



the early music company ltd

Monteverdi *L'Orfeo*

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Acknowledgement should be made in the form

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in commemoration of the 450th anniversary of Monteverdi's death

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INSTRUMENTAL PARTS

It is impossible to provide a set of instrumental parts that will suit all needs. There are problems in relating the list of instruments prefaced to the score (reproduced opposite) with the rubrics in the score, identifying what exactly the named instruments really were, and relating that to the availability of players or funds available for a modern performance.

To accompany this score The Early Music Company issues parts for strings and wind as follows:

Violino I	Cornetto I
Violino II	Cornetto II
Viola I	Trombone I
Viola II	Trombone II
Bass Violin	Trombone III
Recorder I, II	Trombone IV
Harp	Trombone V

Continuo players (harpsichords, organs, chitarrones, etc.) will need full scores. The Basso part includes some of the more melodious continue lines, but if a string instrument is used for the continuo bass extensively, a score is required. The separate harp part contains only the Act III obbligato: the harpist will need a score to play continuo elsewhere.

We have not provide parts for viola da gamba, contrabassi di viola, etc., since each conductor will differ on where these instruments are used. But each instrumental line appears somewhere within the parts provided and may be photocopied as required. (The Early Music Company authorises such photocopying of sections of the parts or score by owners of the performance material who have paid the requisite additional fees to supplement the instrumental parts, but the reproduction of complete parts is expressly forbidden in the contractual agreement signed prior to performance.)

We are happy to provide material to accord with individual specifications, or to advise on instrumentation and provide parts accordingly.

The cornetto and trombone parts include the Act III & IV Sinfonia and choruses at the originally-notated pitch together with transpositions down a fourth and down a fifth. A transposed continuo part is included in the Bass Violin part.

The opening Toccata is included in all parts.

Percussion. No percussion is mentioned in the list of instruments or the score, but it would be possible to add timpani in the Toccata and exotic unpitched percussion (e.g. castanets) in the Moresca.

INTRODUCTION

This edition attempts to reproduce the sources as closely as is possible in modern notation. It is based on the following:

Lib. 1607 libretto, using the copy Wolfenbüttel 174 Hist (9). [This differs slightly from the copy used for the edition of Striggio's text in Barbara Russano Hanning: *Of Poetry and Music's Power* (UMI Research Press, 1980), pp. 305-329.]

1609 First printed edition, using the facsimile ed. A. Sandberger, Augsburg, 1927.

1615 Second printed edition, using the facsimile ed. D. Stevens, Gregg Press, 1972

1615 corrects some errors of **1609**, though introduces others. The differences are small, and there are few doubts of the reading the printers intended, though some corrections may have been made during the print run. Difficulties seem primarily to have been caused by errors in the MS supplied to the printer. Divergences between the sources are noted. The verbal text of this edition follows the libretto (which seems to have been carefully printed) for matters of orthography, including capitalisation and punctuation. But when there is a difference of substance between libretto and the scores, the underlaid text (which is presumably what Monteverdi set) has been preferred. I have resisted the temptation to help the performer by modernising punctuation; to do so would have involved imposing my English practice on 17th-century Italian. The rhetorical shape of the words, however, is usually made unmistakable by Monteverdi's recitative, and the translation will assist the singer in places of doubt. Capital letters showing new lines of verse are retained. A careful modern edition of the text (with facing translation) is in *The Operas of Monteverdi* (English National Opera Guide 45). [See additional note at the end]

Original barring is retained (except for the opening of Act II). This is generally consistent, with a bar line every four minims; sections where barring is irregular often present other editorial problems as well. Added bar lines have been noted. Original ties in the bass line have not been converted to longer note-values. Although there is no complete consistency in repeated passages, and in some cases the ties may only represent line-ends in an earlier manuscript, they may have implications for the repetition of chords. Sometimes, for instance, a cadential major chord needs to be changed to a minor chord on a tied note to begin a new phrase. I see no pattern worth preserving in the shapes of the original ties: differences between curved and square slurs are determined by the shapes of type that were available to the printer.

All accidentals have been retained except on consecutive notes. Accidentals cancelling a previous one that are needed by modern convention are in round brackets, since they are inserted to express the meaning of the original notation, not to change it. Modern conventions over the use of naturals have been followed except in the bass figuring.

The tessitura of the choruses in Acts III and IV always puzzled

me: there is an obvious reason for silencing the sopranos to give a more sombre sound in Pluto's kingdom, but why should there be no chorus bass part? The answer struck me when I was retyping and expanding Andrew Parrott's article on transposition in the 1610 *Vespers* (*Early Music* xii/4, 1984, pp.490-516); although the infernal choruses omit soprano voices, the clefs of the lower voices correspond with those which would have had treble (G2) rather than soprano (C1) clefs for the top parts and which imply transposition down a fourth or fifth. The ritornelli, with upper parts in G2 clefs, confirm this; although the treble parts have as their top note the A which is the highest comfortable note on the cornetto, they still fit two cornetti and five sackbuts when transposed. Transposition down a fifth produces excellent transitions with the rest of the Act III and IV to give an appropriately sombre sound. The handful of very low notes are not unprecedented in music of this period. The standard version has the transposable sections down a fourth, with the relevant pages transposed down a fifth and untransposed at the end of the volume. If required, scores can be supplied with either down a fifth or untransposed pages in the main sequence, or performers can photocopy the pages they need and paste them over the main sequence.

Bars 128-150 of Act II are printed in full in 1609 & 1615: the repeat notation is editorial, as is the bar line 128/129. There are a few minor discrepancies between the four separate repetitions, the most significant being the omission of the first sharp in the top part and the first sharp in the second part in bar 129 from all except the first version. A time signature C appears only in the top and third part at the first appearance of the Ritornello. The rhythmic notation looks like a modern 6/8, as transcribed here, but the use of 'black semibreves' in the Continuo for the F in bar 141 and in both parts for the first note of the 4th-time bar implies that it is black notation. For the first statement only of the Ritornello, a '3' (indicating triplets) is printed for most half-bar groups in the top part, and in bar 129 only in the other parts. This may be intended to indicate a tempo relationship with the previous chorus or to warn the players that the pulse is triple. Osthoff propounds a more complex solution, which produces an irregular rhythm, in *Analecta Musicologica* xv, p. 87.

The first issue of this edition was the result of a double commission. I was asked by Roger Norrington to check the accuracy of the score he had previously used with Kent Opera in preparation for his production in Florence in the summer of 1984, and by Andrew Parrott to prepare material for a performance by the Taverner Consort and Players at the Bruges Festival the same year. I am grateful to Iain Fenlon for the loan of a photocopy of the libretto and pre-publication information of his researches on the first performance of *Orfeo*; also to N. H. and A. Tucker (parents of Mark, a fine singer of *Orfeo*) for kind permission to include their translation as an aid to understanding the text. For further information on the work, the reader is referred to the *Cambridge Opera Handbook* edited by John Whenham or (more briefly) my notes to the Nigel Rogers recording (EMI 2701313), which coincidentally I was asked to write while preparing this edition. Philip Pickett's *Behind the Mask: Monteverdi's L'Orfeo* (available from King's Music) discusses problems of instrumentation and dramatic layout, and has a useful bibliography.

The editorial bass figures derive from those I added to my copy of the 1615 facsimile for a performance at Dartington Summer School in 1974 directed by Roger Norrington. Subsequent changes have almost invariably been simplifications. I am convinced that chords should be simple: they outline clear underlying harmonies and the discordant notes in the voice part should sound against them. Too many minor chords are still heard in performances of music of this period: comparison with Monteverdi's fully-scored music shows that, when he wrote what we call a dominant-tonic cadence, he expected both chords to be major. The convention of the time whereby only flats and sharps are used (flat = minor chord, sharp = major chord) has been adopted: apart from its clarity, it saves changing the notation when transposing. The sparse figures taken from the original editions are in bolder print.

This computer-set version of the edition was prepared for performances at the Aldeburgh, Boston and Salzburg Festivals in 1993. Changes from the earlier version are chiefly related to the underlaid text. For most of the solo sections, the layout on

the page is identical (though the overall numbering differs), and the two versions are compatible. Bar numbers differ in Acts II and IV.

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This new version of the score was re-typeset and corrected in 2022 with invaluable help from Professor Annamaria Popescu, who teaches voice and Italian Diction for Singers at McGill University and the Conservatoire de musique et d'art dramatique both in Montréal, Canada. Whereas Clifford believed that retaining the capitalization of the libretto was "correct", Professor Popescu's experience with both students and professional singers had been that such an approach - though, perhaps, scientifically (and typographically) sound - conceals the grammatical structure, and obscures the dramatic sense. We are sincerely very grateful for her support.

Brian Clark, December 2022.

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*Acts I, II & V are set in the fields of Thrace,
Acts III & IV in the Underworld.*

Toccata che si suoni avanti il levar de la tela tre volte con tutte li stromenti, & si fa un Tuono più alto volendo sonar le trombe con le sordine

[Original printed pitch]

Musical score for measures 1-3. The score is written for five staves: Clarino (G2), Quinta (C1), Alto, e basso (C2), Vulgano (C3), and Basso (C4). The time signature is common time (C). The Clarino part features a melodic line with eighth-note patterns. The Quinta part has a similar melodic line. The Alto, e basso part consists of a continuous eighth-note accompaniment. The Vulgano and Basso parts provide a steady bass line with half notes.

Musical score for measures 4-6. The score continues with the same five staves. Measure 4 begins with a new melodic phrase in the Clarino and Quinta parts. The Alto, e basso part continues its eighth-note accompaniment. The Vulgano and Basso parts maintain their steady bass line.

Musical score for measures 7-9. The score concludes with the same five staves. Measure 7 introduces a final melodic phrase. The Alto, e basso part continues its accompaniment. The Vulgano and Basso parts provide the final bass line.

Play three times

