

# The 'Artusi -Monteverdi' Controversy: Background, Content and Modern Interpretations

ILIAS CHRISOCHOIDIS

KING'S COLLEGE, LONDON [1] [FN](#)

The strife between old and new has anything but evaded music history. In European culture it can be traced back to the fourth century BC, when Aristophanes attacked the music licences of his times; [2] and ever since the eighteenth century the clash between tradition and experimentation has been idolized as a token of progress. Of the numerous such collisions in the annals of music, however, few have assumed the paradigmatic status of the 'Artusi-Monteverdi' controversy from the early 1600s. [FN](#)

The title refers to the exchange of public letters and declarations of a rather polemical character between Giovanni Maria Artusi (*ca* 1540-1613), leading Italian theorist, [3] and composers Claudio and Giulio Cesare Monteverdi. Central to the debate were the merits of a recent compositional practice that overlooked theoretical correctness for the expressive demands of poetry. [4] It has been known ever since as *seconda pratica*. The controversy itself, though, has deeper roots and warrants a broader inspection. [FN](#)

## Background

The 'Artusi-Monteverdi' debate marks the peak in a series of 'incessant musical polemics' generated by changes in late sixteenth-century music theory. [5] These, in turn, were rooted in the profound influence of Platonism in Italian culture. [6] Most consequential of all were the debates between Nicola Vicentino and Vicente Lusitano in the 1550s, and Gioseffo Zarlino and Galileo Galilei in the 1580s. [7] By the time Artusi took aim at Monteverdi, in 1600, he had himself become a veteran polemicist. [8] [FN](#)

Born around 1540, Giovanni Maria Artusi became a canon in the Congregation of S. Salvatore in Bologna, a city equally famous for its library and for its music-theoretical quarrels. [9] His studies with Zarlino in Venice made him a life-long devotee of the famous composer and led him to enter two debates in his defence. [10] The appearance of Galilei's *Dialogo della musica antica et della moderna* (1581), a substantial attack on Zarlino's theories, prompted Artusi to issue two responses in defence of his teacher; [11] and when Galilei replied with his *Discorso* (1589) to Zarlino's *Sopplimenti musicali* (1588), Artusi sided with his master once more. [12] [FN](#)

The second important, and more acrimonious, controversy pitted Artusi against a fellow Bolognese, the aristocrat and humanist Ercole Bottrigari (1531-1612). [13] In 1594, the latter published *Il Desiderio* under the pseudonym 'Alemanno Benelli'. [14] This was an anagram for 'Annibale Melone', leading Bolognese musician and Bottrigari's amanuensis. [15] Alarmed that many were attributing the work to Melone, Bottrigari reprinted it in 1599, a year after Melone's death, thus assuming full authorial responsibility. By a stroke of bad luck, Melone's papers had in the meantime passed on to Artusi, who found among them a copy of *Il Desiderio* in the deceased's hand. Having already engaged critically with Bottrigari in 1600, [16] Artusi published it under Melone's name while accusing Bottrigari of plagiarism. The latter's response came with the *Lettera di Federico Verdicelli* (1601) [17] and the pamphlet *Ant-Artusi* (1602), [18] where he, in turn, accused Artusi of plagiarizing his unpublished treatise *Il Trimerone* (1599). [19] In the same year (1602), Bottrigari published his major work *Il Melone*, [20] siding with Vicentino against Zarlino. Artusi's response came with the *Seconda parte del'Artusi* (1603), [21] which is mockingly dedicated to Bottrigari and refutes his earlier critique of Patrizi's *Della poetica*. [22] The final charge in this heroic saga came in 1604 with Bottrigari's *Aletologia di Leonardo Gallucio*. [23] [FN](#)

Surprisingly, underneath this broad theory of theoretical smoke lies a common objective: universal tuning. [24] This may indeed have been Artusi's ulterior motive for attacking modern music, whose deviations from correct counterpoint further compounded problems in performance. Artusi's awareness of the licences of modern music appears as early as 1588. In *Lettera apologetica* he urged musicians to avoid imitating the 'bagatelles of certain modern composers', preferring instead the works of Willaert, Rore and Merulo as their models; [25] and in his first major theoretical work, *Seconda parte dell'arte del contraponto nella quale si tratta dell'utile et uso delle dissonanze* (1589), he partly blamed the poor construction of some compositions for the imperfections in ensemble performances. [26] [FN](#)

Yet Artusi was not the reactionary theorist he has often been described as being. [27] Although a professed devotee of Zarlino, he did not hesitate to revise his master's views in *L'arte del contraponto*, aligning them with contemporary practice. [28] Also, his defence of Aristoxenus, whose writings were mainly explored by his opponent Galilei, shows him to be anything but a zealot. [29] In fact, he is reported to have 'reconciled himself to the modernist stance'. [30] [FN](#)

## The Controversy with Monteverdi

Artusi's most severe critique of modern music appears in *L'Artusi, overo delle imperfettioni della moderna musica* (1600). This is where the 'Artusi-Monteverdi' controversy really begins, although the two protagonists probably had private contact in the late 1590s. [31] Artusi's treatise adopts the form of dialogue, between Vario and Luca, and comprises two discourses (*ragionamenti*). The first discusses the prerequisites for a good ensemble performance. Of the eight criteria Artusi proposes, the last specifies that 'all instruments should be tuned to the same temperament by a single ear'. [32] Surprisingly, this empirical approach is first to be found in Galilei's *Discorso*, a work which Artusi criticized in his defence of Zarlino. [33] His defence of Aristoxenus near the end of the first dialogue also brings him closer to Galilei, who first explored the Greek author, rather than to his own teacher. [34] The second *ragionamento* turns into a critique of Monteverdi's madrigals, although without any reference to the composer. During a visit to Signor Vario, Luca relates that he attended a concert the night before where some new madrigals were performed. As he jotted down excerpts from the score, although leaving out the text, he asks for Vario's opinion. In what follows, Vario criticises licences in the treatment of the dissonances and the mixing of several modes. His comments turn into a general critique of modern music following Luca's sober presentation of the modernist agenda. [35] [FN](#)

Artusi's charges apparently brought no response from Monteverdi. Perhaps he did not want to endanger his position in Mantua. [36] In 1603, however, and after eleven years of silence, [37] he published *Il quarto libro de madrigali a cinque voci*, [38] which includes material that had been attacked by Artusi. Monteverdi's creative statement might have prompted the appearance, later in the same year, of *L'Artusi: Della imperfettione della moderna musica, parte seconda*. [39] Here, Artusi discloses his correspondence, since 1599, on the subject with an obscure Monteverdi supporter aptly named 'L'Ottuso Academico'. [40] [FN](#)

The identity of 'L'Ottuso' remains vague. Almost every participant in the controversy has been considered as a possible match. Emil Vogel, for instance, identifies him with Monteverdi himself, while Stuart Reiner favours the composer's brother Giulio Cesare. [41] Weighing pros and cons, Claude Palisca dismisses both, along with Bottrigari, as possible candidates. Although he does not dismiss the possibility of 'L'Ottuso' having been a mask of Artusi, he thinks it more likely that he was a composer active in Ferrara or Mantua, probably Count Alfonso Fontanelli or Antonio Goretti. [42] Fontanelli's authorship, however, has been disqualified by the major authority on Ferrarese madrigal, Anthony Newcomb. [43] [FN](#)

Artusi begins the treatise with a reply to L'Ottuso and devotes its second part to defending his own critique of Monteverdi. [44] Entering the controversy, L'Ottuso touched its very crux, namely the necessity of discovering new harmonic effects. [45] In the exchange of letters between the two authors it seems clear that what impedes their understanding of each other is a terminological incompatibility. While Artusi consistently employs Zarlino's terminology, L'Ottuso uses the same terms with their contemporary meaning, although he certainly had read Zarlino. [46] It is in

L'Ottuso's letter that the name *seconda pratica* appears for the first time in the debate, yet without the significance it takes on later in Monteverdi. [47] L'Ottuso's defence is directed towards establishing a precedent in the free use of dissonances, and he quotes examples from Rore, Wert and Marenzio. [48] He admits that no theoretical justification can be offered for these licences, yet he thinks that they can be permissible as poetic licences. Thus, he touches a point that, if pursued further, could lead him to the doctrine of musical figures. Even so, however, he still remains one of the very few Italians who made the association of musical licences with the musical figures. [49] [FN](#)

The only public reply by Monteverdi appears in a letter published with his *Il quinto libro de madrigali a cinque voci* (1605). Unlike his opponent, he does name Artusi. The statement is concise and full of promise. Clearly, he understands the need for a theoretical justification of the new practice. [50] Most important, though, is the use of the term *seconda pratica*. By distinguishing the two practices as first and second, Monteverdi in effect eliminates the possibility of a common discourse: the one cannot be discussed in terms of the other. [51] [FN](#)

Monteverdi's letter prompted a response from one Antonio Braccino da Todi (most likely Artusi himself). Probably in retaliation, Giulio Cesare Monteverdi composed a *Dichiaratione*, which was appended to his brother's new publication, *Scherzi musicali a tre voci* (1607). [52] This famous gloss on Claudio's letter, with its 'padrona-serva' metaphor, is deemed by Palisca as 'one of the most important manifestos in the history of music', although 'richer in slogans than in original aesthetic ideas'. [53] The answer to Artusi's attack is rather naive and the arguments Giulio puts forward not always clear. This has to do also with the fragmentary mode of presentation, probably imitating da Todi's now lost response. Giulio stresses the fact that his brother relies on deeds, while Artusi just on words. Following the latter, he resorts to authorities, especially Plato, and he accuses his opponent for attacking his brother without any provocation, and moreover that he criticized his compositions only by their fragments and without including the text. [54] In his effort to justify Claudio's licences he resorts to precedents. However, the way he uses them reveals that he had little understanding of theoretical issues. [55] [FN](#)

In 1608, Braccino reciprocated with a *Discorso secondo musicale*, which apparently sealed the debate. Monteverdi, however, claimed in 1633 that Artusi (usually identified with Braccino) 'calmed down' after the *Dichiaratione*. [56] Either he forgot the *Discorso* or Braccino was a real person, after all. In his preface of the *Il quinto libro* (1605), Monteverdi promised to expose the theoretical basis of the *seconda pratica* in a treatise called *Seconda pratica, ovvero, Perfezioni della Moderna Musica*. [57] Although the planning of this work occupied him until his death, he did not, finally, complete it. He claimed that Artusi was reconciled to the modern trends, and of course *seconda pratica* had become established. [58] Already a famous composer, he probably had no reason to go back to the issue. [59] It is not unlikely that he also understood his limitations as a scholar and writer. [60] [FN](#)

The debate seems to have ended in amicable terms, at least for the two protagonists. Monteverdi reminisced that Artusi had 'beg[u]n to like and admire me' to the point of 'turning his pen in my praise'. [61] The reverberations of the controversy, however, continued until the middle of the seventeenth century. [62] Romano Micheli in Rome assumed Artusi's role as a defender of the traditionalists against Marco Scacchi in Warsaw, who was probably the most genuine advocator of Monteverdi's ideas, and the dispute extended to other musical centres in Europe. [63] [FN](#)

There is a question about the actual target of Artusi's attack. Was it Monteverdi personally or modern music in general? The first seems unlikely. Neither of the treatises bearing Artusi's name mentions Monteverdi, and the one that does was published by Braccino da Todi, whose identity cannot be established. But if the real target was modern music, then it is easy to explain Artusi's choice of Monteverdi. He was still a young composer, hence a much easier target than, say, Gesualdo or Wert, [64] yet prominent enough among modernists to make the attack effective. In the end, Monteverdi would take up, in 1613, the very post that Artusi's teacher, Zarlino, had occupied in the past. From a loyal defender of the latter to a vocal critic of the former, Artusi managed to save his name from obscurity by grasping the hands of two towering figures on either side of the 1600

## Recent Interpretations

In the legendary fight among ancients and moderns the 'Artusi-Monteverdi' controversy has attained the lofty spot of paradigm. At least two things account for this: Monteverdi's historical significance and the emergence of representation as a central aesthetic problem in music. It is understood, then, that any critical engagement with this debate touches and affects the foundations of musical modernity. No one has been more aware of this than Suzanne Cusick in her challenging (if not subversive) reading of the topic. [66] [FN](#)

Cusick revisits the debate's central texts from the angle of gender rhetoric. The controversy was operating 'within a system of generally understood assumptions about the natures of women and men, and about their proper relationships to each other' (3). For her, Artusi's aim was 'to discredit modern music as unnatural, feminine, and feminizing of both its practitioners and its listeners' (3). First linking modern music with the body, he eventually compares it to a painted whore, while describing Monteverdi's 'Cruda Amarilli' as a 'monstrous birth, part man, part crane, part swallow, part ox' (5-7). Even the neutral description of the Ferrarese vocal ensemble of nuns relates to 'Artusi's overall strategy to associate the modern with the feminine at every turn' (10). In the end, Artusi implies that the licences of modern music threaten social order (10-12). Moving to the Monteverdi camp, Cusick finds Giulio Cesare fully aware of Artusi's gendered rhetoric. His defence strategy, then, is to show that 'modern music is firmly within the control of a masculine-ruled social order' (14). By stressing Claudio's allegiance to his patron, Giulio Cesare affirms his brother's conformity with current social order. At the same time, he reverses the gendered associations of Artusi by contrasting Claudio's hard-working and loyal service to his patron with the theorist's sloppy and wordy criticism (14-16). Concluding her examination, Cusick sees the debate's gendered rhetoric as a reflection of sociological changes in music performance and, eventually, as a component of the new style at the turn of the century.

The last four words in Cusick's article also form its generative cell: 're-gendering early modern music' (25). One cannot approach such reading, then, but with a buyer's caution before a shrewd salesman. For Cusick 'overlooks some evidence in her sources, ignores some evidence she presents, and reads much that is not there'. [68] Charles S. Brauner has exposed significant problems resulting from her old-school, indeed, classificatory approach to the subject. Polemics is a hothouse of binarisms: the enemy has to become 'visible' through contrast. And as gender is a social archetype of polarity, Artusi's rhetoric sounds quite predictable. Cusick, however, goes on to reduce practically every opposition to that of gender. For example, she takes the word 'imperfection' to have compelling associations with the feminine, when this word has a much broader semantic spectrum and may very well stand on its own. Also, she conveniently mutates the high/low vocal parts in 'Cruda Amarilli' to a representation of Eve and Adam (10-11) without evidence. The main problem, then, is that the feminine-masculine opposition turns into a super-concept that engulfs every other contrast. Trapping the richness and complexity of historical phenomena within computer mentality (on/off, masculine/feminine) erodes from past events and human beings the right to exist independently from the mind and the ideological formulations of the historian. [FN](#)

Cusick's plea for 'multiple, companionate truths' (1994: 563) sounds wonderful. But I sense that an academic *laissez faire* is lurking here: anyone can project anything to the past for the purpose of legitimising one's own set of values or even fixations. The historical Monteverdi could thus be dismembered into countless Monteverdis of sundry ideological flavours: a conservative, a radical, a misogynist, whatever comes closer to one's level of intellectual comfort. In my view, the purpose of the historical enterprise is not only cognitive but moral as well: to move outside one's own self, background and affectations and see the larger picture; in the end, to resist cultural conditioning from within. Under this perspective, Cusick's reading of the controversy is insightful if one already accepts gender to be informing all cultural discourse. In that case, Musicology turns into musical Anthropology and its institutional autonomy becomes questionable. But for someone who is interested in Monteverdi and Artusi rather than in, say, American touchiness (Cusick's original article begins on the uneasy relation of American English speakers with the word ... 'mistress' [1]), [69] this reading is hard to swallow without resort to concessions. [FN](#)

Much more sober than Cusick's approach is the 'materialist view' of the controversy by Tim Carter. [70] In 'Artusi, Monteverdi, and the Poetics of Modern Music', he probes the role of the contemporary press, asking 'whether the intensity of the debate itself reflects a new perception of the power of the press', for 'no prior theoretical dispute had kept the presses so busy, with at least six printed statements appearing in the space of only eight years'. [71] Significantly, the two camps were using competing printers, Artusi's works brought out by the Venetian printer Giacomo Vincenti, while Monteverdi's were published by Vincenti's rival Ricciardo Amadino. [72] Given that Monteverdi's music was repeatedly printed in the first decade of the seventeenth century, [73] Carter finds it possible that 'the controversy was fuelled precisely by the presses themselves as a way of drawing attention to, and therefore enhancing the market for, their wares'. [74] However circumstantial the nature of these findings may be (a fact Carter acknowledges), it does not exclude the possibility that the controversy was stirred by the two printers. [75] [FN](#)

In a more traditional vein, Ulrich Siegele detects political rather than commercial motives in Artusi's attack. As a canon and resident of Bologna, a city under Vatican control, Artusi maintained a close relationship with Cardinal Pompeo Arigoni. The latter was not only informed about Artusi's book (1600) but he evidently approved of the attack on Monteverdi: his coat of arms appears on the book's title page. Moreover, Arigoni gets acknowledgment in the introduction of the second *ragionamento* as Vario's patron. [76] In this context, *L'Artusi, ovvero delle imperfezioni della moderna musica* could be read as a warning to Monteverdi from high authority against his liberal tendencies in composition; in a way, an implicit threat for ecclesiastical action against all modernists. [77] [FN](#)

One wonders how Carter's and Siegele's interpretations would stand in the light of a remarkable fact, 'the marked increase in the publishing of sacred music in the early seventeenth century'. [78] While in 1600 the number of secular compositions issued by Italian printers exceeded that of sacred works, by 1610 the trend was reversed, with twice as many sacred works issued than secular ones. [79] It would be interesting to speculate on the contribution of the 'Artusi-Monteverdi' debate on this trend, something which cannot take place here. [FN](#)

Common to all three readings above, of course, is the exegetical shift from musical to extra-musical discourse, and from theoretical objections to readings that explore rhetorical, commercial and political aspects of the controversy. Accepting them all, however, as equivalent would be problematic, if not irresponsible. For every claim deserves to be tested, questioned and often resisted. Cusick, for instance, promotes the agenda of New Musicology and Carter pays homage to Palisca, the scholarly authority on the subject. Motivation is a powerful exegetical tool and, to my view, scholarly quality will always correlate to disinterestedness (which is not lack of commitment, but the ability to move outside oneself and see with clarity and courage even that which one dislikes and dreads). We should be thankful that there are scholars like Cusick and Carter, who seek to enrich our understanding of the past through their individual perspectives. In the end, however, we should retain the right to choose between them. Intellectual freedom predicates on a multiplicity of views but is exercised only through choice.

## Footnotes

[1] This paper was written for the graduate seminar in Music Theory at King's College, London; how long ago, I dare not say. My thanks go to Dr Michael Fend for stimulating discussions in the seminar room. Nick Reyland and his fellow readers gave me the best of reminders: times have changed and so has British postgraduate musicology. I am thankful for their suggestions. [Back](#)

[2] Solon Michaelides, *The Music of Ancient Greece: An Encyclopaedia* (London: Faber and Faber, 1978), p. 31. [Back](#)

[3] Claude V. Palisca, 'Artusi, Giovanni Maria', in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, edited by Stanley Sadie, 2nd edn, 29 vols (London: Macmillan, 2001), vol. 2, pp. 94-96. [Back](#)

[4] Or, in technical parlance, 'the different manner of employing consonances and dissonances in counterpoint': Karol Berger, *Theories of Chromatic and Enharmonic Music in Late 16th-Century Italy* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1980), p. 94. Anthony Newcomb further narrows the topic to 'the handling of dissonance in the polyphonic madrigal': 'Alfonso Fontanelli and the Ancestry of the Seconda Pratica Madrigal,' in *Studies in Renaissance and Baroque Music in Honor of Arthur Mendel*, edited by Robert L. Marshall (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1974), p. 47. [Back](#)

[5] Berger, *Theories*, p. 97. For some of these changes, see Michael Fend, 'The Changing Functions of Senso and

Ragione in Italian Music Theory of the Late Sixteenth Century', in *The Second Sense: Studies in Hearing and Musical Judgement from Antiquity to the Seventeenth Century*, edited by Charles Burnett, Michael Fend and Penelope Gouk (London: The Warburg Institute, University of London, 1991), pp. 199-221. Late 16th-century Italian culture abounded in philosophical contrasts: Gary Tomlinson, *Monteverdi and the End of the Renaissance* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), p. 3. Tim Carter links this controversy with contemporary ones in literary theory, such as Guarini's *Il pastor fido*: 'Artusi, Monteverdi, and the Poetics of Modern Music', in *Musical Humanism and its Legacy: Essays in Honor of Claude V. Palisca*, edited by Nancy Kovaleff Baker and Barbara Russano Hanning (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon Press, 1992), p. 191 and n. 37. [Back](#)

[6] See Berger, *Theories*, pp. 118-21. [Back](#)

[7] Carter, 'Poetics', p. 175; Denis Arnold, *Monteverdi*, revised by Tim Carter (London: Dent, 1990), p. 159. [Back](#)

[8] Palisca, 'Artusi', p. 94. [Back](#)

[9] In the 1480s a debate sparked between Bartolomeo Ramos de Pareja in Bologna and John Hothby in Lucca (in *Excitatio quaedam musicae artis per refutationem*, the latter attacked Ramos's new system of interval proportions exposed in his *Musica practica*: Fend, 'Changing Functions', p. 203, and nn. 23, 25). This was continued by Giovanni Spataro of Bologna, who defended his teacher Ramos against Franchino Gaffurio of Lodi. And later there was another clash between Giulio Cesare Arresti and Maurizio Cazzati: Claude V. Palisca, 'The Artusi-Monteverdi Controversy', in his *Studies in the History of Italian Music and Music Theory* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), p. 54. [Back](#)

[10] Palisca, 'Artusi', p. 94. [Back](#)

[11] Berger, *Theories*, p. 68; Palisca, 'Artusi', p. 94. [Back](#)

[12] *Trattato apologetico* (1590); Galilei's last reply remains unpublished: Palisca, 'Artusi', p. 94. [Back](#)

[13] Iain Fenlon, 'Bottrigari, Ercole', in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, edited by Stanley Sadie, 2nd edn, 29 vols (London: Macmillan, 2001), vol. 4, pp. 87-88. Bottrigari writings explored mainly the subject of tuning and temperament: Fend, 'Changing Functions', p. 213, n. 75. [Back](#)

[14] [Ercole Bottrigari], *Il Desiderio overo de' concerti di varii strumenti musicali* (Venice: Ricciardo Amadino, 1594). [Back](#)

[15] The deceptive attribution was 'an attempt to strengthen Melone's application for the post of maestro di cappella at S[.] Petronio in Bologna': Fenlon, 'Bottrigari', p. 88. [Back](#)

[16] In *L'Artusi, overo delle imperfettioni della moderna musica* (Venice: Giacomo Vincenti, 1600). [Back](#)

[17] Ercole Bottrigari, *Lettera di Fiderico Verdicelli a' benigni, e sinceri lettori in difesa del Sig.e Caval:e Hercole Bottrigaro contra quanto in pregiudicio della rifiutazione di lui ha scritto un certo Artusi in due sue lettere una per dedicatoria all III.mo Senato di Bologna l'altra à cortesi lettori sotto la data di Milano à 12 di luglio 1601 & stampate in Milano appresso gli stampatori archevis* (Bologna: 1602). [Back](#)

[18] Now lost. [Back](#)

[19] Ercole Bottrigari, *Il Trimerone, de fondamenti armonici overo lo esercizio musicale dialoghi ne quai si ragiona, de tuoni antichi, e moderni e de caratteri diversi usitati da musici in tutti i tempi* (Bologna: 1599). [Back](#)

[20] Ercole Bottrigari, *Il Melone. Discorso armonico & Il Melone secondo, considerationi musicali sopra un discorso di M. Gandolfo Sigonio intorno à' madrigali, & à' libri dell'Antica musica ridutta alla moderna prattica di D. Nicola Vicentino. E nel fine esso Discorso del Sigonio* (Ferrara: Vittorio Baldini, 1602). [Back](#)

[21] Giovanni Maria Artusi, *Seconda parte dell'Artusi overo delle imperfettioni della moderna musica* (Venice: Giacomo Vincenti, 1603). [Back](#)

[22] Artusi was justified in doing so, as Bottrigari's *Il Patricio* is a 'rather simple-minded refutation of...Patrizi's exposition of the Aristoxenian genera': Fend, 'Changing Functions', p. 213, n. 75. [Back](#)

[23] Ercole Bottrigari, *Aletologia di Leonardo Gallucio à' benigni, e sinceri lettori. Lettera apologetica* (Bologna: 1604). Palisca, 'Artusi', p. 94, and 'Controversy', pp. 55-56. [Back](#)

[24] Fend, 'Changing Functions', p. 213. [Back](#)

[25] Palisca, 'Artusi', p. 94. [Back](#)

[26] Palisca, 'Artusi', p. 94, and 'Controversy', p. 55 and p. 58, n. 16. [Back](#)

[27] Leo Schrade, for instance, calls him 'narrow and rancorous, irritated and malicious': *Monteverdi: Creator of Modern Music* (London: Gollancz, 1979), p. 198. And Oliver Strunk finds him of a 'completely reactionary turn of mind', who could not understand the innovations of modern music: introduction to G. [Giovanni] M. [Maria] Artusi, 'L'Artusi, overo, Delle imperfettioni della moderna musica', in *Source Readings in Music History: The Baroque Era*, edited by Oliver Strunk (New York, London: Norton, 1965; 1st edn, 1950), p. 33. In the revised edition of the work, however, Margaret Murata removes the offensive language: 'Artusi...attempted to point out the imperfections in the modern music he was hearing' (*The Baroque Era*, vol. 4 in *Source Readings in Music History*, Oliver Strunk, ed., revised edition by Leo Treitler [New York and London: W. W. Norton & Co., 1998], p. 18). [Back](#)

[28] Palisca, 'Artusi', p. 95. [Back](#)

[29] Palisca, 'Artusi', p. 95. [Back](#)

[30] Carter, 'Poetics', p. 175. [Back](#)

[31] Paolo Fabbri, *Monteverdi*, translated by Tim Carter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 41. [Back](#)

[32] Palisca, 'Controversy', p. 55. [Back](#)

[33] Fend, 'Changing Functions', pp. 212-13. [Back](#)

[34] Palisca, 'Controversy', p. 56; Fend, 'Changing Functions', p. 206. [Back](#)

[35] G. [Giovanni] M. [Maria] Artusi, 'L'Artusi, overo, Delle imperfettioni della moderna musica', in Strunk, *Readings*, pp. 33-44. [Back](#)

[36] Carter, 'Poetics', p. 173. [Back](#)

[37] *Il terzo libro de madrigali a cinque voci* (Venice: Ricciardo Amadino, 1592) was the last one of an extensive series of publications. Monteverdi's following apparent silence as a composer may be justified partly because of the pressure resulting from his active involvement in the musical life of the Mantuan court, partly because he had

no immediate need to publish in order to secure his position, and perhaps because he explored new idioms: Carter, 'Poetics', p. 172. [Back](#)

[38] Venice: Ricciardo Amadino. [Back](#)

[39] Carter, 'Poetics', p. 174. [Back](#)

[40] Carter, 'Poetics', p. 173. [Back](#)

[41] For citations, see Palisca, 'Controversy', pp. 66, 71. [Back](#)

[42] In whose house Monteverdi's madrigals supposedly were performed, according to Artusi's dialogue from 1600: Palisca, 'Controversy', pp. 66-69. [Back](#)

[43] Newcomb, 'Fontanelli', pp. 67-68. [Back](#)

[44] Palisca, 'Controversy', p. 66. [Back](#)

[45] Palisca, 'Controversy', p. 69. [Back](#)

[46] Palisca, 'Controversy', pp. 70-71. [Back](#)

[47] Palisca, 'Controversy', pp. 71-72. [Back](#)

[48] Palisca, 'Controversy', pp. 72-74. [Back](#)

[49] Palisca, 'Controversy', p. 78. [Back](#)

[50] Monteverdi was probably unaware of Galilei's proposals of new rules in his counterpoint treatise: Palisca, 'Controversy', p. 81 and n. 86. [Back](#)

[51] Arnold, *Monteverdi*, p. 160. [Back](#)

[52] Carter, 'Poetics', p. 175. [Back](#)

[53] Palisca, 'Controversy', p. 82. [Back](#)

[54] G. [Gulio] C. [Cesare] Monteverdi, 'Dichiaratione' to Claudio Monteverdi's 'Scerzi musicali a tre voci,' in Strunk, *Readings*, pp. 44-55.

[55] Palisca, 'Controversy', pp. 74-75. [Back](#)

[56] Monteverdi to [Giovanni Battista Doni], 22 October 1633: *The Letters of Claudio Monteverdi*, translated and introduced by Denis Stevens, revised edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), p. 421. [Back](#)

[57] 'Il quinto libro de' madrigali', in Strunk, *Readings*, pp. 48-49. [Back](#)

[58] Arnold, *Monteverdi*, p. 63; Silke Leopold, *Monteverdi: Music in Transition*, translated by Anne Smith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), p. 46. [Back](#)

[59] Carter, 'Poetics', p. 175. [Back](#)

[60] Arnold, *Monteverdi*, p. 14. [Back](#)

[61] Monteverdi to [Giovanni Battista Doni], 22 October 1633: *Letters*, p. 421.

[62] Fabbri, *Monteverdi*, p. 34. [Back](#)

[63] Palisca, 'Controversy', pp. 85-87. [Back](#)

[64] Carter, 'Poetics', p. 173. [Back](#)

[65] Arnold, *Monteverdi*, p. 12. [Back](#)

[66] 'Gendering Modern Music: Thoughts on the Monteverdi-Artusi Controversy', *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 46 (1993), pp. 1-25. Subsequent page references to Cusick's article in text. [Back](#)

[67] See Cusick's addendum to her article, *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 47 (1994), pp. 554-63. [Back](#)

[68] Charles S. Brauner, 'Communication', *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 47 (1994), pp. 550-54. [Back](#)

[69] This paper being published in a British journal, I should perhaps quote John Cleese's sensible view on touchiness: 'If you're in a group of people, and you find that one person is particularly touchy — they have difficulty controlling their emotions, greater difficulty than the other people in the group — then you can't have so much fun about them because they're touchy, and they're likely to explode. So, when they're around, you are not as relaxed, you are not as spontaneous, you can't be more real; you have to kind of be more formal. Now, if you find that society is being run by the touchiest members, then, in a sense that's a bit sick, because you're trying to take as the general standard the standard of the people who have the greatest problem controlling their emotions in that area [of discourse]' ('An Interview with John Cleese', in *Fawlty Towers: The Complete Collection* (BBC, 2001) vol. 3, Special Features, 'Chapter 4: taboos'). Cleese talks, naturally, about comedy writing. But his definition of touchiness as inability to control one's own emotions bears directly, I would think, on recent celebrations of scholarly subjectivity. For the chronic suppression of the scholar's 'I' (at least in Anglo-Saxon academia) appears now to galvanize an immoderate appropriation of topics for the expressive relief of this subjectivity.

[70] Cusick, 'Gendering', pp. 4, n. 9. [Back](#)

[71] Carter, 'Poetics', pp. 176. [Back](#)

[72] Moreover, Amadino had published Bottrigari's *Il Desiderio* in 1594, and for Monteverdi's *Scherzi musicali* he obtained special privilege against copyright infringement. [Back](#)

[73] There were no fewer than 14 editions by Ricciardo Amadino in Venice alone. The third book of madrigals was reprinted in 1600, 1604 and 1607; the fourth one was published in 1603 and reprinted in 1605 and 1607; and in 1605 appeared the fifth book followed by reprints in 1606, 1608 and 1610. The year 1607 saw the publication of *L'Orfeo* and of *Scherzi musicali*, the latter being reprinted in 1609. Finally, the *Sanctissime Virgini missa...ac vespere* was printed in 1610. [Back](#)

[74] Carter, 'Poetics', p. 176. [Back](#)

[75] Carter, 'Poetics', pp. 176-77. [Back](#)

[76] Strunk, *Readings*, p. 33. [Back](#)

[77] 'Cruda Amarilli, oder: Wie ist Monteverdis 'seconda pratica' satztechnisch zu verstehen?' in *Claudio Monteverdi: Vom Madrigal zur Monodie*, edited by Heinz-Klaus Metzger and Rainer Riehn, pp. 97-102. [Back](#)

[78] Tim Carter, 'Music Publishing in Italy, c. 1580-c. 1625: Some Preliminary Observations', *Royal Musical*

© [Ilias Chrissochoidis](#), 2004



**BPM Volume 6**