

## **Chalumeau and Soprano: Antonio Caldara's *Morte, e Sepoltura di Cristo***

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This lecture-recital will begin with a description and outline history of the chalumeau. The importance of the Italian court composers and their influence on eighteenth-century Vienna will be discussed in brief. The lecture will primarily focus on the baroque woodwind instrument known as the soprano chalumeau and Antonio Caldara's chalumeau aria, "Io t'offesi," from *Morte, e Sepoltura di Cristo*. Musical examples will be included and discussed, in particular Caldara's use of *secunda prattica*. Handouts will be used as an aid in discussion. A pre-recorded performance of the aria will conclude the lecture-recital. In addition, a handout of the complete works for soprano chalumeau and solo voice found in the Austrian National Library will be offered.

Excerpt of the lecture:

The period from 1640 to 1740 is viewed as the heyday of the Austrian Baroque because of the influx and dominance of Italian musicians, artists, architects, and literary figures. The Viennese were captivated by Italian art, literature, music, and sculpture; many considered Vienna a 'northern Italian' city and the music of the Italian court composers (lead by the non-Italian *Kapellmeister* Johann Joseph Fux) was at its peak. Each of the four rulers over this hundred-year period--Ferdinand III (r.1637-1657); Leopold I (r.1657-1705); Joseph I (r.1705-1711); and Charles VI (r.1711-1740)--was an accomplished musician in his own right. These regents demanded music for all sacred occasions as well as for the numerous other celebrations required by the court. As a result, court musicians constantly produced new works to meet these demands. Each of these rulers also had an affinity for the small woodwind instrument known as the soprano chalumeau whose use was always carefully conceived and whose works varied from simple melodies to extensive obbligato solos that exploited its limited range.

The chalumeau is defined in the *Grove Dictionary of Music* as “a single reed instrument of predominantly cylindrical bore, related to the clarinet;”<sup>1</sup> other sources use the name chalumeau to indicate many types of single or double reed instruments and pipes, including some bagpipes that are primitive in nature. An account by Johann Gottfried Walther in 1732, listed several definitions of chalumeau, one of which described it as “a small boxwood wind instrument with seven holes on top, one underneath, and two brass keys.”<sup>2</sup> However, it was “only in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, after the invention of the clarinet [that] such an instrument [was] definitely associated with the word *chalumeau*. . . .”<sup>3</sup>

The recorder played a role in the development of the chalumeau because it was the only other baroque woodwind instrument with a register hole. Partially opening the hole allowed for changes in register. There were similarities between the early eighteenth-century chalumeau and recorder in physical appearance. The recorder had no bell or barrel, but a foot joint, and its most popular size was approximately twelve inches long. If a single reed mouthpiece were attached a chalumeau would be the result,<sup>4</sup> which suggests that the chalumeau may have been an attempt “to increase the volume of sound produced by the recorder.”<sup>5</sup> In addition, the fingerings of the chalumeau and treble recorder were similar.

Most of the documented improvements to the instrument took place in Germany, where it was first referenced in 1687. The Hofkappelle of Duke Heinrich of Saxe-Römhild compiled an inventory documenting the purchase of a set of four chalumeaux from Nürnberg.<sup>6</sup> Nürnberg was the home of woodwind maker Johann

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<sup>1</sup> Colin Lawson, “Chalumeau,” in *Grove Music Online* [database on- line]; available from <http://www.grovemusic.com.proxy.lib.fsu.edu>; internet; accessed 01 March 2006.

<sup>2</sup> Adam Carse, *Musical Wind Instruments* (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1939), 148.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 148.

Cary Karp, “The Early History of the Clarinet and Chalumeau,” *Early Music* 14/4 (Nov. 1986): 546.

<sup>5</sup> Lawson, *Grove Online*.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

Christoph Denner (1655-1707) who founded a workshop there in 1680, and was known as a specialist in making recorders.<sup>7</sup> Johann Doppelmayr, in his *Historische Nachricht von den Nürnbergischen Mathematicis und Künstler* of 1730, credits Denner with the invention of the clarinet and improvement of the chalumeau,<sup>8</sup> lending credence to the idea that the chalumeaux of the Hofkapelle came from the his workshop. As Denner was an expert recorder maker, it seems likely that the chalumeau developed from his experimentation with the recorder. It is also believed that Denner improved the primitive form of the chalumeau by making it of boxwood, using a removable reed, adding two diametrically opposed keys at the top of the instrument, and adding a hole for the right hand little finger.<sup>9</sup>

The instrument's use in the orchestra also dates from the early eighteenth-century. Parts for the soprano chalumeau can be found in Ziani's *Caio Popilio* (1704); Giovanni Battista Bononcini's *Endimione* (1706) and *Turno Aricino* (1707); Marc Antonio Bononcini's *Trionfo della Grazia* and Ariosti's *Marte placato* of 1707;<sup>10</sup> Emperor Joseph I's aria that was inserted in Ziani's *Chilonida* (1709);<sup>11</sup> and in Keiser's opera *Croesus* (1710).<sup>12</sup>

Another important composer of music for soprano chalumeau was Antonio Caldara who was born in Venice about 1670 and died in Vienna on 28 December 1736.<sup>13</sup> His early operas (1688-1699) were composed for the theater in Venice and

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<sup>7</sup> Horace Fitzpatrick, "Jacob Denner's Woodwinds for Göttweig Abbey," *The Galpin Society Journal* 21 (1968): 81.

<sup>8</sup> J.H. Van der Meer, "Some More Denner Guesses," *The Galpin Society Journal* 23 (August 1970): 118.

<sup>9</sup> Anthony Baines, *Woodwind Instruments and Their History* (New York: Dover Publications, 1991), 296.

<sup>10</sup> F. Geoffrey Rendall, *The Clarinet: Some Notes upon its History and Construction*, 3d ed. (London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1957), 64.

<sup>11</sup> Colin Lawson, *The Early Clarinet: A Practical Guide* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 12.

<sup>12</sup> Colin Lawson, "Telemann and the Chalumeau," *Early Music* 9/3 (July 1981): 316.

<sup>13</sup> Brian W. Pritchard, "Caldara, Antonio," in *Grove Music Online* [database on-line]; available from <http://www.grovemusic.com.proxy.lib.fsu.edu>; internet; accessed 14 November 2006.

during this time he also composed two sets of trio sonatas and twelve chamber cantatas.<sup>14</sup> He was invited to the court of Charles VI in Barcelona in 1708 where he and his patron became good friends, but in 1709, Caldara moved to Rome where he became *maestro di cappella* to the Marquis Francesco Maria Rispoli until 1716. Because of a papal ban on opera, his work here focused on oratorios and cantatas, in particular secular cantatas.<sup>15</sup> He maintained an association with the Habsburgs in Milan and upon Ziani's death, he was promoted to *Vice-Kapellmeister* under Charles VI in Vienna. He held this post from 1716 to 1736. Due to the rigorous ceremonial requirements at court, he composed over thirty-five dramatic works during this period. These *dramma per musica* and similar works were required for the "secular feasts, the birthdays and name-days of the emperor and empress."<sup>16</sup> With the illnesses of Fux and Francesco Conti in the late 1720s, more demands were placed on Caldara, and additional occasions for which he composed included the annual carnival, wedding festivities, and private performances of *componimenti* (dramatic poems set to music).<sup>17</sup> His output includes over seventy operas, thirty oratorios, thirty masses, and many smaller liturgical works. In addition, from 1716 to 1728, he "supplied the Archbishop of Salzburg, Franz Anton von Harrach, with operas, oratorios, and masses."<sup>18</sup>

Caldara's compositions with arias for soprano, chalumeau, and continuo, composed while he was in Vienna, include three liturgical works and one opera.

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<sup>14</sup> Pritchard, *Grove Music Online*.

<sup>15</sup> Brian W. Pritchard, "Antonio Caldara. The Cantatas Revisited. An Obscure Venetian Composer Placed in Perspective," *The Musical Times* 133/1796 (October, 1992): 510.

<sup>16</sup> Pritchard, *Grove Music Online*.

<sup>17</sup> Michael Talbot, "Componimento," in *Grove Music Online* [database on-line]; available from <http://www.grovemusic.com.proxy.lib.fsu.edu>; internet; accessed 25 January 2008.

<sup>18</sup> Edwin Russell Fissinger, "Selected Sacred Works of Antonio Caldara" (DMA diss., University of Illinois, 1965), 8-9.

Apostolo Zeno set the oratorio *Gerusalemme convertita*<sup>19</sup> for two sopranos, alto, tenor, and bass, with strings and chorus. It was completed on 14 March 1733 and first performed on 31 March 1733 in Vienna. *San Pietro in Cesarea* is also to a text by Zeno with the same scoring. It was completed in Vienna on 30 March 1734 and first performed on 30 April 1734.<sup>20</sup> The only opera for this scoring was the opera *Caio Marzio Coriolano*, composed in 1717 and set to a libretto of Pietro Pariati.

The oratorio *Morte, e Sepoltura di Cristo* (Death and Burial of Christ) was composed in 1724 in Vienna and set to a text by Francesco Fozio. Its first performance was on 23 March 1724 and it had subsequent performances in Salzburg, Dresden, and Brünn (1730). It is for two sopranos, alto, tenor, and bass, with accompaniment of violin, viola, and cello.<sup>21</sup> The only aria with chalumeau occurs in the first part of the oratorio and is an excellent example of the chromatic writing for which Caldara was known. His use of key, meter, tempo, ornamentation, and melody as a means to represent the text,<sup>22</sup> while common during the period, was different from other composers with regard to color. Cecil Gray explains that Caldara's uniquely personal way lends an expressive and "musical intensity" to his work. "Caldara excels in the treatment of rather somber themes"<sup>23</sup> and *Morte* is a perfect example of this.

Caldara's "years of residence in Venice and Vienna coincided with the peak decades of the ensembles attached to the institutions by which he was employed."<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Bernard Toscani, *Antonio Caldara: Six Introduzioni and One Sinfonia*, *The Symphony: Italians in Vienna*. Series B, Vol. II, ed., Barry Brook (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1983), xliii.

<sup>20</sup> Ursula Kirkendale, *Antonio Caldara: Sein Leben und seine venezianisch-römischen Oratorien*. (Graz-Köln: Hermann Böhlaus Nachf., 1966), 139-140.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 128.

<sup>22</sup> Robert Freeman, "La Verita Nella Ripetizione," *The Musical Quarterly* 54/2 (April, 1968): 214.

<sup>23</sup> Cecil Gray, *Contingencies and Other Essays* (London: Oxford University Press, 1947), 135-136, 138.

<sup>24</sup> Eleanor Selfridge-Field, "The Viennese court orchestra in the time of Caldara" in *Antonio Caldara: Essays on his life and times*, ed. Brian W. Pritchard (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1987), 142.

His contributions “helped to demonstrate Vienna’s importance as a musical center in Europe in the eighteenth century.”<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Toscani, xliii.

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