STRUCTURES OF FEELING IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY CULTURAL EXPRESSION

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chapter seven

Daphne's Dilemma: Desire as Metamorphosis in Early Modern Opera

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In his marvellously erotic novel *Leucippe and Cleitophon,* the Greek novelist Achilles Tatius offered a highly eroticized retelling of the invention of Pan's pipes. He describes the goat-god's fruitless pursuit of the lovely Syrinx – a chase 'inspired by love.' Just at the moment in which he, 'close on her heels,' is about to grasp the nymph by the hair, Pan realizes that he holds only a clump of reeds. 'In a passion,' Achilles Tatius writes, Pan 'cuts away the reeds, thinking that they were hiding his beloved from him.' After searching for her in vain, and realizing that she had actually been transformed into the reeds, he fears that he might have been responsible for cutting the very object of his desire. But what is most interesting here is the way in which the nymph's transformation initiates yet another metamorphosis – that of Pan's groans and kisses into music:

> So he collected the fragments of reed as though they had been the maiden's limbs and put them together as though to form a single body: and then, holding the pieces in his hands, kissed them, as though they had been her wounds. As he put his lips to them he groaned from love, and breathed down upon the reeds while he kissed them; and his breath, pouring down through the holes in them, gave musical notes, and the pan-pipes found its voice. (Achilles Tatius, 8.6.7–11)[1]

In this etiological meditation on the nature of music, desire, frustration, and the death of the nymph lead to the invention of sound and the birth of an artist whose music would provide the sonic dimension for the Arcadian imagination.

This provocative tale of music and metamorphosis is best known from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (1.689–712), where it appears embedded, almost like a brief and whimsical echo, in the story of Apollo and Daphne (*Met.* 1.452–567).[2] It follows a narrative pattern similar to many of the tales in that poem: a young nymph, sworn to chastity in the service of the goddess Diana, is pursued by a god such as Apollo or demi-god like Pan. She attempts to deny her favours to the pursuer – sometimes successfully, sometimes not – and is transformed from something human into something less than human, losing not only her female body but also her powers of speech in the process. Sometimes the metamorphosis allows the nymph to preserve her chastity. This is the fate shared by numerous Ovidian heroines: Daphne, pursued by Apollo, is transformed into the tree; Lotis, chased by Priapus, becomes the bush that bears her name (*Met.* 9.345–9); Arethusa, desired by the river-god Alpheus, assumes the form of a sacred-forest spring (*Met.* 5.572–641). In other instances, the metamorphoses are the aftermath of rape or vigorous seduction. The nymph Calisto (*Met.* 2.466–95), for example, is turned into a bear by a vengeful Juno, while Jove (*Met.* 1.610–21) transforms his lover Io into a remarkably fetching cow. In another and similar tale, Apollo's desire for the nymph Leucothoe (*Met.* 4.190–273) and disdain for Clytië initiates a veritable chain of metamorphoses. Apollo rapes (or possibly seduces?) Leucothoe after having assumed the guise of her mother.[3] When a jealous Clytië informs Leucothoe's father of her daughter's loss of chastity, the father has his daughter buried alive. Apollo then sprinkles nectar on her grave while expressing his grief, transforming her into an aromatic frankincense bush (*Met.* 4.249–55); Clytië, wasting away from unrequited love, turns into a sunflower (*Met.* 4.256–70). In all of these cases, Ovid contrives for the human consciousness to continue operating, even as the physical body is no longer capable of forming words, creating in this intermediary moment a kind of grotesquerie.[4]

I have recounted all of these tales of women's metamorphoses at length to illustrate not only the common elements in this narrative pattern but to demonstrate as well the potency that it achieves through repetition and variation. The notion of metamorphosis, which becomes less and less improbable with each iteration, is further reinforced by the ironic tone of the narrator and the skill with which he deftly controls the reader's gaze. At the same time, the stories recounted in the *Metamorphoses* are also about origins – of the plants, flowers, trees, and stars.[5] Thus, each of the mythic creatures whose physical forms are altered over the course of the poem becomes a new entity, while at the same time

retaining some element of its original form: the hardness of Daphne's heart is preserved in the laurel tree; Leucothoe's sweet aroma wafts from the frankincense bush; Hyacinth's beauty is retained in the flower for which he is named; and the cool spring evokes Arethusa's purity. Sometimes the transformation is merely a metaphor taken a bit too far – Ovid's purpose, as Leonard Barkan so elegantly describes, is 'to make flesh of metaphors,' and he notes the 'variety of logical, pseudo-logical, or illogical connections that might be made between the original and the transformed object.'[6] Yet embedded within many of these etiological meditations is a predominant precipitating factor: desire. It is physical desire that triggers a chain of events that leads first to a transformation and second to a loss of humanity, until the relationship between the subject and newly formed object of desire must ultimately be reconfigured.

This is precisely what happens in the tale of Pan and Syrinx. In Ovid's version, Pan, after his initial disappointment, becomes in fact quite delighted with his new musical toy. He is, as Ovid explains, 'touched by this wonder and charmed by the sweet tones,' and he exclaims: 'This union, at least, shall I have with thee' (*Met.* 1.710). But in the lengthy, more theatrical version told by Achilles Tatius with which this essay began, the emphasis is on the inherent eroticism of the actual metamorphosis and its aftermath. Pan does not merely blow upon the reeds. He tries to reverse the process that his uncontrolled desire initiated: he reassembles the reeds into human form, as if they were Syrinx's legs, and then kisses what remains of her body. It is this erotic act – Pan's breath flowing through the reeds – that creates sound. Desire, frustration, and the death of the nymph lead to the invention of music and the birth of an artist. It is certainly true that the reader might share in Pan's delight with the discovery of his pipes. Music – like the plants, stars, and trees – is, after all, one of the greatest of all creations. Nevertheless, there is still something unsettling, even disturbing, about this narrative, since it self-consciously resists the happy ending and conventional union of lovers that is part and parcel of comedy. Syrinx, like her sister Daphne, is all but erased from the story, becoming merely an extension of Pan's artistic will. At the end we are left only with the lone beast, a curious meshing of artistry and autoeroticism, and the suspicion that the living Syrinx has been discarded: she has outlived her usefulness for Pan, except as the source of his musical inspiration.

This essay is concerned with some of the ways in which these Ovidian narratives served a special role in the expression of gender ideologies on the operatic stage, a space in which transformations of all sorts

comprised a very peculiar 'structure of feelings' in early modern Venice. I am particularly interested in the gendered implications of these metamorphoses as musical theatre: how composers, librettists, and producers staged not only the transformations themselves but also the aftermaths; how these 'fleshy metaphors' – to paraphrase Barkan – were expressed in sight and sound, particularly in those instances in which the newly formed entities lost the power of speech, which – in an operatic context – results in a silencing of a (usually female) protagonist. In so doing, these operatic transformations eloquently convey notions about sexuality and the body that would otherwise be difficult or impossible to express without music. I focus on the operatic treatment of Pan's counterpart and sometimes competitor in love, music, and loss: the sun god Apollo. After briefly considering Apollo's representation in what is often regarded as the first opera libretto, Rinuccini's *La Dafne* (from which Marco da Gagliano's 1608 setting survives in its entirely), I turn to two operas produced in mid-seventeenth-century Venice: *Gli amori di Apollo e di Dafne* (1640), with music by Francesco Cavalli and libretto by Busenello, and *Gli amori di Apollo e di Leucotoe* (1663), with music by Giovanni Battista Volpe (known as Rovettino) and libretto by Aurelio Aureli.[7]

By considering mid-Seicento operas, I look well beyond the conventional view in opera historiography that Ovid's primary significance for seventeenth-century opera is limited to the self-conscious humanistic leanings of the earliest practitioners, who were drawn to musically inclined mythological characters as a means of justifying sung drama.[8] Indeed, tales based loosely on the *Metamorphoses* – in particular those involving musicians such as Apollo and Daphne or Orpheus and Euridice – were readily annexed by pastoral drama as part of the impetus to turn spoken drama into sung entertainment, ostensibly in imitation of Greek drama.[9] A languishing shepherd or hard-hearted nymph may well be inspired to burst into song occasionally, but, as Nino Pirrotta and others have argued, it is an Orpheus or Apollo who had access to the music of the spheres and could more plausibly sing rather than speak.[10]

But while this explanation may help us to understand the aesthetics and mechanisms of early opera, as well as the relationship between set pieces (aria) and enhanced speech *(recitar cantando)*, it scarcely takes full account of the evocative value of Ovidian myths for Renaissance readers and viewers, their malleability within any number of cultural contexts, and the sheer delight that sixteenth- and seventeenth-century artists, sculptors, and poets took in a playful brand of eclecticism. Mid-seventeenth-century Italian opera, particularly the Venetian model – with its

often self-conscious rejection of Aristotelian unities and its embrace of contrast, variety, and complexity of plot – represents a quite special and arguably different moment in the humanist project. These operas and the brand of humanism that they absorb, I propose, might be best understood beyond their narrow constraints of opera historiography: they are evidence of a prevailing desire to gaze upon the images of the ancients and attach onto them narratives that collapsed the past with the present; they are also part of an impulse – even a compulsion – to submerge completely into a reinvented ancient world saturated with both vibrant visual images as well as movement and sound.

Moreover, the whole notion of metamorphosis might be linked to Seicento opera in a fundamental way, presenting librettists and composers with attractive opportunities to indulge in special musical and dramatic effects. They therefore not only placed these shape-shifting figures on the stage early on in the history of opera – Apollo, Daphne, Pan, Leucothoe, Clytië, Arethusa, Jupiter, Callisto, and Echo to name but a few – but also took special delight in dramatizing the sorts of deceptions and disguises that were part of Carnival's expressive vocabulary as well as exploiting the resulting emotional shifts that the transformations necessarily engendered. In addition to turning women into plants, stars, rivers, or musical instruments, opera – even when shunning the world of myth – transformed actors into singers, masters into servants, women into men.[11] The castrato, too, represented a rather special sort of transformation – one that confounded normal associations between gender and vocal register.[12] Even the rage for mad scenes that took Venice by storm in the 1640s might be understood in the context of metamorphoses. For the hero of Cavalli's *Egisto* (1644), for example, a schizophrenic break brought on by a vengeful Venus and a hard-hearted lover causes him take on a series of new identities with breathtaking rapidity: first he imagines that he is Orpheus, then Jove, and finally Cupid – providing, at the same time, a subtle satirical commentary on the genre itself.[13] We might go further and imagine opera itself as a potent transformative potion: the joining of poetry, art, and music provided a unique way through which the imagined ancient world, captured in frozen images by artists or described by poets, could be transformed into something that could delight both eye and ear simultaneously.[14]

Early modern thinking about gender and sexuality played no small part in the interpretation of these tales of metamorphoses, and indeed they seem to have inspired many of opera's most novel reinventions of Ovid. A world inhabited solely by humans placed a limit on the number

and types of narratives available to express the tensions created by unsatisfied lust and stubborn chastity – usually, but not always, mapped onto the conflict between male desire and female restraint. The early moderns therefore seem to have been particularly attracted by the imaginative possibilities provided by the Arcadian realm, one in which the gods held sway and bodily form could be more transient, in which singing was one of many unusual behaviours that might be adopted.[15] It is difficult to imagine a better – and safer – place to experiment with the consequences of desire's fluid identities than in a primitive universe, quite divorced from normal civilization, where violence was often part of an elaborate game in which both sexes participated with equal pleasure. Arcadia, as portrayed with the often-ironic power of the point of view taken by Ovid's narrator, represented the ideal realm in which to indulge in fantasies and suppressed desires, to experiment with notions of female presence or absence, silence or eloquence, resistance or acquiescence. Where else, for example, could a nymph such as Daphne face the cruel dilemma of either accepting the unwanted love of a god or preserving her chastity through eternity by allowing herself to be changed into the form of a laurel tree?

Was it because of shared concerns with verisimilitude or pure coincidence that the tale of Daphne and Apollo played such a prominent role in early opera, not only in the northern Italian courts of Florence and Mantua, but also in the commercial opera theatres in Venice?[16] Self-consciousness about the nature of opera – and its similarity to pastoral dramas, such as Guarini's *Il pastor fido* – may well have been part of the inspiration for Ottavio Rinuccini's libretto for *La Dafne* (1598), first set by Jacopo Peri, from which only fragments survive.[17] The libretto was sufficiently well regarded that Marco da Gagliano's version, which was set to a revised and somewhat expanded version of the libretto, was performed at the Gonzaga court in Mantua in 1608 – just months after the premiere of Monteverdi's and Rinuccini's *Arianna*. It was also printed in an edition dedicated to Vincenzo Gonzaga that included detailed performance instructions.[18] In Venice, where opera became a commercial enterprise, Apollo and Daphne were the central protagonists in one of the earliest examples of the genre refashioned as carnival entertainment for the most Serene Republic. Francesco Cavalli's *Gli amori di Apollo di Dafne* was written only three years after the premiere of public opera in Venice. It is Cavalli's second contribution to the genre, as well as the first libretto penned by Giovanni Francesco Busenello, best known today as the author of the libretto to Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione di Poppea*.

Given Busenello's well-known association with the infamous Venetian Accademia degli Incogniti, it is not surprising that *Gli amori di Apollo e di Dafne* reflects at least some part of the libertine and even heterodox approach to conventional morality – and ambivalence about women – that infuses so many other works of the period.[19]

Let us briefly consider the primary source material from which both Rinuccini and Busenello drew their inspiration. Ovid's rendition of the tale of Apollo and Daphne, as noted above, appears in the first book of *Metamorphoses*, prior to Mercury's telling of the tale of Pan and Syrinx. Apollo, who boasts about his triumph over the Python, incurs the wrath of Cupid. Cupid takes his revenge by sending forth two darts, one of which kindles love for Daphne in Apollo; the other hardens Daphne's heart to the entire notion of love, leading her to reject all suitors and yearn for perpetual virginity. Apollo assumes the sometimes comic role of an unrequited lover, pursuing Daphne with the fierceness of a dog – though here the narrator proffers his opinion: 'The winds bared her limbs, the opposing breezes set her garments a flutter as she ran, and a light air flung her locks streaming behind her. Her beauty was enhanced by flight' (*Met.* 1.525–35). Daphne speaks only a few words: she begs her father to change or destroy the beauty that has been the cause of her trouble. Ovid provides the reader with a vivid description of how the chase was abruptly halted by Daphne's transformation:

> Scarce had she thus prayed when a down-dragging numbness seized her limbs, and her soft sides were begirt with thin bark. Her hair was changed to leaves, her arms to branches. Her feet, but not so swift, grew fast in sluggish roots, and her head was not but a tree's top. Her gleaming beauty alone remained. (*Met.* 1.548–52)[20]

Like Pan, delighted with this new version of Syrinx as a set of pipes, Apollo, too, falls in love with his Daphne in her new form; he feels her heart beating through the wood and kisses her trunk. The god is unfazed by the fact that the wood recoils from his touch, since he has never paid much attention to Daphne's resistance anyway, and he consoles himself by declaring that the leaves of the laurel tree will serve as an ornament for his lyre and as a garland to welcome the heroes of Rome. Here, the structures of feeling in early modern Italy with regard to masculine desire are manifest in the ease with which Apollo accepts the new physicality of Daphne, an object of desire without the female body or the power to sing. In fact, it seems almost natural, as if no other possibility existed, when Daphne's beautiful hair, the long legs Apollo so admired,

and the heart that she hardened in resisting the desires of the gods are transformed into the beloved laurel tree. Lest we be too horrified by the brutality of Apollo's pursuit of Daphne, the veiled detachment of the narrator allows us, as Mary Barnard has observed, to appreciate both the comic and grotesque elements of the situation.[21] How could a god such as Apollo behave like a lowly satyr? How could a woman actually turn into a tree before our eyes? And how could Apollo so calmly accept the transformation?

In fashioning his libretto, Rinuccini must certainly have looked to Ovid as an authority for his work; he underlines the Roman author's centrality by having him actually sing in the prologue: 'I am he who on the learned lute sang of the passions of the celestial gods, and of the metamorphoses of their appearances, so sweetly, that the world still admires me.'[22] This Ovid, however, was also well aware of his Florentine audience, offering praise to his patrons and explaining that the fable will serve as a cautionary tale about underestimating love in all its guises.[23] The opera, in fact, unfolds in an episodic style that owes much to Ovid.[24] Rinuccini follows Ovid's model by prefacing the tale of Apollo and Daphne with a presentation of Apollo's victory over the Python, a scene that might have been familiar to Rinuccini – and some members of the Florentine audience – from the third intermedi of *La Pellegrina* from 1589.[25] His boasting inspires Amor's vengeance, a position that Venere (Venus) heartily supports. Apollo's heroism notwithstanding, Dafne resists the god's advances with the now familiar consequences. However, as in both Greek tragedy and early opera – our most familiar example being Monteverdi's *Orfeo* – the metamorphosis happens offstage; the audience experiences the transformation only through the expressive narration of the Nunzio (renamed Tirsi in da Gagliano's 1608 version). Tirsi's monologue captures much of the horror and fascination of Ovid's tale: curiously, the narrator claims he could not hear Dafne's tearful appeal to the heavens with her hands outstretched as her legs turn into tree trunks nor her utterance of a mournful sound, because she was too far away. Rinuccini, in fact, captures the often ironic omniscience of Ovidian narrators, heightening the audience's sensitivity to inaudible noises: how, we might ask, could he have known that she uttered a sound if he could not hear it?

For our purposes, however, one of the most critical moments in the dramatization of this myth has to do not only with the monstrous transformation, but also with how both Apollo and his shepherd companions express themselves musically in its aftermath. Does Apollo lament the loss of his love, or, like Pan, does he find consolation in music? And

how do Apollo's fellow Arcadians experience this event? Notably, in the version of Rinuccini's libretto set by Marco da Gagliano, the shepherds respond to the news of Dafne's transformation by singing a lengthy strophic lament ('Ahi dura, ahi ria novella!'), which arguably heightens the sense of tragedy associated with the event; this element is not a feature of Ovid's text.[26]

But perhaps of greater interest is the fact that da Gagliano's preface to his 1608 version, with its detailed performance instructions, provides us with some vital clues as to how he wanted the audience to witness or, more precisely, to *hear* Apollo's reaction to Dafne's transformation. Apollo, da Gagliano emphasizes, must sing the lament with 'the greatest emotion possible; with all that, the singer should have regard for increasing it, where the words demand it the most.'[27] He goes on to add that Apollo should 'wind the laurel branch over which he will have been lamenting, around his head, crowning himself with it' when he sings of her branches being a garland for Roman heroes – in the verse 'faran ghirlanda le tue fronde, e i rami' [your fronds and branches will make a garland].[28] More striking yet is the musical effect that da Gagliano specifies for this moment: 'It is necessary to make it appear to the auditorium that from Apollo's lyre comes a more than ordinary melody. So let there be placed four string players (*da braccio* or *da gamba* matters little) in one of the exits close by, in a position where they are unseen by the audience watching Apollo, and as he plays his bow on the lyre, they should play.'[29] Apollo may lament the loss of Dafne, he might be overcome with feelings of remorse and loss, but he is nevertheless able to recover sufficiently to wrap himself in her garlands and sing with heightened expressivity over Dafne's apparent demise. Moreover, Apollo goes beyond mere recovery: he is even able to play the lyre with supernatural powers. Therefore, Dafne's metamorphosis has a transformative effect on the art form itself; Apollo's loss is music's gain: Dafne the woman is no more; in her place Apollo now has the sonic capabilities of four musicians.[30] Framed by two victories – the triumph over the python and the transformation of passion to art – Apollo emerges not only unscathed, but greater and more gifted for the experience.

Three decades later, in 1640 and in the Republic of Venice, Busenello and Cavalli presented this tale in an entirely different manner.[31] Some of this difference is a result of changes in the genre from a court entertainment to a commercial enterprise. In Venice, opera did not glorify a particular court or family, nor was it used to celebrate dynastic events; instead it was supported by a complex financial and artistic

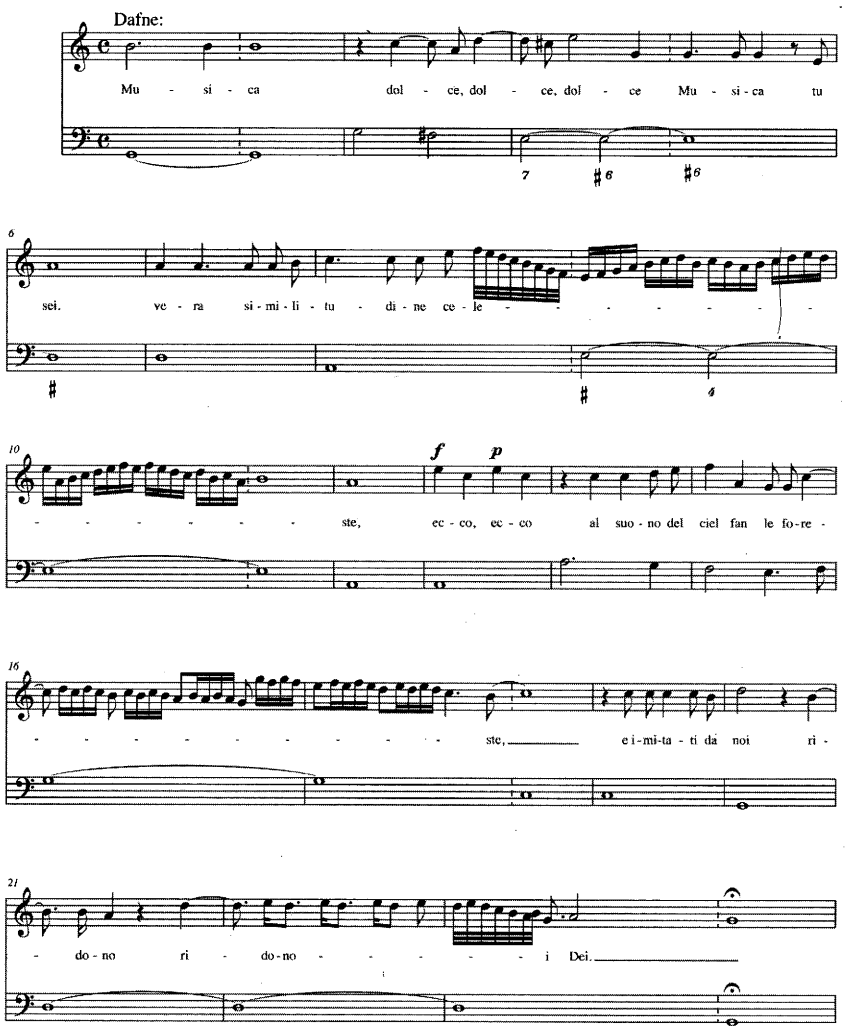
infrastructure – made up of Venetian nobles, musicians, and artisans, and interested foreign patrons, who through their collaborative efforts created a new style of opera suitable for a carnival entertainment that exhibited Venetian liberties to the rest of Europe.[32] Not surprisingly, they were structured differently. Venetian operas were typically arranged in three acts, used a large cast of characters, and employed numerous set changes and multiple plot strands. They thus not only refused to adhere to Aristotelian dramatic principles, but also designed their operas for audiences that were more heterogeneous and – as some have argued—conceivably less discriminating in their tastes than their exclusively aristocratic predecessors. Indeed, this is not a work that commentators have considered seriously in terms of its use of ancient sources, perhaps following Pirrotta's notion that mythological topics in early Venetian opera were primarily inspired by concerns with verisimilitude.

Busenello may read Ovid rather differently than Rinuccini, but his use of Ovid is no less sensitive and perceptive, and probably more so. While Rinuccini may have actually presented Ovid as a character in his prologue, Busenello's libretto is arguably more faithful to Ovid's original – not through a slavish imitation of Ovid's text and narrative, but through his emulation of the narrative style of the *Metamorphoses*, weaving together disparate tales in a manner that defies logic and chronology, requiring the viewer to consider both individual narrative strands and also their relationship to one another.[33] It may well be this sort of fidelity to an ancient author to which Busenello refers in his preface to the 1656 published version of the libretto. After summarizing the tale of Daphne's transformation for the reader, he notes that 'the other episodes in the present drama are woven together in a way you will see, and if by chance some genius would have considered the unity of the fable divided by the duplicity of loves, that is Apollo and Daphne, Tithonus and Aurora; Cephalus and Procris, he should take pleasure in recognizing that this weaving together does not unmake the unity, but adorns it.' He also reassures the reader that a similar strategy had been used by Guarini in *Il pastor fido*, adding further that 'the stingy, narrow minds have corrupted the world, because while they endeavour to wear ancient clothing, they render their garments absurd with modern usage, and this is verified in a maxim by the Divine Petrarch, "everyone should be content with what they know."'[34] For Busenello, it would seem, a constricted approach to antiquity – one in which a narrow view of unity predominated – was all too common in modern times.[35] This is more than a conventional apology; it is a manifesto for a new aesthetic.

All the myths that Busenello interweaves in this opera, in fact, have one thing in common: they involve desire in its various guises. Busenello combines the story of Apollo and Daphne with two others involving female sexual longing: first, the frustration of the goddess Aurora with her immortal but impotent husband (*Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite,* 218–38)[36] and her abduction of the beautiful Cephalus; second, the despair of Procris abandoned by Cephalus (*Met.* 7.661–865). In Busenello's version, however, Procris's lament is inspired by Cephalus's obvious delight at being abducted and the fact that he enjoys Aurora's favours with such pleasure. Thus, a myth that is ostensibly concerned with female resistance to love is ornamented by a series of tales in which desire (and its consequences) is presented in every possible guise. The ultimate culprit here is Love, urged on by the often vengeful Venus.

Considered together, the three myths present a quite vivid (and somewhat ironic) picture of a sexually volatile world of passion and desire, albeit one in which both men and women participate equally and fully. But *Gli Amori di Apollo e di Dafne* also deals explicitly with music and musicians; this is an opera in which the close relationship between desire and self-expression – implicit in the Pan and Syrinx tale – is put into play. Apollo may be the legendary musician, associated with the harmony of the spheres; he will certainly assert that power at the end of the opera – particularly after Dafne has lost her voice and become a laurel tree. But in act 1, scene 4, it is the music of Dafne, her nymphs, and the shepherds that is being celebrated. Dafne is given no fewer than three discrete arias in this scene: first, she vows never to give into love ('O più d'ogni richezza') and then celebrates her liberty while accompanying herself on the lyre ('Libertade gradita'), both arias leading to a *ballo* sung by the nymphs and shepherds. The scene culminates with Dafne's stunning and virtuosic prayer to music, 'Musica dolce, musica tu sei.'

The aria is remarkable from a number of perspectives. After the previous simpler strophic arias in triple metre and the homophonic choral dance, the duple-metre 'Musica dolce,' with its free, improvisatory style and elaborate ornamentation, takes the listener into an entirely different sonic world, one in which earthly pleasures are a reflection of heavenly delights, one in which the music of the spheres is given full reign. From a stylistic point of view, this is perhaps somewhat unexpected; in subsequent Venetian repertoire such displays of virtuosity would usually be reserved for the deities and most often tucked away in an allegorical prologue, where such demonstrations of power and eloquence are the property of the gods. Cavalli creates for Dafne an aria in which the beauty of music is clearly manifest.



Example 7.1 Francesco Cavalli, *Gli amori di Apollo e di Dafne,* act 1, scene 4: 'Musica dolce, musica tu sei' (I-Vnm IV 404 [=9928]).

Note, for example, the care with which Cavalli sets the phrase 'musica dolce' in mm. 1–5: the sweetness of her entrance at the third on the sustained 'mu-,' the three-fold repetition of 'dolce,' on the off beat, each with increasing dissonance, and the untethered, ethereal quality achieved by the sustained E in the bass mm. 4–5. The extraordinary

melisma on the word 'celeste' (mm. 10–12) seems to suggest that Dafne not only understands but even has access to the celestial music that Apollo habitually commands. Yet she is also particularly sensitive to the music of the Arcadian forests – the sonic nuances of Ovid's world in which the earthly and heavenly commingle. In this context the use of the *forte/piano* opposition on the first two beats of m. 13 to create the echo effect goes beyond mere convention. Are we perhaps to understand this as a reference to another familiar Arcadian sound – the cries of Echo – the nymph who would be transformed from female body into pure voice because of her passion for Narcissus? Regardless, as she goes on to demonstrate with the next luscious melisma, the forests themselves reverberate with the pure, wordless sound of heavenly music, which is itself an imitation of that most precious utterance of both man and the gods – laughter. In this one luscious moment, Cavalli and Busenello thus endow Daphne – not Apollo – with the Orphic voice and access to the music of spheres.[37] Later, when she is silenced, that power will be apparent elsewhere.

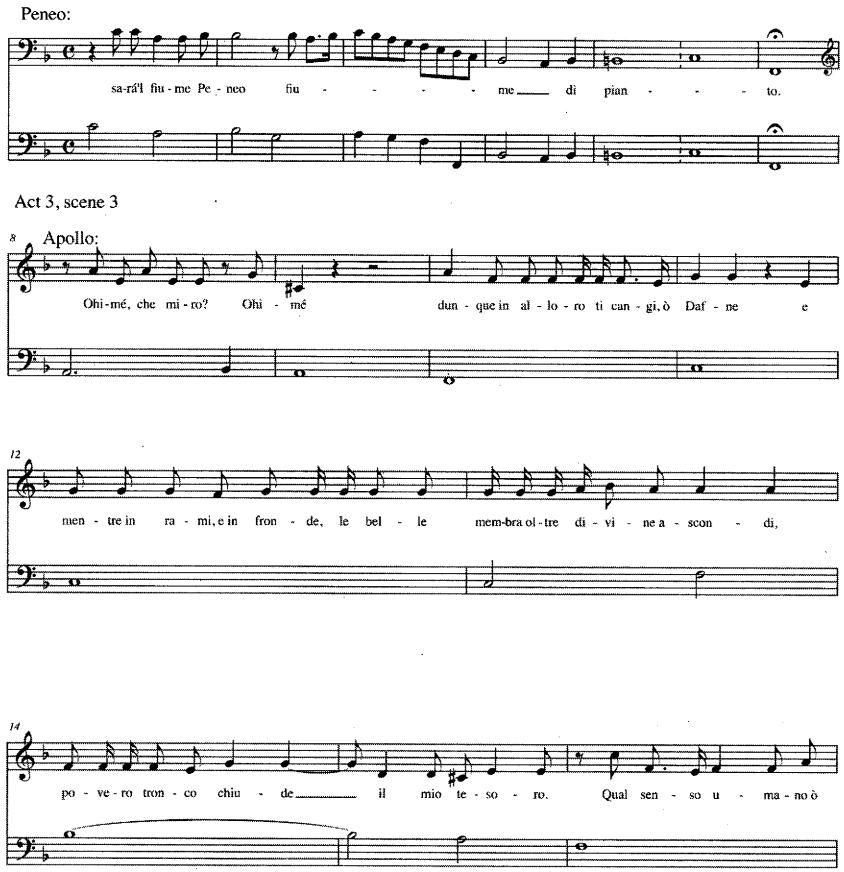
The significance of Daphne's musical prowess is made vividly apparent by Busenello's ironic twist at the opera's conclusion. First, we should consider the transformation itself. Unlike in Rinuccini's *La Dafne,* in *Gli amori di Apollo e di Dafne* the transformation is actually shown on stage. Dafne's father Peneo (Peneus) grants her request, and she becomes a laurel tree in front of Apollo's eyes – and ours as well. That Busenello and Cavalli should focus the viewer's attention on the actual metamorphoses, of course, is by no means surprising. This, after all, is the age of theatrical baroque sculpture, the age of Bernini.[38]

Bernini's sculpture of Apollo and Daphne (figure 7.1) creates a sense of both motion and stasis, one that heightens the viewers' awareness of the physical consequences of the metamorphoses in an unabashedly dramatic fashion. This masterpiece captures the abruptness with which Daphne's movement is halted as her legs turn into the trunk of the tree: her outstretched arms so readily become branches, her fingers become twigs, her hair becomes leaves. Apollo, too, seems to be in flight, managing to touch her at last, albeit just at the moment in which she hovers between a human and non-human state. One of the most striking elements of the sculpture is its implicit sound. Indeed, if a piece of sculpture can be said to make noise, Bernini has accomplished this with true operatic drama. Daphne's mouth is open in the shape of an 'Oh,' and she seems to be uttering a cry – perhaps the one that Rinuccini's Tirsi could not quite hear. Regardless of whether Busenello or Cavalli actually knew Bernini's statue, their presentation of the metamorphoses seems to

Figure 7.1 Gian Lorenzi Bernini, *Apollo and Daphne.* Detail of heads. Galleria Borghese, Rome. Scala / Art Resource, NY.

owe much to his sense of movement and gesture, one that creates a feeling of desire barely evident in Rinuccini's libretto. Busenello and Cavalli make the physical and aural consequences of metamorphoses palpable on both the visual and aural planes.

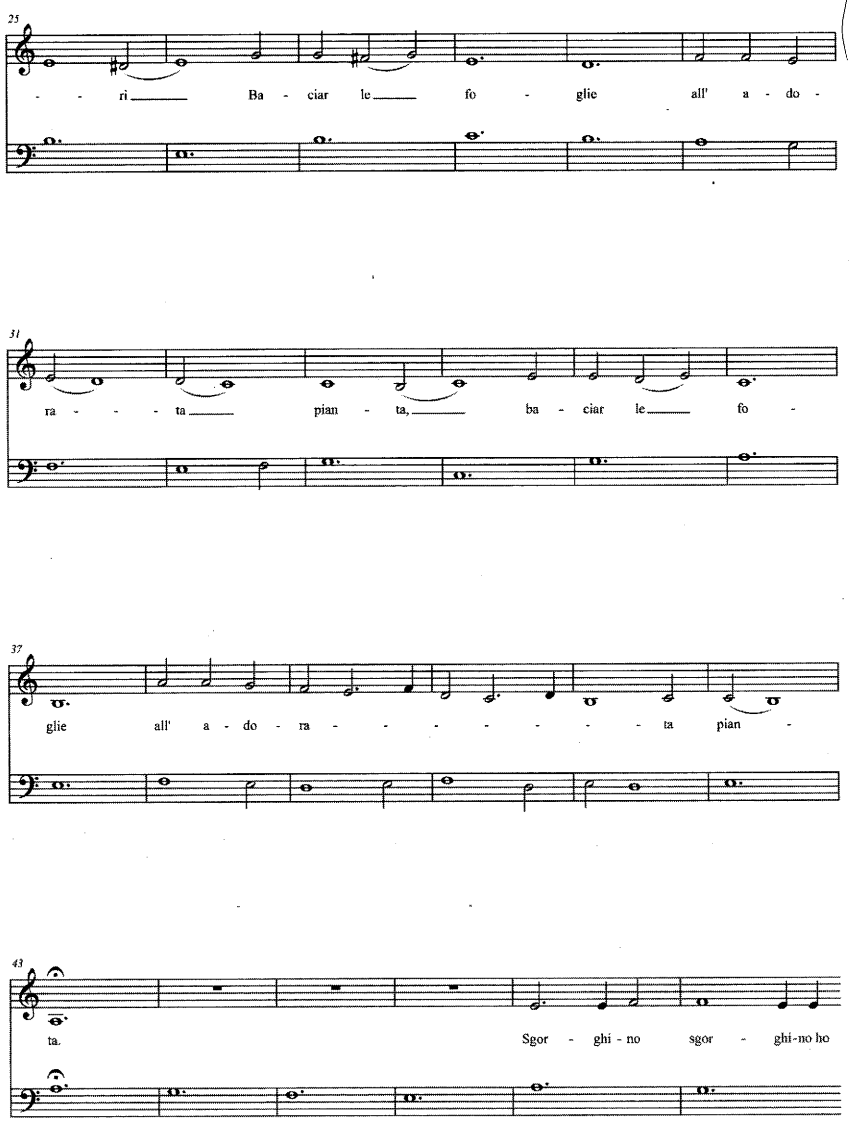
The metamorphosis occurs in act 3, scene 2, as Dafne, determined to save her chastity, asks her father Peneo for aid. He finds only one solution – he will transform her into a plant, a laurel tree that will always retain its leaves. Dafne, for her part, gladly accepts and declares that rather than losing her virginity (apparently a fate worse than death) she would even gladly be transformed into a stone.[39] In a passage of dignified recitative, Peneo transforms his daughter with apparent foreknowledge of the significance of the laurel: he imagines his watery self to be both a mirror that will forever reflect the image of his transformed daughter and a river of tears that he will always shed over her fate – a vision that reminds us of the loss of Dafne's voice that had echoed through the forest.

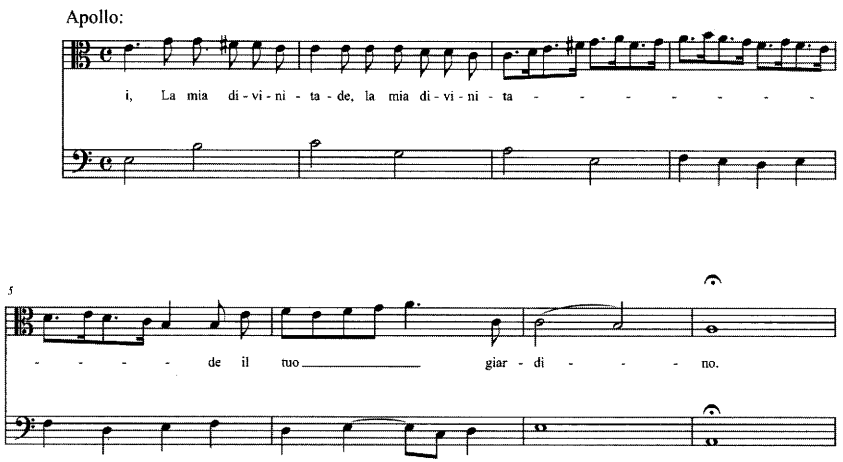


Example 7.2 Cavalli, *Gli amori di Apollo e di Dafne:* excerpt from conclusion of act 3, scene 2 and opening of subsequent scene.

In this striking example, Cavalli places the unusual *quadro* sign on the word 'pianto.' This unexpected chromatic intrusion of the B-natural in the context of a cadence on F not only expresses Peneo's sorrow, but also sets up a system change from flat to natural that acts as a musical metaphor for Dafne's metamorphosis.

Apollo, not surprisingly, reacts to the transformation with shock. His cry, 'Ohimé che miro,' is marked with the introduction of an A-major sonority, an anguished cry in his upper register, and a chromatic upper neighbouring tone in the bass.[40] This begins what for him is a complex





Example 7.3a,b. Cavalli, *Gli amori di Apollo e di Dafne*, act 3, scene 3: excerpt from 'Misero, Apollo' and melisma at conclusion of his monologue.

psychological process, one in which he is not lamenting the death of a beloved in any conventional sense, but rather only the loss of his beloved's body, his 'fire' now transformed into wood. The lament that follows can be understood as Apollo's attempt to assimilate this new knowledge about Dafne, both to mourn her and to contain and rechannel his overwhelming desire, for which there is no longer any possibility of physical satisfaction or release.[41]

In this section, Cavalli introduces a number of brilliant musical touches that portray Apollo's frustration with and ultimate acceptance of his reconfigured relationship with his now-transformed object of desire. One is the repeating harmonic pattern imprinted on each strophe of his lament: four statements of the descending tetrachord from a to e provide the underpinning for Apollo's struggling ascent from e to a, marked by half-step motion and dissonant F-sharps and G-sharps. The difference between Apollo's desire and Dafne's earlier pleasure could not be more apparent. Where her voice echoed freely through the woods, Apollo is trapped – at least at the outset of each strophe – in the obsessive world of the ostinato bass. Notably, he does not completely give in to the obsessiveness of grief: by m. 16 the ground-bass pattern is relinquished in favour of diatonic movement by steps and fifths, with a more stable quasi-tonal harmonic motion, as Apollo imagines himself changed into wind

so that he might caress her leaves (strophe 1), or seeing his bitter tears as providing her with water (2). By the fourth strophe, Apollo discards the lament entirely; when Giove fails to respond to his plea – that he find someone else to take over his job as the sun so that he might enjoy Dafne's shade – Apollo takes on an entirely different vocal strategy: with an extravagant melisma (example 7.3b), he imagines the way in which his divinity will provide a fertile garden for his beloved in which they are joined in sweet union. Notably, in Apollo's fantasy about this idyllic garden, it is the sun god whose virtuosity is celebrated. Male desire trumps female autonomy, and Dafne, the laurel tree, remains a passive and silent recipient of the god's love.

We will recall that the story ends at that point in Rinuccini's *La Dafne*. As described by da Gagliano, Apollo laments, receives consolation from the lamenting shepherds and nymphs, and then drapes himself in the laurel branches with amplified sound. But in *Gli Amori di Apollo e di Dafne*, the brilliant melding of mythic fragments inspires the arrival of unexpected guests. First Amor appears to mock Apollo's loss and gloat over his triumph. Then Pane (Pan), having made his entrance several hundred lines earlier (at least as far as Ovid is concerned), suddenly appears in the wrong myth to console Apollo over the loss of Dafne, even while she is hovering between a human and inhuman state.

Pane asks Apollo what is troubling him, and after an anguished explanation, he offers a solution. He describes his similar pursuit of Syrinx, who, as mentioned earlier, also begged to be transformed from woman into a plant under identical circumstances. Presenting the results – the famed pipes – to Apollo, Pane explains that they are 'harmonious memories' of his lost love. Apollo, he advises, should sublimate in a similar fashion and take comfort by removing branches and leaves from the tree, using them to crown his head and his lyre.[42]

Although Apollo considers this to be a reasonable plan, when he actually tries to cut down the branches, Dafne – who has not yet entirely crossed over into the arboreal world (and must have patiently been listening to all of this discussion about her fate) – cries out in protest. How, she asks, could he be so cruel to an innocent nymph? Not only was Apollo an enemy of her honour when she was a woman, Dafne exclaims, but he continues her assault on her even though she is now a plant.[43] Cavalli and Busenello thus pointedly call attention to that curious moment in the metamorphoses in which, as Leonard Barkan describes it, human consciousness albeit briefly is maintained even as the physical body is lost. The fact that Dafne herself is aware of the process makes this

moment even more poignant. As she bids a final farewell to Apollo, she sings: 'Quest'arbore non può più lungamente organizar parole' [This tree cannot much longer organize words].

The arrival of a sympathetic Pane is a brilliant dramatic stroke by Busenello: he could have found no better way to call our attention to the parallels between these two tales, implicit in Ovid's text. Since overwhelming passion had the same effect on Syrinx, transforming her into the beloved vibrating body, Pane suggest that Apollo follow his example – and use the laurel wreathes to decorate his lyre – thus implying that Dafne, too, could bring Apollo similar pleasure by serving as an ornament to his artistic endeavours. Although Apollo does not actually turn Dafne into an instrument – though his physical assault on the branches is certainly suggestive – the implication is much the same: her body is there to glorify his own music making.

In an operatic context, this has quite astounding consequences. Dafne, as a young virgin, had enjoyed her innate link to the music of the spheres; in this act of presumption or assumption of male prerogative, the power of music that had brought her and her maidens such delight is transferred from the female to its rightful place in the male sphere – not an unfamiliar tactic in the Venetian Republic.[44] Moreover, Pane and Apollo join to celebrate their newfound expressive power and the eternal memories of their lost loves Dafne and Siringe (Syrinx). This is not the conventional love duet that will conclude so many subsequent operas – as, for example, in the infamous duet that consummates the love between Nerone and Poppea at the end of Monteverdi's opera. Rather, what we have here is an unholy alliance between the heavenly Apollo and the earthly Pane: two figures whose differences in physical appearance, habits, and sensibilities are matched by the utter incompatibility of their music making. Compare, for example, the contrasting representations of Pan and Apollo in a mid-sixteenth-century print by Giorgio Ghisi (figure 7.2).

In the duet with which the opera *Gli amori di Apollo e di Dafne* concludes, Pane and Apollo sing together with surprising stylistic uniformity: 'Yes, yes, let them live together eternally, the love-filled lights of our flames. Let their beauty be eternal for those who nourish such blessed passion. May heaven never tire of their sounds.' Tim Carter refers to Pane's appearance as making possible an 'apotheotic conclusion,' attempting, perhaps, to understand Cavalli's and Busenello's work as a descendant of Monteverdi's *Orfeo*.[45] But despite the praise for Dafne and Siringe, there is something more earthbound and conspiratorial about

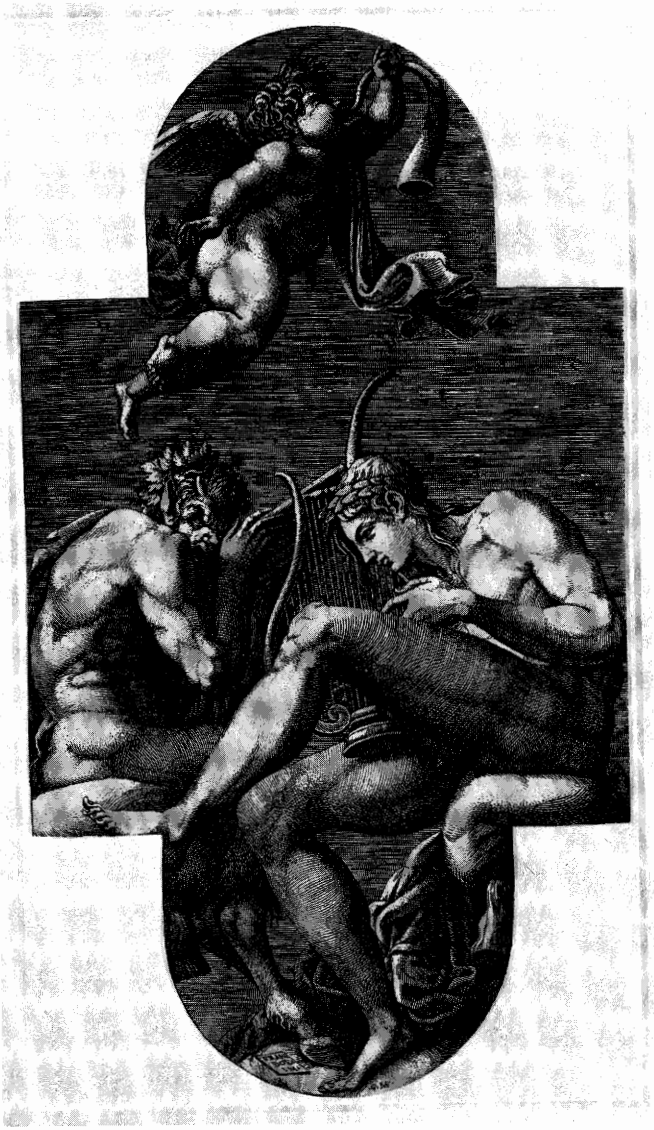
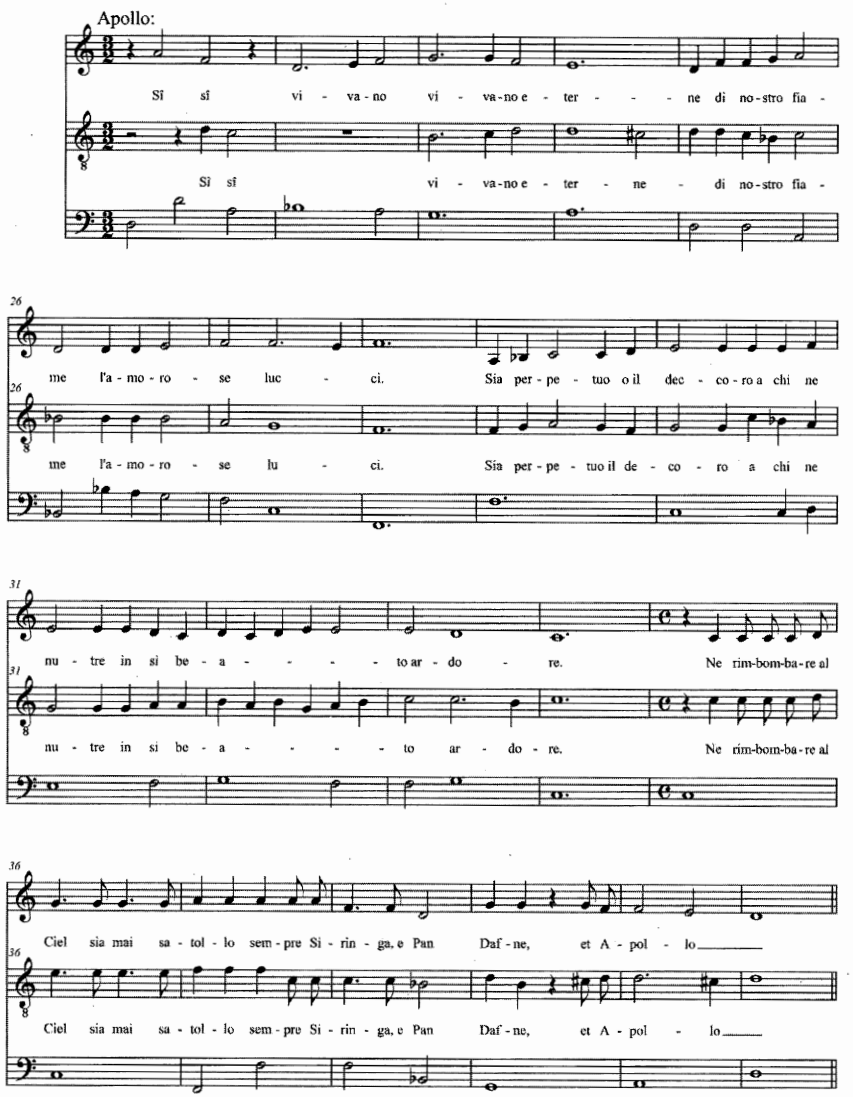


Figure 7.2 Giorgio Ghisi, after Francesco Primaticcio, *Apollo, Pan, and a Putto Blowing a Horn*, 1560s. Engraving (29.8 × 16.5 cm). The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY, USA / Art Resource, NY.



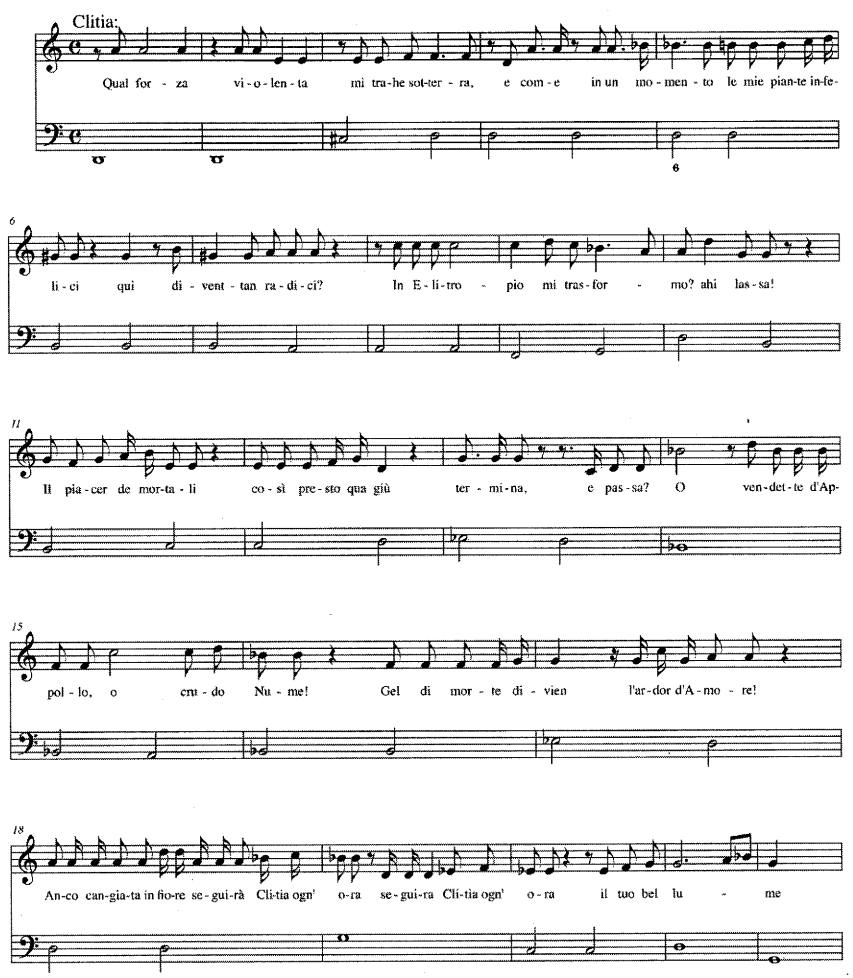
Example 7.4 Cavalli, *Gli amori di Apollo e di Dafne*, act 3, scene 4: final duet, excerpt.

their musings on their lost women. Apollo has learned well his lesson from the goat-god, and even takes the lead, singing with a simplicity of expression that seems more to do with Pane's primitive urges than with Apollo's supposedly celestial leanings.

In this newly reassembled vision of antiquity, the composer offers a Pane and an Apollo who not only transcend their profound differences – physical, social and aesthetic – but even join forces in producing music. This combination of earthly and heavenly – of the Dionysian and Apollonian – would become central to the peculiar aesthetic of Venetian opera. The fact that *Gli amori di Apollo e di Dafne* was written so early in the history of the Venetian opera suggests that the concept of a woman turning into an instrument might also have served as a metaphor for opera itself. The desires of Pane and Apollo for Dafne and Siringe are sublimated and transformed into sublime music making – in other words, the pleasures of opera.

The stories of Daphne and Syrinx tell us much about the inspirational power of frustrated desire. Another opera dealing with opera, written nearly twenty-five years later, provides us with a metamorphosis in which Apollo actually gets the girl – but is unable to keep her. The opera is *Gli amori di Apollo e di Leucotoe*, presented at the Teatro SS Giovanni e Paolo in 1663.[46] The composer was Giovanni Battista Volpe, also known as Riveting, and the libretto was written by Aurelio Aureli, one of the most inventive librettists of the period.[47] The story, to which I alluded earlier, concerns Apollo's deflowering of the nymph Leucothoe, who is buried alive by her own father after hearing of his daughter's lack of chastity from the jealous Clytië. Leucothoe is transformed into a frankincense bush, while Clytië becomes a sunflower.

As is the case with other Venetian operatic treatments of Ovidian rapes – *La Calisto* being the primary example – Leucotoe does not make any attempt to resist Apollo's affections – if indeed it was necessary for him to disguise himself as Leucothoe's mother to gain access to the nymph, this must have happened at an earlier point in the narrative. When she first appears in the opera, Leucotoe is already deeply in love with Apollo and awakens early, before the sunrise, so that she might await his arrival in the garden outside her bed chamber. Thus, in Aureli and Volpe's interpretation of the tale the culprit does not focus on a woman's chastity or resistance to love, but rather on another popular female sin: jealousy. The opera opens with Climene, Apollo's wife, railing against her husband's philandering, and she sends her sons Orfeo (Orpheus), Fetonte (Phaeton), and Esculapio (Esculapius) down to earth to thwart their father's desires.[48] The invented subplot introduces the young Eritreo (Eritreus) presumably the son of Perseo (Perseus) and Andromeda, who is also in love with Leucotoe and who – in another moment of metamorphosis – will lose his wits over the loss of his beloved.



Example 7.5 Giovanni Battista Volpe, *Gli amori di Apollo e Leucotoe*, act 3, scene 17: 'Diffondete miei ragi' (I-Vnm, Cod. It IV 386 [=9910]).

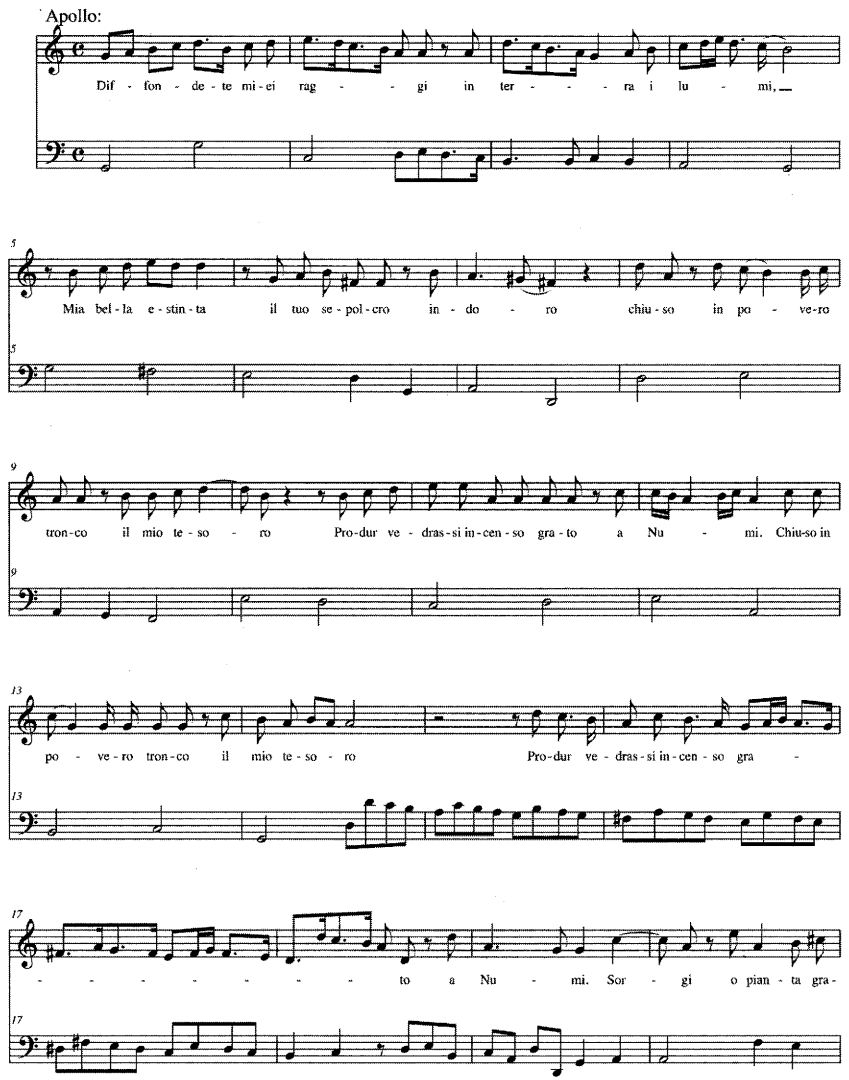
What is particularly interesting, however, is the way in which Aureli and Volpe manage to craft a satisfactory *lieto fine* that nonetheless allows for a somewhat faithful rendition of the myths – that is, two of the central female characters turn into plants. First, Clitia (Clytië) tells Leucotoe's father of his daughter's transgression; he brutally condemns her to be buried alive, despite her eloquent and touching protestations.[49] Apollo

comes upon her only after she's been buried: once again he is frustrated by the realization that his beloved is enclosed in a tomb that is unworthy of her.[50] In this instance, however, he does not lament – after all, he's already consummated the relationship. Instead, in Volpe and Aureli's opera, it his singing that actually triggers the metamorphosis. The aria in which this occurs is curious in many respects: through-composed, with an unambiguously cheerful affect that is scarcely funereal, composed of short motives in the opening phrases, and building to a virtuosic conclusion in which Apollo's musical ability enacts the metaphor of the aroma of the frankincense bush.

Desire here becomes the tool of metamorphosis, and (despite the arguably sombre tone of the dramatic situation – that is, the entombment of the central female character) there is no attempt to suggest that Apollo suffers over his loss. Moreover, in the following scene, as Clitia attempts to renew her affair with Apollo, she, too, will lose her body. Her concluding recitative traces her self-aware moment of transformation – both musically and dramatically: what violent force, she asks, causes my tears to become petals, and transforms me into a sunflower? How could mortal pleasures so quickly pass away and come to an end?[51] Bemoaning the cruel vengeance of Apollo, she recognizes that she, now transformed into a flower, will always follow his beautiful light.

None of this, however, seems to negate the happy ending. Eritreo the heroic son of Perseo and Andromeda, regains his senses and is consoled for his lost love through the good graces of Giove, who declares him to be a virtuous hero. Climene and Apollo are rejoined as husband and wife, and they rejoice in their newfound marital bliss with Oceano (Oceanus) and Theti (Thetys) and a chorus of Nereids.

In this instance, the metamorphosis triggered by desire removes the disruptive female elements and allows for marital fidelity and heroism. From a twenty-first-century perspective, this is the most convenient (if brutal) of all plot devices – what better way to dispose of a pair of former mistresses than to turn them to plants? The jealous wife is placated, the purity of marriage is undisturbed, and – as a bonus – even the environmental cause is served, through the creation of new and beautiful species of flora. Of course conventional early modern gender narratives are built into the stories – male action contrasts with female passivity; chastity is cruel; resistance is futile; and female silence is – predictably – the consequence of either good or bad behaviour. And nowhere is this given more vivid representation than in an opera in which several of the primary female characters aren't actually capable of participating in the *lieto fine*.



Example 7.6 Volpe, *Gli amori di Apollo e Leucotoe*, act 3, scene 17: 'O qual violente.'

However, there is a more profound implication in all of these operatic adaptations of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. In each of these stories, the lover is forced to do without the physical presence of the beloved – usually the female body – but, as we have noted, he is always left with the proverbial

'something to remember her by.' It could be a fragrance (here worshipful devotion), a face surrounded by petals, the sound of vibrating reeds, or the willowy limbs encased in wood. Through repetition and juxtaposition we are reminded again and again that desire – regardless of the barely suppressed violence – has a certain procreative power that merits celebration.

These myths provided opera in seventeenth-century Venice with an opportunity to use a fictional universe to explore a notion of sexuality somewhat free of moral constraints, one that – from an often ironic male-centred viewpoint – regards desire as the source of all artistic and procreative inspiration. In this case, we could push Barkan's formulation further and say that the metaphors are not *made* flesh – if anything they represent the unmaking or unmasking of flesh, as the woman who becomes an object, as a creation of the poet's or musician's imagination, is always separated from her original bodily context, much like the branches of the laurel tree. It is only on the operatic stage, however, that these metaphors could be made audible. Opera allows us both to see and to hear the metamorphoses; we hear the disembodied echo of Dafne's voice and her struggle to speak; we hear Clitia's despair as she grows petals, and we experience Apollo's pain and subsequent self-consolation. We also recognize something that Pan certainly discovered as he tried with such futility to put Syrinx's body back together – that feelings could give birth to music.

NOTES

I would like to dedicate this essay to the memory of composer, musician, and friend, Daniel Pinkham (1923–2006).

1 *Achilles Tatius,* trans. S. Gaselee, The Loeb Classical Library (London: William Heinemann; New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1917). Achilles Tatius (second century AD) is best known for *Leucippe and Clitophon,* a novel that is particularly notable for its narrative, digressions, fantasies, theatricality, and use of ekphrasis. The first complete Latin translation was published in Venice in 1544, vernacular treatments appeared in Italy shortly thereafter, and the book continued to be reprinted well into the seventeenth century. See, for example, *Achille Tatio Alessandrino, De gli Amorosi Avvenimenti di Leucippe, & di Clitophonte Gia dal Greco tradotti, nella nostra lingua Italiana* (Venice: Battista Bonfadino, 1607). The passage cited above appears on 107. Achilles Tatius's theatrical treatment of myth may well have provided inspiration for artists in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, supplementing Ovid and mythographies. Donald Stone, Jr, 'The Source of Titian's Rape of Europa,' *Art Bulletin* 54, no. 1 (1972): 47–9, for instance, proposes that the description of Europa's rape in Achilles Tatius (rather than Ovid) was the primary literary inspiration for Titian's painting on the subject.

2 As noted above, the story of Pan and Syrinx actually forms part of Ovid's tale of Giove's love for the nymph Io, whom he transforms into a cow to avoid Juno's jealousy. Juno, who inevitably discovers her husband's infidelities, demands the cow as a gift and leaves her captive under Argus's one hundred watchful eyes. Mercury tells this beguiling story to Argus in order to put him to sleep and thus gain Io's freedom.

3 On this point, see Michaela Janan, '"There Beneath the Roman Ruine Where the Purple Flowers Grow": Ovid's Minyeides and the Feminine Imagination,' *American Journal of Philology* 115, no. 3 (1994): 427–48.

4 '[W]hen she [Io] attempted to voice her complaints, she only mooed. She would start with fear at the sound, and was filled with terror at her own voice' (*Met.* 1.635–7). Ovid provides a detailed description of Callisto's struggle to communicate: 'And when the girl stretched out her arms in prayer for mercy, her arms began to grow rough with black shaggy hair; her hands changed into feet tipped with sharp claws; and her lips, which but not Jove had just praised, were changed to broad, ugly jaws; and that she might not move him with entreating prayers, her power of speech was taken from her, and only a harsh terrifying growl came hoarsely from her throat. Still her human feelings remained, though she was now a bear' (*Met.* 2.477–85). Leonard Barkan, *The Gods Made Flesh: Metamorphosis and the Pursuit of Paganism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), describes this moment of transition from the human to the beastly as an apparent 'interpenetration of identities' (24).

5 This is a central point made by Barkan in *The Gods Made Flesh,* chapter 1.

6 Barkan, *Gods Made Flesh,* 23.

7 *Gli amori di Apollo e di Dafne* was presented at the Teatro S Cassiano in Venice in 1640. For a facsimile of the score and libretto, see Pier Francesco Cavalli, *Gli amori d'Apollo e di Dafne,* introduced by Howard Mayer Brown, vol. 1: *Italian Opera, 1640–1770* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1978). *Gli amori di Apollo e di Leucotoe,* with music by Giovanni Battista Volpe (1620–91), was presented at the Teatro SS Giovanni e Paolo in 1663.

8 There is an extensive bibliography on the 'birth' of opera, humanism, and myth. For the documents associated with early opera, see Claude Palisca, *The Florentine Camerata: Documentary Studies and Translations* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989); 'The Florentine Camerata: A Reappraisal,' *Studi*

Musicali 1 (1972): 203–36; on early opera and humanism, see Barbara Russano Hanning, *Of Poetry and Music's Power: Humanism and the Creation of Opera*, Studies in Musicology 13 (Ann Arbor: UMI Press, 1980); Gary Tomlinson, 'Music and the Claims of Text: Monteverdi, Rinuccini, and Marino,' *Critical Inquiry* 8 (1982): 565–89; Howard Mayer Brown, 'How Opera Began: An Introduction to Jacopo Peri's *Euridice* (1600),' in *The Late Italian Renaissance, 1525–1630*, ed. Eric Cochrane (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), 401–44. The notion of a humanistic birth of opera has also been influential in critical assessments of the genre, most notably that by Joseph Kerman, *Opera as Drama* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1956). For Kerman, in fact, much of baroque opera is part of the 'dark ages' and thus apparently impervious to the light of humanism. Much of the work on Ovid in early opera has focused on Monteverdi's *Orfeo*. See, for example, Frederick Sternfeld, 'The Birth of Opera: Ovid, Poliziano, and the *Lieto Fine*,' *Analecta Musicologica* 19, no. 1979 (1979): 30–51; Nino Pirrotta, 'Monteverdi and the Problems of Opera,' *Music and Culture in Italy from the Middle Ages and the Baroque* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), 235–53; John Whenham, *Claudio Monteverdi, Orfeo*, ed. John Whenham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986). One of the few studies of the use of Ovid in the later Seicento is Ellen Rosand, ' L'ovidio trasformato,' in *Orfeo by Aureli and Sartorio, Venice 1673*, ed. Ellen Rosand, Drammaturgia musical veneta 6 (Milan: Ricordi, 1983).

9 Nino Pirrotta, in his foundational studies of early opera, emphasized the extent to which the use of mythological characters – particularly those known as gifted musicians, such as Apollo or Orpheus – provided a justification for song, even within the pastoral world in which a greater licence for poetic and musical self-expression was already implicit. See Pirrotta, 'Early Opera and Aria,' *Music and Theatre from Polizano to Monteverdi*, trans. Karen Eales (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), esp. 262–4.

10 In Pirrotta's view, in fact, the continued self-consciousness about verisimilitude was also a factor in the popularity of mythological themes during the first decades of Venetian opera, including works such as Cavalli's *Gli amori di Apollo e di Dafne*: 'One must conclude that, as had been the case for the audience of *Arianna* thirty years ago, the Venetian public was not fully prepared for the novelty of *recitar cantando* as the normal means of expression for human beings; accordingly, it was only natural for the librettists to select themes that either could be developed on a double level, one of which at least would allow the composer a freer hand and compensate for the restraint to which he was obliged when handling human characters' ('Early Opera,' 272). Although Pirrotta, of course, never states explicitly that this is the *only* significance of mythological themes in early opera, it is a prevailing

attitude, I would suggest, that has prevented scholars from considering the broader implications of Ovidian themes in early opera. See Wendy Heller, 'Il canto degli dei: opera, verosimiglianza, and mitologia nel primo Seicento,' *Atti del Convegno internazionale 'Musicologia fra due Continenti: l'eredità di Nino Pirrotta,'* ed. Franco Piperno and Fabrizio della Seta (Florence: Olschki, 2010), 127–39

11 A striking example is Ovid's Iphis (*Met.* 9.666–781), an opera heroine brought to the Venetian stage in 1672: Nicolò Minato, *Iphide Greci* (Venice: Bertani, 1671). Born a woman, disguised as boy by her mother, Iphis manages – at just the right moment – to grow the necessary equipment that all but reverses the ritual of castration. Of note is the fact that the music also went through its own sort of metamorphosis: each act was composed by a different composer: Do-menico Partenio (act 1); Domenico Freschi (act 2); Antonio Sartorio (act 3).

12 On the castrato in seventeenth-century Venice, see Wendy Heller, 'The Castrato as Man: Trajectories from the Seventeenth Century,' *British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 28, no. 3 (2006): 307–21.

13 Giovanni Faustini, *Egisto* (Venice: Surian, 1644).

14 This is the topic of my forthcoming study, *Animating Ovid: Opera and the Metamorphosis of Antiquity in Early Modern Italy*.

15 On Arcadia and Pan, see also Philippe Borgeaud, *The Cult of Pan in Ancient Greece*, trans. Kathleen Atlass and James Redfield (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1988), 4–5; for the operatic implications of the Arcadian realm in Cavalli's *La Calisto*, see Wendy Heller, *Emblems of Eloquence: Opera and Women's Voices in Seventeenth-Century Venice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 178–81.

16 Barbara Hanning views Rinuccini's *La Dafne* as a central text in her hypothesis that Rinuccini's librettos present a 'coherent program that grew out of Renaissance humanistic theories about the power and function of art,' and she attributes this very specific allegorical intent to both Ovid and Rinuccini. See 'Letter from Barbara Russano Hanning,' *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 29, no. 3 (1976): 501–3; see also Hanning, 'Glorious Apollo: Poetic and Political Themes in the First Opera,' *Renaissance Quarterly* 32 (1979): 485–513.

17 Rinuccini and Peri's setting of *La Dafne* was first performed at the Palazzo Corsi for carnival in 1597–8, repeated at the Palazzo Pitti a year later before for Cardinals Monte and Montalto, and was performed again the following year at the Palazzo Corsi. On sources and dating for *La Dafne*, see Oscar G. Sonneck, '"Dafne," The First Opera: A Chronological Study,' *Sammelbände der Internationalen Musikgesellschaft* 15, no. 1 (October-December 1913): 102–10; W.V. Porter, 'Peri and Corsi's *Dafne*: Some New Discoveries and

Observations,' *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 13 (1965): 170–96; F.W. Sternfeld: 'The First Printed Opera Libretto,' *Music & Letters* 49 (1978): 121–38. On Peri's setting, see also Tim Carter, 'Jacopo Peri,' *Music & Letters* 61, no. 2 (1980): 121–35.

18 Angelo Solerti, *Gli albori del melodramma* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1969), 2: 64–105, includes Rinuccini's libretto for *La Dafne*, along with Marco da Gagliano's preface for the 1608 performance in Mantua. The facsimile of the score is printed as *La Dafne di Marco da Gagliano* (Florence: Cristoforo Marescotti, 1608; repr. *Biblioteca Musica Bononiensis* 4, no. 4 (Bologna: Forni, 1970).

19 On the Accademia degli Incogniti and their views on gender, see Heller, *Emblems of Eloquence*, chapter 2.

20 Translated by Franz Justus Miller, revised by G.P. Goold, The Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977).

21 On the notion of grotesquerie and comedy in the myth, see Mary E. Barnard, *The Myth of Apollo and Daphne from Ovid to Quevodo: Love, Agon, and the Grotesque* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1987), 9–11, 19–37.

22 Rinuccini, *La Dafne*, lines 5–11. 'Quel mi son io, che su la dotta lira / Cantai le fiamme de' celesti amanti, E i trasformati lorvari sembianti / Soavi sì, ch'il mondo ancor m'ammira.' On the prologues in early opera, see Jette Barnholdt Hansen, 'From Invention to Interpretation: The Prologues of the First Court Operas Where Oral and Written Cultures Meet,' *Journal of Musicology* 20 (2003): 556–96.

23 Rinuccini and his audiences would have known this Ovidian tale from countless visual representations, which decorated their homes and public spaces, as well as translations and literary commentaries, which provided readers with a host of competing interpretative possibilities for understanding this tale. See, for example, Mary Barnard, *The Myth of Apollo*; Ann Moss, *Latin Commentaries on Ovid from the Renaissance* (Signal Mountain, TN: Summertown Texts for the Library of Renaissance Humanism, 1998); Claudia Cieri Via, *L'arte delle metamorfosi: decorazioni mitologiche nel cinquecento* (Rome: Lithos editrice, 2003).

24 For debates about *La Dafne*, and in particular about the viability of its dramatic structure, see Barbara Russano Hanning, 'Apologia pro Ottavio Rinuccini,' *Journal of the American Musicological* Society 26 (1973): 240–62; Gary A. Tomlinson, 'Ancora su Ottavio Rinuccini,' *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 28 (1975): 351–6; and 'Letter from Barbara Russano Hanning,' 501–3. Tomlinson, who sees *Arianna* (1608) as the perfect realization of Rinuccini's skills as dramatist, is particularly critical of the first version of *La Dafne*, finding that there is 'little attempt to unify the two elements of the plot' (i.e., Apollo's triumph over the python and his pursuit

of Daphne). He finds fault as well with the relatively little importance accorded Daphne in the libretto, viewing it as a 'hodgepodge of dramatic elements' (Tomlinson, 'Ancora su Ottavio Rinuccini,' 354). From the strict point of view of dramatic structure, Tomlinson might indeed be right; however, this way of thinking about the opera fails to account for the fact that Ovid's text neither aspires to nor succeeds in being unified or dramatically coherent. For further response to Tomlinson and a detailed account of the possible significance of the Apollo iconography for the Medici, see Hanning, 'Glorious Apollo.'

25 See D.P. Walker and J. Jacquot, *Les Fêtes de Florence (1589): Musique des intermèdes de 'La Pellegrina'* (Paris, 1963), xxiii–lviii.

26 For Gary Tomlinson, 'Ancora su Ottavio Rinuccini,' 355, these extra strophes enhance the dramatic structure and balance of Rinuccini's original libretto, as well as demonstrate the poet's evolution as a dramatist between the composition of *La Dafne* and *Arianna*. Ovid does present us occasionally with the laments of shepherds and Arcadian creatures, most strikingly, perhaps, in his rendition of the Marsyas and Apollo story, when it is Apollo's flaying of Marsyas that inspires such sorrow.

27 Marco da Gagliano, Al lettore: 'La scena di pianto d'Apollo, che segue, vuol esser cantata co' l maggior affetto che sia possibile; con tutto ciò, abbia riguardo il cantore d'accresserolo dove maggiormente lo ricercano le parole.' Solerti, *Gli Albori*, 2: 72.

28 'Quando pronunzia il verso '*Faran ghirlando le sue fronde e i rami*,' avvolgasi quel ramuscello d'alloro, sopra il quale si sarà lamentato, intorno al testa, incoronandosene. . .'

29 '. . . è necessario far apparire al teatro che dalla lira d'Apollo esca melodia più che ordinaria, però pongansi quattro sonatori di viola (a braccio o gamba poco rilieva) in una delle strade più vicina, in luogo dove non veduti dal popolo veggano Apollo. . .'

30 Hanning reminds us that this is why Rinuccini would not have been so concerned with making Daphne a dramatically vibrant character: 'Despite the title of the work, then, the characterization of Daphne clearly remained less important to Rinuccini than her transformation and subsequent immortalization. In fact, the pathos of her fate is inconsequential compared to Apollo's exaltation of her metamorphosed state' (449). While Hanning, in 1979, was not particularly attentive to the gendered implications here, her analysis reminds us of the fate of the female body in this enterprise: 'For Ovid and Rinuccini the dénouement of the myth is thus symbolic of the power of art which, if it cannot possess natural body, can still triumph in immortalizing it' (449). Indeed, as Hanning emphasizes, it is not surprising

that the Medici would have been drawn to the allegorical significance of the Apollo tale.

31 On Cavalli, *Gli amori di Apollo e di Dafne,* see Wendy Heller, 'Venice and Arcadia,' *Musica e Storia* 12 (2004): 21–34; Tim Carter, 'Mask and Illusion: Italian Opera after 1637,' in *The Cambridge Guide to Seventeenth-Century Music,* ed. Tim Carter and John Butt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 249–59.

32 On the financial structures of Venetian opera, see Beth Elise Glixon and Jonathan Glixon, *Inventing the Business of Opera: The Impresario and His World in Seventeenth-Century Venice* (Oxford University Press: Oxford and New York, 2006).

33 See Andrew Zissos and Ingo Gildenhard, 'Problem of Time in Metamorphoses 2,' in *Ovidan Transformations: Essays on the Metamorphoses and Its Reception,* ed. Alessandro Barchiesi, Philip Hardie, and Stephen Hinds (Cambridge: Cambridge Philological Society, 1999), 31–47.

34 Busenello, *Gli amori di Apollo e di Dafne* (Venice: Giuliani, 1656).

35 'Gl'ingegni Stitici hanno corrotto al Mondo, perche mentre si studia di portar l'abito antico, si rendono le vesti ridicole all'usanza moderna. Ogn'uno abbonda nel senso, & io abbondana nel mio, e trovo in me verificata la massima del nostro Divino Petrarco, *Ogn'un del suo saper par che s'appaghi.'* The passage from Petrarch is taken from his *Trionfa della fama,* 3.96.

36 Aurora, known as one of the most rapacious of all the goddesses, fell in love with Tithonus, a mortal. She then asked Zeus if he would grant Tithonus immortal life; he did so, but allowed him to age first. 'So while he enjoyed the sweet flower of life he lived rapturously with golden-throned Eos, Erigeneia (early-born), by the streams of Okeanos, at the ends of the earth; but when the first grey hairs began to ripple from his comely head and noble chin, Lady Eos stayed away from his bed, though she cherished him in her house, nourished him with food and ambrosia and gave him rich clothing. But when loathsome old age pressed full upon him, and he could not move nor lift his limbs, this seemed to her in her heart the best counsel: she laid him in a room and put to the shining doors. There he babbles endlessly, and no more has strength at all, such as once he had in his supple limbs' (*Homeric Hymn 5 to Aphrodite,* 218).

37 In his discussion *of Gli amori di Apollo e di Dafne* in the *Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Music,* Tim Carter notes that Cavalli provides us with a 'glorious musical display of Dafne's voice' (258), then comments that 'it does almost nothing to project any drama, save allowing a character to state her position several times over.' This is an example in which an adherence to a rigid aesthetic criterion – one that insists upon dramatic realism above

other parameters – limits our understanding of opera's encounters with the ancient world. Thus, while Carter correctly observes the fact that the opera is saturated with references to music and song, he still sees this in terms of the notion of verisimilitude. 'It helps, of course, that here the characters are gods and nymphs living in an Age of Gold; this has been the justification for music in the very first operas, not the least of those based on the Orpheus myth' (259).

38 On the role of Bernini in theatrical and artistic endeavours, see Frederick Hammond, *Music and Spectacle in Baroque Rome: Barberini Patronage under Urban VIII* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994); *Gian Lorenzo Bernini: registra del barocco,* ed. Maria Grazia Bernadini and Maurizio Fagiolo dell'Arco (Milan: Skira, 1999); Maurizio Faigolo dell'Arco, *Novità sul registra del barocco: Berniniana* (Milan: Skira, 1999). See also Wendy Heller, 'A Musical Metamorphosis: Ovid, Bernini and Handel's Apollo e Dafne,' *Handel Jahrbuch* (2008), 35–63.

39 Busenello, *Gli amori di Apollo e di Dafne,* act 3, scene 2: 'Vada la vita mia, com'à te piace, / Per salvar l'honestate, / Se non basta in un'a bore, in un sasso, / Trasformarmi a tuo senno. / Vada perigrinando / Per mille varie esser mio, / Pria, che cader dal virginal decoro / Delle grand'alme singolar tesoro.'

40 Busenello, *Gli amori di Apollo e di Dafne,* act 3, scene 3: 'Ohimé, che miro? Ohimé dunque; in alloro / Ti cangi, o Dafne, e mentre in rami, e in frondi, / Le belle membra oltredivine ascondi, / Povero tronco chiude il mio tesoro. / Qual senso humano, ò qual celeste ingegno / A' si profondo arcano arrivò mai? /Veggo d'un viso arboreggiare i rai / Trovo il mio foco trasformato in legno.'

41 For a transcription of the entire lament, see Rosand, *Opera in Seventeenth-Century Venice* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991), 628–34.

42 Busenello, *Gli amori di Apollo e di Dafne,* act 3, scene 4 : 'Prendi tu di quei rami / E te ne fa corona al biondo crine; / Coronane la cetra, e ti consola, / Che ne fronzuti, e immortali allori / La memoria vivrà d'eterni amori.'

43 Busenello, *Gli amori di Apollo e di Dafne,* act 3, scene 4 : 'Ohimé dunque si crudo / Contro ninfa innocente / Stendi la man feroce? / Questi sono gli amori / O insidioso Apollo, / Nemico del mio onor mentre fui donna / Frattor de' rami miei, mentro son pianta.'

44 On this point, see Heller, 'Tacitus: Incognito: Opera as History in L'incoronazione di Poppea,' *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 52 (1999): 39–96.

45 Carter, 'Mask and Illusion,' 253.

46 For the score, see I-Vnm, Cod. It IV 386 (= 9910); the libretto is published as Aurelio Aureli, *Gli amori di Apollo e di Leucotoe* (Nicolini: Venice, 1663).

47 On Aureli's librettos, see Wendy Heller, 'Poppea's Legacy: The Julio-Claudians on the Venetian Stage,' *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 36, no. 3 (Winter 2005): 279–302, and 'The Beloved's Image: Handel's *Admeto* and the Statue of Alcestis,' *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 58, no. 3 (2005): 559–637.

48 The libretto only includes Apollo's son Phaeton (Fetonte); in the score, however, the inclusion of Orpheus (Orfeo) and Esculapius (Esculapio), representing music and medicine respectively, provided Volpe with an opportunity to write an elaborate trio at the end of act 1, scene 2.

49 For a transcription and discussion of Leucotoe's lament, see Rosand, *Opera in Seventeenth-Century Venice*, 380–1; 665–7.

50 Aureli, *Gli amori di Apollo e di Leucotoe*, act 3, scene 16: 'Diffondete miei raggi in terra i lumi, / Mia bella estinta il tuo sepolcro indoro / Chiuso in povero tronco il mio thesoro / Produr vedrassi incenso grato a Numi. / Sorgi o pianti gradita, e o odor Sabeo. / Spirarmi in seno ò vaga mia deffonta / Mentra Apollo per te mesto tramonta / Splende al tuo Funeral lume Febreo. [Spread light, my rays, over the earth, / your guilded tomb, my dead beauty / My treasure enclosed in a poor trunk, I would see bring forth an aroma pleasing to the Gods,/ Rise, oh welcome plant, and exhale a Sabean / aroma into my breast, / O lovely deceased one /While, for you, Apollo sadly sets the sun, / Phoebus shines for your funeral.]

51 Aurelio Aureli, *Gli amori di Apollo e di Leucotoe*, act 3, scene 17: 'Qual forza violente / Mi trahe sottera, e come in un momente/ le mie piante infelicie / Qui diventan radici? / In Elitroppio mi trasformo? Ahi lasso! / In piacer de mortali / Così presto quaggiu termina, e passa? / O vendette d'Apollo, o crudo Nume? Gel di morte divien l'ardor d'Amore? / Anco cangiata in fiore / Seguirà Clitia ogn'ora il tuo bel lume.

chapter eight

A Viceroy behind the Scenes: Opera, Production, Politics, and Financing in 1680s Naples

LOUISE K. STEIN

Undeterred by the centuries-old Black Legend that 'equated Spain with the Inquisition, religious bigotry, and the bloody persecution of Protestants and Jews,'[1] scholars in recent decades have worked insightfully to understand the relationships among power, authority, religion, nobility, and musical expression in early modern Spain and its extensive dominions. A number of early modern Spanish rulers and aristocrats were ardent connoisseurs, collectors, or patrons of music, art, and theatre – individuals with taste, passion, and personality, rather than faceless bureaucrats or prudish zealots. The question I hope to begin to address in this essay concerns the extent to which their choices and actions as patrons were shaped by personal or private concerns, rather than the broadly political, 'official' motivations that scholars have tended to take for granted when studying seventeenth-century music and society. In particular, my inquiry concerns the extent to which operas performed both publicly and in private were flexible structures of feeling designed for personal expression and affective projection, rather than political assertion or sovereign displays of authority. I also suggest ways in which opera might constitute or work within structures created to explore the affective world of patrons and producers, rather than the composer's thoughts, attitudes, temperament, or biography.

Opera under the Spanish viceroys in late seventeenth-century Naples presents an inviting case study in the intersection of private and public or personal and governmental motivations. The viceroys were at once mere agents of an absent sovereign and hands-on absolute rulers themselves; each controlled and was controlled by some portion of the vast bureaucracy of the Spanish monarchy; and each served in Naples for