

7. *Alfabeto* songs


Introduction

A new style of solo song with *basso continuo* accompaniment developed in Italy in the closing years of the sixteenth century and almost from the start the guitar was regarded as one of the instruments suitable for accompanying the voice in this repertoire. The sources fall into two distinct categories. Many of the songbooks with voice part and bass line in staff notation printed in the first half of the seventeenth century mention the guitar as an option for the accompaniment and include *alfabeto* for at least some of the songs, usually, but not always, placed above the voice part rather than the bass line so that the singer can accompany themselves. There is also a substantial number of both manuscript and printed sources which include the lyrics only (in either Italian and Spanish) of songs with *alfabeto*. The melodies to which these were sung were probably well known and it was therefore not necessary to include the staff notation. In both categories there is rarely any indication as to how the *alfabeto* chords should be interpreted.

Lyrics with *alfabeto* only

In the following illustration from Stefano Pesori's **Lo scrigno armonico** (ca.1648) the lyrics of a song are set out with *alfabeto* letters placed above some of the words. Pesori is not exactly giving much away here (and he doesn't give much away in the rest of the book either). However the metre of the poetry suggests that triple time might be appropriate and if we match note values to the stressed syllables and assume that the harmony changes whenever a new letter appears we can construct something which makes some sense musically as shown in the staff notation below. But unless we can trace a melody which fits the chords in another source, we can't do more than that.

Pesori – *Lo scrigno armonico*, opera seconda (ca.1648). *L'amante tradito* - Lyrics with *alfabeto* only



G H B G
I guardi, chi può:
B E
La maga d'Amore
D H B G
Hà tolto il mio Cuore, poi dice di nò:
B E
Si guardi chi può
D
Si guardi
H
Si guardi
B G
Si guardi chi può
H B G
Si guardi chi può.

G H B G B E D
 Si guar-di chi può: La ma-ga d'A - mo-re Hà tol-to il mio
 H B G B E D
 Cuo-re, poi di-ce di no: Si guar-di chi può Si
 H B G H B G
 guar-di Si guar-di Si guar-di chi può: Si guar-di chi può:

Alfabeto song books

Although *alfabeto* songbooks include both the melody and the bass line in staff notation, they are not without problems as few of them include any advice at all as to how the *alfabeto* should be interpreted. It is sometimes suggested that the *alfabeto*, which is not always helpful or accurate, was added by the printer, rather than the composer, in order to sell more copies of the book and that the composer may not have intended the songs to be accompanied in this way. This is an oversimplification. Although most of the songs were not composed specifically to be performed with guitar accompaniment, the guitar was regarded as a suitable instrument for this purpose. Some of the composers whose works were printed in this format, including Kapsberger and Landi, are known to have played the guitar and may have been directly involved in the editing and printing of their work. However, the *alfabeto* chords may sometimes have been added either by the printer, or by whoever else was responsible for collecting and editing the songs, thinking that this would be helpful and this would account for some of the errors. In some instances the *alfabeto* may simply have been misprinted, especially if the book is printed from moveable type, a complex process involving more than one impression.

Interpreting the alfabeto

One unusual and interesting feature of the 1622 edition of Sanseverino's **Il primo libro d'intavolatura per la chitarra alla spagnuola** does shed some light on how such songs might be accompanied. At the end of the book there are six *alfabeto* songs and rather than just including the lyrics with the *alfabeto* letters above them like Pesori above, all of them have what is effectively a fully written out accompaniment. As can be seen in the example below, the note values and stroke pattern are carefully matched up with the words. All that is lacking is the voice part. Sanseverino would not have expected there

be a separate bass line and there is really no need for one. The accompaniment is complete in itself and works perfectly well when played in this way.

Sanseverino - Il primo libro d'intavolatura per la chitarra alla spagnuola (1622)

O caldi sospiri – Lyrics with *alfabeto*, note values and stroke signs

H L O G M E
Cal - di so-spi - ri ch'v - sci - te dal co - re deh gi - te no-lan - do nel

B H G H G L
se - no al mio Am - o - re Di - te al a cru - da ch'io

G A B G B E I C
l'a - mo& hon-ro che Mi - ri che mo - ro fra tan - ti mar-ti - - ri

E H L O L C A
O cal - di so-spi - ri O cal - di so-spi - - ri.

A different version of the same song is found in Rafaello Rontani's **Le varie musiche. Libro primo (Rome, 1623)** with *alfabeto* over the voice part. The song is also included in an earlier edition of the book printed in Florence in 1614. This has a more elaborate voice part but no *alfabeto*. In this particular instance, where the 1623 edition is a reprint of the earlier one of 1614, it seems unlikely that Rontani himself added the *alfabeto* or played any part in preparing it for the press.

Rontani - Le varie musiche. Libro primo (1623)
O Caldi Sospiri - *Alfabeto* realized in the style of Sanseverino

The musical score consists of three systems, each with a measure number in a box (8, 9, 10). Each system includes a vocal line, a guitar line with chords, and a bass line.

System 8: The vocal line begins with the lyrics "Cal-di sos-pi-ri ch'v - sci-te dal co-re, Dhe gi-te vol-an-do nel sen-e al mio a-mo-re". The guitar line shows chords H, G, O, G, B*, H, G 4-3, and H. The bass line has a measure rest followed by notes G, B, and G.

System 9: The vocal line continues with "Di-te alla cru-da s'io l'am-o& no-ro, che Mi-ri s'io mo-ro fra - tan-ti mar-ti - ri." The guitar line shows chords H*, A 4-3, B, H, G, H, B, and G. The bass line has a measure rest followed by notes G, B, and G.

System 10: The vocal line has the lyrics "O cald - di sos-pi - ri". The guitar line shows chords H, H, G, H, and H. The bass line has a measure rest followed by notes G, B, and G.

Rontani's version is in common time rather the triple time of Sanseverino's version. Sanseverino's chords fit Rontani's melody more or less as far as the phrase beginning "Miri che moro" but from there onwards the two versions diverge and it is not clear whether Sanseverino really had the same melody in mind.

In two places (marked with asterisks) in Rontani's version there are chords which don't fit with the melody. In bar 3 there is a C major chord (Chord B) when there should be a C minor one (Chord L); in bars 5 and 9 where a C minor chord is also needed the *alfabeto* has simply been omitted. Whoever provided the *alfabeto* seems to have been

unsure as to what was appropriate. In bar 5 there is a B flat major chord (Chord H) instead of an F major one (Chord G); this may be a misprint. In both places the *alfabeto* does not match the voice part.

This highlights the common problem in Italian songbooks with *alfabeto*. The fact that the chords don't always match the bass line is neither here nor there since it was not intended that this should be played when the songs were accompanied by the guitar. However if they don't match the melody then obviously something has gone wrong somewhere!

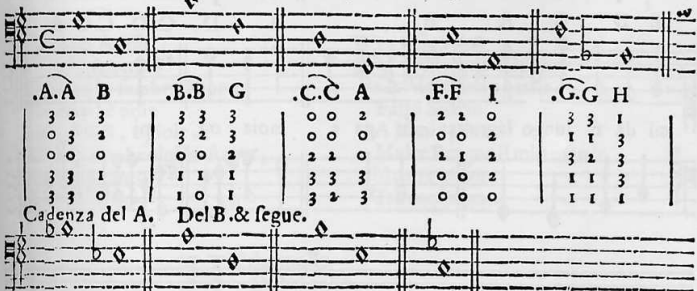
A further problem occurs in bars 4 and 6 where the guitar chords ignore the 4-3 suspension in the voice part.

This is a fairly common occurrence and one to which Biagio Marini offers a solution in the introduction to his **Scherzi e canzonette (1622)**. This does include some instructions specifically intended for guitarists who want to strum an accompaniment to the songs in the book. Marini has included a table of the standard chords followed by one showing how the commoner 4-3 suspensions should be accompanied in *alfabeto*. A dot is placed on either side of the letter to indicate the altered chord. The table is preceded by a note explaining the purpose of the chords. (The last chord represented by a * is the consonant version of Chord L; the dissonant form is included in the basic table of chords).

These are additional chords and they are very necessary especially at the cadences and many of them will be found in the compositions in this book.

Marini's *alfabeto* chords incorporating 4-3 suspensions

Queste fono aggiunte, & fono molto necessarie, massime nelle cadenze, & se ne trouerà molte nelle compositioni di questo libro.



.A.Â B	.B.Ë G	.C.Ç A	.F.F I	.G.G H
3 2 3	3 3 3	0 0 2	2 2 0	3 3 1
0 3 2	3 2 3	0 0 0	0 0 2	1 1 3
0 0 0	0 0 2	2 2 0	2 1 2	3 2 3
3 3 1	1 1 1	3 3 3	0 0 2	1 1 3
3 3 0	1 0 1	3 2 3	0 0 0	1 1 1

Cadenza del A. Del B. & segue.

.H.H M	.I.Î C	.R.R F	*
1 1 1	0 0 0	2 2 2	3
3 3 1	2 2 0	4 4 2	1
3 3 3	2 2 2	4 4 1	0
4 3 4	3 2 3	5 4 0	1
1 1 3	0 0 2	2 2 0	3

La Stella è lettera noua.

Queste fono dunque tutte le cadenze principali, e però stijno auertite nel trouar che faranno la sudetta sorte di lettere legate, & pontate.

.A. A B .B. B G .C. C A .F. F I
 .G. G H .H. H M .I. I C .R. R F *

Examples of these can be seen in bar 2, 14, 16 and 19 in the following song. In each place the movement of the bass line implies a more complex harmonic progression – in bar 2, bar 16 and bar 19 - I**II** V I; in bar 14 - II⁷b.

Marini - Scherzi e canzonette (1622)
Mira mi caro il mio sol

[5]

Mi - ra mi ca - - ro il mio sol deh vol - gi ho - mai quei lie - ti
 O H .C. C O C O G H

[10]

rai de tuoi bei lu - mi à me co - si ar - den - ti ri -
 G O * C C I C

15

lu - chi-no che ques - ta sal - ma il cor' è l'al - ma

A B G A B C I C H

20

saet - - ti no e in pol - ue - re ri - d - chi - no

M .G. G H O G H M .C. C A

In this instance it is reasonable clear that Marini prepared his works for the printer himself. He specifically mentions that the guitar chords will not necessarily match the bass line and explains why.

Note that in some places you will find that the alfabeto does not fit with the bass line. This is because it is the wish of the author to accompany the voice in as many ways as possible rather than while by paying heed to the requirements of one instrument, he is constrained by those of the other, since the guitar lacks many proper consonances.

This is an important point – the guitar accompaniment will be different from that realized by the lute, theorbo or keyboard. The same point is also made by Milanuzzi in his **Primo scherzo dell ariose (1622)**. Milanuzzi also mentions the fact that he has not indicated the accidentals or figures in the bass part.

Note that so as to create a different effect from that of the chitarrone or keyboard when accompanying these little arias with the guitar, in many places I have given the guitar a different chord from that assigned to the bass line intended for other instruments, all of which are intended to make the arias as beautiful as possible. Also I have not included the accidentals or the figures in the bass part as I assume that those who play the accompaniment will be competent and accomplished enough to have one eye on the voice part.

Marini's bass lines are also unfigured and he is not entirely consistent about putting in accidentals. In b.14 he has omitted the F sharp and in bars 16 and 19 the E flat from the bass part. In both places the altered notes can be easily be deduced from the *alfabeto* chords so that the theorbo or keyboard players might do well to have one eye on these as well. Many of Marini's songs have *ritornelli* or interludes for violin and chitarrone notated using treble and bass staves. These are not supplied with *alfabeto* – presumably because Marini did not think that it was appropriate for the guitar to accompany them. The chitarrone could fill in the harmony if necessary. When the songs were accompanied with the guitar, the *ritornelli* may have been omitted.

One other source sheds some light on the way the guitar accompaniment should be played. In Giovanni Battista Fasolo d'Asti's first collection of secular arias, **La barchetta passaggiera (Rome in 1627)** the figures 1 or 2 are placed above the *alfabeto* letters to indicate how many times the chord should be repeated when strumming the accompaniment. The work itself has an interesting history. The Italian musicologist Oscar Chilesotti possessed the only known copy of the original which was lost during World War 2. By chance a facsimile of this one song is included in an article by Chilesotti in "Encyclopédie de la musique ed dictionnaire du conservatoire" (edited by Albert Lavignac, 1925). The complete contents of the book survive in Chilesotti's handwritten transcription which was published in facsimile in 1994.

Fasolo - La barchetta passaggiera (Rome in 1627) I bei guardi

Pentimento di Sdegno Amorofo: a modo di Balletto Francele.

Bei guardi che m'incendono i begli occhi che risplendo no Com' il Sol amez' il di Al mio core raggi porgo no Cofi chiari, che lo scorgono Onde Sdegno il dipar ti il dipar ti

Fasolo - La barchetta passeggera (Rome in 1627)
I bei guardi

I bei guar-di che m'in- cen- do- no i be- gl'oc- chi che ri- splen- do- - no. Co- m' il

Sol à mez- z' il di Al mio co- re rag- gi por- go- no Co- si chia- ri, che lo

scor- go- no On- de sde- gno il di- par- ti il di- par- ti.

Chord symbols: B2, G1, E1, B2, E2, F1, G1, E1, F1, D2, B2; E1, B1, G2*, A2, B, D2, D1, C1, A2, A2, C2; A2, B1, D1, X1, A1, B1, C1, A1, D1, G1*, A1, B2

Like the other examples this song is not without problems. The letters are not always accurately aligned as in bar 4 where Chord F (E major) belongs on the last beat of the previous bar. The chords don't always fit the voice part as in bar 5 and 12 where there Chord G2 (F major) fits the bass part rather than the melody. Fasolo uses an X to indicate the standard E minor chord usually represented with a +

Sanseverino's songbook

As well as his guitar tutor, Sanseverino published two collections of *alfabeto* songs. The first is apparently no longer extant but the second has the title **El segundo libro de los ayres, villançicos, y cancioncillas a la Española, y Italiana al uso moderno a dos, y tres bozes. Para cantar, y tañer en las Ghitarras.** Like his guitar tutor this was printed in Milan by Filippo Lomazzo in 1616. It is dedicated to Conde Iulio Cesare Borromeo, a member of the distinguished Milanese family which included St. Charles Borromeo and his cousin and successor as Cardinal Archbishop of Milan, Federico Borromeo. Federico was created Marchese d'Angera in 1623, and Iulio Cesare, his nephew, succeeded him as Marchese in 1631.

The songbook includes eighteen pieces with Spanish lyrics, one solo, thirteen in 2-parts and four in 3-parts together and four pieces with Italian lyrics, one solo and three in 3-parts. All are in staff notation and all are supplied with *alfabeto*. It is not clear whether any of the songs are his own compositions or whether he has simply arranged them. Some are certainly pre-existing works. Sanseverino has written a brief introduction but unfortunately, as he says, he hasn't included detailed instructions because apparently he had done so in his earlier book. Until this turns up we will have to content ourselves with what he says here – that he has not placed the words of the additional stanzas with the staff notation because of the difficulty in underlaying them. The singer can be trusted to work this out for himself.

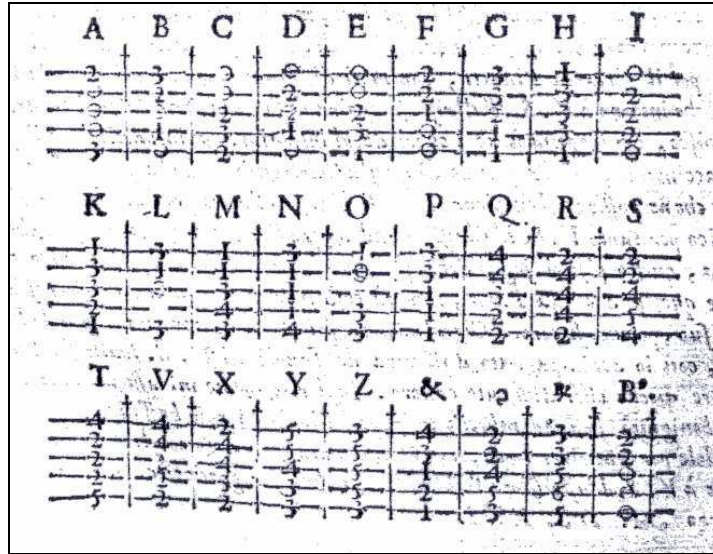
This highlights yet another problem. A detailed understanding of the language and the way it was spoken at the time is necessary in order to work this out correctly.

Sanseverino's Introduction to *El segundo libro de los ayres...*

I have not included here any explanation or rules relating to the playing and singing [of these canzonettes] with the Spanish guitar, other than the Alfabeto set out below, because in this book the same rules must be observed which were set out in the book which I have already had printed, which anyone can refer to whenever they wish. Although I have not spelt out the minor details, it should be noted (with deference to the more educated) that when you wish to sing and play these canzonettes, in some of them it will sometimes be necessary to split a note, making one into two, and sometimes to make two into one, in order to fit the words of the additional stanzas placed below correctly to the music. It has not been possible for the Author to match them with the first stanza because the verses sometimes have more or less syllables. He has however used every care, and is relying on the good sense and practice of whoever considers them worthy to be performed.

This is followed by his table of *alfabeto* chords – the standard ones A-Z, &, ? and R with **B⁶** for the E minor chord usually represented by +.

Sanseverino's Table of *Alfabeto* Chords (1616)



Contents

In Spanish

For two voices

- p 1 Passados contentamientos
- p 2 Zelos importunos
- p.3 Contentamientos
- p.4 Oluidada soys de my
- p.5 Que berdadero dolor
- p.6 Pensamiento mio
- p.7 Oluidastes me Señora
- p.8 Desdeñado soy de amor
- p.9 Los ojos conque mire
- p.10 Ya estaras contento

- p.11 Lleuan desconciertos
- p.12 Hermosissima Pastora

For three voices

- p.13 No me quexo yo del daño
- p.14 Bella Pastorçilla
- p.15 Quien entre mire bien como ha biuido
- p.16 Si son para mirar
- p.17 Al partir llaman parrida

For solo voice

- p.19 Si mi tañer, y canto

In Italian

For solo voice

- p.20 In questo duro scoglio che fate

For three voices

- p.21 Dolcissimo viso
- p.22 Ardo MILLA per voi
- p.23 Mirate strana sorte, ch'io son ferito

All are printed in score. The solo songs “In questo duro scoglio che fate” and “Si mi tañer, y canto” have *alfabeto* added below the bass line which is untexted and not intended to be sung. The 2-part songs have *alfabeto* added to the upper voice only although both parts are texted. The 3-part songs have *alfabeto* added to both the highest and lowest voices both of which are texted and presumably intended to be sung although it may have been up to the singers to decide which of them should provide the accompaniment. The reason for this distinction is not entirely clear. In Montesardo’s collection of vocal pieces with *alfabeto* - **I lieti giorni di Napoli** (Naples : Gio. Battista Gargano & Lucretio Nucci (1612), the 3-part songs also have *alfabeto* added to both the highest and lowest parts but in the solo songs and dialogues it is added to the part to be sung.

At the end is a transcription of the four Italian items with the simple guitar accompaniment realized in the way that Sanseverino would probably have thought appropriate. In spite of the fact that he was a guitarist and presumably saw the work through the press himself, there are occasionally problems with the *alfabeto* which doesn’t fit the voice parts. This may be due to problems with printing.

Conclusion

It is fairly obvious from what these writers say, and from examples of their work, that the guitar was not expected to realize the bass line in the same way as other instruments or to form part of a continuo group. There is a very good reason for this – even with bourdons on the fourth and fifth courses, the guitar does not have an adequate bass register. It is an “imperfect instrument” as so many of the sources explain. Nevertheless the songs work very well when accompanied in this way and there is no reason why this should be regarded as inferior to other options. Since the guitar was not expected to reproduce the bass line, a re-entrant tuning would be just as suitable, and in some circumstances preferable to using octave stringing.

Today these songs are more often than not performed with a group of instruments supplying the accompaniment, often in an elaborate arrangement. The guitar may be one of the instruments included in the group. However this may not have been the commonest way of realizing the accompaniment in the early seventeenth century. To some extent at least composers believed that they were reviving the ancient Greek practice of the singer accompanying himself or herself with the emphasis on the words – “word, rhythm and then tone, not the other way round” as Caccini has it. The words are what matters and nothing should obscure them.

Starting with Foscarini’s **Li 5 libri della chitarra alla spagnuola (Rome : 1640)** the more ambitious guitar books do begin to include exercises on how to realize the bass line in the mixed style. It is clear from these that the guitar was still not expected to reproduce the bass line note for note or to fill in the harmony in the correct inversions. The exercises do not indicate either that players immediately gave up strumming accompaniments in favour of entirely lute style realization. It simply means that accompaniments would have been more varied.

Incidentally both Marini and Milanuzzi highlight quite a different problem with interpreting these songs – the bass lines in many of the songbooks are unfigured so that the harmony appropriate for the accompaniment is sometimes ambiguous and the singer needs to be familiar with the rules of *musica ficta*.

BENDITO SANSEVERINO.

4 ITALIAN SONGS

FROM

EL SEGUNDO LIBRO DE LOS AYRES,
VILLANÇICOS, Y CANCIONCILLAS
A la Española, y Italiana al vso moderno.
A DOS, Y TRES BOZES.

Para cantar, y tañer en las Ghitarras.

[1616]



Transcribed and Edited by Monica Hall
2010

ARIA. Voce sola all'Italiana - In questo duro scoglio, p.20.

In ques - to du - - ro scog - lio che

A B' I C F

5

fa-te che fa-te hai - - me che fa - te ò bel-le Donne in-gra - te.

I C A H L C B C A

10

2.

te. Fors'- au-vez-za - - te il cor - e a far - si scog-lio, a far - si

8 A B' I C D B' E

15

scog- - - - - lio, al saet-tar al saet-tar

8 B A B A E D

20

1. 2.

- al saet - - tar d'Am - o - re. re.

8 B A C B C A

1. 2.

In questo duro scoglia
Che fate haime che fate
Ò belle Donne ingrate,
Fors'auvezzate il core
A farsi scoglio, al saettar d'Amore.

Al ventilar dell'aure
Che fate haime, che fate
O Donna dispietate.
Fors'imparar vi piace
Esser di gelo à chi per'voi si sface.

In quest'ombrose spiagge
Che fate haime, che fate
O sere donn'ingrate.
(Sord') all'altrui penare
Esser volete hormai donne col mare.

Non bast'a voi crudele
Hauer aschiu'ogn'ora
Chi voi sol à m'è adora.
Ch'esser volete hai lasso
All'altrui'pian't vn vent; vn mar, vn sasso.

CANZONETTA à tre voce all'Italiana - O dolcissimo viso, p.21

O C A C O G ⁵ H

O dol-cis-si-mo vi - so, Chi da me t'hà

O dol - cis-si-mo vi - so, Chi da me t'hà

O C A C O G H

O dol - cis-si-mo vi - so, Chi da me t'hà

C L C A O C E I ¹⁰ C E (H)

di - - ui - so, Co - me ch'io vi - uo Se del mio

di - ui - so, Co - me ch'io vi - uo Se del mio

C L C A O C (E) I C E (H)

di - ui - so, Co - me ch'io vi - uo. Se de mio cor

M L O C O
 cor Se del mio cor son pri - uo.

cor Se del mio cor son pri - uo.

8

M L O C O
 Se dei mio cor son pri - uo.

Detailed description: This is a musical score for a vocal piece, likely a duet. It consists of four staves. The top two staves are for vocal parts, and the bottom two are for piano accompaniment. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 7/8. The lyrics are 'Se del mio cor son pri - uo.' The first vocal part has lyrics 'M L O C O' above it. The second vocal part has lyrics 'cor Se del mio cor son pri - uo.' The piano accompaniment has a '8' below the first measure. The bottom staff has lyrics 'M L O C O' above it and 'Se dei mio cor son pri - uo.' below it. There are some red markings in the piano accompaniment, specifically a red vertical line and a red sharp sign.

O dolcissimo viso,
Da me t'hà diso,
Come ch'io viuo
Se del mio cor son priuo.

Che'l dilungar le piante
Da l'amato sembiante,
Non è partita:
Ma è perder la vita.

Quinci al partirmi ch'io
Da te feci idol mio,
Restai conquiso
E senza piaga ucciso.

Ma quando con quel giorno
Farà già mai ritorno,
La fredda Aurora
Ch'io ti veggia, e poi mora.

Ch'à chi per tè si viue
Il morir non prescriue,
Doglie ne pene
S'inanz'à te gli auiene.

Oltra, chè qual fenice,
Iò spero più felice'
Rinascere poi,
Al sol de gl'occhi tuoi.

CANZONETTA à tre voci all'Italiana - Ardo MILLA per voi, p.22

G L C

Ar- - - - - do, Ar - do MIL - LA per vo -

Ar- - - - - do, Ar-do MIL - LA per vo -

8

G L C

Ar- - - - - do, Ar-do MIL - LA per vo -

5 O G L E G

i, E nell'-ar - dor tan-ta-dol - cez - za sen - to,

i, E nell'-ar-dor tan-ta dol-cez - za sen - to, E nell'-ar

8

O G L E G

i, E nell'-ar-dor tan-ta dol-cez - za sen - to, E nell'-ar

L E ¹⁰B 1.G
 E nell'-ar-dor tan-ta dol-cez - - za sen - to,
 dor, tan-ta dol - cez - za sen - - - to,
 8
 L E B G
 dor, tan-ta dol - cez - za sen - to,
 1.

^{2.} [G] L A B G L E B
 Ch'io di - co ò dol - ce Am - o - re Ar - - - - -
^{2.} Ch'io di - co ò dol - ce Am - o - re Ar - - - - -
 8
^{2.}

[G] L A B G L E B
 Ch'io di - co ò dol - ce Am - o - re Ar - - - - -

15
 H O G B G
 - di-mi sem - - pre il co - re.

- di-mi sem - pre il co - re.

H O G B G
 - di-mi sem - - pre il cor - re.

Ardo MILLA, per voi.
E nell'ardor tanta dolcezza sento,
Ch'io dico ò dolce Amore,
Ardimi sempre il core.

Esce dal petto fuore
Fiamma amorosa, e sospirando dico,
Dolci del cor fauille
Vscite à mill'à mille.

Stillo per gl'occhi vn rio,
E del pianto il mio cor tal gioia sente,
Ch'io dico, occhi piangete,
E mai non vi chiudete.

Così d'eterna fiamma,
E di continuo humor l'alma si pasce,
E di tal gioia pieno
Mi godo al bel sereno.

CANZONETTA à tre voci all'Italiana - Mirate strana sorte, p.23

A B C A C G

Mi - ra - te stra - na sor - te, Ch'io son fe -

Mi - ra - te stra - na sor - te, Ch'io son fe - ri - to,

8

A B C A C G

Mi - ra - te stra - na sor - te, Ch'io son fe - ri - to,

B A C D I C

ri - to, Ch'io son fe - ri - to, è stò vi - ci - no à mor - te.

Ch'io son fe - ri - to, è stò vi - ci - no à mor - te.

8

B A C D I C

Ch'io son fe - ri - to, è stò vi - ci - no à mor - te.

A G B B' C B A B'

E per - - do già la vi - ta se non soc-corr' A -

E per - do già la vi - ta se non soc-cor-re A - mor, se

8

A G B B' C B A B'

E per - do già la vi - ta se non soc-cor - re Amor, se

10 C D [D] A C A

mor, se non soc-corr' A - mor, con la su'a - i - ta.

non soc-cor-re A-mor, con la su'a - i - - ta.

8

C D [D] A C A

non soc-cor-re A-mor, con la su'a - i - - ta.

Mirate strana sorte,
Ch'io son ferito, è stò vicino à morte;
E perdo già la vita,
Se non soccorr' Amor cō la su'aita.

Mirate che ventura,
Ch'io stò bruggiando in amoro'sarsura;
E moro à poco, à poco,
Se non estingue Amor il mio gran foco.

Mirate ch'empio fato,
Ch'io moro già da fier' Amor'ligato;
E il mio mal veggio, & odo.
Se non mi scioglie Amor da questo nodo.

Idolo mio gradito,
Per voi moro ligat'ars è ferito;
Per voi quest'alma pate,
E manco sò se voi certo m'amate.

Notes

1. *In questo duro scoglio che fate* – Aria. Voce sola all’Italiana, p. 20

Single voice with bass line. *Alfabeto* under bass line only.

Clefs – C1/F4. Key signature – none [G major]. Time signature - C = 4 crotchets to a bar.

Concordances Paolo D’Aragona – **Amorose querele**. Naples : Lucrezio Nucci, 1616. As a copy of this is not to hand at present it is not possible to say whether this is the same setting of the same words. The lyrics only are also included in Remigio Romano’s **Prima raccolta di bellissime canzonette musicali, & moderne**. Vicenza : Angelo Saluadori, 1618, p.66 and in other collections compiled by Remigio. They vary slightly from Sanseverino’s version. None of them have *alfabeto*. All have the heading “Aria di musica bellissimo. Donne crudeli biasmate”.

Comments: As this is only in two parts there are no real problems here although in bar 3 the D in the voice part sounding against the A major chord creating a perfect 4th with the bass may offend some ears.

2. *Dolcissimo viso* – Canzonetta à tre voci all’Italiana, p. 21

Three voices. *Alfabeto* above the highest and below the lowest voice.

Clefs – C1/C1/F4. Key signature – 1 flat = B flat [G minor]. Time signature C = 4 crotchets to a bar.

Concordances Remigio Romano – *Quarta raccolta di bellissime canzonette musical, e moderne*. Pavia : Gio Battista de Rossi, 1625, p. 68. Lyrics only with *alfabeto*; with heading “Amante lontano della Donna”. Also in *Nuevo raccolta di bellissime canzonette musicali*. Venice : Angelo Salvadori, 1623. Lyrics only with *alfabeto*. The *alfabeto* is identical with Sanseverino’s.

Comments: At both cadences the *alfabeto* ignores the suspended 4th. Sanseverino presumably regarded this as acceptable. In bar 3 he has put Chord A [G major] when it should be Chord O [G minor] which suggests that he is guilty of the heinous crime of adding the *alfabeto* to the bass line and ignoring the other parts. The additional verses are numbered 2,3,4,6 & 7; there is no verse 5. Remigio’s version has only these six verses. (The verses of the other pieces are not numbered).

3. *Ardo MILLA per voi*– Canzonetta à tre voci all’Italiana, p. 22

Three voices. *Alfabeto* above the highest and below the lowest voice.

Clefs – C1/C1/F4. Key signature – 1 flat = B flat [G minor]. Time signature C = 4 crotchets to a bar.

Concordance Remigio Romano – *Seconda raccolta di bellissime canzonette musicali*. Venice : Angelo Salvadori, 1620, p.15. Lyrics only with *alfabeto*. The *alfabeto* is the same as Sanseverino's.

Comments: The 2nd soprano part is obviously misprinted in bar 12 [as C sharp, B flat, C sharp corrected to B natural, A here]. However the E natural on the second semiquaver sounding with the C minor chord in the next bar is acceptable according to the rules of *musica ficta*.

At both cadences the *alfabeto* does not reproduce the harmony correctly. In bar 10 the passing 6/4 followed by a suspended 4th is ignored and in bar 15 the suspended 4th is also ignored. Sanseverino would have regarded this as acceptable.

The first chord in bar 7 should probably be Chord H [B flat major] and the second Chord E [D minor], and the second chord in bar 8 should probably be Chord H too.

4. ***Mirate strana sorte*** – Canzonetta à tre voci all'Italiana, p. 23

Three voices. *Alfabeto* above the highest and below the lowest voice.

Clefs – C1/C1/F4. Key signature – none [G major]. Time signature C = 4 crotchets to a bar.

Concordance None to date.

Comments: Sanseverino is inconsistent in the way he indicates whether the F should be sharpened. In bar 8 the F in the 2nd soprano part must be sharpened to match the *alfabeto* and in bar 10 the Fs in the 2nd soprano and bass part must be sharpened for the same reason.

At both cadences the *alfabeto* does not reproduce the harmony correctly. In bar 6 the passing 6/4 followed by a suspended 4th is ignored and in bar 12 the suspended 4th is also ignored. Sanseverino would have regarded this as acceptable. Elsewhere Chord B [C major] on the last beat of bar 8 should probably be Chord D [A minor].; on the final quaver of bar 11 the correct chord is a passing 2nd inversion of the diminished triad on the leading note for which Sanseverino has substituted Chord B' [E minor].