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Title: A speech by Giovanni Battista Doni on the subject of acting on stage with the accompaniment of musical instruments

Source: Florence, Biblioteca Marucelliana, MS A CCXCV.8., f.<1r>-<11v>

[<f.1r>-] A speech by Giovanni Battista Doni on the subject of acting on stage with the accompaniment of musical instruments dedicated to the most Illustrious [[and most Excellent]] Signor Don Camillo Colonna

I thought that I could not support better the generous ideas of Vostra Signoria Illustrissima and that desire that you feel to resurrect, during your Princedom of the Academy, the ancient glory of the name of Rome, at least in the majesty and refined nature of the most learned theatrical entertainments, especially of the tragedies, than by making some further remarks (beyond what I have discussed in a specific work, albeit only sketched out and not completed) on the subject of singing on stage, and particularly about the instrumental accompaniment to the simple spoken recitation, as far as I can do it with an essay hastily put together and born (among a hundred types of commitments and troubles of the mind) more out of the burning desire that I feel to write it and of the esteem that I have for your very noble and heroic qualities, than from any ambition to flaunt any obscure and outlandish erudition; although I am inclined to a certain type of studies which are remote and commonly almost forlorn, knowing that perhaps I can be more useful to the public in these studies than in others, which appear to be more important, but are embraced by many with a the intention of fulfilling their ambitions. However, leaving aside many things that one could say about the classification of vocal emissions in three species, namely, [<f.1v>-] continuous, such as the one of simple speech with musical intervals as one can hear in true singing, and intermediate, which is used in reciting epic poems, according to Albinus' account quoted by Boethius, what the difference is between continuous and intermediate (which Aristoxenus touches upon at the beginning of his Harmonic Elements), what accents are, particularly in our Italian language, how our pronunciation differs from the ancient pronunciation of Greek and Latin; what origin of that great variety of sounds that can be heard in the French and Spanish tongue, which nevertheless are very closely related to ours, is, and other such things, however, leaving aside such topics (which I have discussed elsewhere with some curiosity) I will say that, since Vostra Signoria Illustrissima has recognised many of the imperfections that can be heard in today' s stage music, commonly known as recitative, since I myself suggested to you in that discussion many of the advantages and positive effects which the tradition of the ancients of performing the discussions and altercations occurring in the Tragedies without music would bring with itself, while only having the choruses and some emotional monologues which were called cantica sung on stage, and since I have replied to the objection raised by some that the transition from spoken word to song would not be wholly satisfactory by saying that there is also a solution to this in that some instruments could be employed [<f.2r>-] while the Actors speak on stage, it is left for me (to satisfy the desires of Vostra Signoria Illustrissima, which I hold in place of explicit orders) to discuss this matter at some length, submitting myself to your most fine judgement and that of these other virtuous Signori Accademici and to experience itself, which is the ultimate judge, when one invokes it legitimately.

The greatest defect of this contemporary stage music, in my opinion, consists mainly in the fact that parts of the plays that are less emotionally charged, such as narrations and speeches, particularly if long, and all the dialogues, cannot but be set to a melody which

causes boredom and nuisance to the audience. This happens because, if it is written in a song style and with varied intervals and cadences, it is not effective, because it is as if a secretary writing a business letter wanted to fill it up with conceits and rhetorical ornaments. On the other hand, if it is composed simply and it needs few intervals, as it is common practice, there follows quickly the boredom and the above mentioned satiety, since that repetition of similar cadences has something cloying and it greatly displeases who is not completely passionate about music, since, in a way, it appears to be neither song nor spoken word, but a third bastardised something which corrupts what is natural, and then tries to restore it with a little device. To which type of singing befit very well those words that Caesar told a bad actor. "If you sing, you are acting. If you are acting, you sing."[-<f.2v>-] And if we want to be impartial, we notice through experience that someone who speaks with good grace pleases us more than someone who uses this type of melody. Nor this is surprising, since what is natural rarely displeases us, while what is contrived and far-fetched quickly causes boredom. For instance, if we watched someone, anyone, jump around and dance for half an hour with little variety of choreography or posture, certainly this would bore us. However, watching someone stroll is not unpleasant for us, since this is something natural and ordinary. That such type of music is less pleasing than ordinary speech, even if it is accompanied by appropriate moves, derives, I think, from the lack of turns of melody, both ascending and descending, which can be heard in the spoken voice and are produced by the throat. These are called *plasmata* by the ancient authors like Quintilianus, albeit that word has not been understood by the translators. The practice of this flexing of the voice, albeit used too often and in inappropriate places, as it is customary of those who recite Latin epic poems, produces great nuisance to the listener, but, if used sparingly, it is mostly a source of sweetness in the melodies, as one can gather from human singing and from wind and brass instruments. So, since this sweetness is lacking in recitative music, where many syllables are produced on the same note (which the rhetorician Fortunatianus calls *monotonia* using with a Greek word), nor this loss is compensated by the variety of notes that can be heard in fully-fledged melodies, it will not be surprising if recitative will result boring to the listener when used in practice. To this one must add the habit of many stage singers to mimic the conversational tone (in which, they think, – it is a common mistake – consists the excellence of this art) by lowering so much the final syllables and almost dropping them as if they were made of lead, that they are barely audible to those who sit under the stage, never mind to those who are furthest away. This is even more obnoxious to the ear because the transition from the fully-fledged song to such languid utterances is more noticeable than when one merely speaks, so it cannot be said that they are singing, since such syllables are pronounced with a subdued speaking voice, nor that they are really speaking, since the preceding syllables were uttered with the voice suspended in the air and firm, as one hears in true singing. In my opinion, albeit common opinion disagrees, such confusion and interbreeding of singing and spoken voice is not otherwise laudable, mainly because very often these two different styles of vocal production are blended in such a way that their differences are highlighted, and their similarities are downplayed. This happens when the ones of lowest tone (which are the first degree on a speech scale) are accompanied by vocal *passaggi* which can elevate them to the highest level of true singing. Nor will anyone be able to find evidence that at any time this was practised by the ancients, as perhaps it was believed by those who restored singing on stage and the recitative style (which nevertheless is more apt to Heroic poems and Rhapsodies than to true stage music). Moreover, Plutarch teaches us clearly, in his very erudite pamphlet on musical matters, that ancient theatre melodies were more varied and song-like than the others. However, I believe that their mistake arose from the view that madrigals (which

are the most esteemed and artificial genre of music of our time) are not very good at producing those effects which one reads that were created by ancient music. Therefore, they convinced themselves that the reason of this was that madrigals are too song-like and dissimilar from everyday speak, rather than because of other reasons, such as because of the shortness of their verses and their repetitions, and mainly because they intertwine several melodic lines instead of creating a single one unwinding in the most beautiful way possible, thus forcing the singers to sing different words at the same time with great loss to the intelligibility of the text, apart from the damage caused by straight and inverted imitations and so on, and the excessive seasoning of the music with passages very long and frequent. As for the rest, experience shows that this music, which is song-like and similar to a madrigal, especially when it touches on notes belonging to different tones, is much more effective in stirring the emotions than the simple and not so varied one, which is mostly heard in the recitatives. Therefore, I believe that just as this one should be perfected and applied to the parts of the stage works which can contain it, similarly the other one, which consists of true speech, should not be despised, not only [-<f.4r>-] for the reasons which I have put forward on other occasions, namely, to be make it possible to compose dramatic actions of the right proportions, and to be able to do without any but the most excellent singers, endowed with the strongest voices, and the best players, and what else is necessary for the dramatic performances, and to save work to them and to the composers, but also to avoid the boredom of the audience and increase their enjoyment with the variety of the action. However, the main reason why this should be done is to render the action more vivacious, realistic and enable it make a stronger impression in the hearts of the audience through the strength that one can hear in an elegant spoken voice, especially if accompanied by appropriate gestures, and by that skill which is required to act well, and which is rarely found among singers. That this was the way adopted by the ancients can be gathered from the distinction that the Latin grammarians make between dialogue sections or *diverbia*, and sung sections or *cantica* within Latin comedies (Donatus says *espressamente* that “the actors recited, but the sung sections were shaped in ways not devised by the poet, but by an expert musician”). This can also be inferred from the distinction made by Diomedes between the flutes used in the sung sections and those used to accompany the choruses, from the distinction outlined by Aristotle in melodies suited to the chorus and to the scenes, from a passage in Dionysius of Halicarnassus where he mentions a section of Euripides' *Phoenissae* which is not a chorus, but is performed with singing, and from many other accounts which I omit for reasons of concision.

[It is worth giving some consideration to a passage in the first book of Plutarch' s *Quaestiones Convivales*, fifth *Quaestio*, where, quoting Theophrastus' books on music, he says that the underlying principles of music are three, pain, pleasure and divine wrath, because each of these three passions bends and changes the voice from its normal tone and makes it closer to song, as one can hear in heartfelt laments. For this reason the orators' voice in their summing up and the actors' in their lamentations gradually become closer to a song. This passage demonstrates that dramatic actions were not sung throughout, but I must admit that it does not prove that some sections of them were sung with a real melody, since one could say that, just as the orators did not really sing in their perorations, but simply raised their voice, so did the actors, if they are compared to the orators. However, if we consider these comparisons, it is easy to reply that Theophrastus' process of induction proceeds proportionally, or, as we say, respectively, meaning that the expression of pain or compassion caused the actors' spoken word to turn into a true song, and the voice of the orators into a style of declamation that, because of a certain

participation and communication of circumstances, is also described as song, albeit improperly. Therefore, it can be said that, in their own way, both the orators, transported by those feelings of pain, and the tragic actors in their modulated laments and sung sections or cantica sing, well as musical instruments do in marg.]

[<f.4v>-] Also, it seems possible to gather from several accounts and conjectures, some of which I will touch on, that the instruments played throughout the action. Firstly, the stage directions to Terence's plays, with all that talk of acts, right-handed, left-handed and paired flutes, Tyrian flutes and so on, can testify to this effect, because, since Latin comedies had no choruses, and seen that the sung sections or cantica in Terence's works are very short and concise, if the flutes were used only in them, or between acts, it would not appear to be convenient this way of talking about them by saying that the comedy had been performed with one or another type of flute.

Moreover, Cicero in his books de Oratore records that many members of the audience were so knowledgeable that they could guess what character was to appear on stage from hearing the sound of the particular type of flute which provided the accompaniment. For instance, they could say whether it would be Antiopa, or Andromache, hence it is reasonable to think that the flutes began to play before the actors entered the stage and never stopped. This is also what seems to be possible to gather from some bas-reliefs, where one can see a flute player, either male or female, playing, while, at the same time, a dialogue or an exchange is performed on stage, as this is certainly what one can see happening on stage, namely, a master who manhandles a servant, and the servant who begs for mercy. Moreover, it is reasonable to believe that the ancients, in their diligence, followed this practice to avoid the discomfort that the ears of the audience would feel in the transition from spoken recitation to song. Nevertheless, I understand that certain dramatic actions which Ferdinando, the duke of Mantua and a very cultured prince, had performed, which were partly sung, and partly simply acted without the assistance of instruments. In a similar way Father Stefonio's mime was performed in the Collegio Romano, and it was met with very great approval. However, if Vostra Signoria Illustrissima and these Signori Academici are of the opinion that the playing of musical instruments throughout the action will sort a more satisfactory effect, and were I to be asked what sort of instruments I deem to be more suited to this task, I will answer without hesitation, and without having to think about it, that these will be string instruments, since it is not necessary to discuss recorders, pipes and other similar wind instruments, firstly, because nowadays they are almost completely superseded, and secondly because, since our halls are very much smaller than ancient theatres, string instruments can do the job very well, since their sound is graceful and similar to the human voice (therefore it blends well with it), and they are capable of produce a high range of sounds which can be as prolonged as one wishes. Therefore, I would choose personally a string bass with a deep and robust voice, and a violin, which is an instrument that is apt in any circumstance and, if well played, is very sweet-sounding and suited to express emotions, thus resembling the cornetto and other wind instruments. The manner of playing them might be as follows. The string bass will act as basso continuo and its part will consist of few and long notes, above which the violin will play almost uninterrupted [<f.5v>-] divisions while the actors declaim. These same instruments will carry on playing when a song like section or canticum starts, albeit changing style from simple divisions to a more artful counterpoint suitable to what the melody of the song requires. Also, because musicians are very keen

on using keyboard instruments, which are comfortable to play and have an abundance of consonant intervals, one could use appropriately my cembalo triarmonico alongside the string bass and the violin, although the players will have to be substituted at some point, and the instruments themselves, as I will say further on, in order to give them some respite. One could also take the precaution, in order to make the transition from spoken word to song, to have the cembalo play with the lid shut, so that only the singer might be heard. This is something that will comply with the instructions of the Florentine restorers of this music, but it will be very different from ancient practice, since it is ascertained that the Greeks and the Romans not only did not hide the sound of the instruments, but set the players in full view of the audience adorning them with the most luxurious and beautiful clothes. However, this might not be too convenient to my cembalo which is too much of an esoteric instrument. One might open the lid of said cembalo little by little as the song progresses, so that the audience, even those who are seated further away, might hear it better, [-<f.6r>-] disregarding the opinion of those who think it would be better if only the voice should be heard, and the accompaniment disguised and underplayed, not realising that the goodness and pleasure which comes from the song would be lost by half. Still, since someone might suspect that such instrumental accompaniment to the spoken word might prove too distracting for the audience and disrupt their concentration on what is most important, they must know that this will not happen in all those cases where the instrumental playing consists in a continuous series of divisions, since this way of playing, being so fast, uniform, and without a distinctive melody, will be pleasing to an extent, but, in my opinion, will not be able to distract the attention of the audience if not perhaps a little in the beginning, especially if the quality of the script, the poetry and the action are such as they should be, since everybody, after realising the uniform nature of such instrumental playing, will be concentrating on the play itself. In other words, since such music will not be in accord or in contrast with the spoken voice, it will be pleasing to some extent, but it will not prevent the audience from concentrating, just as rattles are compatible with every sound, albeit they produce different low and high pitches, and one can see that they do not disrupt the attention of the audience when dancers use them, although they are very do not belong to the dance itself. However, all this will be made clear by experience. Since in any case the human spoken voice has some difference of low and high sounds, which can be realised and noted by a perceptive musician endowed with an excellent ear, who could find some consonant accompaniment [-<f.6v>-] on some instrument, especially since sometimes we see that an instrumental player can express some accenti and words which really seem to be produced by the voice of a man, and since sometimes composers want that some parts of the melodies should be recited simply, while the instruments play an accompaniment, therefore it is possible that someone might imagine that this was what the ancient practised and that this could be restored in our time. However, if I have to state my opinion openly, I deem it to be such a tedious and difficult thing to enact (especially because it is almost impossible to pronounce one or more verses always in the same way, because our tongue has no vowels which are long by nature, and those variations of tone which are heard in spoken voice are so quick and fleeting, that can barely be grasped, and as soon as they are grasped they elapse, as it happens with the sound of bells, and differently from sung sections, where the voice stops and dwells on certain notes) that I fear strongly that this enterprise will turn out to be vane and fruitless. It is true however that the opportunity to tune the instrument with the sound of the spoken voice can be found also in the case of certain exclamations and similarly high-lying expressions, and that, where the spoken voice is heard as being more emotional and almost resembling a melody, the discerning player, if

he is perceptive and quick with his hands, will be able to produce some fitting accompaniment on his instrument, and this will not but produce a good effect.

However if, notwithstanding these difficulties, these Signori Accademici or other musicians will be inclined to attempt [-<f.7r>-] [[During a spoken scene, if at the same time two instruments, a higher and a lower one, for instance a string bass and a violin, are made to play, they will appear to be in tune with the spoken voice. Perhaps this derives from the fact that, since those tones of the voice are contained by the octaves of said instruments, they appear to be rendered determinate sounds, and so they acquire sonority, consonance and stability, such as the notes of sung section.]] such an enterprise, I believe that one should not despair of the result of this exercise, provided one follows certain precautions, which are as follows.

Firstly, one must attempt this enterprise with the consultation and participation of persons not only endowed with good taste, noble ear and expert in musical matters, but also sincere, hardworking, perceptive and of good judgement, since, if one entrusts the matter to second-rate musicians, their ignorance, envy, indolence and moral baseness, which is predominant in most of them, is such, that instead of benefiting such a noble enterprise (although they would not receive from it but advantage and enhanced reputation), they will try to interpose a plethora of obstacles, in order to make it fail and put a stop to it. Please believe me when I say, Vostra Signoria Illustrissima, that I do not speak without reason, but I am well aware of what I say to you, since I have the widest experience in explaining to some of these people the findings of my studies and of my work. Secondly, I suggest that sections should be tried out not just once and in a single way, but more than once and in several ways, with different actors and singers and different ways of acting and singing, varying the sound of the instruments, the place where the performance takes places and other such circumstances, because [-<f.7v>-] not always one can be successful at the first attempt when one tries out new things. Also, since after so many centuries such few remains of their ancient form have been uncovered, we must not let ourselves be thwarted either by the excessive eagerness of some who want to enact these newfangled ways, or by the opinion held by some others, namely, that only what is good has survived the test of time, while what yielded little fruit or usefulness has been lost. Rather, we must take a middle way between these two extremes, namely, that we should not decide to enact anything which does not seem tasteful to people capable of judging, without worrying about those who measure everything by the very weak yardstick of their limited minds. Apart from these instructions, I believe that some other requirements could assist us greatly in this enterprise; more, they could ensure its success. However, because they can be realised only in part, we can rely very little on them.

The first device is that actors must be well practiced in singing, very at ease with it, as tragedy and comedy actors must have been in antiquity, and of quick and acute hearing, since the tone of their voice will blend with and follow the tone of the instruments more easily than if, by converse, the instruments were to imitate the tone of their speaking voice. This would succeed perhaps only to the accompaniment of a single instrument, for instance a violin, if played by a very proficient player. Secondly, our stage singer must choose, in conjunction with the musician, a way to enunciate and recite, out of many possible ones, which he could adopt, and this must be the one that seems to him to be the best, more stable, natural and well-suited. Then, he must master it well through great study and practice, being careful above all to maintain the same tone throughout, without altering it at all from one repetition to the next, since in this way the musician will be able

[<f.8r>-] to notice the notes on which the spoken recitation and its parts are based, and to assign a basso continuo to the player of the string bass so that he might modulate it with fine and sweet bowings and to the violinist, in order that he might develop upon those notes the graceful and elegant divisions that will seem to him more appropriate. Thirdly, it is convenient to know that, although the raising or lowering of the spoken voice is made up of innumerable and non perfectible parts, nevertheless they can be reduced to three degrees. In the first place, there is a very clear and uniform tone of voice which many syllables can be uttered with little or no distinction of high and low, and this could be called tenor with a Latin word. Then, in second place, there are certain ways of rising and lowering the pitch which are quite noticeable. These occur ordinarily, for instance two or three times in every hendecasyllable, and they normally fall on those syllables which carry acute accents, which are stronger and fixed. These kinds of raising and lowering the voice are so much more frequent and perfectible as the action becomes more exciting and more emotional, and they could be called canor, to use a Latin word. In third place are those ways of bending the voice very quickly which can be heard mostly near an acute accent and are used to connect and to bind what comes before and after the syllable carrying such accent. This movement could be called appropriately in Latin flexio.

These ways of bending the voice are very similar with the continuous resonance produced by a string when it is stricken, until it becomes completely silent, except for the fact that the resonance of the string takes place only in one direction, namely towards the lower range, according to the most common opinion. Aristotle says that such resonance descends in pitch to an octave lower, while some modern theorists think that it becomes slightly higher in pitch. However this may be, such resonance can be heard very well in that intermediate tone between song and speech (as Albinus calls it) or enunciation which is typical of epic poems or rhetorical speeches when they are recited in an affected or impassioned way. Such resonances can be heard more rarely in real song than in ordinary speech, where they are very fast and elusive. It is not possible for the instruments to be attuned to these, because of their speed and elusive nature, as they have to occur quickly, just as the passing dissonances in counterpoint, but the instruments can be attuned to the other two degrees, whose arrangement, in my opinion, should be of this kind, namely, that the syllables of the of the tenor <should be marked> with this sign to distinguish them from the accented ones which the Greeks used to mark with an acute or circumflex accent, while the ones without a sign should be understood as bearing a grave accent, or, in my opinion, the lower part of the sound will have to be played usually as a fifth and sometimes even lower. However, in dealing with accented notes, and especially with some that contain certain exclamations, it will be better to use the sixths as a rule, and, with as much distinction as it is possible, the consonances of an octave, a fourth, and a fifth, using the major intervals in cheerful and lively passages, and minor ones instead to accompany sad and subdued moods.

On this foundation, the violinist will have to create its divisions at the his pleasure, making sure he listens carefully and he is quick with his hands to highlight the consonances on those accented syllables with slightly longer notes, since even in ordinary speech they are lengthened more than others, while the tone of voice of recitation is maintained.

In this way, one can hear more cohesion between the voice and the instruments that surround it since, as the high sounds of the spoken voice are contained by the high and low range of the instruments, they are rendered just as euphonious and agreeable to the

ear [-<9r>-] as the notes of sung section. Fourthly, if the performance struggled to reach such a high level of perfection either for lack of long practice or people, I am inclined to believe that it would be tolerably successful, provided that the actors, even if they have no knowledge of music, have good listening skills, and if the player of the string bass were to tune his instrument to the predominant note of the actor's speaking voice, being careful that there are no strange or dissonant intervals between them. In fact, in this case, even if that actor does not maintain that same tone of voice throughout his part, nevertheless its varying character will proceed always, if not by consonant intervals or steps, at least tuneful and of determinate sound, as it seems plausible. Thus, if the voice and the instrumental accompaniment will not please the ear, at least they will not offend it, which is what would happen in two instruments totally out of tune with each other since, however they are played, they will give the greatest nuisance to the listener. However, should they be in agreement, and if one will play fast notes above the long notes of the other instrument, they will not offend the ear, even if this is done without any rule or artistic expertise, because of the variety and the blend of consonances and dissonances, since in our case there is a certain unbalance, considering that the number of the consonances is greater than the number of the dissonances when notes of different lines meet and are considered vertically in their harmonic disposition. [-<f.9v>-] On the contrary, the accompaniment of a tuned instrument, played alongside a spoken voice will always produce a greater number of dissonant rather than consonant sounds because of the infinite divisibility of the continuous motions of the voice, which are called by the Greeks [Aneseis] and [Epitaseis], and signify the continuous rising and lowering of the tone of the speaking voice. However, this does not mean that it is possible to provide an instrumental accompaniment more or less in an exact way, as it has been said, since it will happen by chance that a consonance will be heard in the melodic part, so to speak, or in the most exposed parts of the speaking voice, while dissonances will be hidden, in the same way that the highest part of a set of bagpipes does against the low pipe, or bourdon, which Franchino calls bordonizare, and in any other sort of divisions. Fifthly, I advise the performers to be as loud as possible (which the ancients were obliged to do because of the great size of their theatres) because the tone of their voice will be firmer and more clear, and those grave and acute accents will be more sonorous and audible, and, consequently, it will be easier to tune the consonances and they will be better heard by the audience. Sixthly, I would advise the instrumental players to imitate the voice even in this respect, namely, that, when it dwells on higher notes, so should they, and conversely, when it unfolds with lower notes, they should do the same, but always maintaining the good rules of counterpoint. In fact, this sort of imitation will enhance the cohesion of these parts. Sixthly, I would favour equally that the highest part, namely, the violin, itself should imitate the vocal tone, as this as well will contribute to the overall cohesion. However, in order that all this may be more easily understood with some examples, I will provide a single verse as a demonstration. This verse is adapted to a particular pronunciation with the notes corresponding to every syllable and with the divisions written out. Ordinarily, it will not be necessary to write down the divisions, but they will be left to the discretion of the player. It is true that, since these words are emotional and sententious, perhaps they are more suited to a sung section or canticum than to a dialogue. Now, notice those three varieties of melody mentioned earlier occurring in these few syllables O de' Regi infelici. Firstly, what we called tenor is created on those notes of A la mi re under which one can here [-<f.10r>-] pronounce all the syllables from the first and sixth forward. Secondly, the canor on D la sol re under that quaver which corresponds to the last part of the acute accent on the syllable o. Thirdly, the bending or flexiones on the same syllable o and li which are expressed with those few fast notes ascending by step and with the slur

underneath which is called by the Greeks hyphen, since we have no other sign which might be used to signify that continuous and very fast rising of the spoken tone with certain accented syllables, as described by me above. The imitation of the rhythm of the words can be seen in the word *infelici*, where the violin with a semiminim imitates the ending of this word, and in the word *splendida*, where the first syllable, which is long, as it is a dactyl, is accompanied by a division in the violin part consisting in a quaver followed by some semiquavers. However, in practice it is not possible to observe all these minutiae. It is a good thing nevertheless that the examples should be as accurate as possible. As to imitating [-f.<10v>-] on the violin by way of glissandi those accents and the bending of the tone which are typical features of the spoken voice, I do not believe that they produce a good effect, so I will not say anything else about it. [-<f.11r>-]

[Doni, *Discorso sopra il Recitare*, 11r; text: de' Regi infelici splendida si ma miserabil sorte]

Now, if we believe that this unheard of kind of music making was known and used by the ancients in their works for the stage, as I will hold for certain when experience will have shown that it works well, that passage in Aristotle's *Poetics*, where describing tragedy he says that it uses a "sweetened speech" [hedysmeno logo], which he declares it was achieved through rhythm, harmony and melody - though not all applied together, but in various combination -, that passage, I say, will acquire much clarity and light. In fact, independently from others' interpretations, I believe that this difference consists in the fact that everything converged in the chorus, namely, singing, harmony and rhythm (with which word I mean not only dance and rhythmic movement, but also the measured parts of the verse and of the instrumental music), although in the static chorus instead of the dance and rhythmic movement there was only a display of gestures also governed by rhythm. I believe that in the sung sections or cantica [-<f.11v>-] there were the same basic elements as in the choruses, leaving aside perhaps some differences found in the sung sections of a cheerful character, where perhaps some sort of choreography was employed, the diverse use of flutes, and the singing of one or many people at the same time, the fact that in the dialogues or discussions there was not only the rhythm of the poetry and of the voice, but also in the dialogic and dancing type, consisting more of an action with gestures and rhythm than in a true dance and lifting <.....>, and harmony, or instrumental accompaniment, which proceeded through the entire action and was used to perfect the songs where it was used and to embellish the spoken language, as we have seen, but also to regulate gestures, danced passages and body movement, in which the ancients were wonderfully precise. Proof of this, as of many other practices, can be found in Cicero's *Paradoxa* where he says: "If the actor moves a little out of step with the rhythm, or if the verse is recited shorter or longer of a syllable, immediately there the audience hisses and roars", and as we have discussed more diligently elsewhere.

But since good stage music requires a great variety of singing styles and some diversity of tones, as I have shown elsewhere, and since this cannot be realised using ordinary instruments, but only by employing cembali diarmonici and triarmonici, which can hardly be joined by common string basses, as a consequence it seems necessary to use one of those who are called panarmonici, namely that agree successfully with any tone or harmony, and which have been discussed by me in a speech devoted to them. What follows has to be set in a separate speech.