

1990

Villanescas of the Virtuosi: Lasso and the Commedia dell'arte

Martha Farahat

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarship.claremont.edu/ppr>



Part of the [Music Practice Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Farahat, Martha (1990) "Villanescas of the Virtuosi: Lasso and the Commedia dell'arte," *Performance Practice Review*. Vol. 3: No. 2, Article 3. DOI: 10.5642/perfpr.199003.02.3
Available at: <https://scholarship.claremont.edu/ppr/vol3/iss2/3>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Current Journals at Scholarship @ Claremont. It has been accepted for inclusion in Performance Practice Review by an authorized editor of Scholarship @ Claremont. For more information, please contact scholarship@cuc.claremont.edu.

Villanescas of the Virtuosi: Lasso and the *Commedia dell'arte*

Martha Farahat

Although many scholars have studied the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century *commedia dell'arte* and its conventions, we still know very little about its music. The nature of the genre explains our ignorance. As early as the sixteenth century and continuing well into the eighteenth, professional acting troupes of about ten players toured Italy and the rest of Europe performing improvised dramas,¹ yet no complete, written text of a play performed by them survives. Indeed, we know about what they did chiefly from collections of scenarios, each one a brief synopsis of the play's characters and action. Many scenarios include a list of necessary props but none include music. The actors evidently worked from these scenarios, elaborating each situation by improvising speeches and dialogues, and interpolating bits of stage business. Occasionally, especially at key points such as at the end of scenes, the more important actors recited set speeches that had already been memorized.² But for the most part, the actors relied on their own experience and ingenuity to flesh out the substance of the drama.

1. For more extensive detail regarding the *commedia dell'arte* and its conventions see Allardyce Nicoll, *The World of Harlequin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963). This offers a good introduction to the conventions of the *commedia dell'arte*.

2. See K. M. Lea, "The Bibliography of the *Commedia dell'Arte*," *Library*, Series 4, vol. 11 (1931): 1-38.

Even though the scenarios make little or no mention of music, contemporary descriptions of performances and pictures of *commedia dell'arte* troupes in action all suggest that the comedians used music frequently in these improvised dramas. There are, for example, numerous pictures of individual comedians holding or playing lutes or other plucked instruments, and there are a number of representations of concerted performances.³ It is more difficult, though, to discover what music the comedians sang and played, or exactly where in the comedies it was appropriate. Since the scenarios do not tell us, we can only assume that music was used either in specifically "music-linked" situations such as a serenade, or else between acts as a modest form of intermedio, or just possibly, in the course of the comedies, according to the wishes and talents of a particular troupe.

The earliest and the most complete known account of a *commedia* performance comes not from Italy but from Germany, in the description recorded by a musician of the court of Albrecht V, Duke of Bavaria, recounting the wedding festivities of Albrecht's son, Wilhelm V, and Renata of Lothringia.⁴ This account by Massimo Troiano, a Neapolitan composer and singer at court, is well known by both musicologists and scholars in the field of Italian theater.⁵ Troiano not only sets out the play's basic plot, he also gives us the identity of the participants, information about the quality of acting, the time-frame for planning of the entertainment, and, indeed, some insight into the reception of the drama.⁶

3. The *Receuil Fossard* is one of the largest of these collections. Representations of that collection can be found in Pierre Louis Duchartre's *The Italian Comedy* (New York: Dover, 1966). Reprinted and revised by the author from the original version, *La comédie italienne* (Paris, 1929).

4. The frontispiece to this work reads: DIALOGHI/DI MASSIMO/TROIANO:/ Ne' quali si narrano le cose piu notabili fatte nelle Nozze dello/Illustriss. & Eccell. Principe GUGLIELMO VI. Conte/Palatino del Reno, e Duca di Baviera; e dell'Illustriss. & Eccell. Madama RENATA di Loreno . . . In Venetia, apresso Bolognino Zaltieri. MDLXIX. (This is the second edition; the first was published in 1568.)

5. In *Le Lieu Theatral à la Renaissance*, Éditions du centre national de la recherche scientifique (Paris, 1964), 172, Günter Schöne summarizes the available literature on the Munich court's theater. He gives two additional sources for contemporary descriptions of the 1568 festivities. One by Heinrich Wirre, brother-in-law of the Duke, was edited in 1568 and illustrated with woodcuts. A copy of that manuscript can be found in the Staatsbibliothek in Munich. The second, by Hanns Wagner, also a presentation copy for the duke, contains fifteen large engravings by Nicolas Solis, a master painter.

6. The volume is divided into three books. The first describes the structure of the German court, and details the arrival of the guests. The second recounts the events of the wedding itself, while the last describes the various entertainments and events of the days surrounding the wedding.

The wedding festivities began about February 15, with the arrival of the first guests.⁷ The wedding itself took place on the 22nd. By the 3rd of March a few of the guests had begun to depart, but many remained for hunting during the day, and dancing in the evening. The *commedia dell'arte* performance took place towards the very end of the festivities, on Monday, March 8th.

During the whole celebration the Duke's Kappellmeister, Orlando di Lasso, was extremely busy. He was responsible for the three main groups of ducal musicians: the singers, the string band, and the wind band. A typical day's musical events would always include a Mass in the morning and, in the afternoon, elaborate dinner music, followed by dancing. These events were supplemented by less formal performances of a great variety of secular and sacred music as requested during the day.⁸ Lasso composed new music, organized the musical forces, and performed himself daily during the festivities.⁹

According to Troiano, a day before the *commedia dell'arte* performance, Duke Wilhelm had decided it would be a good idea to have an Italian comedy, and asked Lasso to arrange it.¹⁰ Given the brief amount of time for preparation and Lasso's very busy schedule during the previous days, the Duke must have known from past experience that Lasso was competent at organizing such events and performing in them.¹¹ Indeed, we have further evidence of this from Troiano's dialogue itself: in this performance Lasso played the Magnifico (that is, the Venetian merchant, Pantalone), but Troiano asserts that he was also capable of playing the

7. See Howard Mayer Brown's forthcoming article on the Munich wedding festivities for a more detailed account of the proceedings.

8. Again, see Brown's article, which not only clarifies the sequence of events but also attempts to identify many of the works performed and the musicians involved.

9. See Troiano, *Dialoghi*, 104. "Venuti che sono li frutti, Messere Orlando di Lasso, con li suoi cantori, a tutti lassa il frenco, che con suave e piana voce, facciano udir le compositioni, che ciascun giorno di nuovo li presenta."

10. "Un giorno avanti che si rappresentasse venne in fantasia all'Illustriss. Duca Guglielmo di Baviera, di sentir una comedia il di seguente, & fece chiamare Orlando di Lasso, ch'ad ogni cosa lo conosceva atto, & le comandò con gran preghiere, e non potendo venir meno e benigno signore; trovò per forte Massimo Troiano, nel la avanti camera della Illustrissima Sposa che stava ragionando delle cose di Spagna con il Signor Ludovico Vuesero, il quale era stato per Ambasciatore dell'Illustrissimo Alberto quinto Duca di Baviera alla Maestà di Spagna à convitarlo per la nozze, e disse tutto quello che era passato con il Signor Duca Guglielmo, e così trovato il soggetto e tra ambidue, composure le parole, e la comedia fu questa, . . ." Troiano, *Dialoghi*, 310.

11. Franz Rauhut provides a complete listing of Lasso's recorded *commedia* performances in his article "La commedia dell'arte italiana in baviera: teatro, pittura, musica, scultura," *Studi sul teatro veneto fra rinascimento ed età barocca*, ed. M. T. Muraro (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1971), 241-71.

Zanni, that he was fluent in French and German, and that he spoke the Bergamasque dialect as well as though he had lived there for 50 years.¹²

On several earlier occasions during the wedding festivities, *commedia dell'arte* characters had take part. Troiano refers to a Magnifico and a Zanni who performed at the wedding banquet itself in a 12-voice piece for three choirs: 4 viole di gamba, 4 flauti grossi, and 4 varied instruments. Lasso may have arranged for this performance, but it is unlikely that he sang or acted in it, since his involvement is not mentioned by Troiano here, but is specified in so many other functions. Another performance using more modest forces occurred on Friday the 27th, when a Venetian magnifico performed with two zanni after dinner.¹³ No mention is made of Lasso in this connection either.

Both the *commedia dell'arte* performance and the presence of *commedia dell'arte* characters at a performance of dinner music continue a tradition documented earlier in the century, most notably in Christoforo Messisbugo's account of a banquet given by the Prince of Ferrara in 1529.¹⁴ Messisbugo notes the presence of Ruzzante and his troupe of comedians who presented skits and sang songs while the courtiers ate their dinner. Messisbugo explains that Ruzzante and his companions sang in dialect and he emphasizes the rustic nature of the event. Donna Cardamone rightly comments that "it seems as if the 'anti-literary' aspect of the comedies charmed the courtly audience as much as the music itself."¹⁵ She concluded that the "Provincial dialects and commonplace language simulated a picture of the simple, rural style of life for the delight and amusement of courtiers in the form of plays with music. The depiction of peasant singers on the cover of the earliest printed collection of villanesche, Colonia's print of canzoni villanesche alla napoletana in

12. "... pure il vero virtuosissimo Orlando Lasso fece tanto bene e con tanta gratia il Magnifico Venetiano, e similmente il suo Zanne, che con gli atti a tutti fecero smascellare delle risa. Mar[ino]. Come è possibile che Orlando habbia fatto il Venetiano se lui è fiamengo? For.[tunato] Taci che ancora il Zanne, fa tanto agratiato, e saputo, che par che sia stato allo studio conquanta anni alla valle di Bergamo. E non solo è pratico della favella Italiana, ma anco de la Franzese, e della Tedesca tanto quanto de la sua propria." Troiano, *Dialoghi*, 310.

13. "... e mentre durò la cena si fecero varie e dolci musiche. Alla fine venne un magnifico alla Venetiana, con due Zanni, che non solo cui l'intendeva smascellare dalle risa facevano, ma anco quelli che parola non intendevano, a veder gli atti e gratia, accompagnate, con le vaghe, e ridicolose parole." Troiano, *Dialoghi*, 260.

14. See Howard Mayer Brown, "A Cook's Tour of Ferrara in 1529," *Rivista italiana di musicologia*, vol. 10 (1975) for a detailed description of that banquet.

15. Donna Cardamone, *The canzona villanesca alla napoletana and Related Forms, 1537-1570*, vol. 1 (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1981), 36.

1537, indicates that the new genre was a logical outgrowth of the long-standing tradition of dialect songs in rustic comedies."¹⁶

In the study done by Andrew Minor and Bonner Mitchell of the festivities for the marriage in 1539 of Cosimo I, Duke of Florence, they assert "The verses recited at the banquet and in conjunction with the comedy are not pure poetry, since, like the librettos of opera, they are dependent upon accompanying music for much of their effect."¹⁷

And Mortier in his biography of the famous comedian Ruzzante, refers to a *barzelletta* performed by Ruzzante in the midst of a comedy, writing that these are "little comic songs, which one can insert in certain comedies or which can be sung at table after dinner."¹⁸ At least five of the thirteen plays written by Ruzzante specifically mention music incorporated within the action. In his play *L'anconitana*, for example, both Ruzzante and a Messier Thomas sing. Willaert even wrote a villenesca for the troupe; at least his "Zoia zentil" is also called the Canzon di Ruzzante — and thus gives unique evidence for the musical capacities of these troupes of actors, who were capable of singing written polyphonic music.¹⁹

Although the account by Troiano is our most complete description of a *commedia* performance, it gives less substantive information regarding the music than we would like. The dialogue refers only to music between acts, and to one song sung by Lasso, "Chi passa per questa strada," which he sang twice through, accompanying himself on the lute.²⁰

The only other music Troiano mentions as having formed a part of the evening of *commedia dell'arte* occurs as *intermedii*, between the formal division of the comedy. Separating the prologue and the first act was a

16. *Ibid.*, 36-37.

17. Andrew C. Minor and Bonner Mitchell, *A Renaissance Entertainment: Festivities for the Marriage of Cosimo I, Duke of Florence in 1539*. An edition of the Music, Poetry, Comedy, and Descriptive Account with Commentary (Columbia, Missouri: U. of Missouri Press, 1968), 38.

18. Mortier, A. *Ruzzante 1505-1542* (Paris: J. Peyronnet, 1925), 291 fn.

19. Additional evidence for the musical capacities of singers is found in the iconographical sources. At least one representation in the *Receuil Fossard* shows comedians using partbooks.

20. Troiano, *Dialoghi* 152, 173-75. "Chi passa" was, as aptly characterized by Donna Cardamone, one of the "hit tunes" of the century. Numerous settings of up to seven strophes and with a variety of dialects from Neapolitan to Venetian are found in prints during the middle and late 16th century, and many intabulations were made. Cardamone notes that the Venetian version would have been more appropriate to Lasso's character as the Magnifico, than the Azzaiolo version commonly supposed to have been sung by him.

madrigal for five voices; between the first and second acts we find "Una dolcissima musica," probably also with five voices since it was performed by 5 "violet d'arco [or violet di gamba as the second edition of the Dialogo says] e altre tante voice" and between the second and third acts, there was music for four voices and two lutes, a clavicembalo, a pifaro and a basso de viola d'arco.²¹ (Instruments differ slightly in two publications of the account. The second edition of 1569 lists violet di gamba instead of violet d'arco, strumento da penna instead of clavicembalo, and fiffaro instead of pifaro.) At the end, an Italian dance is performed.

Thus, we know that there were at least five singers and five instruments at any one time. Since many of the musicians were proficient on a variety of instruments, the possibility that there were more participants should not be overlooked. If we assume no doubling, there would have been nine instrumentalists: five string players, two lutenists not counting Lasso, one harpsichordist, and one flutist.

The question is: did Troiano mention all the music that was used, or was there more? And in any case, what music, or at least what kind of music can Lasso and his colledagues have performed? A close examination of the Troiano *Dialogho* together with Lasso's 1581 publication, the *Libro di Villanelle, Moresche ed altri canzoni*,²² yields some interesting possibilities. The cast of ten characters, as reported by Troiano, is listed here:

MAGNIFICO, Pantalone di Bisognosi	Lasso
ZANNI	Messer G. B. Scholari da Trento
PROLOGO, the awkward rustic	Massimo
POLIDORO, lover	Massimo
DON DIEGO di MENDOZA, Spanish Capt.	Massimo
CAMILLA, courtesan	Marquis of Malaspina
Servant to Polidoro	Don Carlo Liviziano
Spaniard's man	Georgio Dori da Trento

21. "... dopo che fu detto il prologo, Orlando Lasso fece cantare uno suo dolcissimo Madrigale a cinque voci . . . ed qui [after the first act] si fece una dolcissima musica, con cinque violet d'arco, & altre tante voci . . . alla fine tutti due intrarono, e qui [after the second act] si fece una musica di quattro voci con due liuti, un clavicimbalo, un pifaro, & un baso de viola d'arco . . . e per honore di queste nozze, fecero un ballo alla Italiana." Troiano, *Dialoghi*, 312-18.

22. LIBRO/DE VILLANELLE, MORESCHE, ET ALTRE CANZONI./ A 4.5.6. & 8 voci./DI ORLANDO DI LASSO./IN PARIGI./Per Adriano le Roy & Roberto Ballard./Stampatori Regij/M.D.LXXXI./Con privileggio de sua Magestà (sic) per dieci annj.

Servant to Camilla
French servant

Ercole Terzo
? (unknown)

Four of the actors seem to have been courtiers but at least four actors, playing six characters, are known to have been musicians: Lasso as the Magnifico, Troiano in 3 roles, Don Carlo Livizano of the ducal chapel playing Don Diego's servant, and Ercole Terzo, also one of the duke's chapel singers, playing Camilla's lady servant.²³

Two of the songs from Lasso's *Libro di Villanelle* of 1581, the contents of which are listed in Table I, immediately stimulate the imagination with *commedia dell'arte* connections.

Table 1. Contents of Orlando di Lasso's publication *Libro di villanelle, moresche ed altri canzoni*, Venice, 1581.

1. S'io ve dico	Villanesca	no known model
2. Ecco la nimph'ebraica	Villanesca	Giovanni da Nola, 3 v. 1545 Venice
3. Ad altre le voi dare	Villanesca	Giovanni da Nola, 3 v. 1545 Venice
4. Tutto lo di	Villanesca	Giovanni da Nola, 3 v. 1545 Venice
5. Saccio 'na cosa	Villanesca	Vincenzo Fontana, 3 v. 1545 Venice
6. Parch' hai lasciato	Villanesca	no known model
7. Io ti voria contar la pena	Villanesca	Fontana, 3 v. 1545 Venice
8. Hai Lucia	Moresca	
9. O bella fusa	Villanesca	da Nola, 1545 Venice
10. Ogni giorno m'han ditt'	Villanesca	Giovanni Tommaso Cimello, 3 v. 1545 Venice
11. S'io fusse ciaul'	Villanesca	no known model
12. Matona mia cara	Tedesca	no known model
13. Lucia, celu	Moresca	no known model
14. S'io ti vedess'	Villanesca	da Nola, 3 v. 1545 Venice
15. O occhi manza mia	Villanesca	anon. 1557 Barrè
16. Allala, pia calia	Moresca	

23. Play records indicate that Ercole Terzo was paid from the chapel accounts. LIBRO PRIMO/NEL QUALE SI RAGIONA DELLA/venuta delli Serenissimi Arciduchi d'Austria, e della/Serenissima Regina Christierna di Danismarchi/e de gli Illustrissimi Principi, di Ger-/mania in la Città di Monico. p. 44.

17. Mi me chiamere mistre righe	Moresca	
18. Cathalina, apra finestra	Moresca	
(2nd pars) Andar a Valenza	Moresca	
19. Chi chilichi?	Moresca	
20. Canta Georgia, canta	Moresca	
21. Tutto lo di mi dici	See #4	(2 choir version)
22. Zanni! Dov'estu?	Dialogo a 8	no known model
23. O la, o che bon eccho!	Eccho.	no known model

The Pantalone-Zanni dialogue, "Zanni, Dov'estu?" (no. 22 in the table), suggests itself as a possible theatrical song, perhaps one that was sung in Munich in 1568. It is a dialogue for 8 voices, forces available at the Duke's court. In this dialogue Pantalone calls to Zanni who answers from the cellar. His responses are garbled because he has been drinking and is at one point holding the cork to the bottle in his mouth. Pantalone insists that he come upstairs. Some internal evidence confirms the appropriateness of this song for a performance by Lasso, for the Zanni says to the Magnifico at one point: "Why? [should I come upstairs] Go and compose a sonnet!" This is an extraordinarily genteel 16th-century admonishment to go away, as well as (possibly) a reference to Lasso's penchant for writing macaronic verse.²⁴

Where in the performance would this interchange be appropriate? In the account of the first act we find the following description:

Presently there appeared Zanni who had not seen his Pantalone for years, and disregarding him as he walked carelessly along he gave him a great jolt and their ensuing dispute brought about a mutual recognition. In his delight Zanni put his master on his shoulder and spun round like a millwheel, carrying him the whole length of the stage until he was dizzy, and Pantalone did the same with Zanni until they both collapsed on to the floor. Picking themselves up they had a ridiculous conversation reminiscing about old times.²⁵

The second song which helps to associate this collection with the Munich festivities is no.6 in Table 1, "Parch'hai lasciato de non t'affacciare?" This is a dialogue between a woman and a Don Diego, in which the lady is

24. The second volume of Horst Leuchtman's *Orlando di Lasso, Briefe* (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1977), contains many of the letters Lasso wrote to Wilhelm. With their great informality and sense of humor, they testify to the longstanding friendship of the two men. Many of the letters are written in doggerel, with interspersed Italian, French, and German dialects.

25. K. M. Lea, *Italian Popular Comedy: a Study in the Commedia dell'Arte, 1560-1620* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1962, reprint of 1934 edition), 9.

playing hard to get and Don Diego is courting her. Since Don Diego is not the most common of the names for the Spaniard in the *commedia dell'arte* — the character is far more often called Capitan Spavento or Cordone²⁶ — it seems at least possible that this composition might actually have been written for the *commedia dell'arte* production in Munich in 1568, or for one very like it. Not only does the name correspond, but also the situation fits, and Don Diego in the Munich production (Massimo Troiano) is known to have been a singer. Furthermore, the text would fit well with the situation as presented by Troiano. The interchange between Camilla and Don Diego in the second act is described in this way: "But now, a mere woman had stolen his valiant heart, and impelled by love he had come to find his darling Camilla and to implore her to admit him."²⁷ The association of this song with the Munich performance is not entirely new. Both Boetticher²⁸ and Sandberger²⁹ suggest that "Parch'hai lasciato" may have been used in this *commedia* production.

If we accept this piece as theatrical, we establish two important principles: (1) that written polyphonic music was regularly sung by *commedia dell'arte* actors, and (2) that music would have been included in places where it is not specifically mentioned by Troiano. Two possible explanations come to mind for Troiano's omission. Either very little music was performed in the *commedia dell'arte* — just the compositions mentioned by Troiano — or else musical numbers were so much a part of the *commedia* tradition (like the stock phrases, the set routines, the *chiusettes*, etc.) that they did not warrant specific mention since they did not distinguish one performance from any others. Connecting "Parch'hai lasciato" to the Don Diego of the Munich performance tends to support the latter interpretation, that music was performed in comedies even where it is not mentioned in the scenarios. As musicologists we tend to accept only literal and incontrovertible evidence; we are inclined to be positivists. But perhaps such absurd standards are inappropriately applied to a genre like the *commedia dell'arte*, which depended so strongly on improvisation.

If it is true that songs were often interpolated into professional comedies, it may well be that Lasso's 1581 *Libro di Villanelle* may include more such theatrical compositions. After all, the volume includes the

26. The captain's name may be associated with the particular *commedia* troupe. Flaminio Scala's captain is usually Capitano Spavento.

27. Lea, *Ibid.*, 9.

28. Wolfgang Boetticher, *Orlando di Lasso und seine Zeit 1532-1594* (Kassel: Bärenreiter Verlag, 1958), 65.

29. Sandberger, introductory notes to the 1939 edition.

Pantalone-Zanni *vignette* as well as the dialogue with Don Diego, and Lasso writing about these pieces in the dedication to Wilhelm V says, "It would have been better had I published these villanelle in my youth, during which time I wrote them . . ." ³⁰ The villanelle are to be associated with Lasso's youth, placing their creation closer to the time we know Lasso participated actively in *commedia-dell'arte* performances.

Looking at the music we see that six of the pieces are *morescas*, that is, dialogues between moorish servants, or slaves, etc. As shown in Table 1 these are:

- 8. Hai Lucia
- 13. Lucia, celu
- 16. Allala, pia calia
- 18. Cathalina, apra finestra, 2nd pars. Andar a Valenza
- 19. Chi, chilichi?
- 20. Canta Giorgia

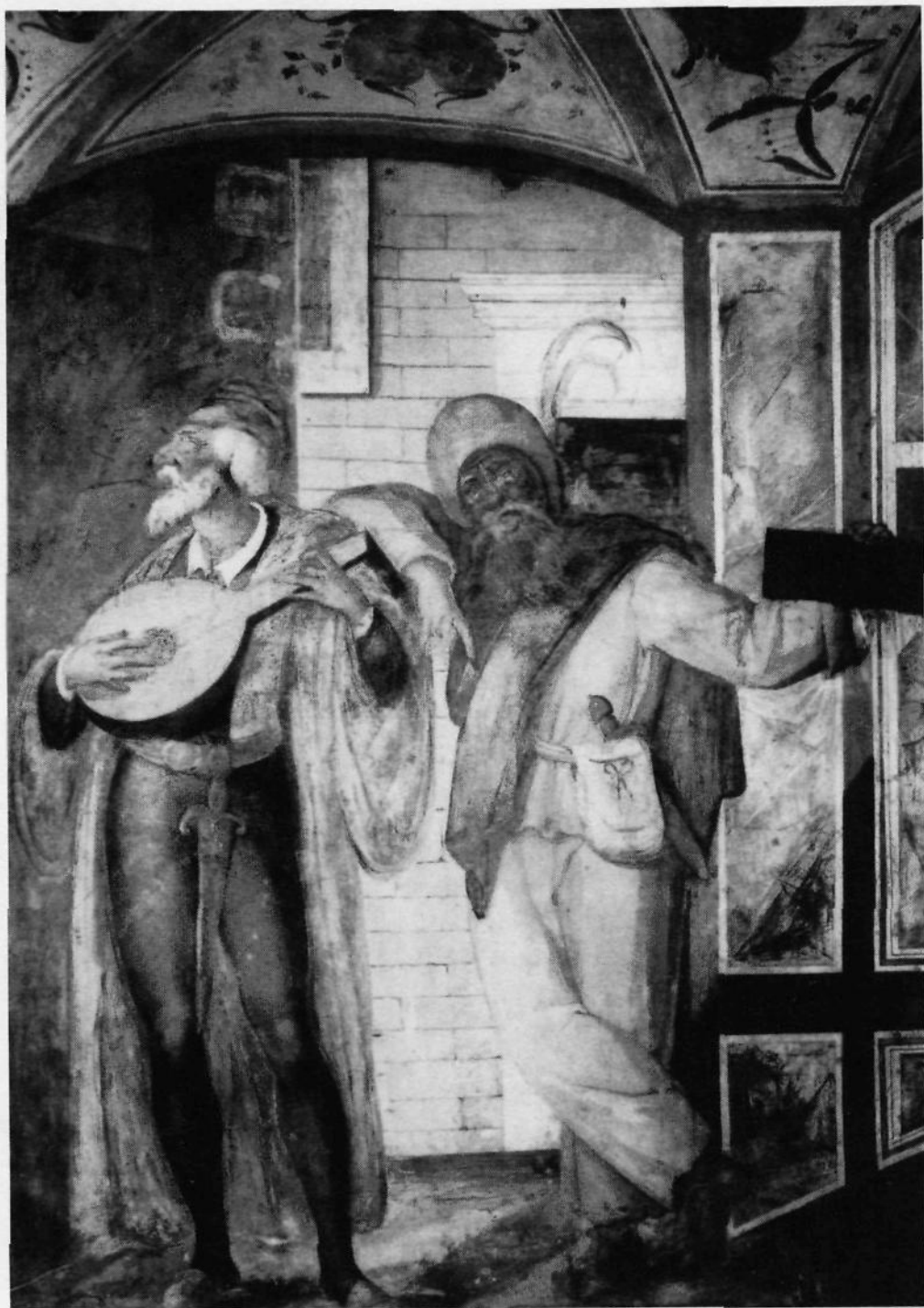
The rest are villanesche, including one, "Matona mia cara," that is more properly called a *tedescha*, that is a villanella sung with a German accent or dialect.

Many of the villanesche are based on preexisting material, and especially on those compositions published in Venice about 1545 by Giovanni da Nola, Vincenzo Fontana, and Giovanni Tommaso Cimello.³¹ The remaining four villanelle (nos. 1, 6, 11, and 12 in the table) have no known models, though Boetticher and others have drawn the conclusion that they too must be based on preexistent material.

The last two pieces in the collection are of a slightly different nature. One is "Zanni, dov'estu?", the dialogue (à 8) between Pantalone and his Zanni, obviously drawn from a *commedia dell'arte* situation. The last is an "Echo." In summary, six of the twenty-two entries are not known to have been borrowed from three-voice models. If they were newly-composed by Lasso, the chance that they were intended for this or a similar production in Munich is increased.

30. That is, "Sarabbe stato piu conveniente che io havessi publicato queste mie lanelle in mia gioventù, nel quale tempo io le feci . . .," from the dedication of the *Libro di Villanelle* of 1581.

31. Boetticher in the chapter "Die Villaneschen in Neapel 1549/50" of Lasso (pp. 48-70) examines in detail some of the origins of the tunes, and traces placement of the borrowed material. Lasso almost always keeps the borrowed material in the tenor.



Pantalone and Zanni singing a serenade.

The two photos are reproduced from the volume *La Commedia dell'Arte* by Cesare Molinari. Reprinted by the kind permission of Arnoldo Mondadori, publisher, Milan.



Zanni bringing a message from the Capitano
to Pantalone's daughter.

The two frescoes are from a stairway in the Trausnitz castle Baviera.

Other than the pieces already mentioned, the songs in Lasso's 1581 *Libro di Villanelle* cannot be associated so easily with the comedy of 1568, yet a good handful of them correspond in significant ways to the information given in Troiano's scenario and therefore it is reasonable to infer that these (and possibly others) might have been performed during the production.

Two other villanesche might have been performed by Don Diego (that is, Troiano). The first of these (#15), "O occhi manza mia" is a simple syllabic setting of a text which mocks a madrigalian conceit by eulogizing less than elegantly the parts of the female form. Its excessive use of reflexive pronouns is doubtless meant to suggest ignorance of Italian grammar and it contains Spanish words and *double entendre* such as the final word "contiento"³² in "Guardam' un poc' a me, fa mi contiento." Its appearance would be appropriate at any point in which Don Diego courts Camilla; there are several opportunities in the Munich play. The second song for Don Diego, "Ad altre le voi dare ste passate," may roughly be translated as "To others you permit entry." This fits nicely following soon after the "Parch'hai lasciato," for Troiano says Don Diego implores Camilla to admit him.

Other situations in the Munich play suggest the possibility of music. Early in the account Troiano writes, "Pantalone began to complain of love and a little later . . . had a long discourse with himself, and another with Camilla . . ." Camilla spurns his love; his sentiments could well have been vented in the small, possibly newly-composed "S'io ve dico ca sete la chiù bella," the first composition in this book of villanelle. The text is roughly translated: "If I tell you that you are the most beautiful of all beauties in the world ever born, I say the truth, and you become offended!"³³

The largest and best known collections of *commedia dell'arte* scenarios, those compiled by Flaminia Scala and published in 1571, enlighten us about many of the standard conventions of improvised comedy. Scala's scenarios, for example, make clear that most plays included a secondary plot, often involving a love affair among servants, that allowed the play to end with multiple marriages.³⁴ In the 1568 scenario sketched out by

32. Both the Italian and the Spanish should be "contento," but some Spanish-like sound is injected with the diphthong *ie*. If the word is assumed to be Spanish, one could hear two syllables "con tiento," which in Spanish implies holding and touching.

33. "S'io ve dico ca sete la chiu bella/Di tutte belle, al mondo mai son nate/Dico lo ver e voi ve ne sdegnate!"

34. See for example Scala's play for the 35th day, *Le disgrazie di Flavio*, a comedy which concludes with marriages of four couples, including one pair of servants, or the

Troiano, we find little mention of any of the servants except Zanni. Given the theatrical conventions, however, as well as the fact that Lasso had almost no time to rehearse his performance, it seems reasonable to assume that he might have incorporated some scenes for the lesser characters — perhaps set dialogues or "old favorites." The *morescas* in Lasso's 1581 *Libro di Villanelle*, all of them based on earlier three-voice models, are especially good possibilities as musical interpolations for these secondary scenes.³⁵ From the cast of participants in the *commedia* performance in Munich in 1568 one pair of characters appears to be ideal for such musical interpolations, the Spaniard's man and Camilla's servant. One of the two characters presumably is Moorish, and he was played in 1568, very conveniently, by Georgio Doni from Trent, a name easily changed in dialect to Georgia. Camilla's servant was surely supposed to be a woman, although she was played by a man, the singer Hercule Terzo, who is also known in chapel accounts not by his own name, but as the son of Lucio Terzo, the string player. What easier transition than to have him take the name of Lucia, when playing the role of a female servant? Three dialogues (nos. 8, 13, and 20), "Hai, Lucia," "Lucia, celu," and "Canta, Giorgia, canta," take place between Lucia and Georgia, where Georgia is undoubtedly a man. The song "Tutto lo di me dici: canta," which appears twice in the collection, once written for four voices (no. 4), the second time for two choirs of four voices (no. 21), clearly can be used as a response to the "Canta, Giorgia, canta" *moresca*.

The Munich performance requires some fleshing out of this sort, most obviously in the third act, since the existing description would have Troiano as Polidoro go into the house, and reappear from the street immediately thereafter in the garb of the Captain. Then as soon as the captain chases Pantaloni and then Zanni offstage, Polidoro reappears with Camilla. Troiano certainly needed a little time for the quick costume changes.³⁶ In fact, after the Captain has chased Zanni off, the only available characters are servants, yet the dialogue makes no mention of them.

preceding day, *Il finto cieco*, in which the final scene is the marriage of three couples, again one among the servants. Flaminio Scala, *Il teatro delle favole rappresentative*, edited by F. Marotti (Milan: Il Polifilo, 1976).

35. A good source for information on the *moresca* and its conventions is the article by Elena Ferrari-Barassi, "La tradizione della *moresca* e uno sconosciuto ballo del cinque-seicento" in *Rivista italiana di musicologia* 5 (1970), 37-60.

36. It is possible that part of the humor of the situation derives from these quick changes, but that does not detract greatly from the argument that the lesser characters must have had something more to do than is mentioned in Troiano's account.

The music from Lasso's 1581 publications may not be the only music used for the *commedia*. Nino Pirrotta in his discussion of this production has asserted that he

cannot imagine that, either as a rustic from Cava or as a lover, Troiano refrained from singing *napoletane*, ironic in tone, like the one blandishing an old bawd in the 1537 Canzoni villanesche. As a despairing Spaniard he might have sung the 'Aria alla spagnola a quattro voci' *O passos esparzidos* (adapted for soloist with the accompaniment of a stringed instrument), a piece listed on the frontispiece itself.³⁷

Pirrotta has hypothesized that Troiano would have used some of his own music for his other roles as well.³⁸

How these musical interpolations were to be performed is not perfectly clear, but one can infer either of two possibilities. The pieces may have been performed in a rather stylized way, using the full, four-voice ensemble which appears in the 1581 print, perhaps with instrumental accompaniment on each of the parts. Giving some support to this view is the fact that the duke obviously liked large, complex musical groups. But the second alternative, of solo song with instrumental accompaniment, is more likely, as it would allow the action to proceed smoothly, with the character(s) responding naturally to each other, not being restricted by the larger musical forces.

The simple nature of the music as shown, for example, in the first piece, "S'io ve dico ca sete la chiu bella," makes clear the possibility of performance in this way without extensive rehearsal time being necessary. Each of the first two lines of text is repeated immediately, while the last line is broken, with the first half repeated, followed by the second half. That line is then repeated in exactly the same way, producing a musical structure AA BB C1 C1 C2 C1 C1 C2. The repetition of C1 has new music. The lower three parts (ATB) form a homorhythmic chordal support to the Canto, which varies only slightly

37. Nino Pirrotta, *Music and Theatre from Poliziano to Monteverdi* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 109-11.

38. "As a despairing Spaniard he might have sung the 'Aria alla spagnola a quattro voci' *O passos esparzidos* (adapted for soloist with the accompaniment of a stringed instrument), a piece listed on the frontispiece itself of the fourth book of his *Rime, & canzoni alla napolitana a tre voci* (Venice, 1569). Its text, a translation of Petrarch's sonnet, *O passi sparsi*, may have resulted in a very apt caricature when it was sung in honour of a courtesan besieged by many lovers but finally married to the servant Zanni." *Ibid.*, 110-11.

from their steady rhythmic structure, and which provides what little dissonance one can find in this extremely simple piece.

Here is an outline of the play's structure, and a listing under each section of appropriate music from Lasso's *Libro di Villanelle* of 1581.

La Cortigiana innamorata

Prologue Rustic from Cava

Madrigal for 5 voices

Act I.

"Chi passa per questa strada?"

"S'io ve dico ca sete la chiù bella"

"Zanni! dov'estu?"

"Una dolcissima musica" for 5 voices and 5 viole da gamba

Act II.

"Parch'hai lasciato"

"Ad altre le voi dare ste passate"

"O occhi manza mia"

Music for 4 voices, 2 lutes, a clavicembalo, a flute, and a bass viola da gamba

Act III.

"Canta, Georgia, canta!"

"Tutto lo dì mi dici: canta!"

An Italian Dance

From the evidence gleaned from the song texts it seems compelling that some of this music was likely written for, or at least performed at, the *commedia dell'arte* entertainment in Munich in 1568. That this is so gives us a confirming instance for the assumption that *commedia dell'arte* troupes regularly interspersed their dramas with music, depending of course on the particular musical abilities of the players. Moreover, we can surmise that some of the music used by comedians, and perhaps much of it, was of the sort to be found in Lasso's collection of villanelle, published in 1581. The twofold endeavor, correlating texts with situations, and *commedia* troupes with particular locations and events, can provide a model for further research. If we accept these arguments we should begin looking in the large villanella-villanesca repertoire from

1537 and after, for other music appropriate to *commedia dell'arte* entertainments.