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A history of the Venetian sacred solo motet (c. 1610–1720)

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The University of Arizona, 1991
A HISTORY OF THE VENETIAN SACRED SOLO MOTET
(c. 1610-1720)

by
Laura Rushing-Raynes

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ABSTRACT

In 17th century Italy, the trend toward small sacred concertato forms precipitated the publication of a number of volumes devoted exclusively to sacred solo vocal music. Several of these, including the Ghirlanda sacra (Gardano, 1625) and Motetti a voce sola (Gardano, 1645) contain sacred solo motets by some of the best Italian composers of the period. Venetian composers were at the forefront of the move toward the smaller concertato forms and, to fulfill various needs of church musicians, wrote in an increasingly virtuoso style intended to highlight the solo voice.

This study traces the development of the solo motet in the sacred works of Venetian composers from the time of Monteverdi to Vivaldi. It revolves around sacred solo motets composed at Saint Marks and the Venetian ospedali (orphanages). It includes works of Alessandro Grandi, Claudio Monteverdi, Francesco Cavalli, and Antonio Vivaldi. It also deals with solo motets of lesser composers whose works are available in modern critical and performing editions or in recently published facsimiles. In addition to providing a more detailed survey of the genre than has been previously available, this study provides an overview of highly performable (but largely neglected) repertoire.
INTRODUCTION AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Venice during Renaissance and Baroque periods was a fertile breeding ground for progressive artistic thought and experimentation. Surrounded by water, its geographical location made it a center for much European trade and a crossroads where many cultures met and influenced one another. The city held a unique position among all cities of Italy and had the cosmopolitan atmosphere of an independent entity that thrived, independent from its neighbors on the Italian peninsula. Even its churches functioned with little concern for what was going on in Rome and the other cities of Italy. The Venetians were liberal and unconventional, sometimes defiantly insisting that their city and surrounding republic be places where individual freedom flourished and where the church was barred from interfering with secular affairs.

It is no wonder, then, that Venice produced some of the most progressive and influential musicians of the late Renaissance and Baroque eras. For instance, the influence of Andrea and Giovanni Gabrieli was exported all over Europe by composers from the wider European community. It is well known that their influence was especially felt in Germany, most immediately in the work of Heinrich Schutz and later, Handel and Bach. At home, the Gabriels provided St. Mark's with a stunning repertory of
continuously evolving polychoral music in which we find one of the aims of the emerging Italian Baroque: the use of contrast to create form. The polychoral style lends itself well to creating audible structure in music, and in Giovanni Gabrieli's work, there is an enormous variety of forms resulting from the "effective distribution of registers and sound masses." The style of the Gabrielis exerted a profound influence over Italian sacred music and the wider European community well into the seventeenth century.

Venetian churches did not insist upon Roman (Palestrinian) a capella practice, leaving Giovanni, the younger of the two Gabrielis, free to use instruments and to experiment as he wished. In his later works, instruments are used in obbligato parts, taking on roles that were especially significant in the context of baroque style. More importantly, these late pieces exhibit the baroque practices of 'affective' writing and more frequent use of solo voices. The concertato style of Giovanni Gabrieli contains many intimations of what is to come, mainly in its striking use of contrasting textures, graphic text painting, and in the opportunities it affords the individual performer for expression.

It is this emphasis on the individual performer that puts us into the realm of sacred solo vocal music. The purity of sixteenth-century Palestrinian practice was gradually being lost as the use of ornamentation became more and more prevalent. In fact, ornamentation had, by this time, become a specialty of Italian singers and a driving force in the changes of the early seventeenth century. The treatises of the period imply that, even in Palestrina's later works, individual singers may have been given opportunity to ornament within the polyphony. Giovanni Bassano published a treatise in Venice that suggests that if ornaments "were tastefully applied the music need not suffer drastic change." The practice seems to have been for individual singers within the choir to "take turns in ornamenting their own parts, as in Bassano's example of a madrigal in which the soprano and bass alternately add elaboration to their lines." The late works of Giovanni Gabrieli reveal strong traces of this tendency as his style anticipates that of Monteverdi's seconda prattica. Ornamenting and thus, highlighting single parts was not conducive to the continued flourishing of the sixteenth-century style polyphony. Additionally,


3 Roche 49.
since the continuo was increasingly essential to the vocal ornamentation used by Italian singers in the courts and the churches, its proliferation further accelerated the rise of the *concertato* style. The solo motet has its origins in these stylistic advances as well as in opera and secular monody. By now, Giulio Caccini had published his important treatise on singing, *Le nuove musiche*, the basso continuo was becoming established and, in the churches, some composers were finding it necessary and desirable to write music for the solo voice. This was partly due to the popularity of secular works for solo voice but, in addition, practical needs of the church musician prompted a change in priorities and style.

The work acknowledged as the foundation for concerted church music in the seventeenth century is the *Cento Concerti Ecclesiastici* of Lodovico Grossi da Viadana. It is written for one to four solo voices and is the first known set of sacred chamber pieces to use basso continuo. In Viadana's "concerti", the basso continuo was partially intended to free the average church musicians from the need to cover all parts in a *capella* singing and could easily be applied to fill in missing harmonies. This provided a means by which soloists could be used to greater advantage but, at times looks quite similar to the old polyphonic
motet with an instrumental bass line tacked on. Still, the work was entirely new and established a practical direction for the composition and performance of sacred works while it eliminated typical four-part texture and elevated the basso continuo to a prominent position.

Viadana's "concerti" form a small part of the catalyst for the changes that took place in the churches of Italy. In composing them, he had a singular aim; to make sung music intelligible and accessible to both the performer and the listener. Yet it was some time before his innovations really began to take hold. In the meantime, secular trends were having a potent effect and Viadana's contemporaries working in the secular field were defining goals that had much in common with his.

Italian secular monody had begun to flourish. It signaled an end to the Renaissance polyphonic ideal by eliminating imitation between voice and accompaniment and by specifying new values for performance that put the text in a position of primary importance. In the pure form of its definition, monody is that which has only a "solo melody with a chordally conceived accompaniment"5 and


places a strong emphasis on the affections. The first known theorist to set these parameters for the term was Giovanni Battista Doni. His treatise of 1635 places special emphasis on the affective aspect of the text:

Monody consists in singing beautifully and graciously and in making all the poetic sentiments understood without the words being lost, and not in the fullness and sweetness of the harmony which without fail would sound better for artificial instruments, e.g. flutes, than for voices; and granted, then, that in sweetness monodie is inferior [to madrigals], it is of little consequence...since a good comprehension of the words is much more essential and important, the goal of music being not pleasure but the arousing of the affects.\(^6\)

Subsequent theorists have had looser definitions and have allowed for contrapuntal interaction between the voice and accompaniment. Current thinking points out that there is a relationship between the early use of basso continuo and the emergence of the monodic style in both sacred and secular circles. The continuo provides a harmonic basis for the vocal line and the voice parts are

not without the element of spontaneity found in the expressive recitative style of the true monody as defined by Doni.

Caccini's *Le nuove musiche* had purposes which matched the goals of the true monodists even if his work, since it was partially contrapuntal, did not exactly match Doni's definition. Spawned by the Florentine Camarata's artistic aims pertaining to opera and by his experience as a performer, his treatise dealt with the abuse of ornamentation which resulted in texts and sentiment being obscured by singers' over-zealous ornamentation. Following Caccini's example came a flood of publications containing what we will refer to as monodies. These volumes were enormously popular in the mainstream (meaning outside the courts) of Italian life, since the opera was then only accessible to the upper classes. It is logical, then, that the influence of two landmark publications of 1602, Viadana's *Cento Concerti*, and Caccini's *Le Nuove Musiche*, eventually filtered into much of the music being composed for church.

Aside from these musical trends precipitating the composition of sacred monody, there were external influences that urgently demanded a shift away from the prevalent larger choral works. In the early part of the seventeenth century, the Venetian republic was brought to its knees by the plague of 1630. Its thriving population
was devastated, music publishing was brought to a halt, and the number of active musicians was drastically reduced. It is certainly not difficult to envision a need for church music of much smaller dimensions, especially in the smaller churches that, because of their size, were particularly susceptible to adverse effects.

Following the plague, the churches never regained a foothold and, after the 1637 opening of the first public opera house, choirs were largely unable to keep their finest singers. Good singers were at a premium and, because of financial realities, were extremely hard to retain within the confines of church budgets. The opera houses offered vastly superior salaries to the best singers in the churches, frequently robbing church choirs of their most capable singers. Singers at St. Mark's, especially during the latter half of the seventeenth century, are known to have complained about "excessive duties and small salaries" ¹ and many of them seized the opportunities offered elsewhere. But it was not only the opera houses that were engaged in the raiding of church choirs. As Venice became economically drained by its war on the Turks in Canadia, foreign courts were offering ever richer rewards to the singers of Venice. This further reduced the

available supply of fine singing talent.

Change is often made easier only by the fact that it is gradual. With the exception of Viadana's 1602 landmark work, forms resembling the monody were not evident in sacred use until the year 1610 when Monteverdi, then in Mantua, composed his 1610 Vespers. This work is a mirror image of what was taking place as the church tried to assimilate current trends and deal with changes made necessary by external forces. Traditional polyphonic motets are juxtaposed with the new small concertato style and heavily ornamented sacred monody. The old and new styles exist side by side within this single sacred work. More importantly, Monteverdi was the first to incorporate styles from secular monody and opera in a way that was both acceptable in current religious order and worthy of the attention of his musical contemporaries.

The next chapter will focus on various composers of St. Mark's, some of whom were directly or indirectly influenced by Monteverdian innovations.
THE SOLO MOTET AT ST. MARK'S

The composers working at St. Mark's during the seventeenth century all, to a greater or lesser extent, made a contribution to the solo motet genre. Though Venice was slow in adopting the new liturgical monody first suggested by Viadana, the city eventually became central to its proliferation in northern Italy. Since St. Mark's was the center of Venetian music making and has been the subject of the most extensive study, it is appropriate to begin with a survey of the works of its composers and, to highlight those that made particularly important contributions to this genre. In all cases but one, that of Grandi, the chronology of their appointments will be consistent with the order in which they are presented in this chapter.

ALESSANDRO GRANDI

Bukhofzer and a number of subsequent musicologists, among them Arnold and Roche, state that Grandi was really the first Venetian to make substantial contributions to the solo motet repertoire. Roche acknowledges Grandi as "the most sought-after composer of small motets", given the fact that his first five published volumes were reprinted several times and heavily demanded by the Venetian public. Aside from his popularity, a large part of his importance

8 Roche 63.
lies in the fact that he was a gifted melodist capable of comfortably assimilating the variety of current styles. His works that are not for solo voice reveal the influences around him in their traces of the poly-choral style, conventional Palestrinian counterpoint, and operatic conventions of the time. To illustrate the operatic influence, Roche uses the duet *Surge propera* (text from *Song of Songs*) scored for soprano and bass. Here, Grandi has the two voices singing in what resembles a husband and wife dialogue with the voices almost completely independent of the continuo. Roche asserts that, in this instance, Grandi was indeed influenced by the early operatic duet, adding that this "personification was an exciting new possibility within the few-voiced medium." It was also indicative of the level of expressive power that Grandi was to gain from operatic influence.

It is important to realize that Grandi's earlier works do not include motets for solo voice, reflecting his working situation during the time he was in Ferrara. The singers there were undoubtedly not accomplished enough to sustain the higher level of performance required by solo works. When he reached Venice in 1617, hired as a singer, he must have clearly perceived that the resources at his disposal would be drastically changed. Only three years

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9 Roche 63-64.
after being hired as a chapel singer, he had ascended to the position of vice maestro di capella, Monteverdi's assistant. It is at this point that the solo motet begins to appear in his repertory and that his assimilation of Monteverdi's style initiates obvious changes in the demands he makes on the solo voice.

If Grandi was, as Denis Arnold puts it, "a disciple of Monteverdi", he was also a composer of considerable stature and originality before he met directly with the older man's influence. He had always possessed a sound understanding of exactly what it meant to write idiomatically for the solo voice and this manner of writing was merely encouraged into new growth by the Monteverdian style. When Monteverdi ventured into the so-called secularization of church music, bringing operatic gesture into the sacred realm, it was only natural that Grandi, whose works shared with Monteverdi's a distinctive affinity for expressive vocal writing, may have, at least subconsciously, followed his example.

This becomes clear upon comparative study of Grandi's solo motets found in the 1625 Simonetti anthology and those published around 1637 (posthumously) in one of his popular sacred motet books. The motets published in the later

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edition abound with written-out ornamentation and florid passages which demand great flexibility, expressive delivery and share a great many characteristics with the Monteverdian style. The earlier motets reveal Grandi's innate gift for lyric, flowing melody, but with a more restricted range and a text declamation that bears little resemblance to the florid recitative style of his maturity. But even without the free virtuoso display found in his later style, there is still ample opportunity in the early motets for the performer to maximize the emotional impact of the text. The solo motet, *O quam tu pulchra es*, has a vocal line that is extraordinary in its simplicity. It offers no florid melisma or frenetic recitative, but instead uses sudden changes in sonority and key to paint parts of the text which are especially poignant. The voice is allowed to color the text appropriately on its own, using only text declamation and changes in vocal tone color.

As vice-maestro at St. Mark's, Grandi had opportunities to capitalize not only on the availability of fine singers, but on highly qualified instrumentalists as well. In the 1620's, he began writing motets for various small ensembles in which instruments played an integral part. His works for solo voice that fall into this category of *motetti con sinfonie di violini*, use instruments mostly to give the pieces a coherent, more
unified form. Roche cites Grandi's *O vos omnes* as an instance in which the instruments are confined to this "unifying role", whereby they merely play a mournful sinfonia at various intervals between the vocal sections of the piece. Meanwhile, the voice is scored with continuo only in a simple, recitative style which again highlights Grandi's simple way of setting emotional texts with the greatest of ease and economy. The *attendite* section is particularly poignant in its use of sudden chromatic shifts and feeling of urgency.11

The majority of Grandi's solo motets are written for high voice and continuo, although a few are scored with violins, and there are occasional motets for lower voices. Particularly noteworthy is the motet for bass voice, *Salvum me fac Deus*, which demands the wide range of pitch and expression, typical of works that both Grandi and Monteverdi composed for the exclusively male singers of St. Mark's.

Denis Arnold calls Grandi a composer of "competence and a certain lyrical gift", whose work blossomed after coming to Venice to work with Monteverdi.12 This lyrical gift was shared by both men, and then augmented by the keen

11 Roche 83-84.

Monteverdian sense of passion and drama. It was Monteverdi who discovered the appealing talent of Alessandro Grandi, actually preceding Grandi at St. Mark's. If Grandi is placed before Monteverdi in this paper, it is only because his contributions to the solo motet repertory comprise a beautifully developed mainstay of Venetian sacred music.
CLAUDIO MONTEVERDI

Shortly after his move from Mantua to Venice, Monteverdi, began, "to surround himself with his own discoveries", among them Grandi, Cavalli, and Giovanni Rovetta. His influence on his younger colleagues is obvious, but it is entirely possible that they too, particularly Grandi, influenced Monteverdi to write more melodiously.¹³

In Monteverdi's sacred works for solo voice, it is indeed possible to find some of the charm and tunefulness which abounds in the works of his associates. One has only to compare a section of an Alleluia in a motet of Grandi's with one found in a solo motet composed by Monteverdi.

Of course, the primary impact of stylistic change came from the progressive artistry of Monteverdi himself as it lead toward the virtuoso vocalism found in secular music. Within the first decade of the seventeenth century, the embellished motet began to flourish. Monteverdi's contributions to this motet repertory are relatively few within the context of his total output, but they are outstanding in that they greatly elaborated on current forward-looking practices which drew their impetus mainly

¹³ Arnold, Fortune 120.
from prevailing secular trends.\textsuperscript{14}

It was in the small embellished motets in his 1610 Vespers that Monteverdi began the firm establishment of operatic practice in music for the church. In the Vespers, Monteverdi showed his unusual ability to make effective use of the variety of current styles, contrasting \textit{prima} prattica writing with the newer concerted style with which he would become so associated. The 1610 work was meant to show the multiple facets of his talent in his ability to write in both styles. Arnold puts the Vespers (and the other pieces found with it in the collection) in the category of audition pieces designed to get the composer a "post either in conservative Rome or scintillating Venice."\textsuperscript{15} It is clear from the St. Mark's procurators immediate approval, that the Venetians would soon cherish Monteverdi's abilities.

Within the Vespers, the four motets for various combinations of soloists represent Monteverdi's first published attempts in the new style. These form the foundation for many of his subsequent works, both sacred and secular, which extensively employ the secularized \textit{seconda} prattica. The single solo motet in the collection,


\textsuperscript{15} Arnold, \textit{Monteverdi} (London: J. M. Dent, 1975) 137.
a setting of *Nigra sum* written for tenor voice, displays wildly expressive writing that is equal to that found in Monteverdi's operas.

The Vespers' significance to this study lies in the fact that it embodies the framework for the composer's later manner of writing for the voice. However, since the Vespers were written prior to Monteverdi's move to Venice, we will not dwell on them further. Instead, it is appropriate to examine his solo motets which were published in some of the Venetian anthologies alongside those of his contemporaries. The few solo motets in Monteverdi's *Selva morale* (1640) will be surveyed as well.

In 1625, one of the castrati at St. Mark's, Leonardo Simonetti, published *Ghirlanda sacra*, a volume of sacred solo motets by a number of composers. Among other pieces, this collection contains four motets for tenor voice by Monteverdi, the first of which is rather unusual in its lack of written embellishments. *Ecce sacrum paratum* is a "prose commentary on the Eucharist . . . [in which] the declamation is perfectly plain and straightforward."\(^{16}\) This is in obvious contrast to the following motet, *Currite populi*, with its vital sections of triple rhythm which surround the slower arioso.

The other two motets in the 1625 collection are contemplative settings of texts in adoration of the Blessed Virgin. The first motet, *O quam pulchra es*, makes less use of sprightly triple time sections, relying, instead, on ornamental melisma and extravagant use of the *trillo* to portray the rapturous text. At the climax, the ornaments disappear, their fervor being replaced by gradually descending, pungent chromaticism that vividly paints a languishing lover. The *Salve Regina* that follows is a piece with unusually expansive phrases that are related through the recurrent use of an energetic rhythmic figure.\(^{17}\)

There is an additional motet, *Laudate Dominum* for bass and continuo, that appears with those described above in a later Monteverdi volume containing a four-voice setting of the Mass and a number of psalms for various performing forces. The serious *d* minor opening of this motet gives little indication of textual meaning and does not intimate what is to come in its light, triple-metered middle section. The closing "amen" lapses back into *d* minor and, like the opening, is heavily ornamented.

Two motets published in subsequent anthologies are *Exulta filia Sion* (1629) and *Venite videte* (1645), both of which make extensive use of recurring thematic material and

\(^{17}\) Arnold, *Monteverdi* 149.
jubilant triple rhythms. *Exulta filia* employs passages which are marked as instrumental *ritornelli* while *Venite* uses a thematic scheme which resembles a kind of extended rondo form in its continual return of the opening material. Both of these motets have an invigorating concluding *Alleluia*. Neither are consistently in triple meter and given that there are no textual variations, the *Alleluia* of *Venite* seems particularly unusual in its alternation between duple and triple time signatures.

In both of these motets, the use of florid ornamentation and *trillo* is typically confined to short sections which move freely in duple meter. This minimal use of ornamentation can be viewed as a sign that popular influence on Monteverdi and his contemporaries kept music in the anthologies infused with singable, unaffected melodies.

The solo motets in the *Selva morale* encompass both the simpler style and the more elaborately ornamented operatic style. The *Ab aeterno ordinata sum*, for bass and continuo, represents some of Monteverdi's most virtuosic writing. It is mostly in a duple meter that allows the singer some flexibility in executing the ornaments. The largest triple-metered section, in its unstoppable *tripla* jubilation, avoids ornamentation altogether. The motet requires a well extended lower range (to low *C*), enormous flexibility, and heroic delivery of "descriptive passages
[that] verge on the spectacular." It was probably written for Monteverdi's friend and favorite bass soloist, G. B. Marinoni.\textsuperscript{18}

The other three motets in \textit{Selva morale} are all for higher voices. \textit{Jubilet} is enigmatic in its specification performing forces. It is written for solo voice in dialogue (\textit{a voce sola in Dialogo}), a designation that seems a contradiction. Denis Stevens believes that this could simply mean that the solo voice works in dialogue with a choir singing in unison.\textsuperscript{19} Since this would restrict it to fewer performances, and because Monteverdi's deliniation is ambiguous, it may also be seen as either a solo work or a dialogue between two singers. Further support of this view may be found in the fact that the piece assumes the standard solo motet form of alternating meters and contrasting sectional treatment of the text.

The second of the three motets, \textit{Laudate Dominum} for soprano or tenor voice, is markedly unsectionalized. It is primarily composed in a flowing triple meter and any extensive ornamentation is reserved for the ending sections that are, as is typical, taken out of the prevailing triple feeling. The motet entitled \textit{Pianto della Madonna} is a contrafactum of the \textit{Lamento d'Arianna} and avoids the

\textsuperscript{18} Stevens 103.

\textsuperscript{19} Stevens 103.
jubilant triple meter altogether. It, too, is not sectionalized, employs no melismatic ornamentation, and is full of colorful chromatic movement in both the continuo and voice part.

It is fortunate that nearly all of Monteverdi's extant solo motets appear in Malapiero's publication of his complete works. Unfortunately, the work of his colleagues and successors is not so readily available for study and performance.
Among those whose work is comparatively inaccessible is Giovanni Rovetta, whose life and works lie in relative obscurity when compared even to those of Alessandro Grandi. Rovetta succeeded both Grandi and Monteverdi in their respective positions at St. Mark’s. Grandi left his post in 1627, for the Bergamo position where he would be full maestro di capella. Monteverdi left his position vacant upon his death in 1644, and as luck would have it, a suitable replacement from outside Venice was not found. Rovetta, still clearly under the shadow of his notorious predecessor, became the maestro at St. Mark’s.

Like most church composers of the period, Rovetta’s work was influenced by the most devastating of external circumstances; the great 1630 plague. His 1635 publication of Motetti concertati naturally reflects the plague-reduced forces for which he wrote. This collection contains no solo motets, but is significant in its proficient use of the concertato style and in its rather diligent use of refrain to create coherent musical form.20

Judging from the list of his extant works, 21 even

20 Roche 75.

though Rovetta had a pleasing lyrical gift, his interest in the solo voice was limited. The solo motet is almost nonexistent in his output. Rovetta's 1648 motet collection contains only one solo motet, a *Salve Regina*, in which an alto voice is accompanied by five viols and continuo.²² It is noteworthy in its high degree of contrapuntal interaction between the voice and strings and for the subtle emotional gestures of its chromatics and suspensions. In its melismatic treatment of some parts of the text, and in less use of refrain devices, it betrays some Monteverdian influence and in spite of its restrained character, it seems worthy of performance.

Another of Rovetta's few pieces for solo voice can be found in his 1642 collection of psalms.²³ It is a *Laudate Dominum* for alto voice, accompanied by two violins and continuo. Rovetta's concern for form rather than emotion is immediately apparent in the straightforward harmony, lack of chromaticism, and generous use of rather plain *ritornelli*. Expressive melisma is almost completely absent.

It is clear that Rovetta's works lack the expressive power found in those of his predecessor and successor at the basilica. From a musicological standpoint they are of

²² Moore 2: 180-186.

²³ Moore 2: 199-205.
interest, but for the performer, they have limited appeal and offer little opportunity for vocal display and coloring.
FRANCESCO CAVALLI

Francesco Cavalli enjoyed a lifelong association with St. Mark's. He was originally hired (December, 1616) as a fourteen year old chorister, becoming part of the refurbishment of the choir following the death of Giovanni Gabrieli and the subsequent appointment, in 1613, of Monteverdi. From then on, he was never far from the basilica, and found the church to be a source of financial stability during lean periods of his normally lucrative operatic career. In 1668, following the death of Rovetta, Cavalli finally became maestro di cappella after years as a well-respected first organist at St. Mark's.

The church provided the backdrop for both the opening and closing of his career, and its influence on his musical development is undeniable. This assumption connects directly with the pervasive Monteverdian influence and, although we cannot be certain that Cavalli studied with Monteverdi, much of his style bears distinct marks of just such a student-teacher relationship. As Denis Arnold says, "There are too many resemblances between their music for them to be coincidental or even a matter of generalized influence."\(^\text{24}\)

There were other, more external influences as well,

and it is from these that Cavalli's limited venture into the solo motet came. As a young man, Cavalli was caught up in the 1620's solo motet vogue begun by Alessandro Grandi, so it seems only natural that his first published work was a solo motet in the 1625 Simonetti anthology. This motet, entitled *Cantate Domino et exultate*, has the tunefulness found in Grandi's work, especially in the characteristic triple time sections that Arnold calls "almost scandalously hummable." It is an easy-going work almost totally without dissonance or ornamental melisma, there are no significant key changes and the metric changes slip smoothly from one to another. The work is not particularly stirring in any regard except melodic grace. Still, it employs several devices which became typical of Cavalli's style and are worth mentioning.

The first is seen in the seamless connection of some sections. They are joined by cadences that, simultaneously, form an opening and closing, or by metric changes placed inconspicuously in the midst of the text. Other Cavalli earmarks are found in five-bar phrase lengths and extensions of phrase that utilize text repetition.

Cavalli's only other solo motet, *O quam suavis*, was

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published in 1645 in another volume of ecclesiastical solo
motets by various Italian composers. It is his second
extant work and, though still quite conservative, shows
increased 'affective' display. This is evident not only in
the occasional ornamental melismas, but also in the
declaration of the text as seen, for example, in the
ascending repetitions of the word "Regina", or the phrase,
"O Maria". Much of the work's impact comes from this
ascending or descending repetition of text which achieves a
sense of urgency and passion. It is not with daring
harmonies, chromatics, or abundant ornamentation that the
piece imparts its beauty and sentiment. Instead, it is
with Cavalli's pure, lyrical, vocal writing from which
excessive display is almost entirely absent.
TEXTS AND MUSICAL STRUCTURE

The distinctive pride and independence of the Venetian republic was intertwined with a popular allegorical connection between the city and the Virgin Mary. "Venice was seen as a pure, uncorrupted virgin state, inviolable by other political powers."27 The art and architecture of the period abound with well-documented evidence of Venetian mythology centered around Mary, but, as yet, there has been little musicological investigation into its effects.

From the decade of the 1620's onward, the solo motets written for St. Mark's contain a sudden preponderance of Marian texts. This may be partially explained by a growing "cultish" preoccupation with the Virgin in the liturgy of St. Mark's during late years of the sixteenth century. However, this does not account for the veritable explosion of Marian interest in motets published or written in the 1620's. James H. Moore offers a plausible explanation for this trend in his recent article entitled, "Venezia favorita da Maria: Music for the Madonna Nicopeia and Santa Maria della Salute."28 He maintains that the course was initiated by a single event:


On 24 August 1617 the Procurators of St. Mark's assembled before Doge Giovanni Bembo to present a plan for one of the most significant projects of restoration in the history of the basilica. The project involved an icon they described as "the miraculous image of the Blessed Virgin Mary painted by the hand of St. Luke the Evangelist," which was kept in the sacristy. They wished to adorn it with gold, silver, and precious jewels and to install it upon the altar of St. John the Baptist, which was to be lavishly rebuilt with four columns of oriental marble according to a design by Tomaso Contino, the head architect of St. Mark's. Simple as the act seems, it held tremendous import, for a fundamental change in the display of a major object of worship would have formidable ramifications for Marian devotion at St. Mark's.²⁹

Moore goes on to describe how the icon gradually became central to worship at St. Mark's and in Venetian religious ceremony. The Madonna was often removed from its altar for ceremonial procession and the completely preserved records of these occasions demonstrate that she was viewed as an essential part of the Venetian belief in

²⁹ Moore, "Venezia," 304.
her protective powers. This was especially true in the years 1630 and 1631 when the population was being devastated by the great plague. Records from these two years show "the most intense veneration of the Virgin in Venetian history."

The appearance of the lavishly refurbished Madonna Nicopeia corresponds with the arrival of Alessandro Grandi and his sudden interest in Marian motet subjects which began in the 1620's. Grandi's compositional output was dominated by works in the small concertato style intended to make the tradition of daily music at St. Mark's feasible. These everyday services did not demand that his music be large-scale or of a liturgical nature, and afforded him the freedom to use texts of biblical and poetic origin. Jerome Roche's survey of Grandi's choices for motet texts reveals a gradually increasing emphasis on texts which were not part of the liturgy and that were focused on the Virgin. This Marian emphasis became a predominant feature not only of Grandi's work, but also of the early Italian Baroque in general, particularly in the small motet forms that lent themselves well to rather sensuous venerations of the beloved Virgin or virgin saints. "Settings of parts of the Song of Songs were a prominent feature among non-liturgical motets, . . .

30 Moore, "Venezia," 313.
especially those of a more . . . erotic nature, for the affinity between this book of the Old Testament and secular love poetry attracted composers, particularly those experienced in the secular field."\textsuperscript{31}

Among Monteverdi's solo motets, there is one, the \textit{Ab aeterno ordinata sum}, with an especially important Marian association. Its text has a liturgical basis which was central to the celebration of the Presentation of the Virgin. This text, based on Proverbs 8:22-35, venerates the Virgin's Divine Wisdom. This theme was "an important part of the liturgy for many Marian feasts."\textsuperscript{32} The \textit{Ab aeterno} . . . was written in a spirit of devout thanksgiving for the abatement of the plague, and planned expressly for the day when the Madonna Nicopeia was moved into her new temple, the \textit{Santa Maria della Salute}. In this context, the work is a moving tribute not only to the eternal Mary, but also to the eternal Venice that was reemerging after the frightening ravages of unstoppable disease.\textsuperscript{33}

Monteverdi's other solo motets were composed for various saints or even as multi-purpose pieces suitable for

\textsuperscript{32} Moore, "Venezia," 340.
\textsuperscript{33} Moore, "Venezia," 340.
various occasions. Among these, we find a technique employed by many other composers as well as Monteverdi: *Currite populi* leaves space where any saint's name may be inserted in order to save the trouble of writing an entire piece for each of the numerous saints days.

It is safe to make the generalization that all of the composers at St. Mark's took more than a passing interest in Marian texts, especially in light of seventeenth century Venetian history. The plague and the resulting intensification of feeling for the Virgin, deepened the fervor with which composers wrote. As far as the solo motet was concerned, that fervor seems to have culminated in Monteverdi's single solo motet for the *Santa Maria della Salute*. The disease swept the whole of northern Italy and killed many talented musicians, among them, Alessandro Grandi after he had taken his post in Bergamo. One wonders what he might have written if his talent had been allowed to age as Monteverdi's did.

In comparison to what must be said about the texts of solo motets, there is relatively little to say pertaining to musical structure. The early Baroque solo motet at St. Mark's assembled a myriad of forms that appear to be both different and similar at the same time. Because the term "motet" has few specific connotations regarding form, the differences in formal characteristics of various solo motets examined so far in this paper seem irrelevant.
Instead, it is appropriate to highlight similarities.

In the majority of works composed at St. Mark's, there are several features common to all. The first is the use of contrasting duple and triple meters in sectional treatment of texts. The sections in duple meter often resemble recitative in their free, unmetrical text settings while sections in triple meter are most frequently composed in a lilting, melodic style. Metrical transitions between these contrasting sections are regularly made so smoothly that they partially negate the sectional idea as, for example, in the two solo motets of Cavalli.

The second common feature relates to the manner in which climactic moments are handled. Here, again, in nearly all cases, particularly emotional sections are relegated to duple meter and may often be set with written-out ornamentation or in some manner of recitative. A feature common to motets that call for instruments other than those of the continuo, is the use of instrumental ritornelli. In these instances, the obbligato instruments may also engage in limited imitative interplay with the solo voice line. Concluding Alleluias or Alleluia refrains, were frequently inserted at appropriate textual junctures as a means of increasing both virtuosic and melodic opportunities. They are usually in triple meter, although there are isolated instances that demonstrate the use of duple rhythms.
Perhaps the overriding feature shared by the solo motets at St. Mark's and in Venice is their broad appeal. With the outstanding exception of a few of Monteverdi's virtuoso motets, these pieces from the first half of the seventeenth century were meant for public consumption; to be simple and singable enough for performance in homes and other secular surroundings. Their melodic features most often indicate that they were meant to be highly performable.
OTHER VENETIAN COMPOSERS

The solo motets written by composers at St. Mark's and other churches in Venice were not preserved through church archives and records. With few exceptions, the works we have examined so far surfaced through a series of Venetian motet anthologies which were intended for public sale and consumption. The popularity of motet anthologies is a testament to the Italian appetite for vocal music and, for us, a chronicle of the evolution of the solo motet, its composition and use.

The works of prominent composers at St. Mark's were published alongside those of composers working in the smaller centers of worship in the Venetian Republic or even outside its borders. The music written for these smaller churches often contained many works of high quality for limited forces. Perhaps more importantly, this music in and around Venice was indicative of "an age of functional music adaptable to all tastes and resources, and sometimes displaying a feeling of experiment that was lacking in the period of Palestrina."34

Although early seventeenth century Venice had quickly become a center for the new concertato style, it was slow in adopting the solo motet. Before 1625, the publishing

houses were publishing collections of motets for ensembles of various numbers including only a sprinkling of pieces for solo voice and continuo. However, in the 1620's, the "growing popularity of the secular aria, especially in Venice,"35 began exerting a strong influence on sacred music publications, and in 1625 Leonardo Simonetti, a castrato at St. Mark's, collected and edited the first published volume of solo motets. This collection, as previously mentioned, was entitled Ghirlanda Sacra and its popularity was such that it elicited the printing of many similar publications, undergoing a second printing in 1630,36 and yet another in 1636.37

This volume is headed by four motets each by Claudio Monteverdi and Alessandro Grandi. The other thirty-seven works represent the work of twenty-four other composers working in Venice or other areas of northern Italy. Among these composers are Monteverdi's predecessor at St. Mark's, Giulio Cesare Martingengo, and Monteverdi's successors, Rovetta and Cavalli. Other composers in the anthology appear to have been caught in an extended orbit around St. Mark's chapel. Some are documented as having been singing


37 Roche, "Anthologies," 8.
teachers at its seminary or, as in the case of Vido
Rovetta, singers from other chapels that the procurators of
St. Mark's were pursuing for employment in the cappella.
Still others, such as Bartolomeo Barbarino, were among the
finest singers that Northern Italy had to offer.38
Barbarino, one of the first secular monodists, was well
acquainted with conventional monodic practice. This is
evident in his manner of mingling sections of ornamented
recitative with the "more melodic arioso."39

In most of these works, especially those composed by
singers, empathy for the performer prevails. Since most
were not composed for the high caliber singers of St.
Mark's, the use of ornamentation is often limited to
cadences, or almost completely absent. In the case of the
four motets by the Neopolitan pedagogue, Giovanni Maria
Sabino, alternative versions with ornamentation are
included for use by the more advanced singer.

Among other Venetian composers were pupils of both
Andrea and Giovanni Gabrieli. Giovanni Priuli, a student
of the younger Gabrieli, was a composer whose two works in
Ghirlanda Sacra demonstrate an affinity for a distinctly
melodic style that either avoids, or only awkwardly

38 Arnold, "Solo Motet," 57.

39 Anne Schnoebelen, Solo Motets from the Seventeenth
xii.
attempts the ornamented complexities of the conventional monody. His work is, perhaps, a more extreme example of the simpler style of writing which places emphasis on melodic line rather than 'affective' portrayal of the text.

Just as the motets of Ghirlanda Sacra derived many of their traits from secular song and monody, so the motets of the 1645 Gardano publication, Motetti a voce sola... libro primo, drew their inspiration from the bel canto aria. The monodic style that had dominated twenty years earlier (before the 1630 plague halted activity at the Venetian publishing houses), was still in evidence but with much greater emphasis on organized melodic and florid structures. Florid sections in duple meter, now subject to the contrapuntal devices of imitation and sequencing, became longer and more rhythmically disciplined. Proportionately, the lilting sections of triple meter took on greater significance, and the role of the continuo became a much more active one.

The 1645 Gardano anthology is dominated by seven motets of Gasparo Casati. He worked outside the Venetian Republic at the Novara cathedral, but was clearly

40 Schnoebelen, xii.
41 Arnold, "Solo Motet," 57.
42 Schnoebelen, xiv.
acknowledged as a very capable composer by the Gardano publishing house in Venice. His motets, in some cases, go slightly against the general trend toward less florid, more structured melodic writing. Nonetheless, he does use sequence and imitation to achieve the prevailing goal of more cohesive and extended musical forms. It is interesting and rather surprising to note that his motet, *Benedicam Dominum*, is in stark contrast to the previously discussed Monteverdi motet, *Venite Videte* which appears in the same anthology. The motet by Casati is emotionally charged with florid writing that recalls that found in some of Monteverdi’s earlier virtuosic solo motets written in the style of opera and secular monody.

Significant solo motet collections after 1645 were quite rare, since Venetian publishing houses never fully recovered following the plague. The next clearly visible steps in the evolution of the solo motet form are found in Venetian music published outside of Venice in the Emilian region of northern Italy. In a 1670 Emilian anthology, compiled by Marius Silvani,\(^4\) the solo motets of the Venetian opera composer, Carlo Pallavicino, reveal startling new twists of form in their cantata-like division between recitative and aria. The former subtle divisions and characteristic movement between duple-metered sections

of quasi-recitative, and tuneful sections of triple meter are gone. The relationship with operatic form and style is unmistakable and, as we will see in the motets of Vivaldi, the future of the Venetian solo motet was inextricably tied to opera and its singers.
THE CULMINATION OF THE VENETIAN BAROQUE SOLO MOTET

By the mid-to-late seventeenth century, opera had become a formidable force for the churches to contend with. Previously known as an extravagant pastime reserved for the upper classes, opera had gradually been transformed into a thriving commercial enterprise enjoyed by the general public. The effects of this on church music were profound enough to inhibit the former popularity of sacred music publications, and completely reshape the formal and musical characteristics of the solo motet. Hence, the word 'culmination' in the title of this chapter, does not denote a flourishing musical activity in the Venetian churches. Instead, it indicates that the solo motet form had expanded to its full flower in order to compete with and parallel developments in opera. This 'culmination' also signals that the level of proficiency necessary for effective performance of the genre had reached its peak. There are few bodies of work which demonstrate this more effectively than the solo motets of Antonio Vivaldi.

Before examining these works, it is essential to understand the circumstances surrounding their inception. The situation in Venice at the time was rather dismal regarding church music. The choirs in the churches had been virtually destroyed, as the best singers, lured away by opera house salaries, left them. Composers of sacred music were forced either to write music for whoever was
left, or to find new singers. The foremost difficulty in the latter alternative was in finding replacements for the castrati, who, since women were barred from church choirs, had formerly satisfied the Italian appetite for sacred virtuoso vocal music.

The most logical solution to this dilemma was found in none other than the orphanages of Venice. These institutions, known as ospedali were a unique and positive force in the city, supported by the state, but also partially self-sustaining. This self-sustenance was the product of a remarkable musical tradition by which orphaned girls were trained to be competent musicians. Their performances were used to finance the same charitable institutions that were responsible for their education and upbringing.

Actually, these and other similar charitable institutions were the rule rather than the exception in Venice. Poverty and its outgrowths were dealt with on a very efficient and admirably humane level that, seemingly, did not decline when the economy began to sag in the latter half of the seventeenth century. This economic downturn was, in fact, the reason that the four largest ospedali turned to music as a way of supplementing their shrinking operating budgets. With the implementation of these performances, they regained their stability and became major musical attractions for Venetians and tourists.
The musical training, especially at the Ospedali della Pieta, was such that the ospedali were also referred to as conservatories. They produced a wealth of fine instrumentalists and singers. By 1701, when Vivaldi arrived to take his post as maestro di violino at the Pieta, it was well on its way to becoming one of the best music schools in Italy and the training offered there was, at some point, even made available on a limited basis to "daughters of the nobility." This situation and its consequences are effectively described by Denis Arnold in the following quote taken from his article, "Orphans and Ladies: The Venetian Conservatories":

When exactly the daughters of nobility began to be sent [to the Pieta] for tuition is not known, but in 1707, the governors of the Pieta decided to regulate their entry and formulate rules for their behavior. Only twelve were to be allowed in, each to be taught music by the orphans, who were picked from the best musicians of the choir. There was probably no fixed scale of fees,


Arnold, "Orphans and Ladies," 35.
which were arranged by bargaining between the governors and nobility. Later in the century one nobleman was willing to pay 150 ducats for a girl's board and tuition, which was over a third of the maestro di coro's salary, so clearly the Pieta was not cheap by any means, and must be accounted the equivalent of one of our better public schools.46

A fair number of well-educated young women from the Pieta are known to have gone on to become opera singers. The Pieta, in all its prosperous glory, proved a fertile breeding ground for vocal music that was the equal of that in opera and was designed to reap financial rewards. This music was in stark contrast to that being composed for the struggling church choirs. As a means of obtaining either extra funds, or relief from the gloomy circumstances in the cappella, many of the composers at St. Mark's are known to have written periodically for the ospedali, composing virtuoso pieces for the skilled female singers that could serve as replacements for the absent castrati. It is ironic that this music, like that of opera, garnered large amounts of money at a time when the Venetian churches, including St. Mark's, struggled to find adequate funds to retain their singers. It was in this strange and wonderful

set of circumstances that Vivaldi's solo motets were written. Although his relationship with the Pieta was not necessarily amiable, given that he never was promoted to the position of maestro di coro even after the post was left vacant, the nature of his compositional style was perfectly suited to the purposes of the governors of the institution. This style is consistent with that found in his instrumental works composed in the brilliant, three-movement concerto style that had, by this time, taken hold throughout Europe. The solo motets, especially, abound with examples of concerto-type writing for the solo voice. Formally, they often are closely akin to the concerto, the major difference being in the consistent use of the da capo aria.

These motets illustrate a curious blend of idiomatic writing that resembles both string and vocal composition typical of the period. In some cases, as in the Alleluia of Nulla in Mundo pax sincera, typical Vivaldian string writing prevails within the voice line despite the composer's attempts to couch it in what vaguely resembles a vocalise from one of the period voice instruction manuals.47 Another Alleluia, from the motet, In furore, has an opening theme which looks as if it ought to be bowed

rather than sung.\textsuperscript{48}

This certainly does not mean that Vivaldi was incapable of writing lyrically and in a manner more suited to the voice. The lilting melody of the opening \textit{larghetto} in \textit{Nulla in Mundo pax sincera} is surpassingly beautiful, achieving an easy grace and sweetness in its wide-ranging arch. The string writing that surrounds it is dominated by gently undulating paired sixteenth notes that do little to call attention to themselves. Similar lyricism and grace can be found in virtually all of the slow middle movements of the solo motets. In these, the vocal lines are drawn out with more emotion than is typical in Vivaldi's instrumental work. A particularly moving example is in the middle movement of \textit{In furore}. Here the text, \textit{languescit cor}, elicits a great deal more depth of feeling than we would normally expect from this composer.\textsuperscript{49}

The beautiful middle arias are usually preceded by recitatives. Few of these are very remarkable, and, occasionally, they even seem awkward, and lacking in emotional, textually motivated dramatic flow. The sole exception to this is the recitative that precedes the middle aria of \textit{Nulla in Mundo pax sincera}. In its spontaneous use of tempo changes, \textit{stretto} melismas and

\textsuperscript{48} Arnold, "Vivaldi's Church Music," 67.

\textsuperscript{49} Arnold, "Vivaldi's Church Music," 69.
stunning contrasts, it bears striking resemblance to the operatic *accompagnato*. There are twelve solo works that were classified by Vivaldi as motets. For the most part, their form is nearly identical from one to the next, generally consisting of a brisk *da capo* aria, a *secco* recitative which joins into the slow middle movement, and a brilliant concluding *Alleluia*. Variations on this format are insignificant, because, in all cases, the three movement framework reinforces the fact that these pieces are indeed analogous to the Vivaldian concerto.

The fact that they are 'sung concerti' may be partly responsible for the lack of attention paid them by performers. Admittedly, many of them contain writing similar to that found in the opening of the motet *Canto in Prato*. It illustrates only too well that Vivaldi was, first and foremost, a composer of virtuoso string music. Here, the undisguised string idioms of repeated quarter notes and intricate chromatic patterns illustrate Vivaldi's lack of empathy and understanding of the needs of the human voice.

This certainly does not mean that the motets are not deserving of much greater attention. After all, there are bound to be singers whose vocal prowess is equal to the

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task of translating Vivaldi's 'string writing for the voice' into well-executed performances. It is clear that, even in the motets where string idioms occasionally present difficulties, the weaknesses are overshadowed by a wealth of lyric melody and attractive vocal passagework that is worthy to stand with the best Italian Baroque *bel canto* traditions.
THE QUESTION OF AUTHENTICITY IN PERFORMANCE

A subject such as this should precipitate a discussion on baroque performance practice. In such a discussion, one could espouse any or all of the various theories and specific practices which are being utilized by performers who specialize in the so-called 'authentic' performance of early music. In contrast, this document will attempt to give credence to the idea that vocal music from the Baroque need not be performed as it supposedly was: that it can and should be sung with an understanding of past performance practices which may be incorporated into present taste and modern vocal technique.

This necessitates some discussion of current ideology. Among musicologists, there has been a controversy brewing for some time about how far the quest for authenticity should go. The word "authenticity" has become the pivotal term for this controversy and has elicited numerous rejections of its implied moral overtones. In other words, we are questioning the belief that if a performance does not meet criteria now being imposed by the early music movement, it is unworthy, unauthentic, and lacks artistic integrity. Surprisingly, many musicologists have viewed the quest for authenticity as counter-productive to the fundamental purposes of our art. After all, there still must be room for personal tastes that make each performance
unique.

In many ways, the early music movement has negated the value of interpretation. Performers of early music are often required to forsake modern musical instinct for the sake of historically correct practice. The performer's instinct may be largely ignored, and a score and its particular language may be reduced to a set of formulas which leave little room for anything but sterility. As the editor's hand is largely absent from an urtext musical edition, so the performer's imprint is suppressed so that the composer's "true" intentions may be heard.

But how can we know for certain about intentions from two or more centuries ago? We certainly have a number of period treatises on performance practice, but it is not humanly possible to discover and duplicate the sounds of an unheard and relatively distant past. In one of a series of probing articles in the periodical, *Early Music*, Daniel Leech-Wilkinson reinforces this view.

Baroque treatises may suggest that such music was considered by its contemporaries to be highly expressive, but as to how this expression was achieved we have only the vaguest information. What happens beyond that, even in this most thoroughly documented of performance styles,
remains a matter of guesswork and, therefore, of invention.\textsuperscript{51}

It is also fair to say that, in many regards, composers from the baroque may not have had the time or freedom to complete their best intentions. In most cases, these composers were subject to the dictates of either private employers or church leaders. They often worked against deadlines, racing to complete works requested for specific occasions. It is little wonder, then, that original manuscripts were often sketchy and lacking in detailed instruction for the performer.

Such original manuscripts are the sources for countless critical and historical editions. These editions are free of editorial comment within the musical scores, and dynamics or other performance-related instructions are limited to those found in original manuscripts. This serves a very practical purpose when one is attempting to discern the accuracy of modern performing editions; but when performers in search of "authenticity" decide that historical editions should be taken literally in modern performances, the results may be bland and uninspiring.

A case in point lies in a comparison of critical and performing editions of Vivaldi's music. The Ricordi

critical editions⁵² are excellent in their authority and objectivity, but lack a viable realization of the continuo part, bowings and articulations for the strings, appropriate phrase markings, and dynamic indications. These editions do contain extensive critical notes that provide useful advice on performance considerations and sources of additional information. When compared to the 1968 Heugel performing edition of Vivaldi solo motets,⁵³ the critical edition, though it serves to validate the quality of the earlier French edition, seems impractical for the performer. The French edition contains a wealth of well-chosen editorial instructions that are of more immediate assistance to the singer and accompanying instrumentalists.

Despite its shortcomings, the early music movement has enlightened mainstream performers in many ways. The well-publicized work of conductors such as Christopher Hogwood, John Eliot Gardiner, or Nicolaus Harnoncourt (to name just three), has inspired mainstream performers to be much more conscious of the freshness and clarity needed to bring "early music" to life. Singers such as Emma Kirkby, Judith

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Nelson, and David Thomas offer us new manners of vocal coloration and expression, new vocal techniques, and unusual perspectives on our art. Early music specialists have inspired all performers to be inquisitive about matters of style, and have opened a whole new repertory for our perusal and enjoyment.

This is, ideally, what the early music movement should be about. It should not be an intimidating factor in the music that mainstream performers choose to study. Nor should it be dedicated to restricting performers to sets of rules that may or may not be meaningful and congruent with their musical instincts, techniques, and tastes.
CONCLUSIONS

The Venetian sacred solo motet is a genre which began to flower as the economic and political well-being of Venice began its decline. Grandi, one of the solo motet's first and best proponents, died in the 1630 plague. Following his death, the form to which he had contributed so much continued to evolve, paralleling the fortunes and beliefs of the city. The solo motet's spiritual connections to Venice stem from its Marian texts, and as Monteverdi's *Ab aeterno* demonstrated, these were closely bound to the hope and spirit of the Venetian population. More often, the solo motet was tied to the financial woes of Venetian religious institutions, and it became a way either to make or save precious funds. Hence, the motets were composed to have both religious and popular appeal.

The Italian Baroque solo motet is a genre that has been eclipsed by the larger history of the overall motet form and by the wide appeal of secular vocal music of the same period. However, in its heyday, its usefulness, combined with pleasing *bel canto* traditions, led the sacred solo motet to enormous popularity. In the years of its history covered by this study, its evolution was continuous. Because of its unrestricted form and purpose, composers of sacred solo motets were at liberty to experiment. They created a repertory of many facets, ranging from the beautiful simplicity of Grandi's motets to
the fireworks of Monteverdi's motets for bass, to Vivaldi's motets for the virtuoso female singers of the Pieta.

It is regrettable that the interest in the Italian Baroque solo motet has been largely confined to musicological studies. As we have seen, this repertoire contains much that should be of interest to performers, especially since it is so firmly linked to Italian opera of the baroque period. There is, of course, the problem with the prevalent opinion that music of this era is best relegated to scholarly study or overly literal performances by early music specialists. However, it would be well for us to remember that it came out of an era known as bel canto and that, today, it offers unique opportunities for vocal expression.
APPENDIX

AN ANNOTATED LISTING OF SELECTED PERFORMING EDITIONS


For high voice and continuo. Contains "O quam tu pulchra es" of Grandi and Monteverdi. Excellent continuo realizations which retain original figured bass notation. Scores are free of editorial comment. Foreword with translations and notes on performance practice (in German).


For soprano or mezzo-soprano (alto) strings, and continuo. Each motet is individually bound and is preceded by critical notes on editorial practices and performance. Continuo realizations are mostly left up to keyboard performer. Bowings and dynamic markings are mostly absent. As critical editions, these are excellent. They should be used to verify accuracy of other editions, and may be used as performance editions, provided that the performers are well versed in matters such as continuo realization and baroque articulation and phrasing.


For high voice and continuo. Contains "Jesu mi dulcissime," "Cantabo Domino," and "Egredimini, filiae"
Excellent continuo realizations which retain original figured bass notation. Scores are free of editorial comment. Foreword with translations and notes on performance practice (in German).


For high voice, two violins and continuo. Contains two *motetti con sinfonie di violini*; "Salve Regina," and "Lauda Sion Salvatorem." Is usable as a performing edition, although there are some instances where rhythmic notation lacks immediate accessibility. Comes as full score with separate string parts.


Contains two sacred solo motets for high voice, "Venite videte," and "Exulta filia Sion." This is a difficult edition to perform from. It is simply a slight upgrade of the Malapiero, and is unsuccessful in its attempts to clarify rhythmic proportion and continuo realization. In some cases, the rhythmic issues are only made more complicated. Might be used in conjunction with Malapiero to form modern transcriptions of these pieces.


Contains all extant solo motets of Monteverdi. Most of them are found in volumes 15 and 16. This collected edition is basically a copy of Monteverdi's manuscripts. It is useful for forming modern transcriptions and for verifying accuracy of modern performing editions. It is of enormous value as a comprehensive source of all of Monteverdi's extant sacred solo motets. Can be used, with some difficulty, in performance if performers are accustomed to the antiquated notation.


Contains six of Vivaldi's extant solo motets; "Canto in prato," "Longe mala umbrae terrores," "O qui coeli," "In furore," "Nulla in mundo pax sincera," and "Invicti bellate." All are for soprano of mezzo-soprano with strings and continuo. This edition is of great use to performers in its well placed
editorial markings and its continuo realizations. The continuo realizations are quite elaborate, but prove to be appropriate in most instances. At times, the continuo part unnecessarily doubles upper strings. Bowings are excellent.
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY


