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The Baroque Concerto
February 17, 2016
The Concerto and its Beginnings

The development of the concept of the concerto is linked to the compositional exploration of

contrasts—between different resonant physical spaces, between soloists and choirs and

instrumental ensembles, between timbral and pitch ranges, between groups of different sizes and

instrumentations—and thus is linked in particular to the innovative output of a certain pair of

Venetian composers. Andrea and Giovanni Gabrieli, working both alone and in collaboration

throughout their careers, created large polychoral vocal and instrumental works that exploited the

dramatics of sounds both in concert and in opposition; their explorations of contrast provide

some of the first historically significant traces of the evolution of the concerto form. Andrea

Gabrieli (1532-1585) served as *maestro di cappella* for the massive Basilica di San Marco in

Venice, working closely with his nephew Giovanni Gabrieli (1557-1618). This pair's

compositional practices in their *musica di chiesa* reflect the crucial intersection of architecture

and sound in the origins of the concerto: the basilica's seemingly vast musical resources and

large, bilaterally symmetrical internal spaces inspired their exploration of contrast, antiphony,

and spatialization. This essay establishes the contrasts developed in the works of Andrea and

Giovanni Gabrieli, and traces the development of those contrasts—relatively chronologically—

spending significant time on the remarkable innovations in Claudio Monteverdi's later books of

madrigals from his time in Venice, passing through the works of Monteverdi's students and

beyond to explore primarily the formal connection between the trio sonata and the concerto, and

concluding with a brief discussion of *concertino* and *concertante* in Corelli's 1714 Op. 6 *concerti grossi.*

Space, Size, and Range in Polychoralism: The Gabrieli Contrasts

O magnum mysterium—from the 1587 published collection *Concerti*[1] *di Andrea et di Giovanni Gabrieli*—demonstrates the pair's deft exploitation of the compositional potentials of the Basilica di San Marco. In its evocation of the wonderment of the "great mystery" of Christ's birth, *O magnum mysterium* illustrates the implied contrasts of the concerto's etymological origin: paired choirs suggest that the composition takes advantage of the basilica's two vaulted choir lofts, and produces contrasting timbral ranges: the first "high" choir is three female voices and one male tenor; the second "low" choir is three males and one female alto. The first sentence, beginning "O great mystery…", is opened by the "high" choir, its counterpoint elegantly highlighted by lightly imitative gestures between the two choirs through their expression of the sacred mystery. The second sentence, beginning "Blessed Virgin…", is opened by the "low" choir, soon joined in imitation by the "high" choir.

In ecclesiis, from Giovanni Gabrieli's posthumously published 1615 collection *Symphoniae Sacrae liber secundus* (his second book of so-called "sacred symphonies", following his critical

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[1] It is worth noting that the though the collection was titled "*concerti*", in no sense are the pieces that follow recognizable yet as *concerti* in the modern sense; the meaning of this title is perhaps more clearly related to the etymological origins of the word "*concerto*", which in its Latin roots implied a conflict or disagreement, and in its modern Italian non-musical usage implies reaching an agreement, two disparate parts coming together. Both of these seemingly oppositional meanings—the conflict, and its inevitable resolution—retain significance and will be seen to operate in tandem in the musical sense of the "concerto" throughout its history.

1597 *Sacrae symphoniae*) highlights his development of spatialized musicality. Massively scored, *In ecclesiis* is written for a brass choir of three cornetti, viola, and two trombones; a group of solo voices including cantus, altus, and two distinct tenors; and a choir of *cantus*, *altus*, *tenor*, and *bassus;* with *continuo.* Structurally, the piece is a display of contrast and interposition between these parts—much of the spatial meaning and antiphony is surely lost in an audio-only recording, but would have been amplified dramatically in the listening experience provided by San Marco. The form of *In ecclesiis* provides a strong example of the crucial role of contrast in the structure of the concerto: to give a rough structural overview, the piece is divided into four major sections, which alternate regularly between the small and large choirs, and further between the voices and the instruments. The sections are divided further, alternating solos—for each voice part alone and in combination—with large choral *ritornelli,* or recognizable returning strains that unite the piece through repetition. Each of these smaller divisions is marked by contrastive dynamics. Thus, Gabrieli's structure depends on several layers of oppositional contrasts: between solo and tutti, between instruments and voices, between dynamic levels, and between new material and *ritornello.* These oppositional categories—and the compositional interplay and innovation they afford—form the center of the concept of the concerto, and will be seen throughout its history in many forms and under many names.

Andrea and Giovanni Gabrieli were followed as organists and composers of Basilica di San Marco by Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643), who moved to Venice to become the basilica's *maestro di cappella* in 1613 and who lived and worked in Venice until his death. The examples that follow are from the final three books of Monteverdi's total nine books of madrigals, written

while Monteverdi was living in Venice and clearly the inheritors of the Gabrielis' polychoral compositional innovations and dramatic sense of space afforded by the basilica.

Monteverdi in Venice: Heightening the Drama of the Stereophonic

Monteverdi's seventh book of madrigals (1619) is cumbersomely titled *Concerto-Settimo Libro di Madrigali a 1, 2, 3, 4, & Sci Voci, con altri generi de Canti*. This use of "concerto" in the title is perhaps still unfamiliar to the modern eye: these are clearly vocal pieces, madrigals, and we are now largely unaccustomed to calling vocal pieces *concerti.* The pieces that follow exemplify Monteverdi's continuation of the Gabrieli innovations: vocal and instrumental pieces that create contrast through dialogue between small and large groups, spatialized in the basilica and timbrally contrastive to heighten the drama, balancing interest between familiar and unfamiliar material through the *ritornello*.

Tempro la cetra is subtitled "*Voce sola*" though accompanied by a secco *basso continuo* throughout—perhaps ideally the titular *la cetra.* The voice entrance is preceded by a simple five-part *sinfonia* in three phrases*,* the final phrase of which returns—marked as a *ritornello*—in fully voiced fragments between the stanzas of text in *recitativo secco.* With each stanza, the vocal line becomes increasingly complex, its text-painting more melismatically illustrative. The final stanza is followed by a *sinfonia* which first imitates the movement of the opening *sinfonia* with a reiteration of its three *ritornelli,* making a vast crescendo and a metric modulation into a snappy compound meter before returning to a final full restatement of the opening *sinfonia.*

Con che soavità is marked "*Concertato a una voce e 9 Istrumenti*" and is scored for three choruses, each with specified instrumentation for the production of truly remarkable timbral contrasts. The first "chorus" is simply a *basso continuo* with two *chitaroni, clavicembalo,* and *spinetta;* the second chorus is comprised of *viola da brazzo*, violins (or *viola all'alta*), and *viole da braccio* with a *basso continuo* of clavicembalo; and the third chorus of the radically darker ranges of *viola da braccio* or *da gamba*, with *basso da braccio* or *bass gamba*, contrabass, and *basso continuo.* Here Monteverdi places the three instrumental choirs in dynamic interaction, coaxing meaning and illustration from their timbral contrasts and expanding upon the implied meanings of the different ensemble registers as seen in *O Magnum Mysterium*. The first chorus implies a *recitativo secco,* ideally positioned directly in the center of the stage as it plays the most continuously as an accompaniment to the solo voice. Since the other instrumental choirs provide dramatically different timbres, they would be ideally placed antiphonally to maximize upon their illustrative capacities: where the text is rhetorically in dialogue, so too can the music. This highlights Monteverdi's conceptual breakthrough which he documented in the preface to his *Scherzi Musicali:* the illustrative capacity of music which was the major controversial differentiation between *prima prattica* and *seconda prattica*.

In *Chiome d'oro,* as in *Tempro la Cetra,* three *ritornelli* comprise the opening *sinfonia.* However, here Monteverdi gives very specific instructions as to the relationship between the *sinfonia* and the *canzonetta* that follows, writing "Crowns of Gold: A *canzonetta* for two voices in concert with two violins with a *chitarrone* or *spinetta,* and before the singing begins, play these *ritornelli*

indicated here" [translation mine]. The need for Monteverdi to provide such explicit instruction becomes clear during the *canzonetta*: a statement of one of the *ritornelli* comes after each line of text, providing a balanced symmetry and coherent structure to the piece. If the players tacked on a different *sinfonia* to the beginning—even one for two violins and continuo— then each of these instrumental interjections in the *canzonetta* would be fresh music, unrecognizable on a first listen and not repeated during the song, and they would not allow Monteverdi's structural symmetry to shine through.

Concitato in the Canti Guerrieri

Monteverdi's eighth book of madrigals, from 1638, is dedicated to the Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand and titled "*Canti Guerrieri et amorosi con lacuna opuscoli…* ". This printing is the source of his famous foreword on the invention of *concitato* sixteenth-notes. He first recalls Plato's concept cited in Aristotle's *On Rhetoric* (though Csicsko notes that the reference is actually found in Plato's *The Republic*) of the three principal *generi* or genres of the passions and the musical styles that express them: the *molle* or languid style corresponding to the passion of humility or supplication, the *temperato* or temperate style corresponding to the passion of temperance, and the *concitato* or agitated style corresponding to the passion of anger. He notes that he has been unable to find examples of the third style, and the potential connection between the *concitato* passion and the pyrrhic metrical foot used in war dances. He then describes his process for his derivation of the warlike style: dividing the *semibreve*—which he defines as "a spondee beat sounded uninterruptedly", in a fascinating conceptual overlap of poetry, dance, and

music —into sixteen semiquavers sounding "one after another" under a text that expressed agitation and anger.

The first song in the *Canti Guerrieri* collection—*Altri canti d'Amor* for six voices—displays Monteverdi's ability to evoke each of the three passions musically, but showcases in particular his new *concitato* warlike style and his ability to use the style to glorify the Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand's "valor and goodness". As to be expected by this point in the development of the concerto, the six voices and ensemble offer Monteverdi the capacity to create great contrasts and a wide range of timbral permutations. The instrumentation of the orchestra particularly shows Monteverdi's flair for timbral specificity: after a *sinfonia* that opens with a lushly orchestrated descending minor tetrachord—for two violins, viola *da brazzo,* and viola *da gamba* over *basso continuo*— the six voices are accompanied by the *sinfonia* ensemble joined by two more violas, including a viola *contrabasso.*

Monteverdi first cheekily illustrates the *molle* or languid style in a very traditional-sounding amorous madrigal—replete with mildly imitative duets and trios between the *canto, quinto,* and *tenore* voices, airy sighs about sweet kisses, and gorgeous transparent unisons between the voices to mimic "two souls united by a single thought"— all while the underlying text of the first stanza suggests that he will leave this well-trod territory to "others" while he upgrades to innovative musical endeavors. The second stanza demonstrates his command of the range of his new *concitato* style: the entrance of the *basso* voice is a truly dramatic drop in timbre and his rhythm immediately quickens the felt meter, preparing the ear for Monteverdi's display of his

new and radically smaller divisions of the *semibreve* in the voice parts and the bass line. Six

independent voice parts and two aggressive violin lines support the agitated martial chaos

expressed in each line of this stanza's text: scales in contrary motion illustrate the "*i duri*

incontri"; hocketing in both the violins and the voices evokes the clashing of swords at "*strider*

le spade"; tumbling downward scales in the voice parts emulate falling "*bombeggiar*"; and

crucially Monteverdi's division of the *semibreve* into sixteenth-notes undergirds each iteration of

"*le battaglie*", pushing the rhythm forward until it snaps into compound meter in m. 120 in the

middle of the second stanza.

The third stanza in the Petrarchan sonnet is a sestet that begins with *la volta,* the "turn" or

clincher of the poem that contextualizes the first two quatrains; these often begin with an

apostrophic invocation of a god or powerful natural concept. Here, with the word "*Tu…*", this *la*

volta brings together the piece's two strands of contrastive musical argumentation into an

encomium for Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand. Written for a stately *basso,* singing *voce sola*

with the full complement of strings and a newly-designated *spinetta* moving largely in

homorhythm underneath, this stanza marks Monteverdi's compositional turn to the third and

final Platonic passion with the *temperato* style. As Nicholas Csicsko notes in <u>Monteverdi's</u>

<u>*Dramma per* Musica</u> this style is the most ambiguous of the three, lying in the middle ground

between the softness of *temperato* and the hardness of *concitato* and can contain hints and

references to both of the pola *generi;* the *temperato* is most recognizable in the declamatory

mode that opens this third stanza. (87) Hints of the *concitato* style do indeed reappear at the

mention of "*guerra*" first in the solo voice; as in Csickso's comments on *Hor che'l ciel e la*

terra e'l vento tace, though the word "*guerra*" was printed only once in the *Altri canti* sonnet text, Monteverdi's setting repeats it many times supported by a *concitato* texture to emphasize the primacy of the *concitato* emotion in his schematic concept. (82) Eventually this trace of warlike *concitato* rhythm opens into a glorious and stately *temperato tutti*— the full voice parts aurally representing a unified glorification of the Holy Roman Empire as the chorus sings of the valor of the empire's inherited ruler, "*o gran Fernando*". Monteverdi's key signatures provide perhaps the clearest differentiation between the *generi;* while Monteverdi seems not to assign a fixed relationship between each style and a key area, his contours of large-scale harmonic motion are critical to understanding how his rhetoric functions. This final stanza makes clear Monteverdi's key scheme for the piece and its ultimate rhetorical intent of glorifying the emperor: after an opening *sinfonia* and the first stanza in the region of D major, the second stanza cadences in G major, and the third stanza immediately picks up in E major, a chromatic cross-relationship of a third and a massive leap upwards on the cycle of dominants, as if to indicate Ferdinand's supremacy and proximity to God in the heavens.

Monteverdi's later books of madrigals expanded the dramatic potential of the developing concerto form by leaps and bounds through his technical developments toward expressing the full range of passions: his exploration of the dyad of familiarity and difference in the *ritornelli* structure of *Tempro la cetra;* his contrastive timbral ranges and expanded polychoralism in *Con che soavità*; his play with large-scale formal symmetry and specificity of performance directions in *Chiome d'oro*; and his revolutionary invention of the *concitato* agitated style first seen in the cheekily illustrative *Altri cant d'Amore* that opens his eighth book. All these developments and

more are operating together in full fruition near the close of Monteverdi's *Canti Guerrieri* in his dramatic masterpiece, *Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda.* Monteverdi sets this tragic story of love and death in the First Crusade—with all its underlying clashes of religion, gender, bodies, mortality, the passage of time—to stanzas from Torquato Tasso's highly popular *Gerusalemme liberato,* Canto XII.

Tancredi e Clorinda

Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda is first mentioned in the foreword to the *Canti Guerrieri e Amorosi* in which Monteverdi describes the various successes and failures of its first performance in 1624 at the home of his patron Girolamo Mocenigo, how its innovations inspired his composition of the rest of the collection and—in rather affronted tones—how important it is for the musicians to play the music as he has notated it, no matter how "laughable" they find the new rhythms.

As Csicsko notes so articulately, because Monteverdi's *seconda prattica* compositional approach clearly prefers to follow the dramatic demands of the text—rather than to fit the stanzas into a more standard "musical" large-scale architecture—"the only meaningful structural analysis of the *Combattimento* comes from an examination of when, why, and how contrast is created within the work and its relationship to the text". (101) Correspondingly, this analysis is centered on the creation of contrast—as related to the traditions established by the Gabrielis and Monteverdi himself in his Venetian madrigals—and the relationship Monteverdi forms with Tasso's text through innovative technical expressions of those contrasts.

The introductory first stanza opens unmistakably in Monteverdi's *temperato* mode, in an instrumentation recognizable from the *temperato* third stanza of *Altri canti d'amor:* a solo bass singing over a *secco recit.[2]* This position is translated here as "the Narrator", but the original Italian crucially designates his role not as "*il narratore*" but "*il Testo*" or literally "the text". With very little in the way of actual dialogue between Tancredi and Clorinda—eleven of the sixteen total stanzas are written for *il Testo*'s voice alone, without anything for the titular characters—this piece is very much like an extended staged *arioso* for *il Testo.* Monteverdi designates that "the Narrator's voice should be clear and firm and… he should not perform runs or trills anywhere else but in the stanza beginning *'Notte'*". (from *Translations of Introductory Texts,* xvii) The primacy of clear expression of the text is established from the first stanza, as *il Testo* opens with largely monotonic declamatory lines, written in a decidedly unvirtuosic style emphasized by Monteverdi's designated lack of vocal ornamentation. After undulating stepwise motion in the two violins and viola *da brazzo* indicate Clorinda circling around, the action begins —literally—at the stage direction for the *motto del cavallo,* the motion of Tancredi's horse as the music changes from the opening duple *lento* into a lolloping triple *allegro non troppo mosso.* As the drama moves towards their fatal battle, the literalistic text-painting continues: descending intervals characteristically illustrate both "*scende*", at Tancredi's dismount, and "*morte*", at his mention of war and death; slow rising marcato lines in the strings indicate the pair walking toward each other; and finally as they approach each other "like two jealous bulls ablaze with

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2 However, if the timeline Monteverdi describes in his foreword is to believed, he wrote the other songs in *Canti Guerrieri* only after being inspired by the successes of *Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda.*

anger" the first *concitato* sixteenth-notes appear in m. 70-72 in the strings and bass line, marking the transition from the introductory scene to the *aria*-like "*Notte*".

Monteverdi's dramatization of *il Testo*'s invocation "*Notte*" ("O Night") seems remarkably like an operatic *aria*: a *sinfonia* for full strings and *continuo*—whose *andante mosso* marking is enacted quite literally onstage by *il Testo* walking around while Tancredi and Clorinda are frozen in suspended animation— opens with a rhythmically modified descending minor tetrachord. At the entrance of *il Testo*, Monteverdi finally allows the singer to release his suppressed urge to ornament. As Csicsko notes, the moment is heightened by Monteverdi's first hexachordal shift, from the *durus* hexachord of the opening stanzas to the *mollis* or two-flat-hexachord with a "key signature" or signatio of a single flat.[3] (112) The *aria* is marked by a repetitive bass line, further encouraging ornamentation, and a beautiful upward melisma at the word "*l'alta*". The battle action recommences with a characteristically specific tempo change—*Allegro, molto moderato*— and a snap return to the *durus* hexachord. As the combat escalates, *il Testo*'s part picks up in the *concitato* style with similar compositional techniques to those seen in the second stanza of *Altri canti d'amor*: repetitive hocketing, cascading contrary motion scales in the violins to illustrate clashing swords, and incredibly virtuosic monotonic *concitato* sixteenth-notes in the voice parts. Monteverdi's truly contrastive innovation comes in the performance direction to the strings to m. 174: "*Qui si lascia l'arco, e si strappano le corde con duoi diti*", or the first notated direction known in history for pizzicato. When the bows are taken up again and Tancredi assaults Clorinda

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[3] The two-flat hexachord is to be seen only at three crucial dramatic points in *Tancredi e Clorinda*: here at "*Notte*", *il Testo*'s address to night; il Testo's address to dawn at m. 228, "*Già de l'ultimo stella*", though there is no signatio shift at that point; and Clorinda's dying words, further illustrated by breathy *forte-piani* in the strings indicated *arcata sola*. (112)

hand-to-hand, squeezing her in the "binding knots" of his "mighty arms", the style shifts to hint at the *molle* passion, with suspensions in the voice and strings highlighting the dramatic irony of the pair's thwarted embrace. They return to their swords, which are whetted with much blood, and the mode shifts evocatively from an aggressive *concitato* G major to a stomach-clenching G minor at the word "*sangue*", a long diminuendo in the strings highlighting the descending third from D to B-flat in the first violin that anticipates the contour of Clorinda's final tragic words ("*Amico… Hai vinto…*"). As Csicsko notes, as the exhausted warriors move away from each other, the note values in both the narrator's part and the recitativo *secco* augment from quarters to half-notes to whole-notes.

Il Testo's second and less formally demarcated *aria*-like segment is framed by two commentaries: first, an apostrophe to the dawn and second, a lamentation on our foolishness and susceptibility to fickle fortune. Though there is no change in signatio, each of these commentaries is supported by a hexachordal shift: the first with a shift to the *mollis* or two-flat hexachord, and the second with a return to the warlike *durus* in the area of G, though *il Testo's* lament raises the sense of anguish with a jolting leap into A major. As the action recommences and Tancredi's victory seems imminent, his request to know his adversary's name and rank is marked by the next dramatic key shift within Monteverdi's continuing warlike G major (*durus)*: a chromatic cross-relation of a third within one of Tancredi's few sung lines as the tonality shifts from G major to E major. Anger returns to their hearts as they learn each other's fundamentally oppositional identities, and as the final "*guerra*" begins in earnest, true *concitato* sixteenth-notes in violent crescendo agitate the strings and bass line. The final blow lands on Clorinda's bosom

and another chromatic cross-relation of a third dramatically pushes upwards from G major up to B major, a motion that Csicsko notes as a mutation from the natural hexachord to the one-sharp hexachord within the *durus*. The strings drop out and a *recitativo secco* accompanies Clorinda to her death, slipping down alongside her in parallel fifths as her feet fail her.

Clorinda's heart-rending plea for forgiveness and Christian baptism is a duple lento accompanied either by a choir of four viols as designated in the forward to be the original instrumentation, or by the regular *Combattimento* ensemble of two violins and viola *da brazzo*, playing breathless full bars of *fortepiani* in *arcata sola,* a single bow stroke, for a truly unique color and affect. The entrance of her voice marks the final instance of the signatio change to the two-flat hexachord, offsetting her dying request in the softness of *mollis.* She reaches a devastating E-flat twice in the course of her melody—both times within an evocative C-minor chord—at the words "*Io ti perdon*" and "*e dona batesmo a me*" as she forgives her enemy and begs for a Christian baptism.

The narrator returns in a simple declamatory *temperato* monotone, pushing the harmony back from the *mollis* with a chromatic cross-relation of a third while honoring Clorinda's anguish through a reiteration of her E-flats. He relates the moment of Tancredi's realization of Clorinda to be the woman he had fallen in love with—in a story to be found in a different episode of Tasso's epic—with a full bar of silence, followed by dramatic dissonant *forte-piani* in the voice line as Tancredi is struck by "*conoscenza*" or recognition. He baptizes her with the water gathered from a nearby mountain stream, and as Clorinda is transformed through baptism from an infidel to a joyful Christian, a hexachordal shift from *durus* to *mollis* pushes her from life into

death. Her final line—which her dying voice only seems to say—is an upwards line, continuing

to rise against all expectation to reach an F-sharp as she sees heaven and goes in peace, unable to

resolve the suspension created in the penultimate bar.

*Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorind*a was the greatest drama by Monteverdi in his later

Venetian books of madrigals, over the epic text that demanded the evocation of all the contrastive

passions of love, religion, and death in the First Crusade. The full impact of his technical

innovations to express these contrasts is felt not only this remarkable drama, but also in the doors

that those innovations opened for his students to further develop the illustration of contrasts in

vocal and instrumental music. As both Western European philosophy and harmony slowly shifted

from predominantly emphasizing tripartite to bipartite models, contrasts in the developing

concerto form likewise became increasingly dyadic. Though the conceptual change was slow,

and the centrality of the Trinity and other ancient religious concepts preserved interest in

tripartite contrasts somewhat, the shift is noticeable and active in the composition of

Monteverdi's students, notably among them Francesco Cavalli (1602-1676) and Heinrich Schütz

(1585-1672). These students expanded upon several of Monteverdi's major innovations in the

Venetian polychoral tradition, including the *concitato* rhythms, dramatic dynamics, increasingly

specific stage directions, and the widening range of instrumental techniques.

Monteverdi's Students: The Venetian Tradition in the Sacred and Secular

Heinrich Schütz studied with Monteverdi at St. Mark's, look for antiphony of interposing small

and large choirs. In Schütz' *Saul, Saul, was verfolgst du mich?* ('Saul, Saul, why do you

persecute me?', sung the voice of the angels from the New Testament conversion story of the

persecutor Saul to the evangelistic disciple Paul), staggered entrances of many voice parts

exaggerate—even maximalize—the multiplicity effect created in St. Mark's resonant spaces. In a

sense, this madrigal's voicing is a stereophonic augmentation of the Gabrieli's strategy for spatialized differentiation between the two vaulted choir lofts: heavily scored for six independent solo voice parts—two sopranos, alto, tenor, and two basses; two full choirs doubled by brass—cornetto with tenor, alto, and bass trombones; and two violin parts; over a *basso continuo* of organ and violone. Though there are some dynamics marked, Schütz builds his dramatic arc—a simple crescendo, an explosion of increasingly complex rhythmic interaction, and a decrescendo—primarily through instrumentation. Schütz' formal symmetry depends on the contrasts available in this instrumentation: the piece opens with the paired solo bass voices over the *continuo* (marked "solo"); progresses through a full imitative restatement of the titular text with the *continuo* in the paired inner solo voices, then the paired soprano solo voices, and finally in the two violin parts before breaking into a complexly layered, hocketed *tutti* across all the choirs and solos. The texture thins out as the solo voice parts in various permutations move through the rest of the phrases, but the *tutti* choirs return only to reiterate the opening text. In parallel with the opening, the piece closes with the paired inner solo voices over the *continuo,* again marked "solo". From this point on, the distinction between restrained sacred music written for the church and secular music written more in the developing operatic tradition will be increasingly less clear, as seen in the ever-widening dramatic scope of madrigalism available to Schütz and those who follow.

Johann Rosenmüller (1619-1684)'s *Sonata Undecima à 5* provides an example of the interaction of the parallel development of the operatic tradition: titled "sonata", or literally "piece to be played", Rosenmüller's *sinfonia*-like instrumentation of two violins, two *violette*, viola *da*

gamba, and *continuo* points backwards to an origin in the so-called "pits" of the Italian opera house, while pointing forwards to the trio sonata . As can be seen in the first three bars, quick transitions between tempi within a movement—again recalling the *sinfonia*—as well as groups of tempi forming a larger-scale alternating pattern also point forward to the emerging structures of the trio sonata and the *concerto grosso*.

The Venetian Giovanni Legrenzi (1626-1690) provides a step even further toward the *concerto grosso* with his instrumentation and sense of balanced group virtuosity, but shows his roots in the traditions of polychoralism: his S*onate für 4 Violinen und Generalbaß* indicates not only the continued central relevance of antiphony as his four violin parts imply stereophonic spatialization around the cembalo *continuo,* but also the continued presence of *concitato* sixteenth-notes and increased dotted figures. As with his predecessors at San Marco, he achieves contrastive key relationships at tempo changes, frequently through a chromatic cross-relationship of a third; as with Rosenmüller, his alternations between *adagio* and *allegro* tempi are beginning to cohere into larger movement-like sections.

Alessandro Stradella (1638-1682) shows a yet-more coherent sense of both trio sonata form and the emergent concerto form. His *Symphonia à 2 Violini è Basso* is a trio sonata in all but its name; two violins move in gentle imitation over a cello and *continuo* in a slow opening, a perky fast section—showing running sixteenth-notes that are decidedly not in Monteverdi's *agitato* mode—ending in a cadence in F major, and a slower elegant movement in triple time—again ending in a cadence in F major— and a fugato-like third movement, virtuosic with unprecedentedly complex rhythms in its B-section, again cadencing cheekily in F major.

If the previous movement is a trio sonata in all but name, his *Sinfonia da "Il Barcheggio"* is clearly recognizable to modern ears as a trumpet concerto. The instrumentation is that of a trio sonata with a trumpet or cornetto part floating above, and its tempo structure is likewise recognizable: a flowing "first movement" in four with imitation and dialogue between trumpet and violins, a swaying "second movement" in triple time with elegant suspensions and plenty of repetition for embellishment, a singing "third movement" that recalls the fugue-like imitation and rhythmic movement of the first, and a virtuosic *finale* in a fast 3/8 with alternating solo and tutti statements—though they are not marked as such.

The coherence of the trio sonata—in form if not in name—clearly created space for Arcangelo Corelli (1653-1713) to first solidify its now-recognizable form with the publication of several books of trio sonatas, and then expand upon it with his development of the *concerti grossi* from that form. His four books of trio sonatas, published in Rome, demonstrate the use and

distribution of the term "sonata" in the later part of the 17th century, providing crucial evidence for the state of the distinction between sacred and secular sonatas.

Corelli: da Chiesa and da Camera

Arcangelo Corelli's *Op. 3, Sonata X* and *Op. 4, Sonata VI:* together in dialogue, these two works challenge the traditionally taught notion that the *sonata da camera* is recognizable by a perky, "secular" fast opening movement (a fast-slow-fast-slow pattern) and that the *sonata da chiesa* is recognizable by a grand, "sacred" slow opening (a slow-fast-slow-fast pattern). Only the presence of dance movements in the titles can truly indicate the *sonata da camera;* the music has blended the sacred and secular so completely that they are fairly indistinguishable both in name and in compositional approach. As Sebastien de Brossard remarked in his 1701 *Dictionnaire,* the sonata primarily gives its composer the chance to explore harmony, fugal writing, and varied emotions, without the strict rules of canonical *prima prattica* vocal writing; he goes on to make the distinction that there are sonatas *da chiesa,* marked by "the dignity and sanctity of the place", and that sonatas *da camera* are suites of small movements for dancing written in the same key, "proper at Court". Brossard's definition implies both an affective and nominal difference between sonatas *da chiesa* and *da camera*: the dance titles will serve as the clearest indicator for this distinction.

In his *Op. 3, Sonata X,* Corelli opens with *vivace* dotted figures that recall both Legrenzi's violin writing in *Sonate für 4 Violinen und Generalbaß* and what is now called French overture style

and accredited to Lully. Along with the instrumentation for two violins over a continuo section of violone and organ, this sonata's alternating tempo structure, imitative fugal writing, key relationships, and cadence structure incontrovertibly recall Stradella's two "symphonies". The movements are designated only by their tempi, indicating what Brossard would call a sonata *da chiesa* though the *vivace* dotted figures of the opening are perhaps more brilliant than dignified or sanctified.

In contrast, Corelli's *Op. 4, Sonata VI* for the same instrumentation opens with an *adagio,* the two violins in slow suspension over a measured bass line, and swings into a vivacious triple *allegro.* This suspended *adagio*-triple *allegro* unit is repeated three times—recalling yet again the *sinfonia*—before introducing two dance movements that retain some sense of the established contour, the measured 4/4 *allemanda* and the bouncy compound *giga.* The similarity of Corelli's writing between the two sonatas shows that the actual affective range available to sacred compositions was perhaps wider than a definition might indicate.

Brossard's definition is also illuminating when applied to Corelli's 1714 Op. 6, titled *Concerti Grossi con duoi Violini e Violoncello di Concertino obligati e duoi altri Violini, Viola, e Basso di Concerto Grosso ad arbitrio, che si potranno radoppiare.* The first eight are without dance titles, and thus *da chiesa*, and the final four are necessarily *da camera* with dance titles such as *Allemanda*, *Corrente*, *Sarabanda*, and *Giga.* Corelli's opus title gives a great indication of the instrumental structure to come in the *concerti*: he has first designated his trio sonata ensemble as "concertino"—the smaller group of players, obviously worth mentioning first—and then

describes the *concerto grosso* ensemble as *ad arbitrio* or "optional", comprised of two "other" violins, viola, and bass, which can be doubled as possible.

The *Concerto Grosso No. 7 in D Major* opens with a clear stylistic connection to *Op. 3, Sonata X: a vivace* "French overture" dotted figures in the *concertino* and *concerto grosso* alike cadences in elision with a long triple *allegro.* Monteverdi's *concitato* division of the semibreve is seen here in yet another affective incarnation, as the violin parts in both *concertino* and *concerto grosso* make joyful outbursts that—like their most recent showing in Stradella's *Symphonia à 2 Violini è Basso*—are a long way from agitation. The internal structure of movements—defined more by cadence points than by the many tempo changes—are remarkably similar to Stradella's *Il Barcheggio:* an introduction into a flowing "first movement" in simple time with imitation and dialogue between the two groups; a forward-moving "second movement" with both suspensions and repetition to give opportunity for embellishment; a slower "third movement" that gives the *concertino* violins a chance to sing over a light *grosso* accompaniment, moving into a *fugato* between all parts with the *grosso* adding complexity to the *concertino*'s statements; and a virtuosic "fourth movement" finale in 3/8 with clear distinctions between solo outbursts and tutti commentary. Both the first *allegro* and the final *vivace* movements end with a tutti cadence in D Major, literally restated twice with its second iteration marked an unexpected *piano*; here as elsewhere, Corelli controls the performers' interpretation through dynamic markings in a manner that clearly lies in continuity with Monteverdi's strongly suggestive performance directions.

An examination of both the *Concerto Grosso No. 7* and the opening work to Op. 6, *Concerto Grosso No. 1*—also in D Major—clarifies Corelli's approach to orchestration that he roughly outlined in his title. These two examples alone provide evidence that he conceives of the two groups as two orchestras, the *concertino* and the *concerto grosso* each with their own full figured bass. The *concertino* trio sonata plays continuously throughout both the *concerti grossi* and could perhaps very well stand to be performed on its own. The *grosso*—derived from the familiar accompanying *sinfonia* that had moved to the "pit" in operatic tradition—serves a *ripieno* function, filling out harmonies and sonorities, some light imitation of the *concertino,* generally augmenting and providing commentary upon the trio sonatas. Neither *concerto* contains dance movements, though the contents of *Op. 6* reveal that the final four—out of the total twelve—do contain dance titles; even with the addition of the *grosso,* the distinction between trio sonatas *da chiesa* and *da camera* clearly still pertains.

**Contrasts in Structure: A Brief Look at Diagramming Corelli**

A structural analysis of Corelli's *Concerto Grosso No. 1 in D Major* provides an illuminating look at the evolution of the contrasts that have been in play throughout the evolution of the concerto: the contrasts between large and small groups (sometimes termed *concertare* and *concertante*, respectively), tempo and metrical schemes, instrumental and vocal timbral ranges, tonal centers or keys, and the interplay of the familiar and the new through *ritornello* structure are crucial elements in understanding Corelli's formal *concerto grosso* structure. The diagrams below demand further exploration and explanation to achieve a meaningful description of these

contrasts in Corelli's structure. Nevertheless, they provide information on how each of these elements functions structurally: tempo designations, meter, solos and tuttis, *ritornelli*, key regions and relations, and the section's basic formal relations to one another.
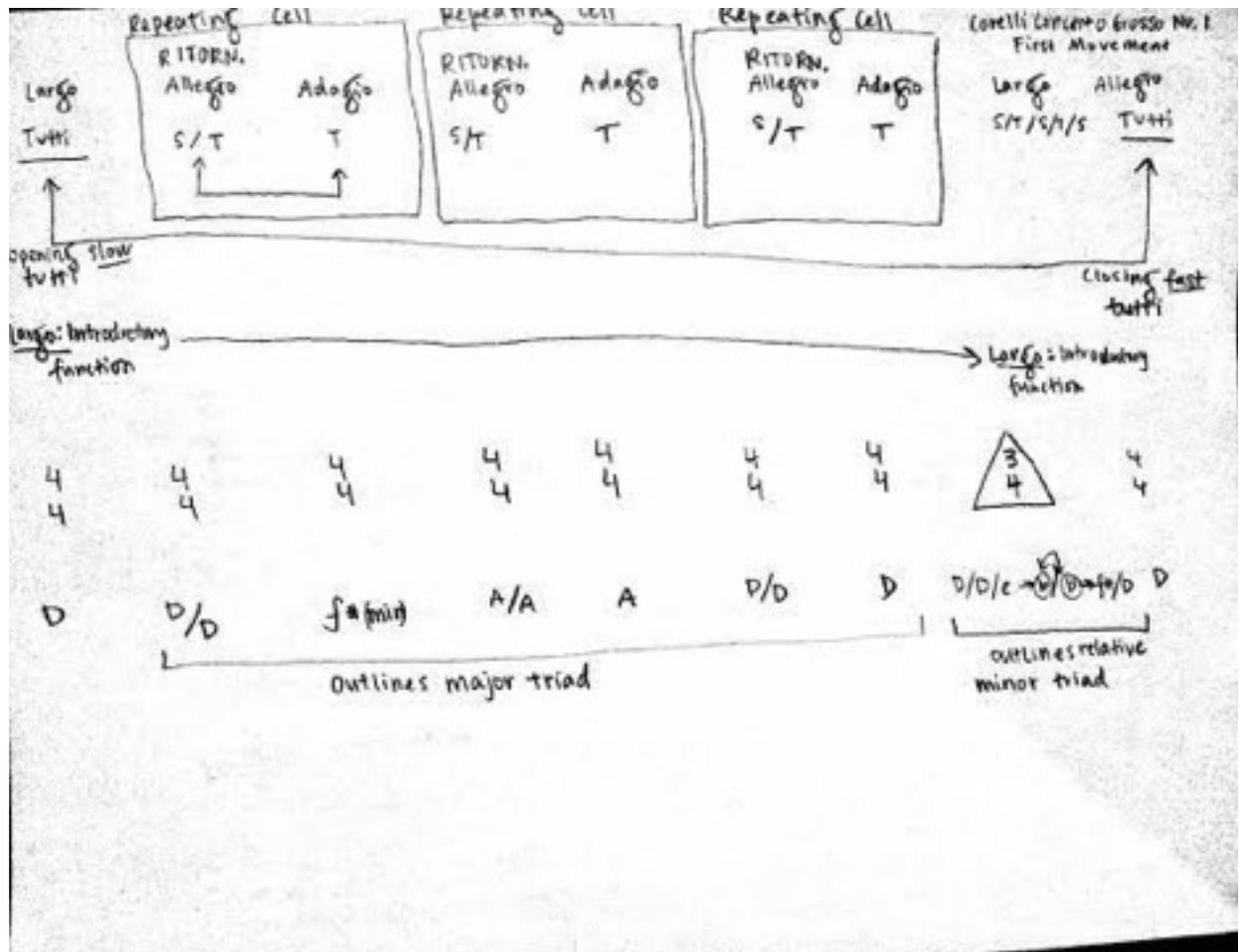

This basic diagram of the "first movement" reveals a few of Corelli's key structural relations; with further investigation and in comparison with other works discussed in this essay, these could perhaps serve to illuminate a seemingly oppositional compositional trend in this period, as it displays both the evolving fascination with the structure of the triad and with the related

philosophical turn from tripartite to bipartite or dyadic rhetorical contrasts, seen in many musical

instantiations in the concerto form but principally in the newly emphasized major and minor

modes. As can be seen, the movement is divided into two main sections—one large and one

small—each introduced by a largo and preceding to an *allegro*. Within the first main section is a

two-part repeating cell, *allegro* and *adagio,* comprised of a *ritornello* and a cadence. In yet

another dyadic contrast, the opening *tutti* is slow, and the closing *tutti* is fast. However, the most

revelatory interplay between these two seemingly opposing contrast comes in the key structure:

the three repeating cells in first, long main section outline a major triad; the short but complex

largo moves through at least three key areas to outline a minor triad, moving into a triple meter

for the first and only time in the movement to do so.
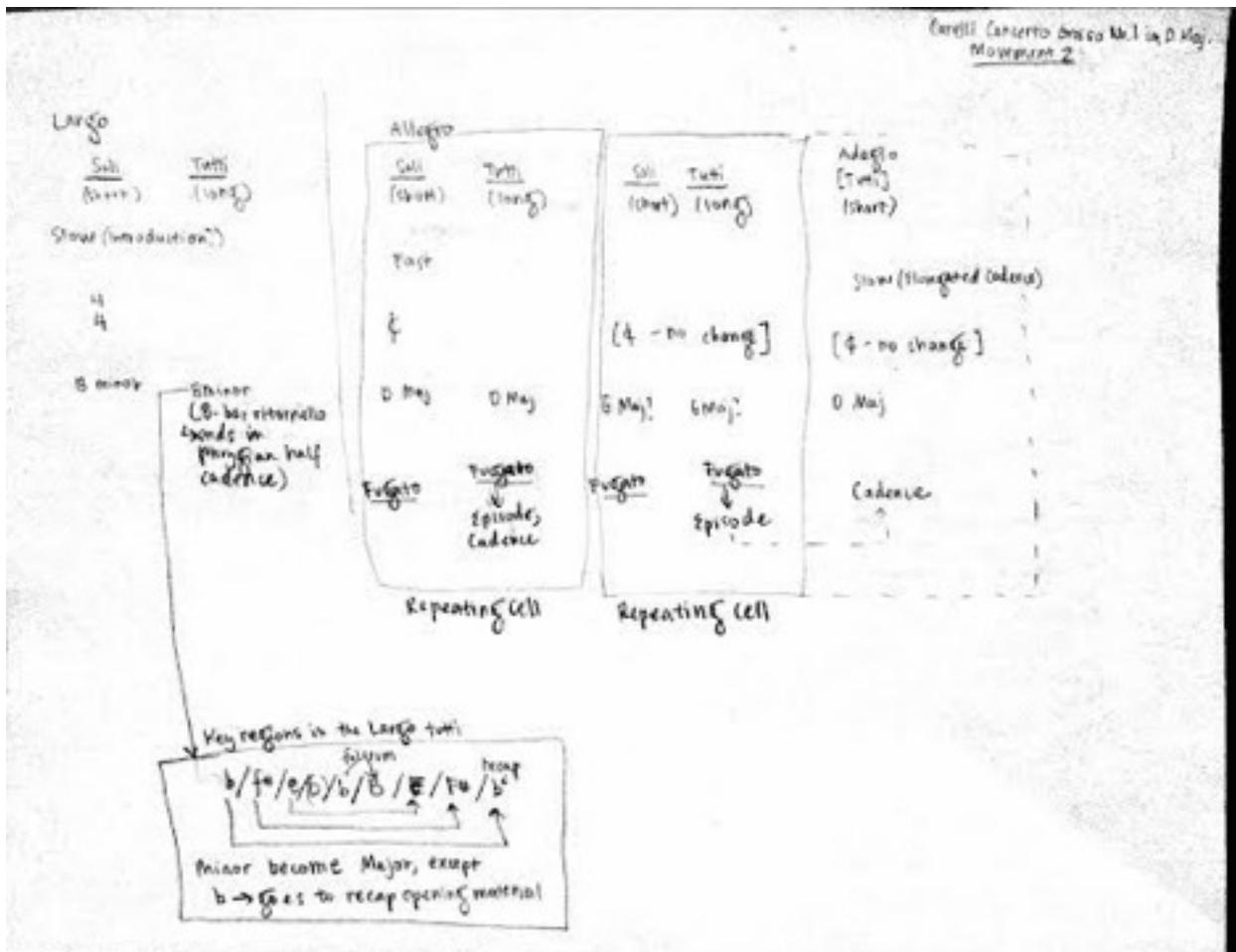
The "second movement" is structured somewhat similarly, with an opening *largo* moving into an *allegro*. However, its most interesting harmonic motion comes in its opening B minor *largo* which unmistakably parallels the *largo* at the end of the first movement. This too outlines a B minor triad, but as the key diagram shows, tips on a fulcrum to travel through the same key areas in reverse, this time in the major mode. The cut-time *allegro* that follows is a thrilling fugato movement between all voices, first in the home key of D major and then repeating in somewhat nebulous harmonies, traversing many key areas in a short span of time through imitative lines before a conclusive elongated cadence in D major.
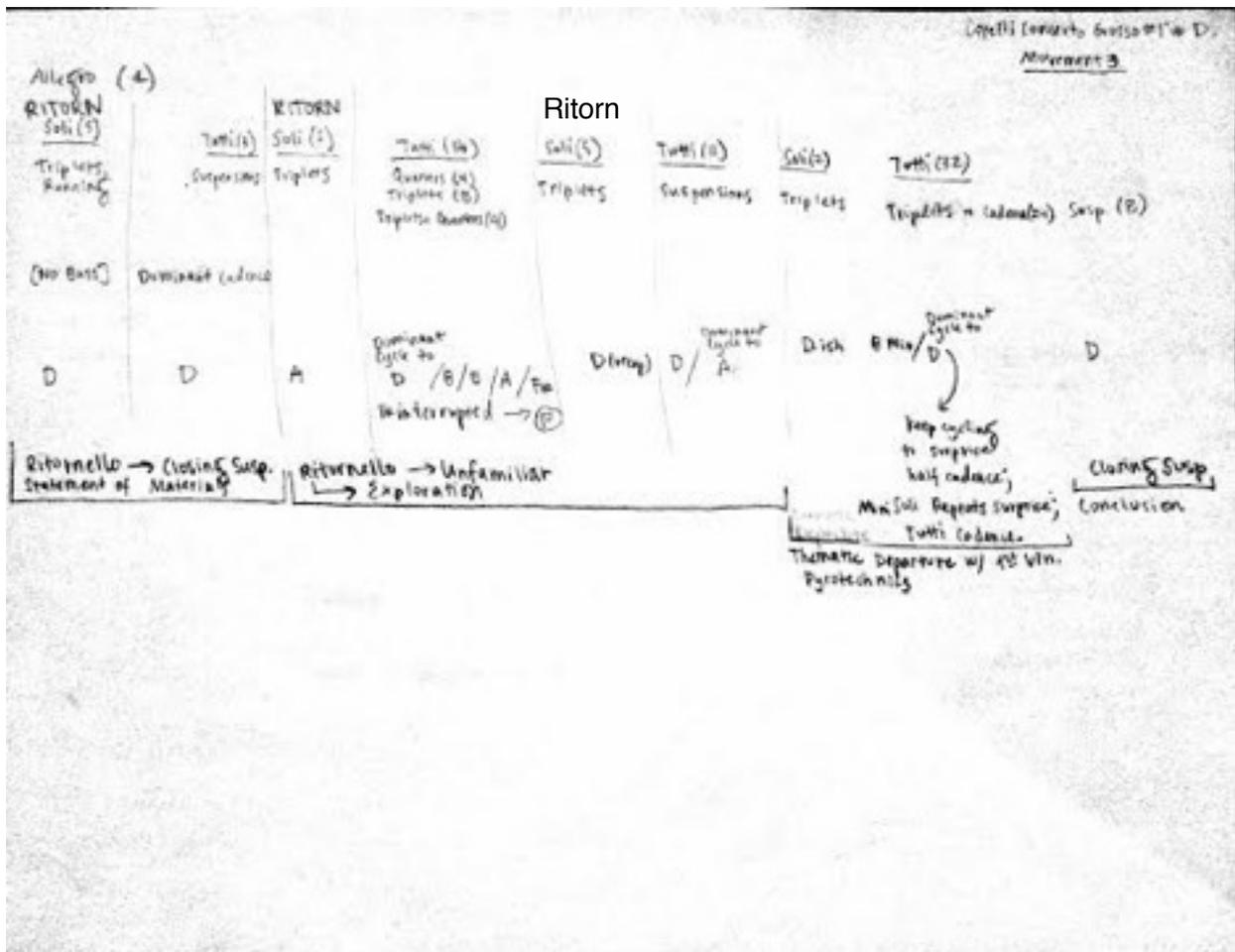
The final movement is gigue-like, recalling the flowing triplets of *Op. 4, Sonata VI.* Its clear

ritornello structure allows for a fascinating second tutti section that explores the rhythmic

interpolation of triplets and quarter notes between the *concertino* and *concerto grosso,* while the

basso continuo repeatedly use a cycle of dominant seventh chords to push the harmony forward;

that cycle is used to push the "exploratory" tutti section to a surprising conclusion, when the

resolution of the fully anticipated cadence in F-sharp major is interrupted by the last statement of

the *ritornello.* The section that follows recalls Brossard's definition of the sonata: "Sonatas are

ordinarily extended pieces… *varied*… by rare or unusual chords… all purely according to the

fantasy of the Composer". Another cycling progression of dominant seventh chords in the final

tutti is interrupted by a sudden chromatic movement upward in the *basso continuo* to a surprising

half-cadence; this surprise half-cadence is repeated literally by the *concertino;* and the piece

closes with a satisfyingly familiar cadence which, for all the innovative harmonic and textural

material preceding it, could have easily closed a *sinfonia* a century earlier than its time.

Some Concluding Thoughts in the First Person

This summary project was incredibly satisfying for me, but also opened up several central

questions to further exploration. Exploring the production of contrasts in detail—whether

timbrally, harmonically, spatially, in voicing or instrumentation, or in terms of familiarity and

novelty—has led me to conclude that no composer has greater interest to me than Monteverdi,

that no composer I've encountered has explored the production of contrasts to the extent that he

has, and that I have only just begun to scratch the surface of his breadth and range of harmonic

understanding. While writing this paper, I annotated most of Nicholas Csicsko's *Monteverdi's Dramma per Musica…* and gained a lot from that reading. I also was able to trace some of the strands of the development of the concerto through its history as we have covered it from Andrea and Giovanni Gabrieli through a first look at Corelli, concluding in the start of an ability to see some of the aspects of structure and form of Corelli's *concerto grossi.* That was very exciting to me. Some other things that were entirely new to me were thinking about the concerto's origins in the Basilica di San Marco, thinking both architecturally and sonically. As a person with a few years—five years so far—performing early music on period instruments as both a baroque violinist and violist, frequently in resonant symmetrical spaces, I got to apply some of my sonic experience and imagination to many of these pieces. I had read a translation of Monteverdi's foreword to the *Canti Guerrieri* before, but never with a teacher who highlighted the significance of things occurring in sets of threes, the relationship of the passions to glorifying the Holy Roman Emperor, and especially the key structure in relation to the cycle (not yet "circle") of dominants. I also had never been shown the direct connection between the trio sonata and the concerto, chronologically and with clear examples in the form of scores. Overall, writing this project was very elucidating, truly took on a life of its own and added so much to my understanding within the span of just two weeks, and taught me that I need to narrow and improve my focus when discussing musical examples in writing because I can tend to dwell.