the "academic" qualities of each ending, and their alignment with the academy members' views.\textsuperscript{20}

\textit{The academy system in Renaissance Italy, and the Accademia degli Invaghiiti}

The academy system that arose in Italy during the fifteenth century traces its roots to humanist interest in the writings, philosophies, and practices of Antiquity. In particular, it was the concept of the Platonic academy that served as the model for the first academies, founded in Italy during the fifteenth century.\textsuperscript{21} Among the earliest groups was the Florentine Accademia Platonica (founded in 1439), whose creation was sponsored by Cosimo de' Medici, and sustained in part through the efforts of the Neoplatonic philosopher, Marsilio Ficino.\textsuperscript{22} The Gonzaga played a significant role in the continued growth of the academy system, including Francesco Gonzaga's (1444-1483) rescue of the Roman Accademia Pomponiana's members from imprisonment for suspected conspiracy in 1468, and the establishment or support of several new academies, including the Accademia di

\textsuperscript{20} Several authors have addressed the topic of each ending's symmetrical correspondence and balance with the rest of the work. These studies have focused primarily on issues of authorship, as well as the possible circumstances surrounding the creation of an alternative ending. These writings are summarized by Barbara Russano Hanning, “The Ending of L’Orfeo: Father, Son, and Rinnucini.” \textit{Journal of Seventeenth-Century Music} 9, 1 (2003) <http://www.sscm-jscm.org/v9/no1/hanning.html>.

\textsuperscript{21} D’Arco, \textit{Notzie delle Accademie}.

\textsuperscript{22} Donatella Manzoli, "La fortuna di Bessarione e lo sviluppo delle accademie a Roma," from \textit{Bessarione e la sua Accademia}, notebook 12, ed. Adrzej Gutkowski and Emanuela Prinzivalli (Rome: Miscellanea Francescana, 2012), 81-99; here 82.
San Pietro, the Accademia Eteri, the Accademia degli Illustri, the Accademia dei Gelati, and of course, the Accademia degli Invaghiti.\textsuperscript{23}

In addition to a desire for intellectual stimulation among the Italian gentry, these groups supported the aim of creating a more well-educated noble class, a view expressed in Baldassare Castiglione's famous handbook on the "ideal Courtier," \textit{Il cortegiano}: "I would have [the courtier] more than passably learned in letters, at least in those studies which we call the humanities ...versed in the poets, as well as the orators and historians, and let him be practiced also in writing verse and prose."\textsuperscript{24} Academy member Stefano Guazzo expresses the civilizing nature of this knowledge in \textit{La civil conversatione}: "Nobility is the daughter of knowledge, and that knowledge ennobles the one who possesses it."\textsuperscript{25}

Similar to a university education in philosophy and practice (if not always in scope), these academies emphasized Socratic discourse to achieve optimal benefit from their individual studies. This aim is also expressed by Guazzo, who states, "the honored Academies ...which have been introduced in many Italian cities to this end, among which we must not leave unmentioned the Invaghiti of Mantua ...[offer scholarly] conversation, which is true refinement, and the entire perfection of belief," and further, that "an hour in


\textsuperscript{25} "La nobilità e figlivola della scienza, & la scienza nobilita il suo possessore." Guazzo, \textit{Conversazione}, 119v. All translations are mine, unless otherwise noted.
discourse with [one's intellectual and social] equals” is of more benefit to men of learning than "a day of study in solitude."26

The Accademia degli Invaghisti was founded in Mantua on November 13, 1562 under the sponsorship of Giulio Cesare Gonzaga (a member of a military branch of the family), with a membership of about thirty.27 In 1564, Pope Pius IV granted the academy special privileges, including the power to grant bachelor's degrees in ecclesiastical and lay law, medicine, and poetics.28 One of the few surviving descriptions of the group's activities is found in academy member Giulio Castellani's Latin epistle to Vincenzo Gonzaga, published shortly after Giulio Cesare's death in 1575, in which he states that the academy members focused primarily on the study of "the early poets, and orators ... undertaking exercises in imitation of them."29 A public letter of 1612 by the Mantuan chronicler Eugenio Cagnani (who may have been a member of the academy) relates the story of the Invaghisti's founding and activities (among other topics); the contents of the letter suggests that the study and performance of poetic and oratorical works was still the group's primary focus, in addition to occasional performances of musical and theatrical works (the creation and performance

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26 "Le honorate Academie ... in molte città d'Italia si sono a questo fine introdotte, fra le quali non deve esser tacita quella de gli Invaghisti di Mantova ... la conversazione è il vero affinamento, & l'intiera perfezione della dottrina, & che giova più al letterato un'ora, ch'egli dispensi nel discorrere con suoi eguali, ch'un giorno di studio in solitudine." Guazzo, Conversatione, 21.

27 Maylender, Storia delle Accademie, I: 363.

28 Stefano Davari, Notizie Storiche intorno alla Studio Pubblico ed ai maestri del secolo XV e XVI che tennero scuola in Mantova tratte dall'Archivio storico di Mantova (Mantua: Segna, 1876), 21. The full papal bull is available in Affò, Vita del ... Marliani, 53-61.

29 "[E]orum utilitate in vetearum Poetarum, ac Oratorum ... imitandis se exercent." Iulii Castellannii, Canonici, Faventi, Epistalorum, libri IIII (Bologna: Rossium, 1575), 23.
of Orfeo, for example, is referenced in his letter). The academy members published writings in numerous disciplines, including poetry, oratory, medicine, military tactics, history, philosophy, and theology.

The Invaghiti were an "open academy," regularly inviting male and female guests to attend their meetings, participate in discussions, and even present oratorical, poetic, theatrical, and musical compositions. One such example is found in a lecture on poetic forms by Alessandro Guarini (the son of Giovanni Battista Guarini, the author of Il pastor fido), which was given at a meeting in 1599; other examples include Scipione Agnelli’s oration in praise of Saint Barbara (the patron saint of Mantua’s palatial chapel), given in 1610, and Marco Catone’s lesson on the presentation of moral object lessons, given in 1645. The majority of these "open" meetings, however, likely served as a forum for the academy members’ own works. For example, Pompeo Baccusi recited his aforementioned oration "in defense and praise of women" for the Invaghiti "publicly, with a substantial number of gentlewomen and gentlemen of [Mantua] in attendance."

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30 Cagnani, "Lettera cronologica," 5-9. In his aforementioned letter to Alessandro Striggio of May 18, 1612, Cagnani suggests a need for reformation within the academy, a suggestion not likely to have been made by a non-member (unless he was acting as a representative of Vincenzo Gonzaga, the group’s titular leader at the time, which Cagnani does not indicate in the letter).

31 Alessandro Guarini, "Lezione del Signor Alessandro Guarini recitata da lui l’Anno 1599, nell’Accademia degli’Invaghiti," from Varie Compositioni raccolte in diverse materie (Ferrara: Vittorio Baldini, 1611), 17-35; Scipione Agnelli, Orazione delle Iodi di Santa Barbara (Mantua: Osanna, 1610); Marco Catone, Il perfetto morale formato da gli avvertimenti del già Marco Catone (Verona: Merlo, 1645).

32 “Recito publicamente con molta frequenza di gentildonne, & gentiluomini di questa citta.” Baccusi, In difesa. Baccusi’s role within the academy, including his encomiastic oration for the funeral of Giulio Cesare (Oratione funebre di messer ...accademico mantovano nella morte dell’illustrissimo et eccellentissimo signor Cesare
The Invaghiti's focus on the oratorical arts was in keeping with the academy's humanist foundations, reflected in Cicero's statement, "I never suffered even a single day to escape me without some exercise of the oratorical kind." Castiglione states that the "Idea of the perfect Republic" (an allusion to Plato's dialectic on the establishment and function of social order) includes the creation of "the perfect Orator," further suggesting that both Aristotle and Plato would have embraced his model of the "perfect Courtier." Another reason for the subject's apparent primacy in the Invaghiti's activities is the fact that this art could be put to practical use by the academy members on a daily basis, observable in the communications of the academy's members; lessons given in the public forum (such as Alessandro Guarini's aforementioned speech to the Invaghiti from 1599); and appeals for favor from a noble lord, examples of which defy accounting.

Like oratory, the study and practice of the poetic arts was assumed of any educated member of the nobility. Unlike oratory, poetry's applications were not especially practical; perhaps for this reason, poetry appears to have taken a secondary role behind oratory within the Invaghiti's study and practice during the final quarter of the sixteenth century (based on the number of publications in these two media by the academy members during the same period). Whether it held the primary or secondary place during the time of Orfeo's

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Gonzaga protettore dell'Accademia [Mantua: Ruffinello, 1575]), is detailed in D.A. Franchini, "'Itinerarium Mantuae,'" 188-189.

33 Cicero, Brutus XC, 359. Oratory and Orators, 347.

34 Castiglione, Courtier, 7, 332.

35 In the De oratore (I, iv; I, xlvii; II, xliii), Cicero suggests this connection between oratorical skill and the ability to govern the state, in addition to its ability to instill virtue and civic pride. Oratory and Orators, 9, 60, 132.
composition, it does figure prominently in their early studies, demonstrated in the group’s first two publications, namely a collection that included poems published in memory of Ercole Gonzaga, and a collection of poems "in praise of some Mantuan gentlewomen," both published in 1564.36

As noted above, the Invaghiti’s "open" activities occasionally included theatrical entertainments, including Orfeo in 1607.37 In fact, a small theater was created in Giulio Cesare’s Mantuan palace in 1565, and although there is no evidence that it was used for any Invaghiti’s theatrical productions, the space likely hosted performances that were given under the group's auspices (though not Orfeo). Notable among the academy members’ contributions within the theatrical and literary genres are the writings of Mutio Manfredi and Ercole Udine, in particular the latter's epic poem on the story of Psyche (Psiche, 1599), which appears to emulate structural symmetries found in the works of Torquato Tasso, and in turn Virgil's Aeneid (detailed in Chapter 2).38 The plays of the Jewish author Leone de' Sommi were frequently performed for the Invaghiti, though the status of his membership in the academy is not clear, possibly as a result of his ethnic heritage.39


37 Giulio Castellani praises Giulio Cesare’s promotion of theatrical activities in a letter of December 10, 1563 to the group’s founder. Lettere d’Accademici Invaghiti, 1.


39 Sommi is referred to as an "academic writer" for the Invaghiti, though he is also referred to as "nostro scrittore," perhaps suggesting an "unofficial" membership in the group. The topic is discussed in Alessandro D’Ancona, Origini del teatro italiano libri tre con
As would be expected of a group that held "nothing [to be] more beautiful than virtue," theatrical works written by or performed for the Invaghiti project a clear moralistic bent. This inclination is articulated in Pompeo Baccusi’s aforementioned oration, in which he objects to the presentation of immoral characters and behaviors onstage, stating that such vices are "manifested in theatrical works, [given in] scenes in which they weave a story [favola] of vanity, deceit, and lies."40 Leone de’ Sommi further states, "the poet, in this human treatment of civil life [i.e., narrative and theatrical works], [must] conceal every effect of vice. And since at all times the modest custom throughout the world is to cover those [immodest body] parts with cloth, or animal skin, or at least tree leaves, we must be wary to cover every conceit that is less than modest/honest [honesta] always with the most honest words."41

References to music in the correspondence of the academy members are rare in comparison to oratory and poetry, and musical publications by or for the members are even rarer (though not absent).42 Certain members of the Invaghiti studied and practiced

due appendici sulla rappresentazione drammatica del contado toscano e sul teatro mantovano nel sec. XVI (Torino: Ermanno Loescher, 1891), II: 406.

40 "Palesse ne theatri, nelle scene le loro favola tessendo, di vane, et bugiarde."


42 To this point, the only compositions I have found by an active academy member are Scipione Gonzaga’s madrigals from an anthology compiled by Paolo Clerico (Di Paolo Clerico da Parma li madrigali a cinque voci libro secondo: dedicati si come e il primo all’illustris. et reverend. signore il Hercole Gonzaga cardinal di Mantova: nuovamente con ogni diligentia post‘in luce; Scotto, 1562). Carol MacClintock has suggested that Giaches de Wert’s "Qui dove naque" from his sixth book of five-voice madrigals, a work that praises
this art, including the librettist for Orfeo, Alessandro Striggio, who was himself the son of a composer (Alessandro Striggio, the Elder). In 1589, one of the few accounts of music composed for the academy is found in a letter written by academy member Bernadino Marliani, who states that music had been written for the group's entertainment [trattimento], though he does not mention the composer by name. Only a few plays were rappresentata in musica for the Invaghiiti after Orfeo (as opposed to plays to which incidental musical was added). Among these works is an anonymous musical dialogue on marital love from 1625; an opera on the myth of Europa from 1626 (L'Europa), libretto by academy member Baldvino Simoncelli; and a musical dialogue dedicated to the Invaghiiti on the Biblical story of Jacob and Leah of 1700, based on a libretto by Francesco de Lemene. The composers of these works are not known, however, and none of the scores has survived.

Like poetry, this relative lack of emphasis likely reflects the art's lack of practical use for the signori of the academy. Perhaps it is for this reason that Castiglione refers to the art as a "pastime" (alongside painting and sport), rather than a skill that is essential for

the "Mantuan" poet Virgil, and a group of "novi Cigni," may have been intended for the Invaghiiti. MacClintock's assertion is based on academy member Ascanio de' Mori's statement, "ch'egli hebbe in lode delle donne il Carnevale passato in Mantova nell'Academia de' Signori Cavalieri Invaghiiti," from his Giuoco piacevole (Mantua: Ruffinello, 1575). MacClintock, Giaches de Wert, 1535-1596: Life and Works (Middleton, Wisconsin: American Institute of Musicology, 1966), 103-104.

43 "Una Musica ...per trattimento degli Accademici." Letter from Bernardino Marliani to Ferrando Gonzaga, dated May 11, 1589. Lettere d'Academici Invaghiiti, 115.

44 Anonymous, Il giudizio del congiugale Amore (Mantua: Osanna, 1625). Francesco de Lemene, Giacobbe al fonte, dialogo per musica (Lodi: Sevesi, 1700).
function within courtly life. Guazzo even goes so far as to reiterate Plato's relegation of music to a mere exercise for the improvement the mind, just as physical exercise improves the body. For these reasons, the role of music in the study and exercises of the Invaghiti should not be overstated in relation to the philosophical statement regarding music's greatness, as represented in *Orfeo* (a view that, as suggested above, is most often expressed by those championing the "modern *Orfeo*").

The primacy of letters (e.g., oratory and poetry) over imitative arts such as music is to be expected within the philosophy and practice of these nobleman. The mastery of the former became increasingly important during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, as the art of persuasion became valuable (and even essential) for the navigation of the increasingly intricate affairs of state, as well as the level of eloquence expected in daily discourse. In fact, this mastery of letters and discourse, governed by moral purpose, came to be a hallmark of noble virtue (*virtù*) by the time of *Orfeo's* creation. (Even though these skills were occasionally emulated and perhaps even comprehended by those of the artisan classes—such as the composer Monteverdi, discussed in Chapter 1—their true mastery was still considered the exclusive domain of educated noble males.)

In addition to these discourses on letters and discourse, a number of discussions focus on the role of noble recreation, illustrated for example in academy member Ascanio

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45 Castiglione, *Courtier*, 74, 104.

46 Guazzo, *Conversatione*, 163v.

47 Attempts by the nobility to restrict the mastery of *virtù* to the noble classes, following the rise of the "artisan virtuoso" (that is, a highly skilled artist who is not a member of the noble class) is considered by Andrew Dell’Antonio, *Listening as Spiritual Practice*.
de’ Mori’s *Giucco piacevole*. These recreations and pastimes, however, were to be approached by the nobility in a way that avoided the appearance of expertise, or excessive displays of virtuosity, a view that is reflected in the non-specialized discourse on these subjects, and which is manifested in Striggio’s characterization of *Orfeo*’s musical protagonist (discussed in **Chapter 1**). The Invaghiti’s founder, in fact, serves as a prime example of all of these expected behaviors among the nobility, serving in the military in his youth, after which he dedicated himself to the study of letters, while regularly engaging in appropriate recreation (though music is not among those activities mentioned among his accomplishments).

*Torquato Tasso and Baldassare Castiglione*

Although members of the Invaghiti expressed admiration for various orators and poets, there are two contemporary authors whose influence on the academy itself towers over all others, namely Torquato Tasso and Baldassare Castiglione. In his aforementioned letter of 1612, Eugenio Cagnani expresses a deep admiration for the poet, comparing him to Virgil, and describing him as “the splendor of Italy, the wonder of nature and of our times, the most famous Torquato Tasso.” This comparison with Virgil held special meaning to Mantuans at the time, since the ancient Roman poet was claimed as a native of the city, having been born in a town that was part of the Mantuan duchy.48 Though not Mantuan himself, Tasso maintained a close relationship with the Gonzaga throughout his career: in

48 In his aforementioned "Lezione" for the Invaghiti, Alessandro Guarini refers to the ancient poet as "our Mantuan Virgil" [*Nostro Mantovano Virgilio*]. "Lezione," 25.
addition to his father's long service as the Mantuan court poet (Bernardo Tasso even contributed a brief elegy for Ercole Gonzaga for the Invaghi's 1564 publication mentioned above), Duke Vincenzo Gonzaga served as Tasso's patron following the former's successful efforts to secure the young poet's release from imprisonment in Ferrara.\textsuperscript{49}

Cagnani praises Tasso's \textit{Gerusalemme liberata} by name, also noting that many of the poet's corrections to the work were made on the advice of academy member Scipione Gonzaga.\textsuperscript{50} Irene Samuel suggests that Tasso fashioned and articulated many of his literary theories through the process of composing and revising the \textit{liberata}, theories that were first published in his \textit{Discourses on the Poetic Arts} (of which Scipione is the dedicatee), and further explicated in his \textit{Discourses on the Heroic Poem}.\textsuperscript{51} It is possible that Scipione would have shared Tasso's literary and theoretical works with his fellow academy members (a common practice in these academies, in particular for works by authors admired by the group), certain of which address the creation of beauty in narrative literature through symmetrical construction, as well as the presence and function of oratory in narrative works (discussed in \textbf{Chapters 2} and \textbf{1}, respectively).\textsuperscript{52}

\textsuperscript{49} Bernardo Tasso's contribution is found in the \textit{Componimenti}, 42.

\textsuperscript{50} Cagnani, "Lettera cronologica," 5.


\textsuperscript{52} "Potendosi lo stesso conoscere anco da le molte opera di simili scienze composte dall'Illustriss Scipione Gonzaga." Although the word, "composte," appears to suggest that Scipione composed ("comporre") the works himself, this word may also refer to the compiling of works for presentation to the academy. In any case, it would be in keeping with common practice to introduce theoretical works by persons who were not members of the academy, especially if the author were known to and admired by the academy's membership. This practice is described by Guazzo, who states that the "writings ...of
Tasso held close friendships with other academy members as well, including Ascanio de' Mori and Stefano Santini (the latter was celebrated by Tasso in a meeting of 1564 "with a most eloquent oration"). Although the nature of Mutio Manfredi's association with the poet is not delineated in surviving records, he once wrote to Tasso, "there is never a day that I do not learn some part of your worthy doctrine." Incidentally, Monteverdi shared this admiration, referring to the poet as "the divine Tasso" in his preface to the "Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda" from the Eighth Book, a work that sets an adapted text from the Gerusalemme liberata.

The Invaghiti's admiration was reciprocated by the poet in his dialogue, On Dignity [De la dignità], in which the poet praises the group's founder for the creation and leadership of the academy, describing Giulio Cesare as "a prince of great genius and mature judgment, and consummate prudence and well versed in letters, a lover of great writers and poets," who gave to the group "not only subject matter, but also opportunity for strangers" [componimenti ...de forastieri] were read in the meetings of academies similar to the Invaghiti. Conversazione, 148v.

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55 Gary Tomlinson suggests that Girolamo Casone, a professor of philosophy at the University of Pavia, may have first introduced Monteverdi to the works of Tasso. End of the Renaissance, 45.
writing and the composition of poetry."\(^56\) Additionally, Tasso made Giulio Cesare the primary interlocutor in two of his dialogues as well, Il Gonzaga and Il Gonzaga secondo, both of which discuss appropriate recreation for the nobility.\(^57\)

Although only a few documented examples of Tasso's interactions with the Invaghioti survive, one offers a glimpse at an aspect of the poet's style that may have influenced Alessandro Striggio's choice of language in his libretto for Orfeo. This example is found in an oratorical sonnet composed for the funeral of Giulio Cesare's brother, Francesco Gonzaga, in 1566.\(^58\) While those written by the academy members are beautiful, elegant, and filled with rhetorical and poetic conceits appropriate to a funerary paean, Tasso's contains the most frequent use of musicopoetic images, a feature which Tim Carter notes to be characteristic of Striggio's libretto for Orfeo in comparison to Rinucchi's Euridice.\(^59\) For example, Tasso speaks of "your song" [vostro canto], for which the mourners should "take in hand the lyre, and while I sing / alternate with voices high and sorrowful."\(^60\) A similar

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\(^56\) Tasso, "De la dignitá," from I dialoghi di Torquato Tasso, ed. Cesare Guasti (Florence: Successori Le Monnier, 1901), II: 292-346; here 336.

\(^57\) The dialogues in which Giulio Cesare Gonzaga serves as an interlocutor include Il Gonzaga, o vero del piacer onesto, and Il Gonzaga secondo, overo del giuoco. Both are available in modern editions: Il Gonzaga is available in I Dialoghi di Torquato Tasso, ed. Guasti, I: 15-68. Il Gonzaga secondo is available, Ibid, II: 43-88.

\(^58\) Tasso's contribution survives in a letter from Silvio Pontevico to Giulio Cesare Gonzaga dated November 10, 1566, which contains the sonnets composed and recited by several academy members for the occasion. Lettere dell'Academici Invaghioti, 82. Even if neither Striggio nor Monteverdi had access to this letter or its contents, this "musical" poetic style is easily observable in the poet's works, including the Gerusalemme liberata.

\(^59\) Carter, Monteverdi's Musical Theater, 118. Carter also suggests that the high level of musicopoetic language in Striggio's libretto may have expressed his concern for verisimilitude within the new musicodramatic genre.

\(^60\) "Prendete in man la lira, e mentre io canto / Alternate con voci alte e dolenti."
controposto is given in the final line of the Prologue to Orfeo, as La Musica states, "Now while I alternate songs, now happy, now sorrowful." This proclivity toward musical imagery, found throughout Tasso's works, illustrates the possible influence of Tasso's style on Striggio's libretto, which may also have served as a reflection of the Invaghiti's admiration for the celebrated poet.

Baldassare Castiglione's Il cortegiano also appears to have had considerable influence on the Invaghiti's academic and social philosophy (as it did throughout Italy during the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries). This is to be expected, given the numerous connections between Castiglione, Mantua, and the Invaghiti: Baldassare was the son of Aloisa Gonzaga, a member of the noble branch of the family; additionally, he was a member of the Mantuan Accademia di San Pietro. Benedetto Varchi also praises Castiglione, writing that his "[greatness] was shown [in] his book of the Courtier, and in letters, and in arms, and in all laudable qualities." In 1593, Bernardino Marliani contributed a foreword and biographical note for a new edition of Castiglione's handbook, in which he praises the author: "[those] of our time have numbered Count Baldassare Castiglione, with highest praise and commendation ...among the greatest and most worthy." Another example of this admiration is found in the resemblances of subject matter, narrative structure, and

61 "Hor mentre i canti alterno hor lieti, hor mesti."


63 "Di tutti ...à tempi nostri hanno con somma lode, & commendatione portato ...che frà primi, & fra più degni ...Conte Baldessar Castiglione." From Il cortegiano del conte Baldassare Castigliona Riveduto, & corretto, ed. Antonio Ciccarelli (Venice: Minima, 1593), foreword (unnumbered).
even philosophical viewpoints between Castiglione and Guazzo's aforementioned writings on noble courtesy. As detailed throughout this study, Castiglione's philosophy on the study and practice of oratory, poetry, and music appears to have informed the views of the Invaghiti, including those manifested in Orfeo.

Female beauty and gendered discourse

The subject of beauty was particularly meaningful to the Invaghiti, as indicated by their motto, Nihil pulchrior [Nothing more beautiful], which is an abbreviation of a phrase from one of Cicero's letters, "Nihil virtute formosius, nil pulchrior" [Nothing is more attractive, nothing more beautiful than virtue]. This phrase, which could have just as believably come from Marsilio Ficino's writings, expresses the group's moralism, and may be an indication of their affinity for Ficino's Neoplatonic philosophy.

Despite the ancillary place of physical beauty within the Neoplatonic spectrum of beauty, the academy members' writings frequently echo the popular belief that corporeal beauty was a natural manifestation of spiritual beauty, holding the woman who possessed both in highest regard. (Benedetto Varchi does state, however, that spiritual beauty may be achieved even in the absence of physical beauty, or "corporeal beauty" [bellezza del corpo], as Guazzo refers to it.) For example, academy member Giulio Castellani states in his

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aforementioned epistle of 1564 to Giulio Cesare, "the beauties of the body ...[are] manifested signs of virtues, which may be found in the human spirit."66

The academy members' writings also focus on the beauties of "female" virtues, such as chastity, humility, pity, and of course, gratitude toward love from worthy suitors, expressed for example in the aforementioned collection of poems composed "in praise of some Mantuan Gentlewomen." Following a popular model, each poem within this collection names its dedicatee, praising her physical and moral beauties, often through comparison to her mythical or historical namesake.67 In fact, the subject of female beauty is the focus of one of the academy's few surviving recorded conversations, a discussion which largely echoes the Neoplatonic viewpoints offered by Castiglione in Il cortegiano (for comparison, both texts are given here):

[Baldassare Castiglione, Il cortegiano]

But to speak of the beauty we have in mind, namely, that only which is seen in the human person and especially in the face, and which prompts the ardent

66 "Le bellezze del corpo ...sono manifesti segni delle virtù, le quali in animo humano si possono ritrovare." Castellani, "Vita del Monsignor Hercole," from Componimenti Volgari, 6v. Other works in which this view is expressed include his Stanze in lode delle Gentili Donne di Faenza di Giulio Castellani (Bologna: Manutio, 1557), in which he expresses "grandest affection to the singular beauties [of these Faenzian gentlewomen], of the spirit, as of the body" [Grandissima affecttua verso le singuali bellezze loro, si dell’animo, come del corpo] (from the dedication to Giovanni Evangelista Armenini [unnumbered]). On the correlation between corporeal and moral beauty within the Neoplatonic philosophy, see Guazzo's La ghirlanda della Contessa Angela Bianca Beccaria (Genoa: Bartoli, 1595), 263. Castiglione also expresses this view: "outward beauty is a true sign of inner goodness." Courtier, 336. In an interesting aside, Bonnie Gordon notes that the ideal of female beauty was so disparate from the reality that, in creating physical models, Renaissance artists should follow the ancient painter Xeuxis's example by "[working] from the composite parts of many models." Monteverdi's Unruly Women, 142.

67 Castellani, Stanze in lode delle Gentili Donne.
desire we call love, we will say that it is an effluence of the divine goodness, which (although it is shed, like the sun's light, upon all created things), when it finds a face well proportioned and composed of a certain radiant harmony of various colors set off by light and shadow and by measured distance and limited outline, infuses itself therein and shines forth most beautifully and adorns and illumines with grace and a wondrous splendor the object wherein it shines, like a sunbeam striking upon a beautiful vase of polished gold set with precious gems. Thus, it agreeably attracts the eyes of men to itself [emphasis added], and, entering through them, impresses itself upon the soul, and moves and delights it throughout with a new sweetness; and, by kindling it, inspires it with a desire of itself.\(^68\)

[Letter from Giulio Castellani to Giulio Cesare Gonzaga, dated March 17, 1564]

First, Il Secreto [Donetto Marcello] defended his point, recalling that the desired thing, when it is distant from the desirer, is far more unfavorable than pleasurable, a point founded principally on [the fact] that desire is always accompanied by the hope of enjoying it, and when the body is distant from the intellect, [the intellect] is less impeded, so that it can more freely wrap itself around the beloved thing. On the other hand, only L’Avvilito [Giulio Cesare Gonzaga] attempted an argument upon the following foundation, [namely] that desire is always accompanied by the desired thing, so that it cannot always do that which would bring sorrow, which he proved and confirmed through the example of the many lovers away from their wives. Most of the other Accademici concurred, in my opinion, with the view of Il Secreto [Donato Marcello], that generally speaking, in different respects both opinions are true, since desire holds hope and is full of pleasure, but in the same way, bereft of the desired thing, cannot be held without pain.

L’Acceso [Silvio Calandra] concluded that remembrances of the beloved and desired thing always bring us delight, and this has been proven very well [literally, "most beautifully"] many times. L’Annabiat [Silvio Pontevico] founded [his argument] upon a citation from Dante’s Inferno, holding [the view] that if the desired thing is forbidden, so that we cannot ever enjoy it, it will give the greatest pain; but if you can enjoy it again, its again brings great pleasure. L’Immobile [Carlo Valenti], and some of the other speakers [who have been] badly treated by their women, held L’Avvilito’s view, seeing great sorrow when they are away from the objects of love, delighted only in the beauties of the body. But L’Avvilito held, always following the pleasure of knowledge from our seeds of intellect, that when one is always around the beloved and desired object, the return of beauty’s memory and the well-

\(^68\) Castiglione, Courtier, 337.
enjoyed beloved thing, or that which is enjoyed in this way, always gives pleasure and consolation.\textsuperscript{69}

Castellani’s record of the conversation ends here, noting that his addressee was present for the debate. Given the discussions of Neoplatonic beauty in other writings by the academy members (such as Benedetto Varchi’s aforementioned dialectic), the conversation may have continued past this point, gravitating eventually toward the divine aspects of Neoplatonic beauty, even if the conversation focused principally on those manifestations of beauty that can be observed in the natural world, including corporeal beauty and the beauties of moral uprightness.

\textsuperscript{69} "Il Secreto prima ha difesa questa parte, che il ricordare una cosa desiderata al desiderante, benché questi gli sia lontano gli arrechi sempre piacere; e il suo fondamento principale è stato questo; perché ch’è il desiderio è tuttavia con la speranza di dover godere la cosa desiderata, e il nostro intelletto quando il corpo è lontano è meno impedito di si dei, onde egli può più liberamente ravvolgersi intorno alla cosa amata. L’Avvilito ha sol tentata l’altra parte con questo fondamento, che il desiderio è sempre accompagnato della cosa desiderata, onde non può fare che sempre non apporti dispiacere. La qual cosa egli ha provata e confirmata poi con l’esempio di molti amati lontani dalle lor donne. La maggior parte degli altri Accademici ha seguita al parer mio la parte del Secreto, il liberato ha tenuto, che secondo diversi rispetti l’una e l’altra opinione è vera, idiocisia che il desiderio in quanto ha la speranza suo è pieno di piacere, ma in quanto à privo della cosa desiderata non può fare che non ha con dolore. L’Acceso ha giudicato che il ricordarci le amate e desiderate sempre ci apporti diletto, e ciò ha provato con molti tempi bellissimi. L’Annabbiato fondatori sopra un luogo di Dante nell’Inferno tiene se la cosa desiderata sia talmente vietata che non si possa mai godere, che questo ne dia grandissimo dolore; ma se si può di nuovo gode al ritorno apporti grandissimo piacere. L’Immobile, e alcuni altri Innarati mal trattati dalle lor donne hanno tenuta la parte dell’Avvilito vando in se grandissimo dispiacere quando son lontani dalle cose amati godere solo della bellezza del corpo. Ma L’Avvilito ha tenuto, seguendo semper il piacere la cognizione de nostri semi e dell’intelletto, quando si aggirano intorno alla obbietto amato e desiderato, che il ritordarii e tornar con la memoria al bello e al ben goduto della cosa amata, o à quello che si godere, sempre dia consolazione e piacere. Ma perché l’Accademia vera più a pieno tutta questa disputa à Vostra Eccelenzia, e io forse l’avete fastidita fin qui le bascièrò riverentemente la mano del favor fattami beneficio di mio Fratello, e priego Dio che gliene renda" (letter dated March 17, 1564). \textit{Lettere dell’Accademici Invaghiiti}, 41.
Returning to the Castiglione, we find the discourse of the interlocutor, Pietro Bembo, on the misery that is encountered when the object of beauty is lost, which to the modern reader might seem to describe the suffering of Striggio’s Orpheus, which serve as the catalyst of the protagonist’s actions:

Therefore the lover who considers beauty only in the body loses this good and this happiness as soon as his beloved lady, by her absence, leaves his eyes deprived of their splendor, and consequently leaves his soul widowed of its good. For when this beauty is thus far away, that amorous influence does not warm his heart as when she was present; wherefore his pores become dry, yet the memory of her beauty still stirs those powers of his soul a little, so that they seek to scatter the spirits abroad; and these, finding the ways shut, have no exit, and yet seek to go forth; and shut in thus, they prick the soul with these goads and cause it to suffer painfully, as children do when the teeth begin to come through the tender gums. And from this come the tears, the sighs, the anguish, and the torments of lovers, because the soul is always in travail and affliction, and well-nigh enters into a furor until such time as the cherished beauty appears to it again; and then suddenly it is quieted and breathes easily, and, being wholly intent upon that beauty, it feeds on the sweetest food, nor would it ever depart from so delightful a spectacle.70

The academy members’ focus on physical and moral manifestations of "female beauty" is manifested throughout their writings, including Pompeo Baccusi’s oration "in defense and praise of women," and Pusterla’s aforementioned oration "in reproof of women’s cruelty." In addition to such oratorical works and essays, this ideal is expressed through the moral object lessons found in the academy members’ narrative works, including Ercole Udine’s epic on the myth of Psyche, whose beauty raised the jealous ire of Venus and the affection of Love himself (i.e., Cupid), and Mutio Manfredi’s Il contrasto amoroso (The Amorous Contest), which through its story on two women competing for the affection of the same man, offers object lessons on the comparative value of bodily and

70 Castiglione, Courtier, 351.
moral beauty. Similar object lessons are found in the aforementioned librettos written for the Invaghiti, including Il giudizio del coniugale Amore, which speaks to the role of beauty and virtue in marriage; Baldvino Simoncelli's rendition of the story of Europa, whose beauty spurred Jove to abduct her; and Francesco de' Lemene's aforementioned rendition of the Biblical story of Jacob's love for the beautiful Rachel, which is frequently contrasted with Leah's uncomely appearance.

In the writings of the Invaghiti, beauty is most often presented through the metaphor of light (a correlation that is also given in Ficino's writings), especially the light of the sun, the latter functioning primarily in the revelation of beauty, as well as moral enlightenment. This popular imagery is most frequently juxtaposed with the opposing imagery of darkness, the latter most often representing ignorance, ugliness, and injustice. For example, in his oration "in defense" of women, Baccusi states, "the fame [of the virtuous woman] is never darkened, thanks to the clearest light of feminine virtue." In Guazzo's La ghirlanda della Contessa Angela Bianca Beccaria (a series of lessons various topics, dedicated to the glory of the countess's "beauties, graces, [and] intellect"), the author expresses the role of the sun's light in revealing beauty, and further suggests that it is a

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71 Mutio Manfredi, Il contrasto amoroso (Venice: Somachò, 1602).

72 The Neoplatonic nature of this imagery is discussed by Solomon, "Neoplatonic Apotheosis," 36.

73 "La fama non é per oscurar sí giamai, merce del chiarissimo lume della virtu feminile." Baccusi, In difesa. This association is also expressed by Castiglione: "the practice of art and reason is required to purify and clear the soul by lifting from it the dark veil of ignorance," and later, "the divine path of love ...wherein beauty shines ...[as] a heavenly ray." Courtier, 298, 347.
"symbol of truth ...[and] God" that "clears away the darkness of the ignorant."74 This association is also represented in the academy's *impresa*, which features an eagle looking upward at the sun, the latter almost certainly representing the "rays of sunlight" which emanated from the glory of the Gonzaga.75

Udine's *Psiche* mentions these images (that is, light and darkness, as well as beauty and ugliness) at a rate comparable to those found in other narrative works by the Invaghiti: in just under 300 lines, the opening canto features thirty-one references to beauty, and twenty-one to light or darkness. Striggio's libretto for *Orfeo*, however, does not follow this tendency, with just seventeen mentions of beauty or ugliness in just under 700 lines of text (on the other hand, it includes sixty-seven of light or darkness, generally matching the rate found in Udine's epic).

This difference may be explained by the fact that beauty was considered a quality that was more important to women than to men, which may have made its frequent reference inappropriate in connection with the play's male protagonist. The importance of a woman's beauty is suggested by Castiglione, who states, "beauty is more necessary to [women] than to the [male] Courtier, for truly that woman lacks much who lacks beauty," and later, "women have a great desire to be ...beautiful ...therefore, whatever nature has failed in this regard, they try to remedy it with artifice."76 Tasso also expresses this view in


76 Castiglione, *Courtier*, 65, 206.
his *Apologia in difesa della Gerusalemme liberata*, stating, "the excellence of women is found in their beauty."\(^{77}\) In fact, all but three of Striggio's references to beauty are given in relation to female characters (the other three examples reference flowers, Orpheus’s lyre, and virtue itself). As will be demonstrated in **Chapters 2** and **3**, the Invaghi'ti's idealization of beauty is expressed primarily in *Orfeo* through the proportions and correspondences of Vitruvian (or "architectural") symmetrical structures, found on multiple levels within the work.

This comparative lack of emphasis on female beauty in *Orfeo* also impacts the dramaturgical marginalization of the female characters themselves (whom, as noted by Bonnie Gordon, were further "silenced" in performance through their portrayal by male actors).\(^{78}\) Leone de' Sommi addresses the subject of the "female voice" in dramaturgical works, suggesting that the breaking of "virginal silence" (i.e., the silence of an unmarried female character) is inappropriate, since it would be an action "filled with vice" \(*viziosissimo*\) for "a naive virgin to reason on stage."\(^{79}\) In addition to this "silencing," the relegation of female characters serves to draw focus to the male protagonist and the suffering brought about by his characteristically "male" character flaws, including pride, exhibitionism, feminization, and fits of romantic despair (the "male" nature of these flaws is discussed in **Chapter 1**).

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\(^{78}\) Gordon, *Monteverdi’s Unruly Women*, 96.

\(^{79}\) "In scena una vergine ingenua a ragionare ...[e] viziosissimo." *Quattro Dialoghi*, 17. On this subject, also see Susan McClary, "Constructions of Gender": 207-208.
In this way, it is the title character of Striggio's libretto around whom the events of the play pivot—similar to the construction found in the librettos of Monteverdi's later operas—while the other characters principally respond to Orpheus's actions; this is especially true in the case of Eurydice, who serves primarily as a reflection of the protagonist's will.\(^{80}\) It is for this reason that Orpheus's actions fall at the center of each act (discussed in Chapter 3), and that the only other characters whose actions move the plot forward are male (e.g., Pluto's decision to return Eurydice to Orpheus, and Apollo's descent from the heavens, the latter initiating the play's *lieto fine*). The one exception to this principle is found in the denouement from the libretto printed for the 1607 performance, in which the Bacchantes—not the virtuous and temperate women of the first four acts, but the destructive agents of Dionysus—move the play to its final resolution through Orpheus's destruction. It is possible that this action, which could have been interpreted as a

\(^{80}\) Unlike the title character of *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, Orpheus's influence on the drama is not based on his ability to control the people or situation around him (with the exception of Eurydice, who articulates her submission to Orpheus in her speech following "Rosa del ciel"). Rather, Orpheus's central role is based in the fact that his actions drive the narrative forward, even if these dramatic progressions result from another character's response to the protagonist (for example, Persephone's pity leading to Eurydice's release from the Inferno in Act IV; the response of the Bacchantes or Apollo to Orpheus's laments in Act V; and even Orpheus "tempting the fates" in Act I through his excessive rejoicing). Aristotle discusses the focalization of the protagonist's errors through the use of a plot that pivots on his or her actions in the *Poetics* XXIV. *Rhetoric and Poetics*, 259. The concept of Eurydice as a psychological projection of Orpheus's will is considered by Jeffrey Kurtzman, "The psychic disintegration of a demi-god: conscious and unconscious in Striggio and Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo*," from *Music and Consciousness: Philosophical, Psychological, and Cultural Perspectives*, eds. David and Eric Clarke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 343-374.
repudiation of gender roles, led to its later replacement with the *deus ex machina* of the 1609 score, the latter action resulting from the wisdom and compassion of a male deity.\textsuperscript{81}

These gendered messages also speak to the two levels of discourse within *Orfeo*'s messages on gendered flaws and virtues: whereas discussions of "female" characteristics are presented through more easily discernable and comparatively generalized discourse, subjects related to inherently "male" characteristics are presented through subtle, complex, and in some cases hidden messages. For example, Eurydice's submission to Orpheus's will is presented in her simple (and comparatively un-artful) response to Orpheus's "Rosa del ciel," as well as Pluto's explicit and straightforward instructions to virtuous wives from Act IV. The play's messages on Orpheus's "male" flaws, on the other hand, are presented in a manner that would have been understood best by highly educated (therefore, most likely male) guests, including the protagonist's exhibitionism and use of sophistry leading to his failure as an orator, as well as the use of symmetrical structures to emphasize the allegorical duality between hope and despair, the comprehension of which would likely have been available to those with knowledge of Ancient and contemporary models discussed in the following chapters.

These distinct levels of discourse are illustrated in Guazzo's handbook on "civil conversation," the first book of which gives considerable attention to the virtues of the academy system, as well as an extensive dialogue on effective oratory. Following this

\textsuperscript{81} Such debates over the moral propriety of an artistic work served as a convenient vehicle for political opposition, offering yet another example of the overlap between the "Invaghiti Orfeo" and "Mantuan Orfeo." These issues were magnified in the case of works given at court, especially since such productions were regarded as a projection of the sponsor's noble virtue. In the case of *Orfeo*, these criticisms most likely would have come from members of the Florentine court who wished to diminish the reputation of the Mantuan court.
conversation, the two interlocutors move to discussions on those types of conversation that required progressively decreasing levels of specialization and education: first is ordinary discourse between princes and subjects (as opposed to the artful address that would be expected before a formal gathering of the court), then conversation husbands and wives, and finally, between parents and children. Following these dialogues, Guazzo presents a conversation held between noblemen and noblewomen at a fictional dinner (this setting was likely an homage to Castiglione’s *Il cortegiano*).

At one point during the dinner, a musician arrives to perform a brief song in praise of the host, which provides an opportunity for a discussion on the music. As one would expect of this "public" discourse between men and women—which in this regard parallels the discourses of the Invaghiti’s "open" meetings—the conversation is highly generalized, and in fact does not offer any specific comments on music itself (instead, the guests consider to the ability of the verses to offer praise worthy of their host). Because of the relatively low number of musically literate members within the academy (none of whom published any musical compositions themselves, so far as I am aware), Guazzo’s generalized discourse may reflect the nature of the Invaghiti’s discussions on the subject as well. This approach to the discussion of this "pastime" stands in clear contrast to the specialized discussion on both the mechanics and philosophy of music from the meetings of the Florentine Camerata, recorded in Vincenzo Galilei’s *Dialogo della musica antica, et della moderna*. As considered in the *Conclusions* to this study, it is perhaps for this reason that Striggio’s libretto (and arguably, Monteverdi’s setting) does not create an "apotheosis" of music, but rather a message both on the medium’s power and its limitations. In the following chapters, I will consider manifestations of this and other subjects on which the
Invaghiti engaged in both specialized and generalized discourse, beginning with manifestations of the *academici*’s philosophy and practice in the art of oratory.
Chapter 1: Academicism and oratory in Orfeo

Introduction

The prevalence of rhetorical style in the recited arts (i.e., literature, dramaturgy, and music) of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries has been well documented in a number of period and modern writings. One of the most explicit writings from the Italian Renaissance is Nicola Vicentino’s treatise, Ancient Music Adapted to Modern Practice (Rome, 1555), in which the author makes several direct correlations between Classical rhetorical technique and common musical practice.\(^1\) More elaborate applications of Classical oratorical styles and structures in musical composition are found in later treatises, including Burmeister’s Musical Poetics (Rostock, 1606), as well as numerous seventeenth-century treatises from France on the subject of the “harmonic orator.”\(^2\) However, it is not my intention to offer a reading of Orfeo based on the theories or practices described in these works, including the identification of specific musical-rhetorical devices (such as Burmeister’s Figurenlehre), since neither Striggio or Monteverdi’s knowledge of these


\(^2\) On the subject of ”The Harmonic Orator” in France, see Patricia Ranum’s monograph of the same name (Baltimore: Pendragon Press, 2001).
treatises, nor a demonstrable link between their content and the Invaghiti’s study and practice of the subject can be established firmly. Nor is it my intention to follow the example of musical theorists such as Burmeister in attempting to analyze an entire work (in this case, Orfeo) as an oration, although such an approach would hardly fall outside the realm of possibility during this period (Tasso suggests the modeling of narrative and dramatic plots after the Classical dispositio in his Discourses on the Heroic Poem). Rather, my analysis aligns the representation of formal orations in Orfeo with the writings of those Classical teachers whose writings served as the philosophical foundation of the academies from which the first generation of operas arose, as found in the orations and theoretical writings of the academy members.

As noted in the Introduction, the prominence of oratory in the Invaghiti’s studies parallels its importance in the curricula of most Italian educational institutions during this period, which created a nearly universal familiarity with the subject among educated Italians. As a result, almost every artful expression—ranging from poetry and dramatic narratives to the formal address of any educated listener—was couched in the ornamental devices and strategies of the rhetorical style (e.g., enthymeme, antithesis, gradatio). Moving from the realm of artful expression to persuasive speech, however, these decorative, performance-based elements functioned as adornment to the foundation and arrangement of the speaker’s arguments (the oratorical canons of inventio and dispositio, respectively).

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3 The relationship between the ordir of Tasso’s poetry and the Ciceronian dispositio is discussed by Lawrence Rhu in The Genesis of Tasso’s Narrative Theory (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1993), 175 (n. 3). Also see Irene Samuel’s introduction to Tasso, Heroic Poem, xxiii.

This prioritization of argumentative substance over the style with which they are executed finds its roots in the aforementioned Ciceronian maxim, "docere, movere, delectare" ("instruction is the first goal, followed by the movement of the mind, and the delight of the senses"), an adage that warned orators against the use of the persuasive arts for amoral ends through the manipulative use of sophistries. On the other hand, those who followed the example of the Sophists by attempting to substitute stylistic brilliance or clever reasoning for morally sound instruction were regularly held up to derisive comment by both Ancient and Renaissance commentators, including certain members of the academy.

Although several modern authors have commented on Orpheus’s failure to persuade Charon through "Possente spirto," only Joachim Steinheuer has considered the question in relation to the academic practice and philosophy of the Invaghiti. After noting that the academy members participated in "speeches, disputations, and literary debates," Steinheuer analyses the use of "high, middle, and low" expressive styles in both Striggio’s text and Monteverdi’s setting, focusing primarily on the protagonist’s attempts to match each style to the situation, as well as on the sophistication of his listener (for example, in addressing the rustic shepherds in the low style). On the subject of "Possente spirto," Steinheuer suggests that Orpheus’s failure to persuade Charon results from his use of the "middle" style to create a passionate expression of his love for Eurydice, rather than the "high" style expected for persuasive speech.⁵ In light of the Ciceronian maxim given above, however, this would have been only a secondary cause; the primary reason would have been found rather in his failure to offer moral instruction to his judge through the proper foundation and presentation of his arguments. In order to offer greater insight into how

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⁵ Steinheuer, "Orfeo," 139.
Orpheus’s failure exemplifies the academic and social philosophy from which the work arose, I will compare the protagonist’s aria-oration to the only other full oration from Orfeo, La Musica’s Prologue, along with selected "musical orations" from Monteverdi’s compositional catalogue, reflective of the works and writings of the Invaghiti. Before moving to the analysis of these two examples, however, let us survey the study and practice of oratory in Renaissance Italy, in particular in the likely practice of the Invaghiti and Monteverdi.

*Oratory and the Invaghiti*

As mentioned above, the prominence of oratory in the Invaghiti’s activities reflects its place in the curricula of Italian educational institutions during the period. The study and practice of oratory would have begun for the academy members in primary school with the study of the Classical *trivium* (grammar, logic, and oratory), and continued at a rigorous pace through the university level. Throughout the period, it was Cicero’s writings and speeches that were most widely read, taught, and imitated, in particular his *De oratore* and *Brutus* (these two works were published respectively in 133 and 60 separate editions between 1450 and 1610, the majority by Italian printers). During this same period, the works of Aristotle, particularly the *Rhetoric*, experienced a steady ascendancy—91 editions over the same range of years—as academics gradually integrated the practical and philosophical viewpoints of these two authors.⁶

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Certain aspects of the Ancient authors' philosophies did not require integration, since both Cicero and Quintilian—who knew and frequently cited the *Rhetoric*—directly echoed the venerable philosopher's teaching on the three principal forms of persuasion (i.e., *ethos, logos, and pathos*, discussed below), along with the oratorical canons related to the construction and arrangement of one's arguments. Cicero's explicit statements on the need for oratory to serve a virtuous purpose, echoing the sentiments of Plato (the latter's statue serving as a prop within the idyllic setting of the *Brutus*), filled the lacunae left by Aristotle's occasionally ambiguous statements on the subject. Renaissance treatises on oratorical theory and practice rarely strayed from these teachings on the foundation, arrangement, and moral purpose of oratory; instead, they offered new ideas on epistemological issues, such as the division of the art's various components between the subjects of rhetoric and logic, as well as performative issues, such as the design of arguments through the use of rhetorical commonplaces and proofs.\(^7\)

The writings of Quintilian also experienced increased popularity during this era, though it was Cicero's status as the "orator-statesman" that seems to have appealed most to Italian nobles, as opposed to Aristotle's vocation as a philosopher, or Quintilian's primary employment as a pedagogue. Perhaps it is for this reason that, as noted by Peter Mack, "in describing the ideal courtier, Baldessare Castiglione consciously modeled *Il cortegiano* on Cicero's *De oratore.*"\(^8\) In fact, the editor of the aforementioned 1593 printing of Castiglione's *Il cortegiano*, for which academy member Bernardino Marliani contributed

\(^{7}\) This survey on oratorical scholarship and practice during the Renaissance is based on Mack's *Renaissance Rhetoric*, as well as Thomas Conley's *Rhetoric in the European Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).

a foreword and a new biographical sketch, in part confirms Mack's assertion by stating that Castiglione modeled his teachings on the art of oratory after the teachings of Cicero, based in the "Platonic school of reasoning." 9

Both ancient and early modern writers address the topics of elocution and performance (the oratorical canons of elocutio and pronuntiatio, respectively) in great detail, the latter group frequently advocating imitation of a particular ancient orator. The orator most often imitated was again Cicero (a style appropriately termed "Ciceronianism"), an inclination illustrated in Eugenio Cagnani's comparison of a famous Mantuan orator's eloquence with that of Cicero (the former's orations were in fact recited for the Invaghtiti on a few occasions). 10 Perhaps in imitation of Cicero's conversations on the subject, Renaissance theorists occasionally indulged in mildly hyperbolic statements on the importance of these performative canons, though these proclamations should not be taken to suggest that even the most skillful eloquence could be substituted for sound moral reasoning. In the De oratore, for instance, though Cicero first states that "delivery ...has the sole and supreme power in oratory," he later qualifies this statement by assuring his reader that even the most skillful delivery, "if there be not matter beneath it clear and intelligible to the speaker, must either amount to nothing, or be received with ridicule by all who hear it" (additional quotes to this effect are given in the analysis below). 11 Following Cicero's example, Guazzo addresses the importance of eloquence (or the orator's "living voice," as

9 Castiglione, Il cortegiano ... corretto, ed. Ciccarelli, unnumbered.

10 "Con maggior eloquenza dire lo stesso ... Cicerone." "Lettera cronologica," 9.

the latter refers to it) within a dialogue that closely imitates a conversation on the subject from the *Brutus*. By naming Socrates as the model of moral philosophy which should accompany all learning, Guazzo derides orators who rely on eloquence as a substitute for moral substance, suggesting that "unpolished wisdom is much more to be commended, than a copious and foolish wit," and further, that in speaking, "the form is not considered foremost... but the weight, and the matter; therefore in reasoning, focus is not given to gracefulness and ornament, so much as ...utility."12

Moving from the realm of oratorical practice to its representation in the theatre, we note that the vast majority of Renaissance poets adhered to the spirit of Cicero's moral maxim as well.13 Torquato Tasso articulates the viewpoint of the "poetic moralists," stating, "[how] very dangerous the lessons of poets would be if in dubious places they did not show us the path of virtue and serve as guides" (similar statements by the members of the Invaghiti are given in the *Introduction*).14 Tasso also articulates the connection between

12 "[M]olto più comodata, è una inculta prudenza, ch'un copioso, & stolto cicalamento ...non si considera principalmente la forma ...ma il peso, & la materia, così nel ragionamento non si dèe tanto mirar la vaghezza, & l'ornamento, quanto ...l'utilità." Guazzo, *Conversatione*, 84-84v. Guazzo's statement on Socrates is given in *Conversatione*, 14v; compare with Mauro Calcagno's suggestion that Guazzo's emphasis on the orator's use of the "living voice" "represents for Guazzo an effective instrument of affective persuasion ...that might even go beyond the effective content of persuasion." *From Madrigal to Opera*, 149.

13 On the subject of those poets who rejected this ancient maxim (that is, literary hedonists), see Lisa Sampson's *Pastoral Drama in Early Modern Italy: The Making of a New Genre* (London: Legenda, 2006), esp. 134-141.

this viewpoint and humanist practice: "following the view of the Ancients ... the poet then is to set as his purpose not delight ... but usefulness [i.e., "moral utility"])."\textsuperscript{15}

\textit{Monteverdi and oratory}

Specific information on Monteverdi's education is unfortunately not available to modern scholars. That said, the composer displays familiarity with at least the technical aspects of Classical oratory in both his public writings and his private correspondence. Perhaps the most frequently cited demonstration of this knowledge is found in his preface to the "Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda" (published in 1638 in the \textit{Eighth Book of Madrigals}), in which the composer offers a three-fold taxonomy of musical \textit{genera} (\textit{molle, temperato}, and \textit{concitato}) similar to Aristotle's classification of the orator's low, middle, and high voices.\textsuperscript{16}

A clear demonstration of Monteverdi's ability to create a successful oration is found in his letter to Striggio of March 13, 1620 (\textbf{Example 1.1a}), in which the composer gives his final declination of Duke Ferdinando's offer to return to service at the Mantuan court.\textsuperscript{17} The composer's use of the rhetorical arts in his professional correspondence is no surprise,

\textsuperscript{15} Tasso, \textit{Heroic poem}, 11.

\textsuperscript{16} Monteverdi's theorizations from the preface to the "Combattimento" are discussed by several authors, including Massimo Ossi, \textit{Divining the Oracle}; Tim Carter, "The Composer as Theorist? Genus and Genre in Monteverdi's Combattimento di Tacredi e Clorinda," from \textit{Music in the Mirror: reflections on the history of music theory and literature for the 21st century}, ed. Andreas Giger and Thomas J. Mathiesen (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), 77-116; and Chafe, \textit{Monteverdi’s Tonal Language}.

\textsuperscript{17} The translation given here is from \textit{The Letters of Claudio Monteverdi}, ed. Stevens (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 188.
since the basic principles of oratory were often taught through the art of letter writing at the primary school level (which Monteverdi almost certainly would have attended in preparation for his career as a musician).\footnote{Rhetoric was often taught at the primary school level—that is, the level of education that Monteverdi almost certainly would have received—through the medium of letter writing. See Mack, Renaissance Rhetoric, and Le “Carte messaggieri”: retorica e modelli di comunicazione epistolare per un indice dei libri di lettere del Cinquecento (Rome: Bulzoni, 1981), ed. Amadeo Quondam. My thanks to Andrew Dell’Antonio for bringing the latter resource to my attention.} In keeping with the teachings of the Ancients, section \textbf{[1]} functions as the introductory \textit{exordium}, naming and praising Monteverdi’s judge, Duke Ferdinando (via the duke’s representative, Alessandro Striggio). In section \textbf{[1a]}, which serves as a continuation of the \textit{exordium}, the composer states that he is not pleading for himself alone, but for his sons as well. This naming of additional appellants illustrates the composer’s use of \textit{pathos}, appealing to his judge’s sympathy in order to offer the duke moral instruction on his duty to maintain the well-being of his servant and his servant’s family.\footnote{The duke’s \textit{noblesse oblige} to Monteverdi and his family is discussed by Tim Carter, “Wings, Cupids, Little Zephyrs and Sirens: Monteverdi and \textit{Le nozze di Tetide} (1616-1617),” \textit{Early Music} 39, 4 (November 2011): 489-502; here 494.} The composer does not offer a \textit{narratio} (statement of accepted facts), which according to the Ancients, would not be required since Monteverdi could assume the judge’s familiarity with the circumstances. Instead, section \textbf{[2]} marks the beginning of the \textit{confirmatio}, in which Monteverdi offers his arguments: at his current position in Venice, the composer receives a higher salary than he did in Mantua, and his salary is always paid on time; he is given greater authority and respect; and his duties are considerably lighter, an issue over which Monteverdi sought relief following the concert season of 1608. (In fact, the composer’s appeal for sympathy, offered with artful restraint in this letter, may have
been intended as a subtle jab at Duke Vincenzo's refusals to grant the composer's repeated requests for relief from his duties in 1608, in relation to his own health and well-being.)

In section [2a], Monteverdi offers his strongest arguments, though in a show of oratorical tact, the composer avoids an overtly confrontational tone by placing them in the form of rhetorical questions. First, Monteverdi asks if it would be wise to abandon an assured salary for money that "dries up" at times of political uncertainty; second, could he depend on payment from the duke, who had failed to pay money already owed to the composer? Section [3] answers the expected counter-arguments (the confutatio, or in the composer's own words, "what the world ...would say against me"): it would certainly be folly to accept less than what others have received from the duke, and again, less than what the Mantuan treasury owes him already. Further, all payments from the treasury require the indignity of having to beg for payment, an action which contradicts a statement made by the duke's own minister, namely that a servant may not serve with honor unless he is treated honorably. Finally, section [4] offers the composer's "conclusion," or peroratio: Monteverdi will continue to be a willing servant of the duke, but will not leave better employment for worse. In a less artful move, the composer again mentions the money that the duke still has not paid him, an issue that he would continue to raise for several years, with tact if not always with perfect artfulness.

Monteverdi adorns his oration with a graceful elocutio (i.e., the placement of words and figures), illustrated here in his exordium (Example 1.1b). Through the extensive use of semicolons, for example, the composer delivers the entire salutation to his judge in a single

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20 The composer describes his poor health in letters dated November 26, 1608, and December 2, 1608. *The Letters of Claudio Monteverdi*, ed. Stevens, 45-54.
sentence, a favorite device among skilled orators. Phrase (1) offers Monteverdi’s most
direct address of the duke ("his most serene highness" [Sua Altezza Serenissima]), for which
the composer employs the "magnificent" verbal style through the predominant use of open
vowels and liquid consonants (a component of the "high" oratorical style, which was
expected for the direct address of one’s judge; examples are underlined).21 The composer
then turns to the closed vowels and harsh consonant sounds of the "severe" style (a
component of the "middle" style) in the first clause of phrase (2), in which he mentions his
former employment under Gonzaga patronage (perhaps another subtle dig at the poor
treatment which Monteverdi felt he received during the 1608 season). In phrase (3), the
composer employs various pairs of internal rhymes (-enza, -erò, -arle, etc.; marked with
italics) to add to the "delightfulness" of his style. Pompeo Baccusi uses a similar repetitive
device in his aforementioned oration, stating, "in the faces of women, you see something
that is not soft, that is not pure, that is not clear, that does not Shine Forth" [ne volti delle
donne non vi si scorge cosa che non sia molle, che non sia pura, che non sia Chiara]. The
repetition of the phrase, "that is not" [che non sia], a device referred to as anaphora, is used
in this case to increase the impact of the descriptors that follow (molle, pura, chiara / soft,
pure, clear). Similarly, Monteverdi’s use of paired rhyme adds emphasis and grace to the
composer’s expressions of gratitude and humility before the duke, thereby creating sort of
"textual double genuflection" appropriate for the address of a servant to his lord.

In sum, Monteverdi’s letter is a model of proper oratory: his execution of the three
principal forms of persuasion is both effective and appropriate, establishing credibility
(ethos) through the proper address of his judge; offering moral instruction through sound,

21 Tasso discusses the "magnificent" and "severe" styles, Heroic Poem, 140-145.
logical arguments (*logos*); and using *pathos* (emotional appeals) to move the duke's heart regarding his duty to his servant and his servant's family. The *dispositio* is properly arranged, and the *elocutio* uses the proper style, enhanced through "delightful" ornamentation. In all these ways, this letter demonstrates that the composer possessed at least a working knowledge of the art, and one that may have informed his portrayal of Orpheus's ineffective oratory.

This conclusion raises the question of the "oratorical" nature and purpose of the ornamented line from "Possente spirto." As Tim Carter has noted, we cannot be certain what this version represents in relation to the performance of 1607, and it is unlikely that the unornamented line was ever meant to be performed.\(^{22}\) It is therefore equally possible that the ornamented line represents what the composer desired, a record of what the actor, Francesco Rasi, had performed, or simply an example of the style of ornamentation that would be considered appropriate to the aria itself. Given the composer's understanding of the oratorical arts, however, it seems reasonable to conclude that Monteverdi could have offered a setting that emphasizes Orpheus's inclination towards youthful exhibitionism, manifested in part through showy musical ornamentation.

Alternately, if the line represents Rasi's interpretation, it could equally point towards his own rhetorical education (Rasi studied at the University of Pisa). Moreover, in keeping with the professional practices of the period, Rasi's study of dramatic expression would have been based at least in part on the art of oratorical speech making, perhaps offering special insight into the performance of oratory on the theatrical stage. And even if neither the composer nor the actor initially considered Orpheus's failures in this regard,

Alessandro Striggio could have brought the issue to their attention during the composition and rehearsal process, in order to assure that the moral object lesson offered through Orpheus's failure would be effectively represented in performance.

Oratorio contropposto: "Possente spirto" and the Prologue

Many of Orpheus's speeches feature the oratorical devices of the performative canons, reflective of the artful discourse expected from the educated gentry who undoubtedly made up the audience of the 1607 performance. We see this illustrated in his proclivity for the popular Petrarchan contropposto of light and dark imagery (see for example his recitation in praise of Eurydice from Act I, "Rosa del ciel," as well as his lament upon her death from Act II, "Tu se' morta"). Only the Prologue and "Possente spirto," however, may be labeled properly as orations, since they feature not only the canons of artful discourse, but also those canons that serve as the foundation of persuasive argument. Through the contrasting examples found in these two "musical orations"—performed by the allegorical personification of music and the demigod of music—Striggio and Monteverdi offer illustrations on the proper foundation and performance of both oratory and music.23

23 Several authors have commented on additional shared aspects of these two musical orations. Mauro Calcagno has recently offered an analysis of deictic language within Monteverdi's works, including the self-deictic statements given by La Musica, "Io la Musica son," and Orpheus's "Orfeo son io," both of which will be considered from an oratorical perspective below. From Madrigal to Opera, 394. Other shared features that have received significant attention include the use of structured verse, the five-strophe form, the use of ritornellos between the strophes, and poetic cross-references. On these subjects, see for example Tim Carter, Monteverdi's Musical Theatre, 35; and Hanning, Of Poetry and Music's Power, 157. A further layer of significance to the relationship between these two
Like the academy members, let us begin our consideration of these two examples with the Ancients whose writings served as the foundation of the Invaghiti’s study and practice. Aristotle states that the orator’s first goal is to gain the good will of the judge through a show of good moral character (ethos). For this reason, Quintilian suggests that the orator should possess “a certain modesty in thoughts, style, [and] tone,” and further, that “the confidence of the orator ought not to display itself too plainly, for the judge generally detests assurance in a pleader.”\(^{24}\) Striggio’s text for the orations’ exordia begins appropriately enough, as both orators follow the Greek custom of directly addressing and paying homage to the judge, Orpheus to the "powerful" and "formidable" Charon, and La Musica to the "illustrious heroes of noble, royal blood"; the latter further claims, "fame... cannot approach the truth [of their glorious deeds], so high the aim," adroitly implying that the noble listeners are the equals—if not the superiors—of the heroes and gods about to be presented on the stage.

It is in the performance (pronuntiatio) of this homage, as manifested in Monteverdi’s setting, that the success of the two speakers first diverges. In fact, Orpheus damages his ethos before he has placed a single argument through his ostentatious vocal display, which falls within this verbal genuflection (Example 1.2a), facilitated by Monteverdi’s substantial alteration of the text’s natural speech rhythms through the introduction of several long-

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\(^{24}\) Institutes of Oratory, IV, i. Quintilian’s Institutes of Oratory; or Education of an Orator, trans. John Selby Watson (London: George Bell and Sons, 1907), I: 266.
held notes (that is, note lengths that would facilitate broad embellishments). By comparison, such disparities between spoken and musical rhythms are nearly absent in the corresponding address and obeisance to the judges of La Musica’s oration (Example 1.2b).

The text for Orpheus’s concluding *peroratio* begins with an address of his judge as well, followed by a brief recapitulation of his request. As in the *exordium*, this statement includes a display of humility (“Only you, noble God, can help me”), though his humility is short lived, as he closes the oration with a boast of his own power, which also serves as a refutation of his judge (“the most rigid soul hardens itself in vain [against my lyre]”; Example 1.3). Although it is only conjecture, Monteverdi’s setting of the latter phrase may have been meant to emphasize of the very word that embodies the primary agency of Orpheus’s failure as an orator (“vain [van]”) by setting it to the aria’s final vocal flourish (unlike earlier flourishes, this example does not require a distinction between the ornamented and unornamented lines, since the ornamented version does not continue past the third strophe). Cicero condemns such errors, on the one hand stating that self-praise violates the “rules of decency,” and on the other, relating the “very strange” story of an “irascible orator [who] wrangled ...with the judge himself.” Of greater importance in the light of the precepts of Ancient and Renaissance moralists, however, is the fact that this

25 Additionally, these broad flourishes at the opening of Orpheus’s oration may have been seen as a violation of Cicero’s statement, “to bawl at the beginning of a speech is boorish.” *De Oratore* III, lxi; *Oratory and Orators*, 260. Orpheus’s flourishes and Cicero’s “bawling,” however, may not have been viewed as analogous by the members of the Invaghi, or by Monteverdi.

26 *Brutus* XLI, LXX. *Oratory and Orators*, 305, 336-337. Castiglione makes allowance for self-praise, but only when the occasion permits the speaker to appear to praise him or herself in the natural course of conversation, without appearing to seek the opportunity for self-adulation, a condition which does not apply to “Possente spirto.” *Courtier*, 35.
statement damages his *ethos* through the prideful denial of the power and authority of
divine providence, an action that inevitably leads to failure in the moralistic narratives of
both periods.27

Moving to the subject of *logos*, the young orator fails to justify his request with the
types of arguments suggested by Aristotle for the effective persuasion of a judge. Among
these are historical examples (most pertinently Aphrodite, the mother of Adonis, who was
allowed to enter the Inferno to recover her son), moral maxims, and metaphors. Academy
member Pompeo Baccusi’s oration “in defense of women” offers one or more of these types
of proofs following the placement of each argument: his use of metaphor is especially
descriptive, including his suggestion that virtuous women are “beautiful copies of flowers,”
as well as his equation of "ungrateful" women with the eight-headed Hydra, and those
"infamous monsters ...who with teeth, and with malignant poison, tear, and disfigure
[honest women].”28 Baccusi cites historical examples of virtuous women as well, including
those who had achieved a high level of eloquence, such as Hortensia, who famously
delivered an oration to the Second Roman Triumvirate of 42 BCE.

Rather than adopting sound moral reasoning, Orpheus weaves a clever, circular
argument: "I am no longer living, since my dear spouse is deprived of life / my own heart is
no longer within me / and without a heart, how can it be that I still live?"29 This use of

27 "It is also an honor to a man ...to attribute success itself to the judgment of the

28 "Infame mostro cosí fieramente contra la donnesca honestà s’aventano, & quella
col dente, & col veleno malignamente lacerano, & deturpano." Baccusi, *In difesa*.

29 "Non vivo io no chè, poi di vita è priva / mia cara sposa, il cor non è più meco, / e
senza cor com’esser può chi’io viva?"
cunning logic would undoubtedly have been looked upon by the members of the Invaghiti as the type of subtle reasoning associated with the morally vacuous rhetoric of the Sophists. As Aristotle writes, “it is more fitting for a good man to display himself as an honest fellow than as a subtle reasoner,” and elsewhere, “do not let your words seem to be inspired so much by intelligence ...as by moral purpose.” Cicero suggests that youthful orators in particular are inclined to present arguments that "[abound] in those turns of thought which are not so much distinguished by their weight and solidity as by their ...elegance," a sentiment echoed by Guazzo’s description of the orator who is "more intent on the sound of [his] words, than the weight of judgments." In fact, Cicero’s appraisal of Orpheus’s arguments might have been especially harsh, since he states that arguments based in the "passion of love" are "excessively puerile" (and as Steinheuer has noted, belonging to the "middle" style).

In contrast to Orpheus’s sophistry, La Musica’s arguments are based solidly on the citation of historical examples. The appeal to history is achieved through La Musica’s assertion regarding music’s power to calm the mind and cool fierce anger (an allusion to the historical example of Alexander the Great from Plutarch’s Moralia, which is also referenced by Guazzo in his dichiarazione on music from La ghirlanda), the citation of Orpheus’s legendary ability to subdue wild beasts through the beauty and power of his


32 Cicero, Brutus, XCV. Oratory and Orators, 364. Steinheuer, "Orfeo," 139.
music, and a reference to his conquering of the Inferno. A further Aristotelian method of persuasion is found in La Musica's "[placement of] the scene before the judges’ eyes," accomplished through the mention of the Pindus mountains and the Helicon river, two of the iconic features of the play’s opening setting (i.e., the Thracian valley), and the mythical home of the Muses. The closing line of this strophe also accomplishes a key function of the proem—as suggested by Aristotle in the Poetics—by providing "a foretaste of the theme ...which [lets] us know the pivot of [the] play": the line, “I alternate my songs, now happy, now sad," hints at the primary allegorical duality of the narrative, namely hope versus despair (discussed in Chapter 2), expressed through the secondary emotions of happiness and sadness.

 Returning to the “Possente spirto," we find that in addition to his errors in the creation of ethos and the application of logos, Orpheus is also unsuccessful in his attempt to move the passions of his judge through the use of pathos. This failure is illustrated, for example, in his choice to speak past his judge in the refutation of anticipated counter-arguments, addressing Eurydice instead: “O of all lights, my light most serene / if your eyes

33 Guazzo, La ghirlanda, 126.

34 Poetics XVII; Rhetoric and Poetics, 245. The visualization of the scene through the speaker’s words is mentioned by Castiglione as well ("Put things before our very eyes"), Courtier, 56. La Musica’s description of the setting may have been born of necessity as well, if—as modern writers such as Iain Fenlon have suggested—the Mantuan production of 1609 lacked the spectacular visual scenery found in contemporaneous musical-theatrical productions, such as the Florentine entertainments of 1589. Fenlon, "The Mantuan 'Orfeo.'"

35 Aristotle, Rhetoric III, xiv. Rhetoric and Poetics, 202. Nearer to the time of Orfeo’s creation, this function of the proem was described by the Giovanni Talontoni in his Lettione sopra l principio del Canzoniere del Petrarca, published in 1587: "[The] prologue ...is to gain the sympathy and the attention of the reader, and to give him a foretaste of the plot." Given in Hanning, Of Poetry and Music's Power, 2.
return to life / ah, who would deny the comforting of my pain?"36 (Although the Ancients considered this technique to be effective for the address of a crowd of judges, it was considered inappropriate for the address of a single judge, especially for the judge whose mind, in the words of Cicero, "cannot be inflamed by ardent and vehement incitation.")37

Despite its secondary role in the successful execution of an oration, the use of style in these examples further illustrates the disparity between the effectiveness of the two speakers. Before turning to these contrasts in more detail, however, we should note a shared approach to the elocutio, found in the arrangement of poetic correspondences within the text, which emphasize key concepts such as La Musica’s descriptions of “sweet accents” and “sonorous harmonies,” as well as Orpheus’s symmetrically-placed references to the Inferno’s "blind air" and "dark places" (see Examples 1.4a and 1.4b). This use of corresponding language illustrates the symmetrical quality of each oration, which in turn underscores one of the most common prescriptions regarding the performance of oratory, namely that the pacing and energy of oratorical speeches should take a clear performative shape, with the center (again, the confirmatio, or placement of arguments) serving as its zenith.38

36 "O de le luci mie luci serene / s’un vostro sguardo può tornarmi in vita / ahi, chi nega il conforto a le mie pene?"

37 De Oratore, II, xlv. Oratory and Orators, 133.

38 The pacing and performative shape of oratorical speeches is discussed in numerous manuals from the period, nearly all of which are based on the prescriptions found in Aristotle’s Rhetoric III, xiii-xviii. Rhetoric and Poetics, 199-218. For example, Daniele Barbaro suggests “an oration should be proportioned like the human body.” Della eloquenza (Venice, 1557), given in Mack, Renaissance Rhetoric, 171. The importance of a speech’s center in works that feature this type of symmetrical design is discussed at length in Mary Douglas’s Thinking in Circles.
The contrast between the two speakers is illustrated in each orator’s execution of the *elocutio* (created through Striggio’s choice and arrangement of textual figures), in particular through the use of the “magnificent” and “severe” verbal styles. In keeping with the teachings of the Ancients, the opening line of the Prologue features the open vowels and soft, voiced consonants of the “magnificent” style (“*Dal mio Permesso amato a voi ne vegno*”). Additionally, the line is characterized by a generally balanced distribution of poetic syllables (seven plus five), and measured rhythmic patterns, found in a flowing sequence of alternating accentuation (“*Dal mio Permesso amato a voi ne vegno*”). The verbal style of Orpheus’s opening line, on the other hand, lacks this “magnificent” quality, primarily featuring primarily the unvoiced consonants and closed vowels of the “severe” style instead (“*Ponsente Spirto e formidabil Nume*”; the full text of both orations is given in **Examples 1.4a** and **1.4b**). Although this use of the “middle” style may have been intended to express the protagonist’s distress upon losing his beloved, it would nonetheless have been considered inappropriate for the address of his “sober” judge.

The dramatic crescendo of momentum and intensity to the center of each orator’s *dispositio* is accompanied by abandonment of the magnificent style in favor of an increased frequency of closed vowels and harsh consonant sounds, as well as an irregularity of verbal cadence. Again, La Musica’s oration offers the more successful demonstration of this approach, as the closed vowels and harsh consonants are accompanied by verbal rhythms that offer a clear contrast to the gentle flow of the *exordium* and *peroratio*; this contrast is best exemplified in the final line of the *confirmatio*, which features several closed vowels, ending with a particularly harsh consonant sound (“*de la lira del ciel*”). Orpheus creates a similar state of agitation in his central strophe, which culminates in a final line that includes
a harsh consonant sound as well ("ove già mai per uom mortal non vassi"). As in the opening of his oration, however, the protagonist's use of gentle and harsh verbal sounds is somewhat muddled: although the opening clause contains a harsh consonant (già), it is set mostly in open vowels; the second clause, on the other hand, is comprised of open vowels almost exclusively, and no hard or harsh consonants (except for the long sibilant in the final word, "vassi"). In keeping with the arched shape described above, La Musica returns to the balanced cadential patterns of the exordium in the peroratio, along with the "magnificent" verbal style. Orpheus uses the magnificent style in his peroratio, though he does not achieve the high frequency of gentle, liquid sounds of the corresponding strophe from the Prologue.

These contrasts continue as we move from the elocutio to the pronuntiatio (that is, from Striggio's text into Monteverdi's setting). La Musica's exordium matches the balanced, rhythmic pacing of the text, as the composer evenly distributes musical-temporal space between the lines of the opening strophe (three breves for the first line, two each for the second and third, and three for the fourth line). Orpheus also opens his oration with slow and deliberate tones, though his delivery of textual lines is uneven, owing to the unbalanced distribution of longer notes, over which the ornamented line features extensive musical flourishes (in order, the lines of Orpheus's opening tercet is given over six, three, and four breves).

As in Striggio's text, Monteverdi creates a crescendo of momentum and intensity in the following two sections of the dispositio for both orators that reflects their varying levels of success. Orpheus's use of melodic gestures in the confirmatio and narratio, for example, at times aligns with the verbal and dramatic character of the text, and at other times seem
to disregard it. The circular nature of the arguments from his *confirmatio*, for example, is represented by musical lines whose temporal values are evenly divided between the antecedent and consequent phrases: the four phrases are given over two breves each, with the final phrase coming to rest on a third breve. As noted above, Orpheus’s opening statement achieves the opposite affect through the introduction of several long melismatic flourishes on a single syllable.39 La Musica successfully matches performative effect with textual character in the *narratio* and *confirmatio* by increasing intensity through the more frequent use of the dominant pitch and harmony, the musical enjambment of non-enjambled poetic lines, and by increasing the number of musical lines that feature rhythmic suspension. This final device is used most poignantly for the climactic melodic note of each strophe (such as the *e*’ that serves as the melodic climax of both the third and fourth strophes; see Examples 1.5a and b). This climactic pitch is given its most rhythmically and harmonically dissonant placement at the climax of the oration (again, the close of the *confirmatio*; Example 1.5b), beginning on the final semiminim of the measure, tied to a semiminim in the following measure, and resolved by a leap of a fourth (though this leap likely would have been “softened” through the use of ornamental passing tones).

Like Striggio, Monteverdi proceeds to the *confutatio* of both orations through a decrease of the violence and energy of the severe style. La Musica returns to the melodic and rhythmic and poetic regularity of the *exordium*, moving the orator into the background, 

39 For a detailed consideration on the use of deictic language in *Orfeo*, see Calcagno, *From Madrigal to Opera*, chapter 5 (“In Search of Voice”). This device (that is, self-deictic identification) is also found in the anonymous *Il giudizio* that was sponsored by the Invaghi in 1625: following a long debate between several mythical and legendary heroines on the subject of marital love, the allegorical personification of Love appears in order to resolve the interlocutors’ debate in a speech that begins, “L’Amore io son, l’Amore.”
and the subject of the oration—Orpheus and the drama—into the foreground. This transition is aided by a reduced number of variations in pitch order and rhythmic patterns from the *exordium* (compared to the *narratio* and *confirmatio*), and the use of only one musicopoetic enjambment, found at the end of the *confirmatio* as La Musica transports the listener into the “immortal glory” of the Thracian countryside.

In keeping with Orpheus's characterization of the tortured lover, the protagonist's musical retreat is not as smooth as La Musica’s, as he moves from the *confirmatio* to the *confutatio* through a musical enjambment of a non-enjambed poetic line over a leap of a minor sixth, an interval commonly associated with pathos (see *Example 1.6*). Following this pathetic expression, the restrained nature of Orpheus's *pronuntiatio* within the *confutatio* appears to contradict the harsh verbal character of Striggio’s poetry. This inverted expression, however, may be interpreted as a device through which the composer heightens the impact of the protagonist’s summary of his arguments with a display of quiet intensity. As suggested by several later commentators, this style change may also represent Orpheus’s realization that the virtuosity of his performance has not moved Charon, for which reason the young orator adopts a comparatively modest, though still impassioned style.40

It is Orpheus’s performative crescendo of momentum and intensity to the center of his oration, however, that leads to his greatest failure as an orator, damaging his *ethos*, perverting his *logos*, and demonstrating the misapplication of his *pathos*. By presenting the arguments of the *confirmatio* (“I am no longer living, since my dear spouse is deprived of

40 For example, see Steinheuer, *"Orfeo,"* 139, and Chafe, *Monteverdi's Tonal Language*, 148.
life," etc.) before the narratio's establishment of undisputed facts ("I am Orpheus, who follows in the footsteps of Eurydice," etc.), he inverts the logical progression (logos) of the dispositio. This disordering damages young orator's ethos by placing his self-aggrandizing statements, beginning with "I am Orpheus," at the climactic center of his speech, rather than the moral instruction that should have served as the justifications of his plea (Example 1.7a). The musical setting of this line displays the young orator's misapplication of pathos by giving these mere four syllables over the space of four breves, which as noted above, facilitates a high level of ornamentation. In fact, the ornamented line from the 1609 score demonstrates not only Orpheus's tendency to virtuosic display, but also features the jagged rhythms, wide-ranging ambitus, and cascading roulades commonly associated with the expression of pathos during this period. Such disparities between musical and textual rhythms are absent in La Musica's self-indicative statement, again offering a distinct contrast to the protagonist's immodest displays (Example 1.7b).

Musical oratory in the works of Monteverdi

Unlike the ubiquitous presence of oratory in the study of academics like the Invaghiti, musical settings of formal orations are relatively uncommon in Monteverdi's catalogue, possibly because formal oratory is not as well suited to the expressive musical setting as grand laments (such as those of Arianna, Olympia, and Penelope). Two of these musical orations from Monteverdi's canon offer significant parallels to the effective and ineffective orations from Orfeo: the first is Pluto's oration from the Ballo delle Ingrate (text by Ottavio Rinuccini), and the second is Melanto's oration from Il ritorno d'Ulysses in Patria.
(text by Giacomo Badoaro). Like the orators of Orfeo, these two dramatis personae offer a clear contrast in their representation of moral character: as a deity—a class of beings commonly associated with nobility during the period—Pluto is a symbol of morality, maturity, and authority. Like Orpheus, Melanto displays follies commonly associated with youth (her errors result from moral depravity, however, whereas Orpheus represents a noble youth whose failure results from Aristotelian hamartiae, discussed below).41

Pluto’s oration from Rinuccini’s moralizing dialectic was first performed at the Mantuan court in 1608 (text and translation given in Example 1.8). The moral instruction offered in this work serves as a warning to young women against the "vice of ingratitude," a moral failing spurred by pride of youth and beauty, and manifested in the withholding of affection from "worthy men" (as noted in the Introduction, this topic is addressed by several members of the Invaghiti, including Pompeo Baccusi and Giovanni Pusterla). Like the Prologue to Orfeo, Pluto’s dispositio follows the Ancient model faithfully, beginning with an extensive exordium, in which Pluto shows proper respect to his judge (Venus, the goddess of love). Following this introduction, he offers a concise narratio on his purpose in bringing the "ungrateful ones" [ingrate] from their dark prison into the light of day. Pluto moves deftly into the confirmatio, though his evidence is not based on argument, but rather a clear threat of the same fate for those women who disregard his warning, as well as a more literal "putting of the scene before their eyes" by displaying the condemned women.42

41 The "tragedy of character" is the fourth species of tragedy discussed by Aristotle in Poetics XVIII. Rhetoric and Poetics, 247. The hamartia is discussed in Poetics XIII. Rhetoric and Poetics, 239.

42 Although Pluto does not use any of the Aristotelian proofs described above, numerous metaphors, maxims, and historical examples are given in the dialogue that precedes the oration.
Pluto offers a single rhetorical question as his *confutatio*, which reminds the listener that youthful beauty will eventually be taken by time. Pluto’s *peroratio* begins with a reiteration of his message from the *confirmatio*, illustrated powerfully through his command to the ungrateful women to return, "weeping in the realm of the Inferno" [*lagrimar nel Regno Inferno*].

The success of La Musica’s *elocutio* is found in Rinuccini’s text as well. We again find a gradual buildup of energy and agitation to the climactic *confirmatio*, followed by a slow retreat to the *peroratio*, as the agitation of the former section is replaced by gentle, flowing verbal rhythms. Monteverdi again uses a slow and measured opening line (compare *Examples 1.2a* and *b* to *Example 1.9a*); the use of ritornellos to punctuate the individual components of the *dispositio*; a high rate of agreement between musical rhythm and verbal cadence; and the use of calm or agitated musical language, reflective of textual character (compare *Examples 1.9b* and *1.5b*).  

As an embodiment of youthful folly, Melanto’s oration from *Il ritorno d’Ulisse in Patria* offers a number of parallels to Orpheus’s "Possente spirto" (text and translation given in *Example 1.10*). In her oration, Melanto attempts to persuade her mistress, Penelope, to abandon her constancy to her husband, the latter having been lost at sea for many years. This advice runs afoul of the moral philosophy of the period, which taught that women should be faithful to their husbands in all circumstances, including abandonment and unfaithfulness; in this way, Penelope’s "historical example" of unshakable faithfulness offered moral instruction to the wives of Venice on the doctrines of fidelity and steadfastness. Melanto’s attempt to persuade the grieving queen to take a new lover opens with a cleverly-couched insult, based in a subtle turn of phrase: "Dear beloved queen / you
are wise and prudent / only to your own disadvantage / I would see you less wise"; the young libertine's argument then culminates in the circular reasoning, "whoever enjoys [the fire of living lovers] does no wrong to him who is dead."\(^{43}\)

A similar example of sophistic reasoning is found in the advice of Octavia's nurse to her mistress from *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*, which like *Ulisse*, is based on a libretto written by a member of the humanist Accademia degli Incogniti (this group's views on moralism, however, were markedly different from the Invaghit).\(^{44}\) Although Busenello's morally ambiguous libretto for *Poppea* may have been meant to mock or offer an ironic commentary on Octavia's struggle to follow the moral teachings of the stoic philosopher Seneca, the Roman empress's words from the first act represent an adherence to the moral idealism championed by groups like the Invaghit. Within this context, the nurse's attempts to persuade her mistress to take a new lover in revenge for Nero's infidelity would have been understood as an action that was decidedly immoral. Correspondingly, the nurse uses circular logic similar to Orpheus's, suggesting, "it is shameful to put up with insults, but honorable to avenge oneself ...if someone wounds your feelings, wound their honor"

\(^{43}\) "Cara amata regina / avveduta e prudente per tuo sol danno sei / men saggia io ti vorrei ...Non fa torto chi gode a chi è sepolto ...e chi attende pietà da morto è stolto."

(statements which Octavia refers to as "foul arguments" [sozzi argomenti]). Therefore despite the possible differing of the two academies' views on such sophistic arguments, all three dramas clearly disassociate this persuasive strategy from the type of moralism championed by the Invaghiti.

Stylistic errors similar to Orpheus's are found in Melanto's speech as well, including Melanto's failure to create an even buildup of momentum and energy to the center of her oration. As in Orpheus's oration, this failure is due in part to the disordering of the dispositio, which causes the comparatively balanced musical style of the exordium to be followed by the irregular character of Melanto's confutatio, which is followed by a return to a measured speech patterns of the narratio (Examples 1.11a-c). This unbalanced structure, however, is not the most egregious error within her pronuntiatio; rather, it is the use of a light-hearted dance meter for large portions of the confirmatio and peroratio (Example 1.11d), reflective of Melanto's frivolous moral character, which makes a mockery of the moral gravitas expected of a virtuous orator.  

45 "L'infamia sta gl'affronti in sopportarsi / e consiste l'onor nel vendicarsi."

46 This portrayal of Melanto as an utter failure in the construction and execution of her oration may have been intended to serve as a reflection of her lack of moral character as a youthful wanton. As Cicero writes, "the doctrine of Epicurus [i.e. Epicureanism, and its popular association to undisciplined and immoral hedonism] ...is the least adapted to form an orator." Brutus, XXXV. On Oratory and Orators, 299.
Conclusions: Charon’s response, and the meaning of Orpheus’s failure

Charon responds to Orpheus’s oration by stating that the young singer has “flattered” and “delighted” (delectare) his heart [Ben mi lusinga alquanto, dilettandomi il core]. However, the young orator fails to move (movere) Charon’s heart to pity, an emotion that is “unworthy of [his] dignity” (and as noted by Anne MacNeil, an emotion that was considered inappropriate for the address of any male judge).\(^\text{47}\) Most importantly, Charon does not even mention the chief form of persuasion—moral instruction (docere)—perhaps offering an unspoken comment on Orpheus’s choice to use empty sophistry instead. As a result, the young orator perverts Cicero’s maxim by giving primary emphasis to musical and poetic delights, fuelled by his inappropriate attempt to move Charon’s heart to pity, all at the expense of his duty to offer moral instruction. This failure offers an unfortunate counterpoint to La Musica’s Prologue, which effectively instructs the listener on the subject at hand (that is, the drama about to be presented). In the eyes of the academy members, then, Orpheus’s musical exhibitionism would have been a detriment to his success as an orator in part because it lacked the modesty and balanced expression of La Musica’s Prologue, the latter demonstrating the proper use of the orator’s “living voice.” In keeping with the teachings of the Ancients, however, and as reflected in Guazzo’s writings and Baccusi’s oration, either performative style would be rendered ineffective if it was not founded upon sound moral instruction.

\(^{47}\) Anne MacNeil, "Weeping." Also see McClary, "Constructions of Gender": 216. This principle appears to apply only to the address of one man to another, however, as opposed to those instances in which a woman sought pity from a man, illustrated in Pluto’s decision to return Eurydice to her husband in response to Persephone’s plea for pity.
In this way, Orpheus exemplifies Cicero’s description of the foolish orator whose “greatest ambition ...is to impress his audience with a high opinion of his eloquence," and to "force the passion of the judge by a strong and spirited elocution," and who, as a result, "can barely inform and amuse them."\(^{48}\) Orpheus also falls prey to the youthful folly that Cicero refers to as "impertinence," as he "[does] not discern what the occasion requires ...or is ostentatious of himself, or is forgetful of the dignity ...of those in whose presence he is."\(^{49}\) It is Guazzo’s description of the speaker who "has a little sugar in his mouth," however, that serves as the most apt characterization of Striggio’s Orpheus: "[his] value appears to be golden, [but] upon comparison is found to be silver, or copper ...flattering the ears too much ...and giving the name of Orator to him who is nothing more than a prattler and an ignoramus."\(^{50}\)

According to Aristotle, the performance of oratory depicts the moral character of the orator, a sentiment echoed indirectly by Guazzo, who writes, “the tongue is a mirror, and a portrait of the soul ...[by which] we may know outwardly the quality of the man, and his ways.”\(^{51}\) In this light, Orpheus’s prideful displays offer an object lesson on a moral failing commonly associated with young men during this period, namely a tendency toward narcissism in the pursuit of personal glory. In the words of Castiglione, “among the many

\(^{48}\) Brutus, IX. Oratory and Orators, 271.

\(^{49}\) De Oratore II, iv. Oratory and Orators, 87.

\(^{50}\) “Poco di zuocaro hanno in bocca ...la monetir loro appare d’orose bene al paragone si scuopre d’argento, ò di rame ...lasingare troppo l’orecchie ...& diamo nome di Oratore a tale, che non è altro, che parabolano, & ignorante.” Guazzo, Conversatione, 78.

\(^{51}\) Rhetoric III, xvi. Rhetoric and Poetics, 209. “La lingua è lo specchio, & il ritratto dell’animo ...comprendiamo a dentro la qualità dell’huomo, & i suoi costumi.” Guazzo, Conversatione, 75-75v.
faults that we see in many of our princes nowadays, the greatest are ignorance and self-
conceit," the former exemplified in the "dark veil of ignorance" represented by Orpheus's
lack of self-knowledge regarding the limitations of his ability and his art.\(^\text{52}\) It is perhaps for
this reason that Renaissance commentators frequently associated the characters of
Orpheus and Narcissus with one another, two youths who fail in their pursuit of glory
because of excessive pride, the latter in his own beauty, and the former in the power of his
song.\(^\text{53}\)

Additionally, the young orator's shortcomings offer an object lesson on the subject
of noble courtesy, as his virtuosic performance strays from the courtier's highest goal of
nonchalance \(\text{sprezzatura}\). Orpheus's excessive display of musical and rhetorical style
contradicts Castiglione's admonition that, in the practice of all pastimes (including music),
the courtier should avoid "unnatural affectation ...[which] stems from an excessive desire to
appear very accomplished."\(^\text{54}\) This sentiment is echoed by Guazzo, who states that with too
much practice, or the display of too high a level of expertise, any "leisure" activity "loses its
name ...so that a man cannot properly call it leisure."\(^\text{55}\) Consequently, Orpheus crosses from
the realm of natural artfulness to unnatural artifice, a transgression frequently warned

\(^{52}\) Castiglione, \textit{Courtier}, 290, 298.

\(^{53}\) Calcagno discusses the equation of Orpheus and Narcissus, \textit{From Madrigal to Opera}, 12-13.

\(^{54}\) Castiglione, \textit{Courtier}, 47.

\(^{55}\) "Quest'otio perde il suo nome, quando è convertito in essercitio continovo ...onde
non si potrà chiamare otio quello d'un maestro di musica che stando tutto di a sedere,
against by oratorical and dramaturgical commentators of both the Ancient and early modern periods.

Furthermore, Orpheus’s excessive ornamentation might have added an undesirable degree of feminization to his dramaturgical persona. On this subject, Quintilian states that although showy eloquence “may please ... audiences by its effeminate and voluptuous charms, I absolutely refuse to regard it as eloquence at all: for it retains not the slightest trace of purity and virility in itself, not to say of these qualities in the speaker.” Bonnie Gordon suggests that such characterizations would not have been applied to the character of Orpheus, but rather that “the power ascribed to male voices related to an imagined orphic rhetorical fluency, which was distinct from ravishing pleasure.” In view of Orpheus’s perversion of Cicero’s maxim, however, this may have been an exception to Gordon’s observation, serving instead as an example of what she refers to as “ornamentation [that] was deemed problematic [because] it appealed only to passion and not to reason.” Therefore, the protagonist would have served as an object lesson on the most offensive state for men during the period, namely the "soft," feminine man described by Castiglione as the Courtier who shuns the call to battle, indulging instead in self-indulgent pleasure. This characterization is exemplified most famously through the figure of the Christian knight Rinaldo from Tasso’s Gerusalemme liberata (XVI, 28-33), who succumbs to feminization while in the company of the pagan sorceress Armida.

56 McClary, “Constructions of Gender”: 217.
57 Institutes V, xii. Institutes of Oratory, 309.
58 Gordon, Monteverdi’s Unruly Women, 6.
59 Ibid, 42.
For all of these reasons, those listeners who were educated in the art of Classical oratory would have perceived these expressions of humanist philosophy regarding the primacy of moral instruction, along with the importance and the limitation of an orator’s ability to move and delight the listener. By the same token, certain aspects of these messages would have been hidden from those who did not participate in the type of study and discourse undertaken by groups like the Invaghiti. In the following chapter, I will consider another example of such "secret" knowledge, namely Striggio’s use of allegorical messages in Orfeo, presented within a symmetrical structure that like the examples of oratory given above, is modeled after exemplars from the Ancients, as interpreted by his humanist contemporaries.
Chapter 1: Figures and examples

Example 1.1a: Letter from Monteverdi to Strigio; March 13, 1620 (trans. Stevens)

My Most Illustrious Lord and Most Respected Master,

[1] I am writing to answer the second paragraph of Your Lordship’s letter, about which I took time to reply until the present post. In the first place, Your Lordship, I must say that the singular honor which His Highness has accorded to my person, in doing me this particular favor of offering me employment once again, has been so heart-warming and of such kindness that I confess myself lacking in words to give expression to so remarkable a favor—inasmuch as the years of my youth spent in that Most Serene service have in such wise planted in my heart a memory of gratitude and goodwill and reverence towards that Most Serene House—so that as long as there is life in me I shall pray to God, and desire for it the greatest happiness that a servant bowed down and indebted to it can wish and long for.

[1a] And certainly if I had no other concern but for myself alone, Your Lordship may be sure that I would be compelled to fly if I could, not just run, to His Highness’s commands without any other thought or expectation. But what with this Most Serene Republic, and the fact that my sons oblige me to entertain second thoughts, perhaps you will allow me to run on a little about these two points, as I still believe myself to be aided by Your Lordship’s kindness in this matter likewise, and know of what great worth it is in regard to prudence and brotherly love.
I shall therefore submit for Your Lordship’s consideration the fact that this Most Serene Republic has never before given to any of my predecessors—whether it were Adriano or Cipriano, or Zarlino, or anyone else—but 200 ducats in salary, whereas to me they give 400; a favor that ought not to be so lightly set aside by me without some consideration, since (Most Illustrious Lord) this Most Serene Signory does not make an innovation without very careful thought.

Wherefore—I repeat—this particular favor ought to command my utmost respect. Nor, having done this for me, have they ever regretted it: on the contrary they have honored me, and honor me continually in such manner, that no singer is accepted into the choir until they ask the opinion of the Director of Music; nor do they want any report about the affairs of singers other than that of the Director of Music; nor do they take on organists or an assistant director unless they have the opinion and the report of that same Director of Music; nor is there any gentleman who does not esteem and honor me, and when I am about to perform either chamber or church music, I swear to Your Lordship that the entire city comes running.

Next, the duties are very light since the whole choir is liable to discipline except the Director of Music— in fact, it is in his hands, having a singer censured or excused and giving leave or not; and if he does not go into chapel nobody says anything. Moreover, his allowance is assured until his death: neither the death of a procurator nor that of a doge interferes with it, and by always serving faithfully and with reverence he has greater expectations, not the opposite; and as regards his salary money, if he does not go at the appointed time to pick it up, it is brought round to his house. And this is the first particular, as regards basic income; then there is outside St. Mark’s of about 200 ducats a year (invited
as I am again and again by the wardens of the guilds) because whoever can engage the
director to look after their music—not to mention the payment of 30 ducats, and even 40,
and up to 50 for two vespers and a mass—does not fail to take him on, and they also thank
him afterwards with well-chosen words.

[2a] Now let Your Lordship weigh in the balance of your very refined judgment that
amount which you have offered me in His Highness’s name, and see whether—on good and
solid grounds—I could make the change or not; and please consider in the first place, Your
Lordship, what harm it would do to my reputation with these Most Illustrious Gentlemen
and the Doge himself if I were to agree that these present moneys that I have for life should
change into those of the Mantuan treasury, which dry up on the death of a duke or at his
slightest ill humor—besides abandoning 450 [scudi] of Mantua (which I am getting from
the treasury here in Venice) to come and pick up 300, as Signor Sante had—what would
these gentlemen not say about me, and with reason?

It is true that you are adding on as well, on behalf of His Highness, 150 scudi from lands
that will be my freehold. But to this I reply that the Duke does not have to give me what is
mine: there will not be 150 but rather 50, since His Highness already owes me the 100;
wherefore what I have already acquired during an earlier period of my life with sweat and
endless toil should not be taken into account. So, there would be in all but 350, and here I
find myself with 450, and 200 more from extra work.

[3] And so, Your Lordship may therefore see that the world would—without fail—have
a great deal to say against me; and without mentioning others, what would Adriana not say,
or a brother of hers, or Campagnolo, or Don Bassano, who up till now have been very much
more recognized and rewarded! And what embarrassment would I not suffer because of
them, seeing them to have been rewarded more than me! What was offered me by His Highness, through Signor Campagnolo, was staying at the house of the said Signor Campagnolo—which was 300 scudi income from lands, 200 of which would have been understood as mine until my death, and 100 as payment from my property rent or donation.

But because I said that I did not wish to have anything to do with the treasury he offered me a further 200 as a pension, which amounts in all the about 600 Mantuan ducats, and now His Highness would like me to settle for less by far, along with the business of going to Signor Treasurer’s office every day to beg him to give me what is mine.

God forbid! I have never in my life suffered greater affliction of mind than when I had to go and ask for my pay, almost for the love of God, from Signor Treasurer. I would sooner be content to go begging than return to such indignity. (I beg Your Lordship to forgive me if I speak freely; and on account of my friendship—as I am a true-hearted servant—to be pleased this once to listen to me with the ear of your infinite kindness, and not with that of your singular merits.) When the Most Excellent Lord Procurator Landi—together with the other Most Excellent Lords—once again increased my salary by 100 ducats, this gentleman said these precise words: ‘Most Excellent Lords and Colleagues: whoever wishes a servant to be honored must also with him honorably.’

So if the Duke has a mind that I should live honorably it is right and proper that he treat me in such a manner, but if not I beg him not to trouble me, since I live honorably as Your Lordship can ascertain. I say nothing about the point concerning my sons because I am speaking to Your Lordship, who is also the father of a family; you know very well what
consideration a father needs, who desires (and who ought by the laws of nature to desire) honor for himself and for the family he leaves behind him.

[4] My conclusion, Most Illustrious Sir, is this: that in regard to Claudio, he already submits himself completely to the will and command of His Highness; in regard, however, to his having considered the aforementioned petition, he cannot—with the honor he has—change employment unless he changes for the better, so that he could take leave of these Most Excellent Lords to his genuine satisfaction (having been so honored and favored by these Lords) through not being laughed at even by those who have earned much through little merit, and not censured either by society or by his sons.

Indeed, His Highness—now that the Lord Bishop of Mantua has passed to a better life—would easily be able to give satisfaction with stipends and with a little more land, without delivering up Monteverdi to the vexations of the treasury, and to its uncertainty. In short, 400 Mantuan scudi as salary, and 300 from lands would mean little to His Highness, but to Claudio it would mean true and undisputed quiet. But is this perhaps asking the impossible? In a word, he asks for even less than Adriana used to get, and perhaps Settimia; but he asks only for what he gets now.

I see no other disagreement but that bit of property, since it is really my duty to leave a little something to my sons, and if I leave something given by the Most Serene House of Gonzaga it will also be to the everlasting honor of that house, for having helped a servant of so many years’ standing; nor indeed was he disdained by rulers. But if this were to seem too much to His Highness, let him do me the honor of assigning to me my little bit of land, as I shall be content with the capital since the 400 ducats I have here are like a pension. And His Highness will have paid his servant well and truly, for if he will be pleased to
command me he will see that in order to serve him, that servant will get out of bed in the middle of the night to render greater obedience.

Forgive me, Your Lordship, if I have gone on for too long. There remains nothing for me to do at present other than to thank Your Lordship from the bottom of my heart for the singular favor done to me in having presented my madrigals to Her Highness, and I am sure that through the most honorable medium of Your Lordship they will have been much more acceptable and welcome. May God assist me, where I cannot, in making Your Lordship's most honorable person happy, to whom with all the affection of my heart I bow and kiss hands.
**Example 1.1b: Exordium from Monteverdi’s letter to Strigio**

Vengo a rispondere al capo secondo de la lettera di V[ostro] S[erene] III[ustrissi]ma sopra al quale pigliai tempo di risposta sino al presente ordinario; (1) Dico dunque a V.S. Ill.ma per prima cosa che l’onore singolare che ha fatto S[ua] A[ltitudine] Serenissima alla persona mia, in farmi questa singolar gratia di offerirmi di bel novo il servitio suo, mi è stato così grato al animo et di così fatto favore che mi confesso non haver lingua che possa esprimere così segnalata gratia; (2) essendo che gli anni miei spesi di mia gioventù a quel Ser[enissi]mo servitio, hannomi cosi fattamente radicato nel cuore, una memoria di obbligo (3) et di benevolenza, et di riverenza verso quella Ser.ma Casa, che sino che haverò vita pregherò Dio per quella, et li bramerò quella maggior felicità che servitore a quella inchinato et obligato possa augurare et bramarle; et certamente che se io non havessi altro riguardo che a me medesimo solo, s’assicuri V.S. Ill.ma che sarei sforzato a volare s’io potessi non che a correre alli comandi di S.A.S. senza altro pensamento nè altra pretensione. Ma havendo et questa Seren.ma Republica sopra a questi duoi capi mi concederà ch’io possa far un di V.S. Ill.ma sopra a ciò sapendo quanto nella prudenza ella molto vaglia et nella carità fraterna.
Example 1.2a: Opening line of "Possente spirto"

"Powerful spirit, and formidable God"

Example 1.2b: Opening line of the Prologue

"Illustrious heroes, gentlemen of royal blood"

Example 1.3: Melisma on the word, "vain" ("Possente spirto")

"In vain hardens itself"
Example 1.4a: Prologue, symmetrical verbal references

Dal mio permesso amato a voi ne vegno,
icliti roi, sangue gentil di regi,
di cui narra la fama eccelsi pregi,
né giunge al ver perch'è tropp'alto il segno.

Io la Musica son ch'a dolci accenti
so far tranquillo ogni turbato core,
ed hor di nobil ira, ed hor d’amore
posso infiammar le più gelate menti.

Io su cetera d’or cantando soglio
mortal orecchio lusingar talhora,
e in guisa tal de l’armonia sonora
de la lira del ciel più l’alme invoglio.

Quinci a dirvi d’Orfeo desio mi sprona,
d’Orfeo che trasse al suo cantar le fere,
e servo fe’ l’inferno a sue preghiere,
gloria immortal di Pindo e d’Elicona.

Hor mentre i canti alterno hor lieti, hor mesti,
non si mova augellin fra queste piante,
né s’oda in queste rive onda sonante,
ed ogni auretta in suo camin s’arresti.
Example 1.4b: "Possente spirito," symmetrical verbal references

Possente spirito e formidabil Nume,

senza cui far passaggio a l’altra riva

alma da corpo sciolta in van presume,

non viv’io no, che poi di vita è priva

mia cara sposa, il cor non è più meco,

e senza cor com’esser può ch’io

viva?

A lei volt’ho il cammin per l’aer cieco,

a l’inferno non già, ch’ovunque stassi

tanta bellezza il paradiso ha seco.

Orfeo son io, che d’Euridice i passi

seguo per queste tenebrose arene,

ove già mai per uom mortal non vassi.

O de le luci mie luci serene,

s’un vostro sguardo può tornarmi in vita,

ahi, chi niega il conforto a le mie pene?

Sol tu, nobile Dio, puoi darmi aita,

né temer dèi che sopra un’aurea ciera

sol di corde soavi armo le dita

contra cui rigida alma in van s’impetra.
Examples 1.5a-b: Melodic climaxes of the confirmatio and confutatio from the Prologue

1.5a

Strophe 3 (confirmatio)

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\[ \text{de la li-ra del ciel piú l'al-mein-vo-glio.} \]
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1.5b

Strophe 4 (confutatio)

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\[ \text{glo-riaim-mor-tal di Pin-do e d'E-li-co-na.} \]
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Example 1.6: Orpheus’s musical enjambment from the end of the narratio to the opening of the confutatio

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[Narratio]  [Confutatio]
\[ \text{(mor)tal non-vas-si. O-de le lu-ci mie} \]
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Example 1.7a: *Orpheus’s self-deictic statement*

"I am Orpheus"

Example 1.7b: *La Musica’s self-deictic statement*

"I am Music"
Example 1.8: Pluto's oration from Il ballo delle Ingrate (trans. Stanley Appelbaum)

[Exordium]

Dal tenebroso orror
At the shadowy horror

del mio gran regno
of my great kingdom

fugga, Donna, il timor
Madame, let fear flee

dal molle seno.
from your soft breast.

Arso di nova fiamma al ciel sereno
I do not come to the clear sky

donna o donzella per rapir non vegno.
ablaze with new passion, to abduct a lady or maiden

E quando pur da vostri rai nel petto
And even though, smitten by your eyes, my heart

languisce immortalmente il cor ferito,
languishes eternally in my breast

non fora disturbare Plutone ardito
Pluto would not be bold enough to disturb

di cotanta regina il lieto aspetto:
the happy looks of such a great queen:

donna al cui nobil crin non bassi fregi
a lady, for whose noble hair only the eternal lights

sol pon del cielo ordir gli eterni lumi,
of heaven can compose worthy ornaments,

di cui l'alma virtù, gli aurei costumi
whose kindly virtue and golden ways

farsi speglio devrían monarchi e regi.
monarchs and kings should adopt as their mirror.

[Ritornello]

[Narratio]

Sceso pur dianzi Amor nel regno oscuro
A while ago, Love, descending to the dark kingdom

preghi mi fè, ch'io vi scorgessi avanti
requested me to lead before you
queste infelici ch'in perpetui pianti
dolgonsi invan, che non ben sagge furo.

[Ritornello]

[Confirmatio]
Antro è là giù di luce e d'aer privo
ove turbido fumo ogni hor s'aggira.
Ivi del folle ardir tardi sospira
alma ch’ingrata hebbe ogni amante a
schivo.
Indi le traggo, e ve l’addito e mostro
pallido il volto e lagrinoso il ciglio
perché cangiando homai voglie e
consiglio
non piangeste ancor voi nel negro
chiostro.

[Ritornello]

[Confutatio]
Vaglia timor di sempiterni affanni
se forza in voi non han sospiri e prieghi.
Ma qual cieca ragion vol che si neghi

these unhappy women, who in perpetual laments,
grieve in vain, for they were far from wise.

There is a cave down there lacking light and air,
where turbid smoke constantly swirls.
There the soul that ungratefully shunned every lover
sights too late over its foolish recklessness
From there I draw them forth and point out and show them to you
their faces pale and their eyes tearful,
so that, changing your desires and counsel,
you too may not weep in the black cloister.

Let the fear of eternal sufferings avail
if sighs and prayers have no effect on you.
But what mental blindness causes you to refuse
quel che mal grado alfin vi tolgon gli anni?
that which against your will the years finally take from you?

[Peroratio]
Frutto non è dal riserbarsi al fine;
It is no fruit to be saved for the end;
trovi fede al mio dir mortal beltate.
let mortal beauty believe in what I say.
Ma qui star più non lice Anime Ingrate,
But you may no longer stay here, ungrateful souls,
tornate a lagrimar nel regno inferno.
go back and weep in the infernal kingdom.
Tornate al negro chiostro,
Return to the black cloister,
anime sventurate,
luckless souls,
tornate ove vi sfoza il fallir vostro.
return where your crime compels you.
Example 1.9a: Opening line of Pluto’s oration

Dal te-ne-bro-soor-ror del mio gran Re-gno

"From dark horror, from my great realm."

Example 1.9b: Musical agitation in the confirmatio of Pluto’s oration

per-chè can-gian-doh-o-mai vo-gliee con-si-glio

"So that, changing your desires and counsel."
**Example 1.10: Melanto's oration from Il ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria (trans. David G. Evans)**

**[Exordium]**

Cara amata Regina!  
Dear, beloved queen!  
Avveduta e prudente  
You are wise and prudent  
per tuo sol danno sei:  
only to your own disadvantage;  
men saggia io ti vorrei.  
I would see you less wise.

**[Confutatio]**

A che sprezzì gli ardori  
Why do you disdain the fire  
dei viventi amatori  
of living lovers  
per attendere conforti  
in order to expect comfort  
dal cenere de' morti?  
from the ashes of the dead?  
Non fa torto chi gode a chi è sepolto.  
Whoever enjoys does no wrong to him who is buried.

L'ossa del tuo marito  
The bones of your husband  
estinto, incenerito,  
who is dead, turned to ashes,  
del tuo dolor non san poco né molto;  
know neither little nor much of your grief;  
e chi attende pietà da un morto è stolto.  
and whoever expects pity from a dead man is absurd.

**[Narratio]**

La fede e la costanza  
Faith and constancy  
son preclare virtù;  
are sublime virtues;  
le stima amante vivo e non l'apprezza,  
a living lover esteems them
perché de’ sensi privo,  
an huom che fu.  
and, deprived of his senses,  
a man that has been does not appreciate them.
D’una memoria grata  
s’appagano i defunti,  
By a grateful memory  
the dead are honored,
stanno i vivi coi vivi  
but the living remain
in un congiunti.  
united with the living.

[Confirmatio]

Un bel viso fa guerra,  
A face marked by inner struggle,
il guerriero costume al morto spiace,  
disesasures the dead,
chè non cercan gli estinti altro che pace.  
for those who have expired seek only peace.

Langue sotto i rigori  
Under the rigors  
de’ tuoi sciapiti amori  
of your renunciation
la più fiorita età,  
the time of your greatest bloom
la più fiorita età,  
languishes;
ma vedova beltà  
your beauty
di te si duole,  
suffers in widowhood,
chè dentro ai lunghi pianti  
for through continual weeping
mostri sempre in acquario un sì bel sole.  
you show a lovely sun behind a veil of water.
[Peroratio]

Ama dunque, chè d'amore
Love anew, for love's
dolce amica è la beltà.
sweet companion is beauty.
Dal piacere il tuo dolore
The delights of love
saettato cadetà.
will dispel your grief.

Example 1.11a: Balanced style of exordium from Melanto's oration

"Dear beloved queen / you are wise and prudent / only to your own disadvantage / I would see you less wise."

Example 1.11b: Musical agitation of confutatio from Melanto's oration

"Whoever enjoys the fire of living lovers [does no wrong to him who is dead]."
Example 1.11c: Musical balance at the return of Melanto's narratio

[Narratio]

La fe - de e la co-stan - za

"Faithfulness and constancy."

Example 1.11d: Use of dance meter at the opening of Melanto's confirmatio

Melanto

Un bel vi - so, un bel vi - so, un bel vi - so fa guer - ra

"A beautiful face makes war."
Chapter 2: Conceptualizations of symmetry, "architecturalism," and Striglio's literary models

Introduction

As noted in the Introduction, the topic of symmetry in Orfeo has been mentioned in the majority of studies on this work, most often addressing the localized symmetrical shapes within the prologue and first act, along with the symmetrical placement of corresponding events within the plot (such as Eurydice's first and final deaths in the second and fourth acts, respectively). Some authors have also drawn a correlation between the balance and orderliness of these symmetrical shapes and a state of "rightness" within the dramaturgical reality, such as the undisturbed nuptial bliss of the first act (and vice-versa for the use of asymmetry and non-symmetry to represent "wrongness," such as the destruction of the first act's "rightness" in Act II). Others have further suggested that this connection between symmetry and rightness is based in popular teachings on the Neoplatonic spectrum of beauty, which ranges from the fleeting nature of physical beauty to the eternity of moral and spiritual beauty.

However, musicologists have yet to consider the possible impact of specific symmetrical models available to Striglio and the Invaghiti (and Monteverdi, for that matter), and how these symmetrical structures may have expressed the group's academic
and moral philosophy. My examination of this question begins with a consideration of the concept of symmetry as it is presented in Ancient writings, contemporary lexical resources, and theoretical resources composed by or likely known to the Invaghiti. Following this is a survey of works from various artistic media that feature symmetrical design, including works that were likely known to the Invaghiti and Monteverdi. Finally, I consider specific literary works that were created or admired by the academy members that feature symmetrical models analogous to those found in Striggio's libretto for Orfeo.

I do not offer this survey of symmetrical artwork and literature to suggest that Striggio or Monteverdi needed such models to create these forms. After all, one hardly needs to argue the physical or conceptual presence of symmetry in any historical period, since it is a naturally occurring phenomenon, and one that appears to be present to some degree in the artisanship of nearly all historical eras (whether through conscious or unconscious design). The purpose of the following survey, rather, is to demonstrate how the symmetrical structures found in Orfeo align with one of the most pervasive artistic trends of the Renaissance, namely the representation of physical beauty through a particular conceptualization of symmetrical design that is based principally on the teachings of the Greek architect Vitruvius—or "architecturalism."

*Conceptualizations of symmetry and "architecturalism"

It may seem strange that the principles of architecturalism would be applied to non-visual arts such as music and literature, since it is much more easily detectible in its visual manifestation. This cross-disciplinary approach, however, pervaded the arts of the period,
based in the Roman poet Horatio’s maxim, "as in painting, so in poetry [Ut pictura poesis]." The maxim is discussed by academy member Benedetto Varchi in a lesson on painting and sculpture: after quoting the passage of Horace’s work in which the maxim is found, Varchi states, "the poem is called art, which is similar to painting, because both of them imitate nature." Several popular authors from the period discuss the application of this interdisciplinary maxim in regard to symmetry, including the art critic Gian Paolo Lomazzo, who wrote in 1584 that the elements of proportion and correspondence—the two key features of architectural symmetry—are "the principal ornaments, not only in painting, but in all the arts."

In fact, the use of symmetrical construction in the non-visual arts was so successful that visual artists occasionally expressed envy for a poet’s ability to create correspondences within narrative works, in comparison with the visual artist’s limitation to visual correspondences. Perhaps for this reason, the painter Ludovico Dolce suggested in 1577 that the visual artist could imitate narrative works by presenting successive episodes in a single painting, a technique that would remain popular through the time of Orfeo’s composition. One of the most expansive examples from this genre is found in Paolo Finoglio’s La Gerusalemme liberata (Naples, c. 1640)—named for Torquato Tasso’s epic—which depicts ten separate episodes from the poet’s expansive narrative.

1 LeCoat, Rhetoric of the Arts, 9.

2 "Perche la poesia si chiama arte, e che è simile alla pittura, perche amendue imitano la natura." Benedetto Varchi, "Della pittura," 226-227. Alessandro Guarini also discusses this maxim in his "Lezione" for the Invaghi, 29-30.

3 LeCoat, Rhetoric of the Arts, 61.

4 Ibid, 43.
This shared approach also speaks to the cross-disciplinary practices of the humanist scholar. An excellent example of the well-rounded academic, and one who features prominently my analysis owing to his role in the practice of applying Vitruvius's teaching on symmetrical design to other artistic media, is Leon Battista Alberti (1404-1472). Alberti's extensive education included four years study of the Classics, a law degree from the University of Bologna, and membership in the Mantuan Accademia di San Pietro. As a result of his extensive education, he became the quintessential model of the Renaissance humanist scholar, contributing to the study of the visual arts, architecture, poetry, linguistics, philosophy, and theology.

Among his most well known accomplishments is the first complete translation (and pursuant championing) of Vitruvius's treatise, *On Architecture.*⁵ Throughout his career, Alberti explicitly incorporated Vitruvius's architectural principles into treatises on various artistic media, a practice that would be imitated by scholars into the eighteenth century. This later trend was supported by the expectation that later Renaissance humanists would be familiar with the works of Vitruvius and Alberti in particular—a view expressed by Girolamo Mei in a letter to Vincenzo Galilei of May 8, 1572—which almost certainly contributed to the presence (and at times, prominence) of symmetrical design in various artistic media throughout the period.⁶

Despite the prevalence of symmetry in Italian Renaissance art, the word itself was used very infrequently outside of the visual arts for reasons that are not entirely clear. In

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⁵ Alberti would later compose his own treatise on the subject, organizing the work into the same number of volumes as Vitruvius.

order to address this apparent disparity between theory and practice, and to clarify the use of the term in this study, I will briefly consider its conception and use in both Antiquity and the early modern period. The Greek word, “συμμετρία” (summetria), is believed to be a combination of two lexical components, “syn” and “metrios,” which in combination render the translation, “good proportion in harmony.”

Vitruvius dedicates an entire chapter of his aforementioned treatise to the subject of symmetry, in which he refers to the form as a fundamental characteristic of artful construction, a sentiment echoed throughout Renaissance writings on the subject of artistic composition. Vitruvius also expresses the correlation between symmetry and beauty, stating, “the beauty of proportion... [is] found when the members of a work all correspond symmetrically.” Incidentally, Vitruvius justifies his advocacy of symmetry by stating, “the ancients had a good reason for their rule,” indicating that even in Ancient Greece, the preference for symmetrical artisanship was a long-held convention.

Given Alberti’s role in the dissemination of Vitruvius’s work throughout Europe, it is not surprising to discover that he was the first European to directly translate the Greek word, “summetria,” into a modern European language. The term “symmetry” [simmetria]  


8 The impact of Classical theories on symmetry on Renaissance thought is summarized in Darvas, Symmetry, 50-52.


10 Ibid, 72-73.

11 To that point in history, the word had been approximated in translation with words and phrases such as "proportion," "ratio," and "just measure," expressions that
first appears in his treatise, *On Painting*, published in Latin in 1435 and in Italian the following year. In this work, Alberti defines the term within his discussion of “what proportional means,” in which he names the two principal components of Vitruvian symmetry: “in things which are proportional to one another, all the parts correspond.” [emphasis added] Also like Vitruvius, Alberti’s discussion of human figures draws a clear connection between beauty (in particular the beauty of the female body) and the presence of symmetry.¹²

Nearer to the time of Orfeo’s composition, we find two definitions of these closely related concepts (i.e., symmetry, proportion, and beauty) that demonstrate the essentially unchanged conception of these terms over a century and a half later. The first example is found in John Florio’s Italian-to-English dictionary of 1598, which according to the Italian diplomat, represents common parlance in Italy at the time. In this work, the word “symmetry” [*simmetria*] is defined as the “due proportion of each part to [the] other, in

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¹² “Etenim quae inter se proportionalia sunt, in his omnes partes respondent... Quod si simulacro aliquo caput amplissimum, pectus pusillum, manus perampla, pes tumens, corpus turgidum adsit naec sane compositio erit aspectu deformis.” Leon Battista Alberti, *On Painting and On Sculpture: The Latin Texts of De Pictura and De Statua*, ed. Cecil Grayson (London: Phaidon Press, 1972), 50-51. On the use of symmetrical proportion for the creation of aesthetic beauty when drawing human figures, see pp. 73-75. The geometrical principles of Euclidian geometry are frequently present within discussions of Vitruvius from the Renaissance, though they are not found within any of the Invaghiti’s writings that I have examined (for which reason I will not be discussing Euclid’s theories in this study). For a survey on the impact of Euclid’s theories on Renaissance scholarship, see Morris Kline, *Mathematical Thought from Ancient to Modern Times* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972).
reflect[ion] of the whole."\textsuperscript{13} The second lexical resource is the \textit{Vocabolario} (1612) of the Florentine Accademia della Crusca, a prominent academy who—like the Invaghiti—counted the subject of poetry as their primary areas of study. The word "symmetry" does not appear in this source, likely because (as noted above) the term was not commonly used outside the discussion of the visual arts. The word "proportion" [\textit{proporzione}] does appear, however, and is defined as "a correspondence of parts, the one with all others, or of the parts between themselves." The definition given for "beauty" [\textit{bellezza}] incorporates proportion by name, and finds a clear affinity with Alberti and Vitruvius's definitions: 

"[beauty is] the corresponding proportion of parts."\textsuperscript{14} Varchi also articulates this conception of beauty within his discussion of Neoplatonic philosophy, stating, "beauty is found in the due proportion and correspondence of all the members among themselves."\textsuperscript{15}

Another key feature of this structural archetype is the primary significance of the composition's center, around which the key figures or events pivot, and through which the artist articulates (or allegorically represents) the work's principal instructive message.

\textsuperscript{13} John Florio, \textit{A Worlde of Words}, FACS, ed. name not given (Hildesheim, Germany: Georg Olms Verlag, 1972), 372. Florio's definition of "bellezza" (beauty) is more literal, ("beauty, faireness, comeliness"), and therefore does not address its conceptual association with symmetry.

\textsuperscript{14} "Proporzione: convenienza della parti l'una con l'altra al tutto, o delle parti tra di loro." "Bellezza: conveniente proporzion delle parti." Lorenzo Molossi, \textit{Vocabolario degli Accademici della Crusca}, FACS, ed. Giovanni Nencioni (Florence: Le Lettere, 1987), 658, 317. Another reason that the word, "symmetry," does not appear in this collection is that the lexical entries are taken exclusively from the works of Dante, Boccaccio, and Petrarch—a choice that served the group's aim of legitimizing the Tuscan dialect as appropriate for literary composition and scholarly discussion—three poets whose careers preceded the first direct translation of the word into Italian in 1425. In fact, Petrarch once noted that the Greek word, "summetria," had no Latin equivalent. Darvas, \textit{Symmetry}, 50.

\textsuperscript{15} "La bellezza non è altro che la debita proporzione, e corrispondenza di tutte le membra tra loro." Varchi, "Della bellezza," 561.
Lomazzo speaks to this practice, stating that it is the center of an artistic composition that constitutes the main point of attraction, for which reason, it should contain all of the work's principal figures or actions. As Mary Douglas notes in her study on symmetrical construction in the literary arts (or "ring composition," as she refers to it), "in a ring composition the meaning is located in the middle," and for this reason, "a reader who reads a ring as if it were a straight linear composition will miss the meaning." The importance of these central themes or events are reinforced through correspondences to elements from the beginning and end of the composition—along with events that correspond to one another, placed at corresponding points within the composition (again, like Eurydice's first and final deaths in Orfeo)—contributing to the composition's overall unity.

Like the Invaghiti, most Renaissance artists held the impartation of moral instruction as their highest goal, communicated through the allegorical messages represented in these key events. This philosophy was commonly expressed through the

16 LeCoat, Rhetoric in the arts, 42.

17 Mary Douglas, Thinking in Circles, x.

18 In some cases, these events fall just before or after a key proportional marker (such as the center of a work, chapter, or act), raising the question of whether "imperfect" symmetrical ratios cast doubt onto the validity of the form itself. Devorin Kempf expresses this correlation between conceptual abstraction and the perfection of the symmetrical form: "the main reason for small ...violations of symmetry is the fact that the mathematical and musical logic are not necessarily compatible." "What is Symmetry in Music?" International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music 27, 2 (December 1996): 155. In other words, the artist must decide whether to prioritize the perfection of the abstract form or the necessity of practical function in certain cases. During the Renaissance period, artists apparently felt free to choose practicality over abstract perfection when needed, a choice that Vitruvius considers appropriate "so as not to interfere with utility." On Architecture, 150. It is not until in the twentieth century, as some artists began to base their creative method on strict adherence to abstract conceptualizations (for example, the Serialists), that we a slight imperfection within a symmetrical form may be considered an invalidation of the form itself.
Ciceronian maxim discussed in Chapter 1, "instruction is the first goal, followed by the movement of the mind, and the delight of the senses" [docere, movere, delectare]. Although there was not a universal consensus among artists of the period on this issue, the Invaghiti's motto (again, "Nothing is more attractive, more beautiful than virtue") offers a clear declaration of their view on the issue, numerous illustrations of which are found throughout the members' writings (examples are given in the Introduction).

In keeping with this goal—and in some cases against modern theatrical sensibilities—the events that serve as key points within such symmetrical structures in narrative and dramatic poetry are not necessarily found within the delights [delectare] of grand dramatic gestures, or even the moving [movere] sequences of romantic intrigue, but rather among the hidden moral instruction [docere] of allegory. As stated by Tasso in his "Allegory on the poem" on the Gerusalemme liberata, this subtle device is used "to denote [the beliefs, and moral habits] rather obscurely with what we might call mysterious signs, so that only those wise to the nature of things can understand them fully."19

This study of "mysterious signs" also speaks to the concept of a printed work (such as the libretto or score of Orfeo) as an artifact for private study, in addition to its use in the performance forum.20 This private activity was especially appealing to men of letters (such as the members of the Invaghiti), particularly in the study of literary works, which featured

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conceits tucked away in the obscurity of textual and thematic allusions, correspondences, and of course, the creation of complex structures. Aristotle speaks to this issue, suggesting that the artist should not create symmetrical forms in which the correspondences are too obvious, so "your hearers will see through you less easily." 21 Guazzo describes both the secret and elitist nature of this practice in La ghirlanda:

The ancients, and the good poets had to ...hide their conceits ...[so that] presumptuous plebeians [could not] approach the high and noble mysteries of poetry, and therefore not would have to soil the pages ...According to the judgment of Horatio, [this understanding is available only to] "a man of genius, and of high and divine mind," and it is on this point that the great Plato states that poetry is filled with mysteries not understood by all, and Dante confirms this, declaring, "O you who have sound intellects / Target the doctrine that conceals itself / Under the veil of these verses!" 22

This inclination to moral utility in art speaks to another popular correlation with symmetry, namely the projection of the form's harmonious qualities as a symbol of civil order created by the ruling class as a reflection of divine order. 23 This correlation between civic order and the beauty of Vitruvian symmetry is expressed by Castiglione metaphorically (and therefore in more generalized language), who advises that the

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21 Rhetoric III, xii; Rhetoric and Poetics, 198.

22 "Gli antichi, & buoni poeti ebbero ...nascondere ...i loro concetti ...prosuntuosa plebe d'accostarsi à gli alti, & nobili misterij della poesia; & però non devrebbero imbrattar le carte ...secondo la sentenza d'Horatio, 'Huom d'ingegno, & di mente alta e divina.' Et di qui è che'l gran Platone dice, che la poesia è ripiena d'enigmi non intesi da tutti; & in confermatione di questo disse Dante: 'O voi c'havete gl'intelletti sani / Mirate la dottrina, che s'asconde / Sotto il velame de li versi strani.' La ghirlanda, 291.

23 The "aestheticization of the political sphere," and the "moral supremacy of nobility," expressed through the allegory of Orpheus as a projection of the Mantuan prince Francesco Gonzaga, is discussed in Calcagno, From Madrigal to Opera, 16-25. Tim Carter also addresses this topic, Monteverdi's Musical Theatre, 21.
Courtier should "take care not only that his separate parts and qualities be excellent, but that the tenor of his life be such that the whole may correspond to these parts." Castiglione makes a similar connection between morality and the beauty of architecture for the members of the ruling class, stating, "the prince must not only be good but also make others good, like the square used by architects, which not only is straight itself, but also makes straight and true all things to which it is applied." Tasso offers a more subtle allusion to this principle in his description of the gardens of Armida from La Gerusalemme liberata (XVI.1) by suggesting that its orderly beauty is undone through diabolical action: “The lavish outer wall was circular / and in the inmost center of the round / in its close bosom, grew a garden / far lovelier than the loveliest renown // Undetectable within the order was its confusion / for demons had built up galleries all around / with slant and veering paths crossed every way.”

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24 Castiglione, Courtier, 97.


26 “Tondo è il ricco edificio; e nel più grembo di lui, ch’è quasi contro al giro, un giardin v’ha ch’adorno è sovra l’uso di quanti più famosi unqua fioriro: d’intorno inosservabile e confuso ordin di loggie I demòn fabri ordiro; e, tra le oblique vie di quell fallace ravvolgimento, impenetrabil giace.” Gerusalemme liberata, XVI.1. This translation is based on Esolen’s translation, Jerusalem Delivered, 300. I have reinserted the word, “undetectable” [inosservabile] into the fifth line, however, as it speaks to the sinister nature of the demonic introduction of disorder.
Architecturalism in Renaissance art

My survey of architecturalism begins—as one would expect—in the medium of architecture. The prevalence of symmetry in both Medieval and Renaissance architecture hardly requires demonstration, and is especially pervasive among those edifices that served as a seat of political power, likely a manifestation of the aforementioned desire to project civil order through the orderliness of symmetrical design. One such building was the Santa Barbara church (finished in 1572), which served as the palatial chapel during the time of Orfeo’s composition (and therefore would have been known to both the Invaghiiti and to Monteverdi). The church features symmetrical design on many levels, found for example in the building’s façade and its interior (see Example 2.1a and 2.1b). In fact, the architect of this edifice, Giovanni Battista Bertani—whom Eugenio Cagnani refers to as one of the "noble children of this celebrated City" [i nobili figlivoli di questa celebre Città]—offers a direct connection between Vitruvius and the Mantuan court through his commentaries on the Greek architect’s famous treatise. The Gonzaga "pleasure palace," the Palazzo Te (finished in 1534), also features symmetry in both its exterior and interior designs (Example 2.2a and 2.2b), in addition to the symmetrically arranged gardens (the latter is discussed further below).

Alberti’s writings had a substantial impact on many of the great painters of the period as well. Some of the best known works that illustrate this trend are drawings such as DaVinci’s Vitruvian Man, Raphael’s School at Athens, along with the works and

27 "Lettera cronologica," 8. My thanks to Seth Coluzzi for bringing the work of Bertani to my attention.
theoretical writings of Albrecht Dürer (who was admired by academy member Scipione Gonzaga). The popularity of symmetry in painting reached its zenith in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, illustrated for example in Pietro Perugino’s *Cristo consegna delle chiavi a Pietro* [Christ Gives the Keys to St. Peter], created in Rome around 1482 (Example 2.3a). Although neither the Invaghiti nor Monteverdi likely knew this work, Perugino’s use of symmetrical architectural figures in the background, a device commonly found in Renaissance paintings that emphasize symmetry, clearly illustrates the impact of architecturalism. An example that was likely known to the Invaghiti (and possibly Monteverdi) is found in Peter Paul Rubens’s *Famiglia Gonzaga in adorazione della Trinità* [The Gonzaga Family in Adoration of the Trinity], which was created in Mantua around 1605 (Example 2.3b) and hung in the Jesuit Chiesa della Santissima Trinità, just a few hundred feet from the ducal palace. Rubens’s work resembles Perugino’s in the proportional distribution of human figures around the center of the painting, using a similar combination of complimentary postures (that is, the left-leaning figures are proportionally complemented by the right-leaning figures). Rubens’s painting also features symmetrical architectural figures in the background—though the buildings are somewhat obscured by the human figures—possibly symbolizing the moral and civil order created by the Gonzagas’ divinely ordained power.

The prominence of symmetry is found in another illustrative genre that was known to the Invaghiti and to Monteverdi, namely frontispiece design. The title page of each of the

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musical works mentioned by name in the present study, in fact, features a symmetrical illustration. Certain of these examples, such as Peri’s Euridice (Example 2.4a), bear the family crest of the publication’s noble dedicatee, many of which were designed well before the Renaissance, and therefore do not represent this trend toward architecturalism. Other examples, however, including Orfeo’s cover (Example 2.4b), were most likely designed by artists working for the publishing houses, and feature the proportion and correspondences of the architectural style. The connection between these illustrations and the principles of Classical architecture is expressed most clearly by Fabritio Caroso in his treatise on dance from 1581, in which he states regarding the frontispiece that he designed for the publication (Example 2.4c): "I confess that Architecture is most exact, because I want you to know that I imitated it."29

Alberti directly applies the principles of architecture to the practice of gardening, an activity that was especially popular in Italy during the period, in particular on the grounds of noble palaces and villas. In fact, Giulio Cesare Gonzaga is reputed to have frequently engaged in this pastime, a reputation that is manifested in the discussions of his interlocutor in Tasso’s first dialectic on noble recreation.30 As early as the 1520s, many gardens on the estates of the Italian nobility featured mirrored symmetrical design, including those attached to the ducal palaces of Florence and Ferrara (both cities to which several members of the Invaghi, including Striggio, made frequent trips, and which Monteverdi may have visited in the company of his patron); period drawings of one such garden is given here as Example 2.5. Thanks to an illustration made in 1620 by a surveyor


30 Franchini, "Itinerarium Mantuæ," 188.
for an invading army, we know that the gardens of the Palazzo Te were arranged in
mirrored symmetrical plots, though information on the arrangement of individual plants is
not available.31

Alberti further notes the shared inclination to symmetrical design between the arts of
gardening and dance, the latter a regular feature of theatrical productions during the
Renaissance and Baroque periods, including Orfeo.32 As noted by Jennifer Nevile, these
symmetrical dances also functioned as an expression of authority and power, which as
suggested above, included the projection of noble virtue through the use of symmetry’s
orderly design.33 One such example is found in one of the best-known predecessors to the
opera genre, the Florentine entertainments of 1589, in which Alessandro Striggio
participated. Period illustrations of this event show the use of symmetrical stage
formations for each of the intermedios, characterized by the symmetrical distribution of
bodies and postures noted in the paintings discussed above. Further, the designs from the
Florentine entertainments closely imitated illustrations from a popular Neoplatonic
textbook, Cartari’s Imagini of 1556, offering a connection between these uses of symmetry
and the Neoplatonic conception of corporeal beauty.34

The use of symmetrical stage formations is discussed in a treatise on the staging of
opera from around 1630 entitled Il Corago [The Stage Director], which may have been

31 Kurt Forster & Richard Tuttle, “The Palazzo del Te,” Journal of the Society of
Architectural Historians 30, 4 (December 1971): 271. Special thanks to Jennifer Nevile for
bringing this information on the Gonzaga gardens to my attention.

32 Nevile, "Garden": 811.

33 Ibid: 822.

34 Donington, Opera and Its Symbols, 25.
written by the son of Ottavio Rinuccini. This work offers a diagram of suggested choral formations (Example 2.6), each of which features mirror symmetry (the comprehension of which was aided by the practice of "[making] a brief pause" whenever "the chorus attains the formation of any such figure"). Since this treatise was published approximately twenty years after the first production of Orfeo, we cannot be certain that these illustrations necessarily reflect the practices employed in the production of the earliest operas. The author's tendency to cite earlier examples, however, rather than to suggest new approaches to opera staging (for example, the symmetrical formations from Example 2.6 are taken from a work published in 1620), suggests that such symmetrical designs were used in the staging of the earliest operas. In fact, Orfeo's function as the first public entertainment given by Prince Francesco suggests that such symmetrical formations could have been used to project the Gonzaga's noble power, similar to the symmetrical design found in Rubens's Famiglia Gonzaga in adorazione della Trinità (Example 2.3b). Several prominent artists served in the role of the "corago," a position that, according to this treatise, required an understanding of the artistic media of architecture, painting, and dance. Among these was Leone de' Sommi, who applies the verbiage of Vitruvian symmetry to his discussion of the theatrical arts in his Four Dialogues on the Stage by comparing the five acts of a play to the proportions of the human body: "And [the acts of the play] all together are [like] a body well organized and united... all of its members are proportional

35 Savage and Sansone, "Il corago," 504. These two authors suggest Rinucinni’s authorship, though they freely admit that the point is hardly settled.

36 Ibid.

37 Nevile discusses the use of courtly spectacle and dance as a manifestation of noble power in "Dance and the Garden."
to the [whole] body."\textsuperscript{38}

Having considered the application of architecturalism to those arts that include at least some visual component, let us now consider its presence in the non-visual arts of music and literature, beginning with music. Like the other non-visual arts, we find an apparent disconnect between symmetry’s explicit description in theoretical writings and its apparent use in compositional practice during the period. Several Renaissance treatises speak to the importance of “balance,” “proportion,” “measure,” and “ratio,” though the practical application of these concepts is found primarily in the construction of tuning systems, with only very generalized statements related to compositional construction. In the case of those treatises that I have found in which the word "symmetry" is used in the discussion of musical composition from before 1607, the authors all hail from other disciplines, and speak to the subject in only the most general terms, or in reference to the physical objects related to musical practice. For example, the architect Giambattista Aleotti writes extensively on manifestations of Vitruvian symmetry in the construction of musical instruments such as organ pipes in his \textit{De la musica} (1593), though he does not address the notion of symmetrical structure in musical composition.\textsuperscript{39} Gioseffo Zarlino does not use the word in \textit{Le istitutioni harmoniche}, though he does echo the Horatian maxim discussed above by stating that composers "should study the precepts of poetry ...set down by Plato, Aristotle... Horace, and others,” because the “custom” of the musician resembles “not only

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\item \textsuperscript{38} "Et che tutta insieme sia poi un corpo bene organizzato et unito ...tutte le sue membra, le quali hanno ad esser proporzionate al corpo." Sommi, \textit{Quattro Dialoghi}, 31.
\item \textsuperscript{39} A translation of Aleotti’s treatise is given in Kimberly Parke’s "Engineering music: a critical inquiry into Giambattista Aleotti’s ‘De la musica’ (1593),” (Ph.D. diss., Berkeley: University of California at Berkeley, 2006).
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that of the poets, but also of the painters."\(^{40}\) (Monteverdi owned a copy of
the work, and his brother Giulio Cesare Monteverdi, speaking on the composer's behalf, referred to the theorist as "the most excellent Zarlino," praising the treatise's "judicious rules.")\(^{41}\)

Despite the lack of explicit discussion on symmetrical construction in musical treatises of the period, modern scholars have found numerous examples of compositions that feature the proportions and correspondences of architectural symmetry. Irene Guletsky, for example, has discovered a symmetrical structure in the fifteenth-century "Barcelona" Mass, including a nearly identical number of breves in the Kyrie-Gloria and Sanctus-Agnus pairs, at 355 and 353, respectively. The modal design of the Mass's five parts match this division, with the outer "mass pairs" in D Dorian, and the Credo in G Mixolydian.\(^{42}\) Nors Josephson has found a similar design in the anonymous *Missa de Sancto Johanne Baptistae* from the early sixteenth century, created through the equal division of


breves between the Kyrie-Gloria pair, the Credo, and the Sanctus-Agnus pair, each numbering exactly 180 breves.\textsuperscript{43}

Perhaps the best-known example of architecturalism in Renaissance music is Dufay's isorhythmic motet of 1436, \textit{Nuper rosarum flores}. In keeping with the formal scheme of this genre, both the \textit{talea} and \textit{color} are stated four times, each time over a different temporal prolation, which in keeping with common practice, are related through simple ratios. As demonstrated by Craig Wright, these ratios (6:4:2:3) reflect the architectural proportions of the legendary seat of royal power from the Jewish scriptures, King Solomon's temple (I Kings 6:2-3), which in turn reflected the greatness of the edifice for whose dedication the motet was composed (the cathedral of Florence).\textsuperscript{44} These compositional ratios may not strike the reader as symmetrical at first glance, since they do not appear to be either equal or reflective (i.e., 6+4 ≠ 2+3). This structure does fit the definitions of symmetry given above, however, with its use of proportion (2:1) and its correspondence of parts, the latter created through the use of shared musical material (again, the \textit{talea} and \textit{color}). Additionally, if Dufay intended the use of precise, two-to-one

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\item \textsuperscript{43} Nors Josephson, “Formal Symmetry in the High Renaissance,” \textit{Tijdschrift van de Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis} 41, 2 (1991): 105-133. As Guletsky has noted, these proportional divisions of the Mass Ordinary would not result naturally from a syllabic setting of the text, since the number of syllables in the Credo is greater than the combined number of syllables in the four remaining texts. “14th-Century Masses”: 170.

\item \textsuperscript{44} Craig Wright, "Dufay's 'Nuper rosarum flores,' King Solomon's Temple, and the Veneration of the Virgin," \textit{Journal of the American Musicological Society} 47, 3 (Autumn 1994): pp. 395-427+429-441. Wright rejects the notion that Dufay's use of proportions is reflective of Renaissance architecturalism, instead interpreting the composer's design as an expression of Medieval numerology and scriptural exegesis. Although Wright argues persuasively that these factors play a significant role in Dufay's compositional structure, the complete exclusion of the architectural style's influence seems unlikely, given the composer's historical and even physical proximity to the enthusiasm among artists and academics created by Alberti's writings.
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temporal ratios between the *perfectus* and the *imperfectus*-based meters—as suggested in several theoretical works of the period—the time required to perform the first two *talea* would be identical to the latter two, and therefore equal in its temporal proportions (in order, the meters of the four sections are *perfectus, imperfectus, imperfectus diminutio*, and *perfectus diminutio*). Like Perugino’s painting, it is highly unlikely that either Monteverdi or any of the Invaghiti would have known any of these compositions (examples from Monteverdi’s catalogue, including *Orfeo*, will be discussed in the following chapter); nonetheless, they do illustrate the application of architectural symmetry in musical composition during the period, despite the lack of explicit mention of such compositional practice in theoretical writings of the period.

In the sixteenth century, we find another manifestation of architectural symmetry in the arrangement of individual selections within publications of musical compositions. One such example is found in Adrian Willaert’s *Musica Nova* (1559), a collection that may have been known to Monteverdi, given his admiration of the elder composer.45 This symmetry is found between the two volumes of the collection, the first of which contains motets, and the second madrigals. As Frank Carey has noted, “in each opening group of four madrigals or motets, clefs, [ambitus], mode, finals, and signatures differ from piece to piece. On comparing the two groups of four works, however, one notes that the compositions occupying the same position in each group are identical with respect to all of these features.” This is only half the story, however, as the final four selections from each volume display the same mirroring of ambitus, mode, finals, and meter signatures, with only minor

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variations of clef usage, necessitated by a greater number of voice parts in the latter
selections (Figure 2.1). Similar symmetrical arrangements are found in Monteverdi's
Fourth and Eighth Books of Madrigals, as noted by Eric Chafe and Denis Stevens,
respectively (Figure 2.2a and 2.2b).46 Massimo Ossi offers further insight on Monteverdi's
use of the architectural style in the arrangement of selections within Fourth Book: the
collection is centered on a selection ("Voi pur da me partite") whose themes of despair and
separation correspond to the opening and closing selections ("Ah dolente partita," and
"Piagn' e sospira," respectively); additionally, this central selection serves as a pivot
between the "pain and suffering" of the first half, and the lighthearted romantic
expressions of the second half, the symmetrical nature of which is further supported by
various correspondences of mode, cantus, and poetic themes.47

Striggio's literary models

Within theoretical writings on the literary arts, we find a greater number of
references to architectural construction than any other non-visual medium, despite the
absence of the word "symmetry" in nearly all of these works. One the most explicit
examples is found in Giraldi Cintio's Discourses on the Composition of Romances, Comedies,
Tragedies, and other types of Poetry, in which he suggests that, "like the architect, the writer
[must] calculate the proportions of his literary work" (incidentally, Giraldi contributed a
sonnet to the Invaghitì's 1564 Componimenti; additionally, his work was admired by Leone

46 Chafe, Monteverdi's Tonal Language, 77. Denis Stevens, "Madrigali guerrieri": 172.
47 Ossi, Divining the Oracle, 98-99.
de' Sommi). The application of this model to Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata* is described vividly by Camillo Pellegrino in his defense of the work (within this work, in fact, Pellegrino morphs the Horation maxim into the phrase, *Ut architectura poësis*): "imagine that the *Gerusalemme liberata* was a building of not too large proportions, but well conceived with the measures and proportions of architecture." The principles of symmetrical literary construction are described by the poet himself in his *Discourses on the Heroic Poem*, in which he states, “the poem that contains a great deal of variety... is wholly composed in a manner so that one [part]...corresponds to the others,” and therefore in the case of the poem that is taken in a single performance, "one can consider... how the parts are in proportion to themselves and to the whole." These statements, when combined with his

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48 Giovanni Battista Giraldi ("Cintio"), *Discorsi intorno all comporre de' Romanzi, delle Comedie e della Tragedie, e di altre maniere de Poesie* (1554). Given in LeCoat, *Rhetoric in the Arts*, 62. Giraldi's contribution to the Componimenti is found on p. 70. Sommi's admiration for Giraldi's works is discussed by Kristine Hecker, "The Concept of Theatre Production in Leone de' Sommi's *Quattro dialoghi* in the Context of its Time," from Leone de' Sommi and the Performing Arts, ed. Ahuva Belkin, 189-209 (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1997); here 190.


50 "Grande è convenevolmente quell poema in cui la memoria non si perde nè si smarrisce; ma tutto unitamente comprendendolo, può considerare come l'una cosa con l'altra sia connessa e dall'altra dependa, e come le parti fra loro e co'l tutto siano proporzionate." "Il poema che tanta varietà di materie contegna...che tutte queste cose siano di maniera composte che l'una l'altra riguardi, l'una a l'altra corrisponda, l'una da l'altra." Torquato Tasso, *Discorsi del poema eroico*, ed. Giulio Einaudi (Torino: Classici Ricciardi, 1977), 25, 243.
description of beauty as "a proportion between parts that are well arranged," encompass
the essential features of Vitruvian symmetry.\textsuperscript{51}

Several literary works from the period appear to exhibit this "architectural"
aesthetic, including works known to and admired by the Invaghi. In keeping with the
academy’s humanist philosophy, let us begin our search for Striggio’s symmetrical models
among the works of the Ancients, specifically Virgil’s \textit{Aeneid} (as mentioned in the
Introduction), Virgil’s epic was translated into Italian by academy member Ercole Udine in
1597). As George Duckworth has shown, Virgil’s poem features the symmetrical
arrangement of corresponding themes and actions (\textbf{Figure 2.3a}).\textsuperscript{52} The poet also includes
localized symmetrical shapes surrounding important speeches or events (such as Dido’s
abandonment; \textbf{Figure 2.3b}), similar to the localized symmetrical shape surrounding
Orpheus’s first words in \textit{Orfeo} ("Rosa del ciel"); compare \textbf{Figures 2.3b} and \textbf{3.2a}).\textsuperscript{53} Virgil
died before the work was finished, for which reason we cannot know which speech or
event he would have placed at the center of the work. In his aforementioned translation of
the work, however, Udine places the Trojans’ arrival on the shores of Latium at the center

\textsuperscript{51} "La bellezza è proportione di parti ben composte." "\textit{Il Minturno overo de la
bellezza}; Minturno, or On Beauty," from \textit{Tasso’s Dialogues: a Selection}, ed. Carnes Lord &
Dain A. Trafton (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 193-244; here 228-229.

\textsuperscript{52} George Duckworth, "The Architecture of the Aeneid," \textit{The American Journal of
Philology} 75, 1 (1954): 1-15. Although these shapes feature translation symmetrical form
(i.e., A B C A B C, etc.), rather than the more common reflective symmetrical form (i.e., A B C
B A, etc.), they would have been considered "symmetrical" by scholars from this period,
since in keeping with the definitions given above, they offer both proportional
relationships and correspondences between the work’s individual parts (whether through
sameness or difference, such as Eurydice’s first and second deaths in the second and fourth
acts of \textit{Orfeo}, respectively).

\textsuperscript{53} George Duckworth, "Mathematical Symmetry in Vergil’s \textit{Aeneid}," \textit{Transactions and
of the work, with 126 poetic octaves preceding the event, and 125 following.\footnote{Analyzing works by the number of lines is a practice referred to by both poets and composers from the period, including Cavaliere’s suggestion that a musical drama should not be more than 700 lines long. Given in Carter, 	extit{Monteverdi’s Musical Theatre}, 52. Monteverdi also discusses the number of lines in a work in his letter to Striggio of January 6, 1617. Stevens, 	extit{The Letters of Claudio Monteverdi}, 119.} In keeping with the moral aims of both the Ancient and early modern poets described above, this event illustrates the work’s instructive lesson on the legitimacy of Rome’s founding. Also in keeping with these models, this action is not taken from the moving account of Dido’s abandonment, or the delight of the battles between the Trojans and the Latia, but rather from a simple act through which the text’s primary allegorical instruction is represented.

Udine’s 	extit{Psiche} features a similar symmetrical structure, which like Ottavio Rinuccini’s 	extit{Arianna} (set by Monteverdi in 1608), is centered around the title character’s abandonment by her male lover.\footnote{Despite its odd combination of ottave rime with the favola’s single plot line (Tasso states that this poetic form was most appropriate for the epic poem), this work exemplifies the author’s fascination with the works of Antiquity, in many cases borrowing popular tropes and plot devices from Virgil’s 	extit{Aeneid}. Some of these borrowed tropes are natural to the myth of Psyche, including a goddess’s jealous rage of mortal beauty (in this case, Venus’s jealousy of Psyche’s beauty), and love between a god and a mortal (Cupid and Psyche). Other examples, however, are imported directly from Ancient works and myths, including an extensive description of great historical figures—in this case, the great women of Mantua, paralleling Aeneas’s vision of the great Roman heroes in the Underworld—as well as Venus’s demand that Psyche undertake a series of labors to regain access to her husband (including the retrieval of golden fleece, and water from the Stygian fountain). On the subject of architectural design in Udine’s work, Herbutus Günther notes that the description of Cupid’s palace from the central cantos largely parallels the design of the Mantuan Palazzo Te. ‘‘Amor und Psyche.’ Raffaels Freskenzyklus in der Gartenloggia der Villa des Agostino Chigi und die Fabel von Amor und Psyche in der Malerei der italienischen Renaissance,” 	extit{Artibus et Historiae} 22, 44 (2001): 149-166; here 163.} In Udine’s text, this event is preceded by 221 poetic octaves, and followed by 223 octaves (in Rinuccini’s text, 474 lines precede Ariadne’s abandonment, and 472 follow; Bojan Bujić also notes the presence of corresponding
dramatic features in this work, given here as Figure 2.4. Like Ariadne, Psyche is abandoned by her lover, in this case in a "horrible cave, of beauty deprived" [horride grotte, e di bellezza privé] as a punishment for her attempt to discover her husband's true identity, in disobedience of his earlier command. In this way, Psyche's example—like Ariadne's—offers the listener moral instruction on the issue of wifely obedience. Therefore, even though Udine and Rinuccini's choice to place a moving speech at the center of their works appears to reject the instruction-centered model, its primary function remains moral instruction on the flaw that has brought the protagonist to a tragic circumstance. Like the other literary works discussed in this chapter, Udine reinforces the message of this central action with a set of symmetrically arranged corresponding events that relate to the subject of obedience (Figure 2.5).

As noted above, this symmetrical structure is also found in Tasso's Gerusalemme liberata. The similarities between the symmetrical structures of the liberata and those found in the Aeneid are to be expected, given Tasso's frequent citation and adulation of the Roman poet—and the Aeneid in particular—in his theoretical works. Tasso's epic on the

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56 Bujić, "Rinuccini the Craftsman": 95.

57 Arianna's message regarding "female disobedience" is discussed further in Chapter 3 in relation to Monteverdi's madrigal setting from the Sixth Book.

58 Udine's choice to emulate the symmetrical structure of the Aeneid in Psiche is not surprising, since in addition to his experience translating of the Virgil's epic, the Roman poet was considered a "native" of Mantua (see Introduction).

59 Alessandro Guarini describes Tasso as an "imitator" of Virgil's style in his "Lezione" for the Invaghiti, 33. Roy Eriksen suggests, "Tasso arranged the epic's twenty cantos according to a principle of mirror symmetry, an arrangement clearly inspired by classical precedent—The Aeneid." Building in the Text, 167 (n. 9). A specific example of Tasso's imitation of the Roman poet’s epic in the liberata is considered in Chapter 3, within the discussion of Monteverdi's "Combattimento."
First Crusade is equally divided around the presentation of the Eucharist to the Christian army, with 953 poetic octaves preceding the event, the service itself occupying twelve octaves, and the remainder of the work numbering 952 octaves. In fact, Tasso would keep this proportional arrangement intact when he revised the poem several years later under the title *Gerusalemme conquistata*, despite the otherwise substantial alteration of the work’s length and content (the latter version features six new cantos, as well as the expansion of several others).60

Tasso’s placement of the Eucharistic service at the center of his epic communicates the Tridentine message that salvation is to be found in the Holy Rites, legitimate only under the auspices of the Roman Catholic Church. This analysis is supported by Tasso’s own statement on the subject of Jerusalem’s deliverance from Muslim control, found in his "Allegory on the poem": “[The Christian captain] Godfrey storms the earthly Jerusalem not for temporal dominion, but so that the Holy Rites might be celebrated there.”61 This emphasis on Counter-Reformation philosophy aligns not only with the views of the poet, but also the Gonzaga, including academy member Ercole Gonzaga, who presided over the third phase of the Council of Trent. Andrew Fichter details the arrangement of corresponding events around the midpoint of the work, to which I have added a pair of examples (namely Rinaldo’s expulsion from and subsequent reacceptance into the Christian camp; Figure 2.6).62

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61 Tasso, "Allegory on the poem," 419.

The architectural design of Striggio’s 1607 libretto is analogous not only to the literary works surveyed above, but also to two renditions of the Orpheus myth which find clear resonances in *Orfeo*, Angelo Poliziano’s *Fabula di Orfeo* and Rinuccini’s *Euridice*.\(^63\) All three texts feature an architectural structure that—in addition to the correspondences of key actions within the mythical plot (detailed below)—includes the equal division of the entire work around Orpheus’s descent into the Inferno: in Poliziano’s *Fabula*, the event is preceded by 164 lines of text, with 162 lines following; Rinuccini’s *Euridice* includes 397 lines before, and 393 lines after; and the event is announced at the center of Striggio’s libretto through the popular Dantean allusion, "Abandon every hope, you that enter," with 337 lines before, and 337 after.\(^64\)

The placement of Orpheus’s *katabasis* at the center of these three works may also be a reference to the popular theory that the geography of the Inferno, as described in Dante’s *Divine Comedy*, features symmetrical proportions. This theory was first propounded by Giannozzo Manetti (1396-1459) in his *Dialogue on the site, form, and measure of the inferno of Dante Alighieri* (published posthumously in 1506), which features illustrations of the

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\(^63\) On the similarities between these three renditions of the Orpheus myth, see Bujić, “Rinuccini the Craftsman”; F.W. Sternfeld, "The Orpheus myth and the libretto of 'Orfeo'" and Fenlon, "The Mantuan 'Orfeo,'" both from *Orfeo*, ed. Whenham; and Pirrotta, *Music and Theatre*.

\(^64\) The present author discovered the equal division of Striggio and Poliziano’s text around Orpheus’s *katabasis*. The symmetrical structure of Rinuccini’s text, including the significance of Orpheus’s descent into the Inferno, is discussed by Bujić, “'Figura poetica motlo vaga'”: 35. In a brief aside, Francesca Chiarelli notes that Rinuccini’s librettos from this period are far more structured and organized than his works from later periods, which may suggest the poet’s use of organized structures such as symmetry to reflect the virtue of the works’ noble sponsors. “Before and After: Ottavio Rinuccini’s Mascherate and Their Relationship to the Operatic Libretto,” *Journal of Seventeenth-Century Music* 9, 1 (2003) <http://www.sscm-jscm.org/v9/no1/chiarelli.html>.
Inferno as a balanced, geometric form (Example 2.7). Manetti’s work spawned numerous commentaries on the subject by Italian literary theorists throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, including Galileo Galilei’s lectures to the Accademia Fiorentina of 1588. Referencing Manetti’s work, Galileo extends these proportional relationships to the entire metaphysical realm described in the Divine Comedy, based in the aforementioned association between symmetry and the moral order created by divine power. Striggio’s placement of the Dantean allusion (“Abandon all hope...”) at the center of his rendition of the Orphic myth does not reflect the geography of the Dantean Inferno directly, since the famous line—along with the katabasis itself—is found near the beginning of Dante’s narrative. Rather, this connection may have been conceived as an association between the pivotal nature of Orpheus’s descent into the Inferno within the symmetrical structure of Striggio’s libretto and the popular notion of universal orderliness represented in Dante’s fantastic realm, offering a meaningful, yet "mysterious" reference for the enjoyment of academics like the Invaghiti.

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65 Allan Gilbert, “Can Dante’s Inferno Be Exactly Charted?” PMLA 60, 2 (June 1945): 287-306.


67 Although it may be only coincidence, the line found at the center of Striggio’s Il Sacrificio d’Ifigenia (performed in 1608) also includes an allusion to the Inferno ("Nume del Ciel, ch’anco l’Inferno adora"), which comes from the pivotal moment of the single-scene drama (that is, Iphigenia’s sacrifice). Il Sacrificio d’Ifigenia: rappresentato [sic] in musica nel Balletto del Sereniss. Sig. Prencipe. In Mantova (Mantua: pub. unknown, 1604), 6.
The corresponding events that surround this central action begin with Orpheus’s first words ("Rosa del ciel"), which fall at the precise center of the opening act (the 75th of 151 lines; the designation of the Prologue and Act I as the "opening act" is discussed in Chapter 3); this event corresponds to his final words, which are found at the center of the final act (the 55th of 110 lines). Orpheus’s famous aria, “Possente spirto,” falls over the midpoint of the third act, in addition to the aforementioned centering of the entire play on the Dantean allusion, near the opening of the same act. Act II is centered on the Messenger’s relations of Eurydice’s demise, while Orpheus’s recovery of his wife falls at the midpoint of the fourth act (Figure 2.7).

The shared allegorical theme within each of these actions is Orpheus’s passage from hope to despair (or vice-versa), the emotional states that serve as the catalyst for Orpheus’s progression through the entire drama: his first words represent the moment of his hope for nuptial bliss, and correspond to the utter despair of his final words; Eurydice’s death in the second act is the loss of this hope, corresponding to its short-lived recovery and eventual loss in the fourth act; while "Possente spirto" serves as the grandest expression of the protagonist’s hope to recover his beloved spouse. Additionally, the primacy of this allegorical dualism highlights the reading of the work based on Marsilio Ficino’s Neoplatonic philosophy. As noted by Jon Solomon, "Orpheus is distinguished from the rest of mortals not because of his musical and poetic abilities or because of his successful katabasis and return from the land of death, but because he more than any other human fully experienced (twice) the ultimate joy and the ultimate grief that mortal life offers...
Orpheus has risen up to the heavens to escape the extremes of human happiness and misery.\textsuperscript{68}

In sum, these literary works illustrate the architectural model for the execution of symmetry in the non-visual arts through the proportional distribution of corresponding events that speak to the narrative's moral aims. As we will see in the following chapter, it is not only Striggio who appears to use this model, but also Monteverdi through his creation of "musical architecture" to reflect the aesthetic, moral, and political aims discussed above.

\textsuperscript{68} Solomon, "Neoplatonic Apotheosis," 31-32.
Chapter 2: Figures and examples

Example 2.1a: Facade of the Santa Barbara church
Example 2.1b: Interior of the Santa Barbara church
**Example 2.2a:** Facade of the Palazzo Te

**Example 2.2b:** Ippolito Andreasi, drawings of the interior walls of the Palazzo Te. Düsseldorf, Museum Kunstpalast, Sammlung de Kunstkademie (NRW). KA (FP): 10920-22.
Example 2.3a: Pietro Perugino, Cristo consegna le chiavi a Pietro (Rome, c. 1482) Photo from the photographic service of the Vatican Museum. © Musei Vaticani

Example 2.3b: Peter Paul Rubens, Famiglia Gonzaga in adorazione della Trinità (Mantua, 1604-1605). By permission of the Minister of Goods and of Cultural Activities, and of Mantuan tourism.
**Example 2.4a:** Rinuccini’s Euridice, frontispiece

**Example 2.4b:** Monteverdi’s Orfeo, frontispiece
Example 2.4c: Fabritio’s Il ballarino, frontispiece

IL BALLARINO
DI M. FABRITIO CAROSO
DA SERMONETA.
Diviso in due Trattati;
Nel primo de’ quali si dimostrano le diversità dei movi, che si danno a gli
arti, e’i movimenti, che si ricercano ne’ Balli: e con molte Regole
si dichiara con quali cose, e’i movimenti debbano farsi.
Nel secondo si insegnano diversiacakti di Balli, e Balletti al
suofo d’Italia, come è quello di Francia, e Spagna.

Ornato di molte Figure,
Es con l’illustrazione di Lino, e il Sopran della Musica
nelle danze di alcuni Balli.

Opera nuovamente mandata in luce.

ALLA SERENISSIMA BIANCA CAPPETTO DEI MEDICI,
GRAN DUCHESSA DI TOLSCANA.
CON PRIVILEGIO.

In Venezia, Apressello Francesco Zilenti. M D L XXXI.
Example 2.5: Giusto Utens, Villa Petraia, Florence (1599). By permission of the Minister of goods and of cultural activity, and of Florentine tourism.
**Example 2.7: Choral formations from Il corago**

![Diagram of choral formations]

**Figure 2.1: Symmetrical arrangement of selections from Willaert’s Musica Nova**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opening motets &amp; madrigals</th>
<th>Clefs</th>
<th>Compass</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Final</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>F4/C4-4-3</td>
<td>GG-g&quot;</td>
<td>G Dorian</td>
<td>1 flat</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>C4-3-2-1</td>
<td>C-c&quot;</td>
<td>C Ionian</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>F4/C4-4-3</td>
<td>GG-g&quot;</td>
<td>G Mixo</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>F5-3-2/C4</td>
<td>EE-e&quot;</td>
<td>E Phryg</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Closing motets</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>F4/C4-4-3-2-1</td>
<td>FF-c&quot;</td>
<td>F Ionian</td>
<td>1 flat</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>F4/C4-4-3-3-1-1</td>
<td>GG-d&quot;</td>
<td>G Dorian</td>
<td>1 flat</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>F4/C4-4-3-3-2-1</td>
<td>GG-d&quot;</td>
<td>G Mixo</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>F3/C3-3-2-1/G2-2</td>
<td>AA-f&quot;</td>
<td>A Phryg</td>
<td>1 flat</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Closing madrigals</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>F4/C4-4-3-3-2-1</td>
<td>FF-c&quot;</td>
<td>F Ionian</td>
<td>1 flat</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>F4/C4-4-3-3-1-1</td>
<td>GG-d&quot;</td>
<td>G Dorian</td>
<td>1 flat</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>F4-3/C4-3-3-2-1</td>
<td>GG-d&quot;</td>
<td>G Mixo</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>F3/C4-3-3-2-1/G2</td>
<td>AA-f&quot;</td>
<td>A Phryg</td>
<td>1 flat</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Figure 2.2a: Symmetrical arrangement of selections by mode in Monteverdi’s Fourth Book (Chafe)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>System</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>h</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>Ah dolente partita</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>Cor mio, mentre vi miro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>Cor mio, non mori?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>Sfogava con le stelle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>g</td>
<td>Volgea l’anima mia soavemente</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>g</td>
<td>Anima mia, perdona</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>g</td>
<td>Che se tu se’l cor mio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>Luci serene e chiare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>La piaga c’ho nel core</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>Voi pur da me partite, anima dura</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>A un giro sol de’ bell’occhi lucenti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>g</td>
<td>Ohime, se tanto amate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>g</td>
<td>Io mi son giovinetta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>g</td>
<td>Quel augellino che canta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Non più guerra, pietate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>Sì ch’io vorrei morire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>Anima dolorosa che vivendo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>Anima del cor mio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>Longe da te, cor mio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>Piagne e sospira, e quand’i caldi raggi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 2.2b: Symmetrical arrangement of selections by voicing from the Eighth Book (Stevens)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Madrigali guerrieri</th>
<th>Madrigali amorosi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Altri cant d’Amor</td>
<td>Altri cant di Marte (Marini)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a 6; strings</td>
<td>Vago augelletto (Petrarch)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hor che ’l ciel (Petrarch)</td>
<td>Mentre vaga Angioletta (Guarini)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a 6; strings</td>
<td>Ardo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gira il nemico</td>
<td>O sia tranquillo il mar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATB</td>
<td>also in Book IX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Se vittorie si belle</td>
<td>Ballo: Movete al mio bel suon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TT</td>
<td>gen. rapp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>also in Book IX</td>
<td>also in Book IX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armato il cor</td>
<td>TTB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ogni amante e guerrier</td>
<td>TTB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a 8; strings</td>
<td>TT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballo: Movete al mio bel suon</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gen. rapp.</td>
<td>gen. rapp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combattimento (Tasso)</td>
<td>gen. rapp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a 3</td>
<td>Ballo delle Ingrate (Rinuccini)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non havea Febo ancora (Rinuccini)</td>
<td>Perché; Non partir; Su su su</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dolcissimo; Chi vuol haver (Rinuccini)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ninfa che scalza il piede</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perché; Non partir; Su su su</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ardo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>also in Book IX</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in genere rappresentativo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 2.3a: Large-scale symmetrical structure in Virgil’s Aeneid (Duckworth)

I: Juno and storm
   II: Destruction of Troy
      III: Interlude (wandering)
         IV: Tragedy of Love
            V: Games (lessening of tension)
               VI: Future revealed

VII: Juno and War
Midpoint: Arrival at Latium
   VIII: Birth of Rome
      IX: Interlude (at Trojan camp)
         X: Tragedy of War
            XI: Truce (lessening of tension)
               XII: Future assured

Figure 2.3b: Localized symmetrical shape from Virgil’s Aeneid (IV.279-415)

279-304: Narrative; preparation for departure
   305-30: Dido’s speech
      331-33a: Aeneas’s emotions
         333b-61: Speech of Aeneas
            362-64: Dido’s emotions
               365-87: Dido’s speech

388-415: Narrative; preparation of departure
Figure 2.4: Symmetrical structure of Rinuccini’s Arianna (Bujić)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line no.</th>
<th>Solerti–Fassò</th>
<th>Gundulić</th>
<th>Action on stage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25–153</td>
<td>Scena prima</td>
<td>I.1</td>
<td>Venere and Amore converse; Venere outlines the story which is to follow. Trumpets heard; Teseo and Arianna arrive; Amor hides.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>154–98</td>
<td>Scena seconda</td>
<td>I.2</td>
<td>Teseo’s conversation with Consigliero and Coro.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>199–280</td>
<td></td>
<td>I.3</td>
<td>Teseo turns to Arianna, who is distressed at having fled from home. They find abode for the night.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>323–421</td>
<td></td>
<td>II.1</td>
<td>Teseo’s conversation with Consigliero, who persuades him to abandon Arianna.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>422–49</td>
<td></td>
<td>II.2</td>
<td>Teseo, Messaggiero and Coro: brief conversation before they board and leave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>450–98</td>
<td></td>
<td>II.3</td>
<td>Commentary of the fishermen; finale with ritorino.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>499–579</td>
<td>Scena quarta*</td>
<td>III.1*</td>
<td>*Arianna discovers Teseo’s departure; Dorilla consoles her.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>580–644</td>
<td></td>
<td>III.2</td>
<td>Fishermen comment on Teseo’s departure; pastoral moralising finale.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>645–782</td>
<td>Scena quinta</td>
<td>II.1</td>
<td>Nunzio describes Arianna’s grief to the fishermen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>783–939</td>
<td>Scena sesta</td>
<td>IV.2</td>
<td>Arianna’s lament; Dorilla’s comment. Trumpets heard, expected to announce Teseo’s return.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>940–1068</td>
<td>Scena settima</td>
<td>V.1</td>
<td>Nunzio describes Bacco’s arrival, mentions that Amor has reappeared. Scene ends with the words ‘ecco i reali amanti’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1069–1115</td>
<td>Scena ottava</td>
<td>V.2</td>
<td>Gods reassemble; Giove (Jupiter) descends from the heavens. Bacco proclaims Arianna’s immortality.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Figure 2.5: Symmetrical structure of Udine's Psiche**

Canto I: Venus's jealousy of Psyche's beauty

Canto II: Psyche removed from her home by the command of the gods

Canto III: Psyche arrives at Cupid's temple; marital bliss

Canto IV: The sisters persuade Psyche to disobey Cupid's command

**Midpoint: Psyche's disobedience and abandonment (LAMENT)**

Canto V: The sisters leap to their deaths

Canto VI: Psyche seeks assistance in the temples of the gods

Canto VII: The gods aid Psyche's quest to regain her marital home with Cupid

Canto VIII: Jove intervenes, quelling Venus's rage
**Figure 2.6: Symmetrical structure of Tasso’s Gerusalemme liberata (Fichter)**

Canto I  
Call to arms

Canto II  
Egyptian governor Argante introduced

Canto III  
Jerusalem first sighted

Canto IV  
Armida appeals to the Christians for help

Canto V  
Rinaldo exiled from camp for killing Gernando

Canto VII  
Rinaldo trapped in Armida’s castle

Canto VIII  
Attempted revolt in the Christian camp

Canto IX  
Night raid against Christian camp

**Canto XI**  
*Presentation of the Eucharist (Midpoint)*

Canto XI  
First assault on the city

Canto XII  
Night raid against Christian camp

Canto XIII  
Attempted revolt in the Christian camp

Canto XIV  
Rinaldo rescued from Armida’s castle

Canto XVI  
Rinaldo restored to the camp

Canto XVII  
Armida appeals to pagans for help

Canto XVIII  
Jerusalem entered

Canto XIX  
Argante killed by Tancredo

Canto XX  
Jerusalem Conquered
Example 2.8: "Citta di Dis," from Manetti’s Diologo ...di Dante Alighieri
**Figure 2.7: Symmetrical structure of Striggio's libretto for Orfeo (1607)**

**Midpoint of Prologue/Act I:** Orpheus’s first words

**Act II:** Eurydice’s first death

**Midpoint of play:** Arrival at the gates of the Inferno

**Act III:** Orpheus’s plea to enter the Inferno

**Act IV:** Orpheus’s recovery of Eurydice

**Midpoint of Act V:** Orpheus’s final words
Chapter 3: Architecturalism and moral allegory in Claudio Monteverdi’s setting of Orfeo

Large-scale structure

An architectural structure analogous to Striggio’s is found in Monteverdi’s score, created through the distribution of musical space (i.e., tacti), in comparison to the distribution of poetic lines in Striggio’s 1607 libretto (despite the removal of over 50 lines from the earlier libretto, as found in the 1609 score, as well as the changed ending; compare Figures 2.7 and 3.1). This comparison suggests that the composer may have recognized and even imitated certain aspects of Striggio’s symmetrical form. Before considering the details of the composer’s architectural structure, however, let us consider the method of measuring and calculating musical space in Monteverdi’s score. First, we must determine the bearer of the tactus, since the composer’s frequent shifts between perfectus and imperfectus meters do not allow for the simple addition of musical units such as the breve (as is possible for measuring of temporal space in the Prologue, which is given entirely in the imperfectus meter). My count of tacti is based in the prescription found in Zarlino’s L’institutione harmoniche: “tempus is of two sorts: perfect and imperfect... equivalent to three semibreves ...[and] equivalent to two semibreves [counter-
respectively].”¹ Therefore, I count the breve as the bearer of the tactus in the *imperfectus* meter, and the dotted breve in the meters 3/2 and 6/4.²

The conceptualization of the score as an artifact for private study, away from the performance form (discussed in Chapter 2) raises the question of whether to count repetitions of music that are not written out in the score, but rather are indicated by repeat sign, or by rubric.³ Since there would be no particular impetus for the repetition of material in the scholar's chamber, it is possible that such a count would not include these additional renditions. Neither possibility is any more likely than the other in this situation, for which reason I have considered calculations created by both approaches. Finally, one must consider whether the "curtain raising" *Toccata* ("sona avanti il levar da la tela," from Monteverdi’s score), as well as the "curtain lowering" *Moresca* would be considered part of the drama. In regard to the measurement of the work's temporal space, this issue is self-resolving in nearly perfect fashion—at least for an "artifactual" reading that does not


² On the subject of Renaissance notation and temporal values, see Bowers, “Reflection upon Notation and Proportion.” Editorial corrections of note values from the 1615 reprint of *Orfeo* do not change the total amount of musical space within the work; instead, these corrections resolve musico-temporal inequalities between the continuo line and the upper parts from the 1609 print.

³ Although there is no evidence that the composer provided a copy of the score to the Invaghiti in 1607—such a request more likely would have been made in person while Monteverdi was still in residence at the Mantuan court, rather than a written correspondence that might have given us a record of such a transaction—it is possible that the composer created a copy around the time of the "Invaghiti" performance for the academy's collection. In fact, the libretto printed for the 1607 performance and the score as it was printed in 1609 were both used in connection with the 1607 performance. As noted by de' Sommi, two versions of a libretto would commonly exist for the production of a theatrical work, one with "the full length of speeches" for printing, and another "cut for when it is to be performed." Given in Hecker, "Concept of Theater," 202.
include repetitions created through rubric or repeat sign—since the temporal space of the two selections balances one another almost perfectly at fourteen and sixteen tacti, respectively.

The method that yields the most intriguing results is the "artifactual" counting. Through this approach, two key events align precisely in their placement between Striggio's libretto of 1607, and Monteverdi's score of 1609: the first, and most significant in view of its central placement within the entire drama, is the popular Dantean allusion ("Abandon every hope..."), found at the exact center of both the earlier libretto and the later score (in the latter, it falls at the 637th tactus of 1274). Additionally, both sources place Orpheus's first words ("Rosa del ciel") at the precise center of the opening act (the 147th tactus of 295). The shared central placement of the latter event also intersects with Donald Grout's suggestion of a reflective symmetrical shape around this structural marker, based on musical types (such as recitative, chorus, etc.), along with the repetition of certain choruses at corresponding points within the arched symmetrical formation (see Figure 3.3a). Another key event falls on a significant proportional division within Monteverdi's

4 The combinatory designation of the "opening act" is based primarily on the unresolved musical quality of the Prologue's final line, as the singer does not end on the tonic D, but rather on a B-natural above the continuo's E (creating a "dominant of the dominant"). This musical line is immediately resolved by the final repetition of the Prologue's d-centered ritornello, though it is resolved "textually" by the opening words of the first act, given by the singer on the tonic D, and supported by the same fundamental pitch in the continuo.

5 Grout, A Short History of Opera, 59. Grout's designation of "Rosa del ciel" as an aria has rightly been called into question, though the proper designation of the selection as a recitation does not change the nature of the symmetrical shape itself. On the proper designation of "Rosa del ciel," see Tim Carter, "An Air New and Grateful to the Ear": The Concept of Aria in Late Renaissance and Early Baroque Italy," Music Analysis 12, 2 (July 1993): 127-145.
score (though not Striggio’s libretto), namely the entrance of the Messenger in Act II, which falls at the one-third point of the entire opera (the 425th tactus out of 1274).

In both the "artifactual" and "performative" counting (the latter including all repeats), Striggio’s 1607 text and Monteverdi’s 1609 score place Orpheus’s plea to Charon over the center of the third act, the relation of Eurydice’s death over the center of the second act, and her recovery at the center of the fourth act. Although the changed ending in the 1609 score does not allow for the same correspondence between Orpheus’s first and last words, both sources center the final act on the play’s denouement: Striggio’s 1607 text places Orpheus’s death at the center of the final act, implied by his final words, which are followed by his exit in the company of the Bacchantes; in the 1609 score, it is the sinfonia that accompanies Apollo’s entrance, through which the *deus ex machina* is initiated.

These misalignments between the precise center of individual acts of the 1607 libretto and the 1609 score do not nullify the symmetrical form itself, since the precise centering of an individual act or canto on its primary event is not always found among works that utilize the Vitruvian model (including the literary works surveyed in the previous chapter). A similar example of misalignment between different versions of the same work is found in the two versions of Tasso’s aforementioned epic (*Gerusalemme liberata*, and the later *Gerusalemme conquistata*): although the fateful battle between Tancred and Clorinda falls over the center of the twelfth canto in both versions, the same line is not found at the precise center, and in neither version does the beginning or end of the battle fall at its precise center, despite its primacy among the canto’s events.

Returning to Monteverdi’s setting, the oppositional nature of the allegorical duality between hope and despair is underscored through the composer’s juxtaposition of G and A-
centered modes (respectively) around the key events that illustrate Orpheus's transition between these two emotional states. Further, the composer frequently favors the mollis ("soft") cantus in the G-centered modes, and the durus ("hard") in the A-centered modes at these pivotal events, perhaps reflective of the corresponding "softness" and "hardness" of hope and despair. At the center of the opening act, for example, a recounting of Orpheus's earlier romantic despair ("Ma tu, gentil cantor") immediately precedes his expression of hope for a lifetime of nuptial bliss ("Rosa del ciel"), the former set in A Durus, the latter in G Mollis. The recounting of Eurydice's death in the second act, which features the most sudden and dramatic shift from hopefulness to despair within the entire work, begins with the Messenger's entrance. Monteverdi's sets this event to a correspondingly dramatic shift to A Durus (Example 3.1); although this shift is immediately juxtaposed with a brief selection in C ("Mira, deh Mira, Orfeo"), the larger section that precedes it is based firmly in G Mollis. Additionally, the Messenger's relation of the very moment of Eurydice's death at the center of Act II is accompanied by the juxtaposition of a decidedly "sharp" triad that could be read as an E Major triad (the dominant of A) with a "soft" G Minor triad (Example 3.2). Orpheus's turn to despair, following the second (and eternal) loss of Eurydice at the

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6 I am not suggesting, however, that Monteverdi uses these cantus and mode-based associations (i.e., G mollis=hopeful, A durus=despair) throughout the work. Rather, my observation is confined to the pivotal events from the center of each act, as well as the center of the entire work. The function of the mollis and durus canti are described by Chafe: briefly, these two terms are used by modern writers to describe a composer's tendency to move, via a circle-of-fifths motion, either in the direction of "harder" harmonies (durus harmonies, i.e. those with a greater number of sharps; for example, G to D, D to A, A to E, etc.), or toward "softer" harmonies (mollis harmonies, vice-versa of durus). However, the term "A Durus" does not equate with any particular mode, such as A Mixolydian or A Major. I will refer to all scales, individual harmonies, and modes according to their modern designations (Dorian, Lydian, Major, Minor, etc.). Similar "tonal allegorical" associations in Orfeo are discussed in Chafe, Monteverdi's Tonal Language, 139-56.
center of the fourth act also features this harmonic juxtaposition: immediately following his G-centered song of triumph ("Qual honor"), Orpheus expresses doubt in the gods’ faithfulness ("Ma mentre io canto, ohimè"). As despair overcomes his resolve, a modified form of the latter melodic line is presented, now over a cadence to A Major (Example 3.3). The final act features a long series of alternations between G Mollis and A Durus, as Orpheus vacillates between utter despair and hopeful calls for pity from the woods and mountains. The sinfonia at the center of the fifth act that accompanies Apollo’s descent is set firmly in G Mollis, and changes the harmonic trajectory of the act, as Apollo gradually “persuades” his son to join him in the hopeful mode and cantus. Only Orpheus’s aria at the center of Act III does not feature such a juxtaposition, since the entire aria is set in G. This is fitting, however, since as noted above, it serves as the grandest expression of the protagonist’s hope to recover his wife. When Charon rebuffs Orpheus, Monteverdi does not move to an A-centered mode, though again this is understandable, since Orpheus does not move from hope to despair, but rather continues his plea, the sweetness of which eventually charms the infernal ferryman to sleep.

As noted above, the event of greatest allegorical significance is found at the center of the play, as the Dantian allusion, “Abandon every hope, you that enter,” is uttered by none other than the allegorical personification of Hope [La Speranza] (Example 3.4). The

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7 Eric Chafe notes that the infernal spirit's declaration that Eurydice must return to the Inferno from Act IV ("Rott’hai la legge")—which immediately follows Orpheus’s turn to doubt and despair—closes with the work’s "durus extreme" (a full cadence in E Major). Chafe further notes that these harmonies correspond to the work's "mollis extreme" (a full cadence in B-flat Major) of the speech given by the allegorical characterization of hope (La Speranza) at the opening of Act III, which I have argued would have been viewed by the Invaghitì as the pivotal moment of the play’s symmetrical structure. Monteverdi’s Tonal language, 132-133.
proclamation is given twice, first over a G Dorian tonic harmony, then A Aeolian; the two statements are separated by a change of key signature through the change of the b-flat to b-natural, a device indicative of a full conversion from the mollis cantus to the durus.\(^8\) Hope then abandons Orpheus at the gates of the Underworld, creating a vivid representation of the "abandonment of hope" to despair, and serving as the instructive centerpiece of the symmetrical structure through which Orfeo expresses the Invaghiti’s idealization of beauty. It is through this understand of line’s precise central positioning within the play’s architectural form, combined with its role as a musical and poetic expression of the work’s primary allegorical message, that we may understand its role as the play’s pivotal event—in the eyes of the Invaghiti, at least—rather than the musical delights of Orpheus’s "Possente spirto," or even the Messenger’s moving description of Eurydice’s death.

These aural manifestations of Orfeo’s primary allegorical duality, in apparent support of its symmetrical structure, raise the question of whether the audience members of the 1607 performance were meant to perceive these proportional relationships. Given the period practice of performing theatrical works without a break, it is likely that the academy’s invited guests, certain to be familiar the plot of the Orpheus myth, would have comprehended at least the balanced distribution of the play’s key events.\(^9\) It is highly unlikely, however, that these guests (or the members of the academy, for that matter)

\[^8\] The relationship between changes in key signature and shifts in cantus is discussed by Chafe in Chapter 3 of Monteverdi’s Tonal Language.

\[^9\] John Whenham states that the earliest operas, including Orfeo, were given without a break. “Five acts: one action.” Dramatic license on the part of the performers, however, might have led to a further departure from the precise distribution of musico-temporal space in the performance of the work. This point is not especially significant to my "artifactual" reading, however, since as noted above, such an analysis would not likely have been based on the listener’s experience in the performance forum.
would have attempted to count tacti or lines of text during the performance itself, with the intention of determining the precise center of the individual acts, or even the entire work. Rather, the recognition of the work's precise proportional relationships would have been possible only through careful study, away from the performance forum. In this way, the comprehension of the work's proportions may have been intended only for the cognoscenti, including members of learned societies such as the Invaghiti.

Localized symmetrical shapes

On the other hand, the localized symmetrical shapes within Orfeo from the opening act may have been detectable in performance to the observant listener. Most recently, Ilias Chrissochoidis has noted the proportional distribution of temporal space in the Prologue, which creates a reflective pattern similar to Orfeo's large-scale symmetrical structure (see Figure 3.2). Chrissochoidis further notes the exceptional character of the Prologue's central strophe, including an identical number of semibreves to the opening and closing ritornellos; additionally, the central strophe is the only one whose vocal line does not open on the tonic D, but rather on A, containing a higher frequency of the latter pitch than any other strophe.10

Donald Grout's aforementioned suggestion of a reflective symmetrical shape surrounding Orpheus's first words, however, is the most well known of these localized formations (Figure 3.3a); Eric Chafe has since noted that this shape is also reflected in the

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10 Chrissochoidis, "Emblem": 521.
distribution of modal centers between the selections (Figure 3.3b).\textsuperscript{11} In addition to these features, the formation is also manifested in Monteverdi’s use of scoring, as the composer alternates between solo and the five-part textures (the latter including both choruses and instrumental ritornellos; Figure 3.3c). As noted by Massimo Ossi, the composer offers the listener a clue to the unified nature of this ring through his use of a single instrumental ritornello, which is unique to this formation (since the ritornello of the Prologue is the first of the opening act, the "Rosa del ciel" ritornello will be designated “R2”).\textsuperscript{12}

The final musical selection of this formation ("Ma se il nostro gioir") serves as a pivot to a third symmetrical shape, which like the preceding formation, is manifested in musical scoring. (Incidentally, the opening of this pivotal selection falls precisely at the three-quarters point of the opening act in the "artifactual" counting). Following the opening solo recitation is a duet, then a trio, followed by another duet; each of these vocal selections is punctuated with a five-voice ritornello, which like R1 and R2, is unique to the formation (ergo, “R3”).\textsuperscript{13} However, the next vocal solo, which could complete the symmetrical formation, does not appear until the opening of Act II, separated from the second duet by the closing chorus and sinfonia of Act I (Figure 3.4). (In a brief aside, either the closing chorus or sinfonia of Act I could be viewed as a component of this symmetrical formation,

\textsuperscript{11} Chafe, Monteverdi’s Tonal Language, 136.

\textsuperscript{12} Ossi, Divining the Oracle, 137.

\textsuperscript{13} As noted by Chafe, this alternation of individual chorus members (or small groups of chorus members) with the full chorus is paralleled in the closing of Striggio’s libretto, as individual Bacchante sing in alternation with the full chorus. Monteverdi’s Tonal Language, 130. However, the choral selections from Act V do not create a symmetrical shape, which may speak to the contrast between the "ideal reality" of Act I and the immoral and destructive forces of the Dionysian Bacchantes.
since, like R3, they are both five-voice selections that stand between two of the vocal
selections performed by small groups from within the full chorus. Additionally, like "Muse,
onor di Parnaso" from the formation surrounding "Rosa del ciel," at least one of these
components would be a non-participating component within the symmetrical form, in that
is does not have a corresponding selection within the symmetrical form. As discussed in
Chapter 2, however, it is not uncommon that a symmetrical design from this period would
include such minor "imperfections" without invalidating the design itself.)

If the opening selection of Act II ("Ecco pur") is to serve as the final component of
this formation, we must account for the interruption created the closing selections of the
opening act. Generally speaking, these two selections are presented at this point in keeping
with theatrical convention: the custom of closing an act with a pronouncement by the full
chorus hearkens back to the Greek tragedies after which the earliest operas were modeled,
including Orfeo (this practice is described by Vitruvius, who suggests that poets "divided
their plays into parts by introducing a choral song"). The practice of placing an
instrumental selection at the end of an act may have developed later than the convention
regarding the use of the chorus, though it was a long-standing tradition in Italian theater by
the turn of the seventeenth century. In keeping with these conventions, a short
instrumental selection follows the closing text of each act in Orfeo, including the final act.

\[14\] Vitruvius, On Architecture, 130.

\[15\] In describing a performance of a fabula from 1600, the Ferrarese historian
Bernadino Zambotti states that the play featured "sounds of various instruments between
the act, because it was done in the manner of a scene or tragedy." Given in Pirrotta, Music
and Theatre, 46.
Subtle cues within these two closing selections suggest a connection between them and the opening selection of Act II, bridging the first two acts and closing the symmetrical formation. One such link is found in the relationship between the opening line of the first act's closing sinfonia and the opening selection of Act II, specifically in the linear contour of the melody and continuo line (Example 3.5a), a resemblance that is unique between the closing and opening selections of the other acts. The 1609 print offers additional evidence of a unique connection between the two acts: as seen in Example 3.5b, the music of Act I is ended with a single barline, rather than the double barline and fermata that is found at the end of every other act, possibly indicating a transition from one act to the next without a stoppage of musical motion that would facilitate the listener's perception of this symmetrical shape as a unified formation.

Audience comprehension of this final symmetrical shape may have been aided by a theatrical custom described in Marco Gagliano's preface to his setting of Rinuccini's Dafne from 1608, as well as instructions found in Il corago. The former author suggests that chorus members speaking as individuals should stand "two or three paces" in front of the full chorus, while the latter states that "the actor-singer ...must move ...to the center of the stage [to sing] (more or less close to the audience according to the rank of the person he represents)."16 Following these practices, the prominent positioning of one, then two, then three, then two chorus members, leading to Orpheus's appearance at center stage for the

16 Savage and Sansone, "Il corago": 502. Gagliano’s preface is given in Carter, Monteverdi’s Musical Theatre, 89.
opening of the second act, might have aided the viewers' perception of this symmetrical shape.  

All three of the opening act’s symmetrical formations serves a specific introductory function (Figure 3.6). The Prologue introduces the play and its subject, the second formation introduces the protagonist, and the third introduces the play’s primary allegory, stated explicitly in the opening line of the first selection ("let none who, despairing, give himself in prey to sorrow"). Additionally, the central selection of each formation presents imagery that speaks to a key aspect of the drama: the Prologue introduces La Musica’s golden lyre (cetera d’or), symbolizing the power of Orpheus’s music; the second formation presents the lyre "in Orpheus’s hands" through the power of his voice; and the text from the center of the third formation ("Ché, poi che nembo rio gravidò il seno") speaks prophetically of the "fearful tempest [that] has filled the world with horror," referencing the tragic events which, in spite of Orpheus’s musical powers, will bring about his transition from hope to despair.  

The prevalence of localized symmetrical shapes in the opening act, which all but disappear in the following acts, raises the question of why Monteverdi chose to fill only this

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17 The audience of the 1607 performance would have been aware of the point at which one act ended and the next began, since in addition to the appearance of the conventional closing chorus and instrumental selection mentioned above, they were provided with a copy of the libretto. Fenlon, "Mantuan Orfeo," 4. Although Monteverdi’s familiarity with the art of choreography cannot be verified, his vocation as a musician almost undoubtedly gave him at least some interaction with the theatrical arts, which regularly featured choral formations.

18 "Alcun non sia che disperato in preda si doni al duol."

19 "Atra tempesta inorridito ha il mondo."
section with these balanced shapes.\textsuperscript{20} Monteverdi may have chosen to use symmetrical formations to enhance the audience’s engagement with the opening act, which, while integral to the establishment of several basic dramaturgical elements (a process referred to as protasis), features no significant progression of the plot; in other words, if the storyline is not moving, the composer can create a type of dynamic motion by leading the listener through a series of balanced, circular patterns.\textsuperscript{21} It is symmetry’s use as an expression of moral order, however, which offers a more meaningful explanation for its prevalence in this section: the opening act presents an ideal reality (or a projection of "the stable Renaissance world," as Susan McClary describes it), in which Eurydice has relented from her prideful ingratitude toward Orpheus’s love, and has adopted a humble state of servitude to his desires, thereby offering the protagonist an ideal partner in marriage.\textsuperscript{22} Baccusi addresses the disturbance to moral balance created by this "female" vice in his aforementioned oration, stating, "Ingratitude dries the font of divine mercy, [and gratitude] keeps it. Ingratitude consumes it, [and gratitude] saves it; Ingratitude makes us odious to

\textsuperscript{20} Massimo Ossi suggests the presence of musical correspondences between several selections from the Prologue, Act I, and Act II, though none of the correspondences from Act II form a complete symmetrical shape. \textit{Divining the Oracle}, 137. Ossi also discusses this correlation between the "rightness" of the dramatic situation in the opening act of \textit{Orfeo} and the use of symmetry, though not in relation to the Invaghi’s academic philosophy. \textit{Ibid}, 290. Eric Chafe notes a similar correlation between moral rightness and the use of symmetry in \textit{L’Incorinazione di Poppea}: the death of Seneca—the drama’s only unwaveringly moral character—features a reflective symmetrical shape that, like the formation surrounding "Rosa del Ciel," is based on musical types and repeated choruses. \textit{Monteverdi’s Tonal Language}, Chapter 14 ("\textit{L’Incoronazione di Poppea}: Tonal-Allegorical Framework ”).

\textsuperscript{21} De’ Sommi notes the tradition of using the first act for protasis in the \textit{Quattro dialoghi}, 31.

\textsuperscript{22} McClary, "Constructions of Gender": 208.
the whole world, [and gratitude] makes us most loved every day, and finally unites us to God."  

It is only through the introduction of disorder in Act II, resulting from Orpheus's loss of hope because of Euridice's death, that we leave this world of perfect moral—and therefore aesthetic—balance.

These forms illustrate Orfeo's function as a monument to humanist study, achieved through the application of Vitruvius's scientific principles—as well as Cicero's moral maxim—to the theatrical arts. Following Classical and contemporary literary models, Orfeo's "pulchritudinous" ("Nil pulchrius," the academy's motto) structure emphasizes instruction primarily, supported by moving dramatic sequences and delightful displays of poetic and musical skill. In keeping with the group's moral aims, the play offers allegorical messages that serve as warnings against the protagonist's inherently "male" character flaws, in this case his being driven to despair as the result of romantic heartbreak (an issue alluded to in the closing chorus of the first act: "Let none, overcome by despair, give way to sorrow, as sometimes this may assail us so powerfully as to threaten our life").

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23 "L'ingratitudine secca il fonte della pieta divina, questa lo mantiene; L'ingratitudine lo strugg, questa lo conserva; L'ingratitudine ci fa odiosi a tutto'l mondo, questa ci rende ogni giorno piu amati, & finalmente ci unisce a Dio." Baccusi, In difesa.

24 "Alcun non sia che disperato in preda / Si doni al duol, benché talhor n'assiglia / Possente si che nostra vita inforsa." Incidentally, the connection between romantic despair and suicide was often connected to the line from the Dante (again, "Abandon all hope..."). Graziole de' Bambaglioni's commentary on the Dante speaks specifically to this correlation. An excerpt of this work is given in Dante, A Critical Heritage, 140-41. This issue is presented in less dire terms within Castiglione's Neoplatonic commentary on the "furor" created by the loss of one's beloved, which is given in the Introduction.
Architecturalism in the works of Monteverdi

It would not be a productive venture to seek out this architectural form in all of Monteverdi works, since there is no reason to believe that he would follow any single compositional method throughout his career. Rather, the composer appears to seek out the most effective means by which he can serve the character of the text itself, whether or not the approach includes an architectural design. This pragmatism, in fact, illustrates a key difference between Monteverdi and those theorists whose criticism or advice on musical topics was based not in the realities of practice, but rather in strict adherence to preexisting treatises (Artusi), or even intellectual curiosity (G. B. Doni).25 For these reasons, a more fruitful goal would be to understand why and how Monteverdi uses this structural design in certain of his works.

Examples of symmetrical forms that include features similar to those from Orfeo are found in Monteverdi's earliest surviving publications, and continue to appear frequently through the first decade of the seventeenth century. The composer's use of this form becomes increasingly rare in works published during the 1630s and 40s, and for reasons that are not clear to me, I have not found a single example in works set to a Latin text. The examples offered in this survey include works that were published before and after the first performance of Orfeo, in order to demonstrate that the composer did not discover this form

25 Massimo Ossi also discusses the divergent approaches of the practitioner, Monteverdi, and "gentlemen theorists" like Artusi and Doni, Divining the Oracle, 191-192. As noted in the Introduction, Monteverdi occasionally ventured into the world of theory, though like his fellow practitioner, Torquato Tasso, these forays served primarily to justify or explain his use of compositional style or device (for example, Monteverdi's "lettera" to Artusi from the Fifth Book, and his essay on the three genera from his preface to "Il Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda").
through his collaboration with the Invaghiti, but rather employed a compositional
approach that he had used in earlier works, and which he would continue to use
throughout his career. In some examples (all of which are found in the first three books of
madrigals), the form is limited to the alignment of a key moment in the text with the center
of musical space. These key textual moments most often feature pivotal poetic devices,
including changes in attitude (generically, "your eyes are kind / but you are cruel");
changes of voice, such as third-person narration to first-person declamation, or changes of
address, as from the address of nature to the speaker’s beloved; and the transition to a
poem’s closing epigram. In later examples (generally speaking, from the Fourth Book
forward), these musico-poetic alignments are usually accompanied by shifts in musical
features similar to those found in Orfeo (such as harmonic language and voicing).

An early example is found in the third selection from the First Book, "A che tormi il
ben mio." In this case, the center of musical space coincides with a localized harmonic
shift from the tonic mode of D Dorian to C Ionian, which is also emphasized by a shift to
slower-moving rhythms (Example 3.6). (As suggested above, this alignment between shifts

26 Additional examples from the First Book include "Filli cara e amata" and "Ardi o
gela a tua voglia," the musical space of both examples being divided at the closing epigram.
Examples from the Second Book include "Intorno a due vermiglie e vaghe labra," which is
divided at a reference to a "kiss" ("Spietato, un bacio solo") that corresponds to the "lips"
mentioned in the opening line; "Quell’ombraesser vorrei," divided by a light-dark
controposto ("Lasso! Ben negli affanni ombrà ignuda"); and "Dolcemente dormiva la mia
Clori," which changes from narration to declamation (at "Stolo, che fai?") at the center of
musical space. Two of the more interesting examples from the Third Book are found among
the madrigal cycles. For example, the musical space of "Vivrò fra l mieli tormenti" / "Ma
dove, oh lasso me" / "Io pur verrò là dove sète,"—which sets Tancred’s lament upon
Clorinda’s death (XII.77-79), a text that immediately follows the passage set in the
"Combattimento"—is evenly divided around a light-dark controposto ("In cui l’ombre e le
selve"). The cycle that sets a soliloquy by Livio Geliano ("Rimanti in pace / Ond’ei, di
morte") is evenly divided between the two madrigals, the first describing Thyrsis’s exit,
and the second featuring Phyllida’s lament upon being abandoned.
of musical features and the textual pivot is uncommon among works published before the *Fourth Book.* The equal division of musical space in this work falls at the poem’s closing epigram, the latter featuring the popular Petrarchan *controposto* between life and death.

An example that features more distinct shifts in musical features is found in “Ma tu, più che mai dura,” from the *Fifth Book* (1605; incidentally, the last collection of madrigals published before the premiere of *Orfeo*). Like the previous example, this work features an equal division of musical space around a pivotal moment in the text (in this case, a shift of address from the speaker’s beloved to a tirade directed at love itself), as well as a textural shift from faster to slower-moving rhythms, and a harmonic shift similar to the one found in the previous example. Unlike the previous example, this moment also features a shift

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27 A similar example from *Book Four* is found in “A un giro sol de’ begl’ochi lucenti,” the musical space of which is equally divided at the speaker’s change in attitude from a description of a woman’s beauty to a lament over her cruelty (beginning at “Sol io le luci lagrimose e meste”). The point at which this division occurs also features a textural shift to slower-moving rhythms (compared to the long roulades that permeate the first half of the madrigal), set over a long-held dominant harmony, which finally resolves through a long chain of suspensions. Numerous additional examples are found in the *Fourth, Fifth,* and *Sixth Books.* From the *Fourth Book,* see “Ah, dolente partita” (change from second to first person, at "E pur i’ provo"); "Sfogava con le stelle” (change from third-person narration to first-person declamation, at "O immagini belle"); and "Anima mia, perdona” (change in attitude from "your cruelty" to "my tenderness," at "Ma nel core"). From the *Fifth Book,* also see "Cruda Amarilli" (*controposto* between "you are a pale flower," to "yet wilder than a serpent," beginning at "Ma de l’áspido sordo"); "O Mirtillo" (change in address from the beloved to unhappy lovers, at "O anime in amor"); and "T’amò, mia vita" (change in address from first person to second person, at "O voce di dolcezza"). In addition to the opening cycle from the *Sixth Book* (the "Lamento d’Arianna," discussed below), see "Qui rise, o Tirsi" (change from narrative description to first-person reflection, beginning at "O memoria felice," which divides the madrigal’s temporal space between the first thirteen poetic lines and the final one); "Batto, qui pianse Ergasto" (change from first person to third person, at "E qui tremante e fioco"); and "Presse un fiume” (change of voice and epigram, at "Facciam, concordi amanti").
from the *mollis cantus* to the *durus*, which like the example from the midpoint of *Orfeo*, is signaled by a change of key signature (*Example 3.7*).\(^\text{28}\)

Like certain of the examples from *Orfeo* considered above, however, the precise alignment between the midpoint of musical space and the corresponding musical shifts would not likely have been detected during performance. First, as suggested above, it is not likely that a listener would have attempted to calculate these ratios during the performance itself. In fact, the latter example is the final selection from a three-part cycle, further lessening the likelihood that its central location would have been perceived in performance; additionally, the B-natural that first indicates the harmonic shift in this example appears in the canto voice two measures before the exact center of musical space.

What would have made this example meaningful to the scholar studying in private, however, is that the written indication of the harmonic shift (again, the change in key signature) appears at the precise center of musical space, as found in the printed music, which would have made this alignment between musical and poetic shift comprehensible only for those engaged in study away from the performance forum.\(^\text{29}\)

\(^\text{28}\) Chafe suggests a possible musical representation of the textual reference to “dura,” or “hardness” from the first line of the poem through the *mollis/durus* shift found in Monteverdi’s setting. *Monteverdi’s Tonal Language*, 113-116.

\(^\text{29}\) The more musically literate members of groups such as the Invaghit (or any member of the educated gentry, for that matter) may have studied such examples of musico-symmetrical forms. Related to such possibilities, recall that Artusi created a "score" version of certain passages of Monteverdi’s madrigals for study, a practice that would have been required for the type of analysis I have offered here. It is also possible that Monteverdi’s more well-educated colleagues would have considered these structures, or even that Monteverdi created them for his own enjoyment.
An example that, like Orfeo, appears to combine the equal division of smaller sections (that is, individual madrigals) with the equal division of the complete work (the madrigal cycle) is found in the composer’s madrigal version of the "Lamento d’Arianna" from the Sixth Book (published in 1614, just seven years after the first performance of Orfeo; Examples 3.8a-e). The musical space of each of the four selections is evenly divided around pivotal moments in the text: in the first selection, the center falls at the return of the opening line’s grand exclamation ("Lasciatemi morire"), while each of the final three selections is equally divided around the return of the exclamation, "O/Ah Teseo mio."

Additionally, all but one of these central points features a return to the cycle’s tonic harmony of D.\(^{30}\) The musical space of the entire cycle is equally divided around the final line from the second selection, in which Ariadne expresses her regret over the loss of her parents ("ed io più, non vidrovi o madre o padre mio"). As noted by both Anne MacNeil and Suzanne Cusick, this line serves as an expression of one of the libretto’s object lessons—arguably the primary lesson—nämely the consequences of defying of parental will.\(^{31}\) Therefore like Orfeo (and like Udine’s Psiche, see Chapter 2), the musical space of this cycle is centered on an action that allegorically represents a key moral lesson.

The "Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda" features a symmetrical design that closely resembles Orfeo’s, both through its emulation of the symmetrical structure found in the literary work on which it is based, and through associations between textual allegory

\(^{30}\) "Dove è la fede" features a dominant preparation for D (see Example 3.8c) that moves instead to the third-related C Major harmony, followed by series of weak cadences to D and A.

and harmonic language. A count of musical space within the "Combattimento" reveals a proportional division around the battle itself, with 274 tacti before the battle's commencement (m. 133), and 276 following the striking of the fatal blow (m. 308) (Figure 3.7). The precise center of Monteverdi's setting falls at the break of dawn, which like many of the central events found in the literary and musical works discussed in the previous chapters, appears to be a relatively insignificant event within the drama. However, a closer look at the adapted text, as well as the source from which it is taken, suggests a high level of allegorical significance.

Many of the important symbols and themes from Tasso's epic are not easily discernable through an examination of the excerpted text of the "Combattimento" alone, which after all, is based on just sixteen of the liberata's 1917 poetic octaves. As noted in Chapter 2, Tasso places the event that represents the epic's primary allegorical message (the celebration of the Holy Rites) at the center of the entire work; in his "Allegory on the poem," however, the poet delineates several additional allegories related to other characters and actions. Although not among those named by the poet, the allegorical imagery that seems to follow Tancred throughout the work is the duality of light and darkness. This association is felt most keenly in his interactions with Clorinda, beginning with the sunrise that first allows him to see her face, after he has knocked off her helmet during a brief skirmish (IX.74). This moment not only initiates his infatuation for her, but also presages their grand combat, after which the gentle removal of her helmet reveals Tancred's imprudence.

The canto from which the text of the "Combattimento" is taken (XII) features more than seventy-five mentions of light or darkness, a rate that far exceeds any other canto. The
first line reads, "It was night, and none took repose" (XII.1), articulating the "dark" side of this allegorical duality. This phrase also parallels a passage from Virgil’s *Aeneid*, "It was night, and all were enjoying the calm of sleep" (IV.522), a line which Tasso cites at several points within his theoretical writings.\(^3\) In his *Discourses on the Heroic Poem*, in fact, Tasso designates Virgil’s phrase as "the greatest possible ornament," citing it as an example of the proper establishment of both the setting and character of a scene.\(^3\) As one would expect with so many mentions of light and darkness, we also find several juxtapositions of this allegorical dualism. Octaves 20-25, for example, recount the story of Clorinda’s childhood as a light-skinned child born to dark-skinned parents, including five "light-dark" *controposti*. Later in the same canto, it is the loss of light within a dust cloud that prevents Clorinda from reaching safety within the city walls while Tancred pursues her. Perhaps it is in reference to the Tancred’s "unenlightened" decision to engage the woman he loves in mortal combat (possibly represented by the darkness of the dust cloud itself) that the author of the excerpted text opens with a reference to Tancred’s ignorance: “Tancred, believing Clorinda to be a man.”\(^3\)

The sequence preceding the battle is closed with the Hymn to the Night (XII.54), which like the canto from which this text comes, opens with an invocation of the night: “Night, who in the deep darkness of your breast / enclosed and made to be forgotten so

\(^3\) Tasso: "Era la notte, e non prendean ristoro." Virgil: "Nox erat, et placidum carpebant cuncta soporem."

\(^3\) Tasso, *Poema eroico*, 169, 103, 107.

\(^3\) "Tancredi, che Clorinda un uomo stima." Freely adapted from XII.52.
great an act.”

In fact, the author of the excerpted text chose the version of the Hymn from the *Gerusalemme conquistata*, which unlike the *liberata*, opens with the word “Notte,” thereby emphasizing the "dark" side of this poetic duality. The sun rises and Tancred triumphs, only to realize his folly in the “odious light... of this unfortunate day” (XII.75).

The description of Clorinda’s death that follows the excerpted text of the "Combattimento" features a barrage of light-dark juxtapositions, including a description of her pale visage as "a night sky ...without glow" (XII.81). The canto closes with Tancred’s dream, in which he sees her clothed in heavenly light, “her eyes flaming with zeal” (XII.93).

Turning to the harmonic language of Monteverdi’s setting, the battle sequence is set firmly in G Mixolydian, while the outer sections are set primarily in D Dorian. This association of G-centered modes with battle sequences, or at least a bellicose state of mind, is found in several of the selections from the *Eighth Book*, including "Altri canti d’amor."

This madrigal shares other noteworthy affinities with the "Combattimento," including cosmetic features ("galloping" rhythms, upward and downward-cascading scales, and "patter" text over repeated semiquavers), as well as a harmonic duality between the "bellicose" G Mixolydian and the "peaceful" D Dorian.

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35 "Notte, che nel profondo oscuro seno / chiudesti e ne l’oblio fatto si grande."

36 "Gli odiosi rai ...di questo infausto die."

37 "Un ciel notturno anco sereno, senza splendor." As noted above, Monteverdi set Tancred’s lament on Clorinda’s death (XII.77-79)—which immediately follows the textual excerpt set by the composer in the "Combattimento"—as a three-part madrigal cycle in the *Third Book*. The musical space of both settings is equally divided around a reference to darkness (the example from the *Third Book* is centered on the line, "In cui l’ombre e le selve / irritaron me prima e poi le belve").

38 “Fiammeggiò di zelo per gli occhi.”
Another aspect of Monteverdi’s harmonic allegory is found in the Hymn to the Night (mm. 88-132), which features two circle-of-fifths motions to the flattest harmony in the work, E-flat Major (see mm. 95, and 122), signaling a distinct mollis-ward shift. This harmonic motion is given under the narration of the sunrise from the center of Monteverdi’s setting as well, again ending with a cadence on E-flat (Example 3.9). As noted by Nicholas Csicsko, this harmony is found at only one other point in the work, namely the moment of Clorinda’s baptism, the latter event almost certainly interpreted as a reference to her escape from the "darkness" of the Muslim religion to the "light" of Christianity.\footnote{39 Nicholas Csicsko, “Monteverdi’s Combattimento di Tancred e Clorinda, an Analysis” (Ph.D. diss., The Juilliard School, 2010). Castiglione expresses the view of Islam as a "religion of darkness" in his story of a Courtier who had "[turned] so many thousands of men from the false sect of Mohammed to the light of Christian truth." Courtier, 322.} Through this shared harmonic motion to the mollis cantus, Monteverdi follows the Vitruvian model discussed in Chapter 2 by creating a musical correspondence between the work’s center and its opening and closing sections.

Therefore, like the literary and musical works analyzed in this study, the central event of the "Combattimento" is not found in the delights of the battle’s violence, or even the moving scene of Clorinda’s death; instead, it is the instructive, allegorical symbol of the dawn, whose light represents the moral enlightenment by which the listener may avoid the errors undertaken by Tancred in the darkness of ignorance. Also like the works considered above (including the Gerusalemme liberata), this precise location of this central event within its symmetrical structure most likely would have been perceptible only through careful study of the "musical artifact," since it does not coincide with a grand musical or theatrical gesture.
These examples demonstrate not only the composer’s ability to create musical structures that align with a popular model of Vitruvian symmetry, but also to adhere to the instruction-centered model found in works composed or admired by the Invaghiti. In the Conclusions, I will consider how Monteverdi’s approach to musico-textual expression in Orfeo aligned with and diverged from its other functions within the circumstances of its creation, including its use as a courtly entertainment, as well as its function as a manifestation of the academic and social philosophy of the Accademia degli Invaghiti.
Chapter 3: Figures and examples

Figure 3.1: Symmetrical structure of Monteverdi’s score for Orfeo (1609)

Midpoint of Prologue/Act I: Orpheus’s first words

1/3 point of score: Messenger’s arrival

Act II: Eurydice dies

Midpoint of score: Arrival at the gates of the Inferno

Act III: Orpheus’s plea to enter the Inferno

Act IV: Eurydice’s second death

Act V: Orpheus assumed into the heavens in the company of Apollo

Example 3.1: Arrival of the Messenger (Act II)

"Oh! bitter chance, oh evil, cruel fate!"
**Example 3.2: Midpoint of Act II**

"And calling 'Orpheus, Orpheus,' after a grave sigh, she expired in these arms."

**Example 3.3: Midpoint of Act IV**

"But while I sing, alas! Who assures me that she follows? Alas, who hides from me the sweet light of her beloved eyes?"
Example 3.4: *Midpoint of Orfeo*

"Abandon every hope, you that enter!"
Figure 3.2: Temporal proportions of the Prologue (Chrissochoidis)

16 breves--Ritornello (complete)
   19 breves--Strophe 1
      6 breves--Ritornello (incomplete)
      14 breves--Strophe 2
      6 breves--Ritornello (incomplete)
16 breves--Ritornello (complete)
   6 breves--Ritornello (incomplete)
16 breves--Strophe 3
   6 breves--Ritornello (incomplete)
      15 breves--Strophe 4
      6 breves--Ritornello (incomplete)
   19 breves--Strophe 5
16 breves--Ritornello (complete)
Figure 3.3a: Symmetrical arrangement of musical types around “Rosa del ciel” (Grout)

1. Introductory song (shepherd): "In questo lieto e fortunato giorno"
   2. Chorus: "Viene Imeneo"
   3. Recitative (nymph): "Muse onor di Parnasso"
   4. Chorus (balletto): "Lasciate i monti"
   5. Orchestral ritornello (dancing)
   6. Recitative (shepherd): "Ma tu gentil cantor"
   7. ARIA (Orpheus): "Rosa del ciel"
   8. Recitative (Eurydice): "Io non dirò"
   9. Chorus (balletto): "Lasciate i monti" (#4 shortened)
  10. Orchestral ritornello (dancing) (#5)
  11. Chorus: "Viene Imeneo" (#2)
  12. Closing recitative (shepherd): "Ma s'il nostro gioir"

Figure 3.3b: Symmetrical arrangement of mode around "Rosa del ciel" (Chafe)

Chorus: "Viene Imeneo" g/G
Solo (Nymph): "Muse onor di Parnasso") F
   Chorus: "Lasciate i monti" G
   Chorus: "Qui miri il sole" (two strophes) g
   Ritornello G
   Solo (Shepherd): "Ma tu gentil cantor" a
   Solo (Orpheus): "Rosa del ciel" g/d
   Solo (Eurydice): "Io non dirò" d
   Chorus: "Lasciate i monti" G
   Chorus: "Qui miri il sole" (two strophes) g
   Ritornello G
Chorus: "Viene Imeneo" g/G
Solo (Shepherd): "Ma s’il nostro gioir" F
Figure 3.3c: Symmetrical arrangement of scoring around "Rosa del ciel"

a1--In questo lieto e fortunate giorno
   
   a5--Vieni Imeneo
   
   (a1--Muse, honor di Parnasso)
   
   a5--Lasciate i monti
   
   a5--R1

a1--Ma tu gentil cantor

a1--Rosa del ciel

a1--Io non dire
   
   a5--Lasciate i monti
   
   a5--R1
   
   a5--Vieni Imeneo

a1--Ma s'il nostro gioir
**Figure 3.4:** *Symmetrical formation in choral finale of Act I*

Act I
a1--Ma s’il nostro gioir
  a5-R3
a2--Alcun non sia
  a5-R3
a3--Che poi che nembo rio
  a5-R3
a2--E dopo l’aspro gel
  (a5-Chorus)
  a5-Sinfonia

Act II
a1--Ecco pur
Example 3.5a: Cantus and continuo lines, opening of final sinfonia from Act I; opening of first selection of Act II

Opening of sinfonia from Act I

Opening of Act II

Ec-co pur ch'a voi ri-tor-no, ca-re sel-ve e piag-ge a ma-te
Example 3.5b: *End of Act I/beginning Act II, from Amadino print (1609)*

[End of Act I/Beginning of Act II]

_O R F E O._

_Copurch'avi ti turno care pel sue piagg'iate amate Ne quel sol fatto be-

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**Figure 3.6: Symmetrical formations of Act I**

*Prologue*

16 breves--R1 (complete)
   19 breves--Strophe 1
      6 breves--R1
         14 breves--Strophe 2
         6 breves--R1
16 breves--R1
   6 breves--R1
16 breves--Strophe 3
   6 breves--R1
      15 breves--Strophe 4
         6 breves--R1
      19 breves--Strophe 5
16 breves--R1

*Act I*

a1—In questo lieto e fortunate giorno
   a5—Vieni Imeneo
      (a1—Muse, honor di Parnasso)
   a5—Lasciate I monti
   a5--R2
a1—Ma tu gentil cantor
a1—Rosa del ciel (Midpoint of Act I)
a1—Io non dirò
   a5—Lasciate I monti
   a5--R2
   a5—Vieni Imeneo
a1—Ma s'il nostro gioir (3/4 point of Act I)
   a5--R3
a2—Alcun non sia
   a5--R3
a3—Che poi che nembo rio
   a5--R3
a2—E dopo l'aspro gel
      (a5-Chorus: Ecco Orfeo)
      a5—Sinfonia (musically related to "Ecco pur")

*Act II*

a1—Ecco pur
Example 3.6: *Center of "A che tormi il ben mio" (First Book)*

Example 3.7: *Center of "Ma tu, piú che mai dura" (Fifth Book)*
Examples 3.8a-e: Symmetrical divisions from the "Lamento d'Arianna" (Sixth Book)

3.8a: "Lasciatemi morire"

3.8b: "O Teseo mio"
3.8c: "Dove è la fede"

Center of madrigal

che mi strac-cie mi di-vo-ri
Ah-Te-seo Ah_Te-seo mi-o

strac-cie mi di-vo-ri Ah Te-seo mi-o

che mi strac-cie mi di-vo-ri Ah Te-seo mi-o

di-vo-ri Ah Te-seo mi-o

3.8d: "Ahi ch'ei non pur risponde"

Center of madrigal

O Te-seo
O Te-seo mi-o

O Te-seo O Te-seo mi-o

O Te-seo O Te-seo mi-o non son

O Te-seo O Te-seo mi-o

O Te-seo O Te-seo mi-o
3.8e: Center of madrigal cycle

Quinto

ed i-o più non ve-dro vi ed i-o più non ve-dro vio ma-dre o___ pa dre mi-

Alto

ed i-o più non ve-dro vi ed i-o più non ve-dro vi ma-dro___ pa dre mi-

Tenor

ed i-o più non ve-dro vi ed i-o più non ve-dro vi ma-dre pa dre mi-

Center of madrigal cycle

ed i-o più non ve-dro vio ma-dre o___ pa dre mi-o

o ed i-o più non ve-dro vio ma-dr-o___ pa dre mi-o.

-o ed i-o più non ve-dro vio ma-dr-o pa dre-mi-o.

o ed i-o più non ve-dro vio ma-dr-o pa dre-mi-o.

ed i-o più non ve-dro vio ma-dr-o pa dre mi-o.

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Figure 3.7: Symmetrical design of “Il Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda” (Eighth Book)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Introduction</th>
<th>Battle (Daybreak)</th>
<th>Clorinda’s Death</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Measures</td>
<td>1-132</td>
<td>133-316 (228)</td>
<td>317-445</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tacti</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>368 (184)</td>
<td>276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poetic octaves</td>
<td>I-II</td>
<td>III-IV-V</td>
<td>VI-VII-VIII</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example 3.9: Center of “Il Combattimento”

"Already of the final star the ray languishes upon first tree that in the east alights."
Conclusions: Reconciling the Orfeo's

As noted in the Introduction, scholars have addressed various aspects of Orfeo's function within the social, political, and artistic milieu in which it was first created. Certain writers have addressed its role as one of Ottonelli's "princely" operas through its use within Mantuan court politics (again, the "Mantuan Orfeo"), as well as its role in the rivalry between the Gonzaga and the Medici. Scholars have also argued that through this work, and through "Possente spirto" in particular, the composer offers a "musical argument" in reply to Giovanni Artusi's criticism of modern music ("Monteverdi's Orfeo"). Others have suggested that Orfeo serves as a "hymn" to music's greatness, a view which I have characterized as the "modern Orfeo," based on an ahistorical "backshadowing" of the role and importance of both music and the composer within the process of Orfeo's creation.¹

Several of the conclusions offered in my reading of the "Invaghiti Orfeo"—including my characterization of Orpheus's musical style as inappropriate for the persuasion of his judge in "Possente spirto," and the centrality of the Dantean allusion from the opening of Act III over this aria—may seem to contradict or even nullify these views. In order to clarify the alignments and misalignments between these various readings of Orfeo, let us briefly

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¹ "Backshadowing," or viewing a historical figure or event's meaning according to modern evaluations of its significance is a concept that was first suggested by Michael André Bernstein in his essay, "Victims-in-waiting: Backshadowing and the Representation of European Jewry," New Literary History 29, 4 (Autumn 1998): 625-651. My thanks to Klara Moricz for bringing this concept to my attention.
survey the views of the Invaghiti and those admired by the group on the subject of music, as it relates to these views of the work itself.

The "Mantuan Orfeo"

The first production of Orfeo served as both an academic and courtly event, since as noted at the opening of this study, it was given for the Invaghiti under the auspices of Prince Francesco as the latter's first public entertainment. Even the work's genesis under the Invaghiti was effectively connected to the court, since a member of the Gonzaga family had always led the academy (even if this leadership was only titular at various points during the academy's existence). As would be expected in such circumstances, Orfeo occasionally addresses or alludes to topics, personages, or actions related to the Mantuan court.²

The greatest difference between Orfeo's function as a courtly event and its function as an expression of humanist learning is found in the function and importance of "Possente spirto." Although the notion of Orpheus's plea serving as the play's central event would not have aligned with its function as an expression of humanist philosophy (discussed in Chapter 1), it certainly may have aligned with the goals of the "Mantuan Orfeo" as the climactic musical expression within this courtly spectacle. In the same way, although the "artifacts" of Orfeo (again, the libretto of 1607 and the score of 1609) may have provided academics like the Invaghiti opportunities to study the work's hidden conceits in private, ²

² Whenham gives several examples of occasion-specific references in "The Mantuan Orfeo."
the libretto served a courtly function as an aid to the listener during the performance, and
the score as a commemorative token of this ephemeral event. Therefore, while Orfeo's
"princely" power was centered in the display of musical and poetic brilliance of "Possente
spirto"—as well as the production's display of the Mantuan court's ability to collect great
poets, composers, and performers—its academic value was tucked away elsewhere, quietly
hidden within understated cues intended for those seeking the meaning of the "academic"
Orfeo.

"Monteverdi's Orfeo"

Despite music's apparently peripheral status in the Invaghiti's studies (in
comparison with oratory and poetry, at least), the academy members' views on musical
expression appear to align with Monteverdi's regarding the seconda pratica in some
respects, in particular regarding the goal of matching musical and textual affect (or in the
words of the composer's brother, "[making] the words the mistress of the harmony"). Guazzo expresses a similar sentiment in his dialectic on "civil conversation," stating, "the
variation of the voice that has acquired grace, like an instrument of many strings, uplifts the
listener and the speaker, the modulation [literally, "mutation"] of which one must do
discretely in respect to time, and according to the quality of the words, as well as the
diversity of judgments and reasons."  

3 Giulio Cesare Monteverdi, "Explanation of Claudio Monteverdi’s letter of 1607,"
given in Strunk's Source Readings, 538.

4 "Il variare della voce acquistata gratia, & a guisa d'une istromento di molte corde,
apporta sollevamento all’ascoltare, & al dicitore; la qual mutatione s’ha però a fare

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This congruence between the views of the composer and the Invaghiti may reflect the group's admiration for Torquato Tasso, who expresses a similar sentiment in his theoretical writings. Perhaps the most well known of the poet’s views on the subject are his expressions of frustration with the "lightweight" treatment of "weighty" texts by his musical contemporaries, articulated in several works, including the Discourses on the Heroic Poem and La Cavalletta. In the former work, Tasso laments the same lack of agreement between poetry and music in the "art of imitation," owing to "human imperfection," which differed from his vision of glorious Antiquity, in which "musicians and poets were the same, as for example ...Orpheus."5

It is Tasso’s views on artistic representation, however, that offer the clearest explanation for the apparent lack of connection between the musical prowess of Striggio’s Orpheus and his ineffectiveness as a protagonist. In the "Allegory on the poem" from the liberata, the poet suggests that the lessons offered through the meaning of the words themselves serve the highest function, namely moral instruction, while their performance—both textual and musical—act only as a delightful decoration through the "imitation" of moral habit: "poetry, like an animal in which two separate natures are joined, is composed of Imitation and Allegory. With the former it attracts the souls and the ears of men and brings them wondrous delight, while the with the latter it instructs men in virtue or knowledge or both."6 This view of music’s role, however, does not devalue its power as

discretamente a tempo, & secondo la qua lità delle parole, & la diversità delle sentenze, & de’ragionamenti." Guazzo, Conversatione, 80v.

5 Tasso, Heroic Poem, 199.

"the most powerful imitator," as Marsilio Ficino refers to it. Rather, it expresses the popular humanist view that—as in the art of oratory—performance serves the secondary goals of moving and delighting the listener, while a work's primary value is to be found through the moral instruction offered in the meaning of the words.\(^7\)

For this reason, the contradiction between Orpheus's musical skill and his ineffectiveness as an orator may have been meant to convey a subtle, ironic message on music's ability to move the heart and mind of the listener, as well as its limitations in regard to moral instruction. As suggested in the previous chapters, this message is implied by La Musica's choice not to mention the latter among Orpheus's abilities, as well as Charon's choice not to mention instruction in his response to Orpheus's musical oration (this omission is also found in Monteverdi and Striggio's discussion of music's power in a series of letters from 1616, discussed below). Therefore, as the allegorical embodiment of music proclaimed the greatness of this art for the "delight" of the academy's guests, the members may have delighted in their understanding of the hidden message on the limitations of music's power.

Regarding the "musical philosophy" expressed in Orfeo, we should also note that the libretto printed for the 1607 performance features the destruction of the musical demigod Orpheus by the Bacchantes, in keeping with the Ovidian rendition of the myth. If one were therefore to try to glean the Invaghiti's philosophical statement on music's power from this text, it could be construed that the drama presents music as an art that fails to move the

\(^7\) Given in Barbara Hanning, Of Poetry and Music's Power, 27. Ficino's work almost certainly figured prominently in the Invaghiti's views on music, given the group's Neoplatonic inclinations, which are expressed in several works (including Orfeo), and most clearly in the conversation on female beauty given in the Introduction.
stout heart of Charon, fails to rescue Eurydice from the Inferno, and ends with the destruction of Orpheus by the agents of Dionysus. I would argue, however, that Striggio's libretto is not meant to convey any such grand philosophical message on the subject. Rather, the faithfulness to Ovid's rendition is more likely in emulation of Angelo Poliziano's *Fabula di Orfeo*, which as noted in Chapter 2, finds clear resonances in Striggio's text. Neither is the work's philosophical statement on music substantially modified by the changed ending found in the 1609 score: despite the *lieto fine* by which Orpheus avoids annihilation, the young singer still fails to move Charon, and fails to recover Eurydice, undone by his "youthful desire" ([giovinil desio], from Act IV) for personal glory, as well as everlasting happiness.

The view of Orfeo as a testament to music's greatness has also led to the characterization of Orpheus as an idealized embodiment of music's power, an inclination which would seem to be supported by his status as the demigod of music, as well as the protagonist of a work that has come to be viewed as the first great work of the opera genre. However, this conclusion is not supported by Striggio's characterization of the mythical figure. Rather, in keeping with the moralizing model found in narrative works composed for or by the members of the academy, the protagonist is a heroic youth who comes to a tragic end, brought about by certain errors or character flaws (again, the Aristotelian *hamartia*). Seen in this context, we may better reconcile his failures with his dramaturgical function, including his inability to persuade Charon through his grand oration.
The "modern" Orfeo

The appraisal of Orfeo as a "hymn" to music's greatness—or at the very least, a work that is meant to glorify music's power—is often supported by the composer's now-famous statement from these letters that Orfeo led him to a "just prayer" (that is, the musical brilliance of "Possente spirto"). To more clearly understand the composer's meaning, however, we must consider the context of the letter itself, as well as the circumstance in which it was written. As noted by Tim Carter, such correspondence was crafted according to an intricate "ritual of courtly exchange," in which the composer would not likely have taken certain actions, such as a presumption to educate his employer's representative on the subject of music's greatness in comparison to other artistic media.8 (Since Monteverdi made his living through his labors, he was for all intents and purposes an "employee" of the Mantuan court, a circumstance that clearly defined his subordinate station in respect to the signori of the academy.) Additionally, it is unlikely that Striggio, who was already educated in the musical arts, would have welcomed philosophical education on this subject from Monteverdi, especially since the latter was a mere "practitioner," as opposed to the former's status as "gentlemen scholar" (a disparity of which the composer was reminded by Artusi some years earlier).

Monteverdi also was not likely to take such presumptuous actions, owing to his need of the signori's favor for professional security and advancement. For example, in

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8 Tim Carter, "'Every Friday evening music is performed in the Hall of Mirrors...': Claudio Monteverdi and the Rituals of Courtly Exchange in Early Seventeenth-Century Italy," from Musical Text as Ritual Object, ed. Hendrik Schulze (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, forthcoming).
1607, the composer still hoped to acquire the position of *maestro di cappella* upon Giovanni Gastoldi's retirement or passing, a decision that would in no small part depend on the good will of the duke's ministers. Several of the Invaghiti, including Striggio, held such positions at the Mantuan court; another academy member whose good opinion Monteverdi likely would have valued was Ercole Udine, who was frequently empowered by the Gonzaga to acquire musical resources, performers, and commissions. After the composer's dismissal from the Mantuan court in 1612, and even more so once he had been appointed to a prestigious position in Venice (that is, at the time the letters of 1616 were written), Monteverdi could have allowed himself more freedom in this regard. However, his hope for continued commissions from Mantua—which in some cases offered financial compensation, but in all cases promised increased favor from powerful allies—likely kept him from risking such an effrontery. For these reasons, it is highly unlikely that Monteverdi would have presumed to challenge the views of the academy members (as opposed to the Bolognese cleric Artusi, who would not hold so much sway over the composer's career prospects) in order to shine a more flattering light on the medium that served as his profession, either in his presentation of Orpheus's musical abilities in *Orfeo*, or in his statements on music's power in his exchanges with Striggio from 1616, to which I turn now.

Striggio and Monteverdi's correspondence from 1616 surrounds the planned entertainments for Duke Ferdinando's wedding to Caterina de' Medici in 1617. This exchange of letters between the composer and his erstwhile librettist began with Striggio's

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solicitation of the composer’s opinion on the suitability a new libretto for musical setting (Scipione Agnelli’s Le Nozze di Tetide). Monteverdi responded in his now-famous letter of December 9, 1616, in which he addresses potential difficulties related to musical imitation, as well as the text’s ability to move the passions: "How, dear Sir, can I imitate the speech of the winds, if they do not speak? And how can I, by such means, move the passions?”¹⁰ A few days later, Striggio wrote to Duke Ferdinando to relate the composer’s concerns, stating that the composer does not know how to move and delight through his setting of the text. Like Monteverdi, Striggio does not mention instruction, suggesting a shared understanding the subject (or at least Monteverdi’s unwillingness to challenge Striggio’s views on the subject).¹¹

Additionally, Monteverdi’s comments in the letter of December 9 address only practical concerns—as opposed to the philosophical statements on the subject offered in works such as Stefano Guazzo’s La ghirlanda—despite the composer’s use of a minor rhetorical flourish in the now-famous quote. The composer first cites Plato in his suggestion that "outdoor" instruments such as trombones and cornetti should be used for those scenes which feature the outdoor gods of the sea, along with an observation regarding the requirement of several sopranos for the many female (or at least non-masculine) roles. The composer’s closing remarks on this subject include the observation that he cannot set the blowing of the wind to music, since wind does not properly possess a voice (possibly a reference to the Galenic concept of the voice as a physical thing that issues from a "human" organ, namely the larynx). Following these comments, he turns to another

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¹⁰ Stevens, The Letters of Claudio Monteverdi, 110.

¹¹ Carter, "Monteverdi and Le nozze di Tetide": 494.
practical matter, namely the lack of a dramatic apex through which he may offer a brilliant musical display, similar to "Possente spirto" or Arianna's lament. Although the composer's comment does address music's ability to set a play's climactic speech effectively, its meaning addresses the topic in respect to the expectation that courtly entertainments should include grand artistic displays that move and delight the listeners, rather than the supremacy of music among the media presented in the theatrical forum.

In sum, Monteverdi's professional circumstances, as well as his views on the subject of music's power (or at least his willingness to accede to his noble masters' views on the subject within his correspondence), suggest that Monteverdi did not seek to glorify music above all other arts through the brilliance of his setting. Rather, the composer fulfilled his employer's requests for moving and delightful music, likely based in the understanding that the highest goal of his contribution remained the impartation of moral instruction, whether through direct or ironic exemplification.

Based on these conclusions regarding Orfeo's various functions at the time of its creation, as well as the analysis offered in this study, we may better understand how the representation of the subjects considered in this study aligned with the academic and social philosophy of the Invaghiti. As demonstrated through this study, these representations tend to fall within Castiglione's vision for the behavior of the "ideal Courtier," including the mastery of oratory, which was considered essential for the nobleman's role within the social and political spheres; issues related to gender, including feminine istitutioni and masculine virtù; and the glorification of beauty through participation in pastimes such as music and theater. Certain messages are presented in a way that could be appreciated by
the Invaghiti’s guests within a generalized discourse, while others would be
comprehensible only to those *cognoscenti* who participated in lofty academic discourse, in
some cases requiring the careful study of the musico-dramatic artifacts. In quintessentially
academic fashion, these mysterious messages offered the allure of knowledge that is
hidden from "presumptuous plebians," firmly underscoring the work’s function as one of
Ottone’s "academic" operas.
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