

***Cipriano de Rore: New Perspectives on His Life and Music*. Ed. by Jessie Ann Owens and Katelijne Schiltz. Pp. 507. Epitome Musical. (Brepols Publishers n.v., Turnhout, 2016). €80. ISBN 978-2-503-56777-8.**

Cipriano de Rore belongs to the rare (or perhaps not so rare) group of 16th-century composers, whose extraordinary fame, both contemporary and posthumous, is matched with an equally extraordinary neglect by researchers. For want of an authoritative biography, a *catalogue raisonné* and even a critical edition of his music (no critical apparatus is provided in Bernhard Meier's edition in *CMM*), Rore scholarship has long been doomed to be the sole domain of a few individuals. This publication marks a decisive step towards overcoming these impediments. Assembling the cream of current Rore experts and instigating others to explore his life and works, Jessie Ann Owens (a household name in Rore scholarship) and Katelijne Schiltz have put together a pioneering volume that is equally informative and inspiring.

As the title promises, the volume offers 'new perspectives' on Rore's biography, his sources and repertoire, analytical approaches to his music and his place in early 20th-century scholarship. Bonnie Blackburn (29-74) once more lives up to her reputation as the supreme sleuth of early modern music history. Not only does she skillfully extract new information from well-known primary sources, she dug out significant new material from Italian archives. On this basis, she sheds fascinating new light onto Rore's early Italian career prior to his employment as maestro di cappella at Ferrara (1546), which had long been shrouded in mystery. With all due caution, Blackburn employs circumstantial evidence to draw the hypothetical contours of the network of patrons and fellow musicians, within which Rore moved as an enterprising freelancer in Brescia. They include Count Fortunato Martingengo Cesaresco, famous through his portrait in the National Gallery, and the fine composers Palazzo del Fano and Nolet (exemplified with one composition each in the appendix).

Laura Stras elucidates Rore's musical relationships with two ladies from the Este household (75-102): Right at the outset of his tenure in Ferrara, Rore became involved in the complex wedding negotiations for the daughters of Duke Ercole II: His motet *Hesperiae cum laeta* (in praise of her portrait) may have been sent with the latter to the projected spouse, the last Jagiellonian King Sigismund Augustus of Poland. Rore also contributed music to the tragedy *Selene*, performed during the festivities of Anna's eventual betrothal with the Duc d'Aumale. Other works, such as his settings of Ariosto, may well have been written to showcase the singing abilities of the Duke's daughters Anna and Lucrezia. As Stras suggests, some madrigals in Rore's second book for four voices demonstrate that the composer took sides with Ercole's estranged wife Renée.

While Stras offers a sneak preview of her forthcoming monograph on *Women and Music in Sixteenth-Century Ferrara*, Franco Piperno develops further ideas from his book on Guidubaldo II della Rovere (2001) (103-122). Rore maintained links with the Duke of Urbino throughout his professional career, as is demonstrated in many works written for his patron. As Piperno argues, Rore also played an influential role in shaping the musical life at the Ducal court.

The triad of illuminating biographical chapters is followed by studies into sources and repertoire. Kate van Orden addresses a tantalising anomaly of Rore's early printed works (125-151): His collection of 'madregali chromatici' of 1544 is an outlier both with Rore's own oeuvre and – as 5-part settings of predominantly Petrarchan sonnets – with the style of contemporary black-note madrigals. Whereas works such as *Per mezz' i boschi* are traditionally seen to anticipate much later developments in madrigal composition, van Orden reveals instead their indebtedness to Janequin's chansons.

Inspired by his earlier work on the organisation of Monteverdi's fifth book of madrigals, Massimo Ossi elucidates the neat programmatic arrangement in Rore's first book of five-part madrigals (1542) according to poetic and literary parameters (153-190). While substantial changes in later reprints may seem to obscure Rore's masterplan, Ossi appreciates the individual publishers' approaches to (re-)organising the contents.

From Rore's corpus of motets, which are notoriously difficult to categorise, Katelijne Schiltz isolates a sub-group of 23 works *a voci pari* (191-225): Scored for equal voices, they dominate Rore's

production of four-part motets and represent a small, but significant minority among his five-part motets. Schiltz's compellingly rich taxonomy of this sub-genre incorporates aspects as diverse as text choice, subject matter, tessitura, dissemination, compositional style alongside contextual factors. In one of the highlights of this volume, Schiltz manages to transform what might have been an anaemic bean-counting exercise into an exciting adventure that starts from analytical detail and ends with a placement of these motets as a link between older French traditions and Willaert's *Musica nova* motets.

Some of the *voci pari* motets discussed by Schiltz also featured in a luxury choirbook from the Munich court (Mus. ms. B), through which Duke Albrecht V paid tribute to Rore. Heavily illuminated by Hans Mielich around 1559, the codex has traditionally been given short shrift by art historians, who regarded it as somewhat anachronistic, if not outright atavistic. Andrea Gottdang makes a spirited revisionist plea for the timeliness of Mielich's work, which sought to achieve no less than to infuse fresh blood into the age-old tradition of book illumination (229-269, in German). With a keen eye for detail, Gottdang analyses Mielich's visual strategies. Her observations create the vivid picture of an immensely talented artist, who was destined to find creative solutions to new challenges and who kept refining his technique through a trial-and-error approach.

Bernhold Schmid introduces a curious German adaptation of Rore's chanson *Susanne un jour* that is documented in manuscript partbooks from the Gymnasium of the Silesian city of Brieg/Brzeg (now kept in PL-WRu, 61335 Muz.) (271-290, in German). From this vantage point Schmid unfolds a panorama of early modern compositional responses to *Susanne un jour*. Thanks to its lasting popularity and Europe-wide reception (including adaptations into a range of vernacular languages as well as Latin) and multiple parallel settings, this song runs like a red thread through 16th-century music at large. This forms a valuable backdrop, against which the contours of Rore's own take on *Susanne* and its Silesian adaptation emerge all the more clearly.

With its many quirks and bold features, Rore's music does not respond well to conventional analytical approaches analysis. Four chapters seek to address this challenge through close-readings of individual works and the more systematic investigation of individual compositional parameters. John Milsom's magisterial exposition on Rore's 'flexed fuga' falls into the latter category (293-329). Digging deep into the fabric of Rore's works, Milsom uncovers some key characteristics of his contrapuntal strategy. His characteristically incisive essay is admirable for being at once a painstakingly accurate *tour de force* of analytical minutiae and a lucid – even thrilling – exposition with real flair that is bound to make the readers itching to explore further works by Rore (and others) along similar lines.

Hartmut Schick raises the question why the Florentine *Camerata* might have upheld Rore as an influence and model, even though their aesthetic outlooks appear to be different (331-356). Giovanni Bardi, figurehead of the loose Florentine grouping, praised specifically Rore's late madrigals (with their chordal texture and contrapuntal licences) as groundbreaking achievement that paved the way to monody. Schick substantiates this claim through exemplary analyses of *Se ben il duol* (also evoked by Giulio Cesare Monteverdi as a forebear of his brother's madrigals) and *O sonno* and points out similarities with the madrigals of Bardi and Vincenzo Galilei, but also Giaches de Wert. One might add that, Rore's *Calami sonum ferentes* could have had a similar inspirational effect on Lasso, who included it in his 'Opus 1'.

Rore's anticipation of later developments such as Monteverdi's *seconda pratica* is also demonstrated by Jessie Ann Owens, albeit from a more exegetical angle. Her persuasive close-reading of Rore's *Dissimulare etiam sperasti* (357-409), a (selective) setting of Dido's lament from the *Aeneid*, establishes Rore's compositional and rhetorical strategies in representing a text, and the utterance of a woman in particular, musically. As a sensitive reader of Vergil's poetry, Rore divides the text into meaningful units (with deliberate repetition of phrases or segments thereof), from which he construes a complex formal structure. The more architectonic aspect is married, however, with a rhetorical-gestural emphasis on representing characteristic affects.

Anthony Newcomb draws attention to a group of madrigals that appeared under Rore's name in posthumous anthologies only, ranging from *Le vive fiamme* (1565) to the *Musica di XIII. autori illustri* (1576), dedicated to Rore's erstwhile Patron, Duke Albrecht V of Bavaria (411-448). Informed by a

host of stylistic reasons, Newcomb challenges the prevailing classification of *Che dova dunque* and *Alme gentili* as spurious, and adds *Se com'il biondo crin* from the 1565<sup>17</sup> to the canon of Rore's authentic works. Thus he effectively rescues from obscurity three pieces that may well be key examples of Rore's late style.

The concluding chapter leaves Rore as a historical figure behind and examines Rore's position in Alfred Einstein's history of the Italian madrigal (first published, in 3 volumes, in 1949), which defined the master narrative of the genre for future generation (451-477). Sebastian Bolz navigates securely through Einstein's writings (including his other publications, but excluding his activity as a music critic) and uncovers the deeper layers of the discourse formation that inspired Einstein's ideas, covering both his indebtedness to contemporary historiographical tropes (cultural biologism and 'Darwinism', Wölfflin, Burckhardt, Spengler) and his academic socialisation at the University of Munich, where Theodor Kroyer, albeit not his official supervisor, became a formative influence. One might also think of the typology of creative personae put forward by Einstein's fellow student Kurt Huber, but that may have taken it a step so far. As Bolz is firmly entrenched in his meta-historiographical approach, he shows surprisingly little interest in checking Einstein's ideas against the musical evidence, or indeed against current (re-)evaluations of Rore, which the preceding chapters had offered plentifully. As a result, the concluding chapter remains strangely disintegrated from the rest of the book.

Printed in glossy paper, the heft of this tome (in paperback!) serves as the fitting incarnation for its polished and weighty contents, generously furnished with musical examples and plates (in grey-scale and colour). Its outward appearance, boasting *Epitome musicale's* characteristically elegant design, is equally appropriate for a composer who lavished so much care on the design of his works.

Mégnier's praise of Rore as 'inventif' (meaning both original and inventive), which the editors invoke at the outset of this volume (21), applies equally to the contributions of this collection. Not many edited books can claim to showcase as much original scholarship and open up as many perspectives as the essays gathered by Jessie Ann Owens and Katelijne Schiltz. Already when they were first presented at the symposium 'Cipriano de Rore at the Crossroads' (Munich 2014), the overall quality of the papers was exceptional. All the credit goes to the editors for helping the contributors to raise them onto an even higher level, based on thoughtful editing and the exploration of synergies between individual chapters.

Admittedly, the book does not do justice to all genres within Rore's oeuvre. One looks in vain for studies of his masses, magnificat and other liturgical compositions, or indeed the assimilation of Rore's works in later imitation masses and magnificats by Palestrina, Lasso and others. The latter omission is particularly surprising, when considering that Jessie Ann Owens and David Crook had explored it in a dyptich of papers at another Rore conference, organised by Owens in 2016 at the University of California Davis. Not incorporating these studies (alongside others by Planchart, Reynolds and Gerbino) is perhaps a missed opportunity. Yet, any such petty grievance pales into insignificance when confronted with this milestone volume that will be the steady companion for future students of Rore and a game changer in research on his life and music.