

Zorzi Trombetta and the Band of *Piffari* and Trombones of the *Serenissima*: New Documentary Evidence

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Zorzi Trombetta da Modon, a trumpet and slide-trumpet player working in Venice in the second half of the fifteenth century, is well-known to scholars as the author of a notebook today preserved in the British Library (Ms Cotton Titus A XXVI, fols. 1-60). This manuscript includes, in addition to a treatise on the techniques of seafaring and personal notes of various kinds, certain unusual counterpoints to the tenor of a chanson by Dunstable, a few other polyphonic pieces for two and three voices, and some simple *tenores*. As has already been pointed out by Leech-Wilkinson a few years ago in a brilliant article on the subject,¹ in spite of the fact that the pieces included in Zorzi's diary account for only a relatively small proportion of the manuscript, they nonetheless constitute an interesting and special case (though not a unique one) in the context of the fifteenth-century polyphonic sources. In fact, all the pieces, even those not attributable to Zorzi's hand,² are written in a simplified polyphonic notation that has little regard for the rules of perfection, imperfection, and alteration of contemporary mensural notation. Apart from these notational anomalies, the counterpoint itself is also somewhat crude and in any case foreign to the methods of contemporary cultivated composition.

Though Leech-Wilkinson's article is beyond reproach from the paleographic-musical point of view and even very properly extends to the literary section of the manuscript in its attempt to account for the musical anomalies, it is still very far from achieving a full identification of the musical and sociocultural background to Zorzi's notes (both musical and otherwise). In Leech-Wilkinson's view, Zorzi exhibited an extraordinary breadth of interests, but given his "limited musical training," he was essentially a non-professional musician: an instrumentalist who not only carried out his duties as a trumpeter on the naval squadrons of the Republic, but also occasionally engaged in amateur polyphonic performances of famous pieces of his age in the company of a few companions. Of course, that is not exactly how things stood.³

After a closer analysis of the manuscript (drawing also on the new horizons opened in historical musicology in the last few years; i.e., the adoption of an approach that is more anthropological and open to examination of a broader range of cultures, genres, and practices) and thanks to the fortunate discovery of new documentary evidence, we can now establish without any doubt that the correct background for understanding Zorzi and his valuable notebook is that of professional instrumental ensemble playing and, more specifically, the practice of *trombetti et piffari* in the late Middle Ages. This context not only offers an explanation for the notational and contrapuntal anomalies noted by Leech-Wilkinson, but also helps us to view the manuscript from a completely new perspective, and

even accentuates its already acknowledged historical importance. Zorzi's notes, both musical and non-musical, constitute a rare case of a written source (and what is more, a direct one) bearing on a musical practice (instrumental music in the fifteenth century) and class of musician (the instrumentalist-artisan) whose methods and skills moved essentially in the sphere of oral practice. Drawn up between 1444 and 1449, Zorzi's counterpoints are an early and still timid signal of how a professional musical culture (whose strengths lay in memory and in the capacity for improvisation) was gradually being infiltrated by written practices.⁴ We are thus at the dawn of that crucial, yet extended and complex, process of assimilation of the cultured musical skills (use of notation, handling of conventional counterpoint) that led instrumental ensemble playing first to absorb the cultured polyphonic repertoire and then to generate a written literature of its own.

Given the sheer breadth of his interests, and given also his extensive recourse to writing (principally verbal, but also musical), Zorzi probably cannot be termed a typical instrumentalist-artisan of the period. Nonetheless he anticipates and epitomizes certain features that became increasingly typical of his category.⁵ His personal history, which we shall attempt to trace here, has therefore an important emblematic significance, insofar as it widely represents a class of musician, a practice, and a musical genre that were to play a vital role in the subsequent developments of Western music history. In particular, we shall see that Zorzi's destiny crossed paths with that of one of the most important Venetian institutions of the period (that of the Doge's *piffari*), and that the man whom Leech-Wilkinson, lacking a solid contextual vision, considered an obscure fifteenth-century trumpeter was in fact a key figure in Venetian instrumental music in his day.

1. The years of formation and travel: the trumpeter and wine seller on the galleys

We do not know the exact date of birth and death of Zorzi Trombetta da Modon, but we do know (from a document of 1481) that his full name was Zorzi di Nicolò. However, a glance at the broad outline of his long musical career (it extended over about a half-century, from 1444 to 1494) suggests that he was born around 1420 and died between 1495 and 1502.⁶ When he began to draw up his notebook in 1444, he cannot have been more than twenty to twenty-five years old. And it was probably in this same year that he began to serve as a trumpeter on certain Venetian mercantile galleys (*galere da mercato*) that plied the trade-routes to Flanders and the Levant.⁷ The habit of keeping a notebook was admittedly a slightly unusual one for a member of the subordinate classes, but was nonetheless strongly encouraged by the tedium of seafaring life, during which, as the contemporary traveler Felix Fabris observed, every man did his best to pass the time by engaging in occupations of the most diverse kinds.⁸ Now Zorzi's book, which (as already pointed out) is not a musical codex *tout court*, but rather a notebook that also contains a few musical pages, exhibits a remarkably wide range of interests and variety of purposes. In it we find poems in Italian and Latin, moral epigrams, prayers, medical information, diary entries, a few accounts (which reveal that Zorzi was not only a professional musician, but also a wine merchant)⁹ and a large theoretical section that includes rules for sail-making, information on bridge-building, siege engines, and mills, and a genuine treatise on ship-building—all complete with technical

drawings and some splendid illustrations. So while Zorzi's text, like many other contemporary and later manuscripts, is, at least in part, a logbook that scrupulously records his earnings from his two occupations (of instrumentalist and wine-seller), as a whole it gives the impression of being a sort of treasure chest in which the diverse bits of his knowledge and experience are set down and preserved like small jewels. With such a wide range of interests and such an extensive use of writing (which far exceeds the practical and strictly functional uses generally found among the merchant classes or the higher sectors of the artisan class in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries), it was perhaps inevitable that Zorzi would show an interest in musical notation. The idea that there is an automatic link between the uses of writing and musical notation is perhaps a debatable one that needs further demonstration, but there is no question that Zorzi's wide range of interests and knowledge was the ideal background for a passage of this kind.

The first documentable portion of Zorzi's career is that of his service as a *trombetta* in the Venetian mercantile navy. Here again, our interest goes well beyond the mere biographical fact, since it would appear that such employment was shared by other Venetian wind instrument players; indeed, given the central place of shipping in the Venetian economy and the standard presence of instrumentalists on the galleys (as will be shown shortly), naval service can be considered a kind of trademark of Venetian wind musicians.¹⁰

The presence of trumpet players on the ships was required mainly, though not solely, for signaling purposes. Althea Wiel relates, though without citing her sources, that in Venice "the vessels of lesser tonnage carried two trumpets, while those of heavier tonnage had a trumpet, a drum, and two kettledrums."¹¹ This is confirmed at least in part by a document in the state archives of Venice dated 1383, also mentioned by Leech-Wilkinson, concerning the admiral of the Romanian fleet.¹² What is not clear is how many and which of the ships in that fleet made use of trumpets and/or drums. Undoubtedly all the war galleys with some function of command were thus equipped, as were the *capitanie* galleys that led the mercantile fleets. And it was on ships of the latter kind (the so-called *galere grosse* or *galere da mercato*) that Zorzi seems to have served between 1446 and 1449, as we clearly deduce from his own reports. To get an idea of his duties on board, and in general of the functions required of wind players on the merchant galleys, we can turn to the chronicles written by Santo Brasca¹³ and the above-mentioned Felix Fabris during their crossing to the Holy Land in 1480 on board the *Contarina*, one of the two Venetian galleys then assigned the function of transporting pilgrims. Their accounts reveal a surprising variety of functions, which in some cases went beyond the strict confines of signaling. Fabris, for example, tells us that one of the trumpeters' duties was to announce the beginning and end of lunch and dinner. Indeed his description of life on board is extremely precise and vivid. Among other things he tells us that as many as four players served on the *Contarina* (a detail confirmed by a fine contemporary illustration of this vessel)¹⁴ and that these musicians played not only the normal trumpets (*tubis*), but also *trumpetae* (a term which probably refers to the slide-trumpet). This last detail, taken together with Zorzi's mention of certain *piffari* players (who were presumably sailing on the *capitania* galley),¹⁵ would seem to be evidence that the duties of the naval trumpeters also extended to music and polyphony, at least on certain vessels:

Four players of the trumpet and slide-trumpet (*trumpetae*) stand up and play their trumpets at mess time, instead of the bell; hearing which all come forward with great haste But the feast of the pilgrims takes place swiftly and everything is hastily taken away, and when their feast is over, the players (*tubicines*) once again play their trumpets.¹⁶

Brasca, who also includes many interesting (though not so detailed) references to the trumpeters, tells us that their duties included sounding the assembly (to summon the *galeotti* [oarsmen] and pilgrims before the departure from every port, for example),¹⁷ hailing friendly vessels and signaling the ship's presence,¹⁸ and finally, performing music on special occasions (i.e., not just trumpet flourishes). Duties of this last type are perhaps exemplified by a passage concerning a "devotional halt" made by the *Contarina* before the venerated sanctuary/shrine of Santa Maria delle Grazie at Lesna:

Sunday morning 18 June [1480], seeing that the storm had ceased, we set sail and at around the sixth hour found ourselves above the city of Lesna [Lesina] There is a church of Santa Maria delle Grazie where the friars of St. Francis live, of observance and very great devotion to all sailors, and all newly built with their offerings. We did not make a halt here, as was the intention of the magnificent patron and the desire of all the pilgrims, because the *provenza*, our propitious wind, rose; but hailing the glorious Virgin when we were opposite the said church with sounding of trumpets and with the singing of the hymn *Ave maris stella* and commending ourselves to the said Mother of Grace, and after making the customary offering to the friars of the said place, who came to the galley, and continuing on our way, (after) about twenty-four hours we made a halt at Corzula, a city of Schiavonia [Dalmatia], which lies opposite the land of the Ragusans.¹⁹

Though it is difficult to establish whether and what kind of polyphonic music was actually played on board, and to what extent it formed a part of the player's ordinary duties, there was clearly no lack of opportunities for engaging in it. The trumpeters received requests for musical entertainment not only from the officers and masters of the galleys, but also from patrons of the aristocratic and merchant classes in the coastal cities, where as a matter of course the naval squadrons stopped for provisioning.

The evidence that professional services of this kind complemented those performed on board comes from Zorzi himself. As Leech-Wilkinson already observed, the list of payments jotted down on fol. 25 of the notebook, dated 17 April 1449, refers mostly to earnings from musical performances given in various coastal towns of Greece and Dalmatia: Zara, Ragusa, Corfù, Patrasso, Lepanto, Cattaro—all ports under Venetian dominion at which the Venetian galleys habitually stopped on the eastern route. Sometimes his notes also disclose the nature of the event (in two cases, at Cattaro and Zara, Zorzi provided music for a

wedding) and reveal that the commissions came from various, yet mostly high-ranking, sources: the rectors of Lepanto and of Trau, the bishop of Cattaro, and the masters of certain galleys. However, the main evidence that the naval trumpeters were familiar with a genuinely polyphonic type of musical practice is precisely that of the two- and three-voice pieces and tenors that Zorzi transcribed in his precious diary. Almost certainly these materials formed part of the polyphonic repertoire he and his companions played on the above occasions.²⁰

While this is not the place for a detailed analysis of these pieces, I feel I should at least add the following comments to Leech-Wilkinson's examination. My first point concerns the group of tenors (four in all: *ttenor d'una balattina franzese*, *ttenor ence prunttemps*, *ttenor soventt me pas*, and *ttenor gie se far danser le dames*). Their presence in the manuscript is by no means accidental, but instead connected with a familiar practice in fifteenth-century music for instrumental ensemble. It is a well-known fact that, like certain tunes of popular origin, the tenor parts extrapolated from pre-existing polyphonic works could act as the structural foundation for forms of extemporatory polyphony in two or three parts.²¹ So it is not at all strange that Zorzi should note down some simple tenors together with the genuine polyphonic pieces. And it also goes without saying that in these cases the musical notation serves essentially as an aid to the memory, as a means of fixing an increasingly large and complex repertoire of melodies designed to be embellished polyphonically in performance.

My second point concerns the four two-part counterpoints to the tenor of *Puisque m'amour*. These instead would seem to be examples of a completely new creative attitude and approach to musical composition. Despite their somewhat crude and unconventional craftsmanship, they nonetheless reveal a tendency to experiment with the various possibilities of counterpoint,²² though their methods of polyphonic elaboration seem to take their cue from oral practice—as clearly shown, for example, by the persistent movement in thirds in the second version.²³ Here, in some respects, the musical notation would seem to be acting as a means of testing and checking what formerly would have been elaborated extemporaneously.

A third and final observation concerns our identification of the instruments the pieces were written for; and by reflection, the type of instrument Zorzi himself used. A careful consideration of the ambitus (*c-e'*) and tessitura of the polyphonic pieces, particularly those for two voices, definitely rules out the extreme hypotheses (natural trumpet and trombone), and instead supports that of a slide trumpet. In fact, the pieces are unplayable on a natural trumpet, while their limited downward range (absolutely normal for the music of the time) makes them unlikely to be intended for an instrument suited to the low register, such as the trombone (which, among other things, was still in a phase of definition at the time). Instead, the behavior of the individual parts would seem to suggest that all the two-part pieces, including the elaborations of *Puisque m'amour*, were intended for two slide trumpets. For the three-voice pieces such as *Une fois avant que mourir*, on the other hand, the most likely hypothesis is that of a typical ensemble consisting of two *piffari* and a slide trumpet.

2. Zorzi in Venice: Service in the Doge's band and relations with the local confraternities

Some recently discovered documents show that at a certain point in his career, Zorzi took up permanent residence in Venice and played an important role in the Venetian musical environment. The documentation on this matter is sufficiently convincing, but it concerns only the last fifteen years of his career, from 1479-80 to 1494-95. Now, judging from the evidence of his diary entries, he was certainly employed as a trumpeter on a merchant galley until at least 1449, so that leaves a fairly long period unaccounted for (some thirty years, from 1450 to 1480), about which we know nothing and, at most, can advance just a few tentative hypotheses. The first concerns his assumption of permanent residence in Venice. It would be tempting, on the strength of the last date noted in the diary, to set his move around 1450, but equally certainly it could have happened quite a few years later, for we cannot rule out the possibility that his service on ships extended well beyond that date. For example, the Collegio document of 1493 attests that a certain Andrea tubicinis served *in triremibus et barchis* for a good twenty years, so Zorzi's own "apprenticeship" on the galleys was conceivably just as long, if not longer.²⁴ He might therefore have settled definitively in Venice soon after 1449, but also shortly before or after 1460. But whatever the actual date, one thing is certain: from the artistic and professional points of view he would have found the situation in the city both stimulating and rich in opportunities.

Though at present we lack thorough studies of musical life in Venice in the mid-fifteenth century and of the orientations of local patronage, the evidence suggests that music for instrumental ensemble, and for the *piffari* in particular, was well rooted and also enjoyed wide appreciation. A fair idea of the situation is given in some recently discovered documents concerning the *scuole piccole* (devotional societies instituted for charitable work and mutual aid, and a very characteristic feature of Venetian society) and the arts and crafts guilds (also commonly known as *scuole*).²⁵ From their statute books (the so-called *mariegole*)²⁶ we learn that as early as the end of the fourteenth century some of these associations were accustomed to solemnizing their main feast by introducing one or more groups of wind instruments.²⁷ By the 1440s this custom seems to have become the norm. For even the humblest *scuola*, the notion of honoring their main holiday without recourse to trumpets and *piffari* would have constituted an inadmissible breach of tradition that could seriously tarnish their image. The vital importance of these musical contributions is also attested by some documents from the very early fifteenth century. They indicate that the various furnishings kept by the schools and guilds often included silk pennants displaying their own coat of arms, to be attached to trumpets and *piffari*. For example, from surviving inventories for the years 1400, 1401, and 1431, we learn that the Scuola of Santa Caterina dei Sacchi possessed "four silk flags for trumpets [...] gilded with the image of the holy Saint Catherine,"²⁸ the guild of the barrel-makers (*botteri*) likewise had "two gold pennants for trumpets ... and two silk pennants for *piffari*"²⁹ and the more prosperous Scuola dei Milanesi was provided with as many as "ten flags for trumpets and *piffari*" and two other flags for nakers (*naccarini*).³⁰ If we consider that around the mid-fifteenth century, Venice had no fewer than two hundred

associations (counting both devotional schools and craft guilds), and that most were required to celebrate both their patron's feast and its vigil with fitting pomp, we can deduce that hardly a day passed without a company of *piffari* being engaged somewhere in the city.³¹

With the surviving documents from the schools and guilds we can in fact do much more than offer a mere quantification of the phenomenon—which, besides, various considerations (as well as other evidence we shall discuss below) suggest was much larger than at first seems. Some of the documents also offer insights into the details of the ceremonial observed by these associations, which consisted in the celebration of a solemn Mass, generally preceded by a procession. They even give a fairly distinct picture of the duties performed by the trumpets and *piffari* in the various phases of the liturgical rite. On this subject we have two key witnesses: one of the rules from the *mariegola* of the Scuola dei Milanesi, drawn up around 1420, and a similar text concerning the Scuola degli Albanesi, dated ca. 1440.³² The former suggests that the duties required of the instruments in the preparatory stages of the feast consisted in summoning the brethren and leading them in procession to the place ordained for celebrating the rite. The latter, on the other hand, clearly points out that the crucial, and musically most delicate, part of their duties took place in church during the liturgical rite (i.e., during Mass on the feast day itself, and on Vespers on the vigil). More specifically, as the brethren take pains to specify, the salient moments were at the act of Offering (the ceremony of oblation that took place during the Offertory)³³ and at the Elevation:

We wish for two or four *piffari* to be received into this *scuola*, who do not have to pay anything when they join the *scuola*, not even for the candles for any time, provided that they do their duty; and this is so as to honor God as the schools do on their feast days; and these *piffari* must play on the vigil of San Gallo, and that of San Mauritio at Vespers, and on the following morning at dawn, and when the *gastaldo* [head of the guild] and companions will rise to make their offering [i.e., at the moment of the oblation ceremony that consisted, as we read in the nineteenth rule of the same *mariegola*, of “one candle each of the value of a *soldo*”], and also when the body and blood of Christ are raised [i.e., at the Elevation]; and to ensure that they serve more willingly, let five *soldi* be given to each of them, if it pleases the *gastaldo* and his companions; and if the said players do not wish to perform their duty let them incur a fine of two *soldi* per person for every time this rule is disobeyed, and be made to pay five *soldi* every year for the candles even, and that they should pay their debt and not leave the said church without the consent of the *gastaldo* and his council; and if they should be engaged in some service of the Signoria, in that case we do not wish them to be subjected to any penalty.³⁴

Obviously the schools and guilds were not the only patrons of the trumpet-and-*piffari* ensembles, though it is certainly true that they provided an important basis of support and promotion for instrumental ensemble practice. The instrumentalist's main source of livelihood in the rich and powerful Venice of the mid-fifteenth century is instead likely to

have consisted of the various musical services provided for the social life and entertainment of the aristocracy and the merchant middle classes: banquets, balls, and weddings, and the so-called *mattinate*.³⁵ From the contemporary chronicles we learn, for example, that the music of the *piffari* played a very important role in the celebration of weddings, and was even considered indispensable in the purely liturgical phase of the rite. In giving notice of the wedding between Alvis Pasqualigo's niece and Gianfranco Morosini, the chronicler Marin Sanudo observes with satisfaction that the ceremony took place "with the trumpets and *piffari* in church [...] which hasn't been done for years, but instead one gets married in church on the quiet and then has a party. But with trumpets and *piffari* is the true and good old way."³⁶

But though such *maritazi* constituted, by ancient tradition, a stable and surely remunerative source of occupation, the central importance of this and other likely functions must not distract our attention from a range of other opportunities and occasions, which diverse kinds of evidence suggest were surprisingly numerous and varied. The Malipiero chronicle (drawn up between 1457 and 1499) offers two extreme, yet emblematic, examples: in an isolated note dated 21 April 1491, it relates that the banker Pietro Soranzo "celebrated the balancing of his books (*ha saldà el so banco*) with trumpets and *piffari*"; and in a longer entry on the famine of the summer of 1495, it records the celebration at the flour warehouse of San Marco of "a solemn Mass of the Holy Spirit with trumpets and *piffari*."³⁷

A final important indication that instrumental ensemble music was both firmly established and in excellent health in Venice around the middle of the fifteenth century is the existence of a *scuola de trombetti e sonadori*; in other words, a corporation that comprised the professional instrumentalists (players of trumpets and *piffari* for the most part) working in the city. Documented from 1468 (but most likely founded several years earlier), the school of Santa Maria dei trombetti was hosted in the church of San Silvestro, where it kept an altar. Unfortunately, its *mariegola* is lost, so our only information about this school is gleaned from a few scattered references in the documentation of the other schools.³⁸

So when Zorzi settled in Venice, it was against a background of consolidated, established instrumental practice and a widely spread and variegated network of patronage. We do not know exactly when he was first engaged in the Doge's band, but it plausibly occurred after he had worked for at least a few years as a "freelance" performer offering his services to the schools, guilds, and members of the nobility and citizen class. While his membership in the *scuola dei trombetti* can be taken for granted, there is good evidence that right from the start it was specifically the schools, and particularly the *scuole grandi*, that offered profitable conditions, at least in terms of social security, if not necessarily in strict terms of income. The hypothesis is supported not only by the established practice among the devotional schools of accepting instrumentalists among their number without any charge,³⁹ but also by the fact that Zorzi—as we shall see below—turns out to have belonged to as many as three confraternities between 1480 and 1495: the Scuola Grande di San Marco, the Scuola di Santa Maria dei Mercanti, and the Scuola Grande di San Rocco.

The earliest securely dated document attesting Zorzi's activities in Venice however does not concern his relations to the schools, but refers instead to his service in the ducal ensemble of *tubetarum et pifarorum*. This is the deliberation of the Collegio, dated 7 July 1481, confirming the decision to increase the band's monthly salary from four to five *ducati*. It is a document of fundamental importance for its bearing, not only on our reconstruction and redefinition of Zorzi's artistic standing, but also on the history of the ducal band and Venetian instrumental music in general. It thus deserves to be quoted and commented in full:

The undersigned lord councillors, having carefully considered the inadequacy of the salary of the trumpets and *pifferi* of the most serene Lord Doge and their numerous duties, and considering also that many of the customary city festivals have disappeared (from which they drew no little profit and supported their families), they have decided and deliberated that to the salary of each them should be added a gold *ducato*, so that if they first had 4 *ducati* a month, from now on they would have 5 *ducati* a month, so that they can support themselves and their families under the protection of our lord....

The names of the aforesaid players are:

Georgius Nicolai de Mothons	}	<i>tubete</i> [trombones]
Hieronymus Georgij dicti filius		

Petrus Nicolai de Raguis	}	<i>pifari</i> [shawms and bombardis]
Georgius Andree paduanus		
Bernardinus Sigismundi tarvisini ⁴⁰		

One of the points of greatest interest of the deliberation lies in the list appended at the bottom. It is not just a list of names, but a faithful outline of the ducal ensemble: its five members are grouped according to speciality—*tubete* (trombones) and *pifari* (shawms and bombardis)—and under each section the instrumentalists are listed, plausibly in order of role and prestige. Heading the whole list is Zorzi's name, here recorded in the same Latinized reading found in the notebook (Gehorgius), but with a new element consisting of the addition of the patronymic Nicolai. If we accept the idea that the list was not drawn up randomly, Zorzi's position is a sign of a certain prestige, a mark of acknowledged professional superiority and perhaps also of enduring and loyal service. Our impression is that he was not just any member of the ensemble, but its head (or at least one of its leaders), and also that he must have entered the group some years earlier (a decade or perhaps more). This supposition is strengthened by the fact that the role of second *tubeta* (i.e., second trombone) is taken by his son Girolamo.⁴¹ Recent research, as shown below, indicates that Girolamo was the eldest of three sons, all of whom were illustrious members of the ducal ensemble.

Before offering further confirmation of these impressions, it is worth saying a few words about the Doge's ensemble of *piffari* and trombones. To date, the above-cited deliberation is the earliest surviving document concerning this illustrious company.⁴² In fact the origins of the ducal band and most of its fifteenth-century history are still shrouded in mystery. But it was unquestionably already functioning at the start of the century. We deduce this not only because the musical practices adopted by the guilds and schools must surely have been the fruit of a mechanism of imitation of state ceremonial, but also because it is precisely the schools' documents that give us the occasional valuable glimpse of its existence. For example, there is a detail in the slightly threatening close of the above-quoted rule of the Scuola degli Albanesi that might suggest that the group of "two or four *piffari*" needed for their own ceremonies was in fact the ducal one: "and if they [these players] should be engaged in some service of the Signoria, in that case we do not wish them to be subjected to any penalty." By way of confirmation, it is worth adding that later documents show that it was altogether customary for the ducal players to supplement their salaries by performing for other institutions.⁴³ Besides, an interesting allusion to this custom is also contained in the 1481 document. There, as a justification for granting the raise in salary, we are told that there had been an increase in the institutional duties and a decrease in all the services rendered at the customary Venetian ceremonies, out of which the players of the band derived not a small part of their own income. And this decrease was due, we may be sure, not to the suppression of any festivities, but to the increasing number of rival companies competing for attention on the Venetian scene. A notable feature of the Doge's ensemble is that the players were exclusively Italian—In fact, they were all drawn from the Veneto or its associated territories (Padua and Treviso were controlled by Venice at that period, and Modon and Ragusa were Venetian colonies). Elsewhere in Italy, German influence was deeply felt. Florence, Ferrara, and Mantua were among the centers in which German players dominated.⁴⁴ Bologna retained its Italian character to some extent. The city produced outstanding players from within its own walls and provided a training ground for young Italian players from other cities and courts. Still, Bologna from time to time included Germans within the ranks of its civic ensemble.⁴⁵ Venice, on the other hand, appears to have been a remarkable in supporting only Italians.

But apart from these details, the most important facts to be extrapolated from the document are those mentioned above, concerning the size and structure of the ensemble. From the carefully drawn-up list at the bottom we deduce that around 1480—and most likely already from the 1470s—the ducal group was a quintet consisting of two trombones (for almost certainly the archaic Latin expression *tubete* refers to trombones rather than slide-trumpets) and three *piffari* (presumably a shawm and two bombards). The presence of a second trombone, an innovation that is anything but inconsequential from the point of view of sonority and which probably took place as early as the mid-1470s (perhaps on the advice of Zorzi himself), placed the Venetian group in an innovative position. Except at the court of Ferrara, where certain German virtuosos were working in the band, we generally find that this novelty was embraced in the Italian context only towards the end of the century.⁴⁶ With such a reinforcement and with the skills of a musically literate leader such as Zorzi, the ducal

band was now capable of tackling not only the traditional instrumental forms, but also the various contemporary polyphonic repertoires (with the necessary adaptations, of course). It seems likely that chansons, motets, and Mass sections for three and four voices were subjected in that period to the same procedures of “expansion” that Alvisè trombon described in his letter to Francesco II Gonzaga of December 1494.⁴⁷

Mention of Alvisè brings us directly to an examination of a second important deliberation undertaken by the Collegio in January 1490. This document specifically concerns Alvisè and his appointment to the Doge’s band, but it also represents a further important contribution towards our definition of Zorzi’s status:

The undersigned lord councillors, having considered the skill and excellence of the trumpeter Alvisè, loyal Venetian subject, son of the loyal Zorzi, also a trumpeter, and to ensure that Alvisè who is indeed, as everyone knows, superior to everyone else in the art of playing brass instruments, may stay here in the city together with his aforesaid father, and serve our Lord and should not be forced to leave, they have deliberated, after the whole Collegio had thus examined the matter, and decided that he should be appointed trumpeter of our Lord with a salary of six *ducats* a month, a *ragione di mese*, and with all the other conditions and obligations that were assigned to his aforesaid father and to his companion trumpeters of our Lord, and that at the established times he must collect the money of his salary from the same place from which his aforesaid companions collect it.⁴⁸

The first crucial point that we learn from the deliberation is that Alvisè trombon, an eminent figure in Venetian instrumental music, and one well known to scholars for his correspondence with the Marquis of Mantua,⁴⁹ was Zorzi’s son, probably the second-eldest. The consequences of this fact are, one might say, twofold. On the one hand, it clarifies the origin and training of a personality as charismatic, musically literate, and inclined to experimentation as Alvisè. On the other, it confirms that Zorzi was a true “head of school” and that his prestige was such that, with minimal effort, he succeeded in persuading the members of the Collegio to employ another of his sons, despite the fact that the brass section was already complete. The official machination was amply justified not only by Zorzi’s authority (and pressure, one might imagine), but also by Alvisè’s exceptional instrumental skill which, no doubt thanks to his father’s discriminating training, “is indeed, as everyone knows, superior to everyone else in the art of playing brass instruments.”⁵⁰ Besides, his exceptional talent is suggested not only by the fear (expressed in the document) that he might leave the city to go and serve elsewhere, but also attested by the relations he actually enjoyed with the Marquis of Mantua and Duke of Ferrara some years later.

Alvisè’s election, which as we have seen did not follow the usual procedure (i.e., filling a vacant position), but with the aim of protecting the city from the loss of a precious investment, poses a few questions about the internal organization of the ducal group. In fact, his engagement not only raised the number of members to six, but also, at least in theory,

created an equal balance between reeds and brass (three *piffari* + three trombones). Now, the possibility of having three musicians skilled at handling brass instruments may have been occasionally exploited, but there is no doubt that the presence of a permanent third trombone was a slight anomaly for the period; at the very least it was a precocious anticipation. This is confirmed also by the deliberations concerning the band issued in the years immediately after Zorzi's death. From these it emerges that at least until 1505 the trombone section consisted of just two players.⁵¹ It seems plausible, therefore, that Alvise had taken the place of his old father, and that the latter, awaiting the moment of his official retirement, had been allowed to reduce his duties, or alternatively had perhaps been assigned a less fatiguing role. Support for the latter hypothesis is offered by the fact that one of the band's three bombard players, Pietro di Nicolò da Ragusa, had died during the years immediately before or after Alvise's appointment. The possibility that Zorzi took over Pietro's position is not at all a remote one if we consider not only his unquestioned capacity to do so, but also the instrumental versatility and flexibility that were typical, and in certain respects indispensable, qualities of contemporary instrumental ensemble playing. So while some doubt remains about the exact distribution of roles in the band and the specific role played by old Zorzi after Alvise's appointment, one thing is certain: from 1493 on, the ducal group had definitively become a sextet. This important turning point is attested by as many as three documents: the appointment of Nicolò di Clementi in October 1493 (which the Collegio made—significantly not to replace a vacancy, but “for the honor of the city”);⁵² the above-mentioned letter sent by Alvise in December 1494 to Francesco II Gonzaga (in which he says, referring to the Doge's band, that *nui semo sei*)⁵³; and a short but eloquent text of the Scuola Grande di San Rocco, dated 1494-95, which clearly reveals that the band was made up of six musicians. Comparable in historical importance to the ducal deliberation of 1481 discussed above, this last document offers us, among other things, an ordered picture of the ducal group's internal organization in the 1490s:

[1494-95]

Ser Zorzi de Nicholò [da Modon]

Ser Bernardin de Sigismondo pifaro

Ser Nicolò [di Clementi] pifaro

Ser Zorzi d'Andrea pifaro

Ser Alvixe de Zorzi trombon

Ser Jeronimo de Zorzi trombon

Ser Bortholamio de Zorzi [added later]

The above players, who are of our most illustrious Signoria, are our brothers, for whom they are obliged to play on the day of the feast and as a reward to have two candles, two loaves, and nothing else for each one.⁵⁴

Leaving aside for a moment the position occupied by Zorzi's name, there is evidence to suggest that the list not only adopts the customary separation of double reeds and brass, but also follows a precise order of register from high to low, as we sometimes find in the documents of the *scuole grandi*.⁵⁵ For example, the position of Nicolò di Clementi (second in the *piffari* section) may not be at all accidental, for we learn from the deliberation of his appointment that his role was that of contralto *piffaro*.⁵⁶ If that is the case, by deduction the roles of soprano and tenor *piffari* could be assigned to the names above and below (Bernardin de Sigismondo and Andrea di Zorzi respectively):

Ser Zorzi de Nicholò [da Modon]
 Ser Bernardin⁵⁷ de Sigismo[n]do pifaro [soprano = *cialamello*]
 Ser Nicolò [di Clementi] pifaro [*contra alto* = bombard]
 Ser Zorzi d'Andrea pifaro [tenor = bombard]
 Ser Alvixe de Zorzi trombon
 Ser Jeronimo de Zorzi trombon

Whatever the case, it is once again old Zorzi who heads the list, a detail we can legitimately interpret as a sign of continuing authority, considering the anything-but-random manner in which the names were entered.⁵⁸ We are not given to know with certainty if Zorzi was still fully operative, for his is the only name without any specification of role. This could be understood either as a confirmation of the flexibility referred to earlier (on certain occasions at least, he could have supplemented the section of the double reeds) or that his presence was more nominal than practical, perhaps even limited to artistic supervision. The presence of a seventh name (Bartholomeo di Zorzi), clearly added later, as one deduces from both its lighter inking and position (at the bottom of the list and slightly separated from the other names), seems to support the former hypothesis. From other documents we learn that Bartolomeo, who was perhaps Zorzi's third son and who almost certainly joined the band as a replacement for the aged leader (by then either unable to serve or already dead), assumed the role of *piffaro*.⁵⁹ If our conjecture is right—in other words, if during his last years of activity Zorzi really did operate predominantly in the reed section and played soprano *piffaro* (on the strength of the arguments outlined above), then the internal organization of the Doge's band from 1493-94 onwards seems to have been that of a typical sextet consisting of two sopranos (shawms), one contralto (bombard), one tenor (bombard), and two basses (trombones).⁶⁰

From this same document it also transpires that Zorzi and the Doge's band had become brothers of the Scuola Grande di San Rocco, a condition that entailed many privileges, but also in exchange obliged them to perform for the confraternity on the day (and most likely also the vigil) of its main holiday (15 and 16 August). We know, however, as we already said above, that this important school was not the first or only one with which Zorzi had dealings. His name appears also in the *mariegola* of the Scuola Grande of San Marco,⁶¹ a confraternity that was especially attentive to the musical side of its ceremonies and particularly inclined to welcome members of the artistic elite among its ranks (its brothers included the painters

Gentile and Giovanni Bellini). The actual enrollment of Zorzi's name, complete with patronymic, profession (*trombetta del principe*) and parish of residence (Sant'Antolin), dates certainly to 1480, the year in which the *mariegola* began to be drawn up, but there is reason to believe that he had joined the school some years earlier, around the mid-1470s—and perhaps as early as 1469.⁶² In 1484 Girolamo, Zorzi's eldest son, was also enrolled as a member of the Scuola di San Marco, whereas there is no trace of Alvise and the other members of the ducal band, except Pietro di Nicolò.⁶³ In addition to the *scuole grandi* of San Marco and San Rocco, Zorzi was also a brother of the rich school of Santa Maria dei Mercanti.⁶⁴ His membership of the latter school, this time shared with the whole of the ducal band, presumably dates to 1493 and there is no doubt that it was granted in exchange for specific musical services, as in the case of the school of San Rocco.

Though the research on this subject is still continuing and there is still much to clarify and define, the data that have emerged so far allow us to outline certain important conclusions. First of all, Zorzi Trombetta, the author of the notebook GB-Lbl, Cotton Titus A. XXVI, was an important—and probably central—figure in Venetian instrumental music during the second half of the fifteenth century. He not only served in the ducal band of *piffari* and trombones for a considerable time and became one of its most influential members, but also created, through his own sons (Girolamo and Alvise), a genuine “school” that monopolized the group's brass section for about thirty years. Secondly, the documentation reveals that ensemble playing, and especially that of the band of *piffari* and trombones, was widespread and strongly rooted in fifteenth-century Venice. This is strikingly confirmed by the fact that it was common practice from the first half of the century for trumpets and *piffari* to perform in church and that particular moments of the liturgy were set aside for their playing. This last point is not without importance, for it may have played a propulsive role in the increasing tendency to engage with sophisticated musical genres (borrowed from the contemporary polyphonic repertoire) and in the gradual development of musical literacy. The third point is that a personality like Zorzi's, over and above its individual and atypical features, cannot in any way be understood or fully assessed outside the rich context of music-making in Venice. It was this context that nurtured his artistic and musical development and which his exceptional personality, musical skills, and cleverness helped in turn to sustain and nurture. The fourth point is that we can assert (even without hazarding absolute priorities) that during the long span of the careers of Zorzi and his sons (ca. 1440-1510), instrumental music in Venice matched the general stature of the city as one of the major centers of Europe. Indeed, in the arena of instrumental ensemble playing it was the only Italian center independent of northern influence and capable of competing with contemporary German practices.

After the completion of his dissertation, Le origini e lo sviluppo dell'idioma violinistico in Italia (“The Origins and Development of the Violinistic Idiom in Italy,” University of Rome “La Sapienza”), Rodolfo Baroncini continued to investigate the early history of the violin as well as the related fields of sixteenth-century instrumental music and the early Baroque sonata. He has published articles on these subjects in Recercare (vol. 6, 1994), Rivista de Musicologia

(vol. 16, no. 6, 1993), and *Studi Musicali* (vol. 27, 1998). Recent work on instrumental ensemble practices and musical patronage of the northern Italian ducal courts in the early seventeenth century culminated in an article entitled “*Sinfonie et balli allegri: Functions, Genres, and Patronage of Instrumental Music at the court of Mantua in the early Seventeenth Century*” (*Italian History and Culture* 5 [1999]: 29-70). Baroncini was Professor at the *Istituto di Musicologia of Parma University* from 1994 to 2001 and now teaches at the *Conservatorio di Stato di Adria (Veneto)*.

The author wishes to thank Keith Polk for his generous assistance in the preparation of this article.

DOCUMENTARY APPENDIX

1. Venezia, Archivio di Stato, Collegio, Notatorio (1474-1481), reg. 12, fol. 150, 7 July 1481

MCCCCXXX primo die septimo Julij

Infrascripti domini consiliarij: attenta parvitate salarij tubetarum et pifarorum Serenissimi Domini Ducis et multis obligationis eorumdem: attentoque etiam multae jam solitae festivitates civitatis defecerunt: ex quibus non parum percipientes utilitatem, familias nutriebant suas: terminaverunt et deliberaverunt *quod* addatur unionique eorum ducatus unus auri in mense ex ratione mensis: ita que sicut prius habebant ducatos quatuor in mense sic imposterum habeant ducatos quinque pro quolibet in mense: et ratione mensis: ut se familiasque suas sustentare sub umbra nostri dominij possint....

Nomina praedictorum sonatorum

Georgius Nicolai de Mothons	}	tubete
Hieronymus Georgij dicti filius		

Petrus Nicolai de Raguis	}	pifari
Georgius Andree paduanus		
Bernardinus Sigismundi tarvisini		

2. Ibid., Notatorio (1489-1499), reg. 14, fol. 7v., 23 January 1490

MCCCCCLXXXVIIIJ die XXIIJ Januarij [more veneto]

Infrascripti domini consiliarij considerata virtute atque prestantia fidelis veneti Alovisij tubicinis filij fidelis Georgij etiam tubicinis, qui quidem Alovisius, ut nemine latet, in arte sua tubicinaria reliquis omnibus prestat, ut habeat modum remanendi hac in urbe una cum prefato eius genitore, nostroque Domino inserviendi et non sit coactus abire, deliberaverunt, sic consulente universo collegio, atque terminaverunt *quod* affermatum pro tubicine Domini

nostri cum salario ducatorum sex in mense et ratione mensis, et alijs omnibus conditionibus et obligationibus cum quibus deputati fuerunt dictus eius pater et consocij tubicines nostri domini, et ab eodem loco percipere debet pecunias salarij sui de tempore in tempus, ab quo dicti consocij percipiunt.

3. Ibid., fol. 74v., 16 January 1493

MCCCCLXXXIJ die XVI Januarij [more veneto]

Infrascripti domini consiliarij compatienses calamitosi et inopiens pauperis Andreae tubicinis, qui per annos XX.ii in triremibus et barchis fideliter et alacriter domino nostro servivit

4. Ibid., fol. 91, 18 October 1493

1493 die XVIIJ octobris

Havendo la *Serenissima* Signoria deliberà per honor de la città tuor et elezer apresso i altri pifari che serveno Nicolò di Clementi per contraalto, soa *Serenità* comanda a vuj signori della zecha che vostre *magnificentie* debino far notar el predicto Nicolò apresso li altri deputati et correspondendoli el suo stipendio come ali altri: començar de el livrar del suo salario adi primo del instante mexe come el fo electo et deputà.

5. Ibid., Notatorio (1499-1505), reg. 15, fol. 71, 14 May 1502

Die 14 Maij 1502

Cum vacaret superioribus *mensibus* locus unus ex pipharis deserventibus una cum alij *serenissimo* principi, & *illustrissimo* domino per mortem *quondam* Andreae piphari qui sonabat instrumentum superne: perquisieruntque ipsi tubicines invenire socium decentem supplicaverunt eidem *serenissimo domini* duci ut Joanne Mariam Bernardi de Padua pipharum quem affirmabant personam idoneam & sufficientem ad eiusdem exercitium [...] admittere dignaretur in socium suum: quam quidem petitionem serenitas sua, ex antiqua & solita auctoritate ducatus hactenus servata per *illustrissimos* predecessores suos admisit: et eundem Joanne Mariam Bernardi constituit & deputavit pro pipharo in demortui locum cum salario modis & conditionibus ac obligationibus quibus constitutus erat [...] quondam Andreas cum ceteris alijs pipharis & tubetis. Terminando & Jubendo illum scribi sic reliqui: percipereque habeat salarium consuetum a die *suprascripto* constitutionis suae.

6. Ibid., fol. 101v., 7 October 1503

Vacavit *proximis* diebus locus unius tubetarum qui deserviunt *serenissimo* principi & *illustrissimo* domino ob decessum Hieronymi filij *quodam* magistri Georgij tubete, *serenissimus* princeps & *excellentissimus dominus* dominus Leonardus Lauredanus, dei *gratia* inclytus dux Venetiae et providere volens de persona idonea & sufficienti, ex antiqua & solita auctoritate ducatus hactenus *servata per* *illustrissimos* predecessores suos, habita sufficienti informatione Aloysij tromboni *quondam* Thome veneti, eundem Aloysium trombonum constituit & deputavit *pro* tubeta in demortui locum cum salaris modis conditionibus & obligationibus quibus constitutus erat dictus *quodam* Hieronymus cum altero tubeta & alijs pifaris. Terminando & iubendo illum scribi sic reliqui percipereque habeat salarium consuetum a die suprascripto constitutionis sue.

7. Ibid., fol. 151v, 21 September 1505

Die XXJ septembris 1505

Obijt die suu *proximis* diebus Aloysius trombonus filius *quondam* magistri Georgij tubete; unde *serenissimus* princeps & *excellentissimus dominus* dominus Leonardo Lauredanus, dei *gratia* inclytus dux Venetiae & providere volens de persona idonea & sufficienti, ex antiqua & solita auctoritate ducatus hactenus *servata per* *illustrissimos* predecessores suos, habita fide digna informatione de persona fidelis veneti Francisci trivisani tubete filij Bernardini piphari ... ipsum Franciscum trivisanum constituit & deputavit *pro* tubeta in demortui locum, cum salario modis conditionibus & obligationibus quibus constitutus erat dictus *quondam* Aloysius cum altro tubeta & alijs pipharis; terminando et iubendo illum scribi, sicut reliqui; percipereque habeat salarium consuetum incipiendo a die primo mensis octobris proxime futuri.

8. Venezia, Archivio di Stato, Scuola Grande di santa Maria della Misericordia, reg. 7, Scuola di Santa Maria dei Mercanti (chiesa dei Frari), Mariegola (redaction of 1476, provisional collocation in the holding of the Scuola della Misericordia)...

[fol. 4] x. Anchora volemo et ordenemo che ogni terza domenega de chadaun mese de l'ano, e tute le sante Marie sia fato di ordenado, e che in la vigilia e in el di de santa Maria che vien adì viij setembrio se debia dar el pan e la chandela chon sonadori al vespero de la vigilia e in el di de la festa....

[alphabetical list of members (*confratelli*):]

fol. 30v Alvixe de Zorzi pifaro

fol. 32 Alvixe de Thomaso trombon del *Serenissimo Principo*

fol. 40v Bortholomio de Zorzi, pifaro del Prinzepe

Bernardin pifaro del Principo

[cc.nn.] Francesco de Bernardin trombon del *Serenissimo Principo*
 Griguol fa lironi S. Jeremia
 Jheronimo trombon del Principo
 Martin di Ambruoso dalle viole
 Nicolò de Chimento pifaro S. Lio
 Çorzi di Nicolò [da Modon] trombetta S. Antolin
 Çorzi de Andrea pifaro
 Zuan Maria de Bernardo pifaro del *Serenissimo Principo*

9. Venezia, Archivio di Stato, Scuola Grande di San Marco, Mariegola II (1480-1549), reg. 4

fol. 159, no date, but plausibly 1480:

Ser Zorzi de *ser Nicolò* [da Modon] tronbeta del *Principo* a S. Antolin

fol. 67, 1484:

Ser Jeronimo de Zorzi [da Modon] tronbeta, *san* Antolin

fol. 115, no date:

Maestro Piero de Nicolò pifaro *san* Lio

10. Ibid., reg. 228, anno 1469 (olim, Margherita LXXVII, 8)

[libro del guardian da mattin contenente i nominativi dei confratelli obbligati a partecipare alle celebrazioni della scuola—processioni, messe, funerali]

[rubric, letter Z:]

ser Zorzi de Nicholò

11. Venezia, Archivio della Scuola di san Rocco, Mariegola, reg. 2, fol. 88

[1493-4]

Ser Çorçi de Nicholò [da Modon]

Ser Bernardin de Sigismondo pifaro

Ser Nicolò [di Clementi] pifaro [*contra alto*]

Ser Zorzi d'Andrea pifaro

Ser Alvixe de Zorzi trombon

Ser Jeronimo de Zorzi trombon

Ser Bortholamio de Zorzi [pifaro]

Li sopraditi sonatori i quali sono de la *nostra* illustrissima signoria son nostri fratelli per i qual son obbligati a sonar il dì della festa e per suo premio aver chandele doi, pani doi e *noz* altro per chadauno di loro.

NOTES

¹ Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, "Il libro di appunti di un suonatore di tromba del quindicesimo secolo," *Rivista Italiana di Musicologia* 16 (1981): 16-39.

² As Leech-Wilkinson correctly observes (*ibid.*, p. 19), not all of the manuscript music section can be ascribed to Zorzi Trombetta's hand. On various grounds (not least the type of black notation used), the four polyphonic pieces that open the section (*Jour a jour la vie, Que'n puis je mais, Une fois avant que mourir, and Je me recommande humbrent*) can be attributed to an earlier hand, dating perhaps to ca. 1420.

³ A point well understood, a few years after the appearance of Wilkinson's essay, by Keith Polk, *German Instrumental Music of the Late Middle Ages: Players, Patrons and Performance Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 86, 158-59; and Lorenz Welker, "Alta capella: Zur Ensemblepraxis der Blasinstrumente im 15. Jahrhundert," *Basler Jahrbuch für Historische Musikpraxis* 7 (1983): 119-65, esp. 159-61, who have implicitly stressed the historical importance of Zorzi's personality and his musical notes by viewing them in their natural context.

⁴ On the subject, see Polk, *German Instrumental Music*, chapters 6 and 7.

⁵ We know that from the end of the fifteenth century the musicians belonging to the more prestigious companies of *piffari*, and particularly those permanently employed at court chapels or musical institutions in the cities, were capable of reading musical notation and performing the contemporary sacred and secular polyphonic repertoire. On this subject, see Rodolfo Baroncini, "Se canta dalli cantori overo se sona dalli sonadori": Voci e strumenti tra Quattro e Cinquecento," *Rivista Italiana di Musicologia* 32 (1997): 327-65.

⁶ That his death can be dated between these two years is deduced from the following two documents: a text of the Scuola Grande di San Rocco, dating ca. 1494, from which we deduce that he was then still alive and active (Appendix, doc. 11), and a deliberation of the Collegio of 1503, concerning the death of his son Girolamo, from which we learn that by that time Zorzi himself was already dead (Appendix, doc. 6).

⁷ Leech-Wilkinson, "Il libro di appunti," pp. 27-29.

⁸ Among the many pastimes, Fabris notes how "Some other, seated, observing the sea and the land they are traveling through, take their notes and fill in some booklets." ("Alii sedent et mare ac terram, quam transeant, considerant et conscribunt, et libellos conficiunt." Felix Fabris (or Faber alias Schmid), *Evagatorium in Terrae Sanctae Peregrinationem*, ed. C.D. Hassler, Bibliothek des Literarischen Vereins in Stuttgart 2-4 (Stuttgart, 1843-49), 2: 134.

⁹ See Leech-Wilkinson, "Il libro di appunti," pp. 28-29 and appendix 2, pp. 35-38. At the time, it is worth noting, it was by no means rare for people to engage in a second profession. And wine selling was a particularly profitable business both because of the large consumption of wine during sea travel (Fabris has observed that tracking down the best wine was one of the main occupations of both oarsmen and pilgrims) and because of the very low duties conceded by the Venetian government to the members of the crew who engaged in any form of trade (see Frederic C. Lane, "Wages and Recruitment of Venetian Galeotti, 1470-1580," *Studi Veneziani*, n.s., 6 (1982); and Jean-Claude Hoquet, *Denaro navi e mercanti a Venezia, 1200-1600* (Rome: Il Veltro, 1999).

¹⁰ Evidence to this effect is also offered by the concession of a pardon by the Collegio in 1493 to a

certain “Andreae tubicinis” because he had served on the galleys of the Republic for twenty years (see Appendix, doc. 3).

¹¹ Althea Wiel, *The Navy of Venice* (London: Murray, 1910), p. 324.

¹² Leech-Wilkinson, “Il libro di appunti,” p. 28.

¹³ Santo Brasca, *Viaggio in terra santa ...* (Milan: L. Pachel e U. Scinzenzeler, 1481); modern edn. edited by Laura Momigliano Lepschy as *Viaggio in terra santa di Santo Brasca 1480, con L'itinerario di Gabriele Capodilista* (Milan: Longanesi, 1966), *I cento viaggi*, vol. 4.

¹⁴ The illustration appears in a fifteenth-century illuminated manuscript drawn up by Grünemberg (Karlsruhe, Landesbibliothek, St. Peter pap. 32). The miniature, reproduced in Momigliano Lepschy's edition of Brasca's chronicle (Table IX), shows four *tubicines* at the center of the ship, caught in the act of playing as many S-shaped trumpets.

¹⁵ Two players of *piffari* (“Girardo pifaro” and “Bartolomeo pifaro”) are mentioned in the accounts for 1448 as the recipients of wine sold by Zorzi on board the *capitania* ship; see Leech-Wilkinson, “Il libro di appunti,” p. 29.

¹⁶ “Surgunt quatuor tubicines, et trumpetae, et tubis concrepant pro cimbulo ad mensam, quo audito cum magna festinantia accurrunt omnes Cum celeritate autem prandium peregrinorum expeditur et eorum prandio finito iterum tubicines tubis cranunt” (Fabris, *Evagatorium in Terrae Sanctae Peregrinationem*, pp. 136-37).

¹⁷ Brasca, *Viaggio in Terra Santa*, para. 21.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, para. 46.

¹⁹ “Domenica maitina 18 iunij [1480], essendo cessata la fortuna, facemo vele et circa l' hora sexta se trovassemo sopra la città de Lesna. . . . Ivi è una chiesa de Sancta Maria de le Gratie dove habitano li frati de San Francescho de observanza, de grandissima devotione a tuti li marinari, et tuta per loro oblatione de novo edificata. Quivi non fecemo scala secundo era il proposito del magnifico patrono et desiderio de tuti li peregrini perché si levò la provenza, nostro prospero vento, ma salutando la Vergene gloriosa quando fossemo arimpecto de la dicta chiesa con soni de trombeti e col canto de l' himno Ave maris stella, raccomandandosi a la dicta madre de gratie, et facta la oblatione consueta a li frati del dicto luoco, che venerno alla galea, proseguendo el nostro camino, circa 24 hore fecemo scala a Corzula città de la Schiavonia, la quale è ab opposito del paese de ragusei” *Ibid.*, para. 25. On the strength of our knowledge of ceremonial practice at the time, we could add, in comment on the passage quoted, that the trumpeters probably also played at the moment of oblation.

²⁰ One theme developed by commentators on fifteenth-century instrumental music has been the distinct separation of the ensembles of signal trumpets from the wind ensembles composed of shawms and slide instruments. And certainly, as a general observation, at courts such as that of Burgundy and Ferrara and in such cities as Florence, Ghent, and Venice, personnel and practices of trumpets and shawms were entirely different. Trumpets were symbols of prestige, and provided relatively simple fanfare-like calls to establish the status of their patrons. Shawm ensembles provided more complex polyphonic music for such occasions as banquets, dances, and processions. Still, the dichotomy is not at all secure. Wind players of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were expected to be competent in a range of instruments (in addition to shawms they played recorders, crumhorns, cornetts, stringed instruments, and even sang when required). Trumpet technique of the time would have proved little challenge. The practical advantage of combining the capabilities of trumpets and shawms would have been enormous. It now seems clear that when cities that had only a shawm ensemble on the payroll (i.e., those that did not subsidize a separate group of trumpets) needed trumpeters they would call upon their wind players. In Mechelen in 1496/97, for example, Thomas van Lupeghem was identified as a member of the civic ensemble of shawms—as a *stadtsnijper*—but he was paid on three occasions for

“going into the streets” of the city to sound trumpet fanfares; see Raymond van Aerde, *Musicalia: Notes pour servir à l'histoire de la musique, du Théâtre & de la dance à Malines* (Mechelen: H. Dierickx-Beke Fils, 1921), p. 71. Certainly pragmatic considerations would have been foremost especially on a naval vessel where space is in any event at an extreme premium. In sum, Zorzi and many of his performer colleagues were most likely this type of generally competent professionals; they would have been carried on the payroll lists as trumpeters, but they would have been capable of providing whatever music or whatever instrument was called for by a particular patron or on a particular occasion.

²¹ On this subject, see Polk, *German Instrumental Music*, pp. 132-36.

²² Confirming this tendency is the well-known fact that Zorzi annotated each contratenor with a comment on its musical (and hence contrapuntal) result.

²³ I.e., that transcribed on fol. 7v of the manuscript, accompanied by the following note: *chontrattenor, sona tuttj do de brjga chol tenor*.

²⁴ Appendix, doc. 3.

²⁵ The documentation, which comes from holdings, scarcely investigated previously, of the Archivio di Stato in Venice, can be found in Elena Quaranta, *Oltre San Marco: Organizzazione e prassi della musica nelle chiese di Venezia nel Rinascimento* (Florence: Olschki, 1998).

²⁶ In addition to the series of rules concerning devotional rites and ceremonial duties, the *mariegole* also usually included a list of the members.

²⁷ The earliest documents on the subject are dated 1373 and 1382 and respectively concern the Scuola di San Giovanni Evangelista e San Giovanni Battista and the Scuola di San Cristoforo dei Mercanti; see Quaranta, *Oltre San Marco*, pp. 253 and 303. As regards the instrumental groups used, the most common terminology before the 1420s is that which mentions *trombette, piffari e naccarini*, generally preceded by their respective numbers (e.g., *4 trombe e trombete, 2 naccarini e 2 piffari*), attesting nearly always to an extraordinary number of brass instruments. This fact seems to imply (given also the presence of *nakers*) not so much the modern mixed ensemble of *piffari* and trombones (or slide trumpets), but rather, following an earlier practice, the presence of two distinct groups: a smaller one consisting exclusively of double reeds (one shawm and one bombard); and another, generally larger, group of brass (four or more trumpets), often accompanied by a duo of nakers. The situation changes from 1430 onwards, when the above expressions are succeeded by others. Though in some respects similar (*trombe e piffari*, or more simply, *piffari* or *trombetti*), these new expressions contain significant changes: we no longer find the indications of number that had characterized the earlier phase, the surplus of brass instruments or, above all, the nakers. We therefore deduce that they now evidently refer to the modern ensemble of *piffari*, formed (as is well known) by a shawm, one or two bombards and a slide trumpet or trombone.

²⁸ See Quaranta, *Oltre San Marco*, p. 447.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 447.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 360.

³¹ According to Sanudo (*I diarii*) the number of *scuole* in 1501 was 210. See Silvia Gramigna and Annalisa Perissa, *Le scuole di arti mestieri e devozione a Venezia*, with an introductory essay by Gianni Scarabello (Venice: Arsenale, 1981), p. 25.

³² See Quaranta, *Oltre San Marco*, pp. 261-62 and 360-61.

³³ It is worth mentioning that the custom of accompanying the ceremony of Offering with instrumental music had been fairly common and strongly rooted ever since the second half of the fourteenth century, at least in Italy. And in the following two centuries the moment of oblation became one of the designated places for instrumental music in the liturgical context. On this subject, see Rodolfo Baroncini, “Contributo alla storia del violino nel sedicesimo secolo: ‘i sonadori di violini’ della

Scuola Grande di San Rocco a Venezia,” *Recercare* 6 (1994): 61-190, here 133, n. 226; idem, “In choro et in organo: strumenti e pratiche strumentali in alcune cappelle dell’area padana nel XVI secolo,” *Studi Musicali* 27 (1998): 19-51, here 23-24; and Marco di Pasquale, “Aspetti della pratica strumentale nelle chiese italiane fra tardo medioevo e prima età moderna,” *Rivista Internazionale di Musica Sacra* 16/2 (1995): 239-68, here 244.

³⁴ “Volemo, che siano ricevuto due, ovvero quatro pifari in detta scuola, li quali non habbiano à pagar cosa alcuna quando intreranno in scuola, neanco per gli luminari per niun tempo facendo essi il debito loro, et questo per honorare iddio come fano le altre scuole nelli giorni delle sue feste, et essi pifari debbano sonar la vigilia di san Gallo, et quella di san Mauritio a vespero, et la matina seguente all’aurora, et quando si leverano il gastaldo et compagni per andar a offerire, et così quando si leverà il corpo, e sangue di Christo, et acciò, che servino più volentieri sia dato a ciaschedun di loro soldi cinque, se el piacerà al gastaldo, et suoi compagni, et se li deti sonadori non voranno far il suo debito caschino in pena di due soldi per persona per ogni volta, che sarà contrafatto tal ordine, et siano obligati pagar soldi cinque ogn’anno per le luminarie perfin, che faran il debito loro, et non possino uscir di detta chiesa senza il consentimento del gastaldo, e del suo consiglio, et se fusero occupati in qualche servizio della signoria all’ora non volemo che siano tenuti a pena alcuna” (Quaranta, *Oltre San Marco*, pp. 261-62).

³⁵ The *matinata* (a fairly common expression in contemporary Italian documentation) was a form of evening and/or nocturnal musical entertainment that took place as a rule in the private houses of nobles and rich merchants, but not infrequently also in the convents. Concerning the latter case a well-attested piece of evidence is a notice addressed to the *scuola de piffari e sonatori* (guild of instrumentalists) by the Patriarchal court of Venice in 1511, calling for an end to the contemptible custom of engaging in “*matinade* by day and by night, as well as playing of various kinds at monasteries for nuns in this city of Venice”; Venezia, Curia patriarcale, sezione antica, Actorum mandatorum praeceptorum, no. 54 (1508-12), Primum liber actorum, 24 aprile 1511.

³⁶ “Colle trombe e pifferi in chiesa [...] cosa che da anzi non si fa, ma si sposa in chiesa segrete e po’ se fa la festa. Ma colle trombe e pifferi è il vero e buon modo antico,” Marin Sanudo, *Diarii*, tomo XI, fol. 471, quoted in Pompeo Molmenti, *Storia di Venezia nella vita privata dalle origini alla caduta della repubblica* (Torino; Roux e Favale, 1885), p. 227.

³⁷ A modern transcription of the Malipiero chronicle can be read in “Annali Veneti di Domenico Malipiero. Parte quinta. Degli avvenimenti della città,” in *Archivio Storico Italiano*, tomo VII, parte II (Florence, 1844), pp. 651-720, here 688 and 696.

³⁸ In addition to the document of the Patriarchal Court cited above (see n. 35), the few surviving documents on the *scola de trombetti e sonadori* can be consulted in Quaranta, *Oltre San Marco*, pp. 16, 406-07 (accounts of the church of San Silvestro for the years 1492-1512) and 285-86 (a notarial document of 1638 that in turn cites a document of 1468).

³⁹ The practice is documented as early as 1373 in an interesting rule in the *mariegola* of the Scuola di San Giovanni Battista e San Giovanni Evangelista (hosted at the church of San Giovanni Decollato), which establishes that no more than *otto trombadori* can be received among their ranks and that, in exchange, these must be obliged to “play according to the custom of the *scuola*” on the day of San Giovanni Evangelista and 29 August, the eve of San Giovanni Decollato. See Quaranta, *Oltre San Marco*, p. 253.

⁴⁰ Venezia, Archivio di Stato, Collegio, Notatorio (1474-81), reg. 12, fol. 150, 7 luglio 1481. For the original version of this document see Appendix, doc 1. For a general discussion of civic ritual in Venice, which conditioned much of the context of instrumental music in the city, see Eduard Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981).

⁴¹ Girolamo (“Hieronymus,” “Jeronimo”) served as second trombone in the ducal ensemble until 1503, the year of his death (see Appendix, doc. 6). Like his father he also appears to have been a member of the Scuola Grande di San Marco from 1484 (see Appendix, doc. 9).

⁴² A search through the records of the Collegio for the preceding years has unfortunately failed to yield results.

⁴³ From a document of the Curia Patriarcale of 1509, for example, we learn that the *trombetti del principe* played for the Patriarca in the church of San Antonio at Vespers (see Quaranta, *Oltre San Marco*, p. 324). Moreover, numerous are the complaints made by the schools and guilds about the *mal servir* (“bad service”) rendered by the Doge’s *piffari*, who without any warning disregarded agreements and failed to turn up at celebrations (on this topic, see Venezia, Archivio di Stato, Scuola Grande di San Marco, reg. 17, fol. 20, 2 febbraio 1502; and Quaranta, *Oltre San Marco*, p. 319).

⁴⁴ See Keith Polk, “Innovation in Instrumental Music 1450-1520: the role of German Performers within European Culture,” in *Music in the German Renaissance*, ed. John Kmetz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 202-14.

⁴⁵ See Keith Polk, “Foreign and Domestic in Italian Instrumental Music of the 15th Century,” in *Musica Franca; Essays in Honor of Frank A. D’Accone*, ed. I. Alm, A. McLamore, and C. Reardon (Stuyvesant, N.Y.: Pendragon Press, 1996), pp. 323-32.

⁴⁶ The band of *piffari* of the Mantuan court, for example, was to boast a second trombone only in 1502. See William F. Prizer, “Bernardino piffaro e i pifferi e tromboni di Mantova: strumenti a fiato in una corte italiana.” *Rivista Italiana di Musicologia* 16 (1981): 151-84, here 160. Florence seem to have kept its ensemble at four until the end of the fifteenth century (Florence, Archivio di Stato, Notario di Camera, no. 20, folios 10-10v, for four players in 1490—including Augustine Schubinger; *ibid.*, folio 22v, for four players in 1495). Siena did expand to five, but apparently only in 1497; see Frank A. D’Accone, *The Civic Muse: Music and Musicians in Siena during the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1997), p. 539.

⁴⁷ On the entire affair, see Baroncini, “Se canta dalli cantori overo se sona dalli sonadori,” pp. 346-58 and 364.

⁴⁸ Venezia, Archivio di Stato, Collegio, Notatorio (1489-99), reg. 14, fol. 7v., 23 January 1490. For the original version of this document see Appendix, doc. 2.

⁴⁹ See Baroncini, “Se canta dalli cantori overo se sona dalli sonadori,” pp. 348-49, to which I also refer for the bibliography on the subject.

⁵⁰ *ut nemine latet in arte sua tubicinaria reliquis omnibus prestat.*

⁵¹ See, for example, docs. 6 and 7 of the Appendix, concerning respectively the deaths of Girolamo and Alvise and the appointment of replacements. Both documents show that when it comes to dictating duties and conditions, reference is made to just one other trombone apart from the one just appointed (*cum altero tubeta & aliis pipharis*). Interesting evidence is also offered by Gentile Bellini’s celebrated painting *The Procession in Piazza San Marco* (ca. 1496), where the ducal consort is portrayed as a quintet consisting of three *piffari* and two trombones. Naturally, none of this means that the band did not have other players capable of playing the brass instruments, as well as the two official trombones. Indeed Alvise’s letter to the Duke of Mantua of 1505 testifies to considerable instrumental versatility. Among other things it tells us that the musicians of the ducal band in Venice habitually played not only *piffari* and trombones, but also cornetto and recorder (the letter in question is reproduced in full in Prizer, “Bernardino piffaro.” pp. 182-83; and Baroncini, “Se canta dalli cantori overo se sona dalli sonadori,” p. 349).

⁵² See Appendix, doc. 4.

⁵³ See Baroncini, “Se canta dalli cantori overo se sona dalli sonadori,” pp. 348-50.

⁵⁴ Venezia, Archivio della Scuola di san Rocco, Mariegola, reg. 2, fol. 88 (see Appendix, doc. 11). On the general background of music in the *scuole grandi* see Jonathan E. Glixon, *Music at the Venetian Scuole Grandi, 1440-1540*, 2 vols. (Ph. D. diss., Princeton University, 1979); *Laudario Giustiniano*, 2 vols., ed. Francesco Luisi (Venice: Fondazione Levi, 1983), 1: 413-20; and Baroncini, "Contributo alla storia del violino nel sedicesimo secolo," pp. 72-78.

⁵⁵ See Baroncini, "Contributo alla storia del violino nel sedicesimo secolo," p. 168, doc. 75; and p. 174, doc. 101.

⁵⁶ See Appendix, doc. 4.

⁵⁷ In this list and in the Appendix, letters in italics are used to complete a word abbreviated in the source.

⁵⁸ In fact, the list of the band's members is again ordered according to instrument type, as in the 1481 document, and, though here (unlike the 1481 list) the *piffari* section precedes that of the trombones, Zorzi's name is still in front of all the others.

⁵⁹ See Appendix, doc. 8.

⁶⁰ This type of distribution was not unknown in the second half of the fifteenth century, but it was to become extremely widespread and typical of the sextet from the early sixteenth century. On the subject, see Baroncini, "Se canta dalla cantori overo se sona dalli sonadori," pp. 351-52ff.

⁶¹ See Appendix, doc. 9. See also Glixon, "Music at the Venetian *Scuole Grandi*," pp. 83-113.

⁶² The fact that Zorzi's name was transcribed in 1480 (which I think we can take for granted, given that it is among the very first to be listed under the letter Z) does not necessarily mean that his membership dates to that year. Most of the names that precede and follow his name turn out to have been enrolled between 1470 and 1475 (as we learn from annotations added next to them). The impression that his membership dates to several years earlier is also strengthened, though perhaps not completely proved, by a register of 1469 (a book kept by the *Guardian da Mattin*, the official in charge of organizing the confraternity's processions and funerals) in which we come across a certain "Zorzi di Nicolò"; see Appendix, doc. 10. Unfortunately the name is not accompanied by any other qualification that might unequivocally identify him as our Zorzi.

⁶³ See Appendix, doc. 9.

⁶⁴ See Appendix, doc. 8; see also Glixon, "Music at the Venetian *Scuole Grandi*," pp. 114-59.