# SACRED MUSIC FROM THE CONVENTS OF SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY ITALY: RESTORATION PRACTICES FOR CONTEMPORARY WOMEN'S CHOIRS

By

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## A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

Music Conducting – Doctor of Musical Arts

2016

#### **ABSTRACT**

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This document explores music composed by seventeenth-century Italian nuns written for cloistered choirs of women. It gives information on the convents and the women housed within, the musical education of the nuns, occasions for the music, and the choir's role in society. Biographies and musical style summations of Chiara Margarita Cozzolani, Isabella Leonarda, Bianca Maria Meda, Sulpitia Cesis, and Raffaella Aleotti are included. It outlines the conundrum of the presence of tenor and bass parts in the music and investigates how women may have sung these parts. Using research of the eighteenth-century *Ospedali* music and seventeenth-century Italian convent music, four restoration practices are explored and realized in six modern performing editions of music by Cozzolani, Aleotti, and Leonarda. Out of the six performing editions provided in the appendices, two pieces by Leonarda were modernized and restored by combining the music from archived part books, realizing the figured bass, and applying a restoration practice. These restoration practices strive to create authentic performances of this music for modern women's choruses.

#### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The inspiration for this project has a long history beginning in 2001 when I became the Artistic Director for Sistrum, Lansing Women's Chorus. Sistrum is a feminist chorus interested in promoting women musicians and so my search for quality literature written for women by women began. In 2005, Sandra Snow formalized my search by giving me a comprehensive exam on this exact topic for my master's degree. In 2011, I attended an interest session lead by Shelbie Wahl on the importance of women's choruses singing music and texts written by women. When I began my doctoral work, I took a musicology class on Gender and Sexuality in Music with Marcie Ray, I sang music by Chiara Margarita Cozzolani restored by Kristina MacMullen, and I took a Baroque choral literature class with David Rayl. All of these experiences culminated in my interest, research, and restoration of seventeenth-century music written by women, for women.

This document would not have been possible without the assistance and encouragement of many people. I would like to thank my committee David Rayl, Sandra Snow, Michael Callahan, Marcie Ray, and Ken Prouty for all of their time, guidance, inspiration, and editing genius. I would also like to thank Candace Smith for her vast knowledge of music from the convents, expertise in revising this music, and answering many questions. Thank you to Brandon Ulrich for giving me a primer on realizing figured bass. A special thanks to Sandra Snow and the Michigan State University Women's Chamber Ensemble as well as Sistrum, Lansing Women's Chorus for workshopping and performing my editions.

I am thankful for the support of my cohort of doctoral graduate colleagues and friends who were always there to listen and help: Megan Boyd, Elizabeth Hermanson,

Stuart Chapman Hill, Andrew Minear, Josh Palkki, Brandon Williams, and Kyle Zeuch. I am also thankful for the members of Sistrum and the Holland Chorale for the much-needed weekly dose of music making they provided.

Finally, my deepest gratitude goes to Lynn Boomer. She has been my rock and my champion. Her boundless capacity for warmth, reassurance, and continual encouragement made everything possible.

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#### CHAPTER 1

#### Introduction

The Western choral tradition spans over six hundred years, and until the nineteenth century, most choirs were comprised of men and boys or castrati and located in the church. This changed in the 1800s with the development of community choruses and church choruses, of men and women. With the advent of the Industrial Revolution and the Enlightenment, the middle class boomed, as did the formation of choral societies, clubs, and festivals. Schools in England, the United States, and Germany included singing as part of their curriculum. All male choirs and all female choirs existed side-by-side as part of social clubs. Men and women began singing together in community choral groups as well as in the Protestant Church. This trend continues today, but certainly not with the popularity it once held.

In the last forty years, participation in SATB choruses has changed. There are more soprano and alto singers and fewer tenors and basses. To accommodate the changing needs of singers, women's choruses have grown in number and scope. In educational institutions, most of the low voices are placed in a mixed ensemble, while a fraction of the high voices that audition are chosen. The high voices not chosen for the mixed ensemble are then placed in a treble ensemble. In a 2004 survey of 127 high school teachers, all reported that they directed a mixed ensemble while 91% had a women's ensemble to support the greater number of high voices who wished to participate in the choral program. Many church choirs have the same imbalance of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Randi Sue Carp, "Single Gender Choral Ensemble, Attitudes and Practices: A Survey of Southern California High School Choir Directors." (diss., University of Southern California, 2004), 27.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> (1620-1704), Leonarda was an Ursuline nun from the convent of Collegio di Sant'Orsola in Novara. She is the most prolific

voices. The Sweet Adeline's, a women's barbershop society, was founded in 1945 as a counterpart to the men's barbershop society. Since approximately 1975 and the advent of the feminist choral movement, some community women's choruses were founded with the express purpose of celebrating women singing together, promoting women composers, and acting as a voice for social change. Including academic, church, and community-based groups, there are tens of thousands of women's choruses currently singing across the world. With this exponential growth, a surge of high quality music making and rising artistic standards for women's choruses began in the late 1990s.

High quality music making should include the study and performance of multiple genres from the Renaissance, Baroque, Classical, and Romantic eras, as well as the twentieth century. Mixed choral groups have the opportunity to study and perform genres from these periods since a good deal of it is readily obtainable on the Internet or as published performing editions. Women's choruses do not have the same depth and breadth of music readily accessible to them from the same time frame. Most of the repertoire available for the women's chorus falls into three categories: SATB music arranged for treble voices, music written for children's or boys' chorus, and music written for women's voices. Of the latter, a number of nineteenth-century German Frauenchor pieces and twentieth- and twenty-first-century selections for women's voices exist and are readily available to purchase, program, and perform. Additionally, performance editions of the music from the eighteenth-century Italian Ospedali are emerging. However, a body of music written for women's voices, specifically Italian nuns from the seventeenth century, exists only in archives, libraries, and a few modern performing editions. These pieces were written by and for nuns, but if a nun wanted her

music published, she needed to conform to the demands of the marketplace, that is, SATB voicing for cathedral choirs of men and boys or castrati. Modern editions of much of this music are available in its original <u>published</u> voicing for SATB choirs. Therefore some revision is essential for modern performance by women's voices. Arguably, a modern revised edition for SSAA forces creates an authentic performance rather than simply performing the published SATB score. In turn, this restoration gives women's choruses an additional genre of music to study and perform in striving for high quality music making.

This document will explore music composed by seventeenth-century Italian nuns, with a critical examination of the work of Candace Smith, the only modern editor who is continually revising, publishing, and performing this body of music. The editions work well for her women's ensemble, are restored, and contribute greatly to the repertoire available to women's ensembles. In spite of her efforts, there is a wealth of music not yet explored or uncovered. I aim to use the restoration practices set forth in treatises, much of it employed by Smith, to add to the body of this repertoire. This study contains six of my editions, including two previously unavailable works of Isabella Leonarda,<sup>2</sup> with restorations specifically for advanced high school or community women's chorus.

## Overview of Music by Seventeenth-Century Nuns

With the surge of interest in women composers in the early 1980s, musicologists rediscovered music of the early-modern Italian nuns and began making their music

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> (1620-1704), Leonarda was an Ursuline nun from the convent of Collegio di Sant'Orsola in Novara. She is the most prolific composer with twenty volumes and two hundred pieces in existence. Her Op. 4 resides at the Zentrobibliotek in Zurich and only one piece out of the set is available to modern performers. A biography is available in Chapter Two.

available in modern notation.<sup>3</sup> Stewart Carter wrote about Isabella Leonarda, while Ann Carruthers-Clement focused on Vittoria/Raphaela Aleotta.<sup>4</sup> Robert Kendrick studied convents and composers in Milan and Lombardy, and Craig Monson concentrated on the nuns in Bologna and Emilia-Romagna.<sup>5</sup> These studies typically created editions based on surviving SATB part books, modernized the notation, and often realized the figured bass.

By and large, this music is available in a few anthologies and scholarly editions published by Hildegard Publishing, A-R Editions, Broude Trust, and other scholarly publishing houses discussed below. Hildegard published the survey anthology *Women Composers: Music through the Ages* by Martha Furman Schleifer and Sylvia Glickman. The two volume set includes solo, two-voice, three-voice, and four-voice pieces by all of the known seventeenth-century Italian nun composers. Vittoria/Raphaela Aleotta, Sulpitia Cesis, Lucretia Vizzana, Alba Trissina, Caterina Assandra, Lucia Quinciani, Bianca Maria Meda, Claudia Sessa, Chiara Margarita Cozzolani, Isabella Leonarda, Maria Xaveria Peruchona, and Rosa Giacinta Badalla. A-R Edition's *Seventeenth-Italian Sacred Music* series volumes 13 and 14 include Jefferey Kurtzman's editions, with realized figured bass, of one three- and one four-voice motet by Isabella Leonarda and a four-voice motet by Chiara Margarita Cozzolani. A-R Edition also published Stewart

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Jane Bowers, ed., "The Emergence of Women Composers in Italy, 1566 -1700," in Women Making Music: the Western Art Tradition, 1150-1950, ed. Jane Bowers and Judith Tick (New York: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 116-67.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Stewart Carter, "The Music of Isabella Leonarda (1620 - 1704)" (PhD diss., Stanford University, 1981); and Ann Carruthers-Clement, "The Madrigals and Motets of Vittoria/Raphaela Aleotti" (PhD diss., Kent State University, 1982).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Robert Kendrick, "Genres, Generations and Gender: Nuns' Music in Early Modern Milan, C. 1550-1706" (PhD diss., New York University, 1993); and Craig A. Monson, *Disembodied Voices: Music and Culture in an Early Modern Italian Convent* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> These editions are cloth bound, large compendiums available in libraries.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Martha Furman Schleifer and Sylvia Glickman, eds., Women Composers: Music through the Ages (New York: G.K. Hall, 1996-2006).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Maria Cattarina Calegari had a book of solo motets published within her lifetime, now lost.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Jeffrey G. Kurtzman, ed., Seventeenth-Century Italian Sacred Music, vol. 14, Vesper and Compline Music for Four Principal Voices (New York: Garland, 1998); and Jeffrey G. Kurtzman, ed., Seventeenth-Century Italian Sacred Music, vol. 13, Vesper and Compline Music for Three Principal Voices (New York: Garland, 1998).

Carter's volume of eight pieces by Leonarda<sup>10</sup> and Robert Kendrick's edition of Cozzolani's *Motets*<sup>11</sup> in their *Recent Researches in the Music of the Baroque Era* series. The Broude Trust published Ann Carruthers's and Thomas Whitney Bridges's edition of Raffaella Aleotti's motets in *Music at the Courts of Italy*. <sup>12</sup> Additionally, Isabella Leonarda's entire Vespers from 1678 is published by Libreria musicale Italiana<sup>13</sup> and James Briscoe's *Historical Anthology of Music by Women*<sup>14</sup> includes two pieces by Leonarda. These volumes are unwieldy, expensive library tomes that are obviously for study, not for performance.

Hildegard, ClarNan, Broude Brothers, and Alliance publish modern performing editions. These editions, like those in the anthologies, typically combine part-books into a full score, modernize notation, and realize the figured bass. Hildegard Publishing carries twenty-eight performing scores, sixteen of which are for more than one voice: five motets by Cesis, four motets by Aleotta, two motets each by Cozzolani, Sessa, Badalla, Leonarda, two motets and five arias by Vizzana, and one motet each by Quinciani, Trissina, Meda, and Peruchona. These performing editions are reprinted from the *Women Composers: Music through the Ages* mentioned anthology above. ClarNan carries nineteen scores, six of which are for more than one voice: two solo motets and one three-voice motet by Peruchona, one motet by Assandra, a Magnificat by Cozzolani, *Messa Prima* from op. 18 (Kyrie, Gloria and Credo) and nine solo motets by Leonarda, two solo

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Isabella Leonarda, Recent Researches in the Music of the Baroque Era, ed. Stewart Carter, vol. 59, Selected Compositions (Madison, WI: A-R Editions, 1988).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Chiara Margarita Cozzolani, Recent Researches in the Music of the Baroque Era, ed. Robert L. Kendrick, vol. 87, Motets (Madison, WI A-R Editions, 1998).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Raffaella Aleotti, Music at the Courts of Italy, ed. C Ann Carruthers and Thomas Whitney Bridges, vol. 2, Sacrae Cantiones: Quinque, Septem, Octo and Decem Vocibus Decantandae (New York: Broude Trust, 2006).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Isabella Leonarda, Vespro a Cappella Della Beata Vergine e Motetti Concertati: Opera Ottava (1678), Collana di Musiche a Cura Della Cappella Strumentale Del Duomo di Novara (Lucca: Libreria musicale italiana, 2005).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> James R. Briscoe, ed., Historical Anthology of Music by Women (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> "Hildegard Publishing Company,", accessed May 7, 2015, <a href="http://www.hildegard.com/index.php">http://www.hildegard.com/index.php</a>, Barbara Garvey Jackson, "Clarnan Editions,", accessed May 7, 2015, <a href="http://www.clarnan.com/ClarNan.com/Home.html">http://www.broude.us/</a>, accessed May 7, 2015, <a href="http://www.broude.us/">http://www.broude.us/</a>.

motets by Meda. Broude Brothers published a series in the early 1980s entitled *Nine Centuries of Music by Women*. Only two motets by Aleotta and one by Leonarda are included in the series. Alliance Music Publications published Kirk Aamot's edition of Aleotta's *Ego Flos Campi*, which is a performing edition of a transcription from the Hildegard anthology *Women Composers: Music through the Ages*. These editions are octavo sized and priced between \$1.70 and \$17.50. Choral organizations can afford the four editions published by Broude Brothers and Alliance at \$1.70, but it is unlikely they can afford Hildegard and ClarNan publications at \$17.50.

## Overview of Music Revised for Women's Chorus

All of the pieces above are modernized versions of the original printings. Robert Kendrick's scholarship contributes a tremendous amount of information about nuns and convents in the Lombardy region of Italy. In his book, *Celestial Sirens*, he writes about the disconnect between the music the nuns published and the performing forces at the convents. Through study of multiple primary sources, he gives an overview on how the music was performed by choirs of varied sizes and specifically suggests how to treat the tenor and bass parts in the music. Kendrick gives recommendations for *Stile antico polyphony* and *Stile moderno* works for larger and smaller convents. The most frequent recommendations are to transpose up an interval that works for the singers. Then, transpose the bass line up an octave and double with a melodic instrument at the original pitch. In the case of smaller houses, use the melodic instrument to replace the bass line.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Robert Kendrick, "Ad usum Sanctimonialium," in Celestial Sirens: Nuns and Their Music in Early Modern Milan (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 177-208.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Ibid, pp 203.

Early music specialist Candace Smith applied Kendrick's suggestions and created revised versions of the music of Cozzolani, Perucona, Meda, and Cesis for her women's ensemble, Capella Artemisia, and its publishing house. Smith's forty editions, many of which are for double choir, include motets, dialogues, and a mass in *stile moderno*. The editions, like those above, combine part books, modernize notation, and realize the figured bass. However, Smith goes one step further. Most often, she transposed the entire piece up a third and the bass up an octave. In other words, the music is transformed into a range suitable for women's voices, and the score is written for SSAA instead of SATB. These are the modern editions that recreate how the music was likely performed.

Boosey and Hawkes published one revised performing edition that is affordable. Kristina Caswell MacMullen revised Cozzolani's three-voice motet "Alma regina caelorum." In it, she transforms a motet from ATB to SSA and realizes the figured bass. At \$2.25, this is the only piece that is an affordable performing edition with revisions for women's chorus.

It is imperative that contemporary women's choruses are exposed to diverse genres and sing the music written specifically for women's voices. According to a number of contemporary scholars, the lack of diverse, historically based literature helps to create the impression that women's choruses are second place to a mixed ensemble. Dee Gauthier shows that 90% of women prefer to sing in mixed ensembles because of a wider variety of music and a more challenging experience. Additionally, Lycan addresses music specifically written for women's voices:

<sup>20</sup> Gauthier, 42-47.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Candace Smith, "Artemisia Editions,", accessed May 7, 2015, http://www.artemisiaeditions.com/.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Dee Gauthier, "I'm Only in Women's Chorus: A Need for Positive Image Building," *Choral Journal* (August 2005): 42-47. Mary Lycan, "Repertoire for Women's Choirs," *Choral Journal* (April 2000): 33-38; and Patricia O'Toole, "A Missing Chapter from Choral Methods Books: How Choirs Neglect Girls," *Choral Journal* (December 1998): 9-32.

This music is written with a deep familiarity with how women's voices function; it has good alto parts. The best of it is so technically intelligent, beautiful, and compelling that teaching and conducting it provides a complete, satisfying musical experience for everyone involved.<sup>21</sup>

An expansion of the depth and breadth of women's choral repertoire will help in changing this perception as well as give the singer a challenging, rewarding musical experience. This study aims to expand the available historically based literature written specifically for women's voices at an affordable price.

<sup>21</sup> Lycan, 33-38.

#### **CHAPTER 2**

## Overview of Seventeenth-Century Convents

Patrician women in early modern Italy had two options in life: they could marry or become a nun—taking vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, and living a cloistered life within convent walls. They had very little agency and often did not get to choose the profession they entered. Young women were under the rule of a familial male (father, grandfather, uncle, or brother) and when they were of age, were given to another man for marriage or sent to the convent for safekeeping. Dowries were expensive and, if a merchant family had multiple daughters, the father typically chose one daughter to marry off while the others were sent to a monastery since spiritual dowries were a fraction of the cost of marriage dowries.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, if the daughter had musical talent and secured the position as organist at a convent, she could save her parents thousands of lire.<sup>23</sup> Some families chose to pay for music lessons if their daughter showed musical aptitude, with the hope that she might be taken into a convent at a reduced spiritual dowry. 24 Not surprisingly, many seventeenth-century women became nuns. Indeed, nearly fourteen percent of the female population of Bologna resided in convents in 1631, while in Milan, an estimated seventy-five percent of noble and upper class women took vows between 1600 and 1650.<sup>25</sup>

The convents served religious, social, and political purposes, providing safety for women of the patriciate. Each convent often housed multiple women from the same

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Spiritual dowries were around 4000 lire while marriage dowries could amount to 20,000 lire. See Robert Kendrick, "Genres, Generations and Gender: Nuns' Music in Early Modern Milan, C. 1550-1706" (PhD diss., New York University, 1993), 818. <sup>23</sup> Craig A Monson, *Disembodies Voices: Music and Culture in an Early Modern Italian Convent* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 2.

Robert L. Kendrick, Celestial Sirens: Nuns and Their Music in Early Modern Milan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 72.
 Statistics from Monson, Disembodies Voices, 6; and Robert Kendrick, "The Traditions of Milanese Convent Music and the Sacred Dialogues of Chiara Margarita Cozzolani," in The Crannied Wall: Women, Religion, and the Arts in Early Modern Europe, ed. Craig A. Monson (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992), 212

household, sometimes holding three generations under its roof. Before the Council of Trent, 'open' monasteries and lay communities existed alongside cloistered sisters. The women in these monasteries were close to their families, who in turn provided patronage to the convents. The nuns were viewed as mystics and intercessors for the surrounding community, which gave them political power. <sup>26</sup> They supported themselves and the local economy by providing goods and services such as weaving, spinning, cooking, and cloth processing. Other nuns were teachers and provided an education for young women in the community. Many times these students, or *educande*, would be the nun's younger siblings, cousins, or nieces. Additionally, nuns sang and played music at mass and offices everyday. These female musicians were renowned, and people would travel long distances to hear their music. The patriciate took pride in the nuns' music-making and financially supported them by purchasing instruments and paying for lessons. These women were very much part of the cultural, social, and economic fabric of their city.

## The Council of Trent and Its Effect

A reshaping of the Catholic Church and the convents occurred after 1563. The Council of Trent (1545 - 1563) was, in reality, a series of ecumenical councils addressing the issues raised during the Reformation and subsequent rise of Protestantism. The Council's aim was to repair the Catholic Church's practices in order to reestablish power after the massive flight of Protestant converts. One way to secure power was to take it back from the lay people. Convents depended on the patriciate for donations and political

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Kendrick, Celestial Sirens, 3

power, while the patriciate depended on the convents for spiritual intercession and their daughters' careers. Severing those ties meant more power for the Church.<sup>27</sup>

The Council demanded that all convents submit to *clausura*<sup>28</sup> and those already cloistered, were subject to stricter enforcement. Robert Kendrick outlines this in detail:

The Milanese curial records from the late 1560's on contain orders for the walling up of gates, parlors and double churches; restricting the access of laity, even nuns' families, and clergy to monasteries; specifying the conditions for providing food and other supplies through the *ruota*, a revolving wheel at the monastery's gate; regulating confessors' visits (and providing appropriately elderly priests for this function); and forbidding nuns from leaving the institution except under conditions of fire or war— in a word, the imposition of unprecedentedly strict *clausura* on institutions which had largely not observed enclosure, in some cases for centuries. Internally, the orders mandated the rotating election of abbesses (an attempt to limit family control over houses); limited nuns' personal property (including chickens and dogs); and provided protectors who would be loyal to the archbishop, not to the families accustomed to controlling female monasteries.... Access by anyone, male or female, without a *licenza*, was forbidden; visits in the parlors were restricted; walls at the gate and in the church were ordered raised and sealed, and duties inside the walls toughened.<sup>29</sup>

Thick walls surrounded gardens, cells, a kitchen, and hospital facilities. The only access to the surrounding community was the *parlatorio*, a room reserved for visits between the nuns and the community, and the *chiesa*, the church where the nuns and community worshipped. After the *clausura*, nuns' connection to the outside world was highly dependent on the local archbishop's reading of the Council's edict. For example, Archbishop Carlo Borromeo had grills placed in the *parlatorio* at S Radegonda after the edict, creating a large space for outside guests and a small space for the nuns with grills between them.<sup>30</sup> Depending on the attitude of the archbishop, musicians could receive lessons through the grill while at other times this practice was forbidden.<sup>31</sup> The *chiesa* was a double church constructed with two rooms divided by a wall and an iron grill to

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> P. Renee Baernstein, A Convent Tale: a Century of Sisterhood in Spanish Milan (New York: Routledge, 2002), 9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Clausura is the Italian word for "enclosure" meaning both the obligatory physical walling-off of female monasteries after 1566 and the legal status of nuns shut off from the external world.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Kendrick, "Genres, Generations and Gender: Nuns' Music in Early Modern Milan, C. 1550-1706," 130-34.

<sup>30</sup> Kendrick, Celestial Sirens, 48.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> There are hundreds of decrees made by archbishops to this effect. See Monson Disembodied Voices and The Crannied Wall.

obscure the faces of the women behind it. The lay people attended Mass in the outer church, while the inner church was reserved for the nuns. The iron grill was placed high and near the altar so that when the priest raised the host, both the nuns and the community could see it. Conversely, the nuns' music could be heard through the grate, but they could not seen. Both the *parlatorio* and *chiesa* were the last places in which the nuns could communicate with the wider community and both were monitored and obstructed by iron grills. Music was one way nuns could still communicate with the community, and they did.

For the convents that made music, the local archbishop was given oversight of the music making practices of the nuns. He also had the *Sacra Congregazione de' Vescovi e Regolari* on his side. The SCVR was a post-Tridentine jurisdictional body founded in 1601, with ultimate authority over all monks and nuns in the Catholic world. Prior to the Council of Trent, nuns, their abbess, and their patrons managed everyday life as well as music and liturgy. They were regulated and disciplined by the regulars, <sup>32</sup> who were often family members. After the Council of Trent, the archbishop was given enormous power over what went on within the walls of the convent. The archbishop could interpret the Tridentine edict according to his own thoughts and biases. He then had the backing of the SCVR against the regulars and the patriciate. In northern Italy, two disparate accounts of this authority played out. In Milan, Federigo Borromeo, cousin to Carlo Borromeo, believed in the mystic nature of women's voices and supported polyphonic music-making by the nuns, while in Bologna, Gabriele Paleotti was more conservative and worked to enforce stricter rules of convent music.<sup>33</sup> Thus during certain periods, creation of music

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> A regular is a monk who follows a given rule.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> See Monson, *Disembodied Voices* and Kendrick, *Celesial Sirens*.

might flourish in one city, while in another it was scant. In a very short time, women who were accustomed to a certain lifestyle within the convent found themselves cut-off from the world and told what they could or could not sing.

The current could change with each archbishop. From 1652, Archbishop Alfonso Litta was on a quest to end polyphonic music making at S Radegonda. He believed that the "Cassinese were hotbeds of immorality" stating this after a choir nun, Maria Francesca Palomera, broke *clausura* with two noble admirers and did not return until the next day. In 1663, Litta obtained temporary punishments from the SCVR including suspension of the performance of polyphony. This suspension was lifted and reinstated multiple times between 1663 and 1665. The nuns appealed for the lifting of the ban to their Cassinese superior, who granted it. Litta found out and went back to the SCVR for another ban. He circumvented the Cassinese altogether and punished the nuns himself. On Feburary 23 or 24, 1665, S Radegonda nuns sang a Mass and Vespers for the visiting (Protestant) Duke and Duchess of Brunswick. Litta was enraged and had the abbess removed. After the nuns' direct refusal of Roman authority, he successfully banned polyphony between 1665 and 1673. 35

Even as the church tried to control, and sometimes prevent, music in the convents, the women religious and their families prevailed. Twelve known nun composers published over thirty collections of music; a number of male composers dedicated works to specific nuns or choirs of nuns; travelers' reports describe the singers and music; and correspondence between archbishops and the SCVR about the music at different houses enlightens contemporary historians about the importance the nuns' music played in their

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> Kendrick, "Genres, Generations and Gender: Nuns' Music in Early Modern Milan, C. 1550-1706," 186.

<sup>35</sup> For the full account see Kendrick, "Genres, Generations and Gender: Nuns' Music in Early Modern Milan, C. 1550-1706," 185-198.

communities. Indeed, these accounts come from all major, and some minor, urban centers: Turin, Monferrato, Asti, Vercelli, Novara, Milan, Bergamo, Brescia, Verona, Vicenza, Padua, Venice, Genoa, Piacenza, Parma, Reggio, Emilia, Modena, Ferrara, Bologna, Florence, Siena, Lucca, Rome, Macerata, Naples, and Foggia. 36

## Occasions for the Music

Music written and sung by women religious was performed for several occasions: the daily mass and Divine Office, Feast Days, and visiting dignitaries. The choir nuns attended mass and the Divine Office or the Liturgy of the Hours throughout the day, everyday. The mass is a rite of Holy Communion in which much of the service is sung, including the Ordinary texts (Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, and Agnus Dei) and Proper texts (Gradual, Offertory, Communion, etc). The Liturgy of the Hours is a set of psalms, hymns, readings, and other prayers said or sung by the nuns at prescribed intervals throughout the day. These intervals are approximately every three hours. Matins is said at midnight, Lauds at dawn, Prime in the early morning, Terce at mid-morning, Sext at noon, None at mid-afternoon, Vespers in the evening, and Compline before bed.

The most extravagant music occurred on Feast Days. Travelers would come from all over Europe to hear the angelic voices at S Radegonda, where the nuns sang polyphonic music as well as the new popular style of operatic monody. They may even have requested a *licenza* and employed outside musicians to add to the festivities. The women were trained like any other church musician. However, in the cathedral choirs of men and boys, the boys had only a few years of singing practice before their voices changed. The nuns could practice much longer and master more difficult music. Craig

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> Kendrick, Celestial Sirens, 9.

Monson points out that the nuns in the convents were singing music in the style of the time from behind a grate. You could hear them, but not see them. This made them seem ethereal, adding to the allure of the women. He calls this phenomenon the "disembodied voice."

## Style Summations and Biographies

Music existed in multiple forms and genres in seventeenth-century Italy. The long phrased, point of imitation *stile antico* polyphony in the style of Palestrina and Lassus existed alongside the short phrased, homophonic polychoral motets in the mode of Gabrieli. Victoria and other composers wrote music that contrasted sections of polyphony in *alla breve* with homophonic sections of triple meter. Sacred music was performed unaccompanied or with instruments doubling *colla parte*. Monteverdi created music that used both stile antico devices like chant, cantus firmus, and polyphony and new ideas of harmony and dissonance employed to paint the text, use of solo or duet voices, and independent instrumental writing. Peri, Caccini, and Monteverdi created the first operas that used solo voices and accompanying instruments, in recitative and arias, to enact a story. By and large, composers were interested in contrast and how best to create affect through the music. Two major developments of this era were the development of the basso continuo and writing for independent instruments.

All the musical trends of the seventeenth century are present in the music of the nuns. It is tempting to believe that once a nun professed her vows and entered the convent, all communication with the outside world ended. This is simply not true. The

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> Monson, The Crannied Wall, 191-209.

following biographies and style summations place four of the nun composers within a historical and musical context.

## Chiara Margarita Cozzolani

The nuns of Santa Radegonda of Milan are gifted with such rare and exquisite talents in music that they are acknowledged to be the best singers of Italy. They wear the Cassinese habits of [the order of] St. Benedict, but (under their black garb) they seem to any listener to be white and melodious swans, who fill hearts with wonder, and enrapture tongues in their praise. Among these sisters, Donna Chiara Margarita Cozzolani merits the highest praise, Chiara [literally, 'clear', Cozzolani's religious name] in name but even more so in merit, and Margarita [literally, 'a pearl'] for her unusual and excellent nobility of [musical] invention...

-Filippo Picinelli's (1670)<sup>38</sup>

In 1620, a young patrician woman by the name of Chiara Margarita Cozzolani professed her vows and became a choir nun at the Convent of Santa Radegonda in Milan, Italy. Her life was typical of many nuns during this time. The youngest daughter of a wealthy merchant family, she joined a convent that housed three generations of women from her family. She was renowned as a singer before she took her vows, yet she was not among the most famous in the convent. She may have learned compositional techniques from her neighbor, *viola bastarda* player and composer Riccardo Rognoni, or from his sons Francesco or Giovanni Domenico. During her career, she served two terms as abbess and became prioress in the 1660s. She composed music for the preeminent choirs of S Radegonda, and, between 1640 and 1650, four volumes of her motets, dialogues, and psalm settings were printed in Italy and circulated throughout Italy, Germany, France, and England. Her first publication from 1640 is now lost as well as the continuo part to the 1648 solo motets. What remains are printed part books of her 1642 and 1650 publications. Within those publications are forty works that include settings of psalms,

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> Ateneo dei letterati milanesi (Milan, 1670).

antiphons, motets, two Magnificats, a Mass, and eight dialogues. A number of the pieces from the 1650 book are scored for double choir, a testament to the number of singers at S Radegonda, which had two choirs of approximately sixteen singers each. Furthermore, each choir had string and continuo players to accompany them.<sup>39</sup> S Radegonda was acclaimed as an elite musical institution in Milan and housed the most famous musicians in the city. One account from a visit by Florence's Grand Duke Cosimo de Medici III in 1664 described the convent.

In this convent of more than a hundred nuns, music is cultivated as a profession, and there are fifty nuns counting singers and instruments of utter perfection, divided into two ensembles, with two *madri di cappella*, who seek daily to make themselves more skilled, not conceding to each other. The first group of Signora Ceva sang a motet for full choir, the second, that of Signora Clerici (for these are the *maestre*) sang solo so well as to amaze everyone. <sup>40</sup>

Cozzolani's motets from the 1642 volume are characterized by affective texts, use of sequences to extend music length, use of parallel thirds, virtuosic vocal lines, contrasting tempo and meter shifts, and text painting. The harmony is mostly straightforward with occasional use of unorthodox harmonic inflections to paint the text. Using the same devices, the 1650 book extends the style of the 1642 volume. The large-scale Vespers contrasts polychoral antiphony with concertato solo and duet writing for the verses.

#### Isabella Leonarda

All the works of this illustrious and incomparable Isabella Leonarda are so beautiful, so gracious, and at the same time so learned and wise that my great regret is not having all of them. – Sebastian de Brossard (1724)<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> Kendrick, Celestial Sirens, 205.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> Filizio Pizzichi, "REALAZIONE Del Viaggio fatto del Ser[enissi}mo Prin{ci}pe Cosimo di Toscana in Lombardia," Archivo di Stato, Florence, Mediceo Principato, filza 6382, fol. 54r. Quotes in Kendrick, "Traditions of Milanese Convent Music," 215.

<sup>41</sup> From Convent to Concert Hall, page 62.

Anna Isabella Leonarda (1620 -1704) was the most prolific nun composer of the seventeenth century. She joined the Ursuline monastery of Collegio di S Orsola in Novara in 1636. She was from a prominent Novarese family known for financially supporting the Collegio. During her career she held a variety of posts including *magistra musicae* (music teacher). She most likely studied organ with novice-mistress Elisabeth Casata and was probably a violinist given her frequent use of this instrument in her works. She may have studied composition with Gasparo Casati, *maestro di cappella* at the cathedral and possible relation to Casata, since he included two of Leonarda's sacred dialogues in his 1640 publication *Terzo libro di sacri concerti*. Out of the twenty volumes she published between 1640 and 1700, all but four survive. Her approximately 200 works include psalm settings, antiphons, motets, dialogues, four masses, three Magnificats, and a book of instrumental works, the first known sonatas written by a woman.

Leonarda's music is firmly rooted in the *stile moderno* with use of basso continuo and concertato principles. The concerted masses and psalm settings alternate full choral forces with solo passages and instrumental ritornellos. Her sacred non-liturgical works for four voices are conservative with pervasive imitative writing, while pieces for one to three voices are more modern and resemble chamber cantatas in form, using ritornellos and solo passages. Her solo works are the most harmonically adventurous and include word painting and bits of coloratura, especially in the final "Alleluia" sections.

#### Bianca Maria Meda

In contrast to the two composers above, little is known about Bianca Maria Meda (ca. 1665 – after 1700), a Benedictine nun at S Martino del Leano in Pavia, a town south

of Milan. Her only known work is a motet collection from 1691, *Mottetti a 1, 2, 3, e 4 voci, con violini*. The volume contains twelve pieces: two solos with paired obbligato violins, two duets, four trios, and four quartets. All pieces call for organ and continuo.

Meda's motets include florid solo writing, recitative, instrumental ritornellos, contrasting duple and triple meters, and contrasting textures of solo or paired voices with full choir. A sister in her convent probably wrote the texts for Meda's motets. They use first-person feminine pronouns and are an example of *imitatio Christi* – the desire to suffer as a way of demonstrating passion for, and devotion to, Christ – a common trope in the contemporary writings of nuns. <sup>42</sup> Some texts directly address Jesus as Spouse, another common occurrence in music written by nuns, the Brides of Christ.

## Sulpitia Cesis

Sulpitia Lodovica Cesis (1577 – after 1619) was a nun at the Augustinian convent of S Geminiano in Modena, Italy. Little is known about her life except that she was a singer and composer. She was mentioned in a traveler's account from 1596: "The nuns there are versed in all sorts of musical instruments...[including] Sister Sulpitia, daughter of the most illustrious Signor Count Cesis, who played the lute excellently... they performed a motet of hers which was highly praised." One volume of her music, *Motteti spirituali*, was published in 1619 and includes twenty-three motets: two for two voices, two for four voices, one for five voices, three for six voices, fourteen for eight voices, and one for twelve voices. In the eight part books, there is no indication of an organ part. 44

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> Candace Smith and Bruce Dickey, Two motets for four voices by Bianca Maria Meda. (Artemisia Editions; Bologna, 2002).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> Candace Smith, "Sulpitia Cesis (1577 – after 1619)." In *Women Composers: Music through the Ages*, vol. 1, edited by Martha Furman Schleifer and Sylvia Glickman (New York: G.K. Hall, 1996-2006), 163.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> This is indicative of the transitional time in choral music. Most likely the organist played *colla parte* as research has indicated in the contemporary works of composers like Gabrieli.

Two of the motets include specific instruments, strings and trombone, the latter being a "forbidden" instrument in monasteries. The church fathers continually attempted to regulate and restrict instruments other than the organ and bass viol, but this is a prime example of how the restrictions were not always adhered to. This indication may be a glimpse into how her music was performed, using trombone to double or replace the bass part in performance.

Cesis's compositional style encompasses *stile antico* polyphony and polychoral writing similar to Venetian composer, Giovanni Gabrieli. Her motets are examples of the early concertato principle, using polyphony in contrast with sections of homophony or using *tripla* sections to contrast with *alla breve*. The eight-voice motets are for equal-voiced double choir and use the same early concertato principle. Often a short, homophonic phrase is passed back and forth between the choirs. The music is generally set syllabically, with fairly simple harmonies. Occasionally, she uses harmonic inflections to paint the text.

#### Raffaella Aleotti

Raffaella Aleotti (c.1570 – after 1646) was a nun, organist, and musical director of the "concerto grande" at the Augustinian convent of S Vito in Ferrara. Her family included five musically talented girls of which she was the eldest. Her father, Ferrarese court architect Giovanni Battista Aleotti, hired Alessandro Milleville and Ercole Pasquini as private music tutors for her because she aspired to be a nun. There is another composer by the name of Vittoria Aleotti who composed a book of madrigals. There is some speculation that Vittoria and Raffaella were the same person. A number of scholars

believe that Vittoria simply changed her name to Raffaella when she took the veil. Other scholars contend that Vittoria was the younger sister of Raffaella, and they both wrote and published music: Vittoria composed madrigals and Raffaella wrote motets. In any case, Raffaella's *Sacrae Cantiones* includes eighteen motets, thirteen for five voices, two each for seven and eight voices, and one for ten voices was published by Amandino in 1593. Her tutor, the organist Ercole Pasquini, composed one of the five-voice motets and the final ten-voice piece.

Aleotti's compositional style is consistent with her contemporaries, encompassing *stile antico* polyphony in the five-voice motets and polychoral techniques in the sevenand eight-voice motets. Generally, the motets are fluid and expressive with clear text declamation. The harmonies are innovative, often containing multiple tonal centers. Some motets use shifting meters; contrasting linearly conceived textures with homophonic blocks of sound.

In sum, the women religious of the seventeenth-century came from wealthy families whose prestige was linked to music of the monasteries. Family members circumvented the walls and gave gifts of printed music and access to music teachers. The nun composers wrote in the early Baroque traditions similar to their male counterparts, and their singing was an important piece of the social and political fabric of their communities.

#### **CHAPTER 3**

### The Tenor and Bass Conundrum

There are roughly two hundred and fifty extant pieces written by seventeenth-century Italian nun composers that include tenor and/or bass parts. This is true across all styles and genres. Each nun used a variety of voicings and textures, including, but not limited to: two-voice compositions for ST or SB; three-voice pieces for SSB, SAT, or ATB; four-voice pieces for SATB, SSAT, SSAB, or SSBB; five voice pieces for SSATB, SATTB, or SSSTT; and double choir pieces for SATB/SATB, SAT/SATB, SSAT/SSAT, SSAB/SSAB, and SSAATB/SSAATB. The nuns published music with tenor and bass parts with an eye to the marketplace, but how did the women inside the convent perform this music?

The music for the women's choruses of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century

Venetian Ospedali presents this same conundrum and has received the most attention.

Multiple scholars and performers have addressed the "problem" of tenor and bass parts in
the music written for these women's choruses. In his article "Tenors and Basses of the

Venetian 'Ospedali,'" Vivaldi scholar Michael Talbot enumerates four theories as to how
the tenor and bass parts of this repertoire were sung: The Hidden Men, Seen But Not

Heard, Sung at Pitch, and Octave Transposition. 45 While scholars apply these theories to
eighteenth-century music in Venice, the same issue is found in early seventeenth-century
music, and these theories are therefore of interest to the present discussion. Robert

Kendrick addresses the issue with regard to this seventeenth-century repertoire in

45 Michael Talbot, "Tenors and Basses at the Venetian 'Ospedali,'" Acta Musicologica 66, no. 2 (July - December, 1994): 123-38.

*Celestial Sirens*. He too enumerates the above theories and supplements them with two more: Instrumental Substitution and Whole Score Transposition.

The Hidden Men theory holds that men hid behind the screens in the church and sang the tenor and bass parts. The Seen But Not Heard theory suggests that the bass parts were written but not sung. Sung at Pitch simply posits that the women sang the tenor and bass parts as written. The Octave Transposition theory suggests that either the bass or the tenor and bass parts were sung up the octave. The Instrumental Substitution theory asserts that instruments played the lines not accessible to women's voices. The Whole Score Transposition theory suggests that all parts were transposed upwards so that all parts could be sung.

The first two theories can be swiftly eliminated. The Hidden Men theory is highly unlikely in a seventeenth-century convent. After the Council of Trent, the nuns were forced into a cloistered existence. Additionally, the nun's music was very much a part of public life. Many travelers as well as members of the local community came to hear them sing. There are no documents of any men performing this music nor any scandal regarding men behind the wall.<sup>46</sup>

The Seen But Not Heard theory is easily debunked given the music that was written for the tenor and bass parts. For example, in Cozzolani's *Dixit Dominus* (1650), the bass solo is the only voice singing the required liturgical text, which would preclude its omission.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Kendrick, Celestial Sirens, 190

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> Kendrick, Celestial Sirens, 189

Figure 1. Cozzolani, Dixit Dominus, mm. 28-34



The Sung At Pitch theory suggests that the women sang the tenor and bass parts as written. How low can women sing? A sample of women's voice ranges provided by Richard Vendome in 2009 reveals that only two percent can sing a G2, which would allow them to navigate most bass parts. He also asserts that twenty percent of women can sing tenor. This is similar to Alexander Ellis's late nineteenth-century survey of women's voices, which found that the lower voices could sing down only as far as C3 or B2. And there is contemporary evidence of nuns singing in the tenor range. In 1724, amateur musician Jan Alensoon wrote in his diary about a nun at Santa Radegonda:

Shortly after dinner I went ... to listen to the famous Signora Quinzana sing: she sang three or four cantatas, and accompanied herself at the harpsichord ... I was amazed when I heard that her voice could reach the highest a of the harpsichord, and descend to the second d below, two and a half octaves altogether; she sang a nice canto, alto, and tenor.  $^{50}$ 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> Richard Vendome, "Women Tenors and Basses – a Brief Introduction," Vivaldi's Women: Schola Pietatis Antonio Vivaldi, 2009, accessed November 1, 2013, http://www.spav.co.uk/SPAVwomentb.html.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> Alexander J. and Mendel, Arthur. Ellis, Studies in the History of Musical Pitch, Monographs by Alexander J. Ellis and Arthur Mendel (1948; 1955). W/ Errata Sheet. (Amsterdam: Frits Knuf, 1968).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> As Kendrick quotes in, *Celestial Sirens*, 192.

It is important to point out that this repertoire used Lombard pitch (*Corista di Lombardia*), which sounds a half step higher than our modern pitch of A 440. <sup>51</sup>

Performances of the music of Lombard nuns should be pitched up a semitone.

Unfortunately, this does not put the bass parts within reach of female voices. The bass ranges of most pieces are C2 to E4. Making adjustments with Lombard pitch, bass range would be C#2 to F4, still beyond the range of the vast majority of women.

Indeed, there are low women's voices, but few, if any, can handle the range of written bass parts, even adjusted for Lombard pitch. A look at Cozzolani's motet *Quid*, *miseri*, *quid faciamus*, shows that a woman could certainly sing the tenor F<sup>#</sup>3 but not the bass D2.

The last three theories are more compelling than the first three. The Octave Transposition theory maintains that the soprano and alto parts were sung as written and the tenor and bass parts were sung an octave higher. Joan Whittemore shows how composers of the Ospedali arranged their SSAA works for SATB and SATB works for SSAA. She asserts that current scholars can follow these composers' methods and transpose both tenor and bass parts up an octave. In this configuration, the tenor becomes the soprano 1, the soprano becomes soprano 2, the alto stays the same and the bass becomes the alto 2.<sup>52</sup>

Whittemore studied music approximately one hundred years after Cozzolani's music, but the same procedures can apply to the earlier repertoire. Figure 2 below shows the original voicing of a Cozzolani motet, transposed up a semi-tone. Figure 3 transposes the tenor and bass up an octave.

51 Herbert Meyers "Pitch and Transposition," in A Performers Guide to Seventeenth-Century Music, ed. Stewart Carter (New York:

1986), 47-109.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> Herbert Meyers "Pitch and Transposition," in *A Performers Guide to Seventeenth-Century Music*, ed. Stewart Carter (New York Schirmer Books, 1997), 331.

<sup>52</sup> Joan M. Whittemore, Revisions of Music Performed at the Venetian Ospedali in the Eighteenth Century (University of Illinois,

Figure 2. Cozzolani, Quid, miseri, quid faciamus, up a semi-tone



Figure 3. Cozzolani, Quid miseri, quid faciamus, tenor and bass up an octave



With this transposition, all the voices fall within comfortable ranges for contemporary advanced high school, college, or community women's choruses. Also, interesting textures are created between the soprano and tenor voices. The imitation between the voices becomes more prominent than when the tenor is down the octave.

Talbot refutes Whittemore's scholarship, contending that "there never was – nor has been – an established tradition of performing from C clefs in octave-transposition." Perhaps that is true, but there is certainly an established tradition of transposing the F clef up an octave and rearranging music to fit different ensembles. As Kendrick points out, there are numerous directives regarding transposition of the vocal bass from the early seventeenth century. A Vesper setting from 1610 by Romano Micheli, scored for two high voices and vocal bass with continuo, contains the following instructions:

Thus if [the contents] are to be sung a 3, a sweeter harmony will result, if two cantus parts and a bass are combined, or two tenors and a bass, or cantus, tenor, and bass, or else two cantus and alto, for the use of the nuns."

In 1605, G. P. Cima's *Hodie Christus natus est*, for cantus and bass (clefs C1 and F5), directs the performer to raise the bass part up an octave, making it into an alto part.<sup>55</sup>

This practice can be applied to Cozzolani's oeuvre of two- and three-voiced motets scored for SB, AB, SSB, and SAB. If the bass is transposed up the octave the scoring fits well within the ranges of a women's choir. Figure 4 demonstrates the application of this practice.<sup>56</sup> The tessitura remains on the low side for the two alto voices, even when sung at Lombard pitch. This transposition would be difficult for younger voices to project, but it is certainly attainable and even an attractive option for older voices.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>53</sup> Talbot, "Tenors and Basses at the Venetian 'Ospedali," 134.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>54</sup> Romano Micheli, "Ad Lectorem," Psalmi ad Officium Vesperarum (Rome 1610), quoted in Robert Kendrick, *Celestial Sirens*, 193.

<sup>55</sup> Kendrick, Celestial Sirens, 194

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>56</sup> The Tenor and Bass parts are placed in treble clef notations to ease reading.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup> Women's voices become less elastic, flexible, and drop in tessitura around menopause. Community choruses typically have a wide range of ages and skew older than college age.

Figure 4. Cozzolani, Quid miseri, quid faciamus, bass up an octave



The Instrumental Substitution theory proposes that instruments played the tenor and/or bass parts, replacing the voices. There is clear evidence that the lower voices were replaced or doubled by a melodic bass instrument, specifically in smaller convents with fewer voices and-resources like S Radegonda in Milan. For example, in 1600, a small convent, ten miles northeast of Milan in Monza, S Maria Maddalena, filed a petition with the Sacra Congregazione:

Recently the vicar-general of Milan issued an order that some nuns of this diocese could no longer use musical instruments except the organ and the regal. Now, since the nuns of S. Maria Maddalena of Monza in the said diocese find themselves completely without voices that function as basses for their polyphony, they use a violone da gamba for this purpose, having no other choice unless they desist from polyphony altogether. They would like to continue this in order not to deprive themselves of polyphony, and so they have recourse to Your Illustrious Lordships, asking humbly that they deign to concede them this favour, and order the said vicar that, in the light of this need, he allow them to use this instrument. <sup>58</sup>

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>58</sup> Kendrick, Celesial Sirens, 196.

Moreover, some works within this repertoire would not permit the substitution of instruments, as evidenced in Cozzolani's *Dixit Dominus* in figure 1 above. Instrumental Substitutions work well with *stile antico* polyphony where all voices have the text and the instruments replace the low, linear voice, and in instances of *stile moderno* works in which the voices sing homophonically and instruments provide harmonic support. It does not work when the bass voice has independent text or a solo line.

The final theory on how the nuns sang this music is Transposition of the Entire Score. Talbot says there is no tradition of octave transposition of the C clefs, but there is a tradition of transposing C clefs. Composers of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries used the *chiavette* or high clefs: G2, C2, C3, and F3 clefs, written with the intention of transposition down a fourth or a fifth to fit the vocal ranges of the choir.<sup>59</sup> The typical cathedral choir of boys and men would have used this transposition. However, women could sing these clefs at pitch. Cozzolani's music is not written in the chiavette clefs. Her music is written in the chiavi naturali or the "normal" clefs of C1, C3, C4, and F4. In this case, a transposition up a third, fourth, or fifth puts the piece within range of a women's choir. There is precedence for this kind of transposition. G.P. Cima's Partito de' Ricercari of 1606 and Lorenzo Penna's Primi albori musicali of 1672 are both dedicated to nuns. Cima's treatise is on retuning harpsichords to all possible intervals. Penna provides instructions for transposition of continuo lines higher or lower than written. 60 Additionally, Roman composer Pompeo Natali's 1662 Madrigali, e canzoni spirituali e morali includes a continuo line transposed up a fifth or down a fourth

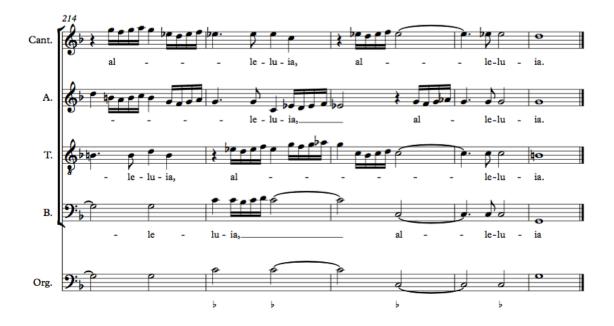
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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup> Meyers, "Pitch and Transposition," 335.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>60</sup> Liner notes in Cappella Artemisia, Canti Nel Chiostro "Musiche nei monasteri femminili del '600 a Bologna," conducted by Candace Smith, Tactus TC600001, CD, 2005. This is also discussed in Kendrick, *Celestial Sirens*, 200-201.

to show how the music can be made accessible for the nuns.<sup>61</sup> Figure 5 shows that Cozzolani's *Quid, miseri, quid faciamus* is accessible by women singers if the entire piece is transposed up a fifth.

Figure 5. Cozzolani, *Quid miseri*, *quid faciamus*, whole score transposition



The low G2 in the last bar is problematic. However, it occurs in only four bars of the piece and is doubled by the organ. According to Richard Vendome's survey, two percent of women can sing a G2.<sup>62</sup> This transposition would be best for a chorus that has a variety of ages and talented low voices. Alternatively, the G2s could be sung an octave higher.

## Fine Tuning Theories

In *Celestial Sirens*, Robert Kendrick coalesces all the primary evidence and gives recommendations on how to perform this music based on those documents. He uses the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>61</sup> Kendrick, Celestial Sirens, 199.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>62</sup> Richard Vendome, "Women Tenors and Basses – a Brief Introduction," Vivaldi's Women: Schola Pietatis Antonio Vivaldi, 2009, accessed November 1, 2013, http://www.spav.co.uk/SPAVwomentb.html.

information from Cima, Natali, and Alensoon referenced above in addition to notes by Milanese composer Ignatio Donati and the petition from S Maria Maddalena. He outlines performance suggestions for *stile antico* and *stile moderno* works for both small and large convents. His recommendations read as follows:

# A. *Stile antico* polyphony

- 1. High-clef pieces a 4 or more
  - a. Larger houses: all parts at notated (Lombard) pitch or up a tone, with or without keyboard
  - b. Smaller houses: voices on top, keyboard reduction or melodic bass instruments for lower parts
- 2. Normally cleffed works a 4-6
  - a. Larger Houses: all parts up a fourth, fifth, or larger interval, with or without organ; melodic bass instruments for lowest voice, or keyboard reduction of lower voices (as above under 1); possibly bass lines up an octave with all other parts at pitch
  - b. Smaller houses: as above under 1, or with bass lines transposed up an octave
- 3. Double-choir works *a* 8
  - a. Both: duplication of the procedures under 1 and 2 above; probably less likely in smaller houses

#### B. Stile moderno works

- 1. High-voice *concertato* pieces
  - a. Larger houses: no problems
  - b. Smaller houses: no problems if enough singers available
- 2. Works for a single low voice with high voices (CB, CCB)
  - a. Both: lower (lowest) voice up an octave
- 3. Small-scale lower-voice pieces (e.g. the ATB motets in Cozzolani's op. 2)
  - a. Both: transposition of all parts up a suitable interval, possibly a fifth or an octave
- 4. Large-scale *concertato* (4-8 voices, including Cozzolani's 1650 Vespers)
  - a. Larger houses: octave transposition of bass lines, with organ; all other parts at pitch
  - b. Smaller houses: less likely<sup>63</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>63</sup> Kendrick, Celestial Sirens, 203.

## Theory Into Practice

Using Kendrick's guidelines above, a few scholars have sought to put his theories into practice. Candace Smith and Bruce Dickey, arranged forty-five pieces for Smith's early music ensemble, Cappella Artemisia. Kathryn Longo's dissertation focuses on the music nuns sang in the Renaissance. She arranged a piece in the *cori spezzati* style and one in the point of imitation polyphonic style. Kristina MacMullen published an arrangement of a motet by Cozzolani. These scholars use four theories above in practice: Instrumental Substitutions, Whole Score Transposition, Octave Transposition of the bass, and Octave Transposition of both the tenor and bass. Finally, some arrangements use a combination of the above.

Using instrumental substitutions, Smith and Dickey transcribed and arranged Sulpitia Cesis' *Motetti Spirituali* (1619) for 2-12 voices in a two-volume set. They published a version for original voicing and one for women's voices. In 2013, Cappella Artemisia, Smith's women's early music ensemble, recorded all twenty-three of the motets. As stated in Chapter Two, every motet includes tenor and bass parts, and no part book for basso continuo exists. This presents the problem of how to perform the tenor and bass parts. Almost every piece on the recording utilizes instruments including a lute, cello, cornets, and trombones to fill in parts. The motet "Ecce ego Ionnes," scored for CATTBB in high clefs, presents the most difficult of problems. The cantus part goes up to an A5 while the bass goes down to a C3. These pitches are challenging, but not impossible, for women to sing. However, the score contains the instruction: "alla quarta bassa" or "down a fourth." This could mean one of two things: the original was sung by women and "alla quarta bassa" was intended for the cathedral choirs of men and boys, or

women followed the "alla quarta bassa" instruction but simply used instruments in place of the low voices. Smith chose to use the original key and substituted brass instruments for the cantus and two bass parts. This follows Kendrick's suggestion under A.1 above and works relatively well. As the recording demonstrates, period instruments work best. Replacing the bass line with a modern-day trombone creates balance issues with an ensemble of women. A better solution might be a bassoon or cello.

For her dissertation, Kathryn Longo arranged Tomás Luis de Victoria's *Ave maris stella* (1581) and used Instrumental Substitution. Longo transcribed the piece keeping the soprano and alto lines intact. She transposed the tenor up an octave so that it could be sung by the second sopranos and assigned the organ to play the bass part, which she says can also be played by harp or bassoon. In two measures the alto part drops to a D3, but in both instances, the bass instrument doubles the alto D3. (See figure 6, mm. 93 and 94) This technique follows Kendrick's suggestion under A.2. However, he says to sing the tenor parts at pitch rather than up an octave.

Figure 6. Victoria, Ave maris stella, organ substitution of bass



Longo also applied Instrumental Substitution to a polychoral piece by Agostino Soderini from his *Sacrae Cantiones* of 1598. Soderini was an organist and composer in Milan. He dedicated *Dic Nobis, Maria* to Francesca Stampa, a nun at S Radegonda. In the arrangement, Longo allocates the women's voices to Choir I and assigns a string quartet to Choir II. She offers the option of a consort of woodwind or brass for Choir II, or it can simply played by an organ or harpsichord. The bass part of Choir I arranged for altos presents a problem in six measures, when it goes below E3. Longo transposed those notes up an octave and used the cello to play the original note so as not to disrupt the chord structure. This partially follows Kendrick's suggestion under A.3 above, although he does not suggest substituting instruments for an entire choir.

Following Kendrick's recommendation B.2 above, Smith uses Octave

Transposition of the bass in Cozzolani's dialogue *Quis audivit unquam tale*. The original is scored for SSB in regular clefs with a range of A5 to C2. When the bass is transposed up the octave for alto voices, the range becomes A5 to C3. The C3 is a problem for a majority of women. However, this note as well as D3, occurs at a cadence point. Smith wrote ossia notes for those women who cannot sing the lowest pitches.

Another option for performance is Whole Score Transposition so that the tenor and bass parts fit within the female vocal range. Kristina MacMullen transposed Cozzolani's motet *Ave regina caelorum* up a minor seventh. The motet is originally scored for ATB in regular clefs with an overall range of B4 to D2. The transposition changes the range to A <sup>b</sup> 5 to F3, just within female voice ranges. Macmullen chooses to manipulate a few of the lowest notes so that the cadence points resolve up instead of down with the continuo instrument filling in the lower octave. For her arrangement, the alto part never drops below A <sup>b</sup> 3. She follows Kendrick's suggestion under B.3 above and Cima's instruction for transposition at every interval.

Kendrick does not mention the possibility of Octave Transposition of the Bass and Tenor. Smith does not use this technique. However, a few scholars of the Ospedali music show that this is possible. As mentioned above, Whittemore was the first scholar to posit this theory with examples she found by fourteen composers who revised their music to fit both male choirs and female choirs. In the forward to his edition of Nicola Porpora *Vespers*, Kurt Sven Markstrom discusses how Porpora and his contemporaries dealt with the tenor and bass parts for music written for the girls at the *Chiesa e Ospedale di Santa Maria dei Poveri Derelitti* (the Ospedaletto) where Porpora worked. Porpora and his

colleagues wrote for the all women's choirs of the *Ospedali* and also for cathedral choirs of men and boys. Their music was adapted from SSAA to SATB or SATB to SSAA to suit whichever choir was performing it. In his SSAA *Laudate Pueri*, for example, Porpora's handwritten notes in the manuscript instruct mixed choirs to transpose one soprano part and one alto part down the octave to become the tenor and bass parts, respectively. Markstrom uses the reverse option to recreate the SSAA voicing from the SATB manuscript of Porpora's Vespers of 1744. He chooses to transpose the tenor to soprano 2 rather than soprano 1 because the transposed notes often lie below the top soprano line. When this technique is used, there are often voice crossings where the soprano 2 sings higher than soprano 1.

These are the clearest examples of Kendrick's recommendations in practice. Simply transposing the score or the bass parts is often not enough to make these pieces accessible for a majority of women's choirs. As Vendome noted, only two percent of women can sing bass. Smith has a singer who sings a strong E3 in Cappella Artemisia, but she cannot sing the C2 indicated in Cozzolani's *Quis audivit unquam tale*. Smith uses multiple combinations of arranging techniques to adapt each piece specifically for her ensemble. She often transposes the entire score up a minor third and transposes the bass up an octave. The notes that fall out of range are typically at cadential points. In those instances, the bass note is transposed up two octaves. Additionally, if the lowest alto has a solo line, Smith typically chooses to set those sections two octaves higher.

This chapter has examined the various ways of treating the repertoire of seventeenth-century nuns to make them accessible for contemporary women's choruses.

These include substituting instruments for voices, transposing the tenor and bass voices

up an octave, transposing the bass voice up an octave, transposing the entire piece up the most comfortable interval, or choosing a combination of any of the above based on the talent of the ensemble. The following chapter will apply all five of these techniques to create six new arrangements from this body of music.

#### **CHAPTER 4**

Out of the roughly two hundred and fifty extant pieces written by seventeenth-century Italian nun composers that include tenor and/or bass parts, only forty pieces have been arranged for women's voices. This document provides six new research-based performance editions from the genre using the recommendations and techniques examined in Chapter Three including: substituting instruments for voices, transposing the bass and/or tenor up an octave, and transposing the entire piece up a comfortable interval. Four pieces are based on the critical editions found in modern scholarly collections and two are taken directly from the original part books. Each piece presents a different obstacle in how to treat the tenor and/or bass parts. This chapter will provide an overview of the original piece, discuss the challenges for the female voice inherent in the piece, and provide my editorial choices for the arrangements. The new editions are provided in the Appendix.

#### **Instrumental Substitution**

Raffaella Aleotti's *Surge, propera amica mea* is a polychoral motet from her 1598 collection *Sacrae cantiones quinque, septem, octo, & decem vocibus decantandae.* <sup>64</sup> The piece, whose text is from Song of Solomon 2:13-14, may be associated with the feasts of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Scored for double choir, SATB/SATB without an organ part, in regular clefs, the range is F2 to D5. The meter is *alla breve* with no tempo indications, and there are no accidentals in the key signature. The first eight measures introduce each voice, one at a time, using long melismatic points of imitation on the word "Surge." After

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>64</sup> The source is the transcription of Aleotti's sacred pieces in Raffaella Aleotti, *Music at the Courts of Italy*, ed. C Ann Carruthers and Thomas Whitney Bridges, vol. 2, *Sacrae Cantiones: Quinque*, *Septem*, *Octo and Decem Vocibus Decantandae* New York: Broude Trust, 2006, 105-112.

the introduction, the piece continues in a typical *cori spezzati* style, with short, homophonic, repeated phrases passed back and forth between the two choirs.

The difficulty for women singing *Surge, propera amica mea* lies mostly with the range of the tenor line in choir 2 and the bass lines in both choirs. The range of the tenor lines is F3 to E4 in choir 1 and D3 to E4 in choir 2. The F3 is more accessible than the D3 for young women. The bass lines lie in the F2 to A3 range, impossible for women to sing. Kendrick suggests raising the piece a fourth, fifth, or larger interval with or without organ; melodic bass instruments for lowest voice, or keyboard reduction of lower voices; and possibly bass lines up an octave with all other parts at pitch. If the piece was raised a fourth, it would send the sopranos into an uncomfortable and unattractive tessitura of E5 to G5 for much of the piece. Kendrick alternatively suggests voices on top with keyboard reduction or melodic bass instrument for lower parts, or with bass lines transposed up an octave. This is the best solution for contemporary women's choirs.

The performance edition of Aleotti's *Surge, propera amica mea* for women's chorus is transformed from SATB/SATB to SSA bassoon/S, violin, viola, cello, and organ. The arrangement retains both soprano parts and the original time and key signatures. In choir 1, the alto part was renamed soprano 2, the tenor part was renamed alto and the clefs were changed from tenor to treble. A bassoon substitutes for the vocal bass. In choir 2, the same approach is taken, but with a suggestion that violin, viola, and cello play the soprano 2, alto, and bass lines. For both bass parts, the line can be sung up an octave with the instrument (bassoon and cello) doubling the original vocal line per Kendrick's recommendation A.3 as seen in Chapter Three. The text for every voice was

<sup>65</sup> Kendrick, Celestial Sirens, 203.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

kept intact in case the conductor chooses to perform the piece as written or chooses SSA/SA with bassoon, violin, cello, and organ; SSA/SSA with bassoon, cello, and organ; or SSAA/SSAA with bassoon, cello, and organ. Only one note was changed for ease of singing: mm. 51, choir 1, the alto 1 D3 was changed to D4. A continuo part was created to give support to the voices and instruments, in accordance with late sixteenth-century practice.

Instrumental substitution of the lower three voices in choir 2 was best for two reasons: the alto line descends to an E3 in mm. 40, 47, and 48 and a D3 in mm. 53-55, and choir 2 is more rhythmically active and melodically disjunct in the opening section and mm. 39-40. A viola was chosen for the tenor-cum-alto 1 line in choir 2 due to the range of the line. A few notes were rewritten to accommodate the voices in case the viola is not used: mm. 14 an F3 was replaced by an A3; mm. 40 an E3 was replaced by an E4; mm. 47-48 the 3 E3s were replaced by E4s; and mm. 53-55 the two D3s were replaced by D4s. This edition makes polychoral music accessible for young women's choruses.

#### Transposing the Bass

Chiara Margarita Cozzolani's *Alma Redemptoris Mater* is a motet from her 1642 volume entitled *Concerti sacri a una, due, tre, et quattro voci con una messa à quattro; opera seconda.*<sup>67</sup> The text is a Marian antiphon and would probably have been sung at the office of Compline. It is scored for soprano, bass, and continuo, in regular clefs with a range of G2 to F5 in the key of F major. The piece contains seven sections delineated by meter, contrasting common time with triple time. No tempo markings are indicated.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>67</sup> The source is the transcription of Cozzolani's motets in Chiara Margarita Cozzolani, *Motets*, ed. Robert L. Kendrick (Madison, Wis.: A-R Editions, 1998), 99-104.

Cozzolani develops each section with sequences and imitative duet textures. The harmonic language is simple until the final section, which becomes highly chromatic.

The performing edition retains the key and time signatures but transposes the bass up an octave following Kendrick's suggestion for stile moderno works written for a single low voice with high voices. 68 Exceptions include mm. 67-68, 77-78, 89 starting on beat two - 91 beat one, where the bass is transposed up two octaves. These choices were based on the brilliance of a young female voice and its ability to project in the upper register. Suggested tempo markings are included in brackets and the figured bass has been realized. An organ or harpsichord should be used as well as a cello and/or bass to complete the continuo consort.

A performance of this motet took place December 1, 2015 at Michigan State University with the Women's Chamber Ensemble. In that performance, the ensemble sang it a half step higher than printed. The women thought it felt better in their voices. Another performance of this motet took place December 18 and 19, 2015 in Lansing, MI, with Sistrum, a community women's chorus. The original key was used and only one octave transposition was used. The original key was optimal for the sopranos and the single octave transposition was best for the altos.

Isabella Leonarda's Laudate Pueri a 3 voci in Arieta is from her 1674 collection Opus 4, Messa, e Salmi, concertati, & à Capella con Istromenti ad libitum. <sup>69</sup> The text is Psalm 113 and is typically performed at Vespers and on feast days. It is scored for two sopranos, a bass, and organ in regular clefs with a range of F2 to G5 in G minor. There are three main sections that include solos, duets, and trios for the three voices. At the end

68 Kendrick, Celestial Sirens, 203.

Concertati, Op. 4, 1674. (Köln: B. Becker, 2004).

41

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>69</sup> The source is from seven part books housed in Zentralbibliothek Zürich, AMG XIII 578, Isabella Leonarda, Messa E Salmi

of each section, Leonarda writes "Laudate da capo se piace" or "[perform] the Laudate from the top if you please" creating an optional refrain. The meter of the refrain is common time and all solos, except the bass and soprano solos at mm. 32-45, are in triple meter. The "Gloria" section completes the piece with sections of textural and tempo contrasts between the two sopranos (Adaggio [sic]) and bass (Allegro) followed by all voices singing the final sixteen measures together.

The performing edition combines the music from the part books into one score, modernizes the notation, and transposes the bass up an octave. The soprano was renamed soprano 1, the altus was renamed soprano 2, and the bass becomes the alto. This adjustment puts the piece in the range of F3 to G5. The figured bass was realized and the "Laudate" section from mm. 18-22 was copied and inserted when the instructions in the music indicate "Laudate da capo se piace." With the addition of the optional refrain the form becomes ABACADAE. There is a discrepancy between time signatures in the part books. At the beginning of the triple meter sections at mm. 10, 23, 51, the canto and altus books indicate a 3/1 meter while the bass and organ books indicate 3/2. All of the part books indicate the 3/1 time signature in the "Gloria" section. The 3/2 time signature was chosen in the former instances and 3/1 in the latter. These decisions were based on the fact that, if the 3/2 sections were intended to be 3/1, there would be an uneven measure at the end of each section. For example, in mm. 23, a 3/2 meter signature creates nine measures. If it were in a 3/1 meter signature, there would be four and a half measures. The 3/1 section at the end could be converted to 3/2, but every part book indicates 3/1 and Leonarda includes tempo indications for contrast between the sections. This arrangement poses no issues of range for female singers. In only three instances does an

F3 sound. In each instance the low note is sung by the entire alto section and doubled at the octave by the continuo consort.

Leonarda's *Lauda Jerusalem* is from her 1698 Opus 19, *Salmi concertati a 4 voci con Stromenti.*<sup>70</sup> She uses the text from Psalm 147 and adds the Gloria Patri text creating eleven verses, nine from the psalm and two from the Gloria. The original is scored for SATB voices, two violins, violone ò tiorba, and organ with a range of G2 to G5 in B major. It could be performed as a soprano solo. Above the first line of music in every part book appear the instructions "Canto solo, if you wish, or together, with instruments *ad libitum*; or intoned by the soprano, and after this all (voices) repeat, with the instruments likewise *ad libitum*." Each of the eleven verses has three musical statements: soprano solo, SATB choir reinforced by two violins, and a sinfonia of violins and continuo. The first three sections are in triple time with a tempo marking of "spedito" or "quick." Each subsequent section contrasts with the preceding section using meter or tempo changes.

The performing edition combines the music from the part books into one score, modernizes the notation, and transposes the bass up an octave. The key and time signatures were retained from the original. The soprano was renamed soprano 1, the alto was renamed soprano 2, the tenor becomes alto 1, and the bass, transposed up an octave, becomes alto 2. The range is E3 to G5. There are five instances where the alto 2 falls below G3: mm. 15, 80, 97, 131, 234. In each instance, except for mm. 97, ossia notes have been inserted for singers who cannot sing the F3. Measure 97 is different because it is a descending scalar passage rather than a note in a homophonic chord. The F3's in mm. 15, 80, 131 and 234 work better than the ossia notes because they create rhythmic

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>70</sup> The source is from eight part books housed in the Zentralbibliothek Zürich, Isabella Leonarda, *Salmi Concertati*, *Op. 19*, *1698*. (Köln: B. Becker, 2004).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>71</sup> "Canto solo se piace, overo a 4 sempre insieme con Stromneti ad libitum, e duoppo esso tutti in replica, con Stromenti parimenti ad libitum."

interest. These notes are doubled by the continuo, therefore the rhythmic interest is not destroyed by repeating the F4. The only anticipated difficulty in performing this arrangement is the fact that the alto 2 part crosses voices fairly often. The doubling of the continuo at the octave should mitigate this problem.

The option of transposing both the tenor and bass was considered and discarded. If the tenor were transposed up an octave becoming soprano 1 or soprano 2, the two soprano parts would cross voices constantly. Another option that works for this piece is to use instrumental substitution by retaining the soprano, alto, and tenor parts and assigning a bass instrument in C to the bass part.

## <u>Transposing the Tenor and Bass</u>

Isabella Leonarda's *Ave Regina Caelorum* is a motet in her Opus 10 from 1684 entitled *Motetti a quattro voci.*<sup>72</sup> The text is the Marian antiphon sung at Compline between February 2 and the Wednesday of Holy week. It is scored for SATB voices and continuo with a range of F2 to F5 in the key of B major. The piece uses a 6/8 dance meter in five sections. Each section is followed by a two-measure homophonic refrain. Three of the sections begin with a duet followed by a tutti repeat. The other two sections are marked by imitative counterpoint.

The arrangement retains the key and meter signatures of the original. The figured bass was realized. The tenor and bass are both transposed up an octave in which the tenor is transformed to soprano 1 and the bass becomes alto 2. The original canto line turns into soprano 2 and the altus becomes alto 1. The range is F3 to F5 with only two instances of

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>72</sup> The source is the edition by Stewart Carter in Isabella Leonarda and Stewart Carter, *Ave Regina caelorum = Hail, queen of the heavens: for SAT soli, mixed chorus (SATB) and continuo.* New York: Broude Brothers, 1980.

F3 in mm. 49 and 59. In each of these instances an optional ossia note was inserted. A number of reasons lead to the choice of transposing the tenor and bass up the octave. First, if only the bass was transposed, both of the alto parts would have constant voice crossing with the alto 2 often above the alto 1. Secondly, the tenor-cum-alto 1 line would fall to a D3 in a number of instances, and it would be harder to hear the points of imitation. Finally, when the tenor is transposed up an octave, it pairs well with the soprano line with very few instances of voice crossing.

## Whole Score Transposition and Instrumental Substitution

Raffaella Aleotti's *Miserere mei Deus* is a five-voice *stile antico* motet from her 1598 collection Sacrae cantiones quinque, septem, octo, & decem vocibus decantandae.<sup>73</sup> The text is from Psalm 57:1-2 and was probably not intended for any specific liturgical event. It is scored for cantus, quintus, altus, tenor, and bassus in pervasive imitation with a range of G2 to E5 in regular clefs. There are no accidentals in the key signature, the meter is *alla breve*, and there are no tempo markings.

This performing edition transposes the entire score and includes instrumental substitution. The piece was raised a minor third to put the top four voices within the range of the female voice of F3 to G5. The bass part is still too low with the range of B  $^{\flat}$  2 to C4. To accommodate this, a bassoon or other bass instrument in C is suggested in place of the bass line. The text is retained on the bassoon line in case the performers wish to sing this line up an octave. Similarly, a cello has replaced the tenor line, but if a four-

Trust, 2006), 57-61.

45

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>73</sup> The source is the transcription of Aleotti's sacred pieces in Raffaella Aleotti, Music at the Courts of Italy, ed. C Ann Carruthers and Thomas Whitney Bridges, vol. 2, Sacrae Cantiones: Quinque, Septem, Octo and Decem Vocibus Decantandae (New York: Broude

part texture is desired, the text is retained. An optional organ part was created to support the voices.

Each of these six pieces pose different problems when attempting to adapt for women's voices. Often, it is easy enough to simply transpose the bass up an octave and adjust a few notes or a solo section. When deciding whether to transpose the tenor and bass in an SATB format, it is important to see how the voices interact. The best option is if the soprano voices are in thirds with few voice crossings. Instrumental substitution is an attractive option as long as the text is sung by the other voices. Transposing an entire score is often helpful to get the lower voices within range, but the soprano line must not go above a G5. There are a variety of choices on how to arrange this music, but the best choice reveals itself through the study of the structure and the range of each piece.

#### **CHAPTER 5**

#### Conclusion

This document explores music written by seventeenth-century Italian nuns and modern performing editions of their music in an effort to understand and apply revision practices to create new performing editions accessible to modern women's choruses. Historical documentation shows that convents were hotbeds of musical activity, housing internationally renowned singers, instrumentalists, and composers. We know of twelve seventeenth-century Italian nun composers who wrote over 300 musical works for convent choirs, 250 of which include parts for tenors and/or basses. Forty of these pieces have been arranged and are available for purchase and performance by modern women's choruses.

The problem of how to treat the tenor and/or bass parts for female singers is the crux of the document. Theories surrounding this problem include the illogical possibility that there were men hidden behind the wall singing with the women; that the music was never intended to be sung by women only; or that women sang the bass parts as written. More logical theories include substituting instruments for the lower voices, transposing both the tenor and bass parts up an octave; transposing only the bass up an octave; transposing the entire score up a comfortable interval; or any combination of the above. Chapter Three examined an example of each of the last four theories put into practice by modern scholars.

I created six new performing editions using researched theories and issues examined by extant performing editions. The source material of four pieces comes from

modern critical editions and two pieces are newly modernized and arranged from the original part book printings. I added or realized continuo parts to support the new editions. Each edition tackles the conundrum of how to treat the tenor and/or bass parts, investigating the best theory to apply based on the piece's style, number of voices, how the voices interact, and range of voices while anticipating the talents and abilities of the intermediate to advanced high school, college, and community women's choirs. I explain each piece and theory applied thoroughly in Chapter Four with the editions posted in the appendix.

An historical genre of music written by and for women is available to modern women's choruses using the techniques discussed in this document. These choirs can experience *stile antico* polyphony and early Baroque *stile moderno* works in authentic performances. Future scholars are encouraged to continue the work of editing and arranging this music to create new repertoire options for intermediate and advanced women's choruses. In doing so, this expansion of the repertoire will help change the perception that women's choruses exist as supplemental ensembles to their mixed chorus counterparts.

**APPENDICES** 

# APPENDIX A

Performance Edition – Instrumental Substitution

Surge, amica mea, speciosa mea, et veni. Columba mea, in foraminibus petrae, in caverna maceriae, ostende mihi faciem tuam, sonet vox tua in auribus meis: vox enim tua dulcis, et facies tua decora. (Song of Solomon 2:13-14)

Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away. My dove, in the clefts of the rock, in the caverns of the clif, show me your face, let your voice sound in my ears; for your voice is sweet and your face comely.

# Surge, propera amica mea





























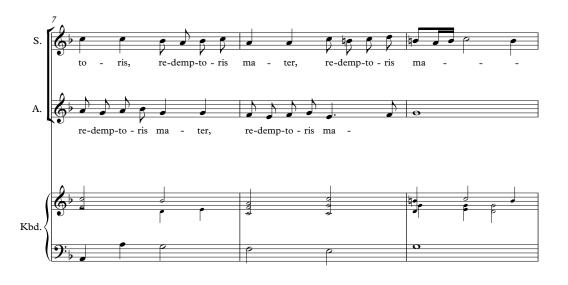
# APPENDIX B

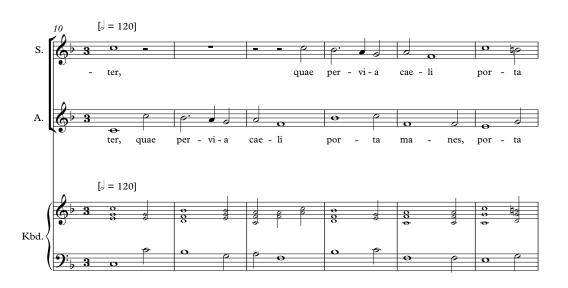
Performance Edition – Transposing the Bass

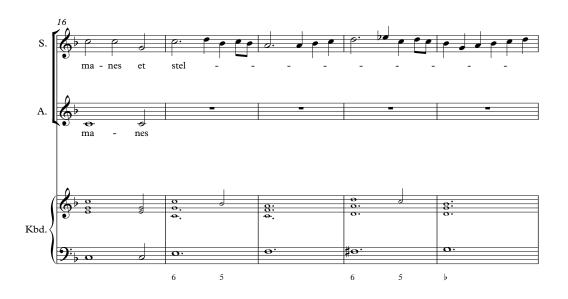
Alma Redemptoris Mater, quæ pervia cæli Porta manes, et stella maris, succurre cadenti, Surgere qui curat, populo: tu quæ genuisti, Natura mirante, tuum sanctum Genitorem Virgo prius ac posterius, Gabrielis ab ore Sumens illud Ave, peccatorum miserere. Mother of Christ! Hear thou thy people's cry, Star of the deep, and portal of the sky! Mother of Him Who thee from nothing made, Sinking we strive and call to thee for aid; Oh, by that joy which Gabriel brought to thee, Thou Virgin first and last, let us thy mercy see.

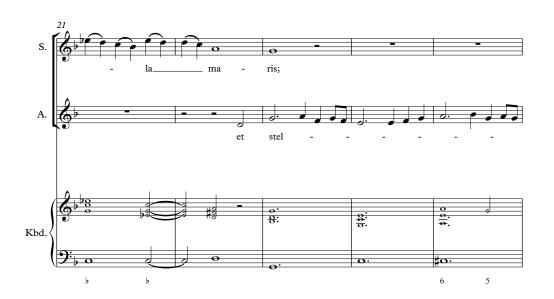
## Alma Redemptoris Mater

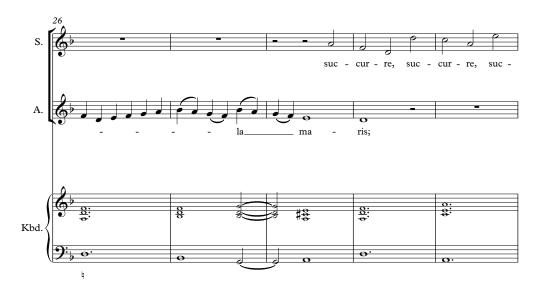


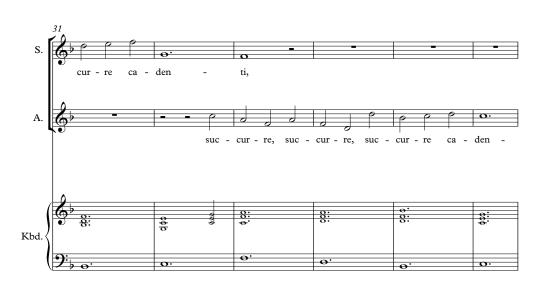


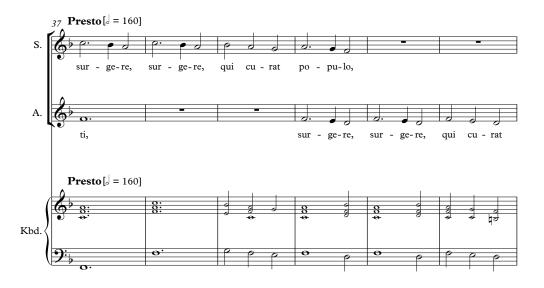


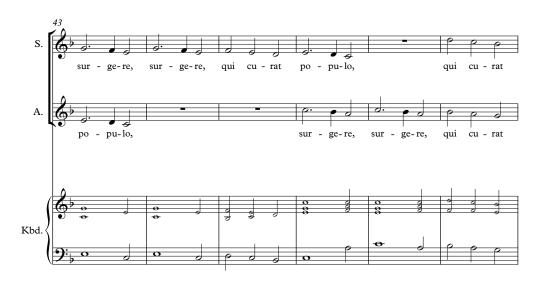


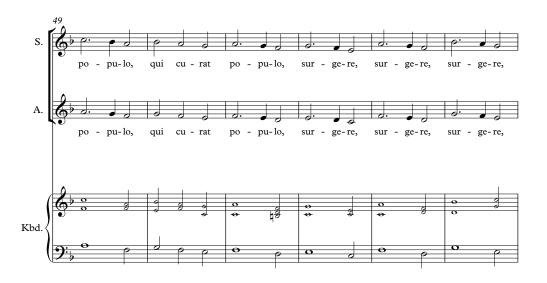


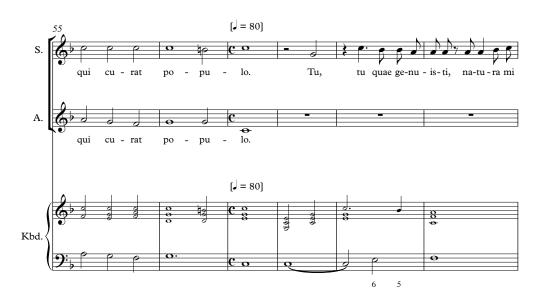


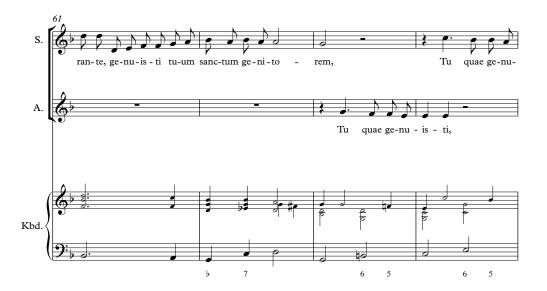


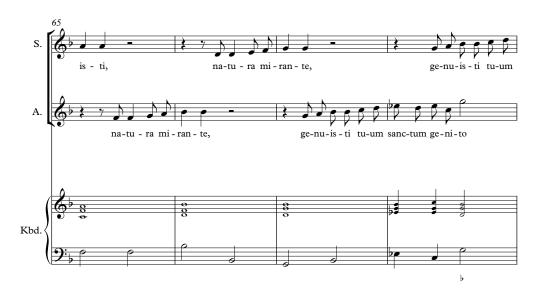


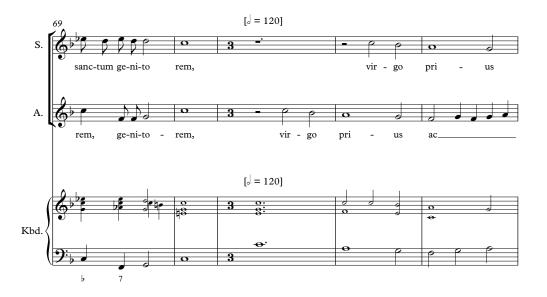


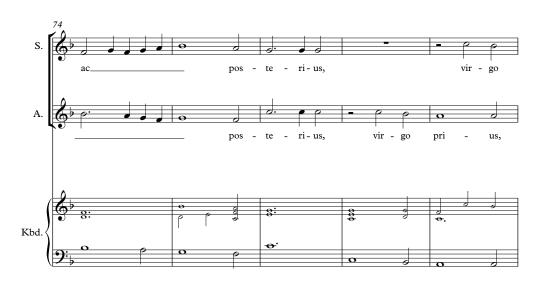


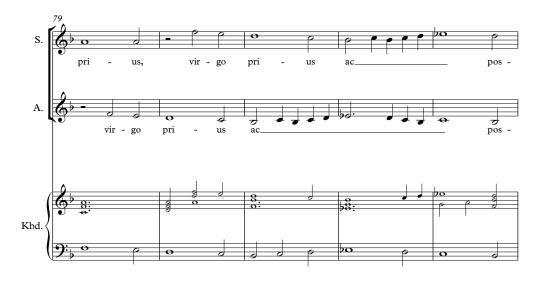


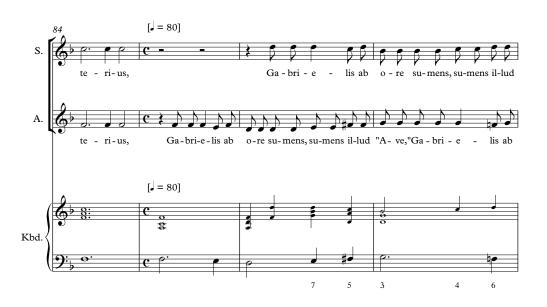


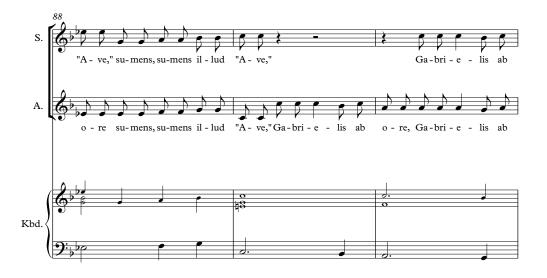






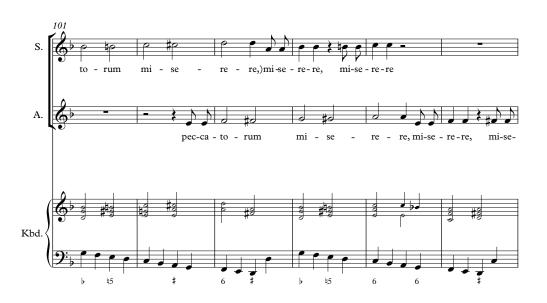


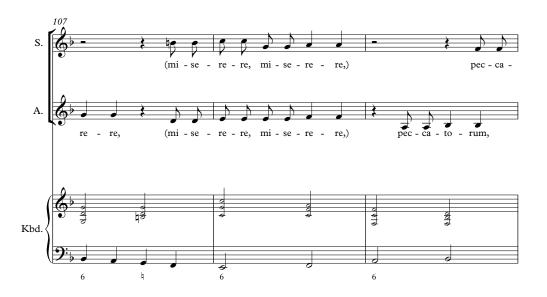


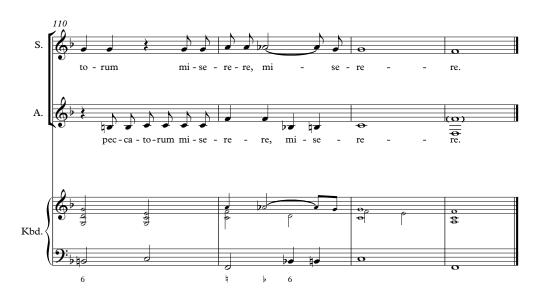












Laudate, pueri, Dominum; laudate nomen Domini. Sit nomen Domini benedictum ex hoc nunc et usque in saeculum.

A solis ortu usque ad occasum laudabile nomen Domini. Excelsus super omnes gentes Dominus, et super caelos gloria ejus.

Quis sicut Dominus Deus noster, qui in altis habitat, et humilia respicit in caelo et in terra?
Suscitans a terra inopem, et de stercore erigens pauperem: ut collocet eum cum principibus, cum principibus populi sui. Qui habitare facit sterilem in domo,

matrem filiorum laetantem.

Gloria Patri, et Filio,

et Spiritui Sancto, Sicut erat in principio,

et nunc, et semper, et in saecula saeculorum. Amen. (Psalm 113 and Doxology)

O praise the Lord, ye children, priase the name of the Lord.
Blessed be the Name of the Lord: from this time forth for evermore.
From the rising of the sun even unto its setting, the name of the Lord is praiseworthy
The Lord is high above all nations, his glory is above the heavens.
Who is like the Lord our God, who dwells on high, and yet he considers the lowely in heaven and earth?
Lifting up the needy from the dust, and raising the poor from the dungheap, so that he may place him with the princes of his people.
Who makes the sterile woman to dwell in her house, the joyful mother of children.
Glory be to the Father and to the Son,
And to the Holy Ghost.

And to the Holy Ghost.

As it was in the beginning Is now and ever shall be; World without end. Amen.

## Laudate Pueri a 3 voci in Arieta

Isabella Leonarda (1620 - 1704) Ed. Meredith Y. Bowen





















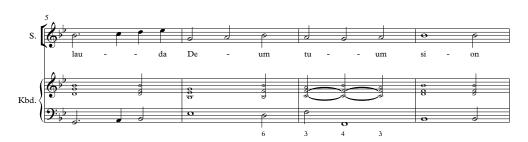
Lauda Jerusalem Dominum, Lauda Deum tuum Sion, Quoniam confortavit seras portarum tuarum. Benedixit filiis tuis in te Qui posuit fines tuos pacem, Et adipe frumenti satiat te; Qui emittit eloquium suum terrae, Velociter currit sermo eius; Qui dat nivem sicut lanam, Nebulam sicut cinerem spargit,
Mittit cristallum suam sicut buccellas,
Ante faciem frigoris eius quis sustinebit; Emittet verbum suum et liquefaciet ea, Flabit spiritus eius et fluent aquae. Qui annuntiat verbum suum Jacob, Iustitias et iudicia Israel. Non fecit taliter omni nationi Et iudicia sua non manifestavit eis. Gloria Patri et Filio et Spiritui Sancto Sicut erat in principio Et nunc et semper Et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem; praise your God, O Zion. for he has strengthened the bars of your gates. He has blessed your children within you. He secures peace in your borders and fills you with the finest of wheat. He sends forth his commandment upon earth: his word runs swiftly. He bestows snow like wool, he spreads hoar-frost like ashes, he dispatches his ice like morsels: when he produces cold, who can endure? He sends forth his word and melts them; he causes his wind to blow and water flows. He declares his word to Jacob, his statutes and judgments to Israel. He has not done the same for any other nations, nor made known his judgments to them. Glory to the Father and Son and Holy Ghost as it was in the beginning, is now and always, and for ages of ages. Amen.

## Lauda Jerusalem



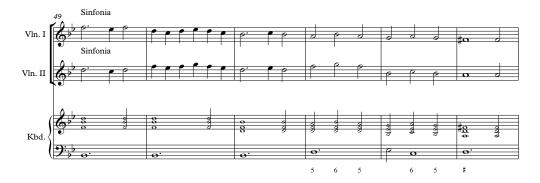


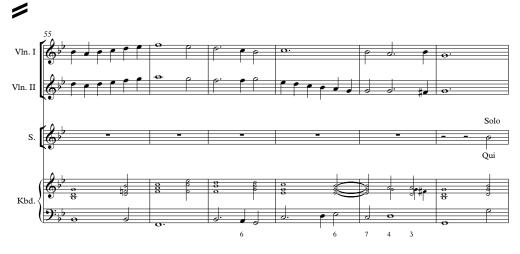








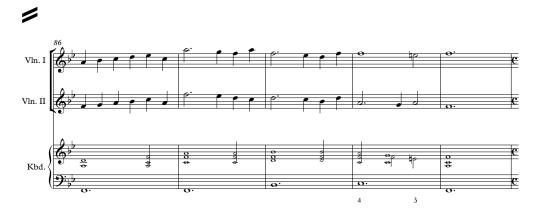






























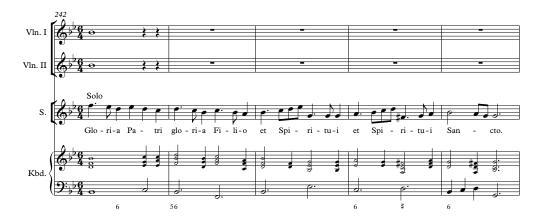










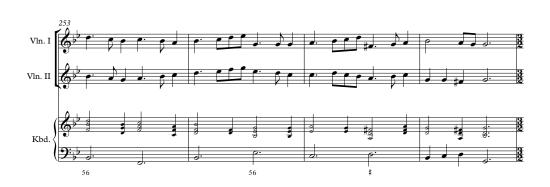


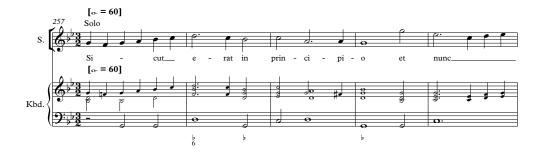
































## APPENDIX C

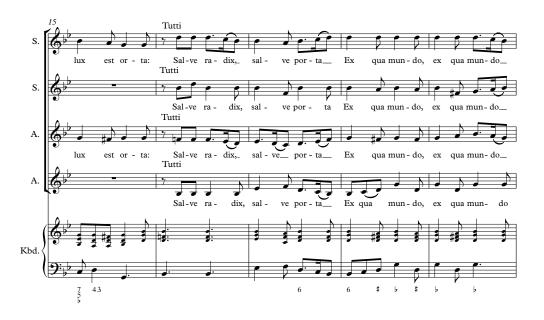
Performance Edition – Transposing the Tenor and Bass

Ave, Regina Caelorum, Ave, Domina Angelorum: Salve, radix, salve, porta Ex qua mundo lux est orta: Gaude, Virgo gloriosa, Super omnes speciosa, Vale, o valde decora, Et pro nobis Christum exora. Hail, O Queen of Heaven enthroned. Hail, by angels mistress owned. Root of Jesse, Gate of Morn Whence the world's true light was born: Glorious Virgin, Joy to thee, Loveliest whom in heaven they see; Fairest thou, where all are fair, Plead with Christ our souls to spare.

## Ave Regina Caelorum





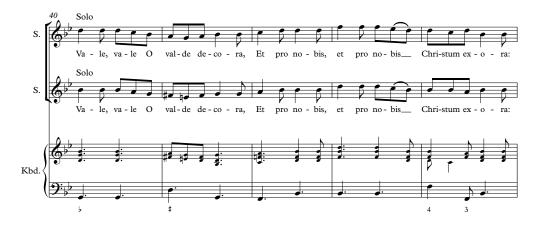
























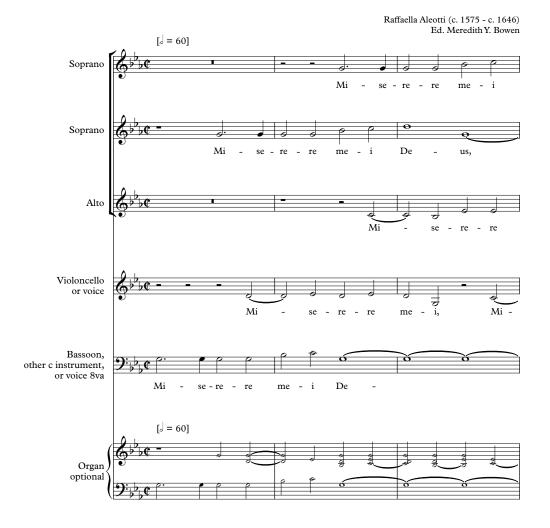
# APPENDIX D

Performance Edition – Whole Score Transposition and Instrumental Substitution

Miserere mei, Deus, miserere mei: quoniam in te confidit anima mea. Et in Umbra alarum tuarum [sperabo]: donec transeat iniquitas. (Psalm 57:1-2) Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me; for my soul trusts in you.

And in the shadow of your wings [I will hope], until iniquity has passed by.

## Miserere mei Deus











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