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Orazio Michi between public and private

Spiritual music, devotional practices, and their contexts

Arnaldo Morelli

In his *Discorsi e regole sopra la musica*, written around the middle of the seventeenth century, the Florentine musician Severo Bonini refers to Orazio Michi as the greatest harp player of his time as well as a composer of arias:

Among the harp players Orazio, nicknamed “of the harp”, unique of this art and for composing arias, had the greatest fame.¹

Concerning Michi’s skill in harp playing, his contemporary Pietro Della Valle recalled, as he did for Frescobaldi in connection with the harpsichord and Kapsberger in connection with the theorbo, Michi’s modern performing style, which was characterized by “mille gratie di trilli, di strascichi, di sinco-pi, di tremoli, di finte, di piano e forte, e di simili altre galanterie”.² However, no trace of Michi’s harp music is left, neither in print nor in manuscript: all we have is a reference to some “sonate da arpa doppia” – now untraceable – in a letter written in 1640 by the amateur musician and patron of music Antonio Goretti.³

On the other hand, we have plentiful evidence of Michi’s art of “composing arias” in his extensive vocal production, which includes around a hundred compositions (canzonettas, arias, madrigals, cantatas – *recitativi*

1 “[Tra i] sonatori d’arpe il grido maggiore è stato del signor Horatio, per soprannome dall’arpe, singolare in quest’arte et in comporre arie”. Cf. Severo Bonini, *Discorsi e regole sopra la musica*, ca. 1650, ed. Leila Galleni Luisi, Cremona: Fondazione Claudio Monteverdi 1975, 112.

2 Pietro Della Valle, *Della musica dell’età nostra che non è punto inferiore, anzi è migliore di quella dell’età passata*, ca. 1640, in: Angelo Solerti, *Le origini del melodramma*, Torino: Bocca 1903, 148–179: 159.

3 Cited in Dinko Fabris, *Mecenati e musicisti: Documenti sul patrimonio artistico dei Bentivoglio di Ferrara nell’epoca di Monteverdi (1585–1645)*, Lucca: LIM 1999, 472.

per musica), both secular and spiritual, mostly for voice and continuo. Indeed, Michi made an important contribution to the new genres of monody, together with a group of musicians who, in the early seventeenth century, gravitated towards the court of Cardinal Montalto, among them Ippolito Macchiavelli, Giuseppino Cenci, Giovanni Domenico Puliaschi, and Giulio Cesare Marotta.⁴

It should be emphasized that at least a third of Michi's compositions (by a very rough evaluation) are of a spiritual or moral genre. This is not surprising: Roman manuscripts that contain arias, madrigals, and cantatas, are usually organized according to a mix of poetic themes, sometimes in striking contrast to one another. Amorous themes are doubtless the most important in these collections, but encomiastic, religious, moral, or spiritual themes can also be found. It can be demonstrated that these same categories were used for grouping poems in a printed collection. The mixture of various topics that at first seems to be random is thus revealed to compile a variety that is easily adaptable to contrasting situations. Vocal music of the seventeenth century, alongside the poetry from which it was generated, was indeed constantly adjusting to the various styles and tones of the occasions for which it was requested and performed.

The “corte di Roma”

On which occasions and where was Michi's spiritual music performed? Who commissioned these works? In answering these simple questions, would be worthwhile to illustrate the Roman *milieu* in which Michi was living and working.⁵

4 On Montalto's music patronage see James Chater, “Music and patronage in Rome: the case of Cardinal Montalto”, in: *Studi musicali* 16 (1987), 179–227; John Walter Hill, *Roman monody, cantata and opera from the circles around Cardinal Montalto*, Oxford: Clarendon 1997.

5 On Michi's life and work see Alberto Cametti, “Orazio Michi ‘dell’Arpa’, virtuoso e compositore di musica della prima metà del Seicento”, in: *Rivista musicale italiana* 21 (1914), 203–277; Arnaldo Morelli, “Michi, Orazio”, in: *Dizionario Biografico degli Italia-*

As a member of Cardinal Alessandro Peretti Montalto's household, Michi is often described as a court musician. Nevertheless, he was not only a court musician in the service of Montalto: the court of a cardinal or Roman prince formed a part of a broader structured system, the so-called "corte di Roma".⁶ Early modern Rome was not only the city of the pope and seat of the Catholic Church, but also the largest and most politically representative of the Italian courts. As the head of a supranational political and religious power, the Rome of Michi's time was perceived by his contemporaries as a *patria communis* (common country) of Catholic nations, the source of legitimacy for Italian and European monarchies and states, the place of regulation of opposing political interests. Due to its authority in conferring titles of nobility in the Church State and lucrative positions within state administration, as well as redistributing the revenues of the ecclesiastical benefices, the court of Rome commanded an extraordinary power of attraction throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Enticed by these possibilities, many people moved from their birthplaces to Rome, their fortunes increasing as they entered into service or in the circle of a cardinal or a noble family. Michi presumably arrived in Rome in 1613 at the latest; in February of that year his name appears in the payrolls of Cardinal Montalto.⁷ The brother of the cardinal, Michele Peretti Montalto, was Prince of Venafro, a town not far from Alife, Michi's birthplace. This fact could explain Michi's arrival at the court of Cardinal Montalto.

Who is a courtier in early modern Rome? In his *Discorso sopra la corte di Roma* – one of the many handbooks that endeavoured to explain the complex mechanisms that regulated the functions of the city – Giovanni

ni, Vol. 74, Rome: Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana 2011, also on the web page [www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/orazio-michi_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/orazio-michi_(Dizionario-Biografico)/) (15 July 2018).

⁶ On the Roman court see Gianvittorio Signorotto and Maria Antonietta Visceglia (eds.), *Court and politics in papal Rome, 1492–1700*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2002; Maria Antonietta Visceglia (ed.), *La nobiltà romana in età moderna: Profili istituzionali e pratiche sociali*, Rome: Carocci 2001. For some reflections on the musician as a courtier see Arnaldo Morelli, "Marenzio, the Courtier. Some Thoughts on Patronage in the Court of Rome", in: Mauro Calcagno (ed.), *Perspectives on Luca Marenzio's secular music*, Turnhout: Brepols 2015, 227–234.

⁷ Chater, *Music and patronage in Rome* (see n. 4), 204.

Francesco Commendone, a sixteenth-century Italian bishop and cardinal, states that courtiers are not only those “who follow the prince’s person, or have some role or service with him”, but also those who “serve one or more lords with the intention of achieving a brilliant career” (“accrescere”, or to raise their status).⁸ The court of Cardinal Montalto constituted for Michi a protective aura and solid point of reference, useful for more than the mere obtaining of lucrative and long lasting benefices. After Cardinal Montalto’s death in 1623, Michi became a part of the entourage of Cardinal Maurizio di Savoia, a patron of arts and music, who lived in Rome from 1623 to 1627, and from 1635 to 1638.⁹ In the meantime, the musician maintained close relationships with Prince Michele Peretti,¹⁰ and cardinals Antonio Barberini *senior*, Bernardino Spada, and Giovanni Battista Pallotta.¹¹ Before being a musician, therefore, Michi was first a courtier; one of many of the Roman court. As his biography clearly shows, it was not by sheer chance that he resided for a lifetime in the papal city.

Historians have taught us that the court space is not only the physical palace.¹² The court is rather a virtual, incorporeal space, an intangible space which extends beyond palace walls. A cardinal or a prince marks out the boundaries of their court, displaying their authority and presence, by means of patronage. As the historian Mario Biagioli states, “patronage was an institution without walls, an elaborate and comprehensive system; its reality [was] made of rituals rather than of ‘things’”.¹³ In this sense, explains Biagioli, “recent historiography of early modern Europe presents patronage as a

8 Giovanni Francesco Commendone, *Discorso sopra la corte di Roma*, ca. 1555, ed. Cesare Mozzarelli, Rome: Bulzoni 1996, 46.

9 Giuseppe Rua, *Poeti alla corte di Carlo Emanuele I di Savoia: Ludovico d’Agliè, Giambattista Marino, Alessandro Tassoni, Fulvio Testi*, Torino: Loescher 1899, 104–105.

10 Claudio Annibaldi, “‘Uno spettacolo veramente da principi’: Committenza e ricezione dell’opera aulica nel primo Seicento”, in: Piero Gargiulo (ed.), *Lo stupor dell’invenzione: Firenze e la nascita dell’opera*, Florence: Olschki 2001, 31–60: 54–55.

11 Cametti, “Orazio Michi” (see n. 5), 248–250, 254.

12 For a critical overview of the concept of court see Marcello Fantoni (ed.), *La corte e lo spazio: Trent’anni dopo*, Rome: Bulzoni 2012.

13 Mario Biagioli, *Galileo, courtier: the practice of science in the culture of absolutism*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1993, 4, 13–14.

fundamental form of social binding and hierarchical organization”.¹⁴ Patronage cannot be simply defined as “a socio-cultural phenomenon; it is rather *the* functioning mechanism of the *ancient regime*”.¹⁵

A cardinal could, for example, display his authority by supporting the construction of a church or by patronizing a confraternity, but also by making his own salaried artists and musicians available to a church or an oratory. Cardinal Montalto supported the construction of the imposing church of Sant’Andrea della Valle, the general seat for the religious order of the Theatines. Boundaries between public and private spheres therefore seem far less clear-cut than they might first appear. Ottavio Durante, another court musician who belonged to the entourage of Cardinal Montalto, recommends in a treatise of religious education (*Breve istruttione per le preghiere sante che potrebbe fare ogni anima christiana*), that the young nobleman to whom the work is dedicated is to “thank God”, after receiving communion during the Mass, “by giving some sign of joy through singing or letting some motet be sung”.¹⁶ A cardinal or prince could therefore let something be sung in their name as a sign of devotion, but also in order to exert their authority, though they might not be physically present.¹⁷ Ottavio Durante’s collection of *Arie devote* (Rome: S. Verovio 1608), which was dedicated to Cardinal Montalto and which combines compositions on liturgical Latin texts with those on Italian texts, seems to have been conceived for such devotional practices, which could take place either within or without the court. This latter instance is also confirmed by Simone Verovio’s dedication of his *Canzonette spirituali*, to the Duke of Mantua, Vincenzo Gonzaga. Verovio hopes that the Duke, who was in Rome for the Jubilee of the year 1600, might increase his faith

¹⁴ Ibid., 15.

¹⁵ Laurie Nussdorfer, *Civic politics in the Rome of Urban VIII*, Princeton: Princeton University Press 1992, 116.

¹⁶ “Potrassi ringratiare Iddio con darne qualche segno di alerezza cantando o facendo cantare qualche motetto”. Cf. Rome, Biblioteca Vallicelliana, Ms. P. 89 (13), fol. 185v.

¹⁷ Claudio Annibaldi has recently demonstrated how during the seventeenth century the pope attended only about twenty per cent of the liturgical services of his own chapel. Cf. Claudio Annibaldi, *La cappella musicale pontificia nel Seicento: Da Urbano VII a Urbano VIII (1590–1644)*, Palestrina: Fondazione Palestrina 2011 (Storia della cappella musicale pontificia, 4/I), 17.

while listening to the “canzonette devote” during the visit to the “ancient churches of the glorious martyrs”, the ritual visit of the Seven Churches.¹⁸ This unusual testimony shows how ‘public’ and ‘private’ were not seen as two opposing categories in that *milieu*.¹⁹ For these reasons Michi was actively involved in the musical activities of some confraternities and religious congregations, though he was never member of a musical chapel. It is likely that many of his spiritual arias for voices and basso continuo were intended for the activities of confraternities and congregations.

Confraternities and oratories

Long before theaters became established as institutions open to the public, churches and oratories provided Rome with opportunities for listening to good music. Indeed, in the early seventeenth century, musical performances were held regularly every Sunday and on the feast days that fell between All Saints’ and Easter, either at the oratory of Santa Maria in Vallicella, the so-called Chiesa Nuova, or in the church of San Girolamo della Carità. The tradition of these meetings, called simply *oratori* (in Italian) after the place where they were held, had been established by Filippo Neri and his first followers in the latter half of the sixteenth century. Focused on the reading of passages from the Old and New Testaments, on the lives of the saints, on church history, and on half-hour sermons (fairly brief for this era), these meetings had been accompanied since their inception by musical performances.²⁰

18 “[...] ascoltandole mentre ella visiterà le chiese antiche de’ gloriosi martiri, si accrescano fiamme al suo animo acceso di cotesto amore”. Cf. *Canzonette spirituali a 3 voci composte da diversi eccellenti musici*, Rome: S. Verovio 1599.

19 As the historian Renata Ago states, public and private are for the Baroque Age “poles of a continuum, and it doesn’t make sense to counterpose them”. Cf. Renata Ago, *Carriere e clientele in Roma barocca*, Rome / Bari: Laterza 1990, 5.

20 For an overview of oratory music in early modern Rome see Arnaldo Morelli, “The oratorio in Rome in the Seicento: its sites and its public”, in: Dinko Fabris and Margaret Murata (eds.), *Passaggio in Italia: music on the grand tour in the seventeenth century*, Turnhout: Brepols 2015, 197–203.

Beyond these two institutions, important musical performances took place in the oratory of the Santissimo Crocifisso di San Marcello (Holy Cross near the church of San Marcello). These were held regularly but limited to a brief part of the year: on the five Fridays of Lent. Performances also took place in the church of Santa Maria dell’Orazione e Morte “in the octave of All Souls’s Day and sometimes during Lent”.²¹

Yet not all spiritual music was meant for oratory meetings such as those of S. Maria in Vallicella, S. Girolamo della carità or Crocifisso di S. Marcello. Other, peculiar forms of devotion were very common in Rome, such as the so-called *Salve* with the litanies, the exhibition of the Holy Sacrament or the magnificent devotion of *Quarantore*, for which the Eucharist was exposed for forty hours. This ceremony normally included the preaching of special sermons, processions, prayers and the singing of hymns and litanies. Such devotions, which were usually accompanied by musical performances, were either held regularly or were concentrated in specific periods of the year in several churches, including churches which were devoid of a permanent music chapel. The *Salve* was most popular among such forms of devotion. The *Salve* was officiated in many churches every Saturday and on the feasts of the Virgin after Compline, and it usually included the singing of the *Salve regina* or another Marian antiphon, and of the litanies of the Virgin Mary, the so-called litanies of Loreto (approved in 1587 for public use by Pope Sixtus V, the uncle to Cardinal Montalto).²² Already at the beginning of the seventeenth century we find a reference to this popular Roman devotional practice in the title of a printed work by Ludovico Viadana, *Litanie che si cantano nella Santa Casa di Loreto et nelle chiese di Roma ogni sabbato et feste della*

21 [Federico Franzini], *Roma antica e moderna nella quale si contengono chiese, monasterij, hospedali, compagnie, collegij, e seminarij; tempij, teatri, anfiteatri [...]*, Rome: G. Fei 1660, 224. Also Pietro Della Valle refers to the “buone musiche” performed in the octave of All Souls’s Day in the oratory of Santa Maria dell’Orazione e Morte at the time of Michi. Cf. Della Valle, *Della musica dell’età nostra* (see n. 2), 176.

22 Arnaldo Morelli, “Con musica eccellentissima di cose pie”. *Salve, litanie ed altre devozioni: pratiche religiose e patronage a Roma in età moderna*, in: Antonio Addamiano and Francesco Luisi (eds.), *Atti del congresso internazionale di musica sacra in occasione del centenario di fondazione del PIMS* (Roma, 26 maggio – 1 giugno 2011), Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana 2013, 723–731.

Madonna (1607). The most famous of the Roman *Salve* was that which was established by pope Paul V Borghese in his family chapel in the basilica of S. Maria Maggiore, which, after his death, was patronized and administered by the Borghese family.²³

Even the confraternity of Roman musicians established devotional practices, following the model of the great patrons. The fellows of the *Compagnia dei musici di Roma*, the confraternity of Roman musicians which was established in 1585, used to sing in turn, every Wednesday, the “litanie della Madonna santissima et sua antifona corrente” in the church where the confraternity had its chapel.²⁴ However, in addition to the litanies and the antiphons, Latin motets or spiritual compositions on Italian texts (such as *laudi*, madrigals, arias, cantatas, dialogues) were also performed in these forms of devotion.

It is in the context of these devotions that we find the first trace of Michi’s participation in the music of a confraternity. Thanks to the archival research of the late eighteenth century historian Giuseppe Bitozzi, we know that during the 1620s Michi took part in the Marian devotions in the church of San Lorenzo in Damaso, where he accompanied with his instrument the litanies and the *laudi* which were performed every Saturday evening in the chapel of the confraternity of Santissima Concezione. For this purpose, the musicians had asked the canons of San Lorenzo for permission to build, in the archway of the chapel, a “temporary platform on which a positive organ was placed, and there, after pulling a cloth in front, musicians sang the above-mentioned *laudi* [that is spiritual songs] to the sound of the organ and the harp”.²⁵ We must not forget that the church of San Lorenzo in Dam-

23 Jean Lionnet, “La ‘Salve’ de Sainte-Marie Majeure: la musique de la chapelle Borghese au 17ème siècle”, in: *Studi musicali* 12 (1983), 97–119.

24 Morelli, “*Con musica eccellentissima di cose pie*” (see n. 22), 728–729.

25 “Un palco posticcio sul quale fu collocato un organo portatile e, tirata all’innanzi una tela, dai musici si cantavano le dette laudi al suono dell’organetto e dell’arpa”. Cf. Giuseppe Bitozzi, *Notizie storiche della basilica collegiata insigne di S. Lorenzo in Damaso*, ca. 1797, cited in Patrizio Barbieri, “Ancora sugli organi di S. Lorenzo in Damaso, Roma. Con un elenco di organisti e maestri di cappella dal sec. XV al XIX”, in: *Amici dell’organo di Roma*, serie II, 2 (1985), 91–99: 95, available online: www.patriziobarbieri.it/organo/rome/no_4_1985_pp_71_102.pdf (18 November 2018).

also is incorporated into the Palazzo della Cancelleria, where Cardinal Montalto resided, in his role of vice-chancellor of the Holy Church. It was perhaps not by chance that in 1627, a few years after the cardinal's death, when the confraternity decided to enlarge the platform and the organ, that the chapter of San Lorenzo, which until then had allowed the confraternity to carry out its devotions and its music, "let everything be demolished and removed, and this later caused an argument between the parties".²⁶

The most important of Michi's connections was the one with the Congregazione dell'Oratorio (Oratorians), which had its seat in Santa Maria in Vallicella, the so-called Chiesa Nuova (the New Church): the importance of this link is proven by Michi's bequeathment of his goods to this congregation. As we know, in 1575 Filippo Neri and some of his closest collaborators founded the congregation of the Oratory, which was approved that same year by Pope Gregory XIII, who assigned to the Oratorians the church of Santa Maria in Vallicella. Music, as we know, was the most characteristic means by which the Oratorians pursued their work of catechism. Although music was constantly present in the oratory meetings from the early times in Filippo Neri's rooms at San Girolamo della Carità, its form and function was changed between the late sixteenth century and the first half of the seventeenth century. The way in which it was changed cannot be completely explained by the evolution of musical taste, rather by recognizing the pragmatic choices made by the Oratorian community in response to relevant problems, such as rivalry among aristocrats in the audience. While in the sixteenth century the early repertoire of simple three voice *laudi* had the function of animate the people attending the meeting congregation after the sermons, from the early seventeenth century onwards oratory music was aimed at attracting people, especially a socially distinguished public.

Already in the first decades of the seventeenth century, music for the oratory meetings on Sundays and feast days became an attractive spectacle, bringing a large audience to the Vallicella. This oratory was the most

²⁶ "Fece demolire e togliere il tutto, il che poi die' motivo ad una lite delle parti". Cf. Bitozzi, *Notizie storiche*, cited in Barbieri, "Ancora sugli organi" (see n. 25), 95. Some informations on the music activity of the confraternity of Santissima Concezione are given in Morelli, "Con musica eccellentissima di cose pie" (see n. 22), 726–728.

renowned in the city; the admission was formally open to all, but the policy sometimes caused confusion and disorder. In January 1625, some Oratorian fathers of the Chiesa Nuova complained that “in past years, when we had vocal and instrumental music, there was disturbance and swords were drawn”: this was caused by the presence of many cardinals and other members of the Curia with their entourages.²⁷ Some fathers proposed to build a “choir loft in the oratory for the convenience of some musicians, who could not easily play their instruments, such as harps and theorbos, together with other musicians”, but the proposal was rejected in order to avoid subverting the original custom of the Congregation.²⁸ Again in 1630, the Oratorians had to note that “since for the three consecutive feast days the music in the oratory was followed by extraordinarily tumultuous disorder and scandals to the point of impeding the prayers, all due to the compositions commissioned by persons of high rank, which were composed and performed by external musicians, and which introduced competition between both among patrons and among performers”, it was necessary to put a stop to this troubled situation. The Oratorian fathers decided, therefore, to have only compositions performed which were “made by their own members for the devotion and the profit of the audience” and to have all texts and music to be performed submitted for approval, admitting only compositions commissioned by the Oratorian Congregation itself. Moreover, all instruments were banned except for harpsichord and organ, which were necessary to play the continuo.²⁹ The compositions “written or commissioned by external persons” and the resulting competition that the Oratorian fathers complained about, give us some

27 Arnaldo Morelli, *Il tempio armonico: musica nell'oratorio dei Filippini in Roma (1575–1705)*, Laaber: Laaber Verlag 1991 (*Analecta Musicologica* 27), 29.

28 Ibid., 120: “Fare un choro nell'oratorio per commodità d'alcuni musici, quali non possono comodamente sonare con gli altri con l'istrumenti d'arpe e tiorbe, e per commodità de' signori cardinali, prelati e principi”.

29 Ibid., 29–30: “essendo passata la musica dell'oratorio piccolo per tre feste seguite in disordini straordinarii di tumulti, impertinenze e scandali fino ad impedire la parola di Dio, e tutto per le compositioni et inviti de' grandi, fatte dagli esterni da' quali erano introdotte concorrenze e gare”. An inventory of 1623 records some instruments owned by the congregation: “un gravicinbano grande”, “una tiorba”, and “un violone”, besides “un organo grande”, and “un organetto in modo di tavolino”; *ibid.*, 103–105.

idea of the price they might have paid for the success of musical performances. In order to present the best composers as well as the best singers and instrumentalists, the congregations needed the support of persons of high rank, such as cardinals and princes, who were their patrons. It was not by accident that for the new oratory of the Chiesa Nuova, designed by Francesco Borromini and inaugurated in 1640, a comfortable *loggia* was built high above the entrance, meant to be used by the cardinals and princes who attended the meetings on feast days, occupying the side of the choir loft opposite the musicians. This exclusive, separated placement for the aristocracy broke the traditional policy which went back to the time of Filippo Neri, founder of the congregation, which did not allow segregated places for anyone who came to the oratory.

The diary of John Evelyn, an English traveller who heard performances in the oratory of the Chiesa Nuova in 1644 – only three years after Michi's death – offers an account of an evening performance that is overflowing with praise for the compositions and the voices of the singers:

This evening [8 Nov. 1644] I was invited to heare rare musique at the Chiesa Nova. [...] We went into the *Sacristia* [that is the oratory], where the tapers were being lighted. One of the Order preached; after him stepped up a child, of about 8 or 9 years old, who pronounced an oration with so much grace, as I never was better pleased in my life than to heare Italian so well spoken, and so intelligently. [...] This being finished, began their mottettos, which (in a lofty cupola richly painted) were sung by eunuchs, and other rare voices, accompanied by theorbas, harpsicords, and viols; so as we were even ravished with the entertainment of that evening.³⁰

The history of the oratory of Santa Maria in Vallicella sparkles with performances by renowned singers or composers. Among the most famous performances was the celebrated *Lamento della Maddalena*, sung by the renowned *castrato* Loreto Vittori (probably one of the spiritual *contrafactum* of Monteverdi's *Lamento di Arianna*);³¹ as well as the *Coro di profeti per la solennità*

³⁰ John Evelyn, *The diary*, ed. Esmond Samuel de Beer, Oxford: Oxford University Press 1955, vol. 2, 233. De Beer notes that “Sacristia” is a mistake on Evelyn's part “for the Oratory built 1637–40”.

³¹ Claudio Gallico, “La ‘quaerimonia’ di Maddalena di Domenico Mazzocchi e l'interpretazione di Loreto Vittori”, in: *Collectanea Historiae Musicae*, Vol. 4, Florence: Olschki

dell'Annuntiatione, with poetry by Giovanni Ciampoli and music by Domenico Mazzocchi.³²

Michi probably contributed to the music performed at the Vallicella oratory, not only as a harp-player, as a composer as well. The text of Michi's recitativo per musica *Si dilegua e si distrugge a Filippo il cor nel seno* clearly refers to Saint Filippo Neri, and can therefore be connected with the Oratorian context at the Vallicella.³³

Michi's autograph manuscript preserved in Rome, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale Mss. Mus. 56 very probably arrived in this library together with many other manuscripts from the archive of the Chiesa Nuova.³⁴ Further, besides "a silver crucifix", Michi bequeathed "all the books of music, both secular and spiritual" to Girolamo Rosini,³⁵ a celebrate castrato, papal singer, as well as an Oratorian father and *prefetto della musica* (music director and chapel master) of the Chiesa Nuova. Rosini died three years later than Michi, and the music collection in his possession was probably inherited from the Oratorian Congregation of the Chiesa Nuova.

1966, 133–147; Bianca Maria Antolini, "La carriera di cantante e compositore di Loreto Vittori", in: *Studi musicali* 7 (1978), 141–188: 153; Wolfgang Witzemann, *Domenico Mazzocchi. Dokumente und Interpretationen*, Köln: Böhlau 1970 (Analecta Musicologica 8), 23.

³² Morelli, *Il tempio armonico* (see n. 27), 32.

³³ Rome, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Mss. mus. 56, fols. 10v–11v (autograph manuscript). An anonymous setting for five voices of the same text of an aria set to music by Michi, *Collinetta che di fiori sugl'albori ghirlandar solevi il crine*, is preserved in the Archivio della Congregazione dell'Oratorio in Rome. Cf. Morelli, *Il tempio armonico* (see n. 27), 76–77.

³⁴ Arnaldo Morelli, "Note storiche sui manoscritti musicali della Biblioteca Nazionale di Roma", in: *Catalogo del fondo musicale della Biblioteca nazionale centrale "Vittorio Emanuele II" di Roma*, Rome: Ministero Beni culturali e ambientali – Consorzio Iris 1989, 13–28; Antonio Addamiano and Arnaldo Morelli, "L'archivio della cappella musicale di Santa Maria in Vallicella (Chiesa Nuova) a Roma nella prima metà del Seicento: Una ricostruzione", in: *Le fonti musicali italiane* 2 (1997), 37–67.

³⁵ "Item lascio al padre Girolamo Rosini della Chiesa Nuova un mio crocifisso d'argento con suo taffetà rosso, che sta nella camera sopra il studiolo, con tutti i miei libri di musica profani e spirituali". Cf. Cametti, "Orazio Michi" (see n. 5), 26.

Among minor beneficiaries of Michi's conspicuous inheritance were also some religious institutions: among these is included the church of the Holy House of Virgin Mary in Loreto of the confraternity of Marchigiani (natives of the Marche but residing in Rome), to which Michi bequeathed his organ, while asking Cardinal Giovan Battista Pallotta to "let it be positioned in an appropriate place".³⁶ Cardinal Pallotta, one of the three cardinals who are mentioned in Michi's will, had in 1637 established the church of the Holy House of Virgin Mary in Loreto, near via di Ripetta and piazza del Popolo, and was the protector of the Roman "confraternita dei Marchigiani".³⁷ In this church "every Saturday the most important singers sing the litanies" and "every first Saturday of each month, in addition to the music, one of the most celebrated preachers delivers a sermon in praise of the Holy House, with the participation of the same Cardinal Pallotta and of many very distinguished prelates, princes and gentlemen".³⁸ Archival documents of the late 1640s confirm the participation of many well-known musicians in this church's music, among them chapel masters of the rank of Stefano Fabbri, Orazio Benevoli, Francesco Foggia, and Carlo Cecchelli, several papal singers and well-known instrumentalists.³⁹ It is very likely, therefore, that Michi also took part in the music for the litanies which were sung in the church of the Holy House of Virgin Mary every week, before a selected audience of cardinals, prelates, princes and noblemen.

Michi probably also contributed to the music of other religious institutions. We gather this from the existence of a second version of his "recitativo

³⁶ Cametti, "Orazio Michi" (see n. 5), 254.

³⁷ Gaetano Moroni, *Dizionario di erudizione storico ecclesiastica*, Vol. 51, Venice: Tipografia Emiliana 1851, 65–66. Some sermons delivered by famous preachers of the time on the occasion of the *Litanie* at the church of the Holy House of Loreto are published in *Dodici sermoni sopra la S. Casa di Loreto*, Rome: Ignazio de' Lazzari 1669, and in: *Predica in lode della Santa Casa di Loreto, fatta dall'illustriss. e reverendiss. monsignor Giuseppe Maria [Suarez] vescovo de Vaison, [...] con intervento delli eminentissimi signori cardinali Franciotti, Firenzola, Pallotta, Cafarelli, Odescalchi, Vidman, e Carlo Barberino, nella nuova chiesa della Madonna di Loreto*, Ancona: Stamperia camerale, 1670.

³⁸ [Franzini], *Roma antica e moderna* (see n. 21), 90–91.

³⁹ Maria Giovanna Fiorentino, "Giovanni Antonio Leoni: nuove acquisizioni biografiche", in: *Recercare* 6 (1994), 193–202: 200–201.

per musica” *Si dilegua e si distrugge*.⁴⁰ The text of this second version is slightly different, altered in order to insert a reference to Teresa d’Avila in place of Filippo Neri (the two saints were canonized together in 1622). It is possible that the composition *Si dilegua e si distrugge a Teresa il cor nel seno* had been performed in some church or oratory of the Discalced Carmelites, the order which had been established by Teresa d’Avila. In this case, we can identify the church in question with Santa Maria della Scala, in the Roman district of Trastevere: in fact we know that Michi bequeathed a painting to this church.⁴¹ Documentary evidence shows, in addition, that at least in the second half of the seventeenth century the so-called *Salve* devotion was regularly performed in this church.⁴²

In conclusion, it should be thought that music that was performed for devotional functions, forms such as oratorios, dialogues, antiphones, litanies, motets, spiritual madrigals, and arias, was not of secondary importance compared to opera and large scale sacred music. At a time in which public theaters and concert halls did not yet exist, churches and oratories were ideal places for composers to experiment with the new *stile recitativo*, and for singers and instrumentalists to exhibit their virtuosity. Therefore, as a virtuoso harp player as well as a composer, Michi stands out as one of the leading musicians of such performances in Baroque Rome.

(English translation by Silvia Gaddini)

⁴⁰ Rome, Biblioteca Casanatense, Ms. 2490, 47–48.

⁴¹ Cametti, “Orazio Michi” (see n. 5), 254: “Alli padri della Madonna della Scala [lascio] un *Ecce homo* con la Madonna che sta nel camerino dove sta la Madalena”.

⁴² Carlo Bartolomeo Piazza, *Eusevologio romano overo delle opere pie di Roma accresciuto e ampliato*, Rome: Giovanni Andreoli 1699, Trattato VII, Parte II, 16.