

Christoph Bernhard

Von der Singe-Kunst oder  
Manier

(ca. 1650)

Translated by Sion M. Honea

## Translator's Preface

This translation was prepared from the German text of Joseph Müller-Blattau, *Die Kompositionslehre Heinrich Schützens in der Fassung seines Schülers Christoph Bernhard* (Bärenreiter, 1963). The musical examples are somewhat updated by transposition to the more easily readable G2 treble clef instead of the old C soprano/descant clef. Some errors in the music have been corrected so far as possible, as well as a few explanatory comments provided.

Few associations, or perhaps none at all, will likely spring to the musician's mind at the mention of Christoph Bernhard. This is all the more unfortunate because he was not only considered one of the more accomplished composers of his day but also was a theoretical writer of an importance considerable then and one who should still be now. As the Grove article says, Bernhard composed mostly sacred music, of which, because the better repertoire circulated mainly in manuscript, very little survives today. His theoretical writings also circulated in manuscript only, though apparently widely despite the fact that the present one survives in only four extant copies.

It is this treatise *Von der Singe-Kunst oder Manier* that is regularly called the most important work on German vocal performance practice of the seventeenth century. Having now translated all the early texts on Italian vocal performance in the *Renaissance Italian Vocal Diminution Series*, I would say that it is surpassed in historical importance only by Caccini and in vocal pedagogy only by Maffei, and is unequalled by any in general performance practice. This does not mean that it is without defect or solves all problems of that era. Bernhard is also capable of ambiguity, and he does not intend to present an elementary text but one for advanced performers.

What Bernhard achieves is an excellent practical manual based on a logical, though somewhat confusingly expressed, analysis of contemporary performance practice, in particular that which he considered of Italian origin. A reader today may well find his exposition of singing styles of the period to be more clear and communicative than any available in a current text. Not only does he discuss the features of the style but the different aesthetic concepts underlying them. I will not repeat here Bernhard's aesthetics, but I do provide among the appendices a diagram of the styles and his terminology.

The fact that Bernhard's text exists only in manuscript tradition requires a different approach from the previous translations in this series. Müller-Blattau's edition is, as he says, a reprint of his original edition of 1926. The nature of his method of establishing his text is inextricable from the process of translating it. For this reason I have provided in special appendices extracts from the front matter of his edition that explain his procedure. I have also included the passage in which he discusses Bernhard's stylistic analysis because it also may aid the reader.

The reproduction in this text of all the editorial conventions in the German is unnecessary and cumbersome. As the reader will find in the appendix, Müller-Blattau has, when justifiable, inserted sections from different manuscript sources, indicating them in square brackets, both in the verbal and musical texts. I have omitted these brackets in the verbal text except when the

insertions constitute a significant syntactical unit, not when merely a portion of a word or an inflectional ending. My own intra-textual comments are in italics within normal parentheses. In every case where I have omitted them from the musical text I have provided a note to that effect. Further, I have clearly identified all of my own alterations.

A reader who consults Müller-Blattau's German text will undoubtedly find it peculiar—it is neither hot nor cold. The orthography is too modern to be seventeenth-century and too seventeenth-century to be modern. This the editor explains—also included in the appendices—by stating that where the manuscripts exhibited discrepancies in orthography he chose the more modern form. Thus, older spellings apparently were left alone where there was no discrepancy, as were inconsistencies in spelling. The reader will probably soon adjust to such as *fürkommen* for *vorkommen* and *anwehnen* for *anwähnen* and find such archaisms as *ein mehreres* pleasantly quaint, but it is rather a mystery why the editor did not make his text uniform. Why *fürkommen* here and *vorkommen* there? What was to be achieved by the inconsistency? He needed only a note saying “where I modernize a spelling on the authority of a manuscript tradition I modernize all instances of that word,” either that or leave all alone.

The process of translating this text has convinced me that it is vital for an understanding of vocal performance practice in the baroque, particularly as to how the Italian style spread and gradually became virtually an international style. It documents the first stage of the dominance of Italian vocal style that prevailed until the mid-nineteenth century. While it is true that it is essentially a “dead,” non-living style today, in that modern singers, trained in an entirely different type of vocal production, cannot simply switch back and forth but must, as pedagogues at least as early as Coclico said, be trained in it from earliest years; despite this, it is valuable to understand its principles and conventions when addressing baroque music, for that music was created assuming them. Finally, it is not a style exclusive to vocal music, not only did composers and instrumentalists adopt its practices, but Bernhard even specifically says that they do and that they would be well advised to do so even more. In sum, Bernhard's *Von der Singe-Kunst* deserves its reputation as a major document in the history of performance practice, vocal and instrumental.

## On the Art of Singing or Style

1. Since it is not enough to maintain the title of “singer” that one sings out absolutely everything that comes up, but rather there is also required, next to a good voice, an artful skill, which one generally calls “style.” Therefore, it is necessary to grasp, then, what those artistic devices (ornaments) are that by observing and applying the singer earns the name of a singer.
2. Style is certainly twofold: one resides with the notes, the other in changing them (*the notes*).
3. The one residing with the notes is in turn twofold, namely one considers only the notes, but the other takes the text, as it is called, into account. These kinds of style are named with special names, and partly because of their natural characteristics the first (1) is *cantar sodo*, the second (2) is *cantar d’affetto*, which when altered is called *cantar passaggiato*.<sup>1</sup>
4. Otherwise, these are also named according to places where each kind is beloved. The first is named *cantar alla Romana*, the second is *alla Napolitana*, and the third is *alla Lombarda*.<sup>2</sup> These kinds are now to be explained, each in turn.<sup>3</sup>
5. The kind remaining only by the notes called the *cantar sodo*, means by that a simple or plain singing, not that it is so easy to learn or that one stays strictly by the notes (since it is the most difficult and laborious and the foundation of the remaining kinds) but rather because it is not changed with *passaggi* but allots to each note individually its own ornamentation.<sup>4</sup> Even so one must recognize as a good singer that one whose throat is not well suited for making *passaggi* or who doesn’t understand the text,<sup>5</sup> for which reason he does not make use of the other two kinds (*i.e., Napolitana and Lombarda. Translator*)
6. The artistic devices such as are used here are the following: (1) *fermo*<sup>6</sup> (2) *forte*<sup>7</sup> (3) *piano* (4) *trillo* (5) *accento* (6) *anticipazione della syllaba* (7) *anticipazione della nota* (8) *cercar della nota* (9) *ardire*.
7. The *fermo*,<sup>8</sup> or keeping the steady voice, is required on all notes excepting where the *trillo* or *ardire* is used, and particularly the ornament of the *fermo* is to be understood, because the

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<sup>1</sup> Bernhard explains the significance of these in the subsequent text.

<sup>2</sup> See the diagram, Appendix I.

<sup>3</sup> I find Bernhard’s statement of the types somewhat confusing because of the factor that the text can be important in types of both styles. The reader should concentrate on the primary distinction of whether a change in the notes is involved.

<sup>4</sup> Note here that he says *cantar sodo* can be ornamented but does not have diminutions.

<sup>5</sup> The *cantar d’affetto* is devoted to communicating the emotional content of the text, hence being able to understand the text is indispensable.

<sup>6</sup> I retain Bernhard’s terms rather than attempt to identify them with modern ornaments, which is most often misleading or impossible. Bernhard’s descriptions, especially when amplified with illustrations, are usually though not always sufficient for understanding.

<sup>7</sup> Note that Bernhard considers dynamics as ornaments, which is usual at this time.

<sup>8</sup> This may well present the reader with the most trouble of all his descriptions of ornaments because it is difficult to accept, somehow, that he really is talking about keeping the voice steady (straight tone) as an ornament. It is better to think of it as part of the *Manier*, a stylistic characteristic than an ornament. The reader’s incipient incredulity is probably exacerbated by his introduction of the term *tremulo*, probably the most ambiguous and confusing term in the literature of ornamentation. Fortunately, Peter Walls reassures us (Oxford Music Online s.v. “Ornaments,” §5 (iv)) that our first impression is correct. There remains the problem of whether a true straight

tremulo (which otherwise on the organ<sup>9</sup> sounds good because of the change, the organ being able to make a tremulo on all pitches the same) is a fault, which is not used among old singers for artfulness but rather insinuates itself because these are not able to hold the voice steady. Whoever desires more evidence of the evils of the tremulo, let him listen to an old man making a tremulo when he is singing alone. Then he will be able to judge why the tremulo is not used by the foremost singers, unless on the ardire, of which more below. Although in other places it is allowed to the basses, but with the restriction that it is seldom introduced and on short notes.

8. Piano and forte, as well as the other artistic devices, we ought to indicate by special signs, hereafter, for the purpose of confirmation. To be sure, because piano and forte must follow each other alternately in singing, therefore we want to deal with it at the same time when we have in the first place marked piano with a “p” and forte with an “f” as symbols.
9. This piano and forte, then, are used either on one note at the same time, or on different notes following each other. The former [on one note] happens on an entire tactus (*whole-note*) or a half tactus (*half-note*), the latter (*different notes*) on smaller notes.
10. When on a whole or half tactus one takes care to use the piano at the beginning, the forte in the middle and finally the piano again,<sup>10</sup> as in:



In which case one must pay close attention not to drop suddenly from piano into forte, [or the latter into the former], but rather must allow the voice gradually to grow or decrease,<sup>11</sup> otherwise that which an artistic device is supposed to be would sound quite horrible.

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tone was intended, the exclusion of all vibrato, or whether Bernhard means just an excessive vibrato. There is evidence of the acceptance of vibrato, at least as an ornament, going back to the Middle Ages, and there is further evidence that a slight natural vibrato was acceptable, the exaggerated vibrato being the only one excluded. Ellen Harris's discussion in Brown & Sadie, *Performance Practice: Music after 1600* is useful, especially pp. 104-105. She remarks that Bernhard is the most adamant of all in his proscription of vibrato.

<sup>9</sup> Evidently he is referring to the tremulant stop on the organ, which existed since about 1500, (Grove Music Online, s.v. "Tremulant.")

<sup>10</sup> The following musical example does not make Bernhard's meaning entirely clear because he shows only the after form of the application of dynamics and not the before form of how it is written with the symbols. An example does appear on the first half-note in the example following number 11. Putting the two together, "pf" on a whole-note or half-note is to be interpreted as a messa di voce. The implicit final diminuendo back to piano I have not met other than in Bernhard. The use of "pf" and "fp" as respectively crescendo and decrescendo marks continued to appear in music into the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, despite the fact that the familiar angular symbols were in use occasionally by the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century. Better critical editions sometimes retain the older "pf" and "fp" markings, which modern performers unfamiliar with this historical convention often misinterpret as accent marks, with bizarre results.

11. On small notes one part of the same is sung piano and the other part forte and then changed in turn, provided, then, that one (*i.e., the singer*) most of the time begins with the piano but always ends with it.<sup>12</sup>

3 **Piano and Forte**

pf Hic f hic a-dest p pa-nis f hic a-dest p pa-nis f hic a-dest p Christus f Hic de-us to-tus p

12. The trillo is the most difficult but most ornamental artistic device, and no one can be taken for a good singer who does not know how to use it, but although it is impossible to depict it in words so that one should be able to learn from them, it must be learned more from hearing. In that way, though, one can indicate without risk how it must be made. It must be observed that the voice partially issues from the chest but partially only in the throat or head, as musicians say, is it formed. From this it then follows that it cannot all be beaten with the chest, whence otherwise the best trillos are beaten, rather, quite a few—and generally the oldest ones must make it in the throat. But above all things one must pay strict attention that in beating the trill one does not change the voice (*quality*), so as not to make a bleating out of it. It is also to be observed that the one who does not do it entirely well should beat very short (*ones*), so that the listener cannot detect that he does not do it the best. For whom it succeeds best, it is allowed to him to make it as long as he can and is to that degree more graceful and admirable. Furthermore, one should also not beat it entirely to fast, but rather allow the voice only to waver, so to speak, yet even not too slow, and if indeed one of the two is to be chosen, I would prefer to hear one somewhat fast than too slow, although to follow the middle course will be best.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> This is a complete confirmation of the explanation in the previous note.

<sup>12</sup> As I understand this in light of the example, what little light it gives, he is simply saying that dynamics are also used on smaller note values, with an alternation between loud and soft, mostly beginning soft but always ending soft. Again, his example shows only the finished state after dynamics have been applied.

<sup>13</sup> There are several issues of historical interest in number 12. First, Bernhard refers to the concepts of head and chest voice, which have actually long been used, in a way implying that they are standard terminology. Bernhard's trillo is the same as Caccini's, a pulse on a single pitch, which today would more likely be called a tremolo. Caccini describes the techniques as striking each note repeatedly in the throat. Thus, Caccini seems fairly clearly to be referring to the type of throat articulation that Maffei describes (see the translation of Maffei in this same series, original page 30) and so both repudiate the use of the chest as the means of articulation, which Bernhard advocates, for the most part. He seems to say that the place of articulation, chest or throat, varies according to the nature of the voice, chest or head. Further, his remark that it is particularly the "oldest" singers who use the throat articulation seems more than his prejudice toward the infirmities of the elderly and might possibly indicate that the older type of throat articulation is disappearing except in the older generation. The change of voice and the bleating that he refers to are what is often called the "goat trill" and generally much despised.

13. In the first place, the trillo is made everywhere that a “t” is found over notes, which is the symbol with which the trillo is designated.<sup>14</sup> Second, it certainly may be made in other places, though with deliberation, and it is to be learned rather through the usage of and listening to others as to how it can be used well, than that one would take it as described in specific precepts and thereby deprive the singer of his liberty, whose discretion will know how to choose the notes on which it is proper to make a trillo. However, it is good to note that it is not made too often, and it is the same as with those spices that, if they are used moderately, make the dish charming, but the same ones, if one uses them too much, can ruin it completely. In addition, our foremost care in this case is nothing other than to explain all the points of style. Their use can be learned better from experience.
14. When a forte and piano takes place in long trillos, it is very charming to hear, and this happens in two ways: (1) one begins the trillo piano and gradually allows the voice to increase therein. (2) In the case of the doubled trillo (*quando si fa trilli doppj*)<sup>15</sup> as in the example.<sup>16</sup>

The markings in this first section are apparently original in Bernhard's MS, except I have changed tr to t and added the crescendo mark. The translator.

I have added the crescendo and decrescendo marks. All other marks including the sharp sign are in square brackets in the editor's text, indicating editorial additions. The translator.

15. Accento is called an artistic device, which is formed on the ending of one note with only a so-called aftertone, and those are mistaken who make use of an emphatic forced cry instead of a gentle accento and in thinking that they give an ornament to their singing they create an abhorrence for the listener because of the dreadful shout.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>14</sup> In the musical examples someone, either copyist or editor, has used “tr” instead of “t.” In the trillo examples have I changed these back to “t” so as to reduce the reader’s potential confusion.

<sup>15</sup> “When one makes a double trillo.”

<sup>16</sup> The indication of the trillo used is “tr” not “t” as Bernhard says. Further some dynamic marks and an accidental have been placed in brackets in order to indicate their manuscript source. I supply modern angular markings (hairpins) in my interpretation of Bernhard’s intention.

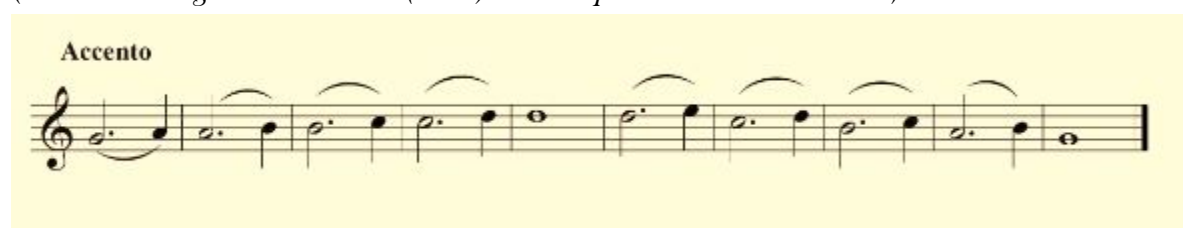
<sup>17</sup> As is so common with early writers on performance practice, Bernhard does not provide an illustration of the accento as performed, only where he says it is to be performed. This practice of not providing visual representations both “before and after” was common, despite the fact that Dalla Casa in 1584 had recognized the importance and done so in his own method. All that can be done in this case is to consider Bernhard’s description of the accento and compare it to the few examples of illustrations that do exist, particularly Francesco Rognoni (1620) and Praetorius (1619). In that Bernhard describes it as a “supplementary aftertone” (*anhenckenden Nachklänge*) on the end of a note, this would seem to indicate that it is of the same pitch as the preceding note, from which it possibly derives its time. If this interpretation is correct, then Bernhard’s accento does not resemble those of either Praetorius or Rognoni but is like Rognoni’s *portar la voce*. This is not particularly troubling, given

16. It is used here, first of all in descending (2) next to each other on one pitch (*clave*)<sup>18</sup> and (3) on a final note.<sup>19</sup>

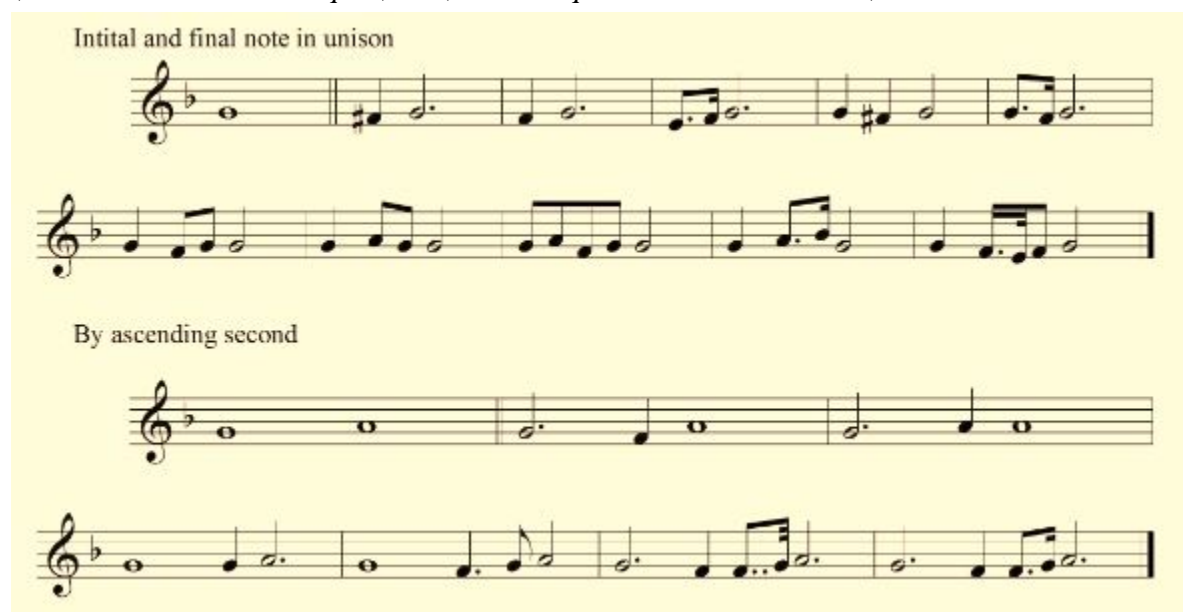
(*Christoph Bernhard's Accento*)



(*Francesco Rognoni's Accento (1620) for comparison. The translator*)



(*Prætorius' Accento excerpts (1619) for comparison. The translator*)



the nearly complete lack of standardization in both terminology and execution of ornaments. The issue in performance practice is to determine the interpretation that is appropriate to the specific music by a specific composer in a specific place and at a specific time.

<sup>18</sup> I take Bernhard's use of *clave* as the method of indicating a pitch by means of its Guidonian syllables, the *clavis*.

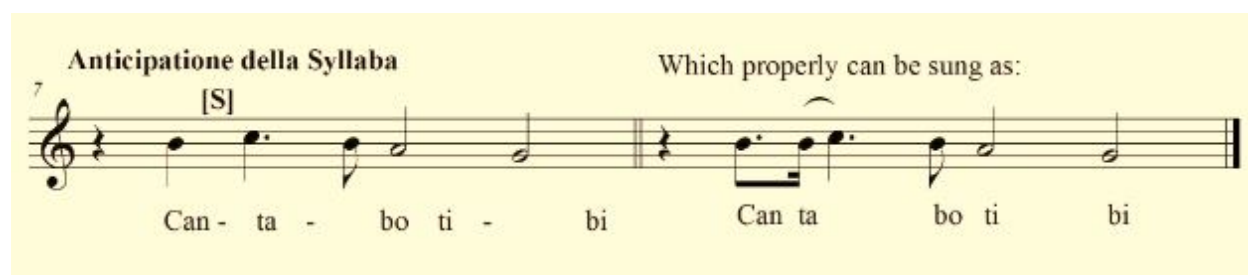
<sup>19</sup> In the following example I have omitted the editorial brackets on the next to last "a" and changed "tr" to "t."



(Francesco Rognoni's (1620) *Portar la voce* for comparison. The translator)



17. First it must be noted that on two notes that follow each other, not the both but only the one with the *accento* can be ornamented, the other remains without *accento*. The third, however, can once again have an *accento*.
18. Only syllables that are pronounced long permit an *accento*. Those, on the other hand, that are pronounced short must remain without an *accento*. The last syllables of words, however, even though such ones are suppressed in pronunciation, can receive an *accento*, all of which can be seen in the previous examples.
19. The *anticipazione della syllaba* is indicated with an "S" and is, as the name indicates, a kind of artistic device, which the syllable belonging to the following note in some way is added to the previous one, as in the example



20. The *anticipazione della syllaba* is used (1) generally when the one note rises a second higher than the previous note, (2) seldom when the notes leap or fall by a third (3) even less often when the notes fall a fourth, fifth or sixth lower, (4) least of all when the notes rise a fourth, fifth or sixth.<sup>20</sup> First of all, then, when the following note rises by a second higher than the previous one, thus at the end of the previous note the syllable belonging to the following note is attached, as can be seen in the example above. (2) When the notes rise or fall a third, then a piece (*of time not pitch*) taken from the previous note is set in the middle of the third, on the other hand the syllable of the following note is applied to the piece taken from the previous note and which was set in the middle of the third, as in the example:

<sup>20</sup> Note that according to his illustration the time for the ornament is always taken from the previous note.

**Third descending or ascending**

18 [S] [S] Is sung thus

Ex - ul - ta - te Do - mi - ne Ex - ul - ta - te Do - mi - ne

(3) If the note falls a fourth, etc., then the first note is divided in the following way:

**Fourth, etc. descending**

21 [S] [S]

In cor - de nec - tar coe - li - cum In cor - de nec - tar coe - li - cum

(4) The last kind, namely when the notes rise a fourth, etc. is almost never used, even so it happens like this.

**Fourth, etc. ascending**

23

Lau - da - bo Do - mi - nus Lau - da - bo Do - mi - nus

21. Anticipazione della nota is, as the name similarly indicates, a little artistic device, by means of which a part of the previous note is fixed to the following note and indicated with “N.”<sup>21</sup> One uses it when the notes rise or fall a second.

22. If the notes rise a second, the first note is then divided and the last part of the same is attracted to the pitch of the following one, then also when they descend a second.

**Anticipazione della nota**

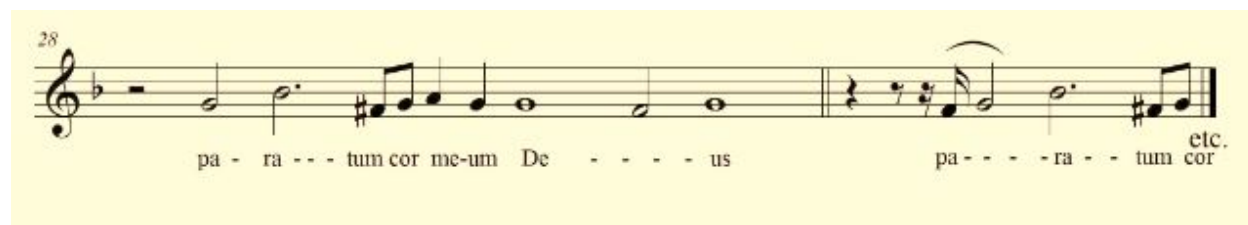
25

Ex - ul - tet ter - - ra Ex - ul - tet ter - - ra

<sup>21</sup> Note that the example does not use the “N” symbol.

23. Cercar della nota means a searching for the note and is indicated with a C.<sup>22</sup>

24. It is used either at the beginning or in progress of the notes. At the beginning one takes care to touch quite briefly and lightly upon the nearest pitch (*neighbor-tone*) below the initial pitch and to slur that one to the initial pitch without emphasis.



28

pa - ra - - - tun cor me-um De - - - - us pa - - - - ra - - - tum cor etc.

Detailed description: This musical example shows measure 28 on a treble clef staff with a key signature of one flat. The melody consists of quarter notes: G4, A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4, G4. The lyrics are 'pa - ra - - - tun cor me-um De - - - - us pa - - - - ra - - - tum cor etc.'. The first 'pa' is followed by a slur over the notes 'ra - - - tun'.

In the progress of the notes it can be used as well with notes that are on the same pitch as with those on different pitches. In the case of notes on the same pitch, one moves from the first to the second by means of either the neighbor-tone above or below.<sup>23</sup>



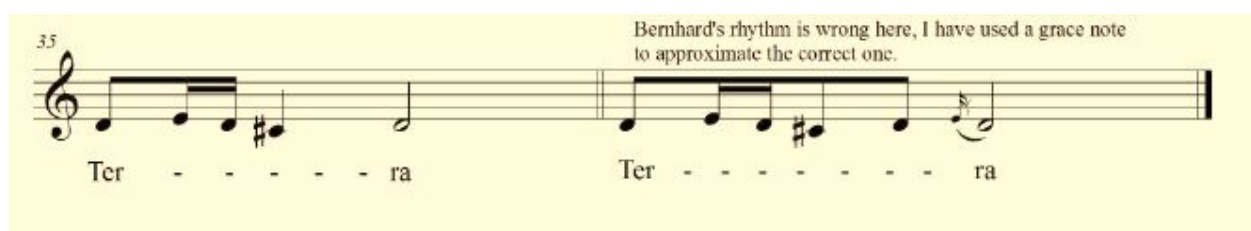
30

Do - mi-no Do mi-no mi Je-su mi Je-su mi Je-su mi Je-su

Detailed description: This musical example shows measure 30 on a treble clef staff with a key signature of one flat. The melody consists of quarter notes: G4, A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4, G4. The lyrics are 'Do - mi-no Do mi-no mi Je-su mi Je-su mi Je-su mi Je-su'. The first 'Do' is followed by a slur over the notes 'mi-no'. The second 'mi Je-su' is followed by a slur over the notes 'mi Je-su'. The third and fourth 'mi Je-su' are followed by trills, indicated by the 'tr' symbol above the notes.

(The symbol "tr" is as appears in the German edition. Translator's note.)

If one wants to use the cercar della nota where the notes rise or fall a second, one must first use the anticipation della nota in it and apply the previous rule accordingly, as in:



35

Bernhard's rhythm is wrong here, I have used a grace note to approximate the correct one.

Ter - - - - - ra Ter - - - - - ra

Detailed description: This musical example shows measure 35 on a treble clef staff with a key signature of one flat. The melody consists of quarter notes: G4, A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4, G4. The lyrics are 'Ter - - - - - ra Ter - - - - - ra'. The first 'Ter' is followed by a slur over the notes 'ra'. The second 'Ter' is followed by a slur over the notes 'ra'. A grace note is used to approximate the correct one.

If the notes rise or fall a third, then one uses the cercar della nota in the following form.

<sup>22</sup> Again, the example does not use the "C" symbol.

<sup>23</sup> Bernhard's description sounds rather like he is saying notes that move either by step or by leap, but his illustration clarifies that he intends as translated here.



If the notes rise or fall a fourth, fifth, etc. then one takes the *cercar della nota* on a pitch either higher or lower (*neighbor-tone*), although in these same leaps rising the *cercar della nota* is seldom used, for which reason we are going to introduce only the falling examples.



25. The *ardire* is a tremolo<sup>24</sup> that is made on the last note of a cadence (*clausul*). This *ardire* is used by only a few, except for the basses, whom it suits the best, because it is granted to them more than the others (*ornaments*) except for the tremolo,<sup>25</sup> and it is indicated with #. It is, however, well to keep in mind that one by no means ought to use it on the last note of a piece, which one calls the final.

This is, then, briefly of the style call *Romana*, which each and every musician, both singers and instrumentalists ought to use.<sup>26</sup>

Now follows the other called *Napolitana*.

26. *Cantar alla Napolitana* or *d'affetto* is a style that only singers are entitled to because it alone has a text; however, instrumentalists could make use of it also quite often, and in so doing know how, in regard to their instrument, to use and control for a resulting more happy or plaintive harmony.
27. It (*cantar alla Napolitana*) consists in the singer observing the text carefully and modifying the voice according to its instructions.
28. This happens in two ways: one in the observation of the bare text, the other in communicating its meaning.
29. The first consists in proper pronunciation of the words, which he is supposed to bring forth; accordingly, a singer does not rasp, lisp or otherwise have strange enunciation, but rather he

<sup>24</sup> Tremulo is a vibrato.

<sup>25</sup> Bernhard's text is somewhat vague here because (1) there is no clear referent for *andren* (others) and the phrase "except for the tremulo" (*ohne daß das Tremulum*) is effectively a pleonasm of "it" (*es*), very awkwardly inserted.

<sup>26</sup> Bernhard is not referring only to number 25 but to all the foregoing ornaments as part of the *cantar alla Romana*, which is the ornamented form of the first, plain stylistic division, *cantar sodo*.

should dedicate himself to a refined and unblemished utterance. Certainly in his own native language he ought to have the most refined skill in pronunciation, so that a German speaker (*should* speak) not Swabian or Pommerian but Meissen or the accent nearest, and an Italian should speak not Bolognese, Venetic, Lombard, but Florentine or Roman. Should he, however, sing something other than in his native language, he must pronounce this same speech at the very least as firm and correct as those in whom the language was born. As to what concerns the Latin language, since that language is pronounced different ways in different lands, it is up to the singer to pronounce it as it usually is in the land where he sings. Should someone, however, like to pronounce Latin like Italian, as most singers are accustomed now, as I consider such, from justifiable reasons that cannot be gone into here, to be not only permissible but even correct and advisable. Above all things Germans ought to strive to make a good and clear distinction between b and p, d and t, f and v, and likewise that they pronounce the st- not according to their custom, as in the word *steten*, but rather as in the word *besten*. It should be considered likewise also with sp- and sc-. Especially ought a singer not interchange the vowels with each other, but rather give these their natural sounds, so that he does not pronounce a like o, or o like a, e like i and so forth.

30. The other is the meaning of the words, and it is still more necessary than the former. Thus,<sup>27</sup> it is lamentable that—since a singer at the least in addition to German or his native language also should fairly understand Latin and Italian, in which he is not well proficient (*in speaking*)—nevertheless most of all he should concern himself with the actual and thorough understanding of the same. Thus it happens, then, that such often bear great censure among learned listeners and daily show their lack of knowledge in that one makes a *passaggio* on the word *Confirmatio*,<sup>28</sup> another wants an ascending run on the text *Abyssus passagiren*.<sup>29</sup>
31. The affects are to be derived from the understanding of the words, from these come the foremost, which are the affects joy, sorrow, rage, gentleness and likewise, as one knows in the *Musica rapraesentiren*.<sup>30</sup>
32. In joy, rage and similar intense affect, the voice must be strong, forceful and brave, the notes not particularly polished but most are sung as they are.<sup>31</sup> Then the remaining sense of the style, and especially the piano, *cercar della nota*, *anticipatione della syllaba* and *della nota*, being somewhat more melancholy than this affect demands, would become loud.
33. On the contrary, with sorrowful, gentle and such words it is better that one uses a mild voice, draw out and connect the notes and introduce the ornamental device intended for the style.

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<sup>27</sup> Bernhard loses effective control of syntactic structure in this sentence. Though the meaning is reasonably clear, ellipses and paratactical structures must be clarified fairly liberally.

<sup>28</sup> The effect would be ridiculous of a freely improvised elaboration on a word whose meaning derives from the idea of stability.

<sup>29</sup> Likewise absurd is an ascending run on a text meaning descend into the abyss.

<sup>30</sup> Bernhard uses this phrase as though it were a well-known term, yet I can find no reference to it even in Grove Dictionary. Its meaning is fairly clear. I forbear to introduce a speculation on the vexed *musica reservata* because of that term's complete historical ambiguity and confusion.

<sup>31</sup> This would seem to mean without ornamentation or diminution, which latter he has already made clear in number 30 is permissible, to some degree, in this style.

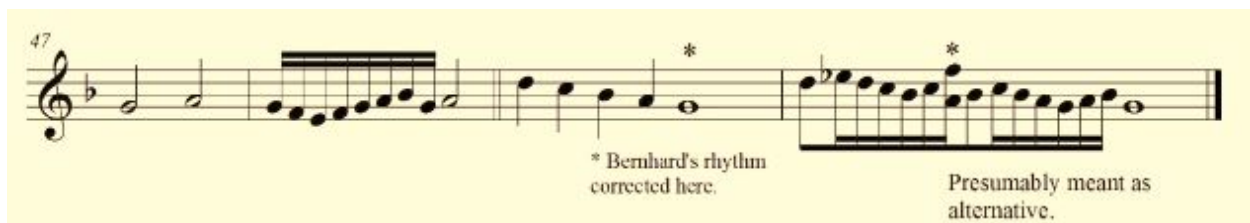
On the other had forte, ardire and trillo somewhat less than with the strong affects, in addition one must use a slower beat (*battuta*) in this kind of affect, but a faster one in the former. A good singer will depend more on the guidance of his judgment and the example of other (*singers*).

34. Here the question is whether a singer should depict the affect as found in the text with his face and gestures. One should thus know that a singer should sing with refinement, demurely and without any facial expression, since there is nothing more annoying than so many singers making themselves better to hear than to see, if they give pleasure to the listener precisely in a good voice and style, they ruin these same things, though, with a hateful countenance and expression. That very singer should only let himself be heard in the choir behind the screen, but not openly in sight of anyone, or indeed have chosen a better expression and refinement.

In my opinion it is not at all possible that one in making music, especially motets and similar pieces, should use the expressions of actors, but rather, if he takes my advice, [he will] be sparing of them until he wants to take on the role in a singing play, on which occasion they will stand him better, indeed even be necessary. Considering such a case, he then not only has to represent the role of an experienced singer but also of a engaging actor.

So much, then, even briefly on the other kind of singing. Here follows the third kind, namely *cantar passaggiato*.<sup>32</sup>

35. The style of *cantar passaggiato* [or *alla Lombarda*] is a kind of singing in which one does not remain with the notes as encountered but rather changes them, and it happens either by diminution or by *coloratura*.<sup>33</sup>
36. Diminution is what makes smaller on one's own the notes as written, according to strict observation of the beat, so that if one divides a note that is worth one half *tactus*, correctly into four eighth-notes, eight sixteenth-notes, or sixteen thirtysecond-notes, and does not remain on the note (*pitch*) but runs ornamentally from the same, as in the example.



(The *E-flat* and the alternative *F* are bracketed in the German edition. *Translator's note.*)

One can commonly find all kinds of examples of diminution everywhere.

<sup>32</sup> The "third" kind is actually the second type within the *d'affetto* division of style.

<sup>33</sup> His analysis is not quite exact because *coloratura* is a form of diminution.

37. Such diminution requires the following rules.

They should be used sparingly, so that the singing—by means of the continuous such runs and the resulting less variety that happens in such cases—does not become burdensome and exhausting for the singer and annoying for the listener. Since it is almost foolish that one makes heard nothing other than only continuous passaggi,<sup>34</sup> rather, this style should be used as salt and spice.

[Second,<sup>35</sup> they should not go too high or too low, or too far above or below the scale (*Scala*) or also from their natural position or pitch, whereby the composition is very easily ruined and now here, now there a horse-fifth, cow-octave or annoying unison slips in and either the first descant, alto or tenor runs into the clef of the others or the others into the first, and thereby the well-set harmony is nullified willy-nilly. Third, all kinds of improper leaps and difficult intervals must be avoided because such not only give no good effect in themselves but also fall disagreeably in the throat and so are much easier and more convenient for instruments than for singers.

38. Coloraturas are those that are bound not so precisely to the beat, but rather more often last two, three or more tactus, but it must be observed that such must be made only in the main final (*cadence*) and not too often in the same or other kind. Now and then more about this do the well-composed solos of composers of proper understanding of singing indicate.<sup>36</sup> As to the rest, there is no further great difference between coloraturas and diminutions, but what is to be observed in the one case is also in the other.

39. It is also better and more musical if a singer or instrumentalist does not diverge from the notes in coloraturas at cadences, but rather, on the contrary, guides by them with restraint also. It is also incorrect if one thus uses the cadence with coloraturas or diminutions as given here in the example.

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<sup>34</sup> Note that he is effectively identifying a specific diminution section as a *passaggio*.

<sup>35</sup> The editor, Müller-Blattau, has placed in brackets the number 37 and the entire passage beginning “Second” and to the end of the treatise

<sup>36</sup> This ought to be a very simple sentence to translate, but Bernhard’s typical casual use of Latin terms and derivatives “Germanified,” in this case *Solo* and *Componisten*, with no predictable gender or case forms that accord with modern practice makes it problematic. This translation requires taking the –en of *Componisten* as a genitive plural and *Solo* as an indeclinable plural, which seems the only way to understand its adjective in “*die wohlgesetzten Solo*”.



Since this causes fifths, fourths, octaves and unisons against the other voices, it is better on this account to vary in the following way instead of the other.<sup>37</sup>



(The “tr” symbols are as appear in the German edition. Translator’s note.)

40. If one makes music alone with an organ or lute it will not be so strictly observed as with polyphony. One takes care only not to make passaggi or coloraturas without discretion. In the bass no great number of rapid passages (*Geschwindigkeiten*) or coloraturas should be made, except for those set by the composer, since otherwise the foundation of the song is destroyed and the voices lack foundation and nothing except an annoying dissonance is heard,<sup>38</sup> thence the *Mantuan* Vers is to be observed, “the bass nourishes, strengthens, supports and increases the voices.” Other voices, however, should make ornamental passages<sup>39</sup> so that they do not introduce musical faults. Such, however, they distinctly prevent if they end on the pitch (*clave*) on which they began when making ornamental passages. Further, it is necessary to know, in conclusion, that a good singer or refined musician who knows how things go with quality and

<sup>37</sup> This reading requires taking *der Gestalt* as masculine nominative instead of the modern feminine genitive. This kind of variation in gender from modern usage is not at all uncommon.

<sup>38</sup> This is a commonplace of the diminution literature and no less true for being often repeated.

<sup>39</sup> Bernhard now switches to use the Germanized Latin “*coloriren*,” which seems to include the making of both passaggi and coloraturas.



quantity of sound (*Qualitate und quantitate Toni*)<sup>40</sup> must not raise his voice in the affect of humility and love, and on the contrary in rage (*must not*) allow the quantity of sound to fall. But, it is especially to be noted in *stilo recitativo*<sup>41</sup> that one raises the voice in rage, and on the contrary lets it fall in sorrow. Pain hesitates, impatience raves. Joy enlivens. Desire emboldens. Love is sensitive. Modesty holds back. Hope strengthens it. Despair reduces it. Fright oppresses it. Danger one flees with shouting. Thus when one puts oneself at risk, one produces such a voice that indicates courage and boldness. In conclusion, a singer should not sing through the nose. He should not stammer or he is unintelligible. He should not shove his tongue and lisp or he is barely half understood. He should also not clench his teeth together, nor open his mouth too wide, nor stick his tongue out between his lips, nor purse his lips, nor distort his mouth, nor puff his cheeks and nose like a monkey, nor bunch his eyebrows together, nor wrinkle his forehead, nor roll his head or eyes around, nor blink, nor let his lips tremble.]<sup>42</sup>

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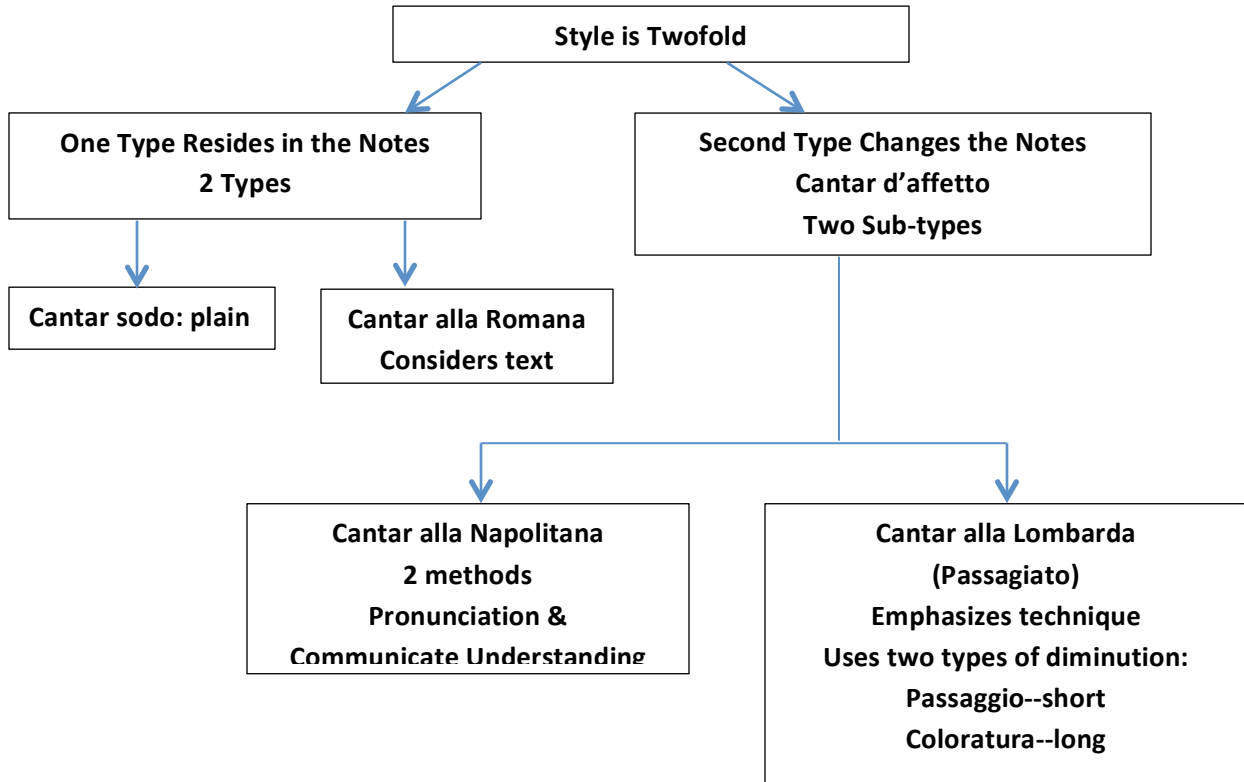
<sup>40</sup> Inferring from the context, I conclude that Bernhard is speaking of the quality of the voice and volume of the sound. He then treats them as separate conditions and specifies how they should be treated according to the specific affect.

<sup>41</sup> Lacking a clear definition by Bernhard, from the perspective of today it is not possible to know precisely what he meant by the term. A good guess would be that it is something like the *stile recitativo* used by Peri and Caccini, a straight-forward declamatory style that audiences of earlier times found astoundingly moving.

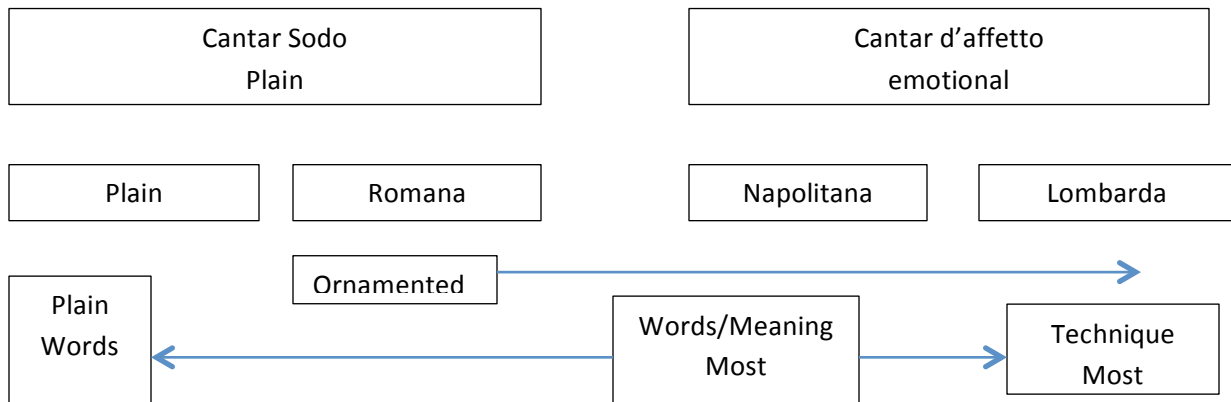
<sup>42</sup> Number 40 rapidly dissolves into a series of miscellaneous, rather jumbled afterthoughts and does not possess the regular structure that Bernhard exhibits in the rest of the treatise. This, along with some changes in vocabulary and the fact that the editor introduced the passage on the sole authority of manuscript c, and not his preferred manuscript sources a and b, causes me to wonder whether it is a later accretion. It is, nevertheless, interesting to see that singers were concerned with such issues at the time.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Translator's summary of Bernhard's style analysis



### Spectrum of Styles



## Appendix 2: Müller-Blattau's Manuscript and other Sources (page 8-9)

There are four manuscript sources for the *Gesanglehre*.

- a. Mus. ms. theor. 76 of the B.B.<sup>43</sup> Title “*Von der Singe-Kunst*” (manuscript in unknown hand).
- b. Mus. ms. autogr. theor. Der B.B. Title “*Von der Singe-Kunst oder Manier*” (manuscript by Johann Kuhnau).
- c. Mus. ms. theor. ND VI 5127 qu. der Stadtbibliothek Hamburg. Title “*Christopheri Bernhardi Mauductio brevior ad Maniera*” (manuscript in unknown hand).
- d. Mus. ms. theor. 85 der B.B. Title “*Kurze Reguhn von der Manier oder Kunstlicher Art zu singen von Hln. Christofforo Bernhardi, Churfl. Sächsischen Vice-Capell Meister herausgegeben*” subtitle “*Von der Art zu singen*” (ascertained as manuscript of Georg Österreich).

Further, the second part of the following booklet has been proven as an extract from Bernhard's *Gesanglehre*.

- e. *Rudimenta musices, das ist, Eine kurtze und Grund-richtige Anweisung zur Singe-Kunst wie solche denen Knaben so wohl in Schulen als in Privat-Information wohl und richtig beyzubringen . . . an Tag gegeben von W.M.M.M.T.C.M.G. im Jahre 1685.*<sup>44</sup>

\* \* \* \* \*

Bernhard's *Gesanglehre* has been received five times. From two of Bernhard's own remarks the title was chosen “*Von der Singe-Kunst oder Manier*, [as indicated in] *Tractatus [Compositionis]* cap. 2§3 and in the [*Ausführlicher*] *Bericht* cap. 18§3 or MS 1b. As Mylius' remark shows, Bernhard did not leave behind an elementary method. [Manuscript sources] a, b and c give the original text. In addition to the common text as a and b present it, c gives further additions. In their conspicuous sketch-like nature d and e as the second part of [Mylius'] *Rudimenta*, are only extracts from Bernhard's work.

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<sup>43</sup> This is clearly a library's call sign for a manuscript. B.B. is the library in question, but German libraries were greatly reorganized by consolidation, etc. as a result of the world wars. Eitner identifies B.B. as the Königliche Bibliothek zu Berlin, which must surely be the one in question. After many vicissitudes including dispersal of the collection during World War II and its division between East and West Germany, the library was reunited following the German reunification and exists today as the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin. This does not insure that the Bernhard manuscripts still exist there. A cursory search did not recover it, which is not particularly unusual.

<sup>44</sup> The editor notes that Adlung identified this book as by Wolfgang Michael Mylius, Bernhard's student.

### Appendix 3: Remarks on Editorial Method from the *Kritischer Bericht* (p. 23).

2. The entire basic text of the three manuscripts is represented according to MS 1a, which corresponds closely with 1b, but has an entirely different numbering of the sections. The supplement of MS 1c was enclosed in square brackets. Its section numbering was introduced because it is confirmed by a remark in the [*Ausführlicher*] *Bericht* (cap. 18§3).<sup>45</sup> Variants of the manuscripts, so far as they are connected with actual alterations of the sense, are introduced below and the best form among them selected, errors in writing are eliminated.

3. Also a middle course was chosen for the writing. The writing style of 1a forms the basis. Wherever double spellings happen within the manuscript, the one conforming to our correct spelling was introduced, as well as, in regard to the alternation in the manuscripts, was the uniformity of the German main words. Internal punctuation was provided when it seemed necessary to understanding the meaning. In regard to the variation of the manuscripts the editor decided for the writing style. In MS 1a (end of §1), the well-founded distinction of *Singer* and *Sänger* was introduced as it exists.

### Appendix 4: Müller-Blattau's discussion of Bernhard's Style Analysis (pp. 15-16).

Surprising also, and of far-ranging significance for the history of style, is the division of the kinds of singing and their attribution to regions of Italy. There are two kinds of singing, Bernhard says, one stays according to the notes, the other changes them. The first kind is once again in two divisions. The first possibility is *cantar sodo*, plain or regular singing. It is the introspective, restrained kind of the singer of *musica reservata*.<sup>46</sup> "Plain" singing appears to correspond to this concept, restrained from individual expression, dedication to the supra-personal musicality of the linear polyphonic organism and its typical expression, (cf. the editor's *Geschichte der Fuge* p.37). But already in the sixteenth century ornamented song<sup>47</sup> belonged to *musica reservata*. Since Josquin, the pinnacle of the style was Rome, already Josquin's student, Coclico, spoke in his *Compendium musices* (1551) [*sic*] of ornate singing (*ornate canere*), which would make *cantus elegans* from *cantus simplex*. His words "*caro cum sale et sinapio condita*" are still to be traced in Bernhard's "*Salz und Gewürtze*" §37. This ornamented song embraces the performance style further presented by Bernhard. It remains "ornamented" in the purely musical sense without relationship to the individual expressive word. In all individual applications of ornamentation, as

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<sup>45</sup> This is a reference to Bernhard's treatise *Ausführlicher Bericht vom Gebrauche der Con- und Dissonantien*.

<sup>46</sup> Müller-Blattau's introduction of the term *musica reservata*, of which there were many understandings even in his own time, does nothing to clarify this passage, particularly because Bernhard himself does not use it.

<sup>47</sup> This would be Bernhard's *cantar alla Romana*.

Hermann Finck already asserted in his *Musica practica* (1556), the actual course of the melody remains unimpaired.

The second possibility of singing, which resides in the notes, is *cantar d'affetto*, the kind that takes the text into account also. It rests first of all on a new valuation of the bare words on proper, refined and faultless pronunciation. Further, it is about correctly grasping the soul, the meaning, or as Bernhard calls it, the understanding from the well-formed aural representation of the word. The basis is again about language, a precise knowledge of one's own German, but also of the other major languages of song, Latin and Italian, at the least an effort about the correct understanding of a text in a foreign language. Schütz, indeed, advised Weckmann to learn even Hebrew! From this kind of correctly understood words are the affects to be extracted. The foremost affects that one can represent in music are joy, sorrow, rage, gentleness and similar. Powerful affects, like joy and rage, demand a rapid beat, the voice must be produced strong, forceful, courageous, the notes ought not be particularly connected. Sorrowful and gentle words, however, want a slow beat and mild voice. The notes can be drawn out and connected. Thus does he express then—apart from performance conforming to sense—the understanding of the affect contained in the word in the kind of movement and in the melody itself. The indication “*alla Napolitana*” makes for a moment's hesitation. Then we remember that the famous preface to Caccini's *Nuove Musiche* (1601) is the most significant document of singing, in which the text prevails over music. But, this type is exemplified and finds its home in the *vilanella* of the *canzon alla Napolitana*, which seeks to match the artlessness from the natural feeling of singing issuing forth from the rustic folk, sailors, and fishermen. Thus Bernhard's designation is correct.

Finally, the *cantar passaggiato*. It is that singing that without consideration for the original part dissolves the linear progression through passages of all kinds and without great distinction in restless surging movement. About this kind of singing we possess from its homeland, upper Italy (hence *alla Lombarda*) a detailed description and method in Lodovico Zacconi's *Prattica di Musica* (1592).<sup>48</sup> It is called *gorgia* and consists, in Zacconi's explanation, “in an accumulation and collection of many eighth-notes and sixteenth-notes, which are united under some one part of a *tactus*.” One learns it “far better through hearing than through examples on account of the rapidity with which so many pitches are drawn together.” Its goal is above all intensification of the movement, not so much the greatly diverse changes of the *passaggi*, its activity of the kind that “the one who listens and hears feels so great a satisfaction in that sweet and rapid movement of the voice, that on account of its loveliness and rapidity does not become aware of this uninterrupted manifold repetitions of a few notes.” In this is it distinguished from basically ornamented song. Its use does not presuppose absolute taste and musicality but rather throat endurance. For this reason Bernhard's description is also only brief. It walks behind the two chief types, for which a different relationship of word and sound lays the foundation, and which thereby form in large part the point of departure for the comprehensive style divisions in the treatise, in particular makes possible the working out of the figures in which lies Bernhard's special merit.

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<sup>48</sup> The entire text of Zacconi's treatment of the diminution technique appears in this same translation series.