

## Scene I: The Early, Innocent Years (1600-1695)

The title of this chapter may seem a bit deceiving, since there is some argument as to what the first opera really was and whose version was presented at the premiere. Most historians are settled that the first performed opera was Jacopo Peri's *Euridice*, given in Florence on October 6, 1600, but most historians also agree that parts of this opera were written by Giulio Caccini, who finished his *Euridice* shortly after Peri did and before the premiere. Yet there is a contingent that states that this is not true, that Caccini forced his students, the paid musician who were supposed to play Peri's *Euridice*, to play his own version. In their view, Caccini's *Euridice* was the first performed though Peri's was composed earlier. Yet there is even an argument here; apparently, there is no incontrovertible evidence that Peri completed his opera before Caccini wrote any part of his. Librettist Ottavio Rinuccini and, to some extent, Peri appear to claim this, but there is no supporting evidence. The most likely scenario is that both composers contributed to the first performance, then both went on to complete their published versions of their separate operas afterward.

But wait! There's *more* argument! Some experts claim that Emilio de' Cavalieri (1550-1602) actually wrote the first opera, *Rappresentazione di anima et di corpo*, which premiered in February of 1600, but there is some pretty heavy debate going on as to whether this is really an opera or a religious oratorio. Considering the fact that the title translates as *Portrayal of the Soul and the Body*, I'm leaning towards the latter myself, but according to these nitpicky musicologists, the fact that it was fully staged makes it an opera; but bear in mind that the mediaeval *Play of Daniel* was also fully staged in its day, and no one has claimed dibs on that being the first opera. Also, the premiere took place in the Oratorio dei Filippini adjacent to the church of Santa Maria in Vallicella, so I'm sticking to my guns. Staged or not, it's a religious oratorio.

But to get back to our originally scheduled opera, there are a surprising number of similarities between Peri's *Euridice* and Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* of seven years later: the trumpet fanfare opening on just one chord, the parade of marginal characters in the Prologue to tell you all about what you're going to see and hear, and even some of the vocal writing itself, with its florid lines which enliven the fairly predictable and resolutely tonal harmonic progression. And, especially in Peri's work, it is these florid passages—which, when sung with energy and a certain amount of changes in dynamics—do indeed suggest drama. Moreover, the orchestra is a strange one, consisting of only two strings, one violin and one cello, but three recorders, five trumpets, and the usual complement of chitarrone, lute, harpsichord and organ. Despite such small forces, or perhaps because of them, Peri uses them sparingly to support or interrupt the vocal line; most of the time what you hear is the harpsichord solo, but when other instruments do come in they sound very colorful because they are entering an orchestral vacuum.

And even here, very early on in our survey, one can hear the truly remarkable difference that an energetic and committed cast, musicians and conductor can make on the opera as a whole. The only recording currently available is the one on the Authentic label, made in 1995, with a cast including Gloria Banditelli, Gian Paolo Fagotto, Mario Cecchetti, Roseanna Bertini and Giuseppe Zambon—Italians all—conducted by Roberto de Caro. They give a thoroughly professional performance; every t is crossed and every i is dotted; all of the florid passages are there, the singers have fine voices, and the instruments come and go as directed; yet a living performance never occurs. It all sounds like a run-through, with only one or two singers giving some energy or interpretation to their roles. The rest just sing and, worst of all, the little orchestra just plays, as if they were bored silly and couldn't wait to break for lunch (or the end of the day). By contrast, there also exists on YouTube a live performance given at the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana on October 6, 2000, honoring the 400th anniversary of *Euridice*'s pre-

miere. All of the singers were well-trained voice students from the opera program except one, and that was tenor Bruce Gladstone as Orfeo, who was from the music faculty of the University of Wisconsin in Madison, yet even though one or two singers in this cast are not up to the vocal standards of their counterparts on Authentic, everyone sounds more involved in the energy of the performance, particularly the instrumentalists. There are so many passages in this performance that sound arresting and interesting.

Of course, one must also take into consideration that the studio recording is all Peri whereas this live performance combines Peri and Caccini. So even here, from the very beginning, we have a difference between what was in the *score* and what audiences actually *heard*. *Euridice* was a success, but it was so because of the two composers combining their music in a single performance.

In the prologue, for instance, there is a choral passage (with soprano solo) by Caccini which contrasts nicely with the succeeding scene, written by Peri. Here Orfeo has an arioso in which he praises the caverns which resound in a “friendly” manner. What makes this section so interesting, at least to me, is that these two pieces of music by two different composers complement each other perfectly, almost as if Peri had anticipated what Caccini would have written as an introduction to this scene. We know that, to some extent, these two composers were rivals, yet the seamless musical *and* dramatic transitions give one pause to wonder if they hadn’t let each other see or hear parts of their scores as they were being composed. After all, the compositional process is not a spontaneous one; ideas come and go, and sometimes they change in the composer’s mind after he had committed them to paper but before they are published.

The bottom line is that, with a lively cast and instrumental forces, the music comes to life in a way that merely reading the score could never convey—unless one is always “reading” an ideal performance into the score as it is being read, an ideal that simply couldn’t happen without the right interpreters. And if you *are* reading an ideal interpretation into the score, but if it falls flat in performance, is your expectation of this ideal the correct interpretation?

Another case in point comes a little further on in this act, as Orfeo’s chipper little monologue is interrupted by a soprano in the University of Illinois performance, singing Dafne, whose voice is completely drained of all vibrato to give it a haunting, otherworldly sound, set against a positive organ for a different instrumental color. True, the sudden shift from harpsichord to organ is what helps to create this dramatic effect (and again, there are parallel passages in Monteverdi’s *L’Orfeo* that lead you to believe that he was very well aware of this score), but if the soprano does not sing with such a “dead” tone, the dramatic effect is either lost or completely different.

But of course, most of the music is not as of as great an interest. Although there are many long solo passages for the various characters, the aria form as such had not been invented yet. It took Monteverdi to start creating something like an “aria,” a melodic structure similar to but shorter than a movement of an instrumental piece. By the time the first half-hour of this opera is over, the music bogs down so much in the sung recitative that, even when it is alternated with choral passages, there are only a few moments here and there where the music changes in tempo (at least) to add some interest. In a nutshell, the music goes on for too long in scenes that, if spoken in a play, would take (at least) only a third of the time. It took Monteverdi to begin “telescoping” scenes in order to achieve maximum theatrical effectiveness.

And this, too, is something that many musicologists fail to consider, that as nice as they are, arias slow down the action although they allow the character singing them to reflect on his or her situation at that moment. The aria was a nice concept; sooner or later, it had to happen; but as we shall see, it became rife for abuse, particularly when the music accompanying it was “merely” tuneful and did not accurately reflect the thoughts or moods of the character singing it.

Which leads us to another question: Who were the first opera singers, and where did they come from? With no tradition for solo singers to have to project their voices from a stage into an audience, of which even the first row was probably at least twenty feet away, and in an era before microphones or even megaphones existed, it would be interesting to know if the audience could even make out words as the performance was being given. Our best-guess estimate is that the first opera singers came from within choirs: definitely the Catholic Church, since the original performance of *Euridice* used three castrati, and castrati sopranos only sang in the churches where female voices were forbidden. The other male singers probably came from a combination of church choirs and madrigal choruses; the madrigal tradition was quite strong in Italy at that time (*pace* Banchieri's entertainment *Festino*), and this is undoubtedly where the solo female singers came from. Yet much still remains murky. Were there voice teachers in those days? Possibly the choral directors themselves, who had some idea of how to sing, but for the most part it was probably a case of whether or not someone had a good natural voice that could also negotiate those fast, tricky runs in the music as well as the staccato-like trills, which were referred to in those days as "spotted flute technique."

Both the rapid coloratura passages and the trills (which, of course, eventually morphed into a fast separation of two notes) were important elements, from the dawn of opera at least through the late 18th century, of operatic music as drama—at least, as used by the best composers. The trill was considered a form of musical disruption, stopping the flow of notes in an aria and using the trill as an indication of mental anguish in a character, either anger or a sudden resolution to act. As we shall see, it was only in the 19th century that the trill was abused, used solely as a means for the singer to show off his or her technique, which is why its use in opera was eventually stopped. I should also point out that the single-note, "spotted flute" trills often represented confusion for the character singing them: one might say, a form of musical stuttering.

Enter Claudio Monteverdi, whose *L'Orfeo* of 1607, though sounding somewhat (but not entirely) conventional to modern ears, created quite a controversy when it was first performed at the court of Mantua. Already, Monteverdi's more advanced use of harmony and his extension of vocal lines into something more dramatic and less "pleasing" to the ears of his listeners created quite a stir. To sum up, Monteverdi's innovations involved not merely the extended vocal lines and unusual (for its time) harmony, but also the introduction of the *basso continuo*, which was a staple of Baroque opera yet to come. Fellow composers and musicians appreciated Monteverdi's innovations, but insofar as the opera-going public was concerned, his works were too modern in their day and deemed old-fashioned during the Baroque period, thus he was largely forgotten until the second decade of the 20th century.

We in the late 20th-early 21st centuries have been quite fortunate regarding recorded performances of this opera. There are at least three that are quite excellent, the first being the 1981 recording conducted by Charles Medlam with tenor Nigel Rogers in the lead role; the more recent Fredrik Malmberg version with an all-Scandinavian and Dutch cast, including tenor Johan Linderoth as Orfeo; and best of all, Gabriel Garrido's fine 1996 version with baritone Victor Torres as Orfeo, Adriana Fernandez as Euridice and Antonio Abate as Caronte. In this lively and superbly recorded performance, everything falls into musical *and* dramatic place as in no other version, and we fully understand Monteverdi's differences from his contemporaries. One small detail, but one that is among his signature devices, is the use of odd syncopated rhythms in the instrumental dances, which adds piquancy to the unfolding of the score. These are, in turn, contrasted with the grave, serious vocal passages. Monteverdi took a while to become brave enough to use actual arias and duets in his operas, and when he did they were not as conventionally melodic as they later became, but in their day they were innovative and, to many ears, disturbing because the music was no longer "pleasing."

And even here, in this early opera, Monteverdi can be heard as a master of sequencing scenes. By our standards today, or even those of a century later, his characters' outpourings of upset, grief, joy and other states of mind sound rather reserved, but in their time they were quite dramatically powerful. As I said early on, it all depends on the state of both music *and* drama in each specific era as to what we judge today as still being dramatic and valid.

One of the more interesting moments in the opera, for me at least, is the use of a “positive organ” (a small one or two-pipe portable instrument) to accompany Caronte (Charon) in Hades. This instrument gives the music an unusual, edgy sound, something quite out of the ordinary for its time. Indeed, I would point to this scene with Caronte as one of the most dramatic in the entire opera. Some listeners feel that Act III has an almost Wagnerian “scale and vibe” about it, and this, too was something unheard and unheard of in 1607.

Yet the most interesting thing about *L'Orfeo*, at least to me, is its structural integrity. As time went on an opera “developed,” not only individual acts but also individual scenes became more compartmentalized—little segments that the composer(s) fused into a whole that did not quite lead from one section to the next, but rather consisted of contrasts, often quite jarring ones. Monteverdi's genius was in making the opera flow in a way that made both musical and dramatic sense; even the little dances seem to develop from the preceding choral material.

But of course, these little dances were not dramatic. They were entertaining. As time went on, the entertainment aspects of opera so overtook the dramatic elements that by comparison Monteverdi's works sounded not merely old-fashioned but like something from another culture or even another planet. Orfeo's famous solo in the third act, “Possente spirito,” is a case in point. Whether sung “straight,” without the implied but not written early Baroque decorations or with them (see score excerpt below<sup>1</sup>), it remains a deeply moving piece.

Monteverdi's last opera, which also survives complete, was the now-well-known *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* (1642). This was an entirely different kind of opera. Rather than

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VYqF3TTaZcc>

composing a tight, well-knit structure that pretty much stayed to one topic, *Poppea* was more of a panorama including not only the story of Nero, Poppea and Nero's empress, Ottavia, but also of the philosopher Seneca and several characters lower down on the social ladder—the maid Drusilla, the page Valletto, and even a *travesti* role for a tenor singing in falsetto (NOT a counter-tenor, however), Arnalta. In a certain sense, then, *Poppea* may be considered to be the first step towards “verismo” opera, since it included musical portraits of ordinary people, even though they were not the principal characters.

Moreover, as anyone who has actually seen a stage production of this opera can tell you, it does not drag the way *L'Orfeo* and *Ritorno di Ulisses in Patria* do. The constant interaction of the various characters, particularly in a well-staged production, keeps one's interest up as the scenes change and the various characters come and go. Perhaps this opera's only weakness is that, at least in my view, there's not quite enough of Seneca in it to fully establish him as a major character. He pops in a couple of times to give his two cents' worth to Nero, then he gets his magnificent scene where he sings goodbye to his devoted followers before he drinks his hemlock. This is music so great that it has resonated down through the history of opera as we know it; Mozart's Sarastro, Wagner's Wotan, Mussorgsky's Boris and Verdi's King Philip II are all musical descendants of Seneca's farewell scene. Not that the music is identical—it clearly isn't—but it was Monteverdi who set the pace for how to write dignified yet dramatically viable music for a bass in a dramatic situation. Yet I have never seen any other opera commentator bring this up. Every note and phrase of Seneca's farewell is exquisitely prepared by Monteverdi, yet when sung by a great artist there is a certain feeling of spontaneity about it, and it is this feeling of spontaneity that one hears in the monologues by those other, later composers mentioned above.

In addition to all this, Monteverdi ends the opera on a morally questionable note as Poppea and Nerone sing what is surely the most beautiful duet in all of 17th-century opera, “Pur ti miro.” It is music of transcendent bliss, but we're talking about a duet between a ruthless tyrant who, among other atrocities, has banished his empress (Ottavia) into the wilderness and given the death sentence to his philosopher just because he warned him against doing so, and a concubine who he has elevated to the status of his new empress. What right have they to be so happy, or so blissful? And yet they are, and that is how the opera ends. As the late tenor Jon Vickers said so often, “Great art asks questions, but it does not provide answers.” This is a truth that we shall encounter again and again as we go through this survey.

### ***Lully: Alceste* (1673)**

Thirty years after Monteverdi's death, another Italian composer had risen to prominence in the field of opera, but this Italian was the first of several migrants or “invaders,” if you will, who moved to France in order to establish himself. Giovanni Battista Lulli had attracted the attention of the young king of France, Louis XIV, when he was only 21 years old, but it wasn't until Louis had taken over the reins of the French government in 1661 that he named Lulli as superintendent of royal music and official music master of the royal family. Yet it wasn't until Lulli married Madeleine Lambert the following year that he adopted the French version of his name.

Unlike Monteverdi, most of whose operas have disappeared without a trace, Lully wrote 14 such works, all of which have survived, but like Monteverdi, many were based on Greek legends or dramas, a few such as *Psyché*, *Amadis* (later known as *Amadis de Gaule*) and *Roland* based on other sources; yet interestingly, even from the start they received *public* performances rather than starting out at the court. His earliest operas were, according to Wikipedia, performed at the open-air Bel Air Tennis Court that Lully converted into a theater. His later operas were first performed at court, but then almost immediately after given at the theater at the Palais Royale which was made available to him.

Of his 14 surviving operas, the most celebrated was, and remains, *Alceste* (1673). Similar to Monteverdi, Lully used a melodic form of *recitative*, often embellished with vocal decorations, to carry forth the bulk of the drama, but his style was an advance on Monteverdi because the music was more continuous and had a great “flow.” The recording conducted by Christophe Rousset is absolutely the best, not just because the singers are all top-notch but because both they and the orchestra impart a high sense of drama to every note and phrase. Even the Prologue has more energy, particularly from the orchestra, than those of Monteverdi, and when we reach the opera proper the choral interjections only add to the building of tension rather than detracting from it. It should also be noted that, since Lully was writing and presenting operas in France, he used a very particular type of male voice that only seemed to be cultivated in that country, the *haute-contre*. This was a very high tenor voice that extended high into the upper register, but it was not a countertenor voice because it used no falsetto. It was, rather, a natural singing voice that sounded (if one can imagine such a thing) a normal light, lyric tenor sped up to reach a minor third higher than the average tenor voice. In part, this vocal category was cultivated to counter the use of the castrati who, as I mentioned earlier, were never really popular in France. The *haute-contre* tradition continued into the early 19th century, but was then replaced by normal tenors who had somewhat extended high ranges in head voice or mixed head and chest voice (known technically as *voix mixte*) and, later still, by tenors who sang their high notes from the chest, the first of whom was Louis-Gilbert Duprez.

Because of this, Lully exploited the high ranges of his singers to a greater degree than Monteverdi had done, but unlike many of his successors he did not allow them to linger on high notes or write high notes into their vocal lines merely for effect. Every essay into the higher range, whether for soprano or *haute-contre*, was done to redouble the dramatic effect of their music. Interestingly, Lully was probably the first composer to conduct all of his works himself, using not a baton—they didn’t exist in those days—but a large, heavy wooden staff which he pounded on the podium to establish the tempo he wanted. Ironically, this led directly to his death. During a performance of his *Te Deum*, given to celebrate Louis XIV’s recovery from surgery, he brought it down so heavily on his foot that it became infected and he died of gangrene.

To return to the opera, however, in a great performance like Rousset’s, one notices how the music continues to develop both musically and dramatically even as we appreciate the greater flow of musical ideas. No longer are we caught up in protracted arias and duets that are just there to entertain the listener, but rather in short solo monologues or duets that come and go in about a minute or so. This, too, feeds into the dramatic quality of the music. The listener needs to pay attention to what is going on *musically* because this is what is also going on *dramatically*. Unlike Monteverdi, Lully also introduced quick changes of meter, suddenly moving from a stately 4 into a rapid 3, then back again a minute or two later. Moreover, these continue to go on in this way throughout entire scenes and even whole acts. It is a very mercurial style of writing which not only changed by the end of the 17th century, but in fact disappeared entirely until Gluck brought it back, in modified form, in some of his operas a century later. It is for this reason that Lully’s music was thought to be “staid” and lacking “melody,” when in fact there are so many melodic lines in each scene that the inattentive listener can lose track of them, but depending on his audience to develop a long attention span inevitably proved to be the fall from grace of Lully’s best music. People came to want and expect tunes that went on for more than a minute or so, had pauses for applause at the end, and were not part of a continuous musical line that never really stopped until the end of the act once it had started.

Thus we have to ask ourselves if Lully’s *Alceste* is still considered opera-as-drama in today’s world, and this is what I was referring to earlier when I said that our concept of drama has changed drastically over the centuries. Even the little instrumental dances that Lully injected into

his scores, charming because they are short, eventually became abused by later composers because their audiences wanted *longer* instrumental pieces. The French, in fact, came to expect actual ballets in the midst of their operas, a decadent tradition that unfortunately lasted through the end of the 19th century—and, for me, there is nothing less dramatic than stopping the action of a stage-play-in-music to give dancers five to fifteen minutes to cavort around stage as the drama not only comes to a halt but is completely forgotten during those interludes.

Taken within its own style, however, I clearly believe that *Alceste* is great music drama. Once begun, the dramatic plot moves swiftly and the music to which it is set, considering the time in which it was written, is consistently innovative and interesting. Not a moment is wasted (listen, for instance, to the tuneful yet very tightly-constructed duet between Céphise and Straton that opens the second act), and truthfully, this is something that cannot be said of all of Lully's operas, although even some of the others have moments similar to the whole of *Alceste* which recommend them. Where Monteverdi wrote operatic mosaics, Lully wrote musical kaleidoscopes, in which the musical imagery shifted and changed both color and shape with the demands of the libretto in an instant—or, to be more exact, in a series of instants (relatively speaking) that dazzle the listener while still making an impression. Some (but not many) 20th-century operas may be seen as artistic successors to Lully's style, and we shall examine these in later chapters.

### ***Purcell: Dido and Aeneas* (1688?)**

The year after Lully died, a British composer whose operas had largely constituted entertaining depictions of fairy life and the like suddenly decided to write a short, compact, one-act work in which only a minimum of florid music was used. In its place he used lyrical monologues and duets that vacillated between the Lully style and that of arias, and in the final scene of this opera he created one of the earliest and best dramatic arias written in any language.

For nearly three centuries, the story was that Purcell received a commission to write the opera from Josias Priest, who ran a boarding school for “gentlewomen” which was founded in 1675. Few people have investigated who Priest was; most suppose he was simply a headmaster of a boarding school and leave it at that; but as it turns out, he was a well-known dancer, dancing master and choreographer, so in his own way he had a professional connection to music for years before he founded the school. We know for a fact that *Dido and Aeneas* was given its premiere at his school in the fall of 1689. Most authorities believe that it was finished by Purcell no later than July 1688, but according to Wikipedia, some scholars insist that it was written much earlier, in 1683 (one article by Andrew Pinnock in the July 2015 issue of *Early Music* and a monograph by Pinnock and Bruce Wood). I personally find it difficult to believe that Priest would have waited six years before performing it; he clearly had some rather talented young women singers in his school at the time he commissioned it, thus he probably arranged to perform it not more than a year after he received the score from Purcell, but there appears to be some slight evidence that it was first performed in 1687, the 1689 performance being the second. One thing that I have never seen stated definitely is whether or not Priest hired two male singers for the roles of Aeneas and the Sailor, sung by a high baritone and a tenor respectively, or whether those roles were sung by other young ladies in drag. One thing is certain, however, and that is that no castrati were used. Although they became exceptionally popular in England during the 18th century, they were not a presence in that country in the 17th.

Whatever the real story of the opera's genesis and original casting, there is no question that *Dido and Aeneas* doesn't resemble Purcell's other operas—often considered to be “semi-operas”—in musical style or presentation. Yes, the Sorceress' music is similar to some of the music in *The Fairy Queen* although it is not nearly as florid; thus he was clearly “writing down” for young women who may indeed have had fine voices but were not trained in the higher sing-

ing skills. More to the point, there is nothing in Purcell's other operas that can compare to Dido's two great scenes, "Ah, Belinda!" and the later "When I am laid in earth." These are, however, similar to some of his greatest lute songs such as *Musick for a While*, *Not All My Torments* and *Mad Bess*. We know that Italian opera grew out of the madrigal tradition in that country, but it took a composer with Purcell's imagination to expand on the lute song tradition in his to create this marvelous piece.

Moreover, another strength of *Dido and Aeneas* from a dramatic standpoint is that, despite the Prologue and the fast vocal music for the witches, the opera is much more organic than his other works with that designation. There is a logical flow from scene to scene as the opera progresses over its less than an hour's length. This lead us to wonder something else that has never been made clear, and that is whether or not Purcell had seen any of the scores of operas by Monteverdi or Lully. No art, as we have seen even in this survey of the 17th century, really comes out of a vacuum, and as much of a musical genius as Purcell was it's hard to believe that he had no knowledge of what had come before he wrote *Dido*.

With that being said, he clearly used devices he was familiar with but expanded their role in this opera, such as the ground bass that accompanies both of Dido's big scenes. Would he have scored these for larger forces had he known they would be available at the first performance? It's possible but not probable. This was the way he wrote ground basses for his songs, thus he just expanded things a little for the opera.

Perhaps the most disheartening thing about *Dido and Aeneas* is that, after 1705, no performances of it were given again for 190 years, when the first staged version in modern times was given at the Royal College of Music by student singers.

The two finest recorded performances use entirely different forces. The first is a version from 1994 using an extremely small group of eight instruments (two of them guitars, to play the not-frequently-heard guitar interludes). Although I am generally against one-to-a-part Baroque ensembles on the grounds that if the original performance could have afforded a fuller orchestra, it clearly would have had one, but in this case I concede their point because Josias Priest probably couldn't have afforded a full orchestra. The cast includes only one singer who became internationally known, mezzo Sarah Connolly as the Sorceress, but all of the other singers are superb and fully inhabit their roles: soprano Kym Amps as Dido, Anna Crookes as Belinda, and bass singer and director David van Asch as Aeneas. What makes this performance exceptional is that, although all of these singers, being British, have clear voices with pure tones, they did not make a conspicuous effort to sing with no vibrato. In fact, both Amps and Crooke have very light vibrato in their voices, and Connolly has a very prominent but even vibrato. But of course the important best thing is that they sing with real feeling without over-hamming the drama, which is the right approach for a "drawing room" drama of this sort.

The other excellent representation of this opera is the one with Janet Baker as Dido, Patricia Clark as Belinda, Raimund Herincx and Aeneas and Monica Sinclair as the Sorceress. These are, of course, larger voices that Josias Priest would have had at his disposal, but as a "bigger scale" performance of the opera it works superbly. With his larger, richer instrument, Herincx is able to project the proper feeling of a heroic Aeneas better than van Asch, and although the orchestra is bigger in both size and sound it is not obtrusive. Anthony Lewis, the conductor, was a highly respected member of the HIP segment of classical performance in his day.

At this point, we shall say goodbye to the 17th century and discover what happened to opera in the 18th.