

and Valverde argue that in the late eighteenth century, Spanish kings attempted to standardize the categorization of botanical findings arriving from the New World, allowing them to take full medical, political and economic advantage of these new resources. The main authoritative tool for this standardization was Linnaean taxonomy. According to Lafuente and Valverde, Linnaean tables carried such authority, that they mediated “between the sensations of the subject and the object toward which they are directed. . . . Nature, then, is a world that distances itself from common experience. As things are geometrized, tabulated, and named, as order is given to data (soon called ‘facts’ by the supporters of this cataloging system), scientists proclaim themselves the only reputable witnesses” (137). The parallels between Lafuente’s and Valverde’s work, and that of Bleichmar, are clear: scientific claims are only determined as valid and true if they are framed within the accepted knowledge structures established by the scientific community, whether that is in regard to Galenic medicine, or Linnaean taxonomy.

This becomes a recurring theme in Spary’s analysis of the eighteenth-century disputation between Pierre Poivre and his rivals about his claims to possess a true nutmeg plant. Spary’s study of this dispute shows how rivals in this episode discredited each other in print and through rumors, in an attempt to destroy one another’s reputation and to ensure that they failed to secure public support for their claims. That is to say that the claim was acceptable only when the community of botanists could be persuaded of the authority of Poivre’s work; this is the intellectual and cultural context in which the nutmeg dispute must be considered by historians.

This collection of papers, therefore, makes some significant contributions to the history of colonial botany. Despite the brevity of each chapter, some important historiographical issues lie just beneath the surface of each case study, promising that future lengthier analyses will prove fruitful for historians in this field.

Massimo Ossi. *Divining the Oracle: Monteverdi’s Seconda Pratica*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003. xviii + 280 pp. \$60.00. Review by STEVEN SAUNDERS, COLBY COLLEGE.

The central aim of *Divining the Oracle* seems modest: to explicate a single

musical term, Claudio Monteverdi's *seconda prattica*, yet as Massimo Ossi's title intimates, penetrating the veil of obscurity surrounding this central concept in sixteenth-century musical aesthetics involves as much divination as scholarship. The term *seconda prattica* originated at the dawn of the seventeenth century as a defensive maneuver in the infamous Artusi-Monteverdi controversy. By creating a dichotomy between the *prima prattica* founded on the norms of strict Renaissance counterpoint and a *seconda prattica* based on vividly conveying new "*affetti*," Monteverdi and his defenders sought to justify the composer's violations of the voice-leading rules codified by the theorist Zarlino. Under the *seconda prattica*, faulty dissonance treatment becomes an acceptable expressive device if deployed in the service of text expression.

The Artusi-Monteverdi feud festered for almost a decade, but, in Ossi's view, their dispute provided only the prologue to a far longer drama, for, as it turned out, the compositions from Monteverdi's fourth and fifth madrigal books that Artusi criticized transgress Renaissance voice-leading rules only marginally. A more thoroughgoing change in Monteverdi's style occurred in the first decade of the seventeenth century when the composer began to employ a variety of compositional techniques—including ostinato basses, ritornellos, refrains and other schematic designs, strophic forms, recitative and aria, the concertato style, and the *genere concertato*—that rejected the very premises of Renaissance composition. Ossi broadens the terms of the debate over the *seconda prattica* by focusing considerable attention on such later works, and on later documentary sources concerning Monteverdi's aesthetics, most notably, two important letters from Monteverdi to the theorist Giovanni Battista Doni from 1633-34 and the preface to the *Eighth Book of Madrigals*.

The *seconda prattica* remained a touchstone for Monteverdi throughout his life. In an appendix to the *Quinto libro de madrigali a cinque voci* (1605), the composer promised a book called *Seconda prattica, overo perfettione della moderna musica*, and nearly thirty years later, he was still assuring Doni that he would publish a treatise under the title *Melodia overo seconda prattica musicale*. Thus Ossi's somewhat controversial conviction that Monteverdi's aesthetic stance was "remarkably coherent [and] unified by consistent interests and method" (29) merits serious consideration.

One of the keys to this coherence and consistency, according to Ossi, is a kind of formal schematization and interest in large-scale musical organization. For example, Monteverdi conceived several of his madrigal books not as

loose-knit collections of independent works but as dramatic unities held together by underlying narratives. Ossi reads Book Five as a double cycle—with the opening *a cappella* madrigals providing a dramatic condensation of the key plot elements of Guarini's *Il pastor fido*, and the continuo madrigals providing commentary on the preceding “madrigal-drama.” Evidence for this view includes the narrative arc of the texts; local and long-range tonal structures; melodic correspondences; vocal scorings; and strophic basses shared among several compositions.

Ossi finds another key element in Monteverdi's conception of the *seconda prattica* in the unlikelyst of places, among the modest *canzonette* of the *Scherzi musicali* (1607). In a chapter based on an important earlier article, he seizes upon the odd coupling of Giulio Cesare Monteverdi's famous *Dichiaratione*, perhaps the most extended and spirited defense of Monteverdi's second practice, with the unassuming, homophonic *Scherzi musicali*. Using this seeming anomaly as an interpretive window, he suggests convincingly that canzonetta-like formal procedures such as strophic forms, instrumental ritornellos, and *colle parte* doublings helped to generate dramatic modules that were deployed as structural elements in Monteverdi's opera *Orfeo* (1607).

Another of Ossi's fundamental ideas is that Monteverdi juxtaposed elements from diverse genres as an expressive device, supporting his notion with insightful analyses of several overlooked works, particularly the madrigal for solo singer and three instrumental choirs “Con che soavità,” and the “Gloria à 7 concertata” from the *Selva morale*. Ossi also offers a fresh reading of the notoriously enigmatic preface to Monteverdi's *Madrigali guerrieri et amorosi* of 1638. The preface—the closest thing we have to an artistic manifesto from Monteverdi's later years—presents a vexing series of three-fold classifications, including musical elements (*oratoria, harmonica, retmica*), genere (*conciato, temperato, molle*), ranges of the human voice (*alta, mezzana, bassa*), affects of the soul (*ira, temperanza, umiltà*), functions (*da teatro, da ballo, da camera*), and compositional types (*guerriera, amorosa, rappresentativa*). Beginning with the insight that Monteverdi modeled his preface on passages from Aristotle's *Rhetoric* (the preface refers mistakenly to Plato's *Rhetoric*), Ossi seeks to unravel Monteverdi's multifaceted classification scheme. Beginning with Aristotle's distinction between the text and its delivery, he argues that Monteverdi envisioned a similar continuum reaching from musical delivery (performance) to musical content (composition). Under such a view, each of the three *generi* has characteristic affect and

registers and attracts a particular constellation of textual, harmonic, and rhythmic features.

Several of the chapters of *Divining the Oracle* betray their origins as independent articles or conference papers. Translations of some texts appear multiple times, and the translation to “*Questi vaghi concerti*” is printed twice with different translations (72 and 91-92). Many of the footnotes could have been updated, most glaringly, perhaps, the references to Monteverdi’s letters in the old edition by Domenico De Paoli rather than to the more recent, authoritative one edited by Éva Lax (1994). The discussion of Monteverdi’s tonal language seems slightly dated, overlooking recent work by Gregory Barnett, Michael Dodds, Beverly Stein, and others. The descriptions of poetic texts, too, is inconsistent; symbols for trochaic and iambic meters are interchanged at one point (120), and the term “verse” is sometimes used to mean strophe, at other times to indicate a poetic line (127).

The volume is aimed at specialists in early seventeenth-century music, most particularly at Monteverdi scholars. It assumes an acquaintance with both Monteverdi’s oeuvre and the literature on the composer. Discussion of individual pieces often begins without orientation regarding the date of composition or collection in which the work is found, for example, and the discussion of the Artusi-Monteverdi controversy assumes prior familiarity with the key documents and players. By enlarging the chronological range of the discussion about Monteverdi’s *seconda prattica*, *Divining the Oracle* provides a useful antidote to literature that focuses narrowly on the Artusi-Monteverdi controversy. At the same time, it scrupulously avoids the danger of bringing virtually any musical innovation of the seicento under the banner of the *seconda prattica*. Nonetheless, the focus on the later Monteverdi also has its drawbacks. The book fails to pursue Giulio Cesare Monteverdi’s crucial claim that the real *seconda prattica* masters were late Renaissance composers such as Cipriano de Rore, Giaches de Wert, and Luca Marenzio. Similarly, the relationship between the preface to the *Madrigali guerrieri et amorosi* and the *seconda prattica* remains ambiguous, since the term *seconda prattica* does not even appear in the preface.

Divining the Oracle makes a number of major contributions to Monteverdi scholarship. It brings together insightful analyses of many works; fresh insights into the large-scale planning behind Monteverdi’s madrigal books; brilliant demonstrations of the centrality of elements of the canzonetta to

Monteverdi's thought; and the most incisive treatments yet of the *genere concertato*. If the quest for a unitary understanding of Monteverdi's *seconda prattica* still seems elusive, even quixotic, Massimo Ossi has succeeded at something equally ambitious and important: he has provided a cogent guide to Monteverdi's musical aesthetics, forcing us to ponder anew the considerable compositional and aesthetic range of seventeenth-century Italy's "oracolo della musica."

Robert Kendrick. *The Sounds of Milan, 1584 to 1650*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002. 528 pp. \$87.72. Review by CHRISTINE GETZ, UNIVERSITY OF IOWA.

The study of North Italian music of the early seventeenth century has blossomed on both sides of the Atlantic over the past ten years, but monographs devoted to urban music of the period are still less numerous than those dedicated to the topic for the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Thus, Robert Kendrick's *The Sounds of Milan, 1584-1650*, comes as an especially welcome addition to the scholarship on North Italian Music of the period. The fact that the monograph follows Kendrick's equally impressive *Celestial Sirens: Nuns and their Music in Early Modern Milan* (1996) by only six years is nothing short of breathtaking, particularly considering the wealth of detail contained.

Using archival documents, iconographical sources, early printed books, and the available secondary scholarship, Kendrick considers the music produced in early seventeenth-century Milan within the context of the institution for which it was originally intended, and, where possible, in which it was originally performed. The overarching theme of music within its sounding space is particularly strong in the first third of the book, which is devoted to the Milanese institutions that boasted musical chapels of noteworthy size and quality, but loses some of its force in the second section, which considers a number of practical issues related to civic music-making, including plainchant rites, civic and ecclesiastical ritual, the training of Milanese musicians, the content of locally produced theoretical treatises, and the Milanese music-printing industry. The sounding spaces thread re-emerges to a certain degree, however, in the final third of the book as Kendrick takes up the issue of the music itself.