

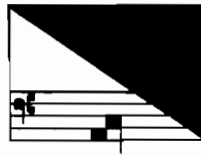
MISCELLANEA

6

GIOVANNI LUCA CONFORTI

BREVE ET FACILE MANIERA D'ESSERCITARSI
A FAR PASSAGGI (ROME, 1593)

MURRAY C. BRADSHAW



AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF MUSICOLOGY
HÄNSSLER-VERLAG

1999
68.860

PUBLICATIONS OF THE
AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF MUSICOLOGY

ARMEN CARAPETYAN

Director

GIOVANNI LUCA CONFORTI

BREVE ET FACILE MANIERA D'ESSERCITARSI
A FAR PASSAGGI (ROME, 1593)

Commentary and Translation

by

MURRAY C. BRADSHAW

AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF MUSICOLOGY

ARMEN CARAPETYAN †

Founding Director

Copyright © 1999
American Institute of Musicology
Hänssler-Verlag, D-71087 Holzgerlingen
Order Number 68.860
ISBN 3-7751-3260-0
ISSN 0065-8855

CONTENTS

Commentary	11
Introduction	11
The Composer	16
The Exercises	20
The “Explanation” (Dichiaratione)	26
Acknowledgments	32
Critical Notes	33
Selected Bibliography	35
Facsimiles	37
Plate 1. <i>Breve et facile maniera</i> , title page	37
Plate 2. <i>Breve et facile maniera</i> , verso of title page	38
Plate 3. <i>Breve et facile maniera</i> , first page of music	39
Breve et facile maniera d’essercitarsi a far passaggi	40
Ascending Step	43
Descending Step	44
Leap of an Ascending Third	45
Leap of a Descending Third	46
Leap of an Ascending Fourth	47
Leap of a Descending Fourth	48
Leap of an Ascending Fifth	49
Leap of a Descending Fifth	50
Unison	51
Ascending Octave	52
Descending Octave	53
Descending Step/Ascending Seventh	54
Embellishment with a Double Whole Note	55
Embellishment of Several Notes	57
Ornaments	58
Cadences	59

Hexachord	62
Free Embellishment	63
Dichiaratione (Explanation)	64

COMMENTARY

Introduction

Conforti published his little treatise in 1593, at a time, as he noted, when improvised embellishments were the rage in large cities and princely courts, and when many singers attempting to master the art of embellishment did so only with great difficulty and little success. By the 1590s every good performer had to know how to embellish a vocal or instrumental composition, and it was to satisfy the need for a textbook on this difficult art, specifically for vocalists but also for instrumentalists, that Conforti brought out his *Breve*.

Three copies have survived, one in the Civico Museo Bibliografico Musicale, Bologna, and two in the British Library, London. It is a small, practical book, thirty-two pages long (including the title page and its verso), in a small format (19 cm x 13 cm), and with a *dichiaratione* (explanation) of four folios at the end. No modern edition has appeared, but there are three facsimile editions: (1) Johannes Wolf's now rare publication of 1922 with German translation and introductory notes (only 380 copies were printed, 300 of them numbered); (2) Giancarlo Rostirolla's 1986 edition with short but informative notes in Italian; and (3) Denis Stevens's 1989 edition with English commentary.¹

In the 1590s there was a real need for such a book. At a time when improvised embellishments were indispensable to any competent singer, the only treatise before Conforti's was Giovanni Camillo Maffei's short but important "letter" to the Count of Altavilla, printed over thirty years earlier in 1562

¹ Johannes Wolf (Berlin: Breslauer, 1922); Giancarlo Rostirolla (Rome: Società Italiana del Flauto Dolce, 1986); Denis Stevens, *The Joy of Ornamentation* (White Plains, New York: Pro/Am Music, 1989).

[Ascending Step]

[p. 3]



[p. 4]



[Cadences] End of a half-measure cadence

[p. 26]



One-measure cadence



Cadences for this subject

[p. 27]

