

Francesco Cavalli * Opere



BA 8906

Bärenreiter 2013

Francesco Cavalli

Artemisia

Dramma per musica by Nicolò Minato

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Francesco Cavalli * Opere

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This edition has been made possible by a generous grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

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Front Cover: "IoFrancCavalli" ("I, Franc[esco] Cavalli");

Santa Maria dell'Orazione di Malamocco, b. 3, fascicolo "Cavalli", September 27th, 1650 (detail).

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ISMN 979-0-006-55666-3

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Preface

The Edition

Over the past several decades, the operas of Francesco Cavalli (1602–1676) have become increasingly in demand in theaters around the world, an interest stimulated in part by the overwhelming popular success of the operas of Monteverdi, Cavalli's great predecessor and teacher. Whereas Monteverdi's extant operas are only three, however, Cavalli's number nearly thirty. Indeed, Cavalli was the most prolific and important opera composer of the seventeenth century, and it is his works that set the stage for the subsequent development of opera as a genre. Cavalli's operas, which share some of the most outstanding features of Monteverdi's, thus provide a treasure trove of material waiting to be performed.

The few editions that were available in the last decades of the 20th century, though path-breaking for their time, and actually responsible for the increasing interest in Cavalli, were not in keeping with present day performance standards for early music. Two more recent critical editions, published during the past decade, however, have encouraged a number of productions, especially of *La Calisto*, but productions of other Cavalli operas have depended on ad hoc editions made for the occasion, without much thought for future use.

Our new critical edition of the Operas of Francesco Cavalli will attempt to fill the need for reliable source-based editions as well as dependable performance materials. It is also designed to encourage productions of operas that have not yet been resurrected in modern times. This project, initiated by Álvaro Torrente in association with Bärenreiter-Verlag, became reality thanks to the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, which granted me a Distinguished Achievement Award in 2007. We are also indebted to the Dipartimento delle Arti visive, performative, mediali dell'Università di Bologna and the Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca for financing the research on the librettos of Cavalli's operas under the direction of Lorenzo Bianconi. Our Editorial Board consists of seasoned Cavalli scholars from six countries – the United States of America, Great Britain, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, and Spain. The first phase of this edition will comprise fourteen operas, half of those for which scores have survived:

<i>La Calisto</i>	<i>L'Ipermestra</i>
<i>Artemisia</i>	<i>Veremonda l'Amazzone di Aragona</i>
<i>Scipione Affricano</i>	<i>L'Erismena</i>
<i>L'Eliogabalo</i>	<i>L'Egisto</i>
<i>L'Orione</i>	<i>L'Eritrea</i>
<i>La Didone</i>	<i>Ercole amante</i>
<i>Il Xerse</i>	<i>Giasone</i>

These were chosen on the basis of a variety of criteria: the historical importance of the works, the variety and interest of particular source materials, the interests of the individual editors, some of whom had already been working on their editions before the Cavalli Edition was established, or as representative examples of important trends or moments in the development of the composer's career.

Editorial challenges posed by these works differ profoundly from those of later operas. For one thing, the original musical material for these operas is notoriously laconic – the scores consist essentially of only two lines, a voice part and a sparsely figured bass line, interspersed with a few passages for three or five-part strings. The scores may also contain certain verbal notations and shorthand symbols for orchestration, transposition, or other editorial intervention, material that the original performers could understand, but whose meaning is not immediately obvious to contemporary ones. Translation into usable performing material thus requires the intervention of specialist editors who understand the implications of the scores and can flesh them out – or provide performers with the means of doing so themselves – with appropriate additional material.

The Sources

Although nearly all were produced more than once in the seventeenth century, as attested by numerous published librettos (exceptions are *Eliogabalo*, never performed at all, *Calisto*, *Ipermestra*, and *Ercole amante*), some are represented by only a single musical score (*Eliogabalo*, *Calisto*, *Ipermestra*, *Ercole amante*, *Eritrea*, *Artemisia*, *Didone*, and *Veremonda*), while others have multiple scores – *Giasone* (11), *Erismena*, *Xerse*, and *Scipione Affricano* (three), *Orione* and *Egisto* (two).

This source situation is both ameliorated and further complicated, however, by the existence of multiple librettos for most of the works. The importance of these librettos – as testifying to multiple productions and as means of understanding various editorial annotations in the extant scores – makes them an essential part of this edition. Indeed, because of the paucity of musical sources, the textual edition can often reflect more about the reception of the opera than the score does. It is for this reason that each individual opera will have a text editor as well as a music editor.

Most of the primary musical sources for our individual volumes come from the famous Contarini Collection at the Biblioteca Marciana, Venice. The 28 Cavalli scores in this collection, representing all of his extant operas, seem to have been collected by the composer himself, with an eye toward preserving them for posterity.

More than half of them (including *Calisto*, *Orione*, *Veremonda*, *Xerse*, *Artemisia*, *Ipermestra*, and *Ercole amante*) are full or partial autographs, some are partly in the hand of the composer's wife, Maria Sosomeno, who was active as a copyist between 1650 and 1652, when she died, and others (including *Didone*, *Eritrea*, *Giasone*, *Erismena*, *Scipione Affricano*, and *Eliogabalo*) are fair copies that were probably made between 1652 and 1676, when the composer died. Other mostly subsidiary manuscripts come from libraries in Florence, Lisbon, Modena, Naples, Oxford, Paris, Rome, and Vienna. The primary librettos are all found in Venetian collections (Cini, Correr, Goldoni, Marciana), but some of those for subsequent productions come from elsewhere (Bologna, Florence, London, Milan, Modena, Naples, Rome).

General Editorial Policy

For the scores, we have applied only basic performance aids, such as writing out ritornellos where they were implied or adding the occasional missing instrumental part. We have added figures only in cases where the harmony is ambiguous, and filled out or regularized whatever expressive indications may be implied or applied inconsistently. In all cases, editorial additions will be clearly differentiated from original material.

Most of our musical sources are singular, but there are at least two distinct versions of the libretto: the literary text given in the Critical Edition, and the sung text, given under the notes. Although distinctions between them will be preserved, occasional mistakes or ambiguities in one will be corrected with reference to the other. English translations will be provided. Each volume will contain a substantial prefatory essay covering the historical and literary background and the production history, as well as a synopsis, and a list of characters (with vocal ranges). The preface will include a Guide to Performance, which will contain a section on suggested transpositions and cuts. It will also provide facsimiles of representative pages from the score.

Our goal is to provide a dependable score for music libraries, where these milestones of operatic composition belong, and a basic framework that can be used as it is or else modified by those responsible for individual productions, who will need to make their own decisions regarding the distribution of continuo instruments, dynamics, and so forth. By making available critical editions that are designed for performance in multiple venues, we hope to satisfy and stimulate the interest in these works, which demonstrate for the first time in history the ways in which the vicissitudes of theatrical life were managed in the production of operas on a regular basis.

Ellen Rosand

Introduction

The opera *Artemisia* was first performed in 1657 in Venice, most likely (judging from the date the printed libretto was signed) on January 10. The theater was SS. Giovanni e Paolo, a large theater situated at the northern end of the city. Although no records of the run of performances have yet been found, it is safe to say that the opera enjoyed some success. It was produced in Naples later in 1657 or 1658, in Palermo in 1659, and in Genoa and Milan in the early 1660s.¹ Part of its success was no doubt owed to the fact that its libretto adopted many structural elements from that of *Xerse*, which was premiered in 1655 to great acclaim, and with which *Artemisia* shared not only its composer, but also its librettist, Nicolò Minato (c. 1625 – 1698). Minato himself draws the parallel with *Xerse* in his preface to *Artemisia*, and it is perhaps telling that an aria from *Artemisia* found its way into the version of *Xerse* that was produced in Bologna in spring of 1657 (“Il dardo d’Amore,” *Artemisia* I.10, re-texted, became “Che gioco gradito” in I.20 of the Bolognese *Xerse*).² In fact, *Xerse* and *Artemisia* were apparently perceived as a pair, since they were staged in Naples, Palermo, and Milan in close chronological proximity to each other. Francesco Cavalli (1602 – 1676) was at the height of his fame when he composed and produced *Artemisia*.³ According to a contract concluded in the year following the première of *Artemisia*, he could ask 400 ducats for an opera composed and produced by him, which was much higher than the sum any other composer could command.⁴ In 1660, he was chosen to compose the opera celebrating the wedding of King Louis XIV in Paris.⁵ He thus obviously en-

joyed the reputation of being the foremost composer of opera in his time. This reputation was based on the fact that, with his operas of the 1640s and 1650s, he had shaped the form of the genre in a way that was to define it for decades to come. As Lorenzo Bianconi has remarked, Cavalli’s situation, for the first time in the history of opera, was “the typical case of the artist ‘created’ by the institution and not vice versa;”⁶ but it is equally true that in shaping and especially institutionalizing opera, Cavalli became one of the creators of the genre in his own right.⁷ Only during the 1660s did his position as the world’s leading opera composer begin to erode. His operas met with little success in Paris, and, casualties of changing aesthetics, his last two operas, *Eliogabalo* (1667) and *Massenzio* (1673), were rejected even before they could be staged.⁸

Artemisia can thus be seen as an ideal type of the genre opera at the time, standing for all that was successful in Cavalli’s operas at the peak of his ability and fame. Simultaneously, it marks the second successful libretto of Nicolò Minato,⁹ who was to become one of the most prolific and versatile opera librettists of the seventeenth century, and who worked for almost thirty years as a court poet at the Imperial court in Vienna, producing hundreds of librettos. Many of his works endured for several decades or even over the turn of the century, quite often being set to music anew by younger generations of composers. In the case of *Artemisia*, the libretto was revised to be set to entirely new music by Alessandro Scarlatti; the new opera, now called *Le nozze con l’inimico, o vero L’Analinda*, premiered in Naples in 1695.¹⁰

- 1 On these later performances of *Artemisia*, cf. the Critical Notes to the Libretto, pp. 201 – 202; Hendrik Schulze, “Cavalli, Pier Francesco,” in *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, second ed. (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2000), Personenteil 4: 471 – 84.
- 2 The aria has been inserted into the manuscript held at the Biblioteca Marciana in Venice (I-Vnm, Cl. It. IV, 374 [= 9898]), which among other things was used for performance in Bologna in 1657. Cf. Peter Grant Jeffery, *The Autograph Manuscripts of Francesco Cavalli* (Ph.D. diss., Princeton Univ. 1980), 215 – 16; Hendrik Schulze, “The Manuscript Score as a Document of Performance Practice in Cavalli’s Operas 1654 – 1661,” *Philomusica on-line* 5 (2006), <http://riviste.paviauniversity-press.it/index.php/phi/article/view/05-02-INT06/46>, retrieved May 29, 2012.
- 3 Cf. Ellen Rosand, *Opera in Seventeenth-Century Venice: The Creation of a Genre* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 222; Silke Leopold, *Die Oper im 17. Jahrhundert* (Laaber: Laaber-Verlag, 2004), 161 – 62.
- 4 Cf. Rosand, *Opera in Seventeenth-Century Venice*, 223; Beth Glixon and Jonathan Glixon, *Inventing the Business of Opera: The Impresario and His World in Seventeenth-Century Venice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 150 – 53.
- 5 Jane Glover, *Cavalli* (London: Batsford, 1978), 24 – 28.
- 6 Lorenzo Bianconi, *Music in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 82.
- 7 Cf. Hendrik Schulze, “Francesco Cavalli come creatore dell’idea dell’opera veneziana,” in *Venezia mercato delle arti*, ed. Barbara Marx et al., forthcoming.
- 8 Cf. Glover, *Cavalli*, 29.
- 9 Minato’s first opera libretto, *Orimonte* from 1650, seems to have met with little success, and the librettist refrained from mentioning it in his subsequent librettos.
- 10 I have to thank Norbert Dubowy and the late Thomas Walker, who in private conversation shared with me their knowledge about this libretto. The score of *Le nozze con l’inimico* is today preserved in F-Pn, Vm⁴.17, with arias extant in I-Nc, Rari 7.1.9. Neither manuscript contains any music by Cavalli.