



Research article

Exploring the Compositional Style of Art Songs in Caccini's New Music

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ABSTRACT

Giolio Caccini (1551-1618) was a composer in the early Baroque period, and his New Music collection and its vocal theory have been passed down in the history of Western music until now. New Music is a collection of art songs composed by Caccini, and it is also the earliest collection of art songs in Italy, this paper focuses on the study of Caccini's art songs, and two art songs are selected for exploration. The two art songs selected are "Hear, Hear, Aisins" and "The Beautiful Fuchsia Rose" to explore the innovations of the composer's music and to further explain the vocal theory in Caccini's "Nuovo Musicale", including his insights into vocal music as well as his methods of singing.

Keywords: Caccini; New Music; Art song; Vocal theory

1 Caccini and The New Music

Giolio Caccini (1551-1618) was not only a composer, vocal educator, and singer, he was also the founder of classical Italian art song in the Baroque period, as well as one of the founders of opera and American singing. He composed the Nuova Musica, the earliest collection of American songs in Italy, which this paper divides into two

periods, using Caccini's participation in the Camerata group as the dividing line. The most important of these is his second period, the period in which Caccini composed the *Nuova Musica*. The formation of the Camerata group, a period that undoubtedly had a huge impact on his writing of New Music, and Caccini's words in the preface to the New Music surface the extent of the gathering's influence on him:" The gathering of the Camerata, held by Giovanni Baldi, Count of Vigno, in Florence, was attended by many of the nobility, and by important musicians, intellectuals, poets, and philosophers took part in it, and I was one of them. I sincerely believe that I learned more in the midst of my discussions with them than if I had spent thirty years studying counterpoint."

Both Caccini and the members of the Camerata group were influenced by the ideas in Plato's work *The Ideal State*, and thus they shared the musical conviction that they were opposed to counterpoint, which was used solely to enrich the harmonic fullness of an accompaniment, and that they were decisively abandoning Renaissance compositional methods and shifting from polyphony to the dominant. In the preface to *New Music*, Caccini writes: "They encouraged me to accept the attitude appreciated by Plato and other philosophers of making music that enters into the human mind and allows the wonderful effects favored by those writers to take place." And this viewpoint coincides with the idea that "the lyrics are the masters of the harmony" (the second convention) of the two conventions proposed by Monteverdi, an Italian figure of the intergenerational period (Renaissance to Baroque). The most important aspect of utilizing the second convention is how the meaning and emotion of the lyrics can be expressed more vividly in the music. The musical vehicle for the realization of this idea was the early Baroque monophonic song, a solo secular song with digital bass accompaniment, including pastoral songs, arias, pastoral songs, and other forms.

The ten arias in Caccini's *Nuova Musica* are clearly characterized by the early monophonic songs, with a pure style, without excessive exaggeration, mostly in the middle register, with a long and coherent melody, long stanzas that make the songs lyrical, and a very well-proportioned structure of the phrase cycle, with lyrics that are

mostly in medieval poetry. Caccini in the preface to the "New Music" put forward "to free the poem from the showmanship", "lyrics are the master of the music" and other concepts, in the perfect expression of the rhythms and emotions of the poem reflects Caccini's individuality in the creation of characteristics. Although this aria is different from the aria in later operas, it is one of the types of early opera singing forms, and it is the embodiment of early opera singing style, thus reflecting the characteristics of early vocal art in the Baroque period.

Because of this, his compositional viewpoint in the New Music jumps off the page. Caccini placed the lyrics in the main body of the song, skillfully utilized the length of the pitch value to react to the weight of the lyrics, and linked the song to the lyrics so that the two were balanced, and this was his greatest innovation. Secondly, there is Caccini's scrupulousness about ornamentation, as he writes in the introduction "I have marked the vocal parts with homophonic trills, vibrato, and many other ornaments, as well as florid passages of the most suitable voices, which are generally not too often written in the score." Caccini says that this kind of ornamentation written into the score is not common, that is, to limit the singer from singing his work in the wrong way, shortening, or even limiting the singer's freedom of expression. He points out that ornamentation cannot be abused and must be subordinate to the song and requires that it be clearly labeled in the score and not added or removed at will. His view of composition explains his view of singing further, requiring singers to pay attention to the lyrics and use them to express the inner emotions of the character. Among Caccini's requirements for singing technique, the most important is the understanding of the work, and he emphasized the understanding of the lyrics, which can only be interpreted by the composer's connotations given to the music by doing a good job of basic training of the voice and understanding the emotions in the work in a comprehensive way.

It is also worth noting Caccini's method of "exclamatory" singing: Caccini's "Nuovo Musicale" explains and contrasts one of the most important and fundamental ways of practicing the voice, the first of which was the one that was customary for the public

of the time, when he says: "There are those who are accustomed to employing the interval of the third in the articulation of their voices, and also some who say that the first note produced by the voice always needs to be made crescendo, which they say is a good way of making the voice elegant and beautiful. people say that it is always necessary to make a crescendo of the first note produced by the voice, and they say that this is a good way of making the voice elegant and beautiful." It can be understood here that practicing the voice begins with the bass, which is an unconscious habit of connection for the vocal learner. In *New Music* he suggests starting the voice from weak to strong: "Starting the voice at the right point is to increase the loudness, especially for sopranos. It is true that in a strong voice it is apt to produce an effect most unfavorable to the ear, because the starting voice is already strong, followed inevitably by a diminution, and then by a strengthening, and this is done so as not to lose the vividness and expressiveness of the voice, and all this opposite effect in the presence and diminution, in the diminution of the voice, gives food for thought, and makes the singing all the more touching." This is what he defines as "exclamatory" singing.

I have chosen "Hear, Hear, Lovers" and "The Beautiful Fuchsia Rose" for my study. *Hear, Hear, Lovers* is by Rinuccini and *The Beautiful Fuchsia Rose* is by Chiabrella.

《*Hear, Hear, O Lovers*》 is a stanzaic song divided into four stanzas (or four stanzas in this case) of poetry, each of which consists of 6-7 lines, with the main stress falling on the penultimate syllable. It is a love poem that describes the poet's state of mind during a lost love. In the first stanza, the poet is talking to himself, in the second stanza, he describes the cause of his grief, in the third stanza, the poet is talking to the stars and flirting with himself, and in the fourth stanza, he resents the heartlessness of the god of love, which is a series of heart descriptions of the poet's own change of mood. When singing, to show the atmosphere of helplessness and courtship, the voice must be soft and gentle, and when singing, you should pay attention to the light and heavy syllables of the poem and put the center of gravity on the heavy syllables of each sentence, keeping in mind the position of the words in the work.

The Beautiful Purple Rose consists of eight stanzas of four to five lines each, with the stress of each line falling on the penultimate syllable, which is relatively neat. It is a poem that expresses love with the theme of roses, and the first stanza introduces the rose as the theme. The second stanza anthropomorphizes the rose and asks about it. In the third stanza the poet begins to fantasize. In the fourth stanza the poet continues to sing the praises of the rose. The fifth stanza begins to the seventh stanza the poet uses the beauty of the earth and ocean continent in contrast to the rose. The eighth stanza returns at the end to illustrate the rose once again above all else. The song is a faster piece of music, and the presence of ornamentation is a suggestion for the singer to sing more lightly.

Caccini's melodies are smooth, cascading, and small in amplitude in order to first emphasize the meaning of the lyrics. All techniques are designed to fit the content of the lyrics, so when singing, one should make full use of these Caccini concepts and then use vocal techniques to interpret Caccini's aria works.

2 The Relevance of Caccini's Arias

Baroque early vocal works (including opera arias), follow the concept of the "second routine", with a special emphasis on the lyrics, all other techniques are to set off the importance of the lyrics, the Baroque period of vocal technique is first of all focused on the lyrics, in the twenty-first century, today, the art of vocal music and technology, how to build on this foundation to enhance the artistry of early music, the second creation is a must as a learner of American voice to explore. this basis will be early music to enhance its artistry, the second degree of creation is as a beautiful voice learners must explore. Caccini's exposition of American vocal technique in the preface to New Music is worth a careful reading for current vocal learners.

His work brings the American voice beginner back to one of the most basic points: the importance of breathing. The first element of American voice singing is ----legato, to achieve coherence between the lyrics, it is necessary to firmly strengthen the role of breathing. Now about the art of rapid training classes more and more, want to let a

beginner can master the breathing in just a few months, basically belongs to the sky, breathing is a singer is the most basic and the most important, whether in the art song or aria, the song in the intensity of the change is to be transmitted to the listener's ears through the voice, to control this exhalation and the vocal folds between the cooperation is also a singer all his life! The pursuit of the state of the art, and in the baroque period, are basically love works, soft and delicate voice is not to sing slow singing light can be, until now singing people know that "sing strong easy to sing light difficult", which means that the breath is strong or not can be tested whether you are a singer of the correct singing. In Caccini's works, he has been emphasizing the lyrics. As a student of the American voice, it is easy to overlook the importance of lyrics. The vast majority of Caccini's works have lyrics from poetry, which means that he wants the American voice learner to sing the work with the feeling of reciting a poem, so that the voice is rounded and relaxed. It is important to emphasize the vowels and unify them individually first; all his compositions are in a smoother style, where the sounds and words are all interrelated. It is easy to train the voice to be coherent.

In addition to following Caccini's view of vocal music, I believe that, on the basis of Caccini's view of singing and training in American vocal technique, it is necessary to carry out the "second degree of creativity" appropriately. With the passage of time, the American voice technology no longer belongs to Italy alone, the development of American voice singing now belongs to the world of American voice technology fusion, American voice not only in Europe, Asia, North America, etc., and the people of various countries according to their own national preferences, will be slowly adjusted to the American vocal singing method, for example, in China, the cavity is the most important. In America, breathing is the most important. And the Italian traditional singing style is passed down by the Italians according to their own functions. So, we must adjust the technique of the American voice according to our own functions, and all of this is based on the Caccini technique of the American voice. "Taking the best from the worst" The worst is not worthless, but whether it suits you

or not. The essence does not apply to everyone, but the correct expertise and sensitivity to the voice is what a voice learner should have.

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