



GESUALDO DENTRO IL NOVECENTO

Atti del Convegno internazionale di studi nel quarto centenario
della scomparsa di Carlo Gesualdo principe di Venosa (1566-1613)

a cura di
DANIELA TORTORA



EDIZIONI DEL CONSERVATORIO DI MUSICA SAN PIETRO A MAJELLA
Napoli 2017

CONSERVATORIO DI MUSICA SAN PIETRO A MAJELLA DI NAPOLI

GESUALDO DENTRO IL NOVECENTO

Atti del Convegno internazionale di studi
nel quarto centenario della scomparsa di Carlo Gesualdo principe di Venosa
(1566-1613)

NAPOLI, 14-16 NOVEMBRE 2013

a cura di
DANIELA TORTORA



EDIZIONI DEL CONSERVATORIO DI MUSICA SAN PIETRO A MAJELLA
Napoli 2017

GESUALDO DENTRO IL NOVECENTO

Convegno internazionale di studi
nel quarto centenario della scomparsa di Carlo Gesualdo principe di Venosa
(1566-1613)

Conservatorio di musica San Pietro a Majella
NAPOLI, 14, 15, 16 NOVEMBRE 2013

sotto l'Alto Patronato del Presidente della Repubblica

Giorgio Napolitano

con il patrocinio di

Regione Campania
Comune di Napoli

in collaborazione con

Pontificio Istituto di Musica Sacra
Fondazione Carlo Gesualdo Centro Internazionale Studi e Ricerche

Comitato d'onore

Riccardo Muti
Aldo Ciccolini
Francesco d'Avalos
Vincenzo De Gregorio
Roberto De Simone
Vincenzo De Vivo
Licia Borrelli Vlad

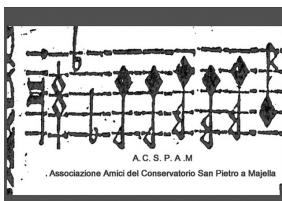
Comitato scientifico

Dinko Fabris
Giovanni Guanti
Daniela Tortora

Curatore scientifico degli atti del convegno

Daniela Tortora

Questa pubblicazione è stata realizzata grazie al contributo
dell'Associazione Amici del Conservatorio San Pietro a Majella



INDICE

<i>Premessa</i> , ELSA EVANGELISTA, direttore del Conservatorio San Pietro a Majella di Napoli	7
<i>Introduzione</i> , DANIELA TORTORA	9
<i>Programma del convegno</i>	19
ROMAN VLAD, <i>L'ultimo Stravinskij</i>	21
GLENN WATKINS, <i>Avant-propos</i>	25
DINKO FABRIS, <i>Gesualdo: a Renaissance Mith for the third Millennium.</i> <i>A Tribute to Glenn Watkins</i>	29
MASSIMILIANO LOCANTO, <i>«A new world of chromatic-harmony polyphony».</i> <i>Il significato della musica di Gesualdo per l'ultimo Stravinskij</i>	57
PATRIZIA VEROLI, <i>Il Monumentum pro Gesualdo di Balanchine</i>	89
MILA DE SANTIS, <i>“Neomadrigalismo”: le (dubbe) fortune di un -ismo novecentesco</i>	103
GIOVANNI GUANTI, <i>Manierismo, ancora manierismi, manierismi sempre</i>	115
MATTEO SANSONE, <i>Gesualdo nella musicologia e nella letteratura inglesi</i>	135
VINCENZO DE GREGORIO, <i>Il crocevia delle tensioni spirituali nella Napoli del '500</i>	153
RENATO DI BENEDETTO, <i>Per Francesco d'Avalos</i>	157

DANIELA TORTORA, <i>Per una drammaturgia musicale difettiva: Maria di Venosa di Francesco d'Avalos</i>	159
IVANKA STOIANOVA, <i>De Gesualdo à Nono: une mise en espace de la vocalité</i>	181
PIETRO MISURACA, <i>Le Voci sottovetro. Metamorfosi gesualdiane nella musica di Salvatore Sciarrino</i>	191
STEFANO LOMBARDI VALLAURI, <i>Da Gesualdo allo spettralismo barbaro: radici modali di due tipi di cromatismo postonale</i>	225
BO HOLTEN, <i>Thoughts on the practical interpretation of Gesualdo madrigals and new Baroque Opera with a special close look at «Asciugate i begli occhi» (1611) and at Gesualdo-Shadows (2014)</i>	249
ENRICO RENNA, <i>Dialoghi con Gesualdo: un laboratorio di composizione</i>	255
<i>Note al CD</i>	257
<i>Indice dei nomi</i>	261

DINKO FABRIS
GESUALDO:
A RENAISSANCE MYTH FOR THE THIRD MILLENNIUM
A Tribute to Glenn Watkins¹

1. *The visionary from Venosa*

Carlo Gesualdo, the “prince of Venosa”, is not only one of the greatest composers in European music history, but also one of the few of his time who still continue to surprise present-day audiences and touch them emotionally just as he touched the listeners of his time.

Gesualdo has been compared to Schönberg and described as a visionary who anticipated the new music of the 20th century.² Stravinskij declared him to be his role model and dedicated his famous *Monumentum pro Gesualdo* to him in 1960.³ The scholarly literature on Gesualdo is now immense, and interpreters have increasingly made his works more accessible through concerts and recordings. And yet, as far as the sources of Gesualdo’s music are concerned, a great deal of research remains to be done. The present article is conceived as a personal journey exploring various aspects of the life, the works, and the reception history of this extraordinarily creative figure – a “Gesualdiana” of sorts where I intend to revisit the personality of the prince of Venosa and his music, to update the available historical information that concerns him, and to imagine possible scenarios for the scholarship on Gesualdo in the near future.

The paper is divided into two parts. The first one will assess the state of our knowledge about Gesualdo some sixty years after Glenn Watkins began his life-long research project on him (§ 1-4). In the second part I will discuss recent works by contemporary composers strongly influenced by the life and music of the prince of Venosa (§ 5-8).

¹ The present text is a revised version of the Lecture I made on 23 October 2015 at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, which has inaugurated the “Watkins Lectures” in the new “Watkins Room” as a Tribute to the scholar who has devoted his entire career and life to the knowledge and diffusion of Gesualdo’s music. I wish to thank the colleagues at the University of Michigan, Louise Stein and Gabriela Cruz for kindly inviting me to deliver this lecture, and Stefano Mengozzi for his help correcting my English text and for many suggestions on the points presented below. Last but not least, my deep gratitude to Glenn Watkins for his continuous generosity and friendship during the last fifteen years.

² Cf. EGON WELLESZ, *Schoenberg and Beyond*, «Musical Quarterly», n. 2, 1916, p. 89: «We have a similar phenomenon in the history of the music of the sixteenth century, in the person of the Italian composer, Gesualdo, Prince of Venosa [...] The same fate may be in store for Schönberg». The comparison established first by Wellesz has been noticed and studied in GLENN WATKINS, *The Gesualdo Hex. Music, Myth, and Memory*, New York, Norton, 2010, pp. 131-ff. On Schönberg see also Part Two, pp. 97-133.

³ In 1957 Robert Craft noted that Stravinskij’s passion for Gesualdo had started to develop at least five years earlier, leading him to undertake two journeys to the castle village of Gesualdo in 1956 and 1959 to compose the *Monumentum pro Gesualdo* (premiered in Venice at the teatro La Fenice in September 1960), and to accept the charge to complete two motets from Gesualdo’s *Sacrae Cantiones*, vol. 2 (1603), still today preserved in incomplete state. The Stravinskij-Gesualdo connection is widely discussed in WATKINS, *The Gesualdo Hex* cit., Part Three, pp. 135-204.

2. Sixty years ago

Very few musicologists have gained the attention of the pre-eminent composers of their time. Glenn Watkins's first book on Gesualdo (1973),⁴ carried a *Preface* penned by none other than Igor Stravinskij, arguably the most important composer of the past century. Stravinskij's *Preface to Gesualdo, the Man and his Music* is dated 1968 under the title *Gesualdo di Venosa: New Perspectives*. Its opening lines became proverbial: «Musicians may yet save Gesualdo from musicologists».⁵ Indeed, Stravinskij indicated two ways of saving Gesualdo from «the prejudices of the scholars»: one was the music performed by musicians (this was the decade of the first recordings of Gesualdo madrigals, directed by Robert Craft for the Columbia and CBS labels),⁶ and the other was the musicological study by Glenn Watkins. Stravinskij credited Watkins with many new findings and new critical perspectives that have contributed to deepening our understanding of Gesualdo's oeuvre: not only his sacred music, but also the madrigals should be studied in the context of the Neapolitan musical milieu, and particularly of the music by contemporary composers such as Pomponio Nenna. Going back to Stravinskij's *Preface* after many years to prepare this Lecture, I was surprised to discover that the Russian composer had developed a particularly rich understanding of Gesualdo's style and artistic goals. Stravinskij described Gesualdo as «a composer of always strongly characterized and expertly made “normal” music whose special inventiveness lies in such other areas as rhythm and intensifying of vocal colours by means of unusual combinations in extremes of ranges».⁷

In the second edition of his *Gesualdo, the Man and his Music* (1991), published almost twenty years after the first edition, Watkins described the major change that had taken place in the intervening years in Gesualdo research, which had been exploring the double context of, on the one hand, the two main musical centres of interest (Ferrara and Naples), and, on the other hand, the large number of professional musicians around the Neapolitan prince-composer.⁸ Another important book by Watkins, *Proofs through the Night: Music and the Great War*, cites Gesualdo only occasionally – namely, in reference to the impact of the first performances of Gesualdo's madrigals in the United States around

⁴ GLENN WATKINS, *Gesualdo. The Man and His Music*, with a *Preface* by Igor Stravinskij, London, Oxford University Press, 1973; first reprint in the US: Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1974; second edition: Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1991, with Stravinskij's *Preface* at pp. V-IX.

⁵ IGOR STRAVINSKIJ, *Preface*, in WATKINS, *Gesualdo: The Man and His Music* cit., 2nd ed., p. V. The reading of the complete phrase is less negative in tone against musicologists: «Musicians may yet save Gesualdo from musicologists: but certainly the latter have had the best of it until now [...]. Professor Watkins's monograph [...] should help to shock the prejudice of the scholars [...]».

⁶ The first two LPs with music by Carlo Gesualdo conducted by Robert Craft were: *Madrigals And Sacred Music*, Columbia Masterworks MS 5234 (1958) and *Canzonettas, Madrigals, Galliards, Sacre Cantiones, Psalms*, Columbia Masterworks MS 6048 (1959). The following release, eight years later, was much more important: *Don Carlo Gesualdo 1560-1613: Prince Of Madrigalists* CBS 72276 (1966), with liner notes by Glenn Watkins. The subtitle on the cover read: «Tributes to His Astonishing Life & Music».

⁷ STRAVINSKIJ, *Preface* cit., p. VII.

⁸ To be found in particular into the appendix to Watkins's monograph, entitled *Aggiornamenti* (pp. 329-364).

1927, and on the topic of Gesualdo's role in the revival of early music for nationalistic purposes by Italian composers such as Pizzetti, Malipiero, and Casella.⁹

In his more recent book, *The Gesualdo Hex*, Watkins recalls his first encounter with Stravinskij, and points out that the composer had already been acquainted with Gesualdo's sacred music in the ten years before 1968.¹⁰ This time, aside from the well-known comparison between Gesualdo and Stravinskij, Watkins draws parallels between the historical positions of Gesualdo and Arnold Schönberg (a comparison first proposed by Egon Wellesz as early as 1916)¹¹ at the light of a previously unpublished correspondence by Schönberg now owned by the University of Michigan Library.¹² Thus, the «two musical giants of the twentieth-century» (Schönberg and Stravinskij) were directly involved in the Gesualdo Renaissance of the past century. The book also discusses many composers and artists of the generation after Schönberg and Stravinskij who were attracted to Gesualdo: Abbado, Adolphe, Andriessen, d'Avalos, Bertolucci, Brendel, Davies, Dean, Francesconi, Gompper, Goode, Herzog, Ligeti, Pollini, Schnittke, Sciarrino... Again, the author of the *Preface* to Watkins' new book is one of the main protagonists of the music of our times – namely the late Claudio Abbado, who subscribes to the common view of Gesualdo as the final destination of a historical journey «taking as its point of departure the grand composers of the nineteenth century, and turning back to Mozart, Bach, Pergolesi, Monteverdi, and Gesualdo...».¹³

At the same time that all those eminent artists became infatuated with Gesualdo, the impulse to study the other composers around the Neapolitan prince, spurred by Watkins' research on this topic, had an unexpectedly negative effect on the musicological community. In the 1990s it became fashionable for scholars to declare Gesualdo's music as overvalued and less important or even less experimental than the music by many other contemporaneous composers active in Ferrara and Naples, such as Luzzaschi, Macque, Montella, Trabaci, in addition to Nenna already indicated by Watkins.¹⁴ This new

⁹ GLENN WATKINS, *Proofs through the Night: Music and the Great War*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2003.

¹⁰ ID., *The Gesualdo Hex*, cit.

¹¹ EGON WELLESZ, *Schönberg and Beyond*, cited in *ivi*, p. 131.

¹² *Ivi*, Chapter 5, «Conversations at the Brink: A Schoenberg-Leibowitz Correspondence, 1945-1950», pp. 99-112. The collection of 74 letters between René Leibowitz and Arnold Schönberg was delivered as a gift to the University of Michigan in the early 1970's by Schönberg's sons.

¹³ CLAUDIO ABBADO, *Preface*, in WATKINS, *The Gesualdo Hex* cit., pp. XIII-XIV.

¹⁴ In his original text of 1973, and also in the *Aggiornamenti* to the Second Edition of *Gesualdo. The Man and His Music* cit., the same Watkins had already outlined the presence of several «Minor Neapolitan Figures». During the 1980s, the revival of interest on musical patronage in late-sixteenth century Ferrara (works by Anthony Newcomb and Elio Durante and Anna Martellotti), as well as the archival researches in Naples by a new generation of Italian musicologists yielded much new information on the music landscape in which Gesualdo operated. The new knowledge of the high level of musicians contemporaries of the prince has led some scholar to propose reducing the importance of Gesualdo: see, for instance, PAOLO EMILIO CARAPEZZA, 'Quel frutto stramaturo e succoso': il madrigale napoletano del primo Seicento, in *La musica a Napoli durante il Seicento*, ed. by Domenico Antonio D'Alessandro and Agostino Ziino, Rome, Torre d'Orfeo, 1987, pp. 17-27: «La conoscenza di queste musiche ridimensiona tuttavia fortemente il ruolo e l'importanza di Gesualdo. Egli ci appare coltivatore intensivo d'un orto manieristico piuttosto angusto: la sua maniera oltranzistica è uniformemente piccante [...]» (p. 20).

prejudice was in fact ahistorical and incorrect: the extant written documents suggest that the composers of Gesualdo's age expressed sincere admiration for Gesualdo's music.

Stravinskij was indeed prophetic with his prediction that «musicians will save Gesualdo from the musicologists», as the performances and recordings of his complete output by several groups of musicians, using historically informed approaches to musical interpretation, gradually demolished the “negative” criticism of Gesualdo in the musicological literature. Dozens of compelling performances by highly acclaimed interpreters, such as The Consort of Musicke, Alan Curtis, William Christie, Philippe Herrewége, Orlando Consort, the Gesualdo Consort Amsterdam, the Tallis Scholars, the Hilliard Ensemble, and others, replaced the few pioneering recordings produced by Craft-Stravinskij in the 1960s. A crucial role in this new wave of Gesualdo recordings was played by Italian musicians, who brought to the table a higher degree of accuracy in language pronunciation, and a characteristically colourful energy that was often missing in past performances in the British and German choral traditions. In the first anthology of Gesualdo music that I have recently published, I have stressed the contribution of these recent Italian recordings toward setting new standards in the performance of Gesualdo's music.¹⁵

In 1995, Werner Herzog's *Death for Five Voices*, winner of the Prix Italia, quickly became a very influential cult film for a wide audience that greatly exceeded the select constituencies of concert-goers and CD collectors. The movie featured historically informed performances of Gesualdo music by ensembles such as Alan Curtis's *Il Complesso Barocco* and Gerald Place's Gesualdo Consort. In spite of the increased popularity of Gesualdo's music created by new recordings and by the Herzog movie, we have seen very few occasions to reopen the discussion on Gesualdo in the musicological arena. In particular, one finds very scant attention paid to aspects of musical style in the massive Italian bibliography on Gesualdo that local historians active in the area of Venosa and around Gesualdo's castle have been producing in the last three decades; on the musicological side only one monograph in 2000 and two conference proceedings in 2006 and 2008 have appeared.¹⁶ Even a passing glance at the last two volumes easily reveals the dearth of analytical contributions on Gesualdo's music.

¹⁵ *Carlo Gesualdo da Venosa. Per una antologia musicale*, ed. by Dinko Fabris, 1 CD (2015) special edition to accompany the book: ANNIBALE COGLIANO, *Carlo Gesualdo da Venosa. Per una biografia*, Irsina, Giuseppe Barile Editore, 2015. The anthology contains 22 excerpts from recent recordings made by early music groups, for the most part Italian (Delitiae Musicae, Concerto delle Dame di Ferrara, Ensemble Arte-Musica, La Venexiana, I Febi Armonici, Odhecaton, Vox Altera, Laboratorio Turchini “Scarlati/Lab” as well as foreigner conductors such as Bo Holten, Jean-Marc Aymes, and the late Alan Curtis). The selection includes madrigals, motets, instrumental music, a canzonetta, a psalm, and an unpublished theorbo intabulation of a madrigal by Kapsperger recorded for the first time (see note 34).

¹⁶ The few musicological volumes are, in the order: PIETRO MISURACA, *Carlo Gesualdo Principe di Venosa*, Palermo, L'Epos, 2000; *All'ombra principesca. Atti del Convegno di Studi “Carlo Gesualdo nella storia d'Irpinia, della musica e delle arti”*, Taurasi-Gesualdo 6-7 dicembre 2003, ed. by Piero Mioli, Lucca, LIM, 2006; *La musica del Principe. Studi e prospettive per Carlo Gesualdo. Convegno internazionale di studi Venosa-Potenza*, 17-20 settembre 2003, ed. by Luisa Curinga, Lucca, LIM, 2008.

3. New and relevant biographical data

The most recent contribution on Carlo Gesualdo is Annibale Cogliano's monumental biography of the composer just published in Basilicata by the art publisher Giuseppe Barile, which includes the anthological CD I mentioned above.¹⁷

It is telling that the bibliography cited in this book takes up about thirty pages (pp. 409-437). From this "local history" production I will now single out a few new and relevant biographical data on prince Gesualdo, almost all of which is already known by Glenn Watkins, who is also the author of the very recent revision of Lorenzo Bianconi's article *Gesualdo* for *Grove Music Online* (2015).¹⁸

Among the most interesting new findings regarding Gesualdo's life I would recall here the identification of the actual place in Naples where prince Carlo lived with his wife Maria d'Avalos: this is not the monumental palace owned by the Princess of Sansevero, as previously thought, which still survives in pristine conditions in Piazza San Domenico Maggiore. A careful review of the paperwork relative to the murder trial led three historians, Domenico Antonio d'Alessandro, Beatrice Cecaro and especially Eduardo Nappi, to identify the Gesualdo residence with another palace in the property of a member of the same family, the Duchess of Torremaggiore, which also included the church called "la Pietatella".¹⁹ This palace is in fact the place where Maria d'Avalos and his lover Fabrizio Carafa were murdered. The building was later destroyed, but not (by sheer chance) the "Pietatella," universally known as the Sansevero Chapel, which still stands with its unsolved mysteries and dark atmosphere of death.

Another unexpected finding was the story told by Annibale Cogliano in his *Carlo Gesualdo. Il principe, l'amante, la strega*, published in 2004.²⁰ At the beginning of the seventeenth century, after the new marriage with Leonora d'Este in Ferrara, Carlo Gesualdo became seriously ill, and in 1603 he was considered in danger of death. The many physicians, priests, experts of magics, etc., who were called to give advice came to the conclu-

¹⁷ COGLIANO, *Carlo Gesualdo da Venosa. Per una biografia* cit.

¹⁸ LORENZO BIANCONI (1980), rev. by Glenn Watkins, *Gesualdo, Carlo, Prince of Venosa*, printed originally in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. by Stanley Sadie, London, MacMillan, 1980; last revision (2015), *Grove Music Online* at: <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/subscribe/article/grove/music/10994> (accessed October 2016).

¹⁹ The first suggestion of a different place for the wedding and murder of Carlo Gesualdo and Maria d'Avalos came from DOMENICO ANTONIO D'ALESSANDRO, *Per una biografia di Pietro Paolo Stella C.R., alias Scipione Stella, in Scipione Stella. Inni a cinque voci. Napoli 1610*, ed. by Flavio Colusso and Domenico Antonio D'Alessandro, Lucca, LIM, 2007, pp. XVIII-XXI. New documents and discussions were also proposed by BEATRICE CECARO, *Madre di pietà. Amore e morte all'origine della Cappella Sansevero*, Naples, Alós, 2010, and EDOARDO NAPPI, *Dai numeri la verità. Nuovi documenti sulla famiglia, i palazzi e la Cappella dei Sansevero*, Naples, Alós, 2010. **I wish to thank Dr. Fabrizio Masucci, a direct descendant of the celebrated Prince Sansevero, Raimondo di Sangro, for introducing me to the "secrets" of the Sansevero Chapel during a private visit.**

²⁰ ANNIBALE COGLIANO, *Carlo Gesualdo. Il principe, l'amante, la strega*, Naples, ESI, 2004. The episode is reviewed in Chapter X, *L'amante e la strega di Gesualdo: maleficio, tortura e conflitti giurisdizionali*, in *Carlo Gesualdo da Venosa. Per una biografia* cit., pp. 247-273. The large bibliography in Cogliano's last book (pp. 409-437) lists the bulk of the local studies published in Italian.

sion that the prince was under the effect of a malefice.²¹ Documents from the Archivio di Stato in Naples, already known to Watkins before Cogliano's publication through the collaboration of John Crayton,²² reveal that two young women from the village of Gesualdo, Aurelia d'Errico and Polissandra Pezzella, confessed under torture that they had administered love potions and other sorceries to prince Carlo. Pezzella was known as a professional witch, but according to the documents the other lady, d'Errico, had been the concubine of the prince in Gesualdo's own castle for almost ten years. Watkins reports the story, with documents translated into English, in his *The Gesualdo Hex*, in the chapter "The Witch Trials". It is astonishing for the modern reader to realize that at the same time that Gesualdo was forced by the "Honour Law" to murder his wife, he was intensively engaged in extramarital relations.

Orsola Fraternali has also devoted not one, but two books to Carlo Gesualdo, with emphasis on the women around him and his family: his mother Geronima (the sister of Saint Carlo Borromeo) and his two wives, Maria d'Avalos and Leonora d'Este. Fraternali's first book, published in 2009 with the collaboration of the artist Kathy Toma (likewise very interested in those female figures) is titled *Fasti dimenticati di un principe del Rinascimento*, and also has a *Preface* by Claudio Abbado.²³ The study offers a reconstruction of the few surviving objects once in the castle of Gesualdo, on the basis of the full inventory preserved in the Ludovisi Buoncompagni archive in Rome (now part of the Vatican Archives). Fraternali's second book, which features a reproduction of Gesualdo's testament, was published in Naples under the title *Gesualdo. L'uomo, il suo tempo, la musica*.²⁴

By far, however, the most impressive amount of documents on Gesualdo's life and his family is found in the already mentioned new book by Annibale Cogliano, the result of the astonishingly rich archive of reproductions of original documents assembled by Cogliano himself through several decades of research, as witnessed by the Inventory already published in 2003. The Cogliano Archive has been recently acquired by the Comi-

²¹ For a possible involvement of Ludovico Viadana in the story, see DINKO FABRIS, 'Padre Viadana', *Gesualdo e i Bentivoglio: nuove ipotesi biografiche*, in *Ludovico Viadana "musicus primarius" nel 450° della nascita*, ed. by Luigi Meneghini, Viadana, Quaderni della Società Storica Viadanese, n. 6, 2014 [Supplement to *Vitelliana. Viadana e il territorio mantovano fra Oglio e Po. Bollettino della Società Storica Viadanese*, IX, 2014], pp. 15-26.

²² «The initial clarification [of the trial] [...] was made known to me by Prof. Dr. John Crayton, who in August 2001 retrieved a copy of the trial transcript from the Neapolitan archives. [...] Later, Annibale Cogliano published a detailed study in Italian of the implications of the trial in a meticulously researched monograph, and in the process clarified numerous issues surrounding the event and its aftermath [...]», WATKINS, *The Gesualdo Hex* cit., p. 116, note 32).

²³ *Gesualdo da Venosa. Fasti dimenticati di un Principe del Rinascimento. Con un saggio di Claudio Abbado*, ed. by Orsola Tarantino Fraternali and Kathy Toma, Salerno, Luciano de Venezia, 2009.

²⁴ ORSOLA TARANTINO FRATERALI, *Carlo Gesualdo. L'uomo, il suo tempo, la musica. Con un contributo di Dinko Fabris*, Avellino, Il Terebinto Edizioni, 2015. The main interest of this book, aside the reproduction of the testament, later published also by Annibale Cogliano, is the innovative discussion on the female presence around Gesualdo: the mother Geronima Borromeo and his two wives, Maria d'Avalos and Eleonora d'Este. My limited contribution to the book, under the title *Gesualdo Musicista* (pp. 125-135) is a resumé of the most important and updated information on Gesualdo's music.

tato Celebrazioni Gesualdo at Regione Basilicata, and will be made available to users in the Public Library of Venosa.²⁵

There are dozens of other books and publications on the biography of Gesualdo, for the most part in Italian, that are rather trivial and uninteresting, when they do not repeat mistakes that were already corrected in academic essays decades ago. A special place in this landscape has to be reserved for the works of Elio Durante and Anna Martellotti, two philologists who have contributed so much to our best knowledge of the music and poetry at the Este Court of Ferrara. Among many other titles, the two authors published the facsimile of the *Partitura delli sei libri de' madrigali a cinque voci di Carlo Gesualdo da Venosa* (originally published by Simone Molinaro in 1613), accompanied by an extensive introductory essay on the content and historical significance of this landmark musical print.²⁶ In due course, Durante and Martellotti published other important contributions on Tasso, Luzzaschi, and Guarini.²⁷

As I have already said, out of the biographical works, there are very few contributions on Gesualdo music published in the last fifteen years or so. These are, for the most part, dedicated only to the madrigals. Noteworthy are the book published in German by Peter Niedermüller: *'Contrapunto' und 'effetto': Studien zu den Madrigalen Carlo Gesualdos*,²⁸ the chapter devoted to Gesualdo in Susan MacClary *Modal Subjectivities*,²⁹ and various essays by Italian scholars, including the short book by Sandro Naglia on Gesualdo's compositional process (2013), available online.³⁰ Also in the celebratory year 2013, marking the fourth centennial of Gesualdo's death, several conferences have added titles to the ever-growing Gesualdo bibliography, even if very few new findings have been announced.

A special issue of the electronic journal *Philomusica online* (12-2013) was devoted to "Gesualdo 1613-2013" and to the memory of Claudio Abbado.³¹ It contains articles mainly on Gesualdo's music and, in particular, an in-depth philological analysis by Francesco

²⁵ Cf. the *Centro Studi e Documentazione Carlo Gesualdo. Inventario*, ed. by Annibale Cogliano, Avellino, Elio Sellino Editore, 2003. The documents described in the *Inventario* (almost all microfilms or photocopies of original historical documents from dozens of Italian and foreign archives) have been acquired by the Comitato Tecnico Scientifico Carlo Gesualdo of the Regione Basilicata in 2014, eventually to be located in the Biblioteca Comunale of Venosa.

²⁶ GESUALDO DA VENOSA, *Partitura delli sei libri de' Madrigali a cinque voci (Genova 1613)*, facsimile ed. and Introduction by Elio Durante and Anna Martellotti, Florence, Studio per Edizioni Scelte, 1987.

²⁷ The main contributions by ELIO DURANTE and ANNA MARTELLOTTI are: *Cronistoria del concerto delle Dame Principalissime di Margherita Gonzaga d'Este. Prima ristampa con una Aggiunta* (Florence: SPES, 1989); *Le due "Scelte" napoletane di Luzzascho Luzzaschi*, Florence, SPES, 1998; *Madrigali segreti per le Dame di Ferrara. Il manoscritto F 1358 della Biblioteca Estense di Modena*, Florence, SPES, 2000); «*Giovinetta peregrina*»: *la vera storia di Laura Peperara e Torquato Tasso*, Florence, Olschki, 2010.

²⁸ PETER NIEDERMÜLLER, *'Contrapunto' und 'effetto': Studien zu den Madrigalen Carlo Gesualdos*, *Abhandlungen zur Musikgeschichte* 9, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2001.

²⁹ SUSAN MACCLARY, *Modal Subjectivities. Self-fashioning in the Italian Madrigal*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2004, Chapter 7: *The Luxury of Solipsism: Gesualdo*, pp. 146-169.

³⁰ SANDRO NAGLIA, *Il processo compositivo di Gesualdo da Venosa. Un'interpretazione tonale*, ebook: Ikonaliber, 2013, online: <https://www.bookrepublic.it/book/9788897778066-il-processo-compositivo-in-gesualdo-da-venosa-uninterpretazione-tonale/>.

³¹ *Gesualdo 1613-2013. Numero speciale dedicato alla memoria di Claudio Abbado*, *Philomusica on-line*, XII, n. 1, 2013: <http://riviste.paviauniversitypress.it/index.php/philissue/view/125/showToc>.

Saggio of the *Partitura*, with new insights about its significance.³² In the wake of Saggio's study of Molinaro's score, I have revisited the issue of Gesualdo's (and Molinaro's) expertise as a lute player in relation to the peculiar disposition of his vocal parts and to his marked preference for chordal writing. I presented the results at a conference in Ljubljana in 2014 and in my article on "Gesualdo liutista".³³ Directly related to this topic is the exciting new discovery that the *Terzo libro di chitarrone* by Giovanni Girolamo Kapsperger (Rome 1626), a copy of which came back to light recently at Yale University, includes Gesualdo's madrigal *Com'esser può ch'io viva* (from Book I).³⁴

Most of the papers presented at Milan Conference on Gesualdo in 2013 were devoted to the reception of Gesualdo in the twentieth century and to modern composers influenced by him. Marilena Laterza, for instance, examined the technique of re-writings in contemporary music, exploring in particular the case of Gesualdo's madrigal *Moro lasso*, which has been reset by composers with very different personalities, such as Francesconi, Sciarrino, Adolphe, Haas, Dean, Ronchetti and Mantovani. A list of modern transcriptions (or, more accurately, re-writings) of Gesualdo originals from 1985 to the present is in the Appendix of her text.³⁵

4. *The Gesualdo Hex*

Part Four of *The Gesualdo Hex*, the 2010 masterwork by Watkins we have often quoted from in this article, is devoted to "The Prince in a Postmodern World." The detailed description of the "Great Revival" of Gesualdo since the mid twentieth century includes mention of every single modern/contemporary composer linked in some way to the prince, from Adriaennsen to Ligeti. In the next paragraph on "Gesualdo and Opera," Watkins lists ten contemporary "operas" that are either devoted to Gesualdo, or inspired by his tragic biography. The series starts with d'Avalos in 1992, followed by

³² FRANCESCO SAGGIO, *Simone Molinaro editore di Carlo Gesualdo: la Partitura delli sei libri de' madrigali a cinque voci (Genova, 1613)*. This is the fourth essay in the volume cit.

³³ DINKO FABRIS, *Gesualdo liutista*, «Quaderni dell'Accademia di Musica Antica di Milano», n. 1, 2014, pp. 49-62 (special issue containing the Proceedings of the Conference on Gesualdo held in Milan in 2013). On the same subject, see also LUIGI SISTO, *Carlo Gesualdo da Venosa e la trasmissione dell'arciliuto a Napoli e nell'Italia meridionale*, in *Gesualdo 1613-2013 Philomusica on-line* cit. (second essay of the volume).

³⁴ FABRIS, *Gesualdo liutista* cit., pp. 49-62. The *Terzo libro* by Kapsperger is now owned by Yale University Library. Kapsperger's intabulation of *Com'esser può ch'io viva* has been recorded for *Carlo Gesualdo. Per un'antologia* (Luca Tarantini, theorbo, and Carlo Barile, organ).

³⁵ MARILENA LATERZA, *I Moro, Lasso di Luca Francesconi e Salvatore Sciarrino: due riscritture a confronto*, «Quaderni dell'Accademia di Musica Antica di Milano», n. 1, 2014, pp. 285-299. The essay is a portion of Laterza's thesis: *La riscrittura nella musica contemporanea. Riflessioni teoriche e studio di un caso*, Ph.D. diss., University of Milan, 2014. The third Chapter entitled *Gesualdo al futuro. Studio di un caso* will be published as a book with the support of the Comitato Gesualdo of Regione Basilicata. Other contributions in the same issue deserve to be mentioned here, namely: ALESSANDRO TURBA, *La recezione novecentesca di Carlo Gesualdo tra i compositori italiani dalla 'generazione dell'Ottanta' a Sciarrino*, pp. 253-284; BIANCA DE MARIO, *Sospiri e sguardi indiscreti. Gesualdo soggetto del teatro musicale contemporaneo*, pp. 229-252; MAURIZIO CORBELLA, *Autopsia di un mito? Alcune ipotesi sulla postmodernità di Gesualdo nella popular culture contemporanea*, pp. 203-228. Together with the essays collected in the present volume, these studies complete the overview provided in WATKINS, *The Gesualdo Hex* cit., *passim*.

Schnittke, Hummel, Francesconi, Sciarrino, Dean, Holten, Huber, culminating with the 15-minute opera *Gesualdo*, written and performed by Ian Rankin in 2008. The list is really impressive: no other musician of the past has inspired so many operas in less than twenty years. It has been further increased by a dozen of new titles of contemporary theatrical plays and movie products on Gesualdo, listed in the Proceedings of the Milan Gesualdo Conference, specifically in the papers presented by Corbella, De Mario and Laterza (with multimedia accessories). And even the works in Watkins' list have become better known since the publication of *The Gesualdo Hex* in 2010. For instance, *Maria di Venosa* by Francesco d'Avalos, previously unperformed, was staged at the Festival della Valle d'Itria in Southern Italy in 2014, and a DVD will soon be published.

Sciarrino's *Luci mie traditrici* has been revived in Montepulciano and issued on DVD in 2010. The mini-opera *Diario dell'assassinata* by Gino Negri, performed once at La Scala in Milan in 1978 (but later more widely known thanks to the 1995 movie by Herzog where pop singer Milva, as Maria d'Avalos, delivers a brief abstract of it) was revived in 2014 for the stage of the San Carlo theater in Naples.³⁶ In 2013, Lucia Ronchetti performed her composition entitled *Blumenstudien*, «*madrigale a cinque voci con musica di Gesualdo*». As Marilena Laterza has shown, this is a special case of compositional rewriting, since Ronchetti has used only the music of famous madrigals from Gesualdo's Fifth and Sixth books, albeit with new texts.³⁷ And in November 2014 a new opera by Bo Holten, *Gesualdo-Shadows*, was produced at the Royal Danish Opera in Copenhagen, later reworked for a full scenic production in Odense in October 2016.

The last part of this essay will concentrate on the first and (at the moment) the last operas in the list dedicated to Gesualdo by contemporary composers. They are the only two scores where original music by the prince of Venosa, performed with period instruments and sung with historically informed techniques, is sandwiched between newly composed music, rather than blended with it.

³⁶ *Diario dell'assassinata*, music by Gino Negri, performed by Maria Pia De Vito (voice), Huw Warren (piano), Solisti dell'Orchestra del teatro di San Carlo, conductor Stefania Rinaldi (17-18 April 2014): see DINKO FABRIS, *Il diario dell'infelice Maria d'Avalos: da Gesualdo a Gino Negri*, Programme Book teatro San Carlo, Naples, 2014, pp. 9-18. De Mario compares the two productions of 1978 and 2014 in *Sospiri e sguardi indiscreti. Gesualdo soggetto del teatro musicale contemporaneo*, pp. 214-218.

³⁷ MARILENA LATERZA examines Ronchetti's piece in her unpublished thesis, *La riscrittura nella musica contemporanea. Riflessioni teoriche e studio di un caso: Lucia Ronchetti. Die Metamorphose des Gesualdo*, pp. 123-136. Ronchetti has in fact reworked original materials from Gesualdo in her *Blumenstudien. Madrigale a cinque voci with music by Gesualdo da Venosa*, Rome, Raitrade, 2013, as well as in a composition by fellow composer RAFFAELE GRIMALDI, *Florilegium Studio da Gesualdo for vocal ensemble, choir and orchestra* (2013, with material from Gesualdo's books Five and Six); but the premiere of the latter, intended to inaugurate the concert season at the teatro San Carlo in Naples (28 September 2013), was annulled for a strike. My thanks to composer Lucia Ronchetti for kindly sharing with me material relevant to the two scores.

5. D'Avalos: Maria di Venosa

Francesco d'Avalos died in may 2014 at the age of 84, but he was fortunate to see his first opera *Maria di Venosa* finally performed in a splendid scenic production at Martina Franca in July 2013.³⁸ D'Avalos was a very interesting and original protagonist of the *Novecento*, as testified by the names of his teachers, the colleagues and the friends recalled in the 800 pages of his *Autobiografia* published in 2014 (just to mention a few of these personalities, he was a student of Celibidache and one of Henze's best friends of).³⁹ But he was also the prince d'Avalos, in direct line of descendance from Maria, the victim of Gesualdo's murder in 1590. To this event, so strictly connected with his family history, d'Avalos decided to devote an opera, completed in 1992, three years before the celebrated *Gesualdo* written by Schnittke. The opera was commissioned to him by the San Carlo theater in Naples but was never performed, and only a CD recording conducted by the same d'Avalos was published by Chandos in 2005.⁴⁰ In fact, this is not a true opera but a quite unusual dramatic work. In *Maria di Venosa*, there are only three main characters: Carlo, Maria and Fabrizio (less important figures are Carlo's uncle Giulio, a priest in the service of Venosa, Maria's servant Laura and "la Veggente"). These, however, are not singers as in a typical opera libretto: rather, they are silent actors (mimes) doubled two singers, a soprano and a contralto, performing out off stage. The general structure of this "Dramma musicale per orchestra, solisti e coro" (as it is properly labeled by the author) is based on a continuous fluctuation between the past and the present: scenes set to original music by Gesualdo and other Neapolitan composers of his time are interspersed with

³⁸ The production at the Festival della Valle d'Itria in Martina Franca, Southern Italy, on the 19th July 2013, in the presence of the author, was welcomed by public and critics with the greatest enthusiasm. After the première, on the *Corriere della Sera* Paolo Isotta wrote: «[...] Ho però scritto la mia gioia per la nascita di un capolavoro. Il privilegio l'ho avuto tre volte: a San Francisco per *Un tram che si chiama desiderio* di André Previn, a Salisburgo per *L'Upupa* di Hans Werner Henze, a Firenze per la *Fedra* del medesimo genio. Adesso a Martina Franca il privilegio mi ha locupletato e sarebbe bastato esso a rendere il 2013 degno di essere vissuto. Venerdì al Festival della Valle d'Itria a Martina Franca si è avuta la prima esecuzione assoluta in forma scenica de *Maria di Venosa*, "Dramma musicale in due parti e quattordici scene per orchestra, solisti e coro", salutata da venti minuti di applausi [...]». The interpreters of the première at Festival della Valle d'Itria in 2013 were: Liana Ghazaryana (soprano), Sara Nastos (alto), Marco Rigamonti, Gloria Dorliguzzo and Riccardo Calia (actors/dancers in the role respectevly of Carlo, Maria and Fabrizio), Gruppo Madrigalístico dell'Accademia "Celletti," Coro del teatro Petruzzelli di Bari, Orchestra Internazionale d'Italia, conductor Daniel Cohen, director Nikos Lagousakos (more information and pictures of the production on the director's website: <http://www.nikoslagousakos.com/>).

³⁹ See FRANCESCO D'AVALOS, *Autobiografia di un compositore (1930-1957). Il Religioso assoluto e l'Io trascendentale*, Introduzione di Dinko Fabris, ed. by Daniela Tortora, Rome, Aracne, 2013, pp. 11-ff. The first autobiographical sketch appeared in FRANCESCO D'AVALOS, *La crisi dell'Occidente e la presenza della storia. Il significato del Ventesimo Secolo attraverso l'evoluzione della musica*, Milan, Bietti, 2005, containing also a complete list of works by the composer, his writings, and an impressive discography. See also DANIELA TORTORA, *Per Francesco d'Avalos, in margine alla sua Autobiografia*, «L'Acropoli», XVI, n. 2, 2015, pp. 157-171.

⁴⁰ ID., *Maria di Venosa*, Susan Bullock and Hilary Summers (solo voices), Philharmonia Orchestra London, dir. Francesco d'Avalos, 2 cd Chandos 2005, CHAN 10355/1-2. The music was recorded in 1994 but published only eleven years later. See DINKO FABRIS, *La tragica storia di Maria d'Avalos e del Principe di Venosa*, in the Programme Book of the XXXIX Festival della Valle d'Itria-Martina Franca, Fasano, Schena, 2013, pp. 56-60. The book contains also the full cast of the performance.

other scenes set to new music by d'Avalos. The plot unfolds as a flashback by Gesualdo, ill and on the point of death, who remembers the events just before the tragic night of the murder, ending with Maria's ghost calling him to eternity.⁴¹ As a matter of fact, the opera begins with a vocal theme that the composer had found (as he informed me) in a tape recorder positioned by a medium during a psychic session with the spirits of the underworld in the d'Avalos family Palace in Naples, held in the room that still preserves the memories of Maria d'Avalos.

SCENA III - Sala da musica del Castello a Venosa

354 $\text{♩} = 80$

Cfg. *pp*

T.t.

Pf.

8^a.....

Soprano

Soprano

Contralto

Tenore

Basso

Cb. *pp*

E chi mi può dar vi - - - - ta, e chi mi può dar vi - - - -

Mo - ro las - so al mio duo - lo, e chi mi può dar vi - - - - ta, e chi mi può

Mo - ro las - so al mio duo - lo, e chi mi può dar vi - - - - ta, e

Mo - ro las - so al mio duo - lo, e chi mi può dar vi - - - - ta, e

Mo - ro las - so al mio duo - lo e chi mi

Carlo Gesualdo - Madrigale XVII dal Sesto libro

Solisti sulla scena

Ex. 1
FRANCESCO D'AVALOS, *Maria di Venosa*, score, Milan, Sonzogno, I, 3
(including Gesualdo's madrigal «*Moro, lasso*», Book 6)

There are two orchestras expressly indicated in the score. Behind the main stage is positioned the big Wagnerian orchestra favored by d'Avalos – who was also an accomplished conductor of the Romantic repertoire – including 4 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba and 8

⁴¹ The score of the *Maria di Venosa* is published by Casa Musicale Sonzogno di Piero Ostali, Milan. On this “dramma” see FRANCESCO D'AVALOS, *La crisi dell'Occidente e la presenza della storia* cit., 2005, pp. 135-37 and 247-254 (with his own analysis of the origins and content of the opera); Dinko Fabris, “*La tragica storia di Maria d'Avalos e del Principe di Venosa*”, pp. 56-60; BIANCA DE MARIO, *Sospiri e sguardi indiscreti. Gesualdo soggetto del teatro musicale contemporaneo*, pp. 239-44.

French horns, and the Choir with 12 singers for each of the 4 parts. On a small stage on the side, a madrigal group of 5 virtuoso singers is accompanied by renaissance instruments: recorders, lute, viola da gamba and harpsichord/spinetta. In Table I I have indicated the moments when Gesualdo's music is inserted into the score.⁴² Notice that there are two symmetrical parts of seven scenes each in the opera, outlining a progression from darkness (the present day of Carlo at the end of his life) to light (a ball scene in the Royal Palace where Maria and Fabrizio started their affaire), with darkness resuming after the murder scene.

TABLE 1
Original early music positioned into the score of d'Avalos's *Maria di Venosa*

1. [PARTE I], 2 (Camera di Maria) → Andrea Ansalone, *Aria terza* (from *Delizie di Posillipo*, Naples 1620) and Gesualdo, *Gagliarda a 4* (Naples, Conservatorio ms. 4.6.3)
2. I, 3 (Sala da musica, Castello di Venosa) → Gesualdo, «*Moro, lasso*» (Libro 6, Naples 1611)
3. I, 4-5 (Maria sola poi Carlo) → Gesualdo, «*Io pur respiro*» (Libro 6, 1611)
4. I, 6 (Giardino del castello a Venosa) → music by d'Avalos on a seventeenth century text (from Giovanni Cesare Netti, *La Filli*, opera, Naples 1684)
5. I, 7 (Ballo nel Palazzo Reale di Napoli) → Ansalone, *La Mendozza* (*Delizie* 1620); Giovanni Salvatore, *Durezza e ligature* (Naples 1640); Ansalone, *Aria* and Grancesco Lambardi, *Gagliarda* (*Delizie*, 1620) and Salvatore, *Corrente* (1640). The dance vanishes away with chromatic chords, ending the first part.
6. [PARTE II], 8 (Palazzo Reale di Napoli) → Jean de Macque, *Gagliarda seconda*; Michael Praetorius, *Pavane de Spagna* (*Terpsichore*, 1612); Giacomo Spiardo, *Ballo dei cigni* and *Ballo de' selvaggi e delle simie* (*Delizie*, 1620).
7. II, 10 (Ballo in una taverna dove si trovano gli amanti)
8. II, 14 last scene (Castello di Gesualdo) → «*Alme leggiadre a meraviglia e belle*», text by Torquato Tasso performed *alternatim* with the Gregorian chant "Requiem".

The music of other composers active in Naples at the beginnings of the seventeenth-century is inserted into the score mixing the period instruments on the stage ("Solisti sulla scena") with elements of the Orchestra (see Ex. 2, 3, 4). On the contrary the excerpts from Gesualdo's madrigals are performed "a cappella" by the vocal soloists.

⁴² Aside from the two madrigals by Gesualdo from Book 6 and his "Gagliarda" from manuscript Naples, Biblioteca del Conservatorio San Pietro a Majella, MS 4.6.3 (dated 1629), the other early music pieces were provided to Francesco d'Avalos by Antonio Florio, his former student of composition, now an internationally known conductor of Baroque music. The works by Ansalone, Lambardi, Spiardo (from the Festival collection *Delizie di Posillipo boscarecce et maritime* (Naples, 1620) and the gagliarde by Macque and Gesualdo were available in modern edition from: *A Neapolitan festa a ballo "Delizie di Posillipo Boscarecce e Marittime" and selected instrumental ensemble pieces from Naples Conservatory MS 4.6.3* / ed. by Roland Jackson, Madison: A-R Editions, 1978. The opera *Filli* by Giovanni Cesare Netti (Naples, 1684) had premiered in 1989 for the reopening of the teatro Bellini in Naples, a performance by Florio and his ensemble, the Cappella della Pietà dei Turchini.

104 ♩ = 90 (in 4)

110

116 ♩ = 40 (in 2)

* Giacomo Spiaro - Suono del Ballo de' selvaggi e delle Scimie, sonata da istrumenti a fiato

SOLISTI SULLA SCENA

SOLISTI SULLA SCENA

I Vno
I Fl. d.
II Vno
II Fl. d.
Via
Via da G.
Vc.
Liuto
Cmbt.

I Vno
I Fl. d.
II Vno
II Fl. d.
Via
Via da G.
Vc.
Liuto
Cmbt.

I-II
Trb.
III-IV

I-II
Fl.
III
I-II
Cl.
III
I-III
Cr.
II-IV
I-II
Trb.
III-IV

Ex. 2
 Id., *Maria di Venosa*, score cit., I, 6
 (including Giacomo Spiaro, *Ballo de' selvaggi e delle Scimie* from *Delizie di Posillipo*, Naples 1620)

Parte Seconda

Sala delle feste nel Palazzo del Viceré - Continuatione dell'ultima scena della Prima Parte

SOLISTI SULLA SCENA

$\text{♩} = 62$ (in uno)

I Violino
I Flauto dolce
II Violino
II Flauto dolce
Viola
Viola da gamba
Violoncello
Liuto
Cembalo

Liuto Tacet

SOLISTI SULLA SCENA

9

I Vno
I Fl. d.
II Vno
II Fl. d.
Via
Via da G.
Vc.
Liuto
Cmb.

SOLISTI SULLA SCENA

17

I Vno
I Fl. d.
II Vno
II Fl. d.
Via
Via da G.
Vc.
Liuto
Cmb.

* Jean de Macque - Gagliarda Seconda

Ex. 3

ID., *Maria di Venosa*, score cit., II, opening “Sala delle feste”
(including Jean de Macque, *Gagliarda Seconda* from Naples, Conservatorio, ms. 4.6.3 dated 1629)

887 $\text{♩} = 54$ (in 2)

Solisti sulla scena

I Violino

II Violino

Viola da Gamba
Violoncello

Violoncello

896

Solisti sulla scena

I Vno

II Vno

Via da G.
Vc.

Vc.

904

Solisti sulla scena

I Vno

II Vno

Via da G.
Vc.

Vc.

911

Solisti sulla scena

I Vno

II Vno

Via da G.
Vc.

Vc.

** Giovanni Salvatore - Durezza e Ligature

Ex. 4
 Id., *Maria di Venosa*, score cit., II
 (including Giovanni Salvatore, *Durezza e ligature*)

Significantly, the original music by Gesualdo (two madrigals from Book 6 and the instrumental “Gagliarda”) and his fellow Neapolitan composers is heard exclusively in the first part and on the bridge scene at the beginning of the second part. This is because the story gradually enters a different emotional tone where the memory of the past is concentrated

only on the predictions of the tragic *denouement* in the dissonant song by the Veggente, *Vedo morte per sangue* («I see a bloody death»). Interestingly, in 1996, only a few years after completing his Gesualdian opera, d'Avalos dedicated to the same tragic event another short composition, *In morte di due nobilissimi amanti*, an “Intermezzo per cinque voci e strumenti” again on a sonnet by Tasso, and again with a competent mixture of Renaissance counterpoint and new music.⁴³

⁴³ The sonnet is «Piangete, o grazie, e voi piangete o Amori», composed by Tasso together with «Alme leggiadre a meraviglia, e belle» (the one cited at the end of d'Avalos *Maria di Venosa*). Tasso himself sent the two poems to Vincenzo Caracciolo on the same year of the tragedy («[...] due sonetti, ch'io le mando, nel soggetto, nel quale piange, e canta tutto Napoli. Fra quelle di tanti saranno meno osservate le mie pazzie: a più lungo poetare non fui mai peggio disposto. Sono stato defraudato di due altri sonetti scritti a V. Signoria. Del primo mandatole da Fiorenza per la strada del Sig. Fabrizio Caraffa, ho perduto la copia; dell'altro la serbo, e farò prova di ricopiarlo: e bacio a V. Signoria la mano. Da Roma, l'11 Novembre del 1590», *Le lettere di Torquato Tasso*, ed. Cesare Guasti, vol. 5, no. 1287, Florence, Le Monnier, 1855, pp. 13-14. Later, Tasso wrote a third sonnet on the same subject, namely, «Poiché d'un cor due amiche amanti voglie». The most recent essay on Tasso and music is the one by ELIO DURANTE and ANNA MARTELOTTI, 'Giovinetta Peregrina,' *La vera storia di Laura Peperara e Torquato Tasso*, Florence, Olschki, 2010. For Tasso and Gesualdo, see the “Appendix” in ANTONIO VACCARO, *Carlo Gesualdo Principe di Venosa. L'uomo e i tempi*, Venosa, Osanna, 1982, pp. 191-193; COGLIANO, *Carlo Gesualdo. Per una biografia* cit., pp. 193-200, which include the earlier bibliography on the subject.

1059 III *pp* III *pp*

Fl. III-IV *pp* IV *pp* IV *pp*

Cr. II-IV

Vc.

Cb.

1066 III *pp* III *pp* $\text{♩} = 70 \text{ (in 4)}$

Fl. III-IV *pp* IV *pp*

Cr. II-IV

Contralto *p*

Vc.

Cb.

Al - me leg -

1074

Contralto

gia - dre a me - ra - vi - glia e bel - le Che sof - fri - ste mo - ren - do a - spro mar - ti - rio,

Vc.

Cb.

1084

Contralto

se mor - te, a - mor for - tu - na il ciel v'u - ni ro, Nul - la

Vc.

1095 *p* vocalizzato

Soprano

Contralto

più vi di - vi - de e svel - le Ma, que - i rag - gi con - giun - ti o pur fa - cel - le,

Ex. 5
 Id., *Maria di Venosa*, score cit., II, finale, bars 1073-ff
 (on Tasso's text «Alme leggiadre»)

In morte di due nobilissimi amanti

(Torquato Tasso)

Francesco d'Avalos
1996

Intermezzo per cinque voci e strumenti

1

Soprano: *pp* o Gra... zie, pian... gr... te

Mezzo Soprano: *pp* Pian... gr... ic, f... e... e... e...

Contralto: *pp* e... vo... i... f... e...

Tenore: -

Basso: -

Viola: -

V.Cello I: -

V.Cello II: -

4

S. pian... gr... ic, o Gra... zie

M.S. o Amo... ri e... vo... i

C. o Amo... ri pian...

T. -

B. -

Viola: -

Vc. I: -

Vc. II: -

11

S. poco cresc. o... e...

M.S. poco cresc. o... e...

C. gr... te o A... mo... f... e... poco cresc.

T. *p* Fe... ri o... fe... i poco cresc.

B. *p* Fe... ri o... fe... i poco cresc.

Viola: -

Vc. I: -

Vc. II: -

18

S.

M.S.

C.

T.

B.

Via

Vc. I

Vc. II

di mor-te e fe-re spo-glie Di bel-la cop-pia cai n'ia-ni-dia

21

S.

M.S.

C.

T.

B.

Via

Vc. I

Vc. II

e so-glie. E ne-gre-pum-pe e ter-re-ru-bru-si

31

S.

M.S.

C.

T.

B.

Via

Vc. I

Vc. II

or-ni-ni

Ex. 6a-b
Id., In morte di due nobilissimi amanti,
 set to a text of Torquato Tasso, score, Milan, Sonzogno, 1996

I cannot discuss here in detail the very personal views held by d'Avalos on the subject of "contemporary music". Suffice it to say that he regarded as a big mistake the decision of the modernist avant-gardes of the twentieth century to create new systems that were discontinuous not only with the short "tonal" era, but also with the entire heritage of European music.⁴⁴ It is interesting to discover in d'Avalos the first contemporary composer who did not consider Gesualdo a visionary precursor of the New Music of the last century, but rather a marvelous Renaissance composer.

6. *Gesualdo-Shadows*

The same vision is shared by Bo Holten, the author of the most recent opera based on Gesualdo's life, and the last one discussed here. In 2010 Glenn Watkins was able to mention the first version of an opera on Gesualdo written in 2004 by the Danish composer and conductor Bo Holten. The opera was written for a Baroque orchestra with a large continuo group. Production was stopped due to several problems encountered during its preparation («the Gesualdo Hex does not always lead to felicitous ends», as Watkins puts it). What happened was that the author of the libretto for personal reasons refused to give permission to produce and record the opera, and subsequently died before withdrawing his opposition, which as a result remains legally binding in perpetuity. After a long pause from such unfortunate circumstances, composer Bo Holten invited Eva Sommestad Holten to prepare a completely new libretto which, however, forced the re-composition of the entire score. The premiere of the new opera, under the title *Gesualdo-Shadows*, took place in a semi-staged provisional version on 9 November 2014 in Copenhagen. The most evident novelty of this opera is declared already in the title: *A modern Baroque Opera*. The performers are in fact the specialists of period instruments of the Concerto Copenhagen (2 violins, viola, cello, bass, oboe, 2 trombones, 1 theorbo, and 1 harpsichord/organ), with the participation of the specialized Vocal Ensemble Musica Ficta, (created and directed by Holten himself), in addition to six solo singers: Carlo Gesualdo, the Shadow, the Duke Alfonso of Ferrara, Maria d'Avalos, Leonora d'Este and Count Fontanelli. The author considers his opera and experiments «with the fusion of new and early music. The piece is really a modern baroque opera, which is quite a new thing under the sun. It is written for period instruments and madrigalists in combination with opera soloists in our more contemporary tradition».

The original madrigals by Gesualdo are easily recognized in the score since they are performed in Italian by the madrigal vocal ensemble. The titles are listed in Table 2:

⁴⁴ Following a series of conversations with the composer, I started writing a book devoted to *Francesco d'Avalos. Terza via del Novecento*, Barletta, Cafagna Editore, in preparation.

TABLE 2

Original Gesualdo music positioned into the score of Holten Gesualdo-Shadows

1. I, 1: b. 30 → «*Meraviglia d'amore*» (Madrigali Book 3, Ferrara, 1595)
2. I, 1: b. 130 → «*Non mi toglia il ben mio*» (Madrigali Book 2, Ferrara, 1594)
3. I, 7: b. 588 → «*Beltà poi che t'assenti*» * (Madrigali Book 6, Gesualdo, 1611)
4. I, 8: b. 817 → [«*Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita*» (text by Dante, *Inferno*, I,1)]
5. II, 4: b. 276 → «*Caligaverunt oculi mei*» (*Responsoria*, Gesualdo, 1611)
6. II, 5: b. 303 → «*Già piansi nel dolore*» (Madrigali Book 6, Gesualdo, 1611)
7. III, 1: b. 438 → «*O vos omnes, qui transitis*» (*Sacrarum Cantionum* I, Naples 1603)
8. III, 5a: b. 755 → «*Beltà poi che t'assenti*» * (Madrigali Book 6, Gesualdo, 1611)

The plot is divided into the three “actes of Gesualdo’s life”, as the character of Shadow calls them): the first act is set in Naples at the time of Gesualdo’s first marriage, until the murder of Maria; the second takes place in Ferrara with the second wife Leonora, until the end of Duke Alfonso’s regency of the city (*Paradise* lost is the title of the Epilogue of Act Two); the third act is set in Gesualdo’s final years in his castle. The composition is set entirely in a tonal style – more precisely, in the typical alternation of old Renaissance counterpoint and the new monodic style of Early Baroque Italian music. The writing is fluent and competent with some interesting traits: the basso continuo part is provided with figures (basso numerato), and there are several sections, such as all the Theorbo introductions, left to the improvising ability of the performers.

ritenuto **Mezzo tempo**

Theorbo

Shadow

S

A

C.Ten.

Madrigalisti

T

Bar.

B

First my boy; re-mem-ber the sen-su-ous dan-gers of Mu-sic.

le, me-ra-vi-glia d'a-mo-re d'a-mo-re

re, me-ra-vi-glia d'a-mo-re d'a-mo-re

me-ra-vi-glia d'a-mo-re d'a-mo-re

vi-glia d'a-mo-re d'a-mo-re

vi-glia d'a-mo-re d'a-mo-re

d'a-mo-re d'a-mo-re

Ex. 7

BO HOLTEN, *Gesualdo-Shadows*, score, Copenhagen, 2014, I, bars 36-ff.
(including Gesualdo's madrigal «*Meraviglia d'amore*», book 3)

The score incorporates not only madrigals from Gesualdo's late period – as usual in all other opera productions on this subject, but also madrigals from Books 2 and 3 and, quite exceptionally, sacred music from the motets and the *Responsoria* for Holy Week. Not by chance, during the preparation of his opera production, Bo Holten published a CD with his group Musica Ficta, devoted to an anthology of madrigals from all six books by Gesualdo, including the ones incorporated into the opera.⁴⁵

Although twenty-two years separate *Maria di Venosa* by d'Avalos from Holten's *Gesualdo-Shadows*, the two operas share several features that are not encountered in the other contemporary operatic production on Gesualdo. The use of a specific group of madrigal

⁴⁵ *Gesualdo. Madrigals*, Musica Ficta, cond. Bo Holten, recorded live in Bari, Festival Mousiké, 2013, 1 CD Danacord 760, 2015. On the 17 pieces contained in the CD, two are also enclosed in the score of *Gesualdo/Shadows*: «*Meraviglia d'amore*» (Book 3) and «*Beltà poi che l'assenti*» (Book 6).

singers and period instruments is fundamental for creating the “sound of the past” according to the interpretive approach of the Early Music Revival. In d’Avalos, himself an aristocrat and a conductor of romantic orchestras, this resource is at the same time a sound effect and a sign of respect for the art of his predecessor prince-musician; yet, his main interest lies in the contemporary soundscape produced by a Wagnerian orchestra, a big choir, silent actors, etc. Because Bo Holten is a conductor of historically informed Renaissance ensembles, it was easy for him to write his opera in “Neo-Renaissance or early Baroque style” (he had already used this format in other works on historical characters). At the same time Holten (born in 1948) has a good sense of the dramatic stage, thanks to his parallel experience as a composer of soundtracks for the film industry, collaborating in particular with Lars von Trier.

A new and for the first time fully-staged production of *Gesualdo-Shadows* was held at the Fynske Opera of Odense from 28 October and 5 November 2016, with a brilliant stage direction by Deda Cristina Colonna.⁴⁶ The scenic production has reinforced the composer’s portrayal of two sides of the protagonist: on the one side the historical Gesualdo (in Naples, Ferrara and the castle Gesualdo), and on the other, the dialogue with his unforgiving *alter ego*, Shadows. In his last dramatic dialogue with Shadows, Gesualdo calls himself a “puppet,” but the moniker also applies to all the other actors on the stage: Borromeo, Maria, and the young Carlo. The director Colonna has transformed the final scene, where Shadows embraces the fragile body of the dying Gesualdo into a *Pietà* of Caravaggesque ambience.⁴⁷

7. Future perspectives

The last homage to Gesualdo to date is a piece by a young Italian composer, Luca Antignani, entitled *Il canto della tenebra*, which also includes period instruments and specialized singers. It premiered in Marseille in March 2017 during the early music Festival organized by Concerto Soave.⁴⁸ As Antignani explains, his relationship with Gesualdo, which informs other compositions in his output, can be considered a “linguistic” one, and it manifests itself sometimes through explicit musical quotations, and in other cases through harmonic similarities.

⁴⁶ Orchestra Concerto Copenhagen and Ensemble vocale Musica Ficta, conducted by Bo Holten (costumes and scenes by Eva Sommestad Holten). The vocal performers were: Carlo Gesualdo: Gert Henning-Jensen; Shadow: Tor Lind; Alfonso d’Este: Guido Paevatalu; Maria d’Avalos: Hanna Kappelin; Leonora d’Este: Ann-Christine Wesser Ingels; Fontanelli: Anders Jakobsson, and the Ensemble vocale Musica Ficta (Ann-Christine Wesser-Ingels, Hanna Kappelin, Nana Bugge Rasmussen, Daniel Carlsson, Andreas Halling, Fredrik Bjellsäter, Rasmus Kure Thomsen).

⁴⁷ For a description of the 2016 spectacle, with newspapers critics and pictures, see the website: <http://www.dedacristinacolonna.com/spettacolo/gesualdo-shadows-2016/>.

⁴⁸ *Il canto della tenebra* has been commissioned to Luca Antignani (a teacher in Lyons and Lausanne) by two French ensembles: the Musicatreize (contemporary vocal music) and Concerto Soave (Baroque music). The text is taken from Dino Campana’s *Canti Orfici*, a cycle of poems that often utilizes the phonetic spelling of the words. The composition, following this text, is a metaphoric trip back to childhood and to the origin of the natural elements.

Is the recruitment of period instruments and specialized voices the best choice for future new operas on Gesualdo and for the wide diffusion of his music? The answer is, of course, unpredictable. Sixty years ago, at the time of the first Gesualdo recordings by Craft and Stravinskij, the Early Music Movement was already a reality, albeit still far from producing convincing performances of such difficult repertoire. After dozen of recent recordings by the most specialized Early Music ensembles from different countries, my impression is that Gesualdo's music, despite being now available in "cleaner" versions, has not lost its enigmatic aura, and it remains difficult to understand even for scholars and for the musicians themselves: Holten's *Gesualdo-Shadows* ends with the words pronounced in recitative by Count Fontanelli: «But his music a final enigma of passion, pain and beauty».⁴⁹

The image shows a page of a musical score for the opera *Gesualdo-Shadows*. The score includes staves for the Organ, two vocalists (Alfonso and Fontanelli), and a string ensemble (Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabasso). The Organ part is marked *ppp* and *Organ*. Alfonso's part has the text "Mad!". Fontanelli's part has the text "But his mu - sic a fi - nal e - nig - ma of" with a triplet of notes under "e - nig - ma". The string parts are playing sustained chords with some movement in the lower strings.

8a

⁴⁹ BO HOLTEN, *Gesualdo-Shadows*, full score, Copenhagen, Wilhelm Hansen, 2014, III, bars 837-842 (note that this part is accompanied by organ and solo lute *arpeggiato*).

839

Ob.

Liuto

Org.

anelli

pas-sion, pain and beau-ty. —

S I

pp

chè — le dà mor - te.

S II

pp

pp

chè — le dà mor - te

pp

Ex. 8a-b
 ID., *Gesualdo-Shadows*, score cit., III, finale, bars 835-ff.
 (count Fontanelli part, with Organ and Lute)

After the several initiatives created around Gesualdo for the 2013 celebrations of the fourth centennial of his death, the preparations of the following anniversary of 450 years from his birth, celebrated in 2016, produced yet another batch of publications, conferences, concerts and recordings.

The first imperative, then, is to find the key to propose convincing performances (and consequently, recordings) for the audience, of both secular and sacred music by Gesualdo. This will be possible only with a radical change of mentality on the part of musicians, in collaboration with the scholars: Gesualdo was neither a precursor of the twentieth-century avant-garde, nor an isolated monad; rather, he was entirely the product of his time. There is a strong contemporary evidence for this assessment in the correspondence of Girolamo Borsieri and Battista Guarini that I published as a follow-up to a study of

Franco Pavan:⁵⁰ in a letter of 1610 Guarini expressed a personal predilection for composers not avant-garde – in his words, «for those quills so distant from the contrapuntal crudities of Monteverdi» («quelle penne, come lontane dalle durezza del Monteverde»), and for the Prince of Venosa, who «is not fond of modern affects, but rather of harmonies in the manner of the ancients» («il quale non si compiace d'affetti moderni, ma d'armonie secondo alle regole de gli antichi»).

Giambattista Doni shared the same impression soon after the death of Gesualdo.⁵¹ The madrigals of Venosa became even a model for learning the perfection of counterpoint according to the *Regole di musica* of father Piscione de Avellis (printed posthumously in 1657).⁵² Gesualdo was not an isolated case if we observe the first century of the long Spanish domination of Naples, when music became the only way for the young noblemen of the city to show their native skills to the foreign invaders: the Lutenist Fabrizio Dentice (Naples, ca. 1530-Parma, 1581) is an intriguing precursor of Gesualdo as a Neapolitan aristocrat devoting himself entirely to music.⁵³ The psychopathological analysis of the possible diseases that may have affected Carlo are not able to explain, by themselves, the perfection of his writing according to the Renaissance rules of counterpoint. The fact that he was an accomplished player of the “little lute” (“chitarrino”)⁵⁴ may offer a more convincing explanation for the inordinately high and spread-out textures of his vocal writing, which makes the life of modern performers so difficult, in addition to challenging the ability to understand his music by modern audiences.

These and perhaps other basic suggestions for interpreters and also for those readers interested in understanding Gesualdo today will be included in the copious critical notes of the *New Gesualdo Edition*, to be published by Bärenreiter Verlag in 12 volumes,⁵⁵ which may be the most important Gesualdo initiative in the last half century.

⁵⁰ DINKO FABRIS, *Lettere di Battista e Alessandro Guarini nell'Archivio Bentivoglio di Ferrara*, in *Guarini, la musica, i musicisti*, a cura di Angelo Pompilio, Lucca, LIM, 1997, p. 90; FRANCO PAVAN, “Un curioso ravvolgimento di precetti”. *La musica negli scritti di Girolamo Borsieri*, in *Carlo Donato Cossoni nella Milano spagnola*, Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi, Conservatorio di Como, 11-13 giugno 1994, a cura di Davide Daolmi, Lucca, LIM, 2007, pp. 376-422: 384-86.

⁵¹ GIOVAN BATTISTA DONI, *Della Dispositione, e facilità delle viole diarmoniche. Discorso quarto* [1638] in *Lyra Barberina*, Florence Thypographia Caesarea, 1763, I, p. 396; see MARTIN KIRNBAUER, *Vieltönige Musik. Spielarten chromatischer und enharmonischer Musik in Rom in der ersten Hälfte des 17. Jahrhunderts*, Schola Cantorum Basiliensis Scripta 3 (Basel, Schwabe, 2013, pp. 148-64.

⁵² GIOVANNI PISCIONE DE AVELLIS, *Regole di musica divise in cinque trattati*, Roma, Moneta, 1657.

⁵³ See DINKO FABRIS, *Vita e opere di Fabrizio Dentice, nobile napoletano, compositore del secondo Cinquecento*, «Studi musicali», XXI, n. 1, 1992, pp. 61-113 and Id., *Da Napoli a Parma. Itinerari di un musicista aristocratico. Opere vocali di Fabrizio Dentice (1530c.-1581)*, Musica Palatina 3, Roma, Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia; Milano, Skira, 1998.

⁵⁴ On this see DINKO FABRIS, *Gesualdo liutista*, in «Quaderni dell'Accademia di Musica Antica di Milano», I, 2014, pp. 49-62.

⁵⁵ New Gesualdo Edition, promoted by the University of Basilicata, the University of Pavia at Cremona and the Istituto Italiano per la Storia della Musica (Kassel, Bärenreiter Verlag, 2017-). The scientific committee is formed by: Glenn Watkins (president), Maria Caraci, Dinko Fabris, Iain Fenlon, Anthony Newcomb, Philippe Vendrix and Agostino Ziino. Caraci, Fabris and Ziino are the members of the executive editorial board. See the website www.baerenreiter.com and my article “Der Visionär aus Venosa. Die neue Gesualdo-Gesamtausgabe bei Bärenreiter,” *Takte. Das Bärenreiter-Magazin* (2015).

The First volume, just released, features the Madrigals of Book 5. Glenn Watkins, who was the co-editor of the previous Collected Edition published by Ugrino about sixty years ago, is again the chair of the scientific committee of the new edition. In his words: «Gesualdo's music is going home to the people and the scholars of the prince's own heartland. They will be able to add new perspectives to it by relying on their linguistic and musical competences, as well as on the easy availability of the original sources located in Italy».

8. *A Conclusion*

In his opening remarks at the Gesualdo Conference in Milan 2013,⁵⁶ Glenn Watkins offered an autobiographical sketch of his entire working life spent with Gesualdo, starting and closing with his fruitful contact with Stravinskij, whom he first met in New York in January of 1960. The incomplete motets that Watkins sent to Stravinskij and Craft produced an increased interest in the prince of Venosa on the part of the Russian Composer, an interest that reached a climax with the composition of the *Monumentum pro Gesualdo*.

Watkins also opens and closes his *The Gesualdo Hex* of 2010 by quoting Igor Stravinskij. At the beginning, he demonstrates that the two main auspices on Gesualdo formulated by Stravinskij in 1968 (namely, «the recovery of performance style» and «the recording of the complete music») had been accomplished: «case closed?» – asks Watkins. The new question he poses at the end of his book is: «was Gesualdo an end, a beginning, or a bridge?» and concludes by quipping that «historians have a way of perpetuating the dilemma».⁵⁷

I will keep this dilemma alive for the next generation of Gesualdo scholars.

⁵⁶ GLENN WATKINS, *Gesualdo: oggi e domani*, in «Quaderni dell'Accademia di Musica Antica di Milano», I, 2014, pp. 17-20.

⁵⁷ WATKINS, *Prelude to a Vicenda and Envoi*, in *The Gesualdo Hex* cit., pp. 3 e 297-298.