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THE STYLE, ANALYSIS, AND PERFORMANCE PRACTICES OF
SELECTED CHORAL WORKS BY ISABELLA LEONARDA AND MARIA
XAVERIA PERUCHONA

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THE STYLE, ANALYSIS, AND PERFORMANCE PRACTICES OF
SELECTED CHORAL WORKS BY ISABELLA LEONARDA AND MARIA
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A DOCUMENT APPROVED FOR THE
SCHOOL OF MUSIC

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Abstract

This document explores and analyzes sacred music composed by two Ursuline composers of the seventeenth century: Isabella Leonarda and Maria Xaveria Peruchona. It also studies the socio-historical background with particular attention to femininity, the lives of Italian nun musicians, and the history of the *Collegio di Sant'Orsola*. The updated biographical summaries of Leonarda and Peruchona in this document provide a fuller understanding of their life and music at the *Collegio*. Although several scholars have explored the conundrum in tenor and bass parts in these nuns' music, my research provides a different point of view in the academic debate and suggests the conductor should proceed with caution on transposing parts. Through music analysis of selected works by Leonarda and Peruchona, their musical intelligence and aesthetics are rediscovered and better understood. It would be delightful to see today's conductors consider standardizing the music of both Ursuline composers and starting to extend the repertory canon.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Intent and Purpose of the Study

The music by Isabella Leonarda (1620-1704)¹ and Maria Xaveria Peruchona (1652-1717)² is generally not present in the standard repertory canon for choral conductors. Despite the surge in research on female composers in the past few years, only a handful of references or existing recordings are accessible to the public.³

Though less known to today's audience, Leonarda and Peruchona were two prominent Ursuline nun composers residing in the Novarese area of the Piedmont region in Northwest Italy.⁴ Their names exclusively appear in *Museo Novarese* (Museum of Novara) of 1701, a meticulous collection of over 1,000 biographical profiles of Novara written by the scholar Lazaro Agostino Cotta (1645-1719).⁵ As the only female composers, Leonarda is branded as “*la musa Novarese*” (the Muse of Novara) and Peruchona as “*eccellente Maestra di Musica*” (an excellent music master).⁶

The choral music of Leonarda and Peruchona is worth rediscovery and performance for their exceptional musical achievements. First, Leonarda was the most

¹ According to Stewart Carter's study, many references that mention Leonarda's birth year as 1641 are incorrect due to an erroneous interpretation by the Belgian musicologist François-Joseph Fétis (1784-1871). See Stewart Arlen Carter, "The Music of Isabella Leonarda (1620-1704)" (Doctorate Dissertation, Stanford University, 1982), 1-2.

² Most sources state Maria Xaveria Peruchona's dates as ca.1652-ca.1709. See the explanation in Chapter 5 and Patricia Chiti et al., *Soavissaima Melodia: Maria Xaveria Peruchona Compositrice Del XVII Secolo*, vol. 18, Studi Storici: Studi Novaresi Dell'associazione Di Storia Della Chiesa Novarese, (Novara, Italy: Interlinea, 2003).

³ As of April 2022, ten CD albums containing Isabella Leonarda's musical works were available in the online Naxos Music Library. One of those CDs exclusively contains her sonatas, and another includes her selected pieces from one set of vespers. Only seven other vocal works appear on the other CDs. By contrast, only eight vocal works by Maria Xaveria Peruchona can be found in the Naxos Music Library.

⁴ Karin Pendle, *Women & Music: A History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 110.

⁵ Chiti et al., *Soavissaima Melodia: Maria Xaveria Peruchona Compositrice Del XVII Secolo*, 18, 23.

⁶ See *ibid.*, 11.

prolific female composer of the seventeenth century with roughly two hundred compositions in twenty collections. Outside of Italy, Leonarda also earned accolades for her quality compositions. In Paris, Sébastien de Brossard (1655-1730), a French encyclopedist, composer, and music collector, owned some of Leonarda's music in his library. He described Leonarda's music as "so beautiful, so gracious, so brilliant" that he regretted not possessing more.⁷ In addition, a Swiss musicologist, Franz Giegling (1921-2007),⁸ claimed that Leonarda's finest works could compare with those of Pietro Degli Antonii (1648-1740) and Giacomo Carissimi (1605-1674).⁹ According to Stewart Carter's research, Leonarda's musical output ranked among the top six of all Italian composers in the second half of the seventeenth century, including her male contemporaries. It is critical to note that male professional musicians generally had exponentially more opportunities than their female counterparts.¹⁰ Although Peruchona only published one collection of music like many other nun composers, her relatively bold compositional approaches to achieving theatrical effects and tonal variety are outstanding from a young composer of twenty-three. Despite such early achievements, Peruchona never published music again, and her talents mysteriously dimmed inside the convent walls.

The cloistered convents in the Lombardy area were an essential source of music-making in the seventeenth century. It is assumed that the semi-open atmosphere under

⁷ Silvia Evangelisti, *Nuns: A History of Convent Life 1450-1700* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2007), 118.

⁸ Siegbert Rampe, *Georg Friedrich Händel Und Seine Zeit*, Große Komponisten Und Ihre Zeit, (Laaber: Laaber-Verlag, 2009), 266.

⁹ Carter, "The Music of Isabella Leonarda (1620-1704)," 3.

¹⁰ In seventeenth-century Italy, "all institutions that hired musicians employed many more men than women musicians, and some employed no women at all." See Jane M. Bowers and Judith Tick, *Women Making Music: The Western Art Tradition, 1150-1950* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 135.

the monastic Order of Saint Ursula may have provided Leonarda and Peruchona more freedom musically and physically, compared to many other nun musicians. Nonetheless, details of the Ursuline lifestyle and music-making are relatively unknown. As Barbara Jackson points out, the *Collegio di Sant'Orsola* (The Company of Saint Ursula) was later dissolved with its records devastated, leaving unanswered questions about the organization and its mission.¹¹ In order to better understand both female composers' musicality, my document attempts to draw inferences based on scattered historical facts.

This document will provide an analysis, overview of the musical style, and recommendations for performance practices of choral music by Isabella Leonarda and Maria Xaveria Peruchona. It will also offer guidelines and tools to choral conductors for performing Ursuline music with modern ensembles. My survey of historical data will shed light on the function of musical elements within each work and provide information on the historical style of each piece, from composition to performance. I hope that the value of their musical artistry is revived, promoted, and appropriately interpreted to enrich Western choral heritage and repertory. Though some analyses of these two female composers and their compositions exist, this document will broadly expand the scope of current scholarship and focus on the historically informed performance practice. Susan McClary states, "Musical scores qualify as crucial repositories of evidence for anyone seeking to understand the people who lived in another time and place."¹² As a choral conductor, I believe that part of our job is to decipher codes and riddles found in musical

¹¹ Pendle, *Women & Music: A History*, 111.

¹² Susan McClary, *Desire and Pleasure in Seventeenth-Century Music* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 5.

works; this fulfills our greater mission to inspire humanity through musical interpretation and performance.

Procedures

Modern music scholarship has widened its scope of study in many ways, recognizing that music is not just about stylistic issues but also reflects a time, place, and people in historical and cultural context. By exploring socio-historical perspectives in addition to musical analyses, I aim to develop a rhetorical understanding of the history and musical style of Leonarda and Peruchona. However, limited by the availability of historical documents and studies, this document primarily uses secondary-source materials as the basis of the research.

Historically, there have been conflicts between the connotations of the act of composition and of physical connotations in femininity. As recently as within the last twenty-five years, Lucy Green has claimed that “the idea of a woman mentally manipulating or controlling music is incommensurable and unacceptable because women cannot be understood to retain their dependent, bodily femininity at the same time as producing a cerebral and potentially autonomous work of genius.”¹³ In other words, Green believes that women live in their bodies and men in their minds. This threat caused restrictions on female composers’ practices and reception. Furthermore, Susan McCary discusses how scholars have treated female composers in history as “indistinguishable from their male colleagues,” as if men and women had equal opportunity during their

¹³ Lucy Green, *Music, Gender, Education* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 113.

time, failing to acknowledge that women did not have the same access to musical training opportunities and formal education.¹⁴ Inspired by those studies, my document will apply feminine sensitivity¹⁵ to historical views of genders, bodies, and social prejudices in relation to nuns' music-making. All the subtopics in this document will provide diverse perspectives to enhance our understanding of Italian Ursuline composers in the seventeenth century.

Seventeenth-century Baroque music usually poses difficulties in analyzing its transitional tonality and musical metaphors. Gregory Barnett considers this period full of myth, uncertainty, and confusion in musical thought, a transition between the Renaissance modal theory and eighteenth-century harmonic tonality that seem more intelligible. Though beautiful, this puzzling musical phenomenon was unclear to musical theorists in the seventeenth century.¹⁶ Naomi Barker proposes that an analysis of music from this time period must answer the question, "How does this music work?"

There may also be a need for analysts of early music not to get enmeshed in the 'authenticity' debate that has dogged performance practice; at the same time, interaction between performance and analysis should also be encouraged as a vital tool for both disciplines.¹⁷

Therefore, by applying historical music theories to the score analysis in the latter part of this document, I intend to rediscover links via different perspectives to reinforce our understanding of the musical rhetoric, gestures, and the composer's sensitivity.

¹⁴ Susan McClary, *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 114.

¹⁵ Feminine sensitivity means special attention to fragmented and marginalized aspects that are mostly ignored by mainstream scholarship.

¹⁶ *The Cambridge History of Western Music Theory*, ed. Thomas Christensen (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 407.

¹⁷ Naomi Joy Barker, "Analyzing Baroque Music," *Early Music* 34, no. 2 (2006): 345.

Review of Scholarly Literature

Generally speaking, books on Western music history written before the 1980s are from a patriarchal perspective. These books barely discuss female composers in the Baroque period. For instance, *Music in the Baroque Era* from 1947 by Manfred Bukofzer does not introduce any female composer in detail: Francesca Caccini is simply mentioned once as a female virtuoso singer and once as a composer of operas “inferior to Monteverdi.”¹⁸

All the composers in music history textbooks are among “the first rank,” exclusively men. The lack of women’s appearance in the narrative makes history seem incomplete. Jeffrey Kuzmic points out that history becomes a product of patriarchy from the perspective of masculinity. History textbooks have continuously retained the cultural patriarchy through schooling.¹⁹ Accordingly, it is necessary to reconfigure the existing knowledge and critically examine music history with sensitivity in order to understand those who may have been marginalized in the historical narrative.

With the subconscious “great man” hypothesis, many textbook authors treat music history as a competition and create an invisible hierarchy of winners and losers in the historical context. Thereby, the contributions of the period seem to be attributed to only the few most significant figures. Nevertheless, the recent reconsideration of women’s roles calls for the gradual inclusion of women in the historical context.²⁰ Although

¹⁸ Francesca Caccini’s name only appears twice in Manfred F. Bukofzer, *Music in the Baroque Era, from Monteverdi to Bach* (New York: Norton, 1947), 61, 398.

¹⁹ Jeffrey Kuzmic, “Textbooks, Knowledge, and Masculinity: Examining Patriarchy from Within,” in *Masculinities at School*, ed. Nancy Lesko, Research on Men and Masculinities Series (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2000), 106.

²⁰ Cynthia Cyrus and Olivia Mather, “Rereading Absence: Women in Medieval and Renaissance Music” (paper presented at the College Music Symposium, 1998), 101-17.

Leonarda and Peruchona were two of the few female composers not entirely forgotten in history, they have been two relatively “great women” among all female composers in the Baroque period. It is believed that with our boosted consciousness of the “great man” theory, future scholarship will further broaden the horizon of historical accounts and allow more visibility of today’s less-known composers.

While most still ignore essential female composers, many recently published textbooks on Western music history have started to include at least some introductory content on women in the Baroque period. For example, *European Music 1520-1640*, edited and published in 2006 by James Haar, scarcely mentions the public life of female musicians and the restrictions imposed on them, but without mentioning any Italian female composers. *Music in the Baroque: Western Music in Context* by Wendy Heller from 2014 discusses music education in history and music-making in convents. The book also introduces Chiara Margarita Cozzolani as an essential representative of many Baroque nun musicians.²¹ However, both Leonarda and Peruchona are absent in the text. A two-volume textbook published in 2015, *A History of Western Choral Music* by Chester Alwes, still does not introduce any Baroque nun composers.

Aside from music history textbooks, several references and research essays focus on Leonarda, Peruchona, Cozzolani, and other nun composers. One of the most noteworthy contributions to understanding Northern Italian convent music and its history is deeply rooted in Robert Kendrick’s doctoral dissertation of 1993, *Genres, Generations, and Gender: Nuns’ Music in Early Modern Milan, c.1550-1706*. His book *Celestial Sirens: Nuns and their Music in Early Modern Milan* is mainly based on his dissertation.

²¹ Wendy Heller, *Music in the Baroque: Western Music in Context* (New York: Norton, 2014), 154-59.

In the book, Kendrick analyzes the musical style of Chiara Margarita Cozzolani and a few other nun composers, including Leonarda and Peruchona by brief mention. His discovery has probably influenced most later studies on Italian convent music. In treating the tenor and bass parts found in the published transcriptions of music for mixed choir by nun composers, Kendrick's systematic approach based on historical findings allows today's choral conductors to restore the all-female choral music initially heard in Baroque convents.

In the years since Kendrick's publications, more has been explored about nun composers in the seventeenth century. The following references are recent scholarly research on Leonarda, Peruchona, or their contemporary nun composers. Many have provided invaluable information and laid a solid academic foundation for my research.

Like Kendrick's book, Caleb Nihira's document of 2018, *In Questo Proposito: Formal Innovations in the Vespers by Chiara Margarita Cozzolani*, also analyzes the musical form, features, and style of Cozzolani. Published in the same year, Emilie Dahnk Baroffio's article, "La compositrice Isabella Leonarda 1620-1704" from *Novarien: Rivista dell'Associazione di Storia della Chiesa Novarese* is an updated biography of the composer.

Aiming to create authentic performances, Meredith Bowen's document of 2016, *Sacred Music from The Convents of Seventeenth-Century Italy: Restoration Practices for Contemporary Women's Choirs*, provides practical realization and detailed solutions based on Kendrick's theory with an applied insight into modern treble choirs. Two years later, Bowen's article in ACDA's *The Choral Journal*, "unCONVENTional Restoration: Giving Voice to the Silenced," summarizes the main points of her doctoral document.

Lindsay Johnson's musicological dissertation of 2013, *Performed Embodiment, Sacred Eroticism, and Voice in Devotions by Early Seventeenth-Century Italian Nuns*, offers a wealth of historical information. It seeks to recreate a vivid picture of the early seventeenth-century Italian nuns' voices in devotion through analyzing the societal background, women's social roles, historical performance practices, sacred eroticism in arts, and early modern conceptions of the body and humorism. Despite some subjectivity, Johnson provides an imaginative yet reasonable scenario of how Italian nuns performed in convents and what their music might mean to us with an understanding of nuns' sensibility in history.

Chapter 4, "Milky Words: Chiara Margarita Cozzolani's *O quam bonus es*" of Kate Bartel's musicological dissertation of 2007, *Portal of the Skies: Four Scenes in the Musical Life of the Virgin Mary ca. 1500-1650*, is a case study of the two-voice motet *O quam bonus es*. Through an interpretational analysis of the motet's musical features and religious significance for women, Bartel highlights the ways that Cozzolani incorporates the Virgin into the music as a critical element in nuns' piety.

Published by Interlinea in 2003, a collection of three essays, *Soavissima melodia: Maria Xaveria Peruchona compositrice del XVII secolo*, focuses on Maria Xaveria Peruchona, providing a valuable biography of less-known Peruchona as well as some musical analyses.

Die solomotetten Isabella Leonardas (1620-1704): Analysen sämtlicher Solomotetten und ausgewählte Transkriptionen by Elisabeth Schedensack is a two-volume academic study from 1998 on Leonarda's ninety-six solo motets. Schedensack's

analysis gives a thorough overview of Leonarda's complete compositional output of solo vocal music.

Mary Heape's 1995 document, *Sacred Songs and Arias by Women Composers: A Survey of the Literature and Performer's Analysis of Selected Works by Isabella Leonarda, Luise Reichardt, Ethel Smyth, Violet Archer, Margaret Bonds, and Edith Borroff* analyzes Leonarda's general vocal style and one solo motet, *Volo Jesum*.

Women Making Music: The Western Art Tradition 1150-1950, printed in 1986, features a musicological essay, "The Emergence of Women Composers in Italy, 1566-1700," by Jane Bowers. It outlines the musical activities of Italian women in history, in which both Leonarda and Peruchona are presented. In addition, Bowers sheds light on Leonarda's remarkable achievements in composition.

Stewart Carter's dissertation of 1981, *The Music of Isabella Leonarda (1620-1704)*, gives a musicological overview of Leonarda's musical style and analyzes her works with liturgical and non-liturgical texts. Carter's study has updated current scholarship and corrected historical misinformation found in multiple early sources.

In this study, new information from sources in other languages will be assessed and introduced in addition to my analysis and interpretation.

Chapter 2: The Musical Life of Leonarda and Peruchona

Spiritual Marriage and Social Background of the Convent

In early modern Italy, a woman inevitably had only two choices for her marriage, a man or Christ. Both options were initially considered equal. The statement “*Aut virum aut murum oportet mulierem habere* (a woman should have a husband or a [convent] wall)” started to be widely recognized after late medieval times.²² However, marriage to a man negatively affected the transferability of familial inheritance.²³ Convents then became “homes” for many culturally prepared women²⁴ because conventual life was considered the only choice for women other than marrying a man. Instead of transferring a large quantity of wealth to the daughter’s spouse, it was universal for a family to pay smaller dowries²⁵ and send their daughter to a convent as a bride of Christ²⁶ by taking a formal vow. The benefits for a family to send their daughter to a convent were as follows: (1) the spiritual dowry was much lower in cost; (2) the family would be freed from future financial responsibility; (3) the wealthy family could thus protect their financial assets; (4) the daughter could escape from childbearing and childrearing.

Traditionally, taking a formal or solemn vow made a woman a perpetual member of the religious community with a sense of durable consecration.²⁷ So, her identity was

²² Craig Monson, *Habitual Offenders: A True Tale of Nuns, Prostitutes, and Murderers in Seventeenth-Century Italy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), 42.

²³ Simona Feci et al., “Women’s Mobility, Rights, and Citizenship in Medieval and Early Modern Italy,” *Clio. Women, Gender, History*, no. 43 (2016): 58.

²⁴ Chiti et al., *Soavissima Melodia: Maria Xaveria Peruchona Compositrice Del Xvii Secolo*, 18, 15.

²⁵ The spiritual dowry is money brought by a nun to the convent.

²⁶ *The Norton/Grove Dictionary of Women Composers*, ed. Julie Sadie and Rhian Samuel (London: Macmillan Press, 1994), 129.

²⁷ Lawrence Cunningham, “Nuns and Brothers,” in *Encyclopedia Britannica*, ed. Encyclopaedia Britannica Editors (March 1, 2022). <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Roman-Catholicism/Religious-communities>.

forever changed, which announced her spiritual death in the secular world and permanently tied her to religion. Regarding spiritual marriage, William of St-Thierry (1085-1148) stated that the soul's relationship with God was like "bride and bridegroom."²⁸ The "marriage" to Christ, as a spiritual union with Christ, bore many parallels in an earthly wedding compared to human relationships, including erotic fantasy.

The practice of Christian monasticism, descended from the apostles' time, was a movement that appeared in the late third century as the ascetic practice that motivated self-denial based on the Christian ideal of perfection.²⁹ Anyone who entered the convent was subject to the rules of the enclosure. Though the conventual cloister was the only place to practice female monasticism, nuns living in the convent were not necessarily religious, as Francesca Medioli points out.³⁰ By the mid-seventeenth century, the enclosure had already become a well-established tradition. Many nuns did not support the enclosure; according to most studies of Italian convents with historical letters and testimonies, nuns experienced monasticism as a repressive institution.³¹ When structural enhancements were added, convents became more and more prison-like.³² Although the Church officially forbade forced monasticism,³³ forcing women to live in convents did occur. For instance, the Venetian patriciate represented itself as immaculate and pure, so

²⁸ The image of the soul as female and Christ as its bridegroom was popular in works for nuns. See Caroline Bynum, *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages*, Ucla Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 119-41.

²⁹ See "Christianity: Monasticism," in *Encyclopedia Britannica*, ed. Encyclopaedia Britannica Editors (November 26, 2020). <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Christianity/Monasticism>. Also, see Andrew Crislip, *From Monastery to Hospital: Christian Monasticism & the Transformation of Health Care in Late Antiquity* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 1.

³⁰ *Time, Space, and Women's Lives in Early Modern Europe*, vol. 57, ed. Anne Schutte, Thomas Kuehn, and Silvana Menchi, Sixteenth Century Essays & Studies, (Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2001), 165.

³¹ Elizabeth Leffeldt, "Monasticism in Early Modern Italy and Spain," in *The Oxford Handbook of Christian Monasticism*, ed. Bernice Kaczynski (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2000), 472.

³² *Time, Space, and Women's Lives in Early Modern Europe*, 57, 166-70.

³³ Heller, *Music in the Baroque: Western Music in Context*, 155.

forcing women into convents³⁴ became logical because monasticism meant having an ascetic lifestyle removed from the secular world to perfect one's love of God.³⁵ As a result, many women ultimately gave up earthly glories and were destined to spend the rest of their lives in a convent despite their refusal.

The church authorities' compassion and awareness of freedom deprivation under coercion allowed nuns varying wiggle room to contact the outside world. The authorities understood the demanding discipline and brutal living conditions for nuns, especially because some of those nuns were their relatives. Sometimes, the relaxation of rules gave rise to severe scandals, which diminished the reputation of nuns being "the guiding lights of the people."³⁶ Therefore, the strictness of the enclosure for nuns varied from place to place.

During the seventeenth century, women were excluded from *officia* (public offices), where political power was exercised,³⁷ so they sought control over their lives in other ways. The general discrimination against women in public life inspired some to participate in religious organizations or even establish new convents. As a result, women who lived in convents could escape the social and political conflicts of the outside world. Helga Möbius further summarizes that "convents were a refuge for all broken lives."³⁸ Subsequently, although spiritual marriage repressed women's freedom, it became a widely adopted solution to many familial and political problems in early modern Italy. Convents eventually opened an outlet for women's voices. Through this outlet, women

³⁴ Lehfelddt, "Monasticism in Early Modern Italy and Spain," 472.

³⁵ *Female Monasticism in Early Modern Europe: An Interdisciplinary View*, ed. Cordula van Wyhe (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2008), 1.

³⁶ *Time, Space, and Women's Lives in Early Modern Europe*, 57, 166-70.

³⁷ Feci et al., "Women's Mobility, Rights, and Citizenship in Medieval and Early Modern Italy," 49-50.

³⁸ Helga Möbius, *Woman of the Baroque Age*, trans. Barbara Beedham (Totowa, NJ: Allanheld, Osmun, 1984), 128-32.

could express an opinion of the time about themselves and even gain fame by becoming “celebrities.”

Nuns’ Unmuted Voices

Many negative attitudes towards women’s creative potential hindered their musical activities,³⁹ which further muted them from social life. In seventeenth-century Italy, women were mainly isolated from the musical mainstream and from the six types of professional positions in music: in church, court, theater, school, private household, or town.⁴⁰ The Roman Catholic Church was the primary employer for male musicians.⁴¹ Similarly, many other institutions did not employ any women at all.⁴² Although some women were highly gifted in music, they faced problems in obtaining positions to work as professional singers or composers in society.

Public education opportunities also affected women’s musical activities. In music, literature, and languages, adequate education provided by the Church was usually only available to adolescent boys. However, away from the public eye, convents supported a lesser form of education for girls. Though many young girls from noble, patrician, or professional families already took private music lessons prior to their spiritual marriage,⁴³ convents continued to train musically talented girls. As a result, convents helped some of

³⁹ Bowers and Tick, *Women Making Music: The Western Art Tradition, 1150-1950*, 140.

⁴⁰ Chiti et al., *Soavissaima Melodia: Maria Xaveria Peruchona Compositrice Del Xvii Secolo*, 18, 17.

⁴¹ In 1774, the female Roman composer Maria Rosa Coccia (1759-1833) was the first woman to pass the qualification exam to earn the title of *maestra di cappella*. However, her gender led to public humiliation. Eventually, she never obtained a professional position in the church. See Rebecca Cypess, *Women and Musical Salons in the Enlightenment* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2022), 164-69. Also, see Barbara Garvey Jackson, *Say Can You Deny Me: A Guide to Surviving Music by Women from the 16th through the 18th Centuries* (Fayetteville, NC: University of Arkansas Press, 1994), 102.

⁴² Bowers and Tick, *Women Making Music: The Western Art Tradition, 1150-1950*, 135.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 131.

them unmute their voices, exalt their creativity in the cloister, and make them professionals. For instance, in the first half of the seventeenth century, about seventy-five percent of noble daughters in Milan lived in convents, and some became musicians.⁴⁴ For other girls, convents provided them with the opportunity to receive an education that they would not have received otherwise.

The increasing musical activity in the convents called for musically talented girls to join. For a prestigious convent, the competition for musical talents among young ladies could have been intense. Some evidence points out that musical skills were required to enter particular convents.⁴⁵ If a girl was permitted to enter a convent, the spiritual dowry paid to the convent could be substantially reduced or even waived if she had enough musical skills.

In convents, nuns actively participated in the liturgy and music-making process.⁴⁶ They could spend up to eight hours a day practicing and performing liturgical music by following and imitating everything the monks did. Although convents were generally not as rich as their male counterparts, they all had music books, liturgical texts, and an organization for a choir, soloists, and liturgists. The rules of Saint Benedict confirm that men and women were equally active in participating in musical liturgy.⁴⁷ Apart from that, women had to remain invisible and restricted from freedom. Some sources indicate that nuns practiced their “daily martyrdom”⁴⁸ through music. Even though the musical

⁴⁴ *From Convent to Concert Hall: A Guide to Women Composers*, ed. Sylvia Glickman and Martha Schleifer (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2003), 56-57.

⁴⁵ Carter, "The Music of Isabella Leonarda (1620-1704)," 9.

⁴⁶ Chiti et al., *Soavissima Melodia: Maria Xaveria Peruchona Compositrice Del Xvii Secolo*, 18, 15.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ In the seventeenth-century conventual writings, nuns were commonly regarded as martyrs, potential saints, or even saints supposedly to be honored. Paolo Regio (1545-1607), a Roman Catholic bishop, wrote in *Vita di S. Patricia* (Life of St. Patricia) that “the immaculate service of the devout mind should be called

function of female monasteries was to guard and pass on religious heritage and to defend taboos, numerous testimonies document that music was involved in daily devotions as a common practice. Hence, music became the carrier of fantasies that originated from nuns' meditation inside the convent walls.

Church officials did not always support nuns' music-making. As nuns' active participation in music occurred solely in convents, their musical lives were determined by religious politics. In the 1550s, the Council of Trent decided to reform convents because the liturgy was distracted by sensuous polyphony and polluted by social gossip and fantasy.⁴⁹ The Council even threatened the existence of music-making in convents when attempting to end nuns' contact with external music teachers (usually men), even if the teaching was done in the parlor isolated behind iron grates.⁵⁰ Its aftermath led to the nuns' physical separation from the outside world. For instance, a Bolognese nun from Santo Omobono commented in April of 1577 about removing the organ from the external church and reinstalling it in the internal church so that nuns would not see men in the external church and vice versa:

Ricordo come alli 22 xbre si levò il nostro Organo dal suo luogo rispondente nella Chiesa di fuori, per com[m]issione venuta di Roma, generala à Tutti li Monasteri delle Monache di Bol; Et noi Suore in segno di obbedienza levato quello facessimo murare sodamente il detto luogo per intiera Soddisfattone di n[ost]ro Ill.mo Arcivesc. Paleotti.⁵¹

I remember on October 22nd how our organ was removed from its corresponding place in the church outside, by commission coming from Rome to all the nuns' monasteries of Bologna; And as a sign of obedience, we sisters should have the

a daily martyrdom." Vittoria Colonna (1610-1675), the founder of Regina Coeli convent in Rome, told her sister nuns that dedicating to divine service in convents should confess the same faith being a prolonged martyrdom. Through their observance, nuns' "daily martyrdom" was equivalent to the religious life of holy virgins and saints who suffered torment and contributed to the birth of Christianity. See *Female Monasticism in Early Modern Europe: An Interdisciplinary View*, 34.

⁴⁹ *From Convent to Concert Hall: A Guide to Women Composers*, 56-57.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 56.

⁵¹ Chiti et al., *Soavissima Melodia: Maria Xaveria Peruchona Compositrice Del XVII Secolo*, 18, 18.

said place firmly walled up to be completely satisfied for our most illustrious Archbishop, Paleotti.

Despite the official prohibition of the Council, the executive force to restrict nuns from making music depended on the attitude of local church authorities, case by case. For instance, a recent historical study of seventeenth-century Siena shows that the local archbishop was responsible for the sacred music used in liturgical services. Since most Sieneese archbishops were from the town, they thought it was unnecessary to restrict music-making in religious institutions. Thus, polyphonic and possibly some secular music was performed in both male and female monastic houses in Siena.⁵² Sieneese documents also show that when special liturgical ceremonies called for a combination of the cities' best trained ensembles, male *masestri* from the local cathedral were hired to deliver music education to nuns, and female and male musicians could have met in this context.⁵³ In contrast, Bologna was a papal state, about 125 miles from Milan, whose nun musicians never enjoyed such encouragement in music-making from their archbishops in the 1600s.⁵⁴ Barbara Jackson argues that the decrees of the Council of Trent and local religious governors were unevenly enforced in convents in different places.⁵⁵

In some other cases, nuns' music-making even extended into the realm of secular music. The local Archbishop of Milan, Federigo Borromeo (1564-1631, in-office 1595-1631), was so interested in female mystics that he encouraged nuns' music-making. He even delivered music scores and instruments to these convents and allowed the use of the

⁵² *A Companion to Late Medieval and Early Modern Siena*, vol. 23, ed. Santa Casciani and Heather Hayton, Brill's Companions to European History, (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2021), 244.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 249.

⁵⁴ Craig Monson, *Divas in the Convent: Nuns, Music, and Defiance in Seventeenth-Century Italy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 3-4.

⁵⁵ Pendle, *Women & Music: A History*, 107-09.

still-in-question violin family in performances.⁵⁶ Under Borromeo's liberal leadership, Milan was sympathetic to secular content used in services.⁵⁷ Borromeo promoted music-making as a "spiritual recreation" to make nuns forget the outside world. He approved the performance of Italian madrigals replaced with Latin texts⁵⁸ so as to confirm that secular music was performed in Milanese convents.⁵⁹ As a specific example, two surviving secular cantatas by the Benedictine nun Rosa Giacinta Badalla (ca.1660-ca.1715) suggests the practice of secular music-making inside the Santa Radegonda convent.⁶⁰

To some extent, Milanese convents may even have tolerated certain behaviors of nuns. For example, some nuns may have sneaked out of the convent via *ruota*, a conventual facility in the wall allowing outsiders to send packages inside,⁶¹ which probably allowed them to hear new trends in secular music. Moreover, extra protection for these behaviors came from the patrician families, who generally opposed religious reforms or punishments and whose money crucially sustained convent life.⁶²

Generally, strict or loose regulations were imposed on convents' music-making depending on the time and diocese, mainly affecting the following aspects: (1) the use of polyphony, (2) the access to music teachers, (3) the use of musical instruments, and (4)

⁵⁶ *Rediscovering the Muses: Women's Musical Traditions*, ed. Kimberly Marshall (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1993), 125-26.

⁵⁷ Federico Borromeo sponsored Aquilino Coppini (died 1629) for contrafacta motets, using Monteverdi's "spiritualized" secular music. Coppini then encouraged Borromeo to use these motets in the church. It was likely that these motets were performed at the Milan Cathedral in Borromeo's private devotions. See Margaret Rorke, "Sacred Contrafacta of Monteverdi Madrigals and Cardinal Borromeo's Milan," *Music & Letters* 65, no. 2 (1984).

⁵⁸ Laura Macy, "Geronimo Cavaglieri, the "Song of Songs" and Female Spirituality in Federigo Borromeo's Milan," *Early Music* 39, no. 3 (August 2011): 350.

⁵⁹ *From Convent to Concert Hall: A Guide to Women Composers*, 65.

⁶⁰ *The Norton/Grove Dictionary of Women Composers*, 32.

⁶¹ Heller, *Music in the Baroque: Western Music in Context*, 155.

⁶² Heidi Epstein, "Melting the Venusberg: A Feminist Theology of Music" (Doctorate Thesis, McGill University, 2000), 261.

the secularization of the conventual music. In general, the social milieu of the time influenced women to enter convents. In turn, these convents unmuted nuns' voices and allowed them to project their voices back into the urban communities through vocal music.

After 1600, there was an increasing social interest in music, and music became a vessel for conversation and communication that prepared the way for public consumption.⁶³ Many Italian cities were characterized by the rising consumption of music in public life. For instance, according to the *History of the Government of Venice* written by the French nobleman Alexandre-Toussaint Limojon de Saint-Didier (ca.1630-1689), several theaters in Venice were offering performances of multiple operas simultaneously.⁶⁴ Therefore, the music gained popularity, especially among tourists. Local tour guidebooks provided precise information on where to find excellent church choirs, organs, organists, and singing nuns. Thus, convents gradually became the cradle for new sacred music composed only for female musicians. In addition, quality music-making in some convents helped them gain fame, publicity, individualization, and differentiation.⁶⁵ For example, although the Convent of San Paolo in Milan never reached the artistic height of Santa Radegonda, the nuns of San Paolo strove to produce high-quality music by the latest composers, accompanied by their new organ or with other instruments. In services, they sang polyphonic music instead of plainchant to attract the public to the church.⁶⁶

⁶³ "The Baroque Era," in *Source Readings in Music History*, ed. Margaret Murata (New York: Norton, 1998), 512.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 574-75.

⁶⁵ Lorenzo Bianconi, *Music in the Seventeenth Century*, trans. David Bryant (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 70-71.

⁶⁶ P. Renee Baernstein, *A Convent Tale: A Century of Sisterhood in Spanish Milan* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 134.

In convents, music was used as a tool to connect with the lay world. When gentlefolk and outsiders visited San Paolo, “[the nuns would] sing for them outside of divine offices, just as professional singers,” as Carol Bascapè (1550-1615), who served as the Superior General for the Barnabites, criticized.⁶⁷ Older nuns also expressed their fear of this ill-formed fashion of polyphonic singing and complained about excessive arrogance among young singing nuns. This trend brought more and more singing nuns to the convent; almost everyone in the convent sang.⁶⁸ In the case of Siena, Olimpia Chigi (b.1635) sent a letter to her brother Cardinal Sigismondo Chigi addressing the popularity of the nuns’ choir in January 1671:

Sunday was a feast day at Il Refugio and all Siena came and stayed right through Vespers because nothing was going on in the Piazza, and my Lala played the organ for the high Mass and all Vespers.⁶⁹

Archbishop Ascanio II Piccolomini (1596-1671) of Siena, who issued a decree in June 1666, acknowledged the public’s attraction to nuns’ performances and even ordered them to lock the doors during rehearsals.⁷⁰ Two months later, however, his handwritten orders of August 1666 loosened the rules: nuns could rehearse the choir and leave the church doors open as long as the church was dark enough. Still, nuns who sang or played at the parlor grates should not be seen.⁷¹

Beyond entertainment, nuns’ singing fulfilled the public’s need for spirituality. A travelogue of 1770 by the English composer and historian Charles Burney (1726-1814) compared nuns’ music with food, regarding a performance at Santa Maria Maddalena al

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 135-36.

⁶⁹ *Musical Voices of Early Modern Women: Many-Headed Melodies*, ed. Allyson Poska and Abby Zanger, ed. Thomasin Lamay, *Women and Gender in the Early Modern World*, (London: Routledge, 2016), 284.

⁷⁰ *A Companion to Late Medieval and Early Modern Siena*, 23, 248.

⁷¹ Colleen Reardon, *Holy Concord within Sacred Walls: Nuns and Music in Siena, 1575-1700* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 24.

Cerchio in Milan. He observed that “at my first coming I both hungered and thirsted after music, but I now had had almost my fill.”⁷²

In the above circumstances, some convents’ performances in the seventeenth century became a fashion, an attraction, and even entertainment for the public. Their popularity broadly reflected the need for new music and encouraged nun musicians to compose music, particularly for specific female choirs. Nuns’ music became a hub to blur the boundaries between the cloister and the outside world, providing spiritual nourishment for the community.

Saint Ursula, Saint Angela Merici, the Ursulines, and the Collegio

Many sources point out that the *Collegio di Sant’Orsola* (The Company of Saint Ursula) was different from other Italian convents, where its members, the Ursulines, did not live a cloistered life.⁷³ As a unique form of female institutes in Italy, its historical context mainly involves Saint Ursula, Saint Angela Merici, the Ursulines, and the *Collegio*. This section explores the historical background, relationships, and education of the *Collegio di Sant’Orsola*.

Saint Ursula lived in the fourth century and was a Christian martyr and legendary leader of 11,000 virgins killed in Cologne, Germany by the Huns, fourth-century nomadic invaders from Southeastern Europe, according to an inscription of the fourth or fifth century from the church of Saint Ursula in Cologne.⁷⁴ The number 11,000 is probably a

⁷² Robert Kendrick, *Celestial Sirens: Nuns and Their Music in Early Modern Milan*, Oxford Monographs on Music, (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1996), 419-20.

⁷³ Pendle, *Women & Music: A History*, 137-38.

⁷⁴ "Saint Ursula," in *Encyclopedia Britannica*, ed. Encyclopaedia Britannica Editors (April 23, 2020). <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Saint-Ursula>.

misreading of XI M (eleven martyrs) from the Middle Ages, but the vast number indicates the importance of this legend.⁷⁵ Querciolo Mazzonis writes:

The legend of St. Ursula, virgin and martyr of the third or fourth century, and the eleven thousand virgins reached its definitive version in the tenth century. Ursula, the daughter of a British king, decided to consecrate herself to Christ. She undertook a three-year pilgrimage with ten aristocratic companions, each accompanied by one thousand servants. The eleven thousand virgins were eventually killed by Attila and the Huns on their way home. Their sacrifice was rewarded with God's intervention, which freed Cologne from the Huns.⁷⁶

The 1911 Encyclopedia Britannica, however, provides different versions of Ursula's story, historically denying the credibility of the legend. Its editor further states that Ursula's legend is "perhaps the most curious instance of the development of an ecclesiastical myth."⁷⁷ Teresa Ledóchowska's research concludes that Ursula's legend contains partial truth that some virgins were martyred at Cologne at the end of the third century, and the basilica of the Church of Saint Ursula was indeed built over their tombs. Nevertheless, the number of virgins, the date of their deaths, the names, and the circumstances were conjectural.⁷⁸ The 2003 New Catholic Encyclopedia further reaffirms that no authentic account can prove the existence of these virgins.⁷⁹

Despite questions about its authenticity, the legend of Saint Ursula later gradually spread through Europe. Her feast and Offices also appeared in the following centuries in Cologne and other places.⁸⁰ The legend in Italian was known to circulate in Italy in the

⁷⁵ *The Cult of St Ursula and the 11,000 Virgins*, ed. Jane Cartwright (Cardiff, UK: University of Wales Press, 2016).

⁷⁶ Querciolo Mazzonis, *Spirituality, Gender, and the Self in Renaissance Italy: Angela Merici and the Company of St. Ursula (1474-1540)* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 65.

⁷⁷ *The Encyclopaedia Britannica: A Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, Literature and General Information*, 11th ed., vol. 27, ed. Hugh Chisholm (New York: Encyclopaedia Britannica Company, 1911), 803-04.

⁷⁸ Teresa Ledóchowska, *Angela Merici and the Company of St. Ursula: According to the Historical Documents*, trans. Mary Neylan, 2 vols., vol. 1 (Rome: Ancora, 1969), 226.

⁷⁹ E. Day, "Ursula, St.," in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, ed. New Catholic Encyclopedia Editors (Detroit, MI: New Catholic Encyclopedia, 2003), 345.

⁸⁰ Ledóchowska, *Angela Merici and the Company of St. Ursula: According to the Historical Documents*, 1, 222-23.

fourteenth century,⁸¹ and devotion to Saint Ursula became particularly popular in the Venetian and Lombard regions.

Under the influence of the Council of Trent and the Catholic Reformation, the Church wished to promote education to broader populations to reclaim the primacy of the papacy. Therefore, new religious orders were founded as “spiritual companies” in the first half of the sixteenth century and became part of the Christian renovation of society at the birth of Protestantism, emphasizing the individual’s inner conversion⁸² and defending the rudiments of the faith.⁸³ This historical background explains the birth and development of the *Collegio di Sant’Orsola*.

One Franciscan tertiary (a member of the Third Secular Franciscan Order), Saint Angela Merici (1474-1540), was born in Desenzano, the Republic of Venice, about 100 miles from Novara. Inspired by a vision that Merici herself would later establish a new female society, she and twelve young women modeled themselves under the protection of Saint Ursula and consecrated themselves to God by a vow of virginity on November 25, 1535, in Brescia (eighty-five miles to the East of Novara).⁸⁴ Hence, they became the first Ursulines and founded the Ursuline Order and the *Collegio di Sant’Orsola*, intending religious renewal as a reformist response to the criticism from the Renaissance popes and clergies.⁸⁵ In addition, Merici imagined establishing a model of religious lifestyle for

⁸¹ Ibid., 224-25.

⁸² Querciolo Mazzonis, "Reforming Christianity in Early Sixteenth-century Italy: The Barnabites, the Somaschans, the Ursulines, and the Hospitals for the Incurables," *Archivium Hibernicum* 71 (2018): 245, 47.

⁸³ Christopher Carlsmith, *A Renaissance Education: Schooling in Bergamo and the Venetian Republic, 1500-1650* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 140-41.

⁸⁴ See "St. Angela Merici," in *Encyclopedia Britannica*, ed. Encyclopaedia Britannica Editors (January 23, 2021). <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Saint-Angela-Merici>. Also, see Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Ursuline," *ibid.* (April 23, 2020). <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Ursulines>.

⁸⁵ "Britannica Encyclopedia of World Religions," ed. Encyclopaedia Britannica Editors (Chicago: Robinson, 2006), 265.

women, proposing a form of consecration as Christ's bride outside the convent amid the secular world, thus replacing strict monasticism.⁸⁶ This religious order became one of the first semi-open institutes for non-cloistered women,⁸⁷ exclusively dedicated to girls' moral and Christian education. The goal was to combat heresy and the widespread immorality of the time.⁸⁸

Rather than take a formal vow, a young woman could join this new form of convents by taking a simple vow instead, which left the chance open for the woman to leave the Ursuline community and inherit family properties.⁸⁹ Therefore, some wealthy families did not want their daughters to join the Ursuline communities without taking solemn vows, thus preventing a future possibility for them to leave and make a claim on the familial inheritance.⁹⁰

Living a non-cloistered lifestyle allowed the Ursuline nuns to have opportunities for public activity. Before the end of the sixteenth century, the Company undertook other social responsibilities to lead a fuller community life, such as running orphanages and houses for female refugees.⁹¹ Therefore, the early *Collegio di Sant'Orsola* had dual functions of being charitable and religious. The organization also had a government

⁸⁶ Mazzonis, *Spirituality, Gender, and the Self in Renaissance Italy: Angela Merici and the Company of St. Ursula (1474-1540)*, x-xi.

⁸⁷ This model of lifestyle did not stand alone historically in Europe. Before the *Collegio di Sant'Orsola*, the semi-cloistered or non-cloistered female communities appeared in history, such as the female communities associated with the Beguines and the *Devotio Moderna* (Modern Devotion), Italian communities of *bizzoche* or *pinzochere*, the Oblates of Torde' Specchi, and tertiaries. See Gabriella Zarri, "The Third Status," in *Time, Space, and Women's Lives in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Anne Schutte, Thomas Kuehn, and Silvana Menchi, *Sixteenth Century Essays & Studies* (Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2001), 181-82.

⁸⁸ D. Dunkerley et al., "Ursulines," in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, ed. New Catholic Encyclopedia Editors (Detroit, MI: New Catholic Encyclopedia, 2003), 347.

⁸⁹ *The Cambridge History of Christianity: Reform and Expansion 1500-1660*, Vol. 6 (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 474-75.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ Ledóchowska, *Angela Merici and the Company of St. Ursula: According to the Historical Documents*, 1, XII.

consisting of parents and powerful protectors;⁹² the top position was the Mother General, supported by the *Matrone* (an aristocratic widow who dealt with practical issues) and the *Colonnelle* (spiritual guides) as the second-tier leaders.⁹³ Under their leadership in pursuing Christian perfection, the Ursulines were said to outdo many cloistered nuns, according to a Brescian priest in the 1560s.⁹⁴ Their discipline, faith, and contribution made them a crucial female congregation in early modern Italy.

Later, the Ursulines expanded their organization to many other Italian towns. In 1535, there were only twenty-eight Ursulines; by 1540, the number had increased to 150. With the papal approbation and local bishops' support for new religious orders, the *Collegio di Sant'Orsola* attracted women with various social backgrounds. After the Ursulines' settlement in Brescia and Milan, by the early seventeenth century, the *Collegio* reached almost every major city in the surrounding areas of Lombardy, Veneto, and Emilia Romagna of Northern Italy,⁹⁵ including Novara in 1593 or 1625.⁹⁶

During their expansion, the Ursuline organizations remained low-profile. They did not create any "living saints" who might gain extra spiritual power and ambition. They always stayed below the radar of those sensitive church authorities.⁹⁷ Because of their humble background, low social profile, and modest plans for expansion, the

⁹² Ibid., 132.

⁹³ David Salomoni, "Women, Religion, and Education in Early Modern Italy: Some Case Studies (16th-18th C.)," *Studi sulla Formazione* 22, no. 2 (2019): 444.

⁹⁴ Ledóchowska, *Angela Merici and the Company of St. Ursula: According to the Historical Documents*, 1, XII.

⁹⁵ Querciolo Mazzonis, "The Company of St. Ursula in Counter-Reformation Italy," in *Devout Laywomen in the Early Modern World*, ed. Alison Weber, Women and Gender in the Early Modern World (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2016), 48-49.

⁹⁶ Salomoni, "Women, Religion, and Education in Early Modern Italy: Some Case Studies (16th-18th C.)," 442-43.

⁹⁷ Baernstein, *A Convent Tale: A Century of Sisterhood in Spanish Milan*, 54.

Ursulines managed to escape from the public eye and the rigorous control of the Christian authorities.⁹⁸

Though a common understanding of the Ursuline Companies is that they would establish a congregation after settling in a town under the Augustinian rule and Saint Angela Merici, these Ursuline Companies of different places were autonomous and separately established. Hence, they had almost no connection with one another. The independence of each Company allowed them the flexibility to modify the rules with the approval of the diocesan bishop and to meet individual local needs.⁹⁹ Accordingly, the Ursuline Companies maintained different in customs from place to place.¹⁰⁰

To better understand how female education was delivered at the *Collegio di Sant'Orsola*, it is necessary to understand what *collegio* means in history. Early modern society expected women to be guided through moral education to protect their virtue and prepare for motherhood.¹⁰¹ Accordingly, Schools of Christian Doctrine arose, involving the Ursulines and other religious orders, such as the Barnabites, the Angelics, the Theatines, and the Jesuits.¹⁰² Composing most of the female students and teachers, the *Collegio di Sant'Orsola* offered female education focusing on religious and ethical issues.

First of all, *collegio* does not necessarily mean a college in the modern sense. For instance, an “elementary student” could be advanced in Latin grammar; by contrast, a “college or university student” could be twelve years old.¹⁰³ An Italian-English dictionary

⁹⁸ Ibid., 40-41, 53, 73.

⁹⁹ Salomoni, "Women, Religion, and Education in Early Modern Italy: Some Case Studies (16th-18th C.)," 443.

¹⁰⁰ Ledóchowska, *Angela Merici and the Company of St. Ursula: According to the Historical Documents*, 1, XII-XIII.

¹⁰¹ Carlsmith, *A Renaissance Education: Schooling in Bergamo and the Venetian Republic, 1500-1650*, 146-47.

¹⁰² Baernstein, *A Convent Tale: A Century of Sisterhood in Spanish Milan*, 77.

¹⁰³ Carlsmith, *A Renaissance Education: Schooling in Bergamo and the Venetian Republic, 1500-1650*, 21.

of 1690 states that *collegio* refers to “a college, a society, a corporation, a brotherhood, or a consultation of physicians.”¹⁰⁴ Another dictionary of 1935 states that *collegio* is not college but boarding school. It further explains that “there is...no exact translation in Italian for our American college, which corresponds, roughly, to the *Liceo* or *Istituto Tecnico*.”¹⁰⁵ The third meaning of *collegio* is a political district in a municipal ward, as in *Il Collegio di S. Giovanni* (the Ward of S. Giovanni).¹⁰⁶ Second, some examples of *collegio* in history provide valuable information: the *Collegio San Giuseppe* was a public school in the parish of Pozzo Bianco until 1659; the *Collegio dei Covittori* was a residential school for boarding students.¹⁰⁷ Third, in the seventeenth century, schools did not mean a system of students, teachers, classroom facilities, and curricula. In view of the above findings, the *Collegio di Sant’Orsola* was less likely to provide college-level education for women.¹⁰⁸ It was likely to be a boarding sisterhood society to provide a form of public education for women, but without the modern sense of teaching facilities and classrooms.

The historian Christopher Carlsmith suggests that a loose definition of schooling instruction on an ephemeral basis would be more accurate in history.¹⁰⁹ Bergamo’s educational system exemplifies many trends in public education as a model for other

¹⁰⁴ John Florio and Gio Torriano, *Vocabolario Italiano & Inglese: Dictionary, Italian and English* (London: R. H. and W. H., 1690), COL58v.

¹⁰⁵ Rudolph Altrocchi, *Deceptive Cognates: Italian-English and English-Italian* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1935), 18.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ Carlsmith, *A Renaissance Education: Schooling in Bergamo and the Venetian Republic, 1500-1650*, 209.

¹⁰⁸ Some of Ursuline groups may have developed into colleges in the eighteenth century. See Mazzonis, “The Company of St. Ursula in Counter-Reformation Italy,” 50. See also, Lois Magner, *A History of Medicine*, 2nd ed. (Boca Raton, FL: Taylor & Francis, 2005), 202.

¹⁰⁹ Carlsmith, *A Renaissance Education: Schooling in Bergamo and the Venetian Republic, 1500-1650*, 19, 27.

small Italian cities and towns.¹¹⁰ Many places struggled to provide stable public education that lacked continuity.¹¹¹ Education, however, was a male privilege. By contrast, girls could receive some education at home or in the convent.¹¹² The *Collegio di Sant'Orsola* supposedly provided sporadic or seasonal education to local female students in a supportive manner, depending on the availability of female teachers.

Other similar Lombard institutions' referential information on how education was delivered¹¹³ further confirms the earlier assessment of the education at the *Collegio*. In the 1580s, attending school to receive spiritual, vocational, and academic instruction was a key part of the daily schedule under the rules of the girls' orphanage in Milan. Generally, female orphans had the standard choice of *maritar o monacar* (marrying or becoming nuns), while some male orphans were prepared to serve the community's religious needs.¹¹⁴ In addition, Carlsmith's research on schooling with Jesuits and Somaschans shows that religious institutions provided education in grammar, rhetoric, humanities, morality, Christianity, and lay subjects. However, the educational structure, content, and atmosphere reflected the impact of religious politics, in addition to the overall fluid and diversified schooling practices. Furthermore, the fundamental *ad hoc* nature and dramatic fluctuation in the fortunes of these schools led to mixed results and reviews. As a result, most schools had an ephemeral life span that rarely lasted more than a few decades, and

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 27-31.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 72-73.

¹¹² As an example of exception, Elena Cornaro Piscopia was the first female to earn a doctoral degree at the University of Padua in 1678. See *ibid.*, 13, 83.

¹¹³ Christopher Carlsmith states that Bergamo's schooling example illustrates a larger reality about the increasing role of education in early modern Italy, and how education was designed and delivered in Bergamo suggests some common educational patterns. Bergamo, Italy is fifty-eight miles away from Novara and thirty-three miles away from Milan. See *ibid.*, 253, 85.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 199-201.

whether they succeeded or failed became a difficult question.¹¹⁵ As a female religious institute, the *Collegio* was likely to be practical, but fluid in nature, adapting to the requirements of the diocesan authorities and the local needs. The *Collegio* also had advantages in religious politics to gain educational stability compared to other schools. During the years of Carlo Borromeo's bishopric, he put the order under the control of the prior-general, Gaspare Belinzaghi, of the Schools of Christian Doctrine. The fusion with the Schools of Christian Doctrine facilitated the *Collegio* to achieve its educational goal for women so that the Ursulines enjoyed more stability in its educational identity and expansion in Italy and abroad.

The educational stability of the *Collegio* was further strengthened by running two types of schools for girls with diverse backgrounds. In the mid-seventeenth century, the Ursuline schools with two types were possibly funded by the local municipality and wealthy nobles. The first type was fee-charging for rich nobles, where vernacular curriculum, arithmetic, domestic arts, music, dance, and painting were taught. The second type provided free education for the poor, where literacy or craftsmanship skills were taught. Their educational identity had formerly followed the model of the male educator teaching congregations, but they remembered their originality: promoted by women for other women. Therefore, the *Collegio* became the pioneer, social transformer, and innovator in women's education in early modern Italy and contributed to female literacy with the rapid economic development.¹¹⁶ The practicality and fluidity of the Ursulines' educational philosophy is reflected in their curriculum, which was divided for multiple

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 219-22, 87.

¹¹⁶ Salomoni, "Women, Religion, and Education in Early Modern Italy: Some Case Studies (16th-18th C.)," 444.

groups of girls—the opposite of having an integrated system in education. Their innovation in advancing the educational models ensured their success in women’s education with much greater stability.

An Overview of Nun Composers and Their Music, 1650-1700

During this long transitional period from Renaissance to Baroque, amateur and professional women musicians began to emerge and become more active. Although nun composers in the Baroque period never had the privilege of positions in music as men, they had an outlet to express themselves through music. However, most nun musicians quickly faded from music history after their first or second publication. As I discussed in the introduction, the widely accepted unrealistic expectancy for women composers’ musical output made critics analyze their music by putting it alongside that of the most famous male counterparts. Therefore, in assessing the musical achievements of Baroque nun composers, we must objectively consider obstacles and challenges that only women composers had to handle.

Seconda prattica, a new Baroque trend, could have been a “musical taboo” for nun composers. The academic argument over this modern compositional practice caused Archbishop Giovanni Artusi (ca.1540-1613) to call Monteverdi and this practice a “painted whore.” The *prima prattica* or *stile antico* was seen as dry, hot, healthy, and beautiful. In contrast, *seconda prattica* or *stile moderno* was wet, cold, and ugly like a sick woman.¹¹⁷ Temperature as a judgment for the quality originated from Aristotle’s

¹¹⁷ Epstein, “Melting the Venusberg: A Feminist Theology of Music,” 255.

notorious statement that the woman was a failed or deformed man,¹¹⁸ along with his explanation that natural heat made men much superior to women.¹¹⁹ As to the compositional practice of Leonarda and Peruchona's forerunner sister composer, Lucrezia Orsina Vizzana (1590-1662), Craig Monson finds that she managed to incorporate such illicit profanities into her sacred music inside the convent.¹²⁰ Other nun composers more or less applied the new practice to their music, since many convents gradually gained fame and became a social fad in tourism. In the case of seventeenth-century nun musicians, their physical invisibility, virtuosic music-making, and *seconda prattica* made them a mystical illusion.

Nun composers rarely wrote sacred music for *cori spezzati*.¹²¹ Limited by career choices, they had little access to the brilliant deployment of large instrumental or vocal performing forces. Hence, instrumental music, full-length operas, oratorios, and sacred pieces for large forces were not their focus, although a small number of them existed and survived.¹²² Practically, nun composers mainly composed for solo voice or small-scale ensembles, where they had complete access.

As an overview, nun composers of the second half of the seventeenth century worked closely with choirs in their own convents, and many of them were also singers in

¹¹⁸ Mireille Lee, *Body, Dress, and Identity in Ancient Greece* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 36.

¹¹⁹ Aristotle, *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation*, 1 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 1199.

¹²⁰ Epstein, "Melting the Venusberg: A Feminist Theology of Music," 257.

¹²¹ *Cori spezzati* (divided choir) was one of the Venetian identities inspired by the architectural features and acoustics. This style first emerged and flourished at St. Mark and was most frequently used in psalms for Vespers. Because *cori spezzati* compositions involve spatially separate choirs to sing antiphonally, they usually require a relatively large number of voices, making the sound effect majestic and grandiose. The development of this style eventually led to the emergence of the Baroque style.

¹²² Bowers and Tick, *Women Making Music: The Western Art Tradition, 1150-1950*, 5-6.

the conventual vocal ensemble, such as Chiara Margarita Cozzolani (1602-ca.1676) at Santa Radegonda in Milan. Her convent was the most famous one for its extraordinary music-making in the seventeenth century. Several other influential nuns from the house published music, such as Rosa Giacinta Badalla (ca.1660-ca.1710). Cozzolani's music circulated more widely than other local music of the time and reached Germany, France, and England.¹²³ She published four volumes of sacred music. Her last collection, *Salmi a otto voci concertati*, Op. 3 of 1650, was published in Venice, consisting of nine partbooks.¹²⁴

Most nun musicians from the second half of the seventeenth century only published one collection of music, including Maria Xaveria Peruchona (1652-1717), Rosa Giacinta Badalla, and Bianca Maria Meda (ca.1665-ca.1700).¹²⁵ As a typical example, Badalla published only one collection of solo motets in 1684, *Motetti a voce sola*.¹²⁶ In 1659, another Milanese nun composer and singer, Maria Cattarina Calegari (1644-ca.1675), published solo motets, *Motetti a voce sola* and later published six-voice Masses and Vespers. However, all of these collections have been lost.¹²⁷ The reason for the complete loss of her music may be attributed to the issue with her spiritual dowry and Archbishop Alfonso Litta's musical restrictions in the 1660s.¹²⁸ Maria Francesca Nascimbeni (1658-1680) was an exception in this category. She published only one

¹²³ Kendrick, *Celestial Sirens: Nuns and Their Music in Early Modern Milan*, 15.

¹²⁴ Jackson, *Say Can You Deny Me: A Guide to Surviving Music by Women from the 16th through the 18th Centuries*, 105-6.

¹²⁵ Bowers and Tick, *Women Making Music: The Western Art Tradition, 1150-1950*, 119.

¹²⁶ *The Norton/Grove Dictionary of Women Composers*, 32.

¹²⁷ Bowers and Tick, *Women Making Music: The Western Art Tradition, 1150-1950*, 118.

¹²⁸ *The Norton/Grove Dictionary of Women Composers*, 99.

volume of spiritual madrigals and other songs in 1675 before taking her vow of spiritual commitment when she was only seventeen.¹²⁹

Many nun singers composed music for their use in the convent in the form of manuscripts but never had a chance to publish. Meanwhile, most manuscripts and historical accounts did not survive, leaving no trace of their musical creativity or even their existence. In contrast, Isabella Leonarda is known to have published the most volumes of music as a woman in the seventeenth century. The following sections will introduce biographies of Leonarda and a relatively minor composer, Peruchona.

Biography of Isabella Leonarda (1620-1704)

In general, little is known about Isabella Leonarda's life. She was an Ursuline composer from the *Collegio di Sant'Orsola* in Novara, around thirty miles to the west of Milan in northwest Italy. The city of Novara joined the Lombard League in 1167, becoming a member of this alliance of Northern Italian towns. Since then, Novara had been dominated by Milan until 1714.¹³⁰ Like many other convents, the *Collegio* was dissolved after Napoleon's conquest of Northern Italy and the result of the French Revolution. Therefore, only a few financial and other documents survived. This biography is based on scattered historical facts discovered by many scholars (see Appendix A).

¹²⁹ Robert Kendrick describes her status as "soon to become a nun." See *The Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Music*, ed. Tim Carter and John Butt, The Cambridge History of Music, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 334.

¹³⁰ "Novara," in *Encyclopedia Britannica*, ed. Encyclopaedia Britannica Editors (June 9, 2011). <https://www.britannica.com/place/Novara-Italy>.

Leonarda was born Anna Isabella Leonarda on September 6, 1620. She was baptized on the same day in the cathedral of Novara, according to the baptismal records of the Diocesan Historical Archive of Novara.

Isabella Leonarda came from a noble family. Her last name Leonarda is a patronymic derived from her father. Her father, Giannantonio Leonardi, obtained degrees in law at the University of Pavia and the College of Doctors in Novara. He later married Apollonia Sala in the parish church of Casalino in the 1600s. Leonarda's uncle, Nicolò Leonardo (ca.1578-1644), also a Doctor of Law, became the canon protector of the Ursulines in the 1610s. The Leonardi family had at least five more children. Leonarda's elder brother, Gianpietro Leonardi, later became *canonico coadiutore* (canon coadjutor) at Novara Cathedral. Her younger brother, Gianfrancesco Leonardi II, became *decurione* (decurion) of Novara, collegiate doctor, and knight palatine. He eventually inherited the paternal noble title. His son, Nicolò Leonardi, being Leonarda's nephew, served as the "protector" of the Ursuline Congregation. Another younger brother of Leonarda, Gianbattista Leonardi, later became a canon at Novara Cathedral. Two sisters of Leonarda, Orsola Margherita Leonarda (1626-1699) and Anna Leonarda, are known to have entered the *Collegio di Sant'Orsola* and became Ursuline nuns.

Leonarda was an Ursuline nun at the *Collegio di Sant'Orsola* in Novara, where she lived until her death in 1704 at the age of eighty-four. In 1636, when Leonarda was sixteen years old, she entered the *Congregazione delle Vergini di Sant'Orsola* (The Congregation of the Virgins of St. Ursula) to prepare herself to enter the *Collegio*. Three years later, she professed vows upon examination by the Novarese bishop, Antonio Torielli, and officially became an Ursuline nun. She had seven positions in her lifetime

at the Ursuline convent, including *madre discreta* (Discreet Mother), *mater et cancelleria* (Mother and Clerk), *magistra musicae* (Music Teacher), *madre* (Mother), *Superiora* (Superior), *madre vicaria* (Vicar Mother), and *consigliera* (Counselor). The significance and responsibility of these positions are unknown. Although *Superiora* was supposedly the highest office at the *Collegio*, all these positions testify to Leonarda's musical and administrative achievements at the *Collegio* in Novara.

Most of Leonarda's musical activities are conjectural without specific evidence. Isabella might have studied music with Casparo Casati (ca.1610-1641) outside the *Collegio* and Elisabeth Casata at the *Collegio*. Historical reports confirm that Leonarda was able to sing, write, count, and compose at the *Collegio* in Novara. She was also an expert in *cantum firmum seu figuratum* (plainsong or figured song). In the 1650s, Isabella could use the Schola Cantorum vocal ensemble consisting of fifteen nuns, with which she might have tested her contrapuntal compositions. She may have taken the opportunity to let the *Collegio* choirs perform her works at services and Christian feasts. Perhaps inspired by the ensemble and her musical experiences at the *Collegio*, Leonarda published twenty collections of music, more music than any other female composer in the seventeenth century.

Biography of Maria Xaveria Peruchona (1652-1717)

This biography is based on documented historical facts and recent scholarship (see Appendix B). Maria Xaveria Peruchona was born in 1652 to Carlo and Margarita Parruchono in either Gozzano or Novara. Although her surname had many spelling variations, the surname Parruccone appeared in the Novarese area in the mid-seventeenth

century in connection with canons, notaries, pharmacists, and nuns. However, there is only a tiny chance that Peruchona's family was part of the connection. Peruchona may have learned music from Giovanni Battista Beria, organist of the Novara cathedral, and Giovanni Antonio Grossi, *maestro di cappella* of the Novara cathedral, before she entered the *Collegio di Sant'Orsola* in Galliate, which was six miles away from Novara. Her family may have resided in Novara to allow her to learn music from both musicians. On May 6, 1668, Peruchona took the veil at the *Collegio* in Galliate and became an Ursuline nun. By then, Francesca Caterina Cellana worked as an organist and composer in the convent, whose role was like *maestra di cappella*. Peruchona likely continued her music studies with Cellana. Around this time, Leonarda began to publish her first collections of works. Though both Ursuline institutes were close, there is no evidence to prove that Leonarda's publications ever inspired Peruchona to compose.

In 1675, Peruchona published her only surviving collection when she was only twenty-three years old: *Sacri concerti de motetti a una, due, tre, e quattro voci, parte con violini, e parte senza*, printed by Francesco Vigone of Milan. Peruchona dedicated this collection to Donna Anna Cattarina della Cerda, wife of the Novarese governor,¹³¹ who may be the sponsor of Peruchona's publication. The *status personalis* (Personal Status) of 1678 annotates that Peruchona dedicated herself to polyphonic singing. Including Peruchona, at least five other nuns at the *Collegio* knew *canto figurato* (modern notation). In the same year, however, Peruchona was in poor health. In 1690, Peruchona served at the office of *Prefectae educandarum* (Prefect of Education) to take care of the sick. Around the same time, she had already started teaching *canto figurato* in the house.

¹³¹ *Composers Born 1600-1699*, 8 vols., ed. Sylvia Glickman and Martha Schleifer, *Women Composers: Music through the Ages*, (New York: G. K. Hall, 1996), 225.

Scholar Lazaro Agostino Cotta comments in *Museo Novarese* of 1701 that Peruchona was an excellent music teacher and an esteemed singer.¹³²

Peruchona died on March 19, 1717, according to her death certificate dated March 20, 1717, which reads “Sister Maria Xavier Perruchona, Ursuline, about sixty-five years old.” On March 20, Peruchona’s body was buried in the common sepulcher under the altar of the internal church at the *Collegio*.

Lazaro Agostino Cotta mentions only two female composers in his *Museo*: Isabella Leonarda and Maria Xaveria Peruchona. Although Peruchona fell into the category of one of those Baroque female composers who only published one volume of music during her lifetime, she strived to achieve bold musical expression of theatrical effects at an early age.

As an Ursuline composer, Peruchona’s musical activities at the *Collegio* are primarily unknown. According to Graziano Sanvito’s record in 1678, three years after Peruchona’s publication, the choir at the *Collegio* was relatively small (six strong singers plus a small group of nun musicians with limited musicality), which would have restricted her creation of any polyphonic work to no more than six complex contrapuntal lines. James Bowers argues that the ensemble singing at the *Collegio di Sant’Orsola* in Galliate may have reached its peak around 1678 and then lost members. It could also have been reasonable to assume that Peruchona lost interest in composition because of their compromised vocal forces and the cruel reality at the *Collegio* in Galliate.¹³³

¹³² Chiti et al., *Soavissima Melodia: Maria Xaveria Peruchona Compositrice Del Xvii Secolo*, 18, 11.

¹³³ *Composers Born 1600-1699*, 226.

The Ursuline Lifestyle in Novara and Galliate

Since Leonarda and Peruchona lived in the *Collegio di Sant'Orsola* in two different areas of Novara, their institutes may have been independent of one another, as discussed earlier. However, the misunderstanding of the Ursuline tradition has existed for a long time. The following statement is a typical understanding of the Ursuline order, as stated in the booklet of an early audio recording of Ursuline choral works:

What is notable is that these groups dedicated to St. Ursula (later called Ursulines) were not monastic communities. The members did not make public profession of vows; they were not subject to the rules of monastic enclosure; they did not wear a nun's veil. The norm of life called for the members to make a commitment to a life of virginity, to continue to live with their families, to live lives of virtue and devotion and good works, to wear simple dress that often had some identifying aspect. In 17th century Italy communal living was not the rule for Ursulines, but the exception.¹³⁴

Many daughters of feudal noble families of Novara chose to reside at the *Collegio di Sant'Orsola* in either Novara or Galliate.¹³⁵ The Ursuline lifestyle in both towns can be reconstructed based on historical accounts, though incomplete and scattered. Appendix A and Appendix B are the sources of the historical accounts.

The history of the *Collegio di Sant'Orsola* in Novara started on March 27, 1583, when Battista Boniperti (1552-1610) found *Societas seu Congregatio Virginum sub titulo sanctae Ursulae* (Society or Congregation of the Virgins under Saint Ursula), approved by Bishop Bossi. Three virgins became the first Ursulines at the *Collegio*, and they lived with their families without observing the cloister. In 1586, eight Ursulines began to live in the community in a house in the parish of San Giacomo.

¹³⁴ Madeline Welch, Barbara Jackson, and Marnie Hall, *Baroque for the Mass: Ursuline Composers of the 17th Century*, CD Program Notes, LE 346, (University of Arkansas, 1982).

¹³⁵ Chiti et al., *Soavissima Melodia: Maria Xaveria Peruchona Compositrice Del Xvii Secolo*, 18, 25.

Around 1597, the noble Alberto Torielli of Lords of Vergano bequeathed his large house in the parish of Santa Eufemia to the Ursulines. The Ursulines then rebuilt and enlarged the property. Then they built their internal church with an organ installed and the external church in honor of the Holy Virgin Mary and Ursula's virgins and martyrs. The foundation became the noble college of the Ursuline virgins, which housed about thirty girls for education. Almost all of them came from aristocratic and wealthy families.

In 1625, the Acts of Visit reports that the Ursulines wore a white dress and a veil at home; they added black when they went out. In contrast, in 1658, the Acts of Visit reports that the Ursulines wore black sack dresses and a white veil. There was no difference between the professed and the novices.

A visitor reported that the virgins had too many feasts, in which they used expensive decorations of fine fabrics and precious silverware. Like other cloistered convents, the choir of the Ursuline nuns could not appear at the external church during these feasts. It was forbidden to let the attendants see the singing nuns.

After 1810, the Ursulines' complex was used for civilians. In the following year, the *Collegio di Sant'Orsola* in Novara officially closed.

In terms of the establishment of the *Collegio di Sant'Orsola* in Galliate, as early as 1625, some virgins began to live a monastic life and settled in the center of Galliate. In the canton of Porta San Pietro, they worked to build the *Collegio* and completed it by the end of the century (see Figure 1).¹³⁶ Around 1637, the double-church structure of the *Sant'Orsola e Teresa*, annexed to the convent of the Ursuline nuns, was completed. This

¹³⁶ Ibid., 24.

building was physically divided into two churches within a single nave: an internal church and an external one. In 1640, the *Collegio di Sant'Orsola* in Galliate started to welcome girls from Novara and the surrounding areas. The *Collegio* possessed civil buildings in the town and rural assets in the countryside. It became an important center of considerable economy in the area. After 1650, the progressive expansion of the convent with its excellent reputation allowed it to attract aristocratic and bourgeois daughters. In 1741, however, the architecture was renovated.¹³⁷

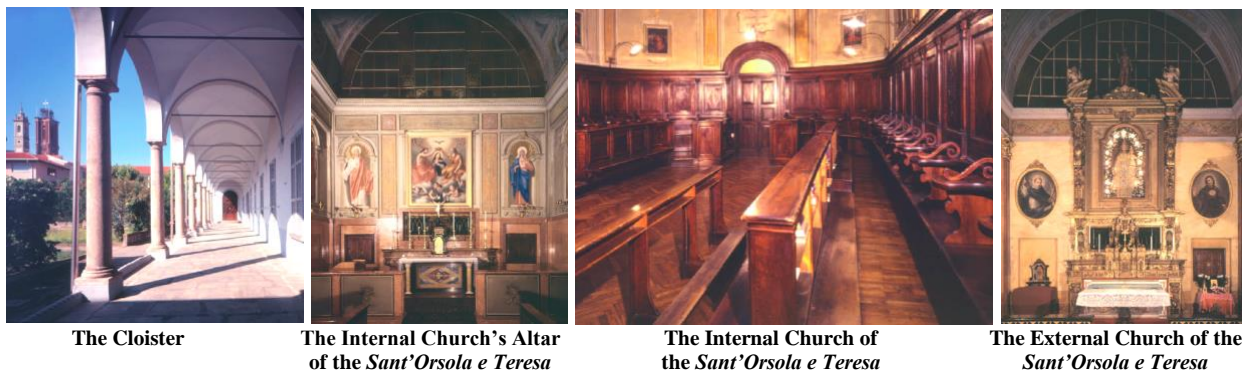


Figure 1. The *Collegio di Sant'Orsola* in Galliate¹³⁸

As confirmed by the draft dated December 24, 1630 by Galliate's curate and theologian, Giovanni Giacomo Gallarate (ca.1593-1650), Galliate Ursulines did not take solemn vows or observe *clausura* (claustration), but the *Collegio* was nothing less sacred than a cloistered convent. However, these Ursuline residents were allowed to have contact with acquaintances without supervision from the administration.¹³⁹ They could also leave the house for recreation or other business with a license or permission. Nevertheless, nuns were required to behave with great modesty outside the convent to

¹³⁷ "La Chiesa Delle Suore Orsoline," 2018, accessed April 10, 2022, <https://www.parcchiagalliate.it/chiese/la-chiesa-delle-suore-orsoline/>.

¹³⁸ See Chiti et al., *Soavissima Melodia: Maria Xaveria Peruchona Compositrice Del XVII Secolo*, 18, 37-40.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 27.

avoid scandals. For any nun who broke the rule, she would be deprived of the privilege of going out for a whole year.¹⁴⁰ The strict governmental control at the *Collegio* in Galliate negates the presumption that Ursulines were not subject to the rules of the monastic enclosure. On October 1, 1716, the *Collegio* began to require solemn vows from all Galliatese nuns. Previously, as long as the nun lived in the community, she could take a simple, informal vow.

To better understand the Ursuline lifestyle at the *Collegio*, it is necessary to refer to the second visit of the Novarese Bishop, Giovanni Battista Visconti (1644-1713), to the *Collegio di Sant'Orsola* in Galliate. Visconti's first visit to the same institute happened in 1690. However, the observation of his second visit was recorded in *Status generalis Virginum Sanctae Ursulae Oppidi Galliatii* (The General Status of the Virgins of Saint Ursula in the Town of Galliate), completed in May of 1709. This record was an essential reference to illustrate the lifestyle of the Galliatese Ursulines of the early eighteenth century.¹⁴¹ The document provides information about the administration of nuns' belongings. The *madre superiora* (Mother Superior) was responsible for managing nuns' dowries, including money and personal items that were kept in rooms allocated to different choirs. Nuns' personal items should not include superfluous things, such as mirrors, which were considered a sign of profane vanity. Regarding their appearance in the convent, nuns were required to obtain their Ursuline dresses at their own expense. The dress was black with a white headdress, veil, and personal linen. The document also explains how Galliatese nuns elected their *madre superiora* and other positions by secret ballot every two years.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 27, 33.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 26, 33.

Regarding the daily religious lifestyle of nuns, *status generalis* offers detailed descriptions. For instance, every day, all the choirs recited the Divine Office together in eight portions (Matins, Praise, First Hour, Third Hour, Sixth Hour, Ninth Hour, Vespers, and Compline). The virgins devoted themselves to mental prayer as a community twice daily in the morning and evening. They also observed silence in the church, the refectory, and at the end of the day. They went to confession every week and on solemn holidays. At the sound of the bell, all the nuns dined together in the refectory. The bell also signaled them when to sleep in a shared dormitory at the end of the day.¹⁴²

Robert Cardano's research on the Rule of Gallarate (about twenty miles from Novara and sixteen miles from Galliate) of 1630 shows the musical practice of Ursulines who resided in a neighboring town, where its austere atmosphere was previously affected by the Council of Trent:

The art of music may be the noblest and most esteemed of any art. One hears those sweet songs, those sweet trills, together with those organ touches, which makes terrible thoughts vanish. It brings beneficial remedies to the troublesome cares..., and it sometimes reaches Heaven with its mind. And today, the music on earth is so esteemed and more esteemed than in Heaven.... The cantors and *maestra di cappella* will have to prepare the motets in time.... The teacher will be diligent in teaching to sing for those who will learn, with charity and pleasantness, and to adjust the voices so that they do not make some dissonance when they sing in public. Those who want to learn musical art must have a strong chest, a clear voice, a variety of passages, affection in the accents, and gratitude in singing, not to waste time or the music has no effect. Those who sing with the organ should be careful to sing only spiritual things. Do not sing things invented only to entice the people.... Not to make a din of noise, so they are not heard by people. The organ or choir loft has its cloth or shelters so that the singers can sing and be heard but not seen.¹⁴³

This draft may provide a similar picture of musical activities at the *Collegio di Sant'Orsola* in Novara and Galliate.

¹⁴² Ibid., 26-27.

¹⁴³ This is the English translation of the original Italian text. See *ibid.*, 30.

Compared to other convents with strict enclosure, the open-convent model of newly established Companies may have provided these unenclosed and unmarried women with an economical way of life, such as teaching or weaving.¹⁴⁴ Companies also allowed unmarried Ursuline members to live in their own, paternal homes, common houses, or at the *Collegio*.¹⁴⁵ No matter where these Ursulines lived, they were not subjected to *clausura*, so they could move, teach, participate in church services, and make confessions.¹⁴⁶ Therefore, the Ursulines flourished and then became an alternative for elite women.¹⁴⁷

For the Ursuline model established in Brescia, Lombardy, the Company brought single women together and guided them to have a spiritual life without taking formal vows.¹⁴⁸ For women of the seventeenth century, however, taking simple vows allowed an additional possible option to live an unenclosed and unmarried life. This innovative female condition differed from the traditional views of women, who were typically either cloistered as nuns or married as wives. Gabriella Zarri uses *il terzo stato* (the third status) to define the status of the Ursulines in contrast to Alison Weber's term, "devout laywomen."¹⁴⁹ The appearance of the third status, therefore, marked Saint Angela Merici as a true innovative pioneer in granting unmarried women of early modern Italy some degree of physical freedom while shaping their religious lives.

¹⁴⁴ *The Cambridge History of Christianity: Reform and Expansion 1500-1660*, 474.

¹⁴⁵ Mazzonis, "The Company of St. Ursula in Counter-Reformation Italy," 49-50.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ Baernstein, *A Convent Tale: A Century of Sisterhood in Spanish Milan*, 182.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 40-41.

¹⁴⁹ Alison Weber, "Introduction Devout Laywomen in the Early Modern Catholic World: The Historiographic Challenge," in *Devout Laywomen in the Early Modern World*, ed. Alison Weber, Women and Gender in the Early Modern World (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2016), 1-2.

It seems that the *Collegio di Sant'Orsola* provided an ideal life for unmarried women; however, some Ursulines started tightening their regulations in the early seventeenth century. As Querciolo Mazzonis argues, recent studies on other female orders in Italy show that the relationship between the post-Tridentine Church and Christian women was highly complex. The popes and leaders of other religious orders were horrified that religious women like the Ursulines had the opportunity to stay in constant contact with laypeople; thus, the Council of Trent reaffirmed the necessity of claustration for religious women.¹⁵⁰ As soon as Merici died in 1540, Brescian ecclesiastics started to criticize the Ursulines, causing a split within the original community.¹⁵¹ As a result, Merici's original solutions for the organization were already modified to follow bishops' new rules, which led to changes in the governmental structure of the Ursulines.

A new emphasis on liturgical devotion and material service of their spiritual life was added to the interior piety of the Ursulines around the end of the sixteenth century.¹⁵² In turn, more rigorous restrictions were imposed on their everyday life as a consequence of partial male domination of the institute, a greater demand for virginity, a stricter public discipline, and the social prejudice inherited from "the medieval perception of female identity as both unstable and permeable to the supernatural" so that the Ursulines' active and secular lifestyle would still be seen as contemplative and monastically spiritual.¹⁵³

¹⁵⁰ *The Cambridge History of Christianity: Enlightenment, Reawakening and Revolution 1660-1815*, 7 (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 175.

¹⁵¹ Mazzonis, "Reforming Christianity in Early Sixteenth-century Italy: The Barnabites, the Somaschans, the Ursulines, and the Hospitals for the Incurables," 252.

¹⁵² Mazzonis, "The Company of St. Ursula in Counter-Reformation Italy," 54-56.

¹⁵³ The social prejudice on women was about their supposed "natural weakness," including, irrationality, sensuality, vulnerability, instability, undefinition, indeterminacy, disobedience, stubbornness, incorrigibility, greed, laziness, insolence, low concentration, and coldness. See *ibid.*, 54-61.

Even if the Ursulines enjoyed more freedom than conventual nuns, the modified rules regulated their behavior to such a high level that their privilege was limited to the minimum. According to Teresa Ledóchowska's research, two forms of the Ursuline Companies existed side by side until the suppression by Napoleon: the non-community Ursulines and the community Ursulines. At first, the number of Ursulines living in their familial homes multiplied as the Company expanded. However, a gradual shift happened towards the Ursulines living in communities, and they tended to live in a modified form of enclosure.¹⁵⁴ Although it was not a complete cloister like all other convents, and some reasons for leaving the enclosure were recognized, those regulations were quite strict. The following was the Ursuline regulation about leaving the house:

It is also permissible, two or three times a year, or at most four times, for the sake of a little exercise, recreation and reasonable relaxation, that the Sisters should take a walk outside the town but not outside the district, in a place where there are no crowds, especially of men. They will behave with great discretion and will always have the permission of the ecclesiastical superior; he, for his part, to make sure that the outing is reasonable and safe, will see that the Sisters are accompanied, if necessary, by a good and trustworthy person of mature age, chosen among the close relatives of one of the Sisters. As a further safeguard a suitable widow will be asked to go with them also.¹⁵⁵

Accordingly, "flexibility" in the enclosure or a so-called "non-enclosed" lifestyle for the Ursulines had its historical sense and was a relative concept, which may still be surprisingly strict with relation to their factual enclosure. However, even if most Ursulines' enclosure was only "marginally looser" than that of other convents, it was probably still one of the primary motives for young girls to join them.

¹⁵⁴ Teresa Ledóchowska, *Angela Merici and the Company of St. Ursula: According to the Historical Documents*, trans. Mary Neylan, 2 vols., vol. 2 (Rome: Ancora, 1969), 205-07.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 209-10.

Reasons for Isabella Leonarda's Success

My main question about Isabella Leonarda is what could have accounted for her success in becoming the most published female composer in the seventeenth century with nearly 200 surviving compositions, despite her disciplined life as an Ursuline nun. Our current understanding of Isabella Leonarda is primarily based on the research of 1982 by Stewart Carter without incorporating the latest research from other sources.

Isabella Leonarda was a singular phenomenon for her success as the most prolific female composer of seventeenth-century Europe, having nearly 200 compositions. Leonarda's success can be traced to various factors. First, she was born into a noble family that had already produced many officers working in the government or the local church,¹⁵⁶ which had laid a solid financial and social foundation for her potential. As Isabella's childhood had no surviving record, we can assume that she received early education, following a common practice in noble families. Significantly, the Leonardi family had early anticipation of the future religious life of their daughters, who were destined to give up their right of inheritance or patrimony.¹⁵⁷

Second, Isabella had a great and young composer-teacher, Gasparo Casati (ca.1610-1641), who taught music in her early years. Casati was only ten years older than Leonarda and was later appointed *maestro di cappella* at the Novara cathedral. The British musicologist, Jerome Roche (1942-1994), analyzed and praised Casati as one of the top figures in the early Baroque period. He further commented that even Monteverdi was following up on the stylish musical trend led by the new generation. By having a

¹⁵⁶ Bowers and Tick, *Women Making Music: The Western Art Tradition, 1150-1950*, 128.

¹⁵⁷ Emilie Baroffio, "La Compositrice Isabella Leonarda 1620-1704," *Novarien*, no. 47 (2018): 110.

youthful teacher who was constantly aware of the newest trends in music composition and was full of innovative ideas in composition, Isabella must have received possibly the best, the most up-to-date music education Novara could ever offer in the early seventeenth century.

Third, after entering the *Collegio di Sant'Orsola* in Novara, Isabella might have continued her music study with the locally famous Ursuline musician Elisabeth Casata (1598-after1658). The possible kinship between the new teacher, Elisabeth, and Gasparo Casati might have enhanced the teacher-student relationship and maintained a sort of smooth continuity in her study with Elisabeth's new perspectives. In addition, Elisabeth's musicality was evidenced to be at a high level because her spiritual dowry to enter the house was reduced by two-thirds.¹⁵⁸

Fourth, the *Collegio* remained exceptionally stable through her lifetime. In the previous chapter, I proved the *Collegio di Sant'Orsola* to be generally more stable than other institutes because many early modern schools could not last over a few decades due to their fundamental *ad hoc* nature.¹⁵⁹ The stability of her "second home," where she spent nearly seventy years, may have eliminated many negatives that could have profoundly affected her output.

Fifth, Leonarda's extensive teaching and working experience with the *Collegio's* Schola Cantorum undoubtedly contributed to her success. Most likely, the social and cultural environment in the Ursuline community helped Isabella continue to learn music

¹⁵⁸ The usual amount was 3,000 lire. See *ibid.*, 113.

¹⁵⁹ Carlsmith, *A Renaissance Education: Schooling in Bergamo and the Venetian Republic, 1500-1650*, 287.

during her first years of living and studying at the *Collegio*. Later, she probably started teaching, composing, and publishing music simultaneously.

Leonarda's free access to and control of the Schola Cantorum, as a fifteen-person vocal ensemble, allowed her to experiment with her compositions. Though the medium-high level of her ensemble did not allow her to experience complex counterpoint for *cori spezzati* with many parts, the choir was decent enough to handle difficult passages in four parts. Furthermore, the artistic level of Schola Cantorum regulated the difficulty level of Leonarda's output, making her sacred music more likely to meet the daily practical needs of many church choirs outside of the convent. The factors of practicality and accessibility in her liturgical and devotional music probably allowed her sacred music to circulate at a certain profitable level, which in turn encouraged her to continue composing and publishing more year after year.

Sixth, Leonarda had financial sources and crucial political connections to support her publications. First, her partial financial support may have come from a familial source. Second, she came from a noble family with relatives working as civic or church officials. In particular, her uncle Nicolò Leonardo was a religious authority for the Ursuline convent where Leonarda stayed. Moreover, Leonarda's nephew, Nicolò Leonardi (the son of Leonarda's younger brother, Gianfrancesco Leonardi II), later served as the "protector" of the Ursuline Congregation. These male relatives may have granted Leonarda political advantages to establish connections with many other political or religious figures. Some of them, accordingly, may have become financial sponsors for Leonarda's publications. Their names may be found in the long list of her dedicatees, including Maraviglia (1670), "Ill.mi Sig.ri" (1674), Trivultio (1677), Borromeo (1678),

Rangoni (1684), Manrique (1684), Leopold I (1686), Caccia (1687, 1693), Odescalchi (1690), Nazari (1695), Visconti (1698), and Avogadro (1700).¹⁶⁰ Among those names were the city fathers, the bishop of Novara, the archbishop of Milan, and Emperor Leopold I.¹⁶¹ The remaining names could be some nuns from wealthy patrician families or laypeople in governmental positions in Novara.¹⁶² Some dedications could also be understood as sincere tributes and diplomatic politics.

One significant advantage of staying at the *Collegio* was that nuns could have contact with acquaintances and other people outside the convent without being subjected to the control of the office.¹⁶³ In 1686, Leonarda was elected as *Superiora* for the first time by secret ballot. Having the highest post in the administrative office highlighted her political importance at the *Collegio*, which may also have opened a window of new opportunities for travel and publication. The *Collegio* of Novara was an institute for unmarried females, where Leonarda could have met and made connections with other aristocratic, wealthy sisters and their families from the city through its musical atmosphere. Her extensive networking can be confirmed by the fact that some of her compositions were dedicated to nuns from other convents and religious orders.¹⁶⁴

Despite Isabella's extensive financial resources, her budget was still limited due to the movable type printing used to print her original publications, first developed by Petrucci. This printing practice was relatively cheaper, and it made the music difficult to

¹⁶⁰ Carter, "The Music of Isabella Leonarda (1620-1704)," 291-309.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 18.

¹⁶² Baroffio, "La Compositrice Isabella Leonarda 1620-1704," 115.

¹⁶³ See Chapter 5.

¹⁶⁴ Sandra Soler, "Anna Isabella Leonarda (1620-1704): 400 Aniversario De La Brillante Compositora Del Barroco Italiano," [Anna Isabella Leonarda (1620 - 1704): 400th anniversary of the brilliant composer of the italian baroque.] *ARTSEDUCA* 25 (January 1, 2020): 106.

read, although more advanced printing forms already existed when Leonarda's music was published.¹⁶⁵

Seventh, the balance of discipline and freedom at the non-cloistered *Collegio* positively affected Leonarda's composing and publishing. The non-cloistered ambiance at the *Collegio* probably allowed Isabella Leonarda to overhear secular music trends outside the convent wall and keep her composition stylish enough to publish and circulate year after year. As the first woman composer to publish sonatas (*Sonate à 1. 2. 3. e 4. istromenti*, Op. 16 of 1693), Leonarda must have been inspired by her contemporaries' instrumental compositions outside of the *Collegio*, considering the challenging fact that women were excluded from jobs or profession as instrumentalists. Regarding the use of musical instruments in the ceremonies, organists and a violone player were identified in a document of 1658 by Serafina Domitilla Guidotta.¹⁶⁶ However, there is little evidence of instrumental music-making in Novarese convents of the seventeenth century except organ playing;¹⁶⁷ hence, there was not much chance that her instrumental music was performed inside the convent. Robert Kendrick's research shows that church officials regularly placed limitations on convents' music-making, including the use of musical instruments.¹⁶⁸ Moreover, Leonarda could have taken advantage of privileged freedom other cloistered nuns never enjoyed by traveling to many places and establishing connections to publish her musical works consistently.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 108-09.

¹⁶⁶ Baroffio, "La Compositrice Isabella Leonarda 1620-1704," 116.

¹⁶⁷ Isabella Leonarda, *Twelve Sonatas, Opus 16*, ed. Stewart Carter, Recent Researches in the Music of the Baroque Era, (Middleton, WI: A-R Editions, 2001), vii.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

Eighth, Leonarda worked very hard and was humble and spiritual. These personality traits exalted her talent to the highest degree. Spanning from 1638 to 1700, Leonarda was continuously composing and publishing. Regarding her modesty, she apologized for the weakness of her works in *Motetti con le litanie della Beata Vergine*, Op. 10, because she wrote them in a short period to not neglect her duty to the government.¹⁶⁹ In her publication of 1693, *Sonate à 1. 2. 3. e 4. istromenti*, Op. 16, when Leonarda was already seventy-three years old, she wrote the following:

*Beatissima Vergine, ... io non dò alle Stampe queste Musiche, per accreditarmi al Mondo, ma acciò da tutti si sappia esser io vostra Divota.*¹⁷⁰

Blessed Virgin, ...I do not give my music to the prints to accredit myself to the world but so that everyone may know I am devoted to you.

Leonarda's strong personal devotion and piety were also reflected in her motet texts. For instance, *Quam dulcis es* (How Sweet You Are) from the collection of 1684, *Motetti a una, due, e tre voci*, Op. 13, expresses:

If I sing, if I make sounds, they are songs through you.
With the music I give you, you take me back again.
I fashion melodious accents so that my harmonies magnify you.
Therefore, my music is always wholly yours, Virgin Mary. Amen.¹⁷¹

Carter's analysis of Leonarda's solo motets shows that her Latin or vernacular (Italian) texts are highly emotional, using the newly composed sacred, poetic language of earthly love in devotion.¹⁷² Moreover, almost all her collections carry a double dedication to the Virgin Mary and a highly placed living person.¹⁷³ Therefore, Leonarda's sincere

¹⁶⁹ Bowers and Tick, *Women Making Music: The Western Art Tradition, 1150-1950*, 128.

¹⁷⁰ Baroffio, "La Compositrice Isabella Leonarda 1620-1704," 113-14.

¹⁷¹ Pendle, *Women & Music: A History*, 111.

¹⁷² Stewart Carter, "Musical Form and Liturgical Function in the Late-Seventeenth-Century Motet: The Case of Isabella Leonarda" (paper presented at the XIV Convegno internazionale sulla musica italiana nei secoli XVII-XVIII, Brescia, Italy, 2007).

¹⁷³ Bowers and Tick, *Women Making Music: The Western Art Tradition, 1150-1950*, 128.

spirituality granted her the ability to compose sacred music at an emotionally affecting level, which heightened the overall artistry of her work.

Ninth, the *Collegio di Sant'Orsola* in Novara must have done a thorough job protecting its reputation with high standards of discipline in order to avoid all the threatening scandals about women.¹⁷⁴ If something shameful had ever happened to the organization, the church authorities eventually would have forced the convent to be subject to complete *clausura*. Because the *Collegio* maintained a high reputation, Leonarda lived life with enough freedom to support her creativity.

Tenth, Leonarda's publishers were from Novara, Milan, Bologna, and Venetia, among which she established a long-lasting relationship with the leading Bolognese publisher, the Monti firm, from 1677 to 1696. After 1677, Monti published nine volumes of Leonarda's music under either Giacomo Monti or Pier-Maria Monti. When the firm's name was subjected to change in 1690 after the death of Giacomo Monti, the business was then passed to his son Pier-Maria Monti.¹⁷⁵ Although some sources argue that her music was little known in other parts of Italy,¹⁷⁶ Leonarda's long-term relationship with the same publisher shows that Leonarda was a loyal client, and her music was probably profitable in Bologna at the time. Moreover, by having a constant publishing collaborator for such an extended period, their mutual trust must have been reinforced over time so

¹⁷⁴ The Galliatese Ursulines were not allowed to bring superfluous personal items to the convent, including mirrors. See Chapter 5.

¹⁷⁵ *Aspects of the Secular Cantata in Late Baroque Italy*, ed. Michael Talbot (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2016), 92.

¹⁷⁶ Carter, "The Music of Isabella Leonarda (1620-1704)," 23.

that the trifles involved in each new publication could be vastly reduced, making publishing music a fast, efficient, and straightforward routine for Leonarda.¹⁷⁷

Last but not least, it is my speculation that Leonarda worked to publish sacred music following the tradition of accomplished male composers in the position of *maestro di cappella*. First of all, there had been many nun composers who published music before Leonarda. As a musically talented woman, it was natural and understandable for her to follow or imitate other successful nun composers' musical routes in a well-established tradition in order to publish her first collections of music. However, merely following in the footsteps of other female composers would not have allowed her to publish as much music as she did. Thus, it probably required ambition and a personal breakthrough for Leonarda to realize her role as a composer of sacred music regardless of gender, especially when society considered women to be imperfect and weak. Therefore, she must have followed what those male composers could have done as *maestro di cappella* to constantly keep up with the trends and the domestic sacred music market. The self-awareness, diligence, courage, and confidence Leonarda must have had in herself to conquer the general thoughts that women did not have a soul were quite admirable. She took the risk even further by distancing herself from the gender stereotypes, took advantage of the "third status," and took a "defeminine" path of life that no other female musicians dared to experience.

¹⁷⁷ Leonarda's last two volumes of music were published elsewhere in Bologna after the last publishing collaboration with the Monti firm in 1696. The ownership change of the printing company probably damaged their relationship with Leonarda. For a long time, the Monti firm (under Giacomo Monti and Pier-Maria Monti) had collaborated with the Silvani firm on the music publishing business portion with the fact that the Silvani firm essentially bore most of the financial risk. In 1696, the owner of the Silvani firm, Marino Silvani (ca.1643-1710), married one of Monti's daughters and took over the firm's music part. Then, he continued to publish music under his own imprint. See Huub van der Linden, "Printing Music in Italy around 1700: Workshop Practices at the Silvani Firm in Bologna," *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 109, no. 4 (December 2015): 493.

In addition to the abovementioned factors and hypotheses, other smaller factors according to historical records may also have contributed to her achievements, such as her excellent health and Novara's generally open and tolerant religious-political environment.

So far, I have left one essential factor undiscussed: Leonarda's talent in composition. Not only did scholar Lazaro Agostino Cotta call Leonarda "the Muse of Novara," but he printed a sonnet by Amedeo Lucchese comparing Leonarda's musical skills to the military prowess of Emperor Leopold I.¹⁷⁸ In Cotta's *Museo*, Leonarda is listed as the most extended entry among all musicians,¹⁷⁹ which could more or less testify to her musical talents. In the following chapters, I will provide an overview of Leonarda's musical styles and analyze her selected choral music to discover her compositional style in detail.

¹⁷⁸ Carter, "Musical Form and Liturgical Function in the Late-Seventeenth-Century Motet: The Case of Isabella Leonarda," 288.

¹⁷⁹ *Composers Born 1600-1699*, 141.

Chapter 3: Musical Styles of Leonarda and Peruchona

An Overview of Choral Motets by Leonarda and Peruchona

Isabella Leonarda's choral output includes about forty Latin liturgical compositions for four voices with or without instruments. She also published 139 Latin non-liturgical compositions, primarily for one, two, or three voices, and only a few for four.¹⁸⁰ These non-liturgical works were known to serve private devotional services but could occasionally be used in Mass to replace some liturgical items, such as the Gradual, Tract, and Offertory. The use of non-liturgical motets was also possible in Vespers.¹⁸¹ Leonarda is assumed to be the author of these texts in her non-liturgical works because she completed two sonnets in honor of Emperor Leopoldo I.¹⁸²

Table 1 provides an overview of Leonarda's surviving masses and motets for three or four voices from various publications. The statistics show that Leonarda published four masses, sixteen motets for three voices (with or without instruments), and forty-eight motets for four voices (with or without instruments) in total. In line with Scacchi's classification, the motet was an essential type of vocal composition in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. More precisely, any sacred composition that was not part of the Mass, being non-liturgical, could be seen as a motet. At first, the name "motet" tended to signify its style as *stile antico* in the early seventeenth century. Later, Baroque motets gradually adopted other names, such as *concerti*, *sacri concerti*, and *sacrae cantiones*. In

¹⁸⁰ Baroffio, "La Compositrice Isabella Leonarda 1620-1704," 114.

¹⁸¹ Carter, "Musical Form and Liturgical Function in the Late-Seventeenth-Century Motet: The Case of Isabella Leonarda," 294-95.

¹⁸² Baroffio, "La Compositrice Isabella Leonarda 1620-1704," 115.

the late seventeenth century, the definition of motet expanded to cover *stile moderno*, including solo vocal works.¹⁸³

Table 1. An Overview of Leonarda's Choral Output

#	Collection	Year	Category
1	<i>Sacri concerti a una, due, tre, et quattro voci</i> , Op. 3	1670	Motet, Non-Liturgical, Spiritual Dialogue, Litany 3 Motets for Three Voices 8 Motets for Four Voices
2	<i>Messa, e Salmi, concertati, & a Capella con Istromenti ad libitum</i> , Op. 4	1674	Mass, Liturgical, Psalm, Magnificat, Litany 1 Mass for Four Voices and Two Violins 1 Motet for Three Voices 6 Motets for Four Voices 2 Motets for Four Voices and Two Violins
3	<i>Motteti a una, due, tre, e quattro voce</i> , Op. 7	1677	Motet, Liturgical, Non-Liturgical, Litany 1 Motet for Three Voices and Two Violins 3 Motets for Four Voices
4	<i>Vespro a Cappella, della Beata Vergine e Motetti Concertati</i> , Op. 8	1678	Motet, Liturgical, Non-Liturgical 1 Motet for Three Voices and Two Violins 8 Motets for Four Voices
5	<i>Motetti a quattro voci/con le litanie della B. V.</i> , Op. 10	1684	Motet, Liturgical, Non-Liturgical, Spiritual Dialogue, Litany 12 Motets for Four Voices
6	<i>Motetti a una, due, e tre voci</i> , Op. 13	1687	Motet, Non-Liturgical 5 Motets for Three Voices 1 Motets for Three Voices and Two Violins 1 Motets for Three Voices, Two Violins, and Violone 1 Motet for Four Voices
7	<i>Messe a quattro voci concertate con Strumenti, & Motetti à una, due, /e trè voci, pure con Stromenti</i> , Op. 18	1696	Mass, Liturgical, Non-Liturgical 3 Masses for Four Voices, Two Violins, and Violone 1 Motet for Three Voices, Two Violins, and Violone
8	<i>Salmi Concertati a 4 voci con Strumenti</i> , Op. 19	1698	Motet, Liturgical, Psalm, Magnificat, Non-Liturgical 1 Motet for Three Voices 1 Motet for Three Voices, Two Violins, and Violone 8 Motets for Four Voices, Two Violins, and Violone

¹⁸³ Carter, "Musical Form and Liturgical Function in the Late-Seventeenth-Century Motet: The Case of Isabella Leonarda," 287.

Maria Peruchona's only publication, *Sacri concerti de Mottetti* of 1675, includes eighteen Latin motets accompanied by basso continuo. Table 2 provides an overview of each motet's voicing and applicable religious occasion. Peruchona's compositions include four motets for three voices and seven motets for four voices. Except for *Regina Caeli*, which uses the liturgical text, all other motets use non-liturgical, new Latin text, which Peruchona herself may have written. Compared to Isabella Leonarda's *Vespro a cappella della Beata Vergine e motetti concertati* of 1678, all of Peruchona's motets, except one, are non-liturgical, whereas most of Leonarda's motets in the collection are liturgical. Therefore, the two collections served different musical and religious purposes. Jane Bowers argues that Peruchona may have intended her works to be used within the framework of liturgical services due to the wiggle room for non-liturgical motets to replace some liturgical items and Peruchona's description of the suitability of each motet to fit a particular feast.¹⁸⁴ For instance, Leonarda's masses, lacking *Sanctus* and *Agnus Dei*, are intrinsically ceremonial to allow other motets to substitute the missing items.

Table 2. An Overview of Peruchona's *Sacri concerti de Mottetti*

#	Title	Voicing	Occasion
1	<i>Solvite solvite</i>	S+2 violins+basso continuo	Motet for the Lord
2	<i>Ad gaudia ad iubila</i>	S+2 violins+basso continuo	Motet for Holy Christmas
3	<i>O quam dulce</i>	S ₁ S ₂ +2 violins+basso continuo	Motet for a Saint
4	<i>Vos aures suaves</i>	S ₁ S ₂ +basso continuo	Motet for Any Saint
5	<i>O vos omnes</i>	S ₁ S ₂ +basso continuo	Motet for the Lord
6	<i>Suspira dolores</i>	SB+basso continuo	Motet for the Lord
7	<i>Laetare triumphata</i>	SB+basso continuo	Motet for Holy Christmas
8	<i>O superbi mundi machina</i>	S ₁ S ₂ TB+basso continuo	Motet for the Municipality
9	<i>Praecipitate o perfidi</i>	S ₁ S ₂ B+basso continuo	Motet for the Lord
10	<i>Propera veni dilecte mi</i>	SAT+basso continuo	Motet for the Lord
11	<i>Plaude plaude</i>	SAT+basso continuo	Motet for a Saint
12	<i>Regina caeli</i>	SAT+basso continuo	Liturgy
13	<i>Cessate tympana</i>	SATB+basso continuo	Motet for the Resurrection
14	<i>Congaudete mecum gentes</i>	SATB+basso continuo	Motet for the Assumption of the Madonna
15	<i>Quid pavemus sorores</i>	SATB+basso continuo	Motet for the Madonna

¹⁸⁴ *Composers Born 1600-1699*, 226.

Table 2. An Overview of Peruchona's *Sacri concerti de Mottetti*

#	Title	Voicing	Occasion
16	<i>Victoria victoria</i>	SATB+basso continuo	Motet for the Resurrection of the Lord
17	<i>Loquere caelestes aulice</i>	S ₁ S ₂ AT+basso continuo	Motet for the Holy Spirit
18	<i>Gaude plaude</i>	S ₁ S ₂ AB+basso continuo	Motet for the Holy Virgin and Mary

Secularization in motets and other sacred genres that pervaded Italian Catholic churches in the early Baroque period is reflected in Leonarda and Peruchona's sacred works. Essentially, secularization was an exploration of emotions in music. In favor of the Counter-Reformation, creativity and individuality in music-making were discouraged in order to neutralize the aftermath of the Protestant revolution. However, both Ursuline composers understood what was missing in the traditional liturgies.

Stylistic Trinity in Leonarda's Sacred Choral Music

Although the prosperity of opera in Venice after 1650 led to the peripheralization of sacred choral music,¹⁸⁵ sacred music-making in convents remained an exception, being a tourist attraction. The second half of the seventeenth century roughly marks the period between the death of Claudio Monteverdi in 1643 and before the first publication of Antonio Vivaldi around 1705.¹⁸⁶ The following sections explore the compositional features of Leonarda and Peruchona's liturgical and devotional music.¹⁸⁷

The Renaissance music tradition and its central philosophy, Renaissance humanism, had a long-lasting influence on the early stages of Baroque music. Along with

¹⁸⁵ Chester Lee Alwes, *A History of Western Choral Music: From Medieval Foundations to the Romantic Age*, vol. 1 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 157-87.

¹⁸⁶ Vivaldi, ed. Michael Talbot (New York: Routledge, 2016), 396.

¹⁸⁷ This chapter skips the introduction to Isabella Leonarda and Maria Xaveria Peruchona. Their detailed biographies are in the following chapters.

the new trends and radical innovations, the early Baroque composers began to use dramatization to express an ideal range of affections through *secunda prattica*. However, scholars such as Silke Leopold oppose generalizing about Renaissance and Baroque music¹⁸⁸ because the evolving progress and transition of music were diverse in terms of region, pace, level, and attitude. Distinct styles, new genres, and old genres had coexisted for a long time, except for the Sistine Chapel, where the vocal polyphony was cultivated exclusively in the style of Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (1525-1594),¹⁸⁹ representing *prima prattica* (also as *stile antico*) as the authority of the Renaissance classic. *Secunda prattica* (also as *stile moderno*) became the Baroque marker—the new monodic style associated with the genres of oratorio, cantata, and opera.¹⁹⁰

Concerning the theories of the time, an influential Roman musician, Marco Scacchi (ca.1600-1662),¹⁹¹ had an equal appreciation for *stile antico* and *stile moderno*. His publication of 1649, *Breve discorso sopra la musica moderna* (Brief Discourse on Modern Music), provided a new three-fold classification system of the contemporary musical styles: *stylus ecclesiasticus* (church style), *stylus cubicularis* (chamber style), and *stylus scenicus seu theatralis* (theatrical or dramatic style). Under *stylus ecclesiasticus*, the four subdivisions are (1) masses, motets, etc. for four to eight voices without organ,¹⁹²

¹⁸⁸ Silke Leopold, *Monteverdi: Music in Transition*, trans. Anne Smith (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1991), 36.

¹⁸⁹ For example, monody managed to replace the polyphonic madrigal and became the new sociable custom. However, by the middle of the seventeenth century, Monteverdi's early collections of five-part madrigals were still in print. See *ibid.*, 146.

¹⁹⁰ Alwes, *A History of Western Choral Music: From Medieval Foundations to the Romantic Age*, 1, 165-66.

¹⁹¹ Marco Scacchi spent decades as Kapellmeister at the Warsaw court and brought the Italian trend to the North. See David Damschroder and David Williams, *Music Theory from Zarlino to Schenker: A Bibliography and Guide*, ed. Joel Lester, vol. 4, Harmonologia, (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon Press, 1990), 299.

¹⁹² The first subdivision is the polyphonic a cappella style of Palestrina.

(2) polychoral works with organ, (3) works in *concerto* with instruments, and (4) motets and *concerti* in modern style and *stile misto* (mixed style) or *recitativo imbastardito* (hybrid recitative). Scacchi admired the diversity of styles and opposed everyone writing music in the same Palestrina style.¹⁹³ Thus, he supported the integrity of both pluralized musical styles. This classification had become a default until the eighteenth century. This idea was also borrowed and developed by many other theorists.¹⁹⁴

Though the new compositional practice was stylish and innovative, Isabella Leonarda's masses and motets seem to have embraced the ideology of Marco Scacchi. Leonarda's repertory canon proves that she understood the contemporary bipartite styles that separated music into ancient and modern. Both *stile antico* and *stile moderno* appear in Leonarda's sacred music. In addition, as a stylistic compromise, she also composed in *stile misto* throughout her lifetime. Formed of these three styles, Leonarda's stylistic trinity became the identity of her sacred music. In contrast, Peruchona composed exclusively in *stile moderno*.

Stile antico is a crucial feature throughout Leonarda's career as a composer. Even in Leonarda's late compositions of 1698, one can still find her appreciation for *stile antico* under the guise of concerted style. For example, Leonarda's *Confitebor* (I Confess) from *Salmi Concertati a 4 voci con Strumenti*, Op. 19 is composed for SATB mixed choir, two violins, organ, and violone (or theorbo). At the beginning of this piece, Leonarda indicates "*con Violini se piace*" (with violins if you like). In addition, the written-out

¹⁹³ Paul Collins, *The Stylus Phantasticus and Free Keyboard Music of the North German Baroque* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2016), 5-7.

¹⁹⁴ These theorists are Angelo Berardi (ca.1636-1694), Christoph Bernhard (1628-1692), and Johann Mattheson (1681-1764). See *ibid.*, 7-8.

violin primo and violin secondo double alto and tenor parts one octave higher respectively (see Example 1); the basso continuo always doubles the lowest part in unison.

Example 1. Leonarda, *Confitebor* (1698), mm. 53-62

The image shows a musical score for Example 1, Leonarda's *Confitebor* (1698), measures 53-62. The score is written for voice and instruments. The vocal parts are in the upper staves, and the instrumental parts are in the lower staves. The lyrics are: - ra Do- mi - ni ex-qui - si - ta in om- nes in om- nes Ma - gna o-pe - ra Do- mi - ni ex - qui - si-ta Ma-gna o - pe - ra Do- mi - ni Ma - gna o - pe - ra Do-. The score includes a basso continuo part at the bottom. A red circle highlights the first measure of the vocal parts. A blue arrow points from the first measure of the vocal parts to the first measure of the basso continuo. A purple box highlights the first measure of the vocal parts. A blue box highlights the first measure of the basso continuo.

Although the employment of instruments in church music was already common in Leonarda's time, her compositional technique of limiting the practice of *colla parte* (doubling or replacing voice parts) was an old tradition of *cori spezzati* or *salmi spezzati* that began in the late Renaissance period. The modern theory of orchestration considers that unison doubling thickens or muddies the sound, and octave doubling adds color and transparency to the sound.¹⁹⁵ Leonarda evidently uses the instruments to establish a pyramidal sonority regarding the balance of the choral sound, where the lower parts are generally louder than the upper parts. The continuo thickens the lowest part as the

¹⁹⁵ Samuel Adler, *The Study of Orchestration*, Fourth ed., ed. Justin Hoffman (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2016), 258-59.

harmonic foundation of the choir; the tenor and alto parts doubled by the violins an octave higher become louder but transparent. There is no sonic enhancement in the soprano part. Therefore, the darkened lowest part will slightly dominate the overall sound, and the soprano part should be slightly quieter compared to the alto and tenor parts to form a pyramid-shaped balance. As the violins are optional and not independent, *Confitebor* is essentially in *stile antico* under the disguise of *stile moderno*, despite the use of continuo.

An Overview of Leonarda and Peruchona's Formal Structure

Formally speaking, the Renaissance *stile antico* tends to maintain a musical flow that is intrinsically smooth, continuous, uniform, and integrated. However, the Baroque *stile moderno* not only delivers a contrasting effect but more of a disruptive sonority in various dimensions. Therefore, it breaks the smooth musical flow so that the music becomes discontinuous and disintegrated compared to *stile antico*. Eventually, these disruptive devices in *stile moderno* became a new cohesive system of musical idioms in early Baroque music, including formal structure.

Leonarda and Peruchona's music in *stile moderno* can usually be divided into sections, some of which may be as short as a few measures. The sectional writing or the multi-section structure is a significant feature of their compositions, highlighting the contrasting change of musical ideas and their variety.

Regarding formal structure, Leonarda frequently uses double lines to divide concertato music into sections (see Example 2); however, Leonarda's liturgical works in *stile antico* usually do not use double lines. She probably treats the double line as a mark to separate two contrasting entities in *stile moderno*. Leonarda's compositions in *stile*

misto do make use of double lines to signify sections, but in a less consistent way. As a musical example in *stile misto*, *Lauda Jerusalem Dominum* of 1678 inserts two rhythmically contrasting sections in a *stile antico* motet, in which Leonarda uses double lines to signal the concerted sections. This psalm has five distinctive and contrasting sections, “chapel—concertato—chapel—concertato—chapel,” forming a scheme in quasi-concertato style. However, the lack of a supporting instrumental group and its overall “chapel” nature make it more of a hybrid. Leonarda puts this psalm under the category of *prima prattica*, which can probably testify to the hypothesis that a hybrid compositional philosophy is embedded in Leonarda’s version of *prima prattica*.

Leonarda’s sacred compositions in *stile antico* are usually through-composed and Palestrina-like with an added continuo. They often have a single section where the beginning of a new verse frequently overlaps the cadential point (the end) of the previous verse, where a new theme, often fugal, appears.

Peruchona does not use double lines at all in her motets for three voices or four voices. However, she only uses them to mark sections in motets for solo or two voices. Other than the use of double lines, poetic structure is usually the decisive factor for both

Example 2. Leonarda, *Messa prima*, Op. 18, *Kyrie*, mm. 1-13, Canto (Soprano)

The image shows a musical score for Soprano Canto. At the top, it reads "MESSA PRIMA à 4. voci con v.v." and "Canto. 1". Below this, the word "Kyrie" is written in a large, decorative font. The score is written on a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The tempo/mood is marked "Tutti." at the beginning and "solo." after a double bar line. The lyrics are: "Yrie eleison Ky-ri-e e-le-i-son e-le-i-son ele-i-son e-le-i-son". A red box highlights the double bar line that separates the "Tutti" section from the "solo" section.

Ursuline composers to divide their music into sections. Each section typically features a single verse and is independent from others, unified by its own rhetorical gestures (rhythmic, melodic, and thematic-textual gestures), although reuse of the same thematic material happens. Here is a list of formal factors to consider the contrast between two sections if a double line is not present: key, tempo, meter, texture, character (agitato/cantabile contrast), new strophe/verse, thematic material (along with rhythmic feature), homophonic/polyphonic style, performing force (solo/tutti contrast), ostinato (chaconne or passacaglia), and cadence.

Although Leonarda's music is driven by the multi-section scheme, several sections may share one theme. For example, *Kyrie I* from *Messa prima*, Op. 18 has three internal sections. However, all three sections mainly present one musical idea. The first section, mm. 1-5, as the introduction, is a thematic reduction of the upcoming theme sung

Example 3. Leonarda, *Kyrie I*, mm. 1-43, Thematic Coherence

The image displays a musical score for Leonarda's *Kyrie I*, mm. 1-43, illustrating thematic coherence. The score is divided into five systems, each with a different performing force and tempo marking:

- System 1 (mm. 1-5):** Canto, *Adagio Tutti*. The melody is marked with red circles around the notes G4, A4, B4, C5, and B4.
- System 2 (mm. 6-8):** Canto, *Spiritoso*. The melody is marked with red circles around the notes G4, A4, B4, and C5. The lyrics are "Ky-ri - e e - le - i - son e - le - i - son".
- System 3 (mm. 9-23):** Violino Primo, *Spiritoso*. This system features a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes.
- System 4 (mm. 24-26):** Canto, *Spiritoso Tutti*. The melody is marked with red circles around the notes G4, A4, B4, and C5. The lyrics are "Ky-ri - e e - le - i - son e - le - i - son".
- System 5 (mm. 27-43):** Violino Primo, *Spiritoso Tutti*. This system features a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. A red circle highlights the final note, C5, which is connected by a blue arrow to the C5 note in the first system.

Blue arrows connect the red-circled notes across the systems, demonstrating the reuse of the same thematic material (the G-A-B-C-B motif) in different contexts and tempi.

by the soprano (see Example 3). The second section, mm. 6-23, is a spiritual dialogue between the soprano and violins. The third section, mm. 24-43, is choral tutti using the same dialogue scheme. Through thematic repetition and coherence, the multi-section structure becomes an integrated unity, as discussed above. In those three sections, Leonarda obtains contrasts in several aspects without developing thematically: tempo, solo(s)/instruments, tutti/instruments, harmony in the continuo, and key modulation.

Leonarda is relatively conservative when it comes to the exploration of tonality. Although many sections are distinct in thematic material, these sections may be unified through a common tonal center. Tonal deviation in Leonarda's music is usually ephemeral. In comparison, Peruchona's motets visit neighboring tonal centers more frequently in a manner of tonal oscillation.

Stylistic Comparison: Magnificat by Leonarda and Her Contemporaries

Magnificat expresses Mary's joy at seeing Jesus's incarnation. In the Baroque period, the passion (emotion) of the texts is emphasized compared to the Renaissance ideology. However, Leonarda's setting of 1678 purposely moves away from the popular style of the time (*stile moderno*), giving the motet an aspect of solemnity and devoutness.

Leonarda's *Magnificat* is in the key of D due to the consistent use of F-sharp and C-sharp, though A major is briefly explored as D's dominant. In the Baroque period, D major was widely regarded as the "Key of Glory," as many trumpet concertos are in D for being the key of natural trumpets and open-stringed violins.¹⁹⁶ A critical characteristic

¹⁹⁶ Wilfrid Mellers, *Celestial Music?: Some Masterpieces of European Religious Music* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2002), 67.

of this *Magnificat* is homogeneity in the musical texture and flow with minimal harmonic contrast so that the listener is more likely to focus on the delivery of the Latin text, complying with the result of the Counter-Reformation. As a result, clear worshiping texts and older traditions of Palestrina-like musical perfection are emphasized.

Compared to other works published around 1678, Table 3 summarizes the compositional devices found in the following works: (1) Maurizio Cazzati's *Magnificat* Op. 37, No. 11, from *Messa e salmi a 4 voci con 2 violini obbligati*, published in 1666, (2) Giovanni Legrenzi's *Magnificat* Op. 5, No. 13, from *Salmi a cinque, trè voci, e due violini*, published in 1657, (3) Tarquinio Merula's *Magnificat* Op. 18, No. 15, from *Il terzo libro delli salmi et messa concertati a tre et a quattro con Istromenti & senza*, published in 1652, (4) Chiara Margarita Cozzolani's *Magnificat* Op. 3, No. 8 and No. 9, from *Salmi a otto voci concertati*, published in 1650, (5) Giovanni Battista Fasolo's *Magnificat* from *Beatus Vir e Magnificat anima mea*, published in 1650, (6) Giovanni Paolo Colonna's *Magnificat* Op. 12, No. 10, from *Psalmi ad Vesperas*, published in 1694, and (7) Giovanni Antonio Rigatti's *Magnificat* from *Messa e Salmi ariosi a tre voci concertati*, published in 1648.

Table 3. Stylistic Comparison of *Magnificat*

Composer	Year	Performing Force	Concertato Style	Instrumental Obligato	Soli/Concertino vs. Tutti/Ripieno	Meter Change	(M2/m2) Dissonant Cadential Point Corelli Clash	Rapid Declamation of Text	Sudden Textual Change	<i>Stimmtausch</i> (Voice Change)	<i>Stile Agitato</i> (Agitated Style)	Antiphonal Imitation	Fugal Section
Isabella Leonarda	1678	SATB, Continuo	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	√
Isabella Leonarda	1698	SATB, V ₁ V ₂ , Continuo	√	√	√	√	×	√	√	×	√	√	√
Giovanni Paolo Colonna	1694	S ₁ S ₂ ATB+ S ₁ S ₂ ATB, V ₁ V ₂ A-Vla T-Vla, Continuo	√	√	√	√	×	√	√	√	×	×	√
Maurizio Cazzati	1666	SATB, V ₁ V ₂ , Continuo	√	√	√	√	×	√	√	×	×	×	√

Table 3. Stylistic Comparison of *Magnificat*

Composer	Year	Performing Force	Concertato Style	Instrumental Obligato	Soli/Concertino vs. Tutti/Ripieno	Meter Change	(M2/m2) Dissonant Cadential Point Corelli Clash	Rapid Declamation of Text	Sudden Textual Change	<i>Stimmtausch</i> (Voice Change)	<i>Stile Agitato</i> (Agitated Style)	Antiphonal Imitation	Fugal Section
Giovanni Legrenzi	1657	SAB, V ₁ V ₂ , Continuo	√	√	√	√	×	√	√	×	×	×	×
Tarquino Merula	1652	SATB, Continuo	√	×	√	×	×	√	√	×	×	×	×
Chiara Margarita Cozzolani	1650	S ₁ S ₂ A ₁ A ₂ T ₁ T ₂ B ₁ B ₂ , Continuo	√	×	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	×
Giovanni Battista Fasolo	1650	S ₁ S ₂ ATB, Continuo	√	×	√	√	×	√	√	√	×	√	√
Giovanni Antonio Rigatti	1648	S ₁ S ₂ B+ SATB, V ₁ V ₂ , Continuo	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	×	×	×

The stylistic comparison shows that through the entire second half of the seventeenth century, all surveyed composers used the concertato style, rapid declamation of text, and sudden textural change as standard compositional devices. It also seems that Cozzolani and Leonarda, both as nun composers, prefer to use the agitated style and antiphonal imitation in their *Magnificat* settings more than male composers. What's more, this comparison further proves Leonarda's capacity to master both *prima prattica* and *seconda prattica*. Although Leonarda's *Magnificat* of 1678 seems anachronous among all surveyed works, the whole collection of Vespers aims at spirituality, practicality, and commerce with the influence of the Counter-Reformation to be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 4: Score Analysis and Performance Practices

The Conundrum in Tenor and Bass Parts

It is common to find that nun composers primarily published music for mixed choir with consideration of the music market—probably for better commercial circulation. Although some historical records mention that some female singers could sing the bass line at pitch, it was not a universal phenomenon. For example, according to the German theorist and composer Johann Mattheson (1681-1764), *Santa Maria della Pieta* (one of the *ospedali grandi*) had an alto who could sing the bass part.¹⁹⁷ Public treble choirs were still rare compared to the music industry in the early Baroque period. This is speculation in commerce, as no original manuscripts used for convent choirs survived due to the dissolution and destruction of convents in the late eighteenth century.¹⁹⁸ As a result, nun composers may have rearranged their music to fit the standard SATB setting with occasional options allowing flexible performing forces, which could attract more potential buyers. For example, voice parts labeled *Canto o Tenore* and the use of optional vocal and instrumental *ripienos* indicate that the music could be performed in various ways depending on the availability of local vocal and instrumental resources.¹⁹⁹

Transposing vocal parts was a common practice in the late sixteenth century and after to improve practicality. Gioseffo Zarlino (1517-1590) and Lodovico Zacconi (1555-1627) talked about the natural *ambitus* of the voices in their treatises. As a result, singers

¹⁹⁷ Heller, *Music in the Baroque: Western Music in Context*, 158-59.

¹⁹⁸ *From Convent to Concert Hall: A Guide to Women Composers*, 65.

¹⁹⁹ *Vesper and Compline Music for Four Principal Voices*, ed. Anne Schnoebelen, ed. Jeffrey Kurtzman, *Seventeenth-Century Italian Sacred Music: In Twenty-Five Volumes*, (New York: Routledge, 2013), viii.

could set their pitch level for a piece to make it most comfortable for their voices with or without instruments. It would, accordingly, require instrumentalists to be capable of transposing.²⁰⁰

Historical terminologies also hinted at the possibility of transposing vocal parts. For example, high clefs or *chiavette* required transposition associated with the theory of clef-codes.²⁰¹ As another example defined by Nicola Vicentino in Book Four of *L'antica musica ridotta alla moderna prattica* of 1555, a piece with *a voce mutata* was formatted as ATTB. This piece was originally scored SATB with its soprano part transposed down to form a second tenor part.²⁰² Likewise, in Zarlino's treatise *Le istituzioni harmoniche* of 1558, the musical terms *voci mutate* and *voci pari* mean "for changed voices" and "for equal voices," respectively.²⁰³

Current scholarship extensively focuses on the possibility of "restoring" nuns' music originally composed for the all-female choir. Scholars have found evidence to support the rewriting process. For instance, Claudia Rusca (1593-1676) was an Italian nun composer at the Umiliate monastery of Santa Caterina in Brera. In her publication of 1630, *Sacri concerti*, she provides practical information in the preface on how to restore the music for treble choir from the printed mixed choir version. Her rubrics mention the following:

Importante la notazione sulla tavola che riporta la prassi conventuale di eseguire i mottetti a otto in tre cori anziché due: Motetti, & Magnificat à 8. concertati; Il Tenore del Primo Choro si può cantare in Soprano, come facciamo nella nostra

²⁰⁰ Jeffrey Kurtzman, *Studies in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Italian Sacred Music* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2014), 3-5.

²⁰¹ *Companion to Medieval and Renaissance Music*, ed. Tess Knighton and David Fallows (New York: Schirmer Books, 1992), 279-81.

²⁰² Anthony Carver, *Cori Spezzati: The Development of Sacred Polychoral Music to the Time of Schütz*, 2 vols., vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 9.

²⁰³ Simon Ravens, *The Supernatural Voice: A History of High Male Singing* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2014), 61.

*Chiesa, & lo facciamo fare un choro da per se; sì che vengono poi ad essere a tre Chori.*²⁰⁴

The notation on the table is important, showing the conventual practice of performing motets in eight [voices] in three choirs instead of two: Motets, & Magnificat à 8. Concertati; the Tenor of the First Choir can be sung in [the range of a] Soprano, as we do in our Church, & we make a choir on itself; so it then becomes three choirs.

The preface of *Salmi boscarecci* of 1623 by Ignazio Donati (ca.1570-1638) also gives practical information on transposition. These rules are (1) some parts can be omitted; (2) if there are not enough sopranos, a tenor can sing the first soprano, placed some distance from the principal tenor; (3) Nuns can sing the bass an octave higher, making a contralto part. Since Donati worked in Novara in the early seventeenth century, his statement about this practice may have referred directly to Novarese convents, including the *Collegio di Sant'Orsola*. In 1625, two Novarese convents boasted about their nuns who could sing tenor.²⁰⁵ It proves the application of Donati's practice in both convents. Therefore, transposing the tenor or bass line one octave up was an authentic performance practice that occurred in history.

Conversely, current scholarship has ignored the possibility that the nun composer might have originally composed and published music for the mixed choir. This hypothesis negates transposing vocal parts to restore the original version for the treble choir, as the original version was first made for the mixed choir. First, it is expected that through the process of "restoration," the rewritten version still follows all the compositional requirements of the period. Therefore, this new setting is supposed to be the original

²⁰⁴ See Claudia Francesca Rusca, *Sacri Concerti*, PDF ed. (Trascrizione di Lorenzo Girodo, 2016), [https://imslp.org/wiki/Sacri_concerti_\(Rusca%2C_Claudia_Francesca\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/Sacri_concerti_(Rusca%2C_Claudia_Francesca)).

²⁰⁵ See the *Collegio's* historical timeline at Biographical Summary of Isabella Leonarda and Related Historical Events

music composed and performed by the nun composer at the convent. Although transposing the tenor or/and the bass up an octave has been a standard practice for the nuns' choir, it could violate the Baroque rule in the continuo line.

It is necessary to review Robert Kendrick's approach to classifying nuns' choral music into four types.²⁰⁶ Type I is a high-voice concertato work. Female singers can perform it without transposition. Similarly, Type III is a small-scale low-voice piece (ATB). Transposing the entire piece up a fifth or an octave to fit the range of a treble choir better will not cause any compositional problem. In history, most bass gamba players could have transposed their parts up a fourth to take advantage of a brighter timbre of the higher strings in the sixteenth century.²⁰⁷ This common practice in instrumental tuning supports the possibility of transposing the whole piece up to facilitate the singing register.

However, the transposed version may draw attention when it comes to the octave transposition for Type II or Type IV. Type II is a work using a single low voice with one or two high voices (CB/CCB), and its corresponding solution is to transpose the low voice up an octave. By contrast, Type IV is a large-scale concertato work (SATB/SSAATTBB). It is supposed to transpose the bass line up an octave while maintaining other parts as written.

Considering how the low lines fit in female voices, Type II and Type IV solutions seem to work. However, Baroque vocal music usually involves a basso continuo. If the continuo doubles the lowest line in a section, the continuo becomes less significant. The

²⁰⁶ Kendrick, *Celestial Sirens: Nuns and Their Music in Early Modern Milan*, 203.

²⁰⁷ Tharald Borgir, *The Performance of the Basso Continuo in Italian Baroque Music*, *Studies in Musicology*, (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1987), 71.

evidence of how Monteverdi treats an extra continuo line shows that the continuo line itself is less independent in the part-writing. For example, Monteverdi first began to use figured bass in his Fifth Book of madrigals in 1605, but when he reprinted the Fourth Book, initially published in 1603, he added basso continuo lines ten years later to his a cappella works retrospectively.²⁰⁸ In this case, Monteverdi “recomposed” the basso continuo based on the preexisting a cappella works. Historically, the organists, harpsichordists, or luteists would sometimes play directly from the lowest-sounding voice part, filling in the texture where necessary.²⁰⁹ Therefore, the bass continuo was invented with the dependence on the lowest voice to provide a chordal accompaniment. In addition, Agostino Agazzari’s basso continuo treatise of 1607 states:

Playing the work as simply and correctly as possible...supporting the voices by occasionally doubling the bass in the lower octave, and constantly avoiding the high registers while the voices, especially the sopranos and falsettos, are occupying them...to avoid, as far as possible, the same note the soprano is singing...not to double the voice part and obscure the goodness of the said voices.²¹⁰

Accordingly, it is unfavorable if the basso continuo doubles the top voice. It can be assumed that it is also unfavorable if the continuo interferes with the inner voices, making the texture obscure or causing one inner voice to stick out of the overall texture. For example, an excerpt from Leonarda’s *Messa seconda* Op. 18 is a Type IV case that may violate Agazzari’s rule on the basso continuo (see Example 4). First, the basso continuo line follows the bass voice strictly until mm. 96 when the tenor line becomes the lowest

²⁰⁸ *The Early Baroque Era: From the Late 16th Century to the 1660s*, ed. Curtis Price (UK: Macmillan Press, 1993), 10.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 9.

²¹⁰ Dennis Shrock, *Performance Practices in the Baroque Era: As Related by Primary Sources* (Chicago: GIA Publications, 2013), 58.

Example 4. Leonarda, *Messa seconda*, Op. 18, *Kyrie*, mm. 92-96

92

Adagio Presto

Chri-ste e-le-i-son e-le-i-son e-le-i-son e-le-i-son Chri-ste e-

Chri-ste e-le-i-son Chri-ste e-le-i-son Chri-ste e-

Chri-ste e-le-i-son e-le-i-son e-le-i-son e-le-i-son Chri-ste e-

#3 b3 6 4 #3 #

voice in the first three quarter notes. Following the Type IV solution by transposing the bass line up an octave, in mm. 92-95, the bass continuo line will mostly double the top voice as the transposed bass voice. Thus, the transposed bass line becomes a new melodic line above the alto. In this two-voice situation, after transposition, the basso continuo doubles the top voice, resulting in unfavorable sonority according to Agazzari's taste. If the voice-crossing causes the basso continuo to double the top voice, it becomes problematic and a compositional error. Leonarda could never have composed a piece in its original form to allow the basso continuo to double a top vocal line, even if this excerpt only lasts a few measures. There is no reason to believe that Leonarda's convent ever performed the all-female version with such a compositional mistake.

The same compositional mistake may become worse if it involves complex voice-leading. The following excerpt continues *Kyrie* to the subsequent four measures (see Example 5). The actual lowest part will change if we still transpose the bass voice up an octave by following the Type IV solution. The transposed bass part will thus relocate somewhere between the soprano and tenor parts, forming a new inner part. Therefore, the continuo will correspondingly have to double this inner part. Example 6 demonstrates the recomposed continuo line to follow the actual lowest voice of the choir after transposition. In mm. 98, the transposed bass line briefly doubles the soprano, leading to an awkward effect. In just nine measures of music, the transposition of the bass vocal line has caused

Example 5. Leonarda, *Messa seconda*, Op. 18, *Kyrie*, mm. 97-100

Example 5 shows a musical score for measures 97-100. The score includes vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and a continuo line. The lyrics are: "e-le-i-son e-le-i-son Chri-ste e-le-i-son e-le-i-son". A red box highlights the bass line in measure 98, and a red arrow points to the soprano line in the same measure, indicating a transposition or doubling effect.

Example 6. Leonarda, *Messa seconda*, Op. 18, *Kyrie*, mm. 97-100, Recomposed Continuo

Example 6 shows the recomposed continuo line for measures 97-100. The score is in bass clef and 4/4 time. The notes are: 97: G4, A4, B4, C5; 98: G4, A4, B4, C5; 99: G4, A4, B4, C5; 100: G4, A4, B4, C5.

several problems, making the “recomposition” distort Leonarda’s original music and intention. It is doubtful that Leonarda wished the restored all-female version to be performed with many compositional errors like this.

In conclusion, transposing the bass up an octave may lead to the following problems. (1) The transposed bass may relocate above the top line and become a new melody, causing the continuo line to double the melody. (2) The transposed bass may relocate and become an inner voice around the tessitura of A and T, causing the original continuo to double an inner voice and overpower other parts. (3) The basso continuo line will not follow the actual lowest voice in the new texture. However, a recomposed basso continuo line will usually change the harmonic structure of the piece. (4) The overall texture may become dense and less transparent. The actual lowest voice may become fragmented and awkward caused by voice-crossing. As a result, the rhetorical features may change for the worse. (5) The denser texture may produce new dissonances that would have probably agitated the Baroque ears.

Although nuns practiced transposition in their ensembles and the above-mentioned problems may have been tolerated by the Baroque ears, the question regarding compositional errors and the distortion in the music remains unanswered. For modern performers, I suggest that conductors proceed with transposition and restoration of the all-female version with extra caution to avoid basso continuo issues. If the attempts to restore nuns’ music by simply transposing the bass up actually distort the music and the composer’s intention, performing the original mixed-choir version as is may be a better solution.

Leonarda: Vespro a cappella della Beata Vergine e motetti concertati, Op. 8

The *Vespro a cappella della Beata Vergine e motetti concertati*, Op. 8 by Isabella Leonarda was published in 1678 by the publisher Giacomo Monti in Bologna. This collection is one of the three volumes dedicated to the canon of Vespers: Op. 4, Op. 8, and Op. 19.

Leonarda underlines two distinct styles in the title of this collection: psalms in the chapel style and motets in the concertato style. This volume contains eleven psalms and motets, seven of which are for use in Vesper’s liturgy, and the last four are devotional motets (see Table 4). Leonarda focuses more on the psalms than the modern motets in this collection, which may be interpreted as her wishing to emphasize the central position of the traditional Vespers. The most sacred music heard in the seventeenth century, however, was not intended for traditional services but paraliturgical ceremonies.²¹¹ Understanding what the congregation would enjoy, Leonarda composed four modern concertato motets in trend attached to the end of this volume as a “bonus” to add to the core of the tradition. It eventually turns out to be a “Vespers for all” collection, which embraces spirituality, practicality, and commerce; its variety in style becomes a byproduct.

Table 4. Vesper Psalms in *Vespro a cappella della Beata Vergine*, Op. 8

Title	Performing Force	Meter	Tempo Implication ²¹²
1. <i>Domine ad adiuvandum</i>	SATB+Organ	C ⇒ C	Slow in 4 ⇒ Medium in 2
2. <i>Dixit Dominus</i>	SATB+Organ	C	Medium in 2
3. <i>Laudate pueri Dominum</i>	SATB+Organ	C	Medium in 2
4. <i>Laetatus sum</i>	SATB+Organ	C	Medium in 2
5. <i>Nisi Dominus</i>	SATB+Organ	C	Medium in 2

²¹¹ Heller, *Music in the Baroque: Western Music in Context*, 88.

²¹² This is one possible interpretation of the tempo and time, see the explanation in Shrock, *Performance Practices in the Baroque Era: As Related by Primary Sources*, 115-29.

Table 4. Vesper Psalms in *Vespro a cappella della Beata Vergine*, Op. 8

Title	Performing Force	Meter	Tempo Implication ²¹²
6. <i>Lauda Jerusalem Dominum</i>	SATB+Organ	$3/2 \Rightarrow C \Rightarrow 6/4$ $\Rightarrow C \Rightarrow 3/2$	Slow in 3 \Rightarrow Slow in 4 \Rightarrow Slow in 2 \Rightarrow Slow in 4 \Rightarrow Slow in 3
7. <i>Magnificat</i>	SATB+Organ	\mathcal{C}	Medium in 2
8. <i>In Caelis personent</i>	SATB+Organ	$3/2 \Rightarrow C \Rightarrow 3/1 \Rightarrow 6/4$	Slow in 3 \Rightarrow Slow in 4 \Rightarrow Very slow in 3 \Rightarrow Slow in 2
9. <i>Sicut turtur</i>	SAB+V ₁ V ₂ +Organ	$C \Rightarrow 3/4$ (Largo) $\Rightarrow C$ $\Rightarrow 3/2 \Rightarrow C$ (Allegro)	Slow in 4 \Rightarrow Slow in 3 \Rightarrow Slow in 4 \Rightarrow Slow in 3 \Rightarrow Fast in 4
10. <i>Tua sum mi Jesu</i>	S+Organ	$C \Rightarrow 3/4 \Rightarrow C \Rightarrow 3/2$ $\Rightarrow C \Rightarrow 3/4 \Rightarrow 12/8$	Slow in 4 \Rightarrow Medium in 3 \Rightarrow Slow in 4 \Rightarrow Slow in 2 \Rightarrow Slow in 4 \Rightarrow Medium in 3 \Rightarrow Medium in 4
11. <i>Dulcis amor</i>	S+Organ	C (Largo) $\Rightarrow 3/4$ $\Rightarrow C$ (Adagio) $\Rightarrow C$ (Aria) $\Rightarrow C$ (Largo) $\Rightarrow 6/8$	Slow in 4 \Rightarrow Medium in 3 \Rightarrow Medium in 4 \Rightarrow Medium in 4 \Rightarrow Slow in 4 \Rightarrow Fast in 2

The relationships between sections with regard to tempo are confusing to modern performers. Additionally, Leonarda does not use time signatures consistently, and sometimes she even uses different signs simultaneously.²¹³ Table 4 provides one possible interpretation of the fractional time signatures according to some Baroque musicians and theorists. In Leonarda's *stile antico* psalm settings, the tempo should be maintained throughout the piece. However, if there are tempo changes, the contrast should not disturb the musical flow. As in *Domine ad adiuvandum*, the tempo change occurs at mm. 3 after the fanfare-like opening. However, if a full stop is added before mm. 3, it may create an unnecessary textural contrast. In *Lauda Jerusalem Dominum*, though a liturgical setting, *stile misto* is intended and thus, contrasts need to stand out to highlight its sectional structure.

Stewart Carter identifies that this collection provides settings of the psalms required for Vespers on the most important feast days of the year. Especially, *Dixit Dominus*, *Laudate pueri*, *Laetatus sum*, *Nisi Dominus*, and *Lauda Jerusalem* are all

²¹³ Leonarda, *Twelve Sonatas*, Opus 16, ix.

included in Op. 8 to meet the ends of feasts of the Blessed Virgin and other female saints.²¹⁴ This supports the hypothesis that Leonarda's collection partially aims at practicality for being relatively reserved in the compositional technique.

Due to the work's natural simplicity, Leonarda has achieved outstanding balance in melodic activity: each voice is equally active in her contrapuntal writing. Combined with its liturgical practicality, Leonarda's Vespers, Op. 8 may have been influenced by Palestrina's musical intelligibility in *prima prattica* and the musical decision of the Council of Trent. In this section, I aim to analyze Leonarda's compositional devices in detail.

Domine ad adiuvandum (1678 & 1698)

The opening G major triad is in a fanfare-like chordal style (Example 7). The use of chordal style in psalms is popular among seventeenth-century composers. For instance, Ignazio Donati (1570-1638), Giovanni Battista Biondi da Cesena (fl.1605-1630) and

Example 7. Leonarda, *Domine ad adiuvandum* (1678), mm. 1-9

The image shows a musical score for the beginning of 'Domine ad adiuvandum' by Leonarda. It features five staves: Canto, Alto, Tenore, Basso, and Organo. The music is in G major and 3/4 time. The vocal parts enter with a G major triad (G-B-D) in the first measure. The lyrics are: Canto: Do-mi - ne ad a-diu-; Alto: Do-mi - ne ad a-diu - van-dum me fe - sti-; Tenore: Do-mi - ne ad a-diu - van-dum me fe - sti - na Do-; Basso: Do-mi - ne ad a-diu - van-dum me fe - sti - na. The organ part provides harmonic support with a similar triad and a bass line starting on G.

²¹⁴ Carter, "The Music of Isabella Leonarda (1620-1704)," 112-14.

Maurizio Cazzati (1616-1678) all open their *Domine ad adiuvandum* in a similar chordal style (Example 8 and Example 9), following which the contrapuntal material is introduced. Leonard's version of 1698 employs *seconda prattica* and opens with a lightly ornamented block chordal style (Example 10). After a three-measure alto solo, block chords come back. The contrast between block chords and a solo line makes the introduction in concertato style.

Example 8. Donati, *Domine ad adiuvandum*, mm. 1-4

The musical score for Example 8, Donati's *Domine ad adiuvandum*, measures 1-4, is presented in 13/8 time. It features a vocal ensemble and a Ripieno doppio di Voce & Instrumento. The vocal parts (Canto, Sesto, Alto, Tenore, Quinto, Basso) enter with block chords, while the instrumental parts provide a rhythmic accompaniment. The lyrics are "Do-mi-ne ad a-diu-van-dum me fe-".

Vocal Parts:

- Canto:** Do-mi-ne ad a-diu-van - dum me fe-
- Sesto:** Do-mi-ne
- Alto:** Do-mi-ne
- Tenore:** Do-mi-ne ad a-diu-van - dum me fe - sti-
- Quinto:** Do-mi-ne
- Basso:** Do-mi-ne ad a-diu-van-dum me fe-

Ripieno doppio di Voce, & Instrumento

Tutti

Instrumental Parts:

- Canto Secondo e Violino:** Do-mi-ne *Tutti*
- Sesto Secondo e Violino:** Do-mi-ne *Tutti*
- Alto Secondo e Violino:** Do-mi-ne *Tutti*
- Tenore (II) e Trombone:** Do-mi-ne *Tutti*
- Quinto Secondo e Trombone:** Do-mi-ne *Tutti*
- Basso (II), e Trombone:** Do-mi-ne
- Basso Per l'Organo:** (Bass line)

Example 9. Cesena, *Domine ad adiuvandum*, mm. 1-3

Musical score for Example 9, showing vocal parts and organ. The score is in common time (C) and features five staves: Canto o Tenore, Alto, Tenore, Basso, and Basso per l'Organo. The lyrics are: Do- mi- ne ad a- diu- van- dum, ad a- diu- ne. Do- mi- ne. Do- mi- ne ad a- diu- van- dum. Do- mi- ne.

Example 10. Leonarda, *Domine ad adiuvandum* (1698), mm. 1-5

Musical score for Example 10, showing instrumental and vocal parts. The score is in common time (C) and features seven staves: Violin I, Violin II, Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass, and Basso Continuo. The lyrics are: Do - mi-ne Do - mi-ne. Do - mi-ne Do - mi-ne ad ad - iu - van - dum me. Do - mi-ne Do - mi-ne. Do - mi-ne Do - mi-ne. Do - mi-ne Do - mi-ne. The score includes a double bar line and a repeat sign, with a fermata over the final measure of the first system. The Basso Continuo part has a fingering of 5 and a 43# marking.

One of the outstanding features in Leonarda's music is how she develops the thematic material in *stile antico*. Rather than repeating the same musical idea, Leonarda chooses to develop an idea into a variety of patterns, which allows the music to develop actively and create a musical flow. Although composing *prima prattica* works is seemingly out of date for Leonarda's time, her creativity maintained high artistic standards.

The development of the theme itself has an imitative nature horizontally (see Example 11). The *dux* in the tenor first presents a three-measure fugue-like subject, and

Example 11. Leonarda's Thematic Development

The image displays a musical score for four parts: *dux/tenor*, *comes 1/bass*, *comes 2/alto*, and *comes 3/soprano*. The *dux/tenor* part is the primary theme, with several notes circled in red. Blue and purple arrows connect these notes to corresponding notes in the other parts, illustrating thematic development and imitation. The *comes 1/bass* part starts with a strict restatement of the theme a fifth lower. The *comes 2/alto* and *comes 3/soprano* parts also show imitative entries with variations in rhythm and pitch.

immediately, the counterpart²¹⁵ starts to imitate itself in the subsequent two measures for the first time by repeating the essential rhetorical gesture, adding passing tones, and varying the rhythm. The second-time imitation coming next becomes even bolder compared to the first-time imitation: the opening gesture of leaping down a perfect fifth is reiterated at a higher pitch level, which allows the melodic line to reach the zenith of the whole phrase, the high F-sharp. Then it falls with a word-painting melismatic passage on “*festina Domine*” (make haste, Lord).

The *comes 1* is in the bass. It opens with a strict restatement of the theme in the *dux* a fifth lower for two measures; then, the line starts to invert the statement, explores the low A on “*festina*” and becomes the first-time exposure of this falling melismatic passage. It allows the bass to lead other parts to imitate this feature with variations one after another. The soprano line (*comes 3*) has two falls one after another, heightening this deliberate figure of “haste.”

²¹⁵ When the *dux* completes its thematic statement, the free melodic writing in this line placed against the theme in other parts is the counterpart.

The above analysis is to consider the thematic materials linearly. If we put them together harmonically, there are even more discoveries. The falling bass line in mm. 5 may give the illusion that the bass line turns into a new *dux*, which prepares the imitation in other parts. In mm. 7-8, the composite melodic fragmentation connects three falls together, making it a grand musical moment (see Example 12). Moreover, if we use a treble choir to perform this excerpt with the bass line transposed up an octave, the impression of a long composite melody will be much smoother and more effective. At first, the transposed bass picks up the falling line from the soprano at G4 and completes the one-octave fall. As soon as the transposed bass hits C4, through register transfer (register displacement) up an octave that occurs simultaneously, the line is again carried over by the soprano to begin its second fall in mm. 8. Therefore, the sense of notes falling is tripled and lengthened by interaction between two voices. The analysis testifies to Leonarda's meticulous care in her contrapuntal writing in *prima prattica* linearly and harmonically.

Example 12. Leonarda, *Domine ad adjuvandum*, mm. 6-8 (S/B)

The image shows a musical score for three parts: Soprano, Transposed Bass, and Bass. The Soprano part is in treble clef, the Transposed Bass is in treble clef (representing the original bass line transposed up an octave), and the Bass part is in bass clef. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The Soprano part has a melodic line with a large slur over measures 6-8. A blue arrow points from the Soprano part down to the Transposed Bass part, and another blue arrow points from the Transposed Bass part up to the Soprano part, illustrating the register transfer and interaction between the two voices.

Therefore, Leonarda's *Domine ad adjuvandum* of 1678 shows that her contrapuntal technique is applied in several dimensions. (1) The counterpart in the *dux* line continues to develop the thematic material in free imitation. The imitation then

deviates increasingly to enhance a greater figure along with a significant text. (2) The theme can be divided into small musical units for imitation and expansion. (3) The upcoming restatements in other parts slowly evolve the thematic material; the counterparts develop the thematic units in free imitation. (4) The interplay between imitative, non-imitative units, and free inversion leads to a grand musical moment.

Carter claims that Leonarda usually starts with a new point of imitation when a psalm finishes one verse.²¹⁶ Although this is a common practice in many Renaissance compositions, Leonarda probably wishes to use this device to create contrast between verses with new thematic materials. Using similar or the same materials will reduce the distinction. Therefore, Leonarda's compositional attempt to create more contrast and distinction within one piece is essentially based on the concept of *seconda prattica* or the compositional philosophy in *stile misto*.

Leonarda's newer setting of *Domine ad adiuvandum* of 1698 brings spiritual ecstasy to another level, which uses the first violin, the second violin, violone or theorbo, and organ. Her notes to the collection add that the violone or theorbo and organ are coincident and transcribed on the same line, except for the first motet *Domine ad adiuvandum*. The whole set of Vesper psalms is characterized as *seconda prattica* due to the use of contrasting performing forces, including a small instrumental group. There is no need to restart a verse with a complete stop each time in the new setting because the application of *seconda prattica* already allows sonic contrast between *sinfonia* and vocal forces, dissimilar enough to maintain drama and structural clarity.

²¹⁶ Carter, "The Music of Isabella Leonarda (1620-1704)," 117.

The closing section of the newer *Domine ad adiuvandum* leads its expression to climax with a burst of melismas (see Example 13). The “closing Amen” brings a prayer to completion according to Christian liturgical usage, which means “it shall be so” or “so

Example 13. Leonarda, *Domine ad adiuvandum* (1698), mm. 99-106

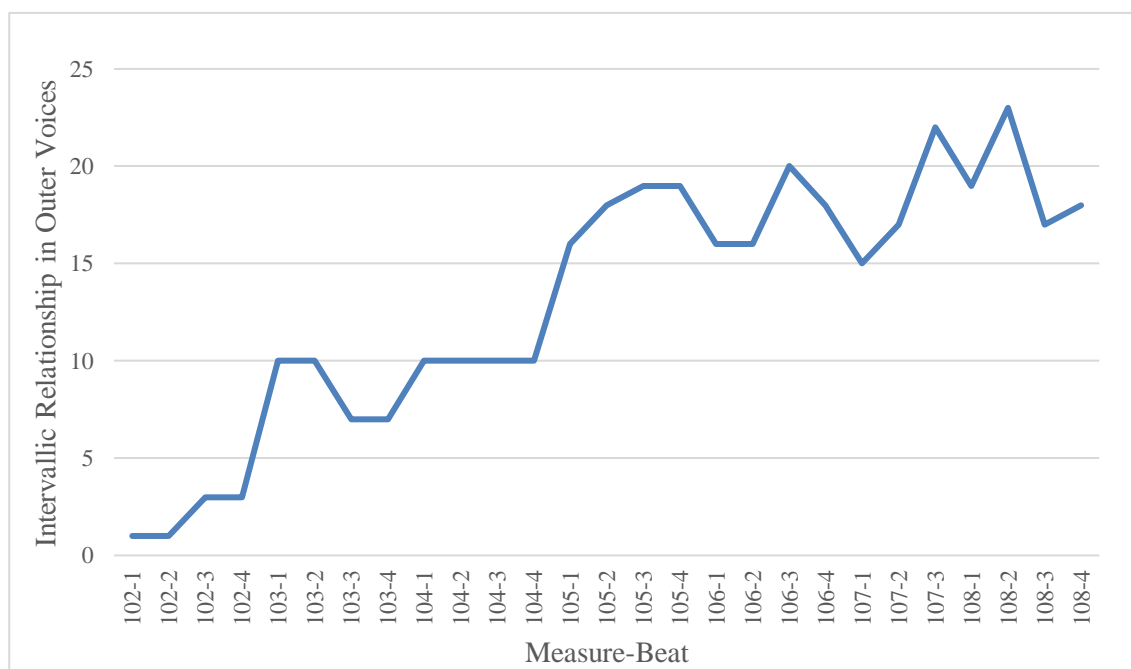
The image displays a musical score for Example 13, consisting of two systems of staves. The first system includes staves for Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), Bass (B), and Bassoon (Bc.). The second system includes staves for Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), Bass (B), and Bassoon (Bc.).

Key features of the score include:

- Measures 100 and 105:** Indicated by the number '100' above the Soprano staff and '105' above the Soprano and Bassoon staves.
- Melismas:** Red boxes highlight specific melismatic passages in the vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and the Bassoon part. These passages consist of rapid, repetitive rhythmic patterns.
- Annotations:** Blue arrows point from the vocal parts to the corresponding melismatic passages in the Bassoon part, indicating the instrumental accompaniment of the vocal melismas.
- Lyrics:** The lyrics 'A - men, a -' are written below the vocal staves, corresponding to the melismatic passages.

be it” in Hebrew, being the answer from the community as co-participants in the ritual²¹⁷ to the prayer of the church leader. Leonarda uses a textural crescendo in imitation at the beginning of this Amen section. Although all polyphonic works with parts entering at different points of the time, one after another, naturally produce textural crescendo effects, Leonarda’s intention of stretching the range of outer voices maximizes this aural experience. Principally, the duo violins join the vocal ensemble and function as the extra range extender for the human voice after the entry of all four vocal parts. The first violin doubles the alto line an octave higher, and the second violin doubles the tenor part an octave higher. If we calculate the interval between outer voices at each beat (excluding the continuo) in mm. 102-108, Leonarda progressively expands the range of the closing section for a pronounced textural crescendo effect (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Range Expansion in Outer Voices, *Domine ad adiuvandum* (1698), mm. 102-108



²¹⁷ *The Language of Turn and Sequence*, ed. Cecilia Ford, Barbara Fox, and Sandra Thompson, Oxford Studies in Sociolinguistics, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 51.

Another dramatic device that Leonarda applies here is the extensive use of imitative, virtuosic melismas of sixteenth notes in all voices and instruments. It generally thickens the texture. In addition, the melisma in each vocal part is limited to a local area and explores a few intervallic degrees back and forth at one time. The melisma often oscillates adjacently between two notes, delivering trill-like effects. The frequent use of rhythmic trills in all parts throughout the whole section produces a kaleidoscopic, vibrant, quasi-perpetuum-mobile sonority.

The Singing Style of Leonarda and Peruchona's Sacred Music

The historical accounts in this section will provide information on the Baroque vocal aesthetics and administrative facts to help us understand the possible singing style of Leonarda and Peruchona's sacred music.

It is common for today's choral conductors to encounter the choral problem of slowly singing flat. This tuning issue also existed in seventeenth-century ensembles, according to a manuscript treatise *Il corago* (Artistic Director) by an anonymous Italian author. This treatise talks about the staging of dramatic works, completed around 1630. It states that the stage heat causes the string instruments to go flat little by little. However, it damages the sound the least if all strings go flat together since no discords or notable ugliness will be produced.²¹⁸ Though not talking about ensemble singing, this concept can be directly transferred to choirs, which mostly matches today's choral concepts: (1)

²¹⁸ "The Baroque Era," 629-31.

The choir should not go flat.²¹⁹ (2) If going flat is inevitable in the performance, all parts singing flat together is least damaging to the art.

The Sienese documents show that at least nine local institutions had an elite ensemble of select nun singers capable of performing polyphony. At the convent of *Trafisse del Cuor di Maria* (The Transfixed Ones of Mary's Heart, known as *Le Trafisse*), there were thirty-two to thirty-seven female choristers and choristers-in-training. The top two singers were chosen to take the role of *prima cantora* (first singer) and *seconda cantora* (second singer). Sometimes, a third singer, fourth singer, and assistant singers were also chosen to fit the needs of the composition. Most likely, these singers were the strongest vocalists and probably also served as section leaders.²²⁰ These singers could have taken the most challenging contrapuntal sections in a composition. In these convents, it could have been expected to perform large-scale polyphony requiring contrasts between a small elite vocal ensemble and a large ensemble.

As a conventional understanding of western choral music, Zarlino's views on choral timbre provide useful information. Part III of his *Istitutione harmoniche* clearly describes the choral tone in *stylus ecclesiasticus*. To him, all parts in the choir should blend well enough so that the timbral transition between two adjacent parts should be indistinguishable:

The tenor immediately follows the bass, and its low tones are indistinguishable from the high tones of the bass.... The low alto tones blend with the high tenor tones, while the high alto tones blend with the low tones of...the canto.²²¹

²¹⁹ Choirs going flat is due to various reasons other than the stage heat.

²²⁰ Reardon, *Holy Concord within Sacred Walls: Nuns and Music in Siena, 1575-1700*, 32-33.

²²¹ David Lewin, "Women's Voices and the Fundamental Bass," *The Journal of Musicology* 10, no. 4 (1992): 477.

Although Zarlino's ideal was for the mixed choir consisting of men only, this ideology can easily be transferred to an essential goal for modern mixed choirs (with men and women) or all-female choirs.

Mauro Uberti's study of Italian vocal techniques in the second half of the sixteenth century combines historical concepts with the modern anatomical approach to vocal mechanism. He concludes that Zarlino and Zacconi make the same distinction between the loud *cappella* (chapel) singing and the softer *camera* (chamber) singing.²²² However, both singing techniques require the larynx to be free. The church style performance requires much a louder volume with a tiny sacrifice of the vowel distortion, leading to *forte*, full-voiced brilliancy in character. Therefore, the expressiveness in church *a cappella* music lies in compositional features, such as cadences, rhythmic agogics, changes of texture, imitative entrances, phrases, and chiaroscuro in volume and timbre. In comparison, *camera* singing focuses on the interaction between subtle timbral or sentimental shifts and Italian poetry, which allows more agility in melodic embellishment. However, the level of drama is not determined by the volume. Historically, *camera* singing was much smaller in volume but more dramatic than *cappella* singing.²²³ Nevertheless, Dennis Shrock's research on the singing volume shows that the ideal sound for the Baroque repertoire is soft, considering the relatively low noise level in the environment.²²⁴ Thus, the "loud" *cappella* singing should probably be slightly quieter in the modern sense.

²²² Mauro Uberti, "Vocal Techniques in Italy in the Second Half of the 16th Century," *Early Music* 9, no. 4 (October 1981): 486.

²²³ *Ibid.*, 494-95.

²²⁴ Shrock, *Performance Practices in the Baroque Era: As Related by Primary Sources*, 2.

Conversely, some evidence points out that many early Baroque composers attempted to create a large magnitude of sound. For instance, the professional choir at the Duomo in Milan usually had between seventeen and twenty-five singers during the seventeenth century. At the Milanese convent of San Francesco Grande, two organs were in use in the 1580s to create a louder sound than a single organ. In addition, a document of 1669 suggests that up to forty musicians performed at the church on some feasts in Milan.²²⁵ Although no evidence shows that Leonarda ever had a choir of more than fifteen singers, Leonarda's musical reality may not have been ideal for her. Therefore, for today's conductors, the rhetorical features of a sacred composition by Leonarda or Peruchona determine the ideal volume in performance and the corresponding number of singers.

A Roman nobleman, Pietro della Valle (1586-1652), best known for his travel memoir, remarks on the singing voices in his discourse of 1640. His preferences are summarized in Table 5. Unlike modern comments on the singers' vocal production, historical accounts usually mix up opinions or instructions from varying categories using somewhat ambiguous or subjective language, including the choice of repertoire, the singer's personality, musical taste, and even their appearance. All of these factors decide whether they are great church singers. Since Valle mentions nuns' names in his writing, his comments should also apply to female singers.

Table 5. Comments on Singing by Pietro della Valle (1586-1652)²²⁶

Category	Desired Execution	Undesired Execution
Attitude	Letting others do some <i>passaggi</i> (Embellishments created by ornamental subdivisions) ²²⁷	Wanting to do all the <i>passaggi</i>

²²⁵ *A Companion to Late Medieval and Early Modern Milan: The Distinctive Features of an Italian State*, vol. 7, ed. Andrea Gamberini, Brill's Companions to European History, (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2015), 320-22.

²²⁶ "The Baroque Era," 545-51.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, 732-33.

Table 5. Comments on Singing by Pietro della Valle (1586-1652)²²⁶

Category	Desired Execution	Undesired Execution
	Singing lightness of exchanges	Overpowering other singers
	Singing with the judgment of solo singing or ensemble singing	
Vocal Quality	Goodness and sweetness	
Vocal Technique	Agility and excellent ability	
Solo Singing	The sweetness of voice or exquisite skill	
Phrasing & Vocal Technique	Finishing one long note with a good vocal placement gracefully	
	Good vocal placement of different dynamics	
Phrasing	Reiterating the phrase done by another voice with space, opportuneness, and subtle difference	
Dynamics	Increasing the voice little by little	
	Diminishing the voice with grace	
Melismatic Singing (Vocal Technique & Improvisational Skill)	Natural <i>passaggi</i>	Too many <i>passaggi</i> , making the audience misunderstand the mood of the music (happy or sad)
Specific Vocal Skill	One long note can be more pleasing than <i>passaggi</i> .	Singers who never use <i>passaggi</i> or other graces
Musical Expression	Joyful, melancholy, plaintive, ardent, or elegant	
	Singing with taste, grace, and true refinement	Singing without taste or style like learning by rote
	Free and imaginative	

Lorenzo Penna (1613-1693) gives twelve instructions on how to sing correctly in an ensemble on the last two pages of Book I of *Li primi albori musicali per li principianti della musica figurata*. Table 6 is a review of these rules. Penna's strangest requirement of singers is the Latin vowel O. He requires singers to use three fingers, one above the other, to measure the proportionate opening of the mouth for the O vowel, while the vowel A requires a little less than three fingers. By contrast, to today's understanding of the Latin lyric diction, one important pronunciation system of Latin is rooted in a publication of 1937 by St. Gregory Guild, *The Correct Pronunciation of Latin According to Roman*

Usage. This system requires the vowel O always to be pronounced [ɔ],²²⁸ being an open-mid back rounded vowel, whereas [a] and [ɑ] are both open vowels in terms of vowel heights.²²⁹

Table 6. The Review of Lorenzo Penna's Choral Ideal²³⁰

Category	Instruction	Ideal Quality
Counting Beats	Count in the head or softly to avoid disturbing other singers.	Count beats silently.
Collaboration	Do not sing just by yourself. Singing notes and rhythms right is not enough.	Sing with others and avoid mistakes.
Balance	No one should sing louder or softer than others.	Each singer sings at the same volume.
Vocal Placement	Nasal sound, throaty sound, or singing with clenched teeth is bad.	Sing with proper placement.
Vowel Shaping	Use fingers to measure the opening of the mouth for a specific vowel.	In Penna's opinion, O requires the largest mouth opening among all five Latin vowels.
Diction	Diction and notes should be clear.	Make diction stand out and understood.
Ornamental Subdivisions	Do not make ornamental subdivisions on vowels I or U.	
Ornament in One Voice	Sing preciously with improvised tones. Do not use ornaments too often.	Learn to develop the technique.
Ornament in Two Voices	Do not sing trills in two voices together. Preferably, do one after another.	Sing call and response with trills in two voices.
Expression	Perform the emotion in line with the text.	
Appearance	Twisting faces or body parts is ugly.	Sing with professional posture and expression.
Long-Term Learning	Attend great choirs' concerts and learn from great singers.	

The seventeenth-century Venetian priest, Francesco Coli, issued a periodical *Pallade veneta*, which has collective writings of 1687 on music in Venetian society. These journals contain detailed descriptions of female choirs from the famous *ospedali* of Venice. The female choir at *ospedali* may have shared some similarities to the Ursuline

²²⁸ Joan Wall et al., *Diction for Singers: A Concise Reference for English, Italian, Latin, German, French, and Spanish Pronunciation*, 2 ed. (Redmond, WA: Celumbra, 2009), 129, 33.

²²⁹ International Phonetic Association, *Handbook of the International Phonetic Association: A Guide to the Use of the International Phonetic Alphabet* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 12-13, 180.

²³⁰ Lorenzo Penna, *Li Primi Albori Musicali Per Li Principianti Della Musica Figurata* (Bologna: Giacomo Monti, 1679), 42-43. Also, see "The Baroque Era," 638-39.

choirs at the *Collegio di Sant'Orsola* in Novara and Galliate. Table 7 summarizes the valuable comments on the singing quality of the *ospedali* female choir in 1687.

Table 7. Comments on Female Singing from *Pallade veneta* in 1687²³¹

Category	Comment
Singing in High-Register	Soaring without fear
Voice Type	Females could sing a natural, masculine, full, baritone, and tender voice
Stylist Taste	Sweet ornaments and pleasing <i>portamenti</i>
Diction	Clean in enunciation

In history, *portamento* (plural: *portamenti*) had many different and confusing definitions. Around the time of Leonarda, *portamento* or *portare la voce* meant carrying the voice into a smooth flow over notes bounded together, as explained by Johann Friedrich Agricola (1720-1774). However, it could also mean more detached articulations.²³² In the following century, *portamento di voce* meant “perfection of vocal music,” as the Italian voice teacher Domenico Corri (1746-1825) said. Specifically, it may involve the concepts of crescendo and decrescendo in the voice and the articulation of texts.²³³ Though confusing and unclear, “pleasing *portamenti*” (see Table 7) in Leonarda’s time may have required exquisite execution of singing in either seamless legato or slight articulated manner with sensitive dynamic changes over texts.

²³¹ "The Baroque Era," 562-64.

²³² Martha Elliott, *Singing in Style: A Guide to Vocal Performance Practices* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 64.

²³³ *Ibid.*, 108.

Leonarda: Messe e motetti concertate, Op. 18

Messa prima and Messa seconda

Leonarda completed four masses in Op. 4 of 1674 and Op. 18 of 1696, spanning most of her compositional career. Leonarda's masses contain only *Kyrie*, *Gloria*, and *Credo* from the Ordinary without the Eucharistic part, following the common Northern Italian practice.²³⁴ The original publication of Op. 18, collected at the Royal Academy of Music in London, contains part books in single impression printing for Canto, Alto, Tenore, Basso, Violino I, Violino II, Organo, and Violone/Theorbo.²³⁵

The tradition of composing incomplete masses originated in Venice after the mid-seventeenth century. Under this practice, masses often lack *Sanctus* and *Agnus Dei* in order to include some ceremonial features in the services.²³⁶ The disappearance of the Roman rite items gives time for the performance of other elaborate motets or even instrumental pieces as substitutes. Although we do not have evidence to prove how those omitted mass movements were replaced in the service at the *Collegio di Sant'Orsola* in Novara, Leonarda's repertory was vast enough to provide motet substitutes. Therefore, Leonarda would have been reasonable to compose her masses in *seconda prattica* because of their ceremonial nature.

Leonarda uses two violins in *Messa prima* and *Messa seconda* in an obbligato role of either doubling the vocal parts or being contrapuntally independent. They provide thematic materials for the *sinfonia* sections. After 1630, sonata and *sinfonia* were used

²³⁴ Isabella Leonarda, *Messa Prima from Opus 18, Á 4 Voci Con Violini (1696)*, ed. Barbara Jackson (Fayetteville, AR: ClarNan Editions, 1981), i.

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ The tendency of shortening *Sanctus* and *Agnus Dei* movements was observed in 1623 in order to provide time for a concerto at the Elevation and a *sinfonia* at Communion. See *The Early Baroque Era: From the Late 16th Century to the 1660s*, 78, 99.

more frequently to imply instrumental compositions. Using two to four instruments plus a basso continuo is the setting for a typical Baroque sonata, whose form consists of several sections with contrasting meters and textures.²³⁷ In Leonarda's masses, the *sinfonia* section sometimes functions as a quasi-instrumental refrain. Since Leonarda tends to develop thematic materials in *stile antico*, her skill sometimes also applies to *stile moderno*. Thus, the repetition or return of the same instrumental material is usually a variation. In addition to double lines and other structural indicators, the *sinfonia* section sometimes also functions as a structural divider. Table 8 and Table 9 provide the formal analysis of *Messa prima* and *Messa seconda* by Leonarda respectively.

Table 8. Formal Analysis of Leonarda, *Messa prima*

Section	Measure	Meter	Key/Mode	Scoring	Musical Event
Kyrie	1-5	4/4	A	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Adagio, Tutti Block chords
	6-23	4/4	A	S+V ₁ V ₂	Spiritoso Imitative dialogue: S↔V ₁ V ₂ S: Florid melisma, drive to cadence Theme A
	24-40	4/4	A	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Spiritoso, Tutti Imitative dialogue: SATB↔V ₁ V ₂ Theme A
Christe	41-43	4/4	A→E	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Adagio, Tutti Block chords
	44-59	4/4	E	A+V ₁ V ₂	Spiritoso Imitative dialogue: A↔V ₁ V ₂ A: Florid melisma Theme B
	60-76	4/4	E→A	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Spiritoso, Tutti Imitative dialogue: SATB↔V ₁ V ₂ SA: Florid melisma Theme B
Kyrie	77-104	4/4	A	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Spiritoso Fugal Cadence: Slow block chords Theme C
Gloria	105	4/4	A	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Adagio, Tutti Sustained block chord (A major)

²³⁷ Soler, "Anna Isabella Leonarda (1620-1704): 400 Aniversario De La Brillante Compositora Del Barroco Italiano," 113.

Table 8. Formal Analysis of Leonarda, *Messa prima*

Section	Measure	Meter	Key/Mode	Scoring	Musical Event
	106-114	4/4	A	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Spiritoso Fugal, florid melisma, surprising silence, no cadence, sustained tonic / dominant ST Imitative duet→AB Imitative duet ST: Tonic lock AB: Dominant lock Theme D
	115	4/4	A	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Adagio, Tutti V ₁ V ₂ : Slow thematic material as a transition SATB: Block chords Theme D
	116-129	4/4	A→E	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Allegro V ₁ V ₂ : Obbligato, thematically linking material SATB Homophonic→V ₁ V ₂ Duet in 3rds Theme E
	130-134	4/4	E→A	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Adagio, Tutti Block chords
Et in terra	135-137	4/4	A→D	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Adagio, Tutti Ornamented homophonic as an intro to the following double fugue
	138-161	4/4	D	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Double fugal with 2 subjects (Theme F, G)
Laudamus	162-233	4/4	A→E→G →D→A	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Sinfonia / Tutti Homophonic, melisma Dialogue: SATB↔V ₁ V ₂ V ₁ V ₂ : Duet in 3rds SATB: Block chords Theme H
Gratias	234-239	4/4	A	S	Largo Arioso Theme I
	240-262	12/8	A→E→A	SAB+V ₁ V ₂	Sinfonia / Trio Dialogue: SAB↔V ₁ V ₂ Theme J
Domine Deus	263-285	4/4	A→E→A	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Dialogue: T→V ₁ V ₂ →A→V ₁ V ₂ →SB (Imitative duet)+V ₁ V ₂ →T+V ₁ V ₂ Theme K
Qui tollis	286-295	3/2	A→D	V ₁ V ₂	Sinfonia Chaconne, chains of suspensions Theme L
	296-320	3/2	D→G	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Adagio Fugal, melisma, chaconne, chains of suspensions Theme L
Miserere	321-332	3/2	G→A	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Block chords
Qui tollis	333-423	3/2	A→E→A	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Dialogue: V ₁ V ₂ →S→V ₁ V ₂

Table 8. Formal Analysis of Leonarda, *Messa prima*

Section	Measure	Meter	Key/Mode	Scoring	Musical Event
					→A→B→V ₁ V ₂ →SATB Homophonic↔V ₁ V ₂ Theme M
Qui sedes	424-433	4/4	A→D	A	Largo Arioso, chains of suspensions Theme N
Quoniam	434-451	6/4	D→A→E →A	SATB	Fugal→Homophonic Theme O
Amen	452-458	6/4	A	B+V ₁ V ₂	Florid melisma V ₁ V ₂ : Theme O B: Theme P Theme P
	459-469	6/4	A	V ₁ V ₂	Sinfonia Theme P
Quoniam Amen	470-493	6/4	A→D→A	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Tutti Melisma SATB Block chords→Fugal Theme Q
Amen	494-496	4/4	A	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Homophonic
Credo	497-500	4/4	A	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Adagio, Tutti Block chords
	501-509	4/4	A→E	S+V ₁ V ₂	Spiritoso Arioso, florid melisma Imitative dialogue: S↔V ₁ V ₂ Theme R
	510-519	4/4	E	A+V ₁ V ₂	Largo Arioso Imitative dialogue: A↔V ₁ V ₂ Theme S
	520-525	4/4	E→A	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Tutti SATB Homophonic→SATB Imitative
Deum de Deo	526-537	4/4	A	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Spiritoso, Tutti Homophonic, surprising silence Theme T
Genitum non factum	538-543	4/4	A	T+V ₁ V ₂	Allegro Arioso Dialogue: T↔V ₁ V ₂ Theme U
Qui propter	544-552	4/4	A→E→A	SB+V ₁ V ₂	Spiritoso Florid melisma Contrasting dialogue: V ₁ V ₂ →S →T+V ₁ V ₂ →S→SB+V ₁ V ₂ Theme U (continued)
Et incarnatus	553-556	4/4	A	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Adagio, Tutti Homophonic
	557-567	4/4	A	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Spiritoso A Arioso→SATB Homophonic Theme V
	568-575	4/4	A	V ₁ V ₂	Sinfonia, Spiritoso V ₁ V ₂ : Duet in 3rds

Table 8. Formal Analysis of Leonarda, *Messa prima*

Section	Measure	Meter	Key/Mode	Scoring	Musical Event
					Theme W
Crucifixus	576-577	4/4	A	ST+V ₁ V ₂	Adagio ST: Duet in 3rds Theme X
	578	4/4	A	ST+V ₁ V ₂	Spiritoso ST: Duet in 3rds Theme X (continued)
	579-581	4/4	A	V ₁ V ₂	Sinfonia V ₁ V ₂ : Duet in 6ths Theme X (continued)
	582-583	4/4	A	ST	Spiritoso ST: Duet in 3rds Theme X (continued)
	584-587	4/4	A→F#	ST+V ₁ V ₂	Adagio ST: Duet in 3rds V ₁ V ₂ : duet in 3rds Theme X (continued)
	588-590	4/4	F#→A	ST	Spiritoso ST: Homorhythmic duet Theme X (continued)
	591-594	4/4	A→E	ST	Adagio ST: Homorhythmic duet Theme X (continued)
	595-597	4/4	A	V ₁ V ₂	Sinfonia, Adagio V ₁ V ₂ : Duet in 3rds Theme X
	598-599	4/4	A	V ₁ V ₂	Spiritoso V ₁ V ₂ : Duet in 3rds Theme X
	600-601	4/4	A→F#	V ₁ V ₂	Adagio V ₁ V ₂ : Duet in 3rds Theme X
	602-603	4/4	F#	V ₁ V ₂	Spiritoso V ₁ V ₂ : Duet in 3rds Theme X
	604-608	4/4	F#→A→E	V ₁ V ₂	Adagio V ₁ V ₂ : Homorhythmic duet Theme X
Et resurrexit	609-620	4/4	A→D→F#	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Allegro, Tutti Fugal, tonic lock, dominant lock Theme Y
	621-644	3/1	A	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Fugal Theme H' (derived from theme H)
	645-673	3/1	D→A	V ₁ V ₂	Sinfonia (Refrain structure) 2-measure continuo solo V ₁ V ₂ : Imitative→Homorhythmic Theme Z
Et ascendit	674-693	4/4	A→D→B →E→A	A+V ₁ V ₂	Dialogue: A↔V ₁ V ₂ Melisma Theme AA
Et iterum	694-700	4/4	A	S+V ₁ V ₂	Spiritoso

Table 8. Formal Analysis of Leonarda, *Messa prima*

Section	Measure	Meter	Key/Mode	Scoring	Musical Event
					Dialogue: S↔V ₁ V ₂ Florid melisma Theme AA (continued)
	701-704	4/4	A→E	S	Adagio Theme AA (continued)
	705-716	4/4	E→A	S+V ₁ V ₂	Spiritoso Theme AA (continued)
Et in spiritum	717-722	4/4	A	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Allegro, Tutti SATB: Block chords V ₁ V ₂ : Contrasting material from theme AA Theme BB
Qui cum patre	723-737	4/4	A→B→A	AB+V ₁ V ₂	Imitative / contrasting dialogue: A→V ₁ V ₂ (Imitative) →B+V ₁ V ₂ (Contrasting & imitative) V ₁ V ₂ : Duet in 3rds Theme CC
Et unam sanctam	738-765	3/1	A	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Fugal Theme DD
	766-782	3/1	A	V ₁ V ₂	Sinfonia V ₁ V ₂ : Imitative duet Theme DD
Confiteor	783-795	4/4	A→F#→A	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Adagio, Tutti SATB: Block chords
Et expect	796-810	4/4	A→D→F# →A	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Allegro, Tutti Fugal, Florid melisma, tonic lock, dominant lock Fugal→Homophonic Theme EE
Et vitam /Amen	811-840	3/1	A	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Fugal Theme Z' (derived from theme Z)
	841-869	3/1	D→A	V ₁ V ₂	Sinfonia (Refrain structure) 2-measure continuo solo V ₁ V ₂ : Imitative→Homorhythmic Theme Z
	870-898	3/1	A	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Fugal Theme Z' (derived from theme Z)

Table 9. Formal Analysis of Leonarda, *Messa seconda*

Section	Measure	Meter	Key/Mode	Scoring	Musical Event
Kyrie	1-9	4/4	A	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Adagio, Tutti Homophonic, homorhythmic Theme A
	10-13	4/4	A	V ₁ V ₂	Sinfonia, Adagio (Refrain structure) Corelli clash V ₁ V ₂ : Duet in 3rds Theme B

Table 9. Formal Analysis of Leonarda, *Messa seconda*

Section	Measure	Meter	Key/Mode	Scoring	Musical Event
	13-28	4/4	A→B →A→E	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Adagio ST→Fugal Theme B
	29-31	4/4	E	SA	Adagio SA: Duet in 3rds Theme B
	32-35	4/4	E	V ₁ V ₂	Sinfonia Corelli clash V ₁ V ₂ : Duet in 3rds Theme B
	36-51	4/4	E→A	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Fugal Theme C
	52-60	4/4	A	V ₁ V ₂	Sinfonia, Allegro V ₁ V ₂ : Imitative duet / Duet in 3rds Theme C
Christe	61-69	6/4	A→E	ST	Adagio ST: Duet in 6ths Theme D
	70-82	6/4	E→F# →E→A	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Presto Fugal→Homophonic Theme E
	83-91	6/4	A→E	V ₁ V ₂	Sinfonia V ₁ V ₂ : Duet in 3rds Theme D
	92-95	6/4	E→A	AB	Adagio AB: Duet in 3rds Theme F
	96-113	6/4	A→F# →D→A	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Presto Corelli clash Free imitation→Imitative dialogue: ST→SA→TB Theme F (continued)
	114-125	6/4	A	V ₁ V ₂	Sinfonia, Adagio V ₁ V ₂ : Duet in 3rds / Imitative duet Theme F
	126-146	6/4	A→F# →A→E →F#→A	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	A Capella Free imitation Theme G
	147-149	4/4	A	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Homophonic, drive to cadence
Kyrie	150-164	4/4	A	V ₁ V ₂	Sinfonia, Adagio (Refrain structure) V ₁ V ₂ : Duet in 3rds / Imitative duet Theme B' (derived from theme B)
	165-228	2/2	A→E →A	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	A Capella Fugal Theme H
Gloria	229-265	6/4	A→D →A	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Spiritoso Florid melisma, 3-fold structure, tonic lock, subdominant lock, Fugal→Block chords →Fugal→Block chords →ST (Duet in 6ths)→Fugal

Table 9. Formal Analysis of Leonarda, *Messa seconda*

Section	Measure	Meter	Key/Mode	Scoring	Musical Event
					→Block chords Theme I
	266-280	6/4	A	V ₁ V ₂	Sinfonia Echo effect (Drop to <i>piano</i> repeated phrases) V ₁ V ₂ : Imitative duet / Duet in 3rds Theme I
Et in terra	281-313	6/4	A→F# →A	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Tutti Echo effect (<i>forte-piano</i> antiphonal phrases) Block chords →STB (ST: Duet in 10ths) →Block chords→ST: Duet in 6ths →Homophonic Theme J
	314-322	6/4	A	V ₁ V ₂	Sinfonia Echo effect (<i>forte-piano</i> antiphonal phrases) V ₁ V ₂ : Duet in 3rds Theme J
Laudamus	323-347	4/4	A	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Chains of suspensions Fugal→Free imitation→Dialogue: AT (Imitative) →SB (Duet in 10ths)→TB (Imitative) →Free imitation→ST (Duet in 6ths) Theme K
	348-353	4/4	A	V ₁ V ₂	Sinfonia V ₁ V ₂ : Imitative duet Theme K
Gratias	354-388	3/2	A→D →A	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Imitative dialogue: SA→TB→SA→Free imitation →Homophonic Theme L
Domine Deus	389-397	4/4	A→F#	SATB	Dialogue: ST (Imitative, parallel) →AB (Imitative, parallel) Theme M
Domine Deus	398-408	3/2	A	V ₁ V ₂	Sinfonia Corelli clash V ₁ V ₂ : Duet in 3rds Theme N
	409-442	3/2	A→E →A	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Largo Dialogue: SA (Duet in 3rds) →TB (Duet in 3rds) →SA (Duet in 3rds) →Homophonic, antiphonal Theme N
Qui tollis	443-522	2/2	A	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	A Capella Fugal Theme O
	523-533	4/4	A	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Tutti Homophonic

Table 9. Formal Analysis of Leonarda, *Messa seconda*

Section	Measure	Meter	Key/Mode	Scoring	Musical Event
Qui sedes	534-560	3/2	A	SB	Adagio Echo effect (Drop to <i>piano</i> repeated phrases) SB: Duet in 10ths Theme P
	561-586	3/2	A	V ₁ V ₂	Sinfonia Echo effect (<i>forte-piano</i> antiphonal phrases) V ₁ V ₂ : Duet in 3rds Theme P
Qui sedes	587-624	3/2	A→F# →D	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Tutti Echo effect (Drop to <i>piano</i> repeated phrases) Block chords→AT: Duet in 3rds
	625-646	3/2	D→F# →A	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Block chords
Quoniam	647-671	3/2	A	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Fugal, stepwise Theme Q
Iesu Christe	672-675	4/4	A	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Tutti Homophonic
	676-688	3/2	A	V ₁ V ₂	Sinfonia V ₁ V ₂ : Imitative duet Theme R
Cum sancto	689-734	3/2	A→D →A	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Fugal→Free imitation Theme S
	735-755	3/2	A→D →A	V ₁ V ₂	Sinfonia, Presto Corelli clash V ₁ V ₂ : Imitative duet / Duet in 3rds Theme S
Amen	756-791	3/2	A	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Fugal Theme T
	792-794	4/4	A	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Cadential Theme T (continued)
Credo	795-802	4/4	A	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Adagio Homophonic
	803-807	4/4	A	SATB+V ₂	Agitated style ST (Duet in 6ths)→Homophonic Theme U
Factorem	808-813	3/2	A→E	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Block chords
Credo	814-822	4/4	E→A	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Adagio AB (Duet in 10ths)→Homophonic →ST (Duet in 10ths) Theme U
Et in unum	823-832	3/2	A→E	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Tutti Block chords
Credo	833-844	4/4	E→A	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Melisma SA (Duet in 3rds)→Homophonic →AB (Duet in 10ths)→Homophonic Theme V
	845-850	4/4	A	V ₁ V ₂	Sinfonia V ₁ V ₂ : Duet in 3rds

Table 9. Formal Analysis of Leonarda, *Messa seconda*

Section	Measure	Meter	Key/Mode	Scoring	Musical Event
					Theme W
Deum de Deo	851-886	3/2	A→D →B→D →A	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Dialogue: ST (Duet in 6ths) →AB (Duet in 10ths) →Free imitation→Block chords Theme X
	887-899	3/2	A	V ₁ V ₂	Sinfonia V ₁ V ₂ : Duet in 3rds Theme X
Genitum	900-922	4/4	A→F# →A	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Spiritoso Melisma Fugal→Free imitation Theme Y
Qui propter	923-946	4/4	A→E →A	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Melisma ST (Duet in 10ths / 6ths) →Homophonic Theme Z
Et incarnatus	947-963	4/4	A	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Adagio, Tutti Block chords
Crucifixus	964-992	4/4	A	S	Arioso (Aria), florid melisma Theme AA
Et resurrexit	993-1025	4/4	A	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Allegro Dialogue: Solo↔Choir S→SATB Quasi-homophonic →B→SATB Quasi-homophonic →S→SATB Quasi-homophonic →T→S→SATB Quasi-homophonic →AT (Duet in 3rds) →SATB Quasi-homophonic Theme BB
	1026-1036	4/4	A	V ₁ V ₂	Sinfonia, Presto Tonic lock V ₁ V ₂ : Imitative duet Theme BB' (derived from theme BB)
Et ascendit	1037-1090	3/2	A→E →A	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Echo effect (<i>forte-piano</i> antiphonal phrases) ST (Duet in 10ths / 6ths) →Block chords →SA (Duet in 6ths / 3rds) →Fugal→Block chords Theme CC
Et iterum	1091-1108	4/4	A→F#	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Melisma T→Fugal→Homophonic Theme DD
Cuius regni	1109-1121	4/4	F#→A	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Echo effect (<i>forte-piano</i> antiphonal phrases) Dialogue: AT (Duet in 3rds) →SB→Homophonic Theme EE
Et in spiritum	1122-1156	3/2	A	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Fugal→Block chords →Fugal→Block chords Theme FF

Table 9. Formal Analysis of Leonarda, *Messa seconda*

Section	Measure	Meter	Key/Mode	Scoring	Musical Event
	1157-1163	4/4	A	V ₁ V ₂	Sinfonia, Spedito V ₁ V ₂ : Imitative duet Theme GG
	1164-1175	3/2	A	V ₁ V ₂	Sinfonia V ₁ V ₂ : Homorhythmic duet Theme HH
Qui cum patre	1176-1187	4/4	A→B →E	SAB	Melisma Dialogue: A→S→B Theme HH (Theme HH is built from the head motive in theme G)
Qui locutus	1188-1207	3/2→4/4	E→A	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Fugal Theme II
	1208-1215	4/4	A→D →A	V ₁ V ₂	Sinfonia V ₁ V ₂ : Imitative duet Theme JJ
Et unam	1216-1238	4/4	A	ST	Dialogue: T→S Theme KK
Et expect	1239-1249	4/4	A→F# →A	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	Adagio, Tutti Homophonic Theme LL
Et vitam	1250-1312	2/2	A	SATB+V ₁ V ₂	A Capella Fugal

One tempo marking, *spiritoso*, frequently appears in the music, which is to say that “one has to play with understanding and spirit.” The explanation in the *clavier treatise* of 1755 by Friedrich Marpurg (1718-1795) indicates the mean between quick and slow.²³⁸ Johann Quantz (1697-1773) puts *Adagio spiritoso* in the third category of tempo along with *Arioso*, *Cantabile*, *Soave*, *Dolce*, *Poco andante*, *Maestoso*, *Pomposo*, and *Affettuoso* with the description:

Executed quietly, and with a light bow stroke. Even if interspersed with quick notes of various kinds, the *Arioso* still requires a light and quiet stroke.²³⁹

Therefore, *spiritoso* may not be too fast or too slow if the performance needs to convey spiritual *affetto*. An appropriate interpretation of *spiritoso* lies between *Allegro* and *Adagio*, probably *Moderato*.

²³⁸ Shrock, *Performance Practices in the Baroque Era: As Related by Primary Sources*, 165-66.

²³⁹ Mary Cyr, *Performing Baroque Music* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2016), 41.

Another lesser-known tempo marking, *spedito*, appears only once in *Messa seconda* at measure 1157 of a *sinfonia* section. According to an Italian-English dictionary of 1824, *spedito* means quick, nimble, and careful.²⁴⁰ If we compare the rhythmic and melodic figures used in the *spedito* section to similar thematic materials in the same mass, the rhetorical gestures in mm. 158-161 and mm. 1028-1030 are pretty similar, though the melodic features are slightly different. The tempo markings used in both *sinfonia* sections are *Allegro* and *Presto*. Considering all factors, *spedito* may indicate a fast tempo between *Allegro* and *Presto*.

It was a common practice in the Baroque period to first select a soloist choir as *ripieno* in contrast to a *capella* choir. The contrast in the performing forces lies in the core of the concertato style. Although Leonarda does not identify the *ripieno* sections in her masses, it is not difficult to spot them. Whenever the vocal line requires fluid melismas or rapid declamations of text in one section, it is intended for the *ripieno* rather than the choir. *Capella* is a separate choir that occasionally participates in enhancing the music.²⁴¹ However, Martin Fuhrmann (1669-1745) regards the *capella* as optional because all parts are already being covered.²⁴² The marking *capella* is absent in Leonarda's first mass but appears four times in her second version. I suspect that Leonarda may have intended a third choir (*capella* II) to join. As Robert Kendrick points out, it was a common tradition in some convents to have a three-choir performance.²⁴³ Thus, *capella* in Leonarda's *Messa seconda* may mean *capella* II if we consider the *ripieno* as the soloist choir and

²⁴⁰ See Giuseppe Baretta, *Italian and English*, vol. 1 (London: C.E.J. Rivington, 1824).

²⁴¹ *The Cambridge Companion to Choral Music*, ed. André de Quadros (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 21.

²⁴² Kerala Snyder, *Dieterich Buxtehude: Organist in Lübeck*, Revised ed. (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2007), 365.

²⁴³ *Female Monasticism in Early Modern Europe: An Interdisciplinary View*, 110.

capella I as the second choir to sing *tutti*. In Leonarda's music, there is a clear distinction between a *tutti* section and a *capella* section. Therefore, a *tutti* section may only involve *ripieno* and *capella* I, whereas a *capella* section may indicate performing with all three choirs, which will result in a slightly more brilliant effect and larger volume, matching the ceremonial nature of these masses. However, *capella* II should not be a congregational chorus in the modern sense. Historically, it probably consisted of only one or two extra singers in one part.²⁴⁴ The use of an added third choir will also enhance the "concertato" feature of the mass.

Leonarda's basic structural design for both masses is the irregular use of short sections. Her sonatas were published three years before her masses, with an unpredictable number of sections with irregular order of tempos that do not follow the influential Corellian model for *sonata da chiesa*.²⁴⁵ Many sections in Leonarda's sonatas are brief, which may have influenced her compositional style for these masses.

Although in irregular length, the neighboring sections contrast in many ways with one another. For instance, in *Kyrie I* of *Messa seconda*, the opening section A (mm. 1-9) starts with a homophonic, chordal style in *Adagio, tutti* (SATB choir plus two violins). However, through increasing the rhythmic activity, the texture becomes denser and more urgent. However, the enunciation of the Latin text is clear due to the use of homorhythm, which synchronizes the text in all parts. The closing of section A comes to a complete stop on the A major chord with anticipated V-I authentic cadence, followed by section B.

Section B is *sinfonia* in *Adagio*, spanning only three measures. Two violins play rhythmically in parallel thirds and reach a cadential point at the end of mm. 12. Leonarda

²⁴⁴ Snyder, *Dieterich Buxtehude: Organist in Lübeck*, 365.

²⁴⁵ Leonarda, *Twelve Sonatas, Opus 16*, vii.

uses the dissonant major-to-minor-second cadence (Corelli clash) to conclude this brief section. This cadential gesture was popular around the mid-seventeenth century. According to the stylistic comparison of *Magnificat*, only Rigatti and Cozzolani employed this type of cadence in 1648 and 1650 (see Table 3). Therefore, though there is no contrast in tempo or meter, both sections still contrast with each other in terms of the rhythmic gesture (eight notes vs. sixteenth notes, mostly), the use of timbre (mostly choir vs. violins), the performing force (*tutti* vs. violins), texture (chordal style vs. duo violin), melodic gesture (two distinct materials), and cadential gesture (V-I cadence vs. Corelli clash).

Section C begins in mm. 13 in *Adagio* with the soprano and tenor solos from the *ripieno* singing the same theme from the violin duet over the text “*Kyrie eleison.*” The only difference between section B and the beginning of section C lies in the change of performing force (violins vs. solo voices) and slight variation in the harmonic structure. To obtain a better artistic result, if the tenor line is performed by an alto solo one octave higher, it will reiterate the dissonant effect of the previous cadence of the violins.

Leonarda occasionally indicates frequent tempo changes every few measures. Because of such frequent tempo changes occurring in the *Crucifixus* section (mm. 576-608) of the first mass, Leonarda must have wanted the music to become highly sensitive to the text. At the same time, these vocal lines intended for the *ripieno* can execute precise tempo changes in synchronization more easily than the *capella* choir. Additionally, limited by the historical conducting technique, it was less likely that the *capella* choir would have performed these passages with precise tempo changes. Perhaps, Leonarda has intended to control how the ensemble performs her music accurately by micromanaging

the tempo, knowing that Baroque music is usually performed with much freedom at the performers' discretion. Therefore, the mass may have reached a dramatic effect via subtle tempo fluctuations over specific texts, creating a *rubato*-like, romanticized moment.

The following textural analysis of the *Crucifixus* section is based on the tempo fluctuations over the text in *Messa prima*. The music first requires the singer to speed up slightly (from *Adagio* to *Spiritoso*) over “*etiam pro nobis*” ([crucified] also for us) and slow down (from *Spiritoso* to *Adagio*) slightly over “*passus*” (suffered). My previous analysis suggests that *Spiritoso* may be close to *Moderato*, so the tempo change between these two indicators may not be so abrupt. Then the subtle change in tempo can be executed in a sensitive way. Therefore, the approach to delicately stressing specific text in the *Crucifixus* section is more of the *stylus cubicularis*, which is more dramatic than the *stylus ecclesiasticus*.

The occasional use of chaconne sections in *Messa prima* may illustrate spiritual ecstasy with the obsession with salvation through musical irrationality. For example, the section in mm. 286-320 applies fluid melismas and ostinato in the continuo over the text “*Qui tollis peccata mundi, Miserere nobis.*” (You who take away the sin of the world, have mercy on us.) In the early Baroque period, the chaconne was a popular dance and musical form, first found in some guitar method books providing harmonic progressions.²⁴⁶ Its strong tendency to move forward to the successive couplets (the ostinato in bass statements) became one of the most telling features.²⁴⁷ The low-class or

²⁴⁶ Edith Hines, "From Imitatio to Pronuntiatio: Background, Analysis, Interpretation, and Performance of Antonio Bertali's Chiacona for Violin and Continuo " (Doctorate Dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1999), 8.

²⁴⁷ *The Keyboard in Baroque Europe*, ed. Christopher Hogwood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 6.

street music origins of the chaconne made it a carnivalesque dance and likely put the audience into an ecstatic trance state. Although some Baroque composers composed chaconne to show off their compositional techniques and musical creativity, Leonarda's insertion of vocal chaconne is too short to showcase. Still, she may have used this chaconne section as a rhetorical device to highlight the nuns' spiritual ecstasy.

Musical Freedom and Historical Conducting Practices in the Crucifixus Section

The *Crucifixus* section in *Messa prima* imposes several questions: (1) How could historical conducting practice handle the frequent tempo changes and highly sensitive performance? (2) How much musical freedom may one have in the performance? (3) How to heighten the emotional expression in sacred music?

Modern conductors understand how the gesture affects and shapes the sound of the ensemble, though performers of the seventeenth century probably had a different sense of gestural motion and its meaning. As Mathias Elmer proposes, the concept of "historically informed conducting practices" provides an understanding of what historical directors and singers did in performing the music. Although the early conducting technique was quite incomplete, some of their approaches can inspire us to interpret music differently, especially in the *Crucifixus* section, where frequent tempo changes occur.

According to *Il corago*, the recitative style does not need to be conducted as a common practice because the perfection of this art lives in the natural rhythm of the language.

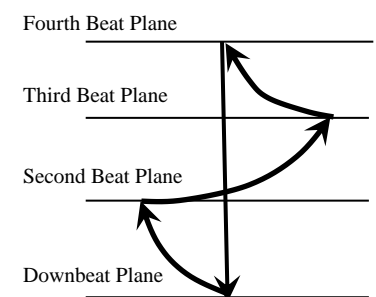
Showing and imitating the natural manner of discourse, one must remove everything that demonstrates patent artifice as much as possible.... The beat is not necessary.... [One] should freely follow the impulse of feeling.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁸ "The Baroque Era," 631.

In addition, the treatise emphasizes the importance of visual communication between the singer and the instrumental player and hearing each other. If not, someone will have to beat the time to avoid a disagreement in the tempo.²⁴⁹

Table 10 summarizes Elmer's research on Penna's treatise, *Li primi albori musicali per li principianti della musica figurata* (Musical Daybreaks for Beginners in Measured Music) of 1672.

Table 10. The Review of Lorenzo Penna's Guidelines on Conducting²⁵⁰

Meter ²⁵¹	Instruction	Comment
$\frac{4}{4}$	<p>First beat: downbeat Second beat: in an angular motion Third beat: a little higher Fourth beat: at the top</p> <p>From downbeat to second beat: <i>ondeggiando la mano</i> (swaying the hand in an angular motion)</p>	<p>Depending on the director's preference, the second beat may go to the left or right. The third and fourth beats may also keep an angular motion. Each beat (<i>ictus</i>) may occur at different plane levels. One possible conducting pattern may be like this:</p> 
$\frac{3}{4}$	<p>First beat: downbeat Second beat: a curled upward motion Third beat: at the top</p>	
$\frac{6}{8}$	<p>Six-part beats: going down and up The pick-up: in an upward motion, ending at the top</p>	
$\frac{12}{8}$	<p>Triple notes: in an accented triple manner</p>	<p>There are four macro beats, with equal triplet notes in each beat.</p>

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 630.

²⁵⁰ The content is summarized from Mathias Elmer's dissertation, except for the comments. See Mathias Elmer, "Conducting and Ensemble Direction 1500 to 1800: The Evidence of Selected Theorists" (Doctorate Dissertation, University of Memphis, 2017), 45-48.

²⁵¹ Many Baroque writers confirmed that meter signatures affected tempo. (1) For triple meters, larger values (the denominator is small) indicated slower tempos, and smaller values indicated faster tempos. For example, 3/4 was twice as fast as 3/2. (2) Common time or 4/4 (divided into four) was slow, while alla breve (cut common time, divided into two) was twice as fast. See Shrock, *Performance Practices in the Baroque Era: As Related by Primary Sources*, 116-17.

Penna's instruction on conducting various meters is still in its embryonic form. It remains in a music theory perspective due to a lack of mentioning the preparatory beat in a modern sense. Therefore, the conducting technique is merely referential. Accordingly, professional singers in the early Baroque ensemble must have relied extensively on each other aurally to reach a high level of synchronization and much musical freedom in the execution.

In training today's choral ensembles, the conductor may reduce their conducting gestures to the minimum at one point of a rehearsal and allow the ensemble to use various means of nonverbal communication to synchronize. Hence, the choir may probably learn to be more sensitive through visual and aural interaction. Freeing the choir from being conducted will probably allow more musical freedom in the group, which better matches the Baroque ideal in performing.

The problem with performing early music lies in the lost tradition of passing down the knowledge orally from teacher to student. Historically, in addition to the score itself, performers were expected to understand their own culture and practice as their default music treatment. First, Baroque composers or performers did not expect the musical notation to be self-sufficient to explain and convey all the details for performance execution due to its imprecise notational system in development. Second, the composer was often part of the performing force, so the director and the composer must have worked closely and exchanged ideas.²⁵² Furthermore, Baroque composers did not hope that their music would be performed in the same way. Both William Byrd (ca.1539-1623)

²⁵² Elliott, *Singing in Style: A Guide to Vocal Performance Practices*, 6.

and François Couperin (1668-1733) mentioned the possible discrepancy between the notation and the actual performance.²⁵³

Most Baroque genres after 1600 engaged both performers and listeners on a plane of immediacy, which called for varying degrees of improvisation and left much unwritten.²⁵⁴ This understanding is supported in the handbook by the British musicologist Robert Donington (1907-1990), where he argues that musicians need to recognize the conventions and stylistic boundaries despite so much freedom in the interpretation:

One of the most striking features which gives its characteristic quality to baroque music is the freedom it grants to the performer in improvising the greater part of the expression as he goes along, and even quite a substantial part of the notes. Nothing is regarded as entirely fixed. Everything is just that much open to the mood of the moment. It is possible to be inconsistent, wayward, imaginative and unpredictable, and if you are sufficiently in touch with the style of your piece, no harm need come of it, but rather all the enjoyment of a spontaneous liberty within bounds. No wonder baroque music appeals strongly to our freedom-loving generation. Much of our own contemporary music pursues just such spontaneity, and in baroque music this ingredient is contained in the very conditions of its authentic performance.²⁵⁵

Baroque musicians were expected to improvise unwritten ornaments and perform the music correctly by ear and the performance idiom.²⁵⁶

Early Baroque musicians' improvisation in church music was typically based on a plainchant or composed polyphony. In 1643, the Roman musician Giacomo Razzi outlined musical practices at St. Mark in a letter to Giacomo Carissimi, writing that

²⁵³ Andrew Parrott, *Composers' Intentions?: Lost Traditions of Musical Performance* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2015), 5-6.

²⁵⁴ "The Baroque Era," 513.

²⁵⁵ Robert Donington, *Baroque Music: Style and Performance* (New York: Norton, 1982), 6.

²⁵⁶ Giovanni Piccioni (ca.1548-ca.1619) points out, in his *Concerti ecclesiastici* (1610), that it is unnecessary to put accidentals over the basso continuo line because competent musicians should play them correctly by ear and by art. This concept of using the keyboardist's own musical judgment in executing the Baroque music can apply to other musicians. See Elliott, *Singing in Style: A Guide to Vocal Performance Practices*, 10.

ordinarily singers sang from the large book, and they improvised counterpoint over the *cantus firmi*.²⁵⁷ When it comes to improvisation over a composed polyphony, most early Baroque composers seemed antagonistic to this idea. According to Giovanni Maria Bononcini (bapt.1642-1678), it was common for some singers to alter the music poorly without understanding the art. In the end, composers began to beg these singers not to do so. Another Italian composer, Giovanni Paolo Cima (ca.1570-1630), requested singers to sing as written. For those who preferred to add ornaments, he asked them to do so “only with *accenti* and *trilli*.”²⁵⁸ Although the modern changing-note trills already existed in Isabella Leonarda’s time, her vocal works were possibly performed with the earlier repeated-note version of trills. Written-out trills using the repeated-note version appear in the vocal works of the Novarese organist Giovanni Beria (ca.1610-ca.1671).²⁵⁹ If ornamented trills are to be added to Leonarda’s music at some cadential points in today’s performance, the singer may choose to do either the repeated-note or changing-note version.

Regardless of the excessive freedom and malleability in performing the music, Baroque musicians were expected to understand the composer’s intentions. For instance, Johann Matteson (1681-1764) said that without knowing what the composer wanted, the performer could not represent the music such that the composer would not even recognize their own work.²⁶⁰ However, on most occasions, performers do not always have writings of the Baroque composers talking specifically about how their music was performed, so

²⁵⁷ Parrott, *Composers' Intentions?: Lost Traditions of Musical Performance*, 18.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 7-8.

²⁵⁹ Leonarda, *Twelve Sonatas, Opus 16*, viii.

²⁶⁰ Parrott, *Composers' Intentions?: Lost Traditions of Musical Performance*, 2.

in addition to score study, performers must refer to other historical documents involving a wide range of composers and singers who engaged in a similar process in creating or executing the music during the same period.

In conclusion, when treating music by Leonarda and Peruchona, a certain degree of musical freedom and improvisation is expected. However, the high expectation of the performers' understanding of the style and divided historical opinions on improvisation over sacred polyphony call for extra precautions on ornaments and any modification to their original music.

Regarding musical expression, the Baroque style emphasizes strong emotional responses to stimuli and covers a wide range of emotional expressions.²⁶¹ In seventeenth-century Europe, however, emotion commonly referred to a movement or a disturbance due to civil agitation.²⁶² Its understanding had many references to various political thoughts or individual beliefs. Therefore, the modern term "emotion" was historically conceptualized as passion, affect, and sentiment in the studied ancient contexts.²⁶³ According to ancient scholars since antiquity, passion was a term relating to the four liquid humors in the body.²⁶⁴ It not just worked as "the vocabulary to define feeling in the early modern period" but also had a rich cultural and religious context.²⁶⁵ Hence, passion responded strongly in emotion to visual arts, music, and religious practices, through which emotions in turn became a form of communication.²⁶⁶

²⁶¹ *A Cultural History of the Emotions in the Baroque and Enlightenment Age*, 4 (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020), 9.

²⁶² *Ibid.*, 1.

²⁶³ *A History of Emotions, 1200-1800*, ed. Anu Korhonen and Birgitta Svensson, ed. Jonas Liliequist, Studies for the International Society for Cultural History, (London: Routledge, 2016), 1.

²⁶⁴ "The Baroque Era," 516.

²⁶⁵ *A Cultural History of the Emotions in the Baroque and Enlightenment Age*, 3.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 9.

Gusto and *affetto* were two essential Baroque concepts concerning the level of emotion in the process of delivery. Lodovico Casali (1575-1647) expresses in his treatise of 1629, *Generale Invite all Grandezza e Maraviglie della Musica* (Invitation to the Greatness and Marvels of Music), that the quality of the performance affects the audience's emotions: if the singer sings the new concerted music perfectly, the quality of the performance will engage the listener to *gustare* (taste) its sweetness and delight. Other prints of the time also mention that the music is designed "to meet the *gusto* of the most learned ears."²⁶⁷ *Gusto*, in seventeenth-century Italy, had a deeper meaning than "taste" in the modern sense. It implies a highly educated level of refined upbringing as well as cultivated, learned, and aesthetic knowledge that the literate intelligentsia can understand.²⁶⁸ In this case, a successful composer of the early Baroque period needed to convey *affetto* via music and perfect singers to meet the *gusto* of some elite audiences, where *affetto* referred to the movement of the mind or soul, evoking the desired emotion in the spectator.²⁶⁹

In the religious territory, "holy affections" were considered morally superior to all other emotions and more satisfying than bodily pleasures.²⁷⁰ They were understood as a form of suffering in the flesh or an internal motion in the soul—operations of the soul.²⁷¹ According to recent scholarly studies, the Baroque is eclectic, dynamic, and natural in embracing old and new medical ideas. The coexistence of many principles and theories has opened medicine to its cultural, social, and political grounds.²⁷² Being a female

²⁶⁷ *Culture and Authority in the Baroque*, ed. Massimo Ciavolella and Patrick Coleman (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 108-11.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 114.

²⁶⁹ *A Cultural History of the Emotions in the Baroque and Enlightenment Age*, 86.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 35.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 18.

²⁷² *Ibid.*, 33.

composer in the seventeenth century meant that women had to remain behind the scenes in a private circle. Thus, this female composer in the convent became a medium to allow sacred texts to be expressed with *affetto* via her written music, which was analog to the spiritual ecstasy of the soul in paradise as the spiritual mission of the Counter-Reformation about music.²⁷³

Many Baroque treaties argue that music could mysteriously elevate the soul about society, economy, or culture without explaining how music did this. Tim Carter suggests that the way music speaks to us today is not how it spoke or was made to speak at the time.²⁷⁴ Modern musicians understand that music evokes emotions. Although how Baroque sacred music moved the audience could hardly be duplicated today, these Baroque theorists have inspired us to pursue excellence in our own music-making. They also believed in the metaphysical power of music and invested in the delivery of emotion to significant and extreme levels. To “stay in style,” conductors and performers of today need to explore the emotional potential hidden in those works deliberately as historical performers often did, and necessary exaggeration may be more effective in conveying *affetto* to today’s less sensitive audience.

An Interpretation Based on Nun Musicians’ Invisibility

For many centuries, Christianity developed its own musical language through devotions inspired by faith in God, with little professional involvement from women. Up until the twentieth century, women were gradually becoming recognized as professional

²⁷³ *Culture and Authority in the Baroque*, 115.

²⁷⁴ *A Cultural History of the Emotions in the Baroque and Enlightenment Age*, 69.

composers and church musicians. Throughout the history of Christianity, women had actively participated in religious ceremonies, liturgies, and organizations.²⁷⁵ After the apostle Paul commented on women in the church service in 1 Corinthians 14:34 that “*Mulier tacet in ecclesia* (women should be silent in the church),”²⁷⁶ women were essentially muted. Lynelle Frankforter-Wiens explains that women were previously used in pagan rituals, and the Church wanted Christian worship purified from any association with pagan practices.²⁷⁷ Women were, thus, excluded from music-making within the church hierarchy in liturgies. Even public secular music-making, such as opera and drama, was deeply influenced by the Church’s misogyny. When visible women took control of their bodies and manipulated their voices, sexual and moral codes were challenged by an implication of non-procreative sexuality.²⁷⁸ It seems that visible women having voices in early modern Italy were problematic and intolerable.

In order to avoid problems and intolerance in the Christian world, women had to stay physically invisible. As Christine Jeanneret points out, they appeared either in the private or public spheres in the seventeenth century, and there was no crossover.²⁷⁹ Being visible and musical for women meant giving up their decency and virtue to pursue public fame, resulting in disrespect and even scandals. Alternatively, it was possible to be invisible and musical as a nun musician. In comparison, a young male composer had the opportunity to compose music for the chapel choir, hear it, and instantly receive feedback.

²⁷⁵ Chiti et al., *Soavissima Melodia: Maria Xaveria Peruchona Compositrice Del Xvii Secolo*, 18, 13-14.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 14.

²⁷⁷ Lynelle Frankforter-Wiens, "A Practical and Historical Guide to the Understanding of the Counter Tenor Voice" (Doctorate Dissertation, Indiana University, 1987), 8-9.

²⁷⁸ Bonnie Gordon, *Monteverdi's Unruly Women: The Power of Song in Early Modern Italy* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 34-35.

²⁷⁹ *Readying Cavalli's Operas for the Stage: Manuscript, Edition, Production*, ed. Roberta Marvin, ed. Ellen Rosand, Ashgate Interdisciplinary Studies in Opera, (London: Routledge, 2016), 96.

After he had matured in compositional skills, he could secure a position as *maestro di cappella* to earn a living as an accomplished composer, allowing him the opportunity to compose music involving large-scale performing forces. Later, with the support of patrons of various sources, he could even publish his compositions. Nonetheless, this was not possible for female musicians. The widespread doubt about women's capabilities and physicality based on gender stereotypes was also universal in early modern Italy. Even in the early eighteenth century, it was still believed that women were physically and mentally weaker than men. Moreover, women's physical features were said to weaken men's minds.²⁸⁰ Thus, female composers mainly composed music for small ensembles because female musicians could not obtain a *maestra di cappella* position.²⁸¹

The identity of nun musicians was thought to be "the most precious symbol of patrician pride and piety"²⁸² because their virginity and physical invisibility protected them from scandals and barbaric associations with sexual accessibility. As a counterexample, without the protection of a cloister, Barbara Strozzi (1619-1677) suffered from insidious slurs, even if she chose not to perform in the theatre and lived in a sphere being enclosed and isolated.²⁸³ In the name of purity and protection, male authorities banned singing nuns from being visible in the convent churches. Accordingly, the nuns' choir could only be heard in the external church attached to the convent, and with some architectural modification, they remained invisible to the lay public.²⁸⁴ Bonnie

²⁸⁰ The French scholar Montesquieu (1689-1755) claimed that women's menstrual cycle evidenced their lack of reason. This cycle attacked women and particularly their minds. See Ediberto Román, *Citizenship and Its Exclusions: A Classical, Constitutional, and Critical Race Critique* (New York: New York University Press, 2010), 68.

²⁸¹ Green, *Music, Gender, Education*, 93.

²⁸² Epstein, "Melting the Venusberg: A Feminist Theology of Music," 260.

²⁸³ Ellen Rosand, "Barbara Strozzi, "Virtuosissima Cantatrice": The Composer's Voice," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 31, no. 2 (Summer 1978): 280.

²⁸⁴ Leffeldt, "Monasticism in Early Modern Italy and Spain," 473.

Gordon suggests that nuns' supervised, carefully controlled public performances may also be compared to courtesans' performances for many of their similarities.²⁸⁵ To a certain extent, nuns and courtesans were aurally or vocally parallel, and in both instances, singing had some pecuniary advantage. When both performed for different audiences in different venues, their singing employed similar vocal virtuosity and aroused similar ecstasies, either spiritual or erotic. The performance of expressive music in these vocal compositions by nun composers blurred the dichotomous views on sacred/secular and virgin/courtesan even more.

Based on the analysis above, my interpretation of nuns' music-making in convents of the Baroque period is further inspired by Edmund Wilson's (1895-1972) study from 1941. If we view nuns' physical invisibility as a kind of disability, then their voices are enabled because of this disability. This point of view is illustrated in Wilson's study of the play *Philoctetes* by Sophocles (ca.496-ca.406 BC), adapted by André Gide (1869-1951), in which it seems that through disability, one enables their ability. Philoctetes's illness and banishment imply a bounded duality of strength and mutilation.

Philoctetes is such...a man obsessed by a grievance, which in his case he is to be kept from forgetting by an agonizing physical ailment; and for Sophocles his pain and hatred have a dignity and an interest.²⁸⁶

A more general and fundamental idea [is] the conception of superior strength as inseparable from disability.²⁸⁷

The misfortune of his exile on the island has enabled him to perfect himself: "I have learned to express myself better," he tells them, "Now that I am no longer with me. Between hunting and sleeping, I occupy myself with thinking. My ideas,

²⁸⁵ *The Courtesan's Arts: Cross-Cultural Perspectives*, ed. Martha Feldman and Bonnie Gordon (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 191.

²⁸⁶ Edmund Wilson, *The Wound and the Bow: Seven Studies in Literature* (Cambridge, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1941), 278.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 287.

since I have been alone so that nothing, not even suffering, disturbs them, have taken a subtle course which sometimes I can hardly follow....”²⁸⁸

So, sacrifice becomes the crux of overturning the binary results via the medium of virtuosic vocal music. This idea is reflected in cloistered nun musicians: their sacrifice of freedom and visibility enabled them to have a voice that other women did not have in public. Through nuns’ “daily martyrdom” and sacrifice, they overturned the public perceptions about women singing and transcended from Perspective A to Perspective B, as shown in Table 11. Eventually, the convent wall metamorphosed the physical enclosure into spiritual freedom.

Table 11. Binary Perspectives under the Effect of Sacrifice

Perspective A	Sacrifice →	Perspective B
visible		invisible
physical		disembodied
bodily		soulful
fleshly		noble
vulnerable		protected
free		cloistered
abled		disabled
tangible		intangible
negative		positive
earthly		angelic
secular		sacred
idyllic		heavenly
blasphemous		reverent
scandalous		venerable
dishonest		moral
licentious		chaste
obscene		pure
erotic		spiritual
whorish		saintly
prostitute		virgin

²⁸⁸ Ibid., 288.


Peruchona: *Quid pavemus sorores*

Peruchona’s motet number fifteen, *Quid pavemus sorores* (What Do We Fear, Sisters), is dedicated to the Madonna. Table 12 provides an overview of its structural plan. This motet is through-composed in sections. It uses non-conversational and non-Scriptural dialogue, allowing solo voices and the SATB choir to express religious feelings collectively. It resembles a popular Latin sacred dialogue in the Lombard convents during the seventeenth century.

The bass solo in the opening section in E minor indicates a representative from the congregation asking a question about their fears. The half cadence at mm. 6 confirms the congregation’s confusion and urges a resolution.

By contrast, the ending E major chord eventually resolves the question in triumph. The question-answer relationship reminds us of nuns’ “daily martyrdom” in the cloister, reflected in their musical practice. As I discussed in the previous section (see Table 11), sacrifice (as in the text, to fight *demon, caro, mundus, and accidia*) becomes the crux to metamorphose two categories of exact opposite perspectives through singing. The convent wall metamorphoses women’s physical freedom into their spiritual freedom.

Table 12. Structural Plan of Peruchona’s *Quid pavemus sorores*

Section	Text ²⁸⁹	Measure	Meter	Key/Mode	Scoring	Style and Texture	Musical Event
A	<i>Quid pavemus sorores quid timemus quid vita religiosa est quasi pugna dolorosa</i> What do we fear, sisters? what are we afraid of? Because the religious life is like a painful battle	1-6	C (4/2)	e→B (HC)	B	Aria	A downward leap to the leading tone D# on <i>pavemus</i> (fear) Triadic melodic contour over <i>quasi pugna</i> (like a battle), exploring the foreign tonal area on F# major and using rhythmic figures (as secondary dominant)  est qua-si pu - gna

²⁸⁹ The English translation is by John Trudeau and Steven Beall from *Composers Born 1600-1699*, 231.

Table 12. Structural Plan of Peruchona's *Quid pavemus sorores*


Section	Text ²⁸⁹	Measure	Meter	Key/Mode	Scoring	Style and Texture	Musical Event
							B3 to B2 descending scale on <i>dolorosa</i> (painful), ending on dominant (half cadence), and concluding the whole section. “-sa” from <i>dolorosa</i> (painful) has an early appearance on the penultimate note C before the half cadence as textural anticipation, which highlights the tension of the major seventh drop from “do-” to “-sa.”
B	<i>Ubi demon semper ferit ubi caro semper perit ubi mundus semper tentat et accidia nos tormentat</i> where the devil always wounds where the flesh always perishes where the world always tempts and sloth torments us.	7-17	3/2	e→B→e	B	Aria	<i>semper</i> (always) emphasized by an octave leap downward <i>tentat</i> (tempts) exploring the foreign tonal area on F# major. <i>tormentat</i> (torments) cadencing in B major (F# major as secondary dominant → B major) and using 4-3 suspension 4-3 suspension over the second-time <i>perit</i> (perish) A long, slow melisma and 4-3 suspension over the third-time <i>perit</i> The four-note pattern in short/short/long/long allows hemiola to occur at mm. 12 (on <i>tonnentat</i>) and mm. 13-14 (on <i>semper perit</i>).
C	<i>Consolemur et laetemur</i> Let us be comforted and let us rejoice.	18-21	3/2	e	SATB	Homophonic	Weak tonicization of D
		22-30		e→B→E		Free imitation Homophonic, chordal	Weak tonicization of E for the first time using elided cadence <i>laetemur</i> (let us rejoice) using 4-3 suspension three times to confirm the new tonality The use of circular, active melodic contour depicts “comforted” and “rejoice.” The circular melodies in all parts fuse into the chordal style to prepare for the upcoming battles. Hemiola occurs at mm. 28-29 through the flow of the macro two-beat feel on <i>laetemur</i> .
D	<i>ad superanda omnia bella Virgo Maria vinci bella</i> To overcome all our battles the beautiful Virgin Mary has come.	31-38	C (4/2)	E→B→E	SATB	Fugal	The section marks the “battle” rhythms drawn from section A. 4-3 suspension on <i>vinci bella</i> (wars to be conquered) 4-3 suspension on <i>vinci bella</i> and <i>omnia</i> (all) superimposed  Ad su-pe-ran - da_ om - ni - a bel - la
E	<i>Ecce iam nobis presentatur gratis nobis aggregatur fortis in orbe praeliabitur in victoria Maria dominabitur.</i> Behold she is shown to us, she approaches us freely, she will fight bravely in the world, in victory Mary will dominate.	39-44	C (4/2)	e→B→e	SB	Free imitation Florid melisma	The sudden shift from E major to E minor after a caesura (a half/minim rest) Pseudo-canon entrance Weak tonicization of B minor and D <i>fortis in</i> (bravely), <i>praeliabitur</i> (fight), <i>dominabitur</i> (will dominate) on F# major 7-6 suspension on <i>praeliabitur</i> 4-3 suspension on <i>dominabitur</i> Declamatory melisma on <i>praeliabitur</i> Long, florid, declamatory melisma on <i>dominabitur</i>

Table 12. Structural Plan of Peruchona's *Quid pavemus sorores*

Section	Text ²⁸⁹	Measure	Meter	Key/Mode	Scoring	Style and Texture	Musical Event
F	<i>Si iam virgo fuit cara erit in Caelis coronata</i> <i>Si Maria stellis est adornata</i> <i>astris dilecta vincta fulgebit</i>	45-50	6/4	e	AT	Homophonic	Relatively static using mostly stepwise melodic contour and limited range
	Since she has been a virgin she will be crowned in heaven. If Mary has been adorned with stars, she, beloved, will shine surrounded with stars.	50-53		e→E	S	Homophonic	<i>stellis</i> (the stars) on E major having a sudden tonal shift The tonality is gradually shifted through revising E major, weak tonicization of E and B rather than cadencing on E major.
		53-55		E	TB	Homophonic, homorhythmic	Relatively static using mostly stepwise melodic contour and limited range
	<i>et nos cum ipsa triumphabimus cum triumphanti acclamabimus</i> And we will triumph with her we will shout with her in triumph.	56-60		E	SATB	Less strictly homophonic	B is tonicized several times
		60-68		E→B→E	SATB	Homophonic, homorhythmic	C# major→F# major over <i>acclamabimus</i> (we will shout) 4-3 suspension on <i>acclamabimus</i> on cadences in B and E
				68-70	E		SA
		70-72		E (Tonicizing B)	TB		T is a transposed version of S. B functions as a brass instrument
72-76	E	SATB	4-3 suspension on <i>in nostris</i> (in our)				
G (Coda)	<i>ergo sint júbila in nostris cordibus</i> <i>ergo sint cantica in nostris oribus.</i> Therefore let there be joy in our hearts, Therefore let there be songs in our mouths.	77-79	C (4/2)	E	SATB	Fugal	4-3 suspension cadence on <i>oribus</i> (mouths)

What is comforting in this motet is that the nuns were to fight/sacrifice communally, with the inspiration of the Virgin Mary. For centuries, “veneration” has been offered to saints and the Virgin Mary; however, the division between worship and veneration is blurred. Though the Council of Trent (1545-1563) refused to claim Mary as an equal role with Jesus in human redemption, the Virgin Mary still served as a role model for women, especially in Italy.²⁹⁰ In other words, the Virgin Mary stands for the highest

²⁹⁰ See Mary Leith, *The Virgin Mary: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2021), 62-63. Also, see *Women and Faith: Catholic Religious Life in Italy from Late Antiquity to the Present*, ed. Lucetta Scaraffia and Gabriella Zarri (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 90.

state of perfection in female “honor” reflected in virginity, humility in virtue, and obedience toward authority.²⁹¹ To nuns, the Virgin Mary’s role is also reflected as mother and virgin at the same time, even being the human and the more-than-human.²⁹² As the spiritual giver of salvation, forgiveness, and life, she became the ideal woman who was estranged from her own body and sexuality.²⁹³ In the motet, the Virgin Mary is an invincible warrior, lending her strength to nuns. The extensive homophonic passages in homorhythm in the latter part of this motet in section F gives a sense of togetherness. Peruchona understands that when the choir sings homophony in precisely the same rhythms, the power of oratory is enhanced, resulting in transparent diction and delivery.

In section G, the coda begins with a burst of dotted rhythms in all parts. The sudden change in the texture, meter, and articulation after a short caesura at mm. 76 allows the exact text (*ergo sint júbila in nostris cordibus/ergo sint cantica in nostris oribus*) initially expressed through forceful homophony to reiterate in a fugal gesture, adding a varied perspective to the musical expression. If one considers that homophony may exalt a sense of triumph, the rugged, dotted, contrapuntal figures are a better choice to portray joy.

²⁹¹ *Women and Faith: Catholic Religious Life in Italy from Late Antiquity to the Present*, 90.

²⁹² Charlene Spretnak, *Missing Mary: The Queen of Heaven and Her Re-Emergence in the Modern Church*, 1st ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 201.

²⁹³ *The Feminist Encyclopedia of Spanish Literature*, ed. Janet Pérez and Maureen Ihrle (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2002), 380.

Peruchona: Gaude plaude

This four-voice, non-liturgical motet *Gaude plaude* is scored initially for the S₁S₂AB choir (see Example 14) dedicated to “the Virgin saint and martyr” without specifying the name. In mm. 11, 13-14, 17-18, 66-67, 70-71, 85-86, and 91-92, the generic N is to be completed (N for *nome*, or name) by the performer.²⁹⁴ In placing that N in the text, one may appropriately use the name of any virgin martyr tormented to death. This compositional practice started in Milan in the mid-seventeenth century as the “generic” sanctoral motet, as Robert Kendrick points out, to promote female saints musically, usually linked to specific houses, as models for nuns and laywomen.²⁹⁵

Example 14. Peruchona, *Gaude plaude*, mm. 1-3

The musical score for Example 14, Peruchona, *Gaude plaude*, mm. 1-3, is presented in a standard format. It includes five staves: Canto Primo, Canto Secondo, Alto, Basso, and Organo. The score is in common time (C) and begins with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The lyrics are: "Gau- de plau- de, plau- de, sum- ma lau- de si- ne". The score is divided into two phrases, "Phrase a" and "Phrase a'". Red circles highlight specific notes in the vocal parts. The organ part provides a harmonic accompaniment. The page number "6 5" is visible at the bottom right of the score.

²⁹⁴ Maria Xaveria Peruchona, *Two Motets by Maria Xaveria Peruchona*, ed. Candace Smith, Bruce Dickey, and Miranda Aureli, *Music by Nun Composers in Lombardy*, (Sala Bolognese, Italy: Artemisia Editions, 1999), i.

²⁹⁵ Robert Kendrick, "Genres, Generations and Gender: Nuns' Music in Early Modern Milan, C. 1550-1706" (Doctorate Dissertation, New York University, 1993), 300.

The complete piece consists of 156 measures and seven formal sections according to the point of cadence, the change of meter, or the switch of compositional material.

Table 13 shows the formal overview of *Gaude plaude*.

Table 13. Formal Analysis of *Gaude plaude*

Section	Measure	Meter	Key/Mode	Scoring	Style and Texture	Latin Text
A	1-18	C (4/4)	G→C→D→G	S ₁ S ₂ AB	Imitative duets Largely homorhythmic	<i>Gaude plaude</i> ... <i>plaude Virgini,</i> <i>plaude martiri N.</i>
B	19-71	3/2	G↔C ²⁹⁶ →D→G		Chordal/homorhythmic	<i>Qui tentatus et</i> <i>afflictus,</i> ... <i>gaude plaude N.</i>
C	72-85	C (4/4)	G	S ₁ S ₂ A	Canonic motive/trio	<i>Illa vicit superavit</i> <i>mortem, feras et</i> <i>tirannum:</i>
D	86-92		G→C	B	Monody	<i>N. speculum virtutis,</i> ... <i>solatium reorum N.</i>
E	92-120	6/4	C→G	S ₁ S ₂ B	Canon trio	<i>O felices cicatrices,</i> ... <i>et duplicemus gaudia</i>
F	121-133	C (4/4)	G	S ₁ S ₂ AB	Melismatic phrases Duet	<i>Tu, o Virgo,</i> ... <i>per te precor veniam</i>
G	133-156		G→E→C→D→G		Fugal	<i>Et te semper cantabo:</i> <i>Alleluia</i>

One extensive writing on pitch organization from the second half of the seventeenth century is a 1673 treatise by Giovanni Maria Bononcini (1642-1678), *Il musico pratico* (The Practical Musician). Though it virtually paraphrases concepts from Zarlino's *Istitutione harmoniche* on the twelve-mode system,²⁹⁷ this treatise has significantly impacted the North Alps areas beyond Italy and influenced the Baroque fugal theory. *Music Theory from Zarlino to Schenker* comments that Bononcini's theory

²⁹⁶ The tonal oscillation occurs between G and C.

²⁹⁷ The other writing of 1693 by Angelo Berardi (1636-1694) is *Miscellanea musicale*. In consideration of the publication by Peruchona was in 1675. Berardi's writing will be excluded in the document. See Gregory Barnett, "Musical Issues of the Late-Seicento: Style, Social Function, and Theory in Emilian Instrumental Music" (Doctorate Dissertation, Princeton University, 1997), 155.

is less comprehensive than Penna's but contains insight studies on counterpoint. Accordingly, *Il musico pratico* became the most popular practical manual of the late seventeenth century.²⁹⁸

In agreement with the historical perspectives in *Il musico pratico*, the mode of the seventeenth-century modal polyphony depends on the following aspects: (1) higher or lower *ambitus*, (2) modal final, and (3) modal coherence. Moreover, the theory explains how the proper use of fugal subjects stipulates a well-planned composition.²⁹⁹

Seventeenth-century composers and theorists often refer to the tonal organization as *tuono* or *tono*, known as the psalm tone tonality. This practice has mingled with the traditional modal system throughout the seventeenth century.³⁰⁰ During Leonarda's and Peruchona's time, the mastery of contrapuntal technique in the modal system has been regarded as professional integrity.³⁰¹

In this analysis, I will use the seventeenth-century modal theory to interpret the tonal structure that reflects the composer's technique and intention. I will also use Bononcini's *Il musico pratico* to explain the polyphonic technique Peruchona uses in *Gaude plaude*, published two years after the theory's first appearance. Table 14 shows how Peruchona realizes Bononcini's polyphonic ideal via music.

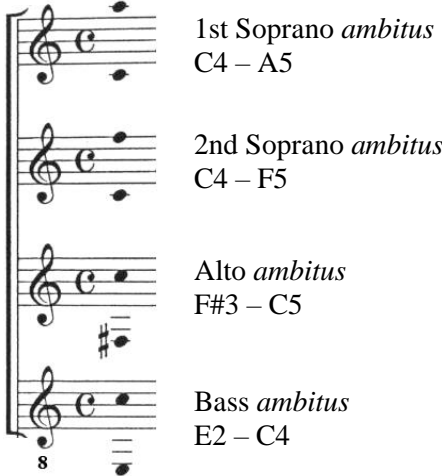






²⁹⁸ Damschroder and Williams, *Music Theory from Zarlino to Schenker: A Bibliography and Guide*, 4, 34.

²⁹⁹ Gregory Barnett, "Giovanni Maria Bononcini and the Uses of the Modes," *The Journal of Musicology* 25, no. 3 (2008): 237-38.

³⁰⁰ Gregory Barnett, "Modal Theory, Church Keys, and the Sonata at the End of the Seventeenth Century," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 51, no. 2 (1998): 246-49.











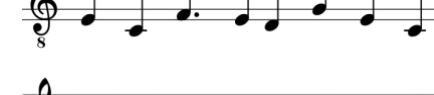



³⁰¹ Barnett, "Giovanni Maria Bononcini and the Uses of the Modes," 245.

Table 14. Modal Analysis of *Gaude plaude*

Music Excerpt	Analysis and Explanation
 <p>1st Soprano <i>ambitus</i> C4 – A5</p> <p>2nd Soprano <i>ambitus</i> C4 – F5</p> <p>Alto <i>ambitus</i> F#3 – C5</p> <p>Bass <i>ambitus</i> E2 – C4</p> <p>8</p> <p>The Bass does not have to abide by the limit of <i>ambitus</i>.</p>	<p>Theoretical Mode 7 <i>ambitus</i> and final (Mixolydian)</p>  <p>Authentic <i>ambitus</i></p>  <p>Plagal <i>ambitus</i></p>  <p>Authentic <i>ambitus</i></p>  <p>Plagal <i>ambitus</i></p> <p><i>Gaude plaude</i> does not transpose the mode.</p> <p>Peruchona extends the vocal range beyond the <i>ambitus</i> for expressive reasons in mm. 79-80.</p>
<p>mm. 1-4 See Example 8.1. for the first three measures</p>  <p>Phrase a Phrase a' – a fourth higher than Phrase a</p>	<p>The opening phrases a and a' spell out the proper octave of Mode 7, emphasizing B, D, C, and E. The rising feature of both phrases marks it an authentic-mode melody.</p>
<p>mm. 153-156 The final cadence</p> 	<p>1st Soprano's final D is the fifth above G.</p> <p>2nd Soprano's final B is the third above G.</p> <p>Alto's final is G.</p> <p>Bass's final is G.</p> <p>The final cadence confirms the mode of this motet as Mode 7, G-Mixolydian.</p>
<p>mm. 133-156 Fugal Subjects (Initial Subphrase)</p>	<p>In Italian theory, the requirement of a good modal counterpoint is the use of a tonal answer.³⁰²</p>

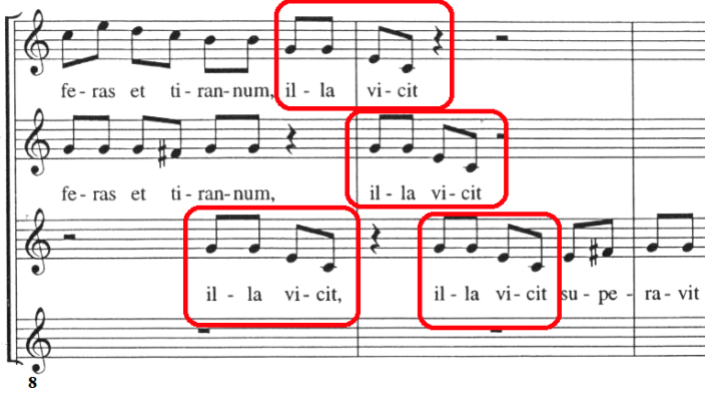
³⁰² Ibid., 241.

Table 14. Modal Analysis of *Gaude plaude*

Music Excerpt	Analysis and Explanation
1. S ₁ 	<p>Peruchona alternates the subject and its tonal answer in the final fugal section. Theorists in history praised this new compositional design. The harmonic and contrapuntal style with extended <i>ambitus</i> represents a freer approach to the <i>seconda prattica</i>.³⁰³</p> <p>The eighth fugal tonal answer occurs at measures 141-142. This tonal answer is unique among all thirteen fugal statements. First, it explores the highest realm of the <i>ambitus</i>. Second, the rhythmic alternation of the statement makes it stand out, which is the only statement that applies the rhythmic alternation. Third, proportionally, the eighth statement sits at the Golden Ratio point, marking its unique and vital role.</p> <p>The complete ambitus for G-Mixolydian will appear if one places the fugal subject and its higher tonal answer together.</p> 
2. A 	
3. S ₂ 	
4. B 	
5. S ₁ 	
6. A 	
7. S ₂ 	
8. S ₁ 	
9. S ₂ 	
10. B 	
11. S ₁ 	
12. A 	
13. S ₂ 	

³⁰³ Ibid., 252.

Table 14. Modal Analysis of *Gaude plaude*

Music Excerpt	Analysis and Explanation
<p>mm. 79-80 1st Soprano's Extended Vocal Range</p>  <p>The musical score shows three vocal parts. The lyrics are: fe-ras et ti-ran-num, il-la vi-cit. The first Soprano part has a red box around the notes G4, E4, C4, and B3. The second Soprano part has a red box around the notes G4, E4, C4, and B3. The third Soprano part has a red box around the notes G4, E4, C4, and B3. The lyrics for the first Soprano are 'fe-ras et ti-ran-num, il-la vi-cit'. The lyrics for the second Soprano are 'fe-ras et ti-ran-num, il-la vi-cit'. The lyrics for the third Soprano are 'il-la vi-cit, il-la vi-cit su-pe-ra-vit'.</p>	<p>Peruchona uses the four-note canonic motive at the unison among three voices at a close distance of one beat to create a kaleidoscopic effect to depict <i>Illa vicit</i> (She defeated). It is the only occasion for the first Soprano to reach down to C4. For Peruchona, this is a conscious decision to extend the <i>ambitus</i>. However, this G-E-C downward motion is unambiguously not a plagal gesture.</p>

It is unlikely that those meticulous yet subtle compositional designs in *Gaude plaude* happen by chance. We have reasons to believe that Maria Peruchona's superb musicianship and her awareness of prevailing trends in music led to her exceptional musical rhetoric.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

For musicians, composers, and conductors, the task of learning and discovering the less-known parts of music history is never finished. Social order and gender stereotypes primarily affect how we understand and interpret music. When we analyze music by minor composers, our ways of appreciating music may not respond well to unfamiliar or even awkward musical gestures because we misunderstand the connotation of their rhetorical “signals.” Accordingly, we need to expand our default expectations to allow for the possibility of understanding and accepting the music by less-known composers. Through my analysis of selected choral works by Leonarda and Peruchona, I hope to highlight their outstanding musicianship and the artistic value of their works. In this document, much of the early sociohistorical research is to enhance my analysis of Ursuline music and allow reasonable interpretations to emerge.

In terms of performing Leonarda and Peruchona’s music, the never-ending question about the performance practice is, “must we perform the music exactly like how they performed their music at *Collegio di Sant’Orsola*?” Of course, we have the option to choose original period instruments, the same ensemble size, and possibly the closest performing technique. Then, would this performance be authentic?

First, I discussed performative freedom in early Baroque music, and the modern sense of “fidelity to a score” did not exist 400 years ago. Thus, our original initiative to erase our own identity in performing early Baroque music will lead to historical inauthenticity. James Young states that there have been doubts about whether authentic or completely authentic performances are attainable. He further proposes the concept of an acoustic definition of authenticity: reproducing a performance that occurred audibly

in the past. In addition, he argues that modern performers may produce better performances over time, which makes sonic authenticity less of an aesthetic goal.³⁰⁴ In the case of Maria Peruchona, she most likely only had about six top singers in her choir, so there might have been a balance issue if most of them were altos, for instance. This assumption was unlikely an ideal performing source for Peruchona, and the acoustic authenticity of her composition would not have explored its artistic potential due to the compromised musicality of available singers. In addition, as early Baroque music itself was in the process of creativity through appropriate improvisation and the discovery of the unwritten, acoustic authenticity should embrace these practices. However, our performance may dangerously deviate from authentic aesthetics when deciding how much we are involved in changing or adding elements to the score.

In contrast to the pursuit of acoustic authenticity, replicating or reproducing the same musical experience that happened in the past is sensible authenticity.³⁰⁵ Bonnie Gordon, however, believes that early modern listeners could respond differently to specific musical expressions.³⁰⁶ Moreover, Colleen Baade comments that some Baroque music could agitate premodern listeners, although the same music may sound sweet to our ears.³⁰⁷ Therefore, sensible authenticity may not be possible because modern ears have been trained to interpret the meaning of musical components differently. Furthermore, since social sensitivity has changed over the centuries, the modern audience now is not supposed to be shocked to see an all-female choir perform on stage as opposed

³⁰⁴ James Young, "Authenticity in Performance," in *The Routledge Companion to Aesthetics*, ed. Berys Gaut and Dominic Lopes, Routledge Philosophy Companions (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2013), 452-56.

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 455.

³⁰⁶ Gordon, *Monteverdi's Unruly Women: The Power of Song in Early Modern Italy*, 10-11.

³⁰⁷ *Masculinities, Childhood, Violence Attending to Early Modern Women—and Men: Proceedings of the 2006 Symposium*, ed. Amy Leonard and Karen Nelson (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2011), 314.

to what might have happened in history when the premodern audience accidentally saw nuns perform their music in ecstasies. For instance, the Spanish Carmelite nun Theresa (1515-1582) precisely describes the course of her ecstatic raptures in her autobiography, whose vivid descriptions then have provided religious fantasy with pictorial instructions to her followers as a “model” in their own contemplative meditation.³⁰⁸ If visual and aural experiences of the audience are both important to achieve sensible authenticity, Baroque conventual music itself implies the invisibility of performers in spiritual ecstasies.

Even if the performance could emulate the “authentic sound,” the “authentic *affetto*” can hardly be conveyed via the same sound. Without a solid background full of “wrong” beliefs deeply rooted in early modern pseudo-science, our ears no longer translate the meaning and emotion of Baroque music in its original way. Hopefully, my discussion of socio-historical issues can help readers understand what is missing in our social background before we subconsciously judge nuns’ music and their musical expressions.

Regarding the “intentional definition of authenticity,” I concur with James Young’s idea that it may not result in authentic performances. First, the composers may expect future performers to develop new interpretations. Second, modern performers may develop better interpretations than what was intended initially.³⁰⁹ Although modern conductors generally feel a moral obligation to be loyal to the intentions of the composers, there is a possibility that by respecting the composer’s intentions, restricted interpretations and performances may become less aesthetically attractive.

³⁰⁸ Möbius, *Woman of the Baroque Age*, 31.

³⁰⁹ Young, "Authenticity in Performance," 456-58.

Last, in terms of the “technique definition of authenticity,” we are supposed to consider the following aspects: (1) fidelity to the score by carefully studying urtexts and the composer’s notes on the performance, (2) respecting the composer’s intentions, (3) historical performance practices (including everything discussed in musical freedom and malleability), (4) considering the ideal sound of the work (using better performing techniques), (5) eliminating redundant practices that do not affect the sound, (6) performers’ creativity in individual interpretations, (7) taking advantage of acoustic, sensible, and intentional authenticities/avoiding philosophical controversies, and (8) checking if a desirable authentic goal is achieved.³¹⁰ In addition, there is a significant but inaudible part of the experience that we can hardly get immediately—the music culture. To enhance the listener’s experience, it may be necessary to consider giving pre-concert educational instructions on the musical and social backgrounds to boost the listener’s awareness of specific or unfamiliar musical components. Additionally, exaggerating crucial effects can possibly heighten the drama and enhance sensible authenticity. Finally, conductors need to continue to reassess the aesthetic goal and evaluate the result.

I believe that music reflects many kaleidoscopic facts of the humanities. Research into female monasticism and its music will broaden our understanding of an incredible but little-known cultural phenomenon. Leonarda and Peruchona, living a non-cloistered but disciplined life in the seventeenth-century Novarese area, have expressed their spiritual piety through vocal music composed for the mystic, low-profile women’s organization—the *Collegio di Sant’Orsola*. Their devotional and musical themes have helped us understand the musical creativity at the *Collegio* and have allowed us to

³¹⁰ Ibid., 458-60.

experience female spirituality with universal joy, imagination, and passion. I hope my research will shed light on further interdisciplinary studies of musical minorities in the history of Western music.

Appendix A: Biographical Summary of Isabella Leonarda

Biographical Summary of Isabella Leonarda and Related Historical Events³¹¹

Year	Event	Comment
	<i>Societas seu Congregatio Virginum sub titulo sanctae Ursulae</i> (Society or Congregation of the Virgins under Saint Ursula) was founded by Battista Boniperti (1552-1610), approved by Bishop Bossi on March 27, 1583. [5]	
1583	<i>Societas seu Congregatio</i> dressed the first three virgins in the monastic habit in the cathedral. [5] The first Ursulines lived with their families. [5] The Ursulines were dedicated to the Christian doctrine and good works. [5]	
1586	Eight Ursulines began to live in the community in a house in the parish of San Giacomo, bought by Battista Boniperti. [5] The Ursulines were not required to observe the cloister. [5]	
Around 1597	The noble Alberto Torielli of Lords of Vergano bequeathed his large house in the parish of Santa Eufemia to the Ursulines. [5] The Ursulines rebuilt and enlarged the property. They moved to their new headquarters. [5] There was the main entrance leading to a cloistered quadriporticus. [5] The Ursulines built their internal and external church with the permission of Bascapè. The bishop permitted the monastery that the church was dedicated in honor of the most glorious Holy Virgin Mary, virgins and martyrs of Ursula and her companions. [5] The foundation became the noble college of the Ursuline virgins, which housed about thirty girls for education. Almost all of them came from aristocratic and wealthy families. [5]	The property was within the area of San Nicola Alleyway, Cannobio Street, Mossotti Street, Torielli Street, and St. Ursula Street. [5]
Before 1603	Giannantonio Leonardi, Isabella's father, obtained a degree in law [5] at the University of Pavia. [6]	
1603	Giannantonio was admitted to the College of Doctors in Novara. [2]	
160?	Giannantonio Leonardi married Apollonia Sala at the parish church of Casalino. [5] The Leonardi family lived in the parish of San Pietro. [5]	

³¹¹ The sources are from the following documents. [1] Bowers and Tick, *Women Making Music: The Western Art Tradition, 1150-1950*, 119-46. [2] *Composers Born 1600-1699*, 139-41. [3] Carter, "The Music of Isabella Leonarda (1620-1704)." [4] Elisabeth Schedensack, *Die Solomotetten Isabella Leonardas (1620-1704)*, 2 vols., vol. 1, Musicological Studies & Documents, (Neuhausen, Germany: American Institute of Musicology, 1998). [5] Baroffio, "La Compositrice Isabella Leonarda 1620-1704." [6] Giulia Grilli, "Leonardi, Isabella," in *Biographical Dictionary of Italians* (April 1, 2022 2005). https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/isabella-leonardi_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/. [7] Chiti et al., *Soavissima Melodia: Maria Xaveria Peruchona Compositrice Del Xvii Secolo*, 18.

Biographical Summary of Isabella Leonarda and Related Historical Events³¹¹

Year	Event	Comment
1610?	Battista Boniperti was succeeded by the canon protector of the Virgins (Congregation), “doctor of law,” Nicolò Leonardo (ca.1578-1644). He was an uncle of Isabella. [5]	Nicolò was <i>doctor utriusque iuris</i> , consul of justice, the penitentiary of the cathedral, several times episcopal vicar general, and capitular. [6]
1613	Gianpietro Leonardi was born as Isabella’s brother. [2]	Gianpietro was the first son of Giannantonio. [6] Gianpietro later became <i>canonico coadiutore</i> (canon coadjutor) at Novara Cathedral. [2]
1616	Elisabeth Casata (1598-after1658) entered the <i>Collegio di Sant’Orsola</i> and worked as an organist and teacher of music. [2] Elisabeth Casata’s family paid a dowry of 1,000 lire instead of the usual 3,000 lire. [5]	Elisabeth Casata and Gasparo Casati may be relatives. [2] Though the term <i>maestra di cappella</i> never appeared at the <i>Collegio</i> , this role was carried out by the organist nun. [7]
161?	Anna Leonarda was born as Isabella’s sister, supposedly. [2]	Anna Leonarda’s dates are unknown. She was supposedly older than her other sisters. [6]
1620	Father: Giannantonio Leonardi [2] Mother: Apollonia Sala [6] Born Anna Isabella Leonarda into a Novarese noble family on September 6, 1620 [2] Baptized in the cathedral of Novara on the same day, deduced from the baptismal records of the Diocesan Historical Archive of Novara [6]	Her last name Leonarda is a patronymic derived from her father. Isabella had at least five siblings. [2] Isabella’s family members included leading civic, church officials, and knights palatine. [2]
1622	Gianfrancesco Leonardi II was born as Isabella’s brother. [2]	Gianfrancesco II later became <i>decurione</i> (decurion) of Novara, [2] collegiate doctor, and knights palatine. [5] Gianfrancesco inherited the paternal noble title. [6]
1625	Gianbattista Leonardi was born as Isabella’s brother. [2] Two Novarese convents boasted about their nuns who could sing tenor. [2] The Acts of Visit report: The Ursulines wore a white dress and a veil at home; they added black when they went out. [5] Anna Leonarda (Isabella’s sister) entered the <i>Collegio di Sant’Orsola</i> as a novice. [6]	Gianbattista later became a canon at Novara Cathedral. [2]
1626	Orsola Margherita Leonarda (1626-1699) was born as Isabella’s sister. [2]	Orsola Margherita later entered the <i>Collegio di Sant’Orsola</i> . [2]
1635	Gasparo Casati (ca.1610-1641) worked as <i>maestro di cappella</i> at Novara Cathedral. [2] The <i>Collegio</i> hosted thirty-two nuns and fourteen schoolgirls. [7]	The British musicologist, Jerome Roche (1942-1994), praised Casati’s music and considered

Biographical Summary of Isabella Leonarda and Related Historical Events³¹¹

Year	Event	Comment
		him one of the leading figures in stylish composition. ³¹²
1636	Isabella Leonarda entered the <i>Congregazione delle Vergini di Sant'Orsola</i> (The Congregation of the Virgins of St. Ursula). [2] Isabella may have received instructions from Elisabeth Casata. [2] Gianpietro Leonardi died. [2]	<i>Congregazione delle Vergini di Sant'Orsola</i> might have been an affiliated department that prepared girls to enter the convent.
1638	Reported as able to sing, write, count, and compose [2]	
Before 1639	Isabella may have studied music with Gasparo Casati. [2]	
1639	Professed vows upon examination by the Novarese Bishop, Antonio Torielli [2]	The Leonardi family may have supported the <i>Collegio</i> financially. [2]
1640	Two motets appeared in Gasparo Casati's <i>Terzo libro de sacri concerti</i> (Third Book of Sacred Concertos) of 1640 [1] Leonarda's father, Giannantonio, died. [2] Gasparo Casati died. [2]	Gasparo Casati was supposed to teach Isabella music. [2] Motet 1: <i>Ah domine Iesu</i> [6] Motet 2: <i>Sic ergo anima</i> [6]
1641	Composed <i>Mottetti a voce sola dall'Opera Prima</i> , Op. 1 ³¹³	The first six motets for solo voice in the manuscript have survived.
1644	Nicolò Leonardo died and had a tomb in the church of the Ursulines. [5]	
1647	Examined about taking the habit of the Virgins by canon Gabriele Torielli, vicar general [5] Isabella could use the Schola Cantorum vocal ensemble. [5] Worked as <i>madre discreta</i> (Discreet Mother) [5]	
1658	Worked as <i>mater et cancelleria</i> (Mother and Clerk) and <i>magistra musicae</i> (Music Teacher) [2] Volume 266 of the Acts of Visit report: Isabella was an exemplary nun who was not dedicated to vanities and was in excellent health. She knew how to write and count and was an expert in <i>cantum firmum seu figuratum</i> (plain or figured song). [5] The Acts of Visit report: There were fifteen nuns in the service singing polyphony. Ten of them knew polyphonic singing very well, one laudable and two in a tolerable way. [2]	It is unclear what Leonarda taught at the <i>Collegio</i> .

³¹² See Jerome Roche, "Giovanni Antonio Rigatti and the Development of Venetian Church Music in the 1640s," *Music & Letters* 57, no. 3 (July 1976).

³¹³ The surviving manuscript has been archived at the Central Library in Solothurn, Switzerland. See "Mottetti a Voce Sola Dall'opera Prima, Op.1 (Leonarda, Isabella)," 2019, accessed April 1, 2022, [https://imslp.org/wiki/Mottetti_a_voce_sola_dall'Opera_Prima%2C_Op.1_\(Leonarda%2C_Isabella\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/Mottetti_a_voce_sola_dall'Opera_Prima%2C_Op.1_(Leonarda%2C_Isabella)).

Biographical Summary of Isabella Leonarda and Related Historical Events³¹¹

Year	Event	Comment
	<p>The Acts of Visit report: The Ursulines wore black sack dresses and a white veil. There was no difference between the professed and novices. [5]</p> <p>The organ had eleven registers and a pedal. The Acts of Visit report: The internal church was equipped with an organ. The report assessed the qualification of the organ as <i>non mediocris bonitatis</i> (non-average goodness). [5]</p> <p>A visitor reported that the virgins had too many feasts, in which they used expensive decorations of fine fabrics and precious silverware. [5]</p>	<p>Like other cloistered convents, the Ursuline nuns' choir could not appear at the external church during those feasts. It was forbidden to let the attendants see singing nuns. [5]</p>
1665	<p>Anna Leonarda (Isabella's sister) became <i>madre</i> (Mother) of the Congregation of the <i>Collegio di Sant'Orsola</i>. [2]</p> <p>Published either Op. 1 or Op. 2, mentioned by François-Joseph Fétis [3]</p>	<p>The musical ensemble probably inspired Leonarda at the <i>Collegio di Sant'Orsola</i>; The <i>Collegio</i> probably offered opportunities to perform Leonarda's compositions. [1]</p>
Before 1670	<p>Published Op. 1 and Op. 2, lost [3]</p>	<p><i>Motetti a tre voci, libro primo, Op. 2</i> [4]</p>
1670	<p>Published <i>Sacri concerti a una, due, tre, et quattro voci</i>, Op. 3 in Milan on April 24, 1670 [4]</p> <p>Probably did not have administrative responsibility for Isabella signed as <i>Isabella Leonarda nel Collegio di S. Orsola in Novara</i> [4]</p>	
1674	<p>Published <i>Messa, e Salmi, concertati, & a Capella con Istromenti ad libitum</i>, Op. 4 in Novara on September 20, 1674 [4]</p> <p>Probably did not have administrative responsibility for Isabella signed as <i>Isabella Leonarda nel Collegio di S. Orsola in Novara</i> [4]</p>	
1674-1676	<p>Published Op. 5, lost [4]</p>	
Before 1676	<p>Anna died, supposedly. [6]</p>	
1676	<p>Worked as <i>madre</i> (Mother) [2]</p> <p>Isabella's cousin, Lorenzo Leonardi became <i>canonico archidiacono nella Cattedrale di Novara</i> (Archideacon canon of Novara Cathedral). [2]</p> <p>Published <i>Motteti a voce sola</i>, Op. 6 in Venetia in 1676 [4]</p>	
1677	<p>Published <i>Motteti a una, due, tre, e quattro voce</i>, Op. 7 in Bologna in 1677 [4]</p>	
1678	<p>Published <i>Vespro a Cappella, della Beata Vergine e Motetti Concertati</i>, Op. 8 in Bologna in 1678 [4]</p>	
Before 1684	<p>Was busy with administration duty and composing [3]</p> <p>Published Op. 9, lost [4]</p>	

Biographical Summary of Isabella Leonarda and Related Historical Events³¹¹

Year	Event	Comment
1684	Published <i>Motetti a quattro voci/con le litanie della B. V.</i> , Op. 10 in Milan on May 9, 1684 [4]	
	Published <i>Motetti a voce sola</i> , Op. 11 in Bologna in 1684 [4]	
1686	Worked as <i>Superiora</i> (Superior) [2] Nicolò Leonardi (Gianfrancesco II's son, Isabella's nephew) wrote a sonnet praising Emperor Leopold I for winning over the Turks, included in the preface to Isabella's publication. [2]	<i>Superiora</i> was probably the highest office at the <i>Collegio</i> . [2] Nicolò Leonardi served as the "protector" of the Congregation. [2]
	Published <i>Motetti a voce sola...opera duodecima</i> , Op. 12 in Novara on February 22, 1686, dedicated to the emperor [2] [4]	
1687	Flaminia Morbida and Chiara Margarita Gattica were regarded <i>musica virtuosissima</i> . [2] It suggests that these two nuns perhaps played the stringed instrument. [5]	
	Published <i>Motetti a una, due, e tre voci</i> , Op. 13 in Bologna in 1687 [4]	
	Published <i>Motetti a voce sola</i> , Op. 14 in Bologna in 1687 [4]	
1690	Published <i>Motetti à voce sola</i> , Op. 15 in Bologna in 1690 [4]	
	Worked as <i>madre vicaria</i> (Vicar Mother) [2]	
1693	Published <i>Sonate à 1. 2. 3. e 4. istromenti</i> , Op. 16 in Bologna in 1693 [4]	Was the first woman composer to publish trio sonatas [1]
1695	Worked as <i>Superiora</i> (Superior) [2] Published <i>Motetti a voce sola</i> , Op. 17 in Bologna in 1695 [4]	
	Worked as <i>madre vicaria</i> (Vicar Mother) [2]	
1696	Published <i>Messe a quattro voci concertate con Strumenti, & Motetti à una, due, /e trè voci, pure con Stromenti</i> , Op. 18 in Bologna in 1696 [4]	
1698	Identified as Donna Isabella Leonarda [2]; no longer appeared to have offices within the Congregation [6] Published <i>Salmi Concertati a 4 voci con Strumenti</i> , Op. 19 in Bologna in 1698 [4]	Being probably no longer active in the administration [2]
1699	Orsola Margherita Leonarda died. [2]	
1700	Identified as <i>consigliera</i> (Counselor) [2] Published <i>Motetti à voce sola, con Istromenti</i> , Op. 20 in Bologna in 1700 [4]	<i>Consigliera</i> may be an honorary title. [2]
1704	Died on February 25, 1704, at the age of eighty-four [4]	
After 1810	The Ursulines' complex was used for civilians. [5]	
1811	The <i>Collegio di Sant'Orsola</i> closed. [3]	

Appendix B: Biographical Summary of Maria Xaveria Peruchona

Biographical Summary of Maria Xaveria Peruchona and Related Historical Events³¹⁴

Year	Event	Comment
1625	Some local virgins began to live a monastic life, settling in a building in the center of the town, in the canton of Porta San Pietro. [3]	
1640	The <i>Collegio</i> started to welcome girls from Novara and the surrounding areas, including Trecate (about four miles away) and Magenta (about ten miles away). [3]	The <i>Collegio</i> possessed civil buildings within the town and rural assets in the surrounding countryside. The convent was a center of considerable economic importance. [3]
Around 1648	Francesca Caterina Cellana, born around 1634 in Magenta or Corbetta, Lombardy, took the veil and dedicated herself to composing sacred music. [3]	
After 1650	The <i>Collegio</i> 's progressive expansion was to admit nuns of more origins. The house had a good reputation and attracted some aristocratic and bourgeois daughters. [3]	
1652	Born to Carlo and Margarita Parruchono [1] Variations on the surname: Parruccone, Perruccone, Paruccone, Paruchone, Parucone, Parruchone, Peruchone, Perucone, and Perruchone [3]	Peruchona was born a native of Gozzano, about twenty-five miles away from Galliate. It may also mean that Peruchona came from a Gozzoanese family. It is also possible that Peruchona was born in Novara. Her dedication at the opening of the printed book, the composer, indicated as <i>novariensis</i> , dated 1678. [3] The surname Parruccone appeared in the Novarese area in the mid-seventeenth century in connection with canons, notaries, pharmacists, and nuns. Though, it is impossible to establish any relationship with the composer. [3]
1657 or before	The <i>Collegio di Sant'Orsola</i> in Galliate had an organ [1] located in <i>apto loco</i> (a convenient place) in the internal church. [3] Francesca Caterina Cellana worked as an organist and composer. She remained in the post of organist through 1690 and taught <i>canto figurato</i> (modern notation). [1]	<i>Canto figurato</i> involved a versatile system of notation used for all types of music except plainchant, including seven fixed clefs on a five-line staff, symbols for rhythm and performance, and an ability to

³¹⁴ The sources are from the following documents. [1] *Composers Born 1600-1699*, 225-30. [2] Carter, "The Music of Isabella Leonarda (1620-1704)." [3] Chiti et al., *Soavissaima Melodia: Maria Xaveria Peruchona Compositrice Del Xvii Secolo*, 18.

Biographical Summary of Maria Xaveria Peruchona and Related Historical Events³¹⁴

Year	Event	Comment
		represent scale transpositions beyond a single flat. ³¹⁵
		Francesca Caterina Cellana's role was like <i>maestra di cappella</i> , though this title was never mentioned in any document. [3]
1661	The organ rested on the west wall of the sacred building (convent), described in a deed of sale dated 1661. The nuns purchased it. [3]	
Before 1668	Schooled well in the art of music, playing, and singing by Francesco Beria and Antonio Grosso [1]	Peruchona's teachers may be Giovanni Battista Beria, organist of the Novara cathedral from 1651 to 1671 [3], and Giovanni Antonio Grossi, <i>maestro di cappella</i> of the Novara cathedral from 1644 to 1666. [3] Her family may reside in Novara in order to learn music from the two successful musicians.
	Took the veil at the <i>Collegio di Sant'Orsola</i> in Galliate on May 6, reported by Lazaro Agostino Cotta [3]	
1668	The dressing ceremony was presided by a canon from the Novara cathedral, Emiliano Paruchone. [3]	The reason for a high Novarese prelate to go to Galliate to dress a young nun could indicate the kinship network between them. [3]
	Regarded as an excellent <i>Maestra</i> of music and an esteemed singer [1]	There is no known relationship between Peruchona and Leonarda. [2] Leonarda may have already published her Op. 1 and Op. 2 by 1668.
1672	Paola Maria Caroella (born in 1655, daughter of Giovanni Paolo and Maria Agnese Albana) entered the <i>Collegio</i> at seventeen. [3]	
1675	Published <i>Sacri concerti de motetti a una, due, tre, e quattro voci, parte con violini, e parte senza</i> by Francesco Vigone of Milan [1]	It is the only surviving collection from the <i>Collegio</i> . Peruchona lost her momentum and disappeared into the convent after. [1]
	Chiara Margherita Cochia (born in 1660, daughter of Francesco Cochio) entered the <i>Collegio</i> at fifteen. She knew how to play the zither. [3]	
1678	Reported to be in poor health, to possess a dowry of 2,000 lire, to be able to write sufficiently, [1] to regularly recite the Divine Office in the choir, to be assiduous in the sacraments, and to eat lunch in the communal refectory [3]	Peruchona should have been taken care of by the convent.
	At least six nuns knew <i>canto figurato</i> , including Peruchona, Antonia Maddalena Albana, Maria Serafina Caroella, Maria Angelica Longa, Caterina Serena Binaga, and Barbara Margherita Juliana. [3]	The <i>status personalis</i> (Personal Status) of 1678 annotates that Peruchona dedicated herself to polyphonic singing. It is a

³¹⁵ According to the explanation in the Glossary of Technical Terms in Nicholas Baragwanath, *The Solfeggio Tradition: A Forgotten Art of Melody in the Long Eighteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), xiii.

Biographical Summary of Maria Xaveria Peruchona and Related Historical Events³¹⁴

Year	Event	Comment
		disappointing observation referring to a composer. [3]
		<i>Canto fermo</i> referred to plainchant and its associated system of notation involving a medieval four-line staff and square noteheads. For the choral singing at the Catholic churches, <i>canto fermo</i> was taught to understand how solfeggists read multiple clefs and keys by identifying their latent fa-clefs. ³¹⁶
	Organist, Paola Maria Caroella was active. [1]	
	Worked at the office of <i>Prefectae educandarum</i> (Prefect of Education) [1]	Peruchona's job was to take care of the sick. [1]
	Taught <i>canto figurato</i> [1]	
1690	Francesca Caterina Cellana, Maria Serafina Caroella, and Maria Angelica Longa were able to perform Gregorian chant. [3]	
	Angela Antonia Brusata (<i>madre vicaria</i>), Laura Caterina Paruchona, and Orsola Antonia Ferrara dedicated themselves to studying liturgical singing. [3]	
1701	Lazaro Agostino Cotta's comment in <i>Museo Novarese</i> : An excellent teacher of music and an esteemed singer [3]	
1709	Listed to reside at the convent without mentioning her status [1]	
	Giuseppa Antonia Tartara was noted for her singing skills. [3]	
1716	The <i>Collegio</i> started to require solemn vows from all Galliatese nuns on October 1. Previously, as long as the nun lived together in the community, she could take a simple, informal vow. [3]	
1717	Died on March 19, according to the death certificate dated March 20, 1717, which explains <i>Suor Maria Xaveria Perruchona Ursolina, aetatis suae annorum sexaginta quinque circiter</i> (Sister Maria Xavier Perruchona, Ursuline, about sixty-five years old) [3] On March 20, Peruchona's body was buried in the common sepulcher under the altar of the internal church at the <i>Collegio</i> . [3]	

³¹⁶ According to the explanation in the Glossary of Technical Terms in *ibid*.

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