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Polyphonies of Ceriana

Current Research Perspectives, Future Cues [1]

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[1] The authors elaborated this text in a total cooperation and hence they share contents, method and perspective of the essay. The drafting has been however divided as follow: Febo Guizzi wrote the paragraphs 1 to 5, 10, Bibliography and Discography notes; Ilario Meandri wrote the paragraphs 6 to 9 (except comments to the transcription 'E tre figliete, that are by Guido Raschieri). This version of the essay updates a previous version published on DER (Documentary Educational Resources) website in 2010. The text has been translated by Febo Guizzi and revised by Ruth Henderson.

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POLYPHONIES OF CERIANA:
CURRENT RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES, FUTURE CUES

by Febo Guizzi, Ilario Meandri, Guido Raschieri

1. CERIANA AND ITS TERRITORY

The Liguria region, in northwestern Italy, is a narrow coastal land-strip that extends along the Tyrrhenian seaside from the border with France to Tuscany. Its main town, Genoa, is the most important seaport in Italy. The capital acts as the vertex where two sub-regions meet, forming something as an obtuse angle: the eastern sub-region is called "Levante" ("rising", referred to the point of sunrise), the western one is known as "Ponente" ("setting [sundown]", the point where the sun disappears).

Excepting for a couple of narrow plains, the coastal Ligurian territory is backed by the mountain range of the Apennine, directly joined, with no interruptions, to the southwestern incipient track of Alpine system (so called *Alpi Marittime*, i.e. "Maritime Alps"). Short torrential rivers has dug several narrow valleys in the quite lush mountains rising from the sea, so that all the so called *entroterra ligure* [Ligurian Inland] especially in the Ponente sub-region, is surprisingly harsh and relatively "wild", with extensive woods interrupted by cultivations of high quality olive trees, grapevine and vegetables, mostly planted in terraced ground strips sustained by typical little dry-stone walls (without any fastening material as concrete or cement).
Ceriana is a village in the Armea valley, in the western part of *Ponente*, the Province of Imperia; it is situated at 369 meters above sea level in the inland mountains dominating Sanremo, one of the most important coastal cities of the Province, well known as the most relevant flower-market centre in Southern Europe and as a tourist attraction. Sanremo has a flourishing musical life, having a resident symphonic orchestra, theatres and auditoriums, and being from the 1951 the base for the most important festival for the Italian popular music.

2. CERIANA TODAY

Today economy in Ceriana is based on the typical agricultural cultivations of the *Ponente*, being one of the most important places for the olive oil production and for the floriculture. Circa 1300 inhabitants are now permanently resident in the municipality, a relevant increasing number of which works in the tourist, administrative, industrial and commercial activities in the coastal centers, mostly in Sanremo and Arma di Taggia. Even if from the quantitative point of view the place is nothing more than a village, its architectonic-urbanistic arrangement is a noticeable remnant of a relatively complex

social structure, yet readable in the same organization of the vestigial elements, as an aristocratic palace, churches and chapels, a theatre etc. In the past Ceriana was effectively more important and more populated than in the present days; the transformations undergone in the course of history testified - as already said - by the actual urban structure of the town itself are especially manifest by the relevant number of not inhabited houses, many of them being gradually restructured and converted in holiday houses for people coming from outside. Ceriana's urbanistic aspect, especially when one sees its profile from outside-far, represents a typical example of the medieval Italian structure of the fortified centers: it is grasped at an ascending hill looking as a high cone with a bell-tower as the vertex and the multi-ground houses being overbuilt one upon other along concentric outlines, where a labyrinth of narrow streets weaves thickly around.

3. MUSIC IN CERIANA

The present cultural situation in Ceriana is dominated by an intensive musical life, that in its turn rests upon a rich network of collective events distributed along all the year in several festive traditional and modern occasions, showing a strong communitarian ethos, cemented by the shared passion for the music: the two most important actual realities involved in these occasions are the devotional-laical confraternities (or brotherhoods) and, on the other side, a lot of groups of singers with non-religious repertories, among whom the most important is the Compagnia Sacco.

Both religious and secular associations and groups share all over the year the cultural leadership within the numerous festivities that mark the social time in the town: besides the most important recurrences, as the Easter, Christmas and All Saints' Day (November 1st)/All Souls' Day (November 2nd) periods, and other than the Carnival, the civil festivities (the Liberation Day - April 25th and Republic Day, June 2nd), one must remember a lot of festive occasions, as the conscript day, the feasts of the Madonna della Villa (September 8th), Sts. Peter and Paul (patrons of Ceriana - June 29th), the Madonna della Visitazione (July 2nd), Sts. Placido and Germanione (July 13th), St. Mary Magdalene (July 22nd), St. James (July 25th), St. Ann (July 26th), St. Martha (July 26th), St. Salvatore (August 6th), St. Philomena (August 19th), St. Bernard (August 20th: this is the day of the Alpini, the mountain troops of the Italian army), St. Rose from Lima (August 23rd), St. Barthelemy (August 24th). All these festivities call for a commitment of the families, of the brotherhoods, of the associations, of the choral groups, the "spontaneous" and the organized ones, for animating the village. Perhaps the most affecting festivity is on July 24th, day of St. John, or, as they say in Ceriana, *san Zane*: all over Europe this is a very important occasion, an exemplar pivot that joins folkloric and Christian rites and myths. In this feast, Ceriana experiences an intense participation of all the people, around the little church of San Giovanni Battista, outside the town, where a communitarian mood is elaborated by means of food, wine and singing. Many intense sequences in the film are devoted to the "informal" - nonetheless strictly traditional - singing practice during this feast, today largely lead by the Compagnia Sacco.

4. *CONFRATERNITIES* AND *COMPANIES*

Cerianese people feel a deep affection for music and singing, whose public expressions are to be considered as the results of the two main aggregations, the *Confraternite* and the *Compagnie,* by which the cultural social history of the village has been largely influenced. Both of these two forms of

associations derive their crucial role in the preservation of the traditional music life as a particular expression of their deep function in providing the people with a "horizontal" way of aggregation and conveying and shaping the energies spread within the society. The roots of both of them, too, can be traced back to a far historical origin and along an intense social development and update.

Almost every Cerianese is involved in one of the four religious-laical brotherhoods (three of them being strictly confraternities, the fourth a penitential company), each based in a different oratory (to be intended as a church not having the main role of a parish with a priest as responsible for the community). The contemporary situation in Ceriana is in the same time a sort of residual local persistence of a former largely spread presence of the confraternities in Liguria, and an evidence of the special character that the congregations of lay believers has particularly preserved in this village: as a survival of the past, one must consider that, before the interdiction imposed by Napoleonic legislation in 1811, in the Ponente the three-quart of the male population was engaged within the confraternities; as a cultural social marker of the present time, the Cerianese brotherhoods are exceptionally characterized, in respect with the other Ligurian places where confraternities are present and vital too, by the quality and the richness of their traditional singing and by the strong affection for it shared among all the members and participants in them. In general, both for their same origins, and because of the renewed subjective spirit and the wider social actual functions that pervade their activities, the confraternities show an explicit independence from the strict ecclesiastic hierarchy: as to the origins, one must remember that the post-medieval features of the confraternities was dominated by the strategy of the Catholic Church after the Tridentine Council, aiming to concede a relative autonomy to the secular people aggregations, on condition that the tensions between faith and obedience should not exceed, under the influence of the Reformed Churches, the boundaries of the orthodoxy.
Belonging to one or other of the four groups is mainly a consequence of familiar heritage: it is felt as a sign of identity and as a social resource, both allowing an innumerable series of opportunities and implying a lot of well-accepted duties. Usually women after marriage join the husband's confraternity. The most important task for the brotherhoods is not simply to organize the religious events where its members take part, as rather to interweave the religious and the social life in a dense calendar of events based on the permanent organization of the brotherhood itself. In the course of year the brotherhoods are active on occasion of the rites and ceremonies, including several secular activities and events, during the Holy Week, the religious festivities of the *Corpus Domini* and of the *Madonna della Villa*, the parish feast of Saints Peter and Paul, the Day of the Dead. Each sodality has also its own patronal festival on specific day. The principal profane feasts where the devotional associations take part are the *sagre*, that is village festivals as the *sagra della salsiccia* (sausage feast) in summer and the *sagra delle castagne* (chestnut feast) in autumn.

To understand the very spirit of these aggregations, is very important to note that they are totally laical, not having in Ceriana a "spiritual assistant" pertaining to the ecclesiastic hierarchy as it happens with other confraternities in different parts of Italy. The four religious-laical societies have a very important role in the musical life: each of them has an own choir, not firmly organized excepting for a narrow nucleus of skilled singers who are the guarantors for the respect of the repertory and of the traditional style to sing it. As to their formation, the choirs are not closed in the number of their

participants, nor dependant on a director or a concertmaster: the sole strong rule in their structure is the exclusive participation of male singers. The songs repository of brotherhood's choirs is strictly predetermined and historically inherited through a strong inner oral tradition. Each choir detains its own version of the *Miserere* (on the biblical text of the Psalm 50 in Latin version), of the *Stabat mater* (from the well known Latin medieval weeping chant - *rectius* a *sequence* - about the sorrow of Maria at Crux's feet, the most valuable version being the one attributed to the poet Jacopone da Todi, 13th cent.); these two compositions are the unavoidable nucleus of the choirs' repertory; it comes complete with a different amount of not liturgical sacred chants, the *Laudae*. The fundamental aspect of the oral tradition as the ruling way of transmitting music and text of the choirs' repertory is not contradicted by the vestiges of different compositional styles retraceable in some of the chants, including the *Miserere*, presumably referable to "modern" (surely not medieval) inspirational sources as the 19th century Italian *melodramma* or to the instrumental repertories for organ or for brass-bands. The probable authorial work of some compositor, perhaps an organist working for the parish church or for the oratories, can be indicated as the matrix, if not as the direct origin, of these chants, in the frame of a partial renovation of the repertories, anyway originated from a very earlier past, which was assumed again as the starting point for a "new" tradition transmitted without the direct use of the written score: the choirs' participants are not able to read music - anyway this competence is not requested - so that a supposed written source cannot be used as the ruling support for the performance.

Women too in Ceriana have had their religious singing formations, the most important having been the choir of the *Figlie di Maria* ("Mary's Daughters"), a congregation referring to the parish church, even if guided by laical conductors. The *Figlie di Maria* don't exist no longer now, but the influence of their singing practice is yet strong in present time, especially thanking to the concurrent affiliation of many singers in the choir of the *Figlie di Maria* and in the profane one called *Mamme Canterine* ("Singing Mothers"). About this important singing tradition Mauro Balma (1989: 6) wrote:

> The drone singing, this time entrusted entirely to women's voices, also characterizes *Quasi Cedrus* (Lectio III of the *Mattutino* of the *Ufficio* of the Blessed Virgin Mary, sung as "fra l'anno"). The singing is the prerogative of the "Society of the Daughters of Mary", who sang on Sunday afternoons provided that it is not commanded an office for the dead. It was sung also the second Sunday of the month in the morning, before nine o'clock Mass, at the Sanctuary of the Madonna della Villa. On the occasion of the annual feast of the Daughters of Mary, the Office was sung with special solemnity and with the participation of the organ. The performance pertains to a type that one should define responsorial (small group of soloists - large group with lower participation) with regard to the Office in general.

The typical practice of Ceriana is based on two soloist voices supported by the bass drone. The *incipit* of *Quasi Cedrus*, intoned in a mono-vocal way, serves as an effective musical introduction at the opening of polyphonic part. The singing of the Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary was abandoned during the seventies (Balma *ibid.*), but is now object of a special attention for its revival by the most active female singers, who refer to the choir of the *Mamme Canterine* ("Singing Mothers").

Because of its apparent secondary importance, the female sacred musical involvement is yet not sufficiently investigated, but we can assume that for the women in Ceriana the restricted chances of singing in public have determined a more tight relationship between the domestic "private" repertory

and the religious occasions of participation in musical events: in this perspective, is very interesting in general the case of the *Lectiones*, sung by the women, as a monodic unaccompanied (or accompanied by the organ) form of liturgical chant with Latin text, about which we have intensive attestations of the deep educative, emotional and aesthetical involvement in practicing, even outside the ritual performance within the church. Today the most important feminine presence in Ceriana musical landscape is provided by the above-mentioned *Mamme Canterine* ("Singing Mothers"), where not accidentally the profane songs coexist with sacred songs: the most relevant are *Quasi Cedrus* and the *Lauda della Madonna della Villa* ("Lauda for the Virgin Mary of the Villa"); this last is a very important and complex para-liturgical song executed as the main ritual occurrence by music during the feast of the Madonna della Villa, on September 8th. While in the course of the way toward the Church other *laudas* are performed, this is the only one sung on the square in front of the Sanctuary, out of the village, at the end of the night liturgy. The way of singing based on two soloist voices and a choral drone, which is a rule for the profane repertory, in that occasion it can be heard in one of the rare occasions where a religious song is based on this practice. The *Lauda* has 42 stanzas: because of its length, it is not entirely sung in the rite in front of the church, but in the last times the women-singers have adopted the rule to adjoin every year a new stanza to those sung the last year, so that in "few" decades the *Lauda* will be performed in its completeness.

The profane singing tradition rests on the role of the *Compagnie* ("Companies"), now - as already told - represented at the highest level by the Compagnia Sacco: it is *de facto* the only one Compagnia active nowadays, deeply grounded in the traditional roots but in the same time, from many aspects to be considered for its specific new changing face, markedly different from the older one.
In the recent past, the *Compagnie* were the informal associations founded (potentially) every year by the conscripts, that is by the young men entering in the year of their majority, when they were legally considered able to be recruited for the armed services. The mutual collective link consists in being all born in the same year, so being the same age. As such, the conscripts' associations can be considered as the heirs of the older similar traditional organizations based on age classes as they were conceived in Western Europe, from the Middle Age forward, to be involved in the initiatory practices, i.e., in the *rites de passage*.

In Northern Italy, especially in Piedmont - the Region North of Liguria from which is separated only by the Apennine Mountains - these juvenile associations were mainly known with the name of *Badie* or *Abbadie* ("Abbeis"). In the traditional pre-industrial European society, they were associate groups of youths, with the task, sometimes officially recognized, to organize and manage the festive time throughout the entire year with special attention to the main non-religious festivities, first of all the Carnival. One of the most current ways in their *modus operandi* was the fierce spirit of proudness and their quest for a competitive exhibition of skills and abilities: such an attitude is often prodrom of cultural specializations and the musical field, comporting great chance of demonstrating virtuosity and mastery, was in every time one of the best one to propose oneself as leader of the community. This singers' pride in performing at the best, can be read as a cultural root of the construction of their strong gender identity: even today in Ceriana some of the male singers sincerely believe that women cannot sing with voices drone, because of their presumed "weakness".

Many of the prerogatives and habits of the *Badie* have gone lost in the modern times; but their residual function was often inherited by the conscripts' associations, especially in the field of performing skills in music making, dancing and singing: in the *Ponente*, and in Ceriana in a special way, the *Compagnie* have committed this tradition constituting the vocal formations who carried out the special virtuosistic style of multipart, or polyvocal, singing. They were founded when the young conscripts felt themselves able to perform in an autonomous group the repertory they had listen to and learned from the older appreciated formations. The new group could assume a specific name, mostly conceived with a jokey signification. The *Compagnie* were used to sing in the taverns and during the festive occasions. They happened to perform a collective gratuitous work to someone's advantage, as for example to build the dry-wallets for within the land property belonging to a friend or to a relative: in these occasions of social "service", the *Compagnia* organized a final festivity, where the most important manifestation was singing the traditional repertory. But even during the collective works, especially for the harvesting of grapes for winemaking, they will sooner or later fall into song; the elder in Ceriana are pleased to report that, when people worked in the fields on one side of the valley, they are used to call the workers on the other side, and sing responsorily, something as a defy and an effort to achieve a higher level of cohesion. Something similar to this practice now, is the wine-and-singing party organized every year by the Compagnia Sacco in their own "headquarters" on the Holy Thursday night, after the confraternal ritual, as can be well seen in the film.

The most qualitative *Compagnie* keep going in aggregate and sing together even beyond the year of conscription, maintaining their name, if they have one, and accepting new adherents, outside the initial binding of the common age. In this way some *Compagnie* became long persistent groups, having the possibility of improving their skill in singing and achieving a continuously better fame and appreciation from their fellow citizens. The *Compagnie* whose name is attested by documents or is remembered by the people yet today are: *La Compagnia dei Baradàn* (recently re-founded even if not so firmly established), *i Menestrelli* (recorded in 1962 by the ethnomusicologist Giorgio Nataletti), *i Antichi*, *i Cuntènti, i Camalli,* the *Compagnia Lasagna, la Bolide, la Berculùn*. In these names, is readable a subtle nuance of the ironic, funny mood typical of the juvenile aggregations: anyway, the names of the *Compagnie* have to be intended as metaphorical and allusive. For this reason, the name "Sacco" of the most important *Compagnia*, even if the inner tradition of the group itself refers it to the bag ("sacco"; the name of another *Compagnia*, *la Berculùn*, had a similar origin, being the "berculùn" the bag for collecting olives) carried on the shoulder as the container of the food by the farmers, when they went to work in the fields from the early morning to the sunset, probably is to be better intended as a suggestive expression rather than an explicit reference to the effective working practice. This statement intends to distinguish the subtle but relevant difference between the peasants' world and the social segment within it represented by the young male organizations: the cultural outline of these last is based upon values and preferences hinting to unquietness, exuberance and propensity for festive activities. Peasants' mentality on the contrary pays attention to the work, to the sense of place, to the bonds with the land.

Ceriana is an exceptional case in today's traditional folk music scene in Italy: despite having gone through all the changes and having seen the world around radically transforming, this village has maintained a strong cohesion of its people centered on their musical culture and an admirable

continuity in the forms, in the repertories, in the occasions of singing; this may seem at least surprising. Viewed more closely, in fact, the situation is less enigmatic: many things really have changed in the music, but these modifications are likely to have been able to keep firmly at the center of social life the singing tradition - especially of course singing in public - based on its expressions most directly referable to the past: in this perspective Ceriana sets itself up as a kind of laboratory in which it was successfully experienced the way for conservation through the change.

Two key factors have contributed significantly to produce this result: the first is an exogenous factor, represented by the ethnomusicological research itself, that has made Ceriana a privileged and paradigmatic "field" of investigation. This acknowledgement from the outside reinforced the pride of the community in its heritage and provided a permanent seismograph, capable of offering an accurate assessment along the time of the most minute movements in the cultural balance of the Cerianese society, so recording any evidence of the basic conservative dynamics and then carefully detecting gaps, breaks in continuity, changes and innovations.

As often happens, however, the attention focused from the outside can provide an unequal enforcement of the negotiation of the cultural equilibrium; so, rather than fixing a standard, it can increase the claim that even the changes - if induced by those who exercise cultural hegemony within the community - set as standards and display themselves as a kind of concentrated of the conservation. Ethnomusicology, in other words, even when it is not forced from the "urgency", can facilitate a centralized mediation in constructing identity, traditionalism and the assurance of compliance with a non-contaminated heritage from the past. This can happen either unwittingly, or as a result of a choice in behalf of the protection of what outsiders consider essential and most relevant, and therefore must be preserved even at the cost of an excess of attention on the details of the assessment, to the detriment of the whole picture's phenomena: the result of this *modus agendi* is that becomes "traditional" and unchangeable what is considered relevant, not being relevant what is traditional and worthy of conservation.

The second factor is endogenous: it is the imposing presence of the Compagnia Sacco. The Compagnia Sacco exists from nearly a century, having been "founded" in 1926: at least, first documentation at our disposal allows going back to this date. It gave to Alan Lomax in October 1954 a large part of the valuable material he recorded in Ceriana. Since from 1967, the Compagnia has been able to move on the stages of the great cities, having been included in that year in the outstanding program of the spectacle arranged by the two "founding fathers" of contemporary Italian ethnomusicology, Roberto Leydi and Diego Carpitella, featuring some of the most important representatives of Italian traditional music at that time, and proposed within the bill of the Piccolo Teatro of Milan, one of the most prestigious theaters in Europe of the time.

Subsequently, the Sacco has made many concert tours in Europe and the USA; they has also published many CDs on their own initiative or through a specialized producer, starting in this practice when this way of promotion was very unusual for a traditional expression of the folk music scene. From a long time the Compagnia manages its relationship with the world through partnerships with cultural institutions and Universities (the Turin University, in particular), with TV channels and international concert and festival circuits. As a matter of fact, the very composition of the group is marked by a "closed" form, which today is upheld by the formal constitution as an association: that means that the subjects taking part in it, being selected for their skills and competencies at the highest level, must pass through the co-optation, which rules the access and, therefore, the turn-over within

the group. This practice, however, doesn't prevent the Compagnia from acting as an attraction pole for a larger participation in singing by friends, other villagers, and occasional fellows. This happens in the contexts that can be better assimilated to the occasions in the past when the Compagnia - as the other existing Compagnie - was used to perform in the traditional way, i.e. during the festive collective meetings or in the convivial situations as in the taverns. A very clear evidence of this practice is provided by the film scenes where members of the Compagnia "informally" sing during the St. John's and the chestnut's festivities.

All this complex node of traditional and innovative bearings expresses a remarkable ability to meet the rules of industrial society and to adapt oneself to the mass communication circuits, but it coexists with the full compliance with the terms of the Cerianese traditional polyphonic singing style, in its secular version dominated by male voices who master the technique of drone singing, unique in the traditional western European landscape.

5. As we have known or believed to know Ceriana and its singing tradition

Owing to the reach and unique musical tradition, Ceriana very soon became an obligated and privileged site for the ethnomusicological field research in Italy: starting with Alan Lomax during his legendary journey across Italy in 1954, a long list of important scholars who made their fieldwork in Ceriana tell us the interest devoted to this small chest of musical treasures.

The most important recordings were made by Giorgio Nataletti on 1962, by Roberto Leydi on 1961 (with Luciano Berio, the great Italian composer, born in Oneglia, the main town in the Province of Imperia, to whom Ceriana pertains), 1967 and 1969, by Sandra Mantovani on 1971, by Emilio Jona on 1972, by Edward Neill on 1977, by Mauro Balma from 1982 up today, by Giuliano d'Angiolini from 1999 up today, by Febo Guizzi, Ilario Meandri and Guido Raschieri from 2001 to the present.

Ceriana has been also the subject of many audiovisual reports, mainly intended as TV programs with a journalistic, newsy character, made by the regional station of the public Italian broadcasting service (the RAI) or by educational national programs of the same radio-TV company with the typical television informative language. The Compagnia Sacco committed in 1998 a documentary movie about the role and the cultural presence of the Compagnia in Cerianese context, with the supervision by Mauro Balma. The first scientific film about the Compagnia Sacco and the music life in Ceriana is Hugo Zemp's documentary of which the present text is the written companion.

As first ethnomusicologist aiming to record the music in Ceriana, Alan Lomax reached the village on October 10th 1954, coming from Baiardo, the municipality in the high Armea Valley, near the border between Liguria and Piedmont. In the same date he moved to Genoa, the day after (10-11th-1954) he was again in Baiardo and on 10-12th-54 he came down for the last time to Ceriana. One must consider the difficulty, in those years, to move along the tortuous viability of a region constricted between the sea and the mountains as the Liguria is. Lomax in that occasion had not as partner Diego Carpitella, the Italian ethnomusicologist who accompanied him across Italy: the same fact of his going onward and backward despite of the difficulties, is a clear symptom of the relevance he acknowledged to the music he had "discovered" in Armea Valley. His recordings are a very important document of the richness of the singing tradition in the two main centers of the valley: but while in the time passed after Lomax's transit in these places Baiardo has lost its living tradition in singing, in Ceriana the

practice of singing not only survived, but surely became more and more strong and beloved: it can be rightly considered that this happened thanking to the decisive impulse in forwarding the tradition received from the lights Lomax switched on, so illuminating this culture in a very accurate way yet from its first "discovery". The date when Lomax reached Ceriana, however, was a "normal" day at all: the main festivities and public occasions for performing ritual and ceremonial singing were far from being in act: this is the main reason why Lomax was not directly acquainted about the devotional traditions of the Confraternities; in the same time, we must consider that his fugacious, even if so intense, presence in the village was not able to provide him with all the singing repertories occurring in Ceriana. So his attention was obviously focused on the polyphonic singing of the male choirs, especially of the Compagnia Sacco, that can be "easily" actualized in a public site as a tavern or even in a piazza. Very more difficult was to catch a glimpse on the domestic repertory (in the sense of the inner family life within the houses) and on the women's singing traditions in general: nevertheless, it is very important, on one hand, the have at disposal today a little amount of Lomax's recordings of songs pertaining to the women and of some performances where at least one or two female singers feature in the polyphonic practice dominated by the male voices also. Also the sporadic presence of monodic songs here and there within these recordings is a valuable resource.

Besides their relevance as the first field recordings bringing Ceriana to the notoriety of the "outer" world, the audio documents he collected are extremely important because of the quality of the voices and singing style attested in a period so far from our reality, considering all the transformations the world has encountered during the in-between days. In general, we can argue that the voices were preferred in a relatively higher register, especially in drone singing, or, better to say, with a composition of the voices devoted to the drone part with less preminence of the bass register.

The greater part of these characteristics was confirmed by the researches who followed Lomax's precursory work: Leydi and Berio and Nataletti concentrated their attention on the male profane multipart singing, deepening main aspects of the picture emerged thanking to Lomax: Leydi recorded a beautiful version of the *Menestrun* (which can be heard in the today performance by the *Compagnia Sacco* in one of the bonus-tracks of the DVD), that is the "chain-song" typical of singing in taverns, made up by joining together parts of heterogeneous vocal sources, from Verdi's *Traviata* to serenades, military joking songs and others. Leydi was also responsible for the first decisive evolution of the *Compagnia* toward a more structured asset by inviting them to participate in the spectacle in Milan, *Sentite Buona Gente*, on February - March 1967. On March 3rd the performance was recorded in theatre on audio tape and on a TV open reel video tape: all the songs were performed with guitar accompaniment. The recordings by Sandra Mantovani in 1971 contain an interesting feature: it is the Compagnia Sacco performing one of the best known song of the feminine repertory of the *mondine* (that is the working women who periodically went to labor in the rice plantations in Piedmont and Lombardy), entitled *Senti le Rane che Cantano*. This song was learnt by the *Compagnia* in Milan, during the spectacle, from another traditional group of singers performing in that concert, that is the Sisters Bettinelli, whose repertory was very reach of *mondine* and other typical female songs from the Padana Valley. The recordings by Emilio Jona (1972) seem to be more occasional, without the participation of the Compagnia Sacco: this allows to have a number of wider informations about the musical life in Ceriana (even if not thoroughly depicted) in those years that surrounded the central role of the Compagnia.

In general the image of Ceriana provided by the important chain of ethnomusicological scholars who made of it a paradigmatic research field for the North-Italian traditional folk scene, did not balance the focus on ritual religious chant and profane polyvocal song with the importance of the everyday world of domestic sound and songmaking, assuming, without conceding, that really exists an unifying pattern there that moulds the whole musical world of this village. The main result of these researches being the collection of secular male songs performed with the drone voices, in the audio archives emerge here and there sporadic traces of innovative practices or same eccentric samples of "unusual" songs, if compared with the main repertory of the *Compagnia Sacco*: Nataletti, for example, recorded in 1962 a song non-pertaining to the traditional oral repertory, entitled *Per una volta sola*: it is a typical "light-tenorist" song, probably learned from a 78rpm record (catalogue Columbia n. CQ 2767 year 1954 - sung by Carlo Buti - composed by Gualdi-Coli - orchestra conductor GM. Guarino); singers were Iride, Amelio e Ottavio Crespi. The *Compagnia Sacco* was recorded by Nataletti singing a song entitled *Maria Ma(d)daléna* which in origin is a monodic lullaby from the feminine domestic repertory, whose melody, however, is shared with a ballad entitled *Pàire de Catarina* ("Catherine's father), to be performed both in soloist or in multipart form.
It was thanking to the Balma's recordings that our knowledge about musical culture in Ceriana, even if centered on Sacco style and repertory, was increasingly widened to almost all the different traditions and to the divergent strategies the protagonists have experimented to preserve or to change them.

6. THE SACRED REPERTOIRE

Ceriana is the scene of one of the most interesting traditions of Italian polyphonic music of oral tradition. An important part of the male repertoire consists of a series of orally transmitted para-liturgical pieces *a cappella*, the heritage of the four confraternal associations present in Ceriana from the late Middle Age. Hood and cape worn by the brothers pertaining to the four oratories during the official occasion, the main being the Easter rituals, are marked by as many colors, with the denomination of which usually the full name of the brotherhood is shortly replaced. In order: the "Greens" for the Confraternity of St. Marta, the "Blues" for the Brotherhood of the St. Mary's Visitation or of St. Mary's of the "penitence" (the name "…della Visitazione o della *Pena*" is generally intended in this way, but the real origin depends on the proper name of a Spanish architect, Pena or Peña, who worked in the oratory chapel: so it should be told as "…della Visitazione o di Pena"); finally the "Reds" for the Brotherhood of St. Catherine, and the "Blacks" for the Society of Our Lady of Sorrows: this last devotional guild is not properly a confraternity, it is a Company. Each of the four devotional associations has also a short name in dialect: the Greens are the "Santamartei", the Blues the "Madunenchi", the Reds the "Catarinenchi" and the Blacks the "Duluri".

On Holy Thursday, in the parish church and during the path from the oratories to the church, there and back (it is a "short" procession), takes place the largest and most complete performance of the sacred songs. On Good Friday there is the proper procession starting from the parish church and returning to it, along the streets of the village and touching all the four oratories. In both cases, into and out the church, the clergy does not participate in events. In the present configuration, both the processions (the "short" and the proper one) are preceded by the cross, bearing the "Mysteries of the Passion", that is metonymic symbols that recall the main events of the evangelical story of the Passion

of Christ; as is customary for the Ligurian confraternities, the crucifix is not facing forward but backward, toward the brothers who follow it; immediately after the cross, there is a group of children and adolescents, male and female, and then the male brothers-singers. On Holy Thursday the processional performance of the songs begins when each fraternity converges to from own oratory the Church of Saints Peter and Paul, located in the central square. Here confraternities, one at a time, wait for their turn to enter the church and take their places around the altar for a performance of the *Miserere*, the *Stabat Mater* and a *Lauda*; then, having finished this central episode of the ritual, the brothers start toward the exit to return to their oratory, and another fraternity makes its entrance into the church. The interweaving and echoing of the songs of the respective confraternal repertoires on the village square on the evening of Holy Thursday, and at certain times of the procession which takes place on Friday afternoon along the ancient streets of the village - that get available a lot of different resonating open spaces/stages - is a peculiar feature of the Cerianasco soundscape during the Easter festivities. Another peculiar sound source adds itself to this soundscape: it is the sound of the chestnut bark trumpets, called *corni* ("horns"), made by the adults for the children on Holy Thursday, as musical toys but also as ritual sound-devices of the Holy Easter *Triduum*. They provide an important symbolical affective support to people's acoustic feeling, being the voice of the *corni* considered as a central part of their global sound-memory of the place. The ritual construction itself of the *corni*, as a skilled service offered to the community, is an occasion to reaffirm the spirit of the late *Compagnie* of the conscripts: a group of the singers of the *Compagnia Sacco* is leading in this ritual work, some of them acting as the cultural hero of this practice, mixing a special enthusiasm in the job and a fierce willing in competing with all the others.

The repertoire of sacred songs, in their present crystallization, consist of the *Miserere* (Psalm 50) and the *Stabat Mater*, which every fraternity has in different musical version, with text in Latin, although the *Stabat Mater* of the Green and the Blacks have been recovered and put back in function only in recent years. The Brotherhood of Santa Marta is the only one to sing the *Domine Jesu Christe* (Latin text), and the lauda *Alma Contempla* (Italian text) is the same for the four brotherhoods. The *Stabat Mater* of the Visitazione and the *Alma Contempla* are also the only songs in the sacred repertoire to be performed with the drone accompaniment, that is the most distinctive style of profane Cerianasco singing, which will be discussed later.

According to Mauro Balma, one of the few scholars who have conducted depth investigations on the subject along a pluri-decennial research, the songs which deviate from the drone-style "show [...] literate or semi-literate influences, detectable in turns of phrases, in the use of differentiated entrances of voices, of polyphonic elementary behaviors", determined, *inter alia*, by a strong prevalence of contrary and oblique motion (at least between extreme parts) and by a modality in the conduction of the parts that, as we shall see, differs deeply from the style of profane drone-singing.

During research conducted in the second half of the eighties and early nineties, Mauro Balma has brought to light the written sources of two *Miserere* and two *Stabat* (preserved in the archives of the Confraternity of St. Catherine and St. Martha). According to the analysis of this scholar, (BALMA 1999: 11) at least three sources can be identified as works by some brass-band conductor or by local organists operating in Ceriana: namely the *Miserere* of St. Catherine, according to the autograph

attributable to Pietro Antonio Veneziano, and dated 1898. As Balma argues, "The *Miserere* in question is unequivocally dated and allows the identification of the author, who is remembered by the elders as the organist of the Brotherhood […]" (BALMA 1999: 12). But, given in these terms, the problem of the author of the "vocal work" may be misleading. "Our attitudes, fashioned by practices of writing, push us to join the ideas of text and author: at the same time, our sensitivity, distorted over the past one hundred years, leads us to identify […] oral poetry and folklore, that is to say, anonymity and impersonal traditions. None of these prejudices accounts for the facts." (ZUMTHOR 1990: 167). The work of organists or brass-band conductors in Ceriana certainly has a decisive role, but it is configured, as the same Balma notes (BALMA 1999: 14), as a deep mediation between two different logics in the organization of musical material. The action of the "band-leaders", turned to a primarily aesthetic effort, a mediation between opposing forces: adaptation, resistance of the polyphonic practice *vs* breakup, irruption of innovative patterns, borrowed directly from other musical rhetoric, as those typical of the brass-bands' style and of the opera singing (crosspollination between the opera musical world and traditional singing is still active today). In this direction there is still open a question of fundamental importance, namely, a systematic analysis of the differences between manuscript sources and polyphonic practices (and also, the differences between sound documents attested by historical field-research, and the events of today. About this point we will return between short), a topic that has been the focus of the recent studies carried out by Mauro Balma and Giuliano d'Angiolini (BALMA and D'ANGIOLINI 2007). The contemporary reflection on sound recordings collected during past field-research is still ongoing and is of paramount importance, because the complexity of its mode of existence prevents the study of orally transmitted vocality otherwise than from a prospective of enough long duration. The memory works for selection (and it is this process that we are interested in, comparing written sources and living repertories); in a similar and complementary way, the amnesia leads to the emergence of the structural features of the proper oral practice.

Structural proceedings of the polyvocality, aesthetically and socially shared, probably resurface within the deviations from the manuscripts; today one can currently find simplifying and differenciating features between the manuscripts and contemporary repertories. Next to the large number of manuscripts property of the heirs of Pietro Antonio Veneziano - not yet thoroughly investigated by ethnomusicologists - all this makes still open the question of an extensive survey of the relationships between polyphonic praxis and written sources, on the paradigm of other relevant studies in Italy about the relationships between local organists and instrumental and polyvocal forms (LA VENA 2001/2002:17-33 and GUIZZI 2009: 11-13). The general characteristics of Cerianasca sacred polyvocality that make possible a comparison with other polyvocal forms are summarized here:

- tenor and countertenor constantly move themselves basing on parallel thirds. Together, the two treble parts go oppositely to the basses, running mainly in *motu contrario* (this is essentially a two-part polyphony, since tenor and countertenor have no rhythmic and conducting independence);
- differentiated entrances of voices, strong rhythmic independence between bass and tenors;
- exclusive use of perfect cadences;
- presence of parallel fifths and eighths on movements marked by strong elements;

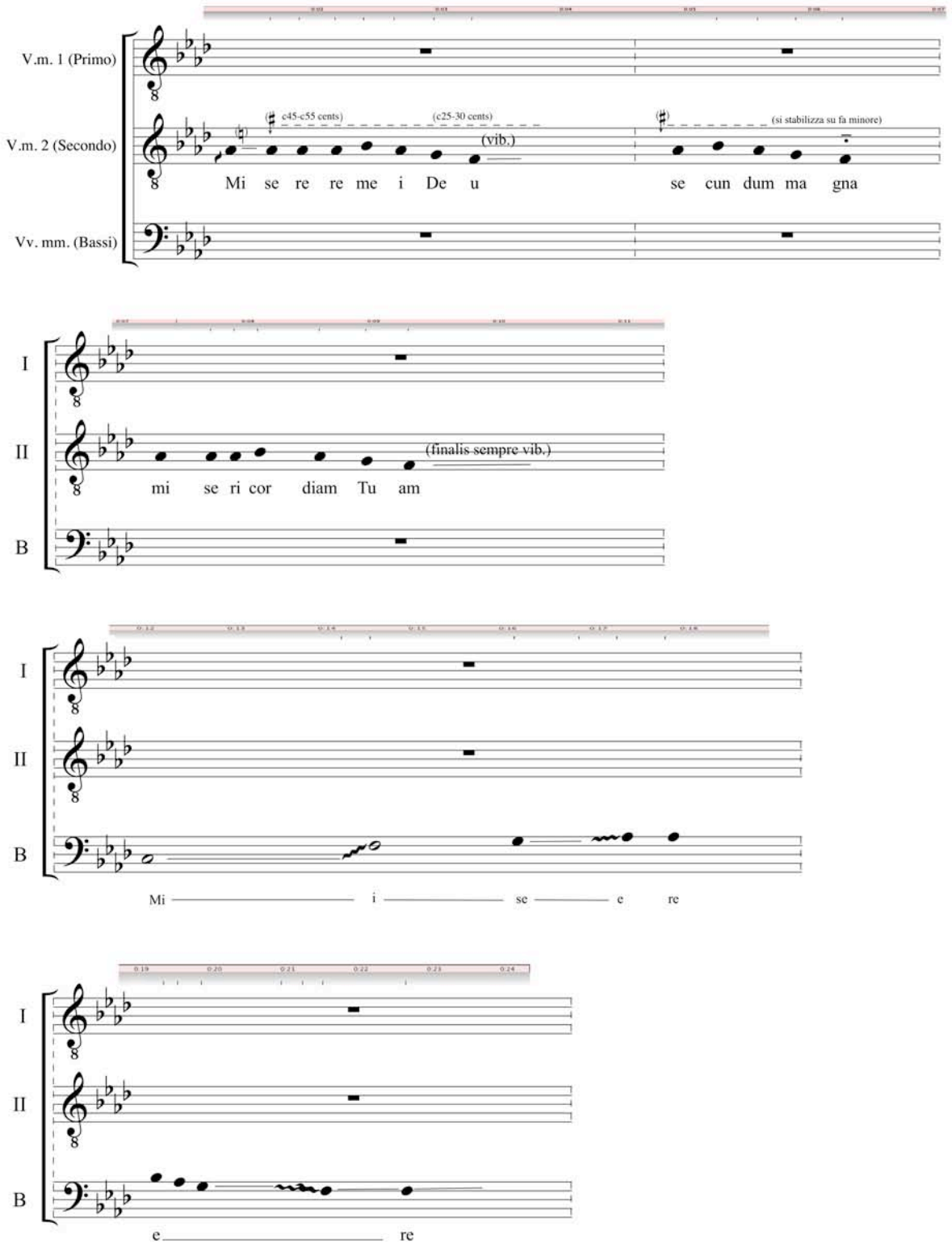
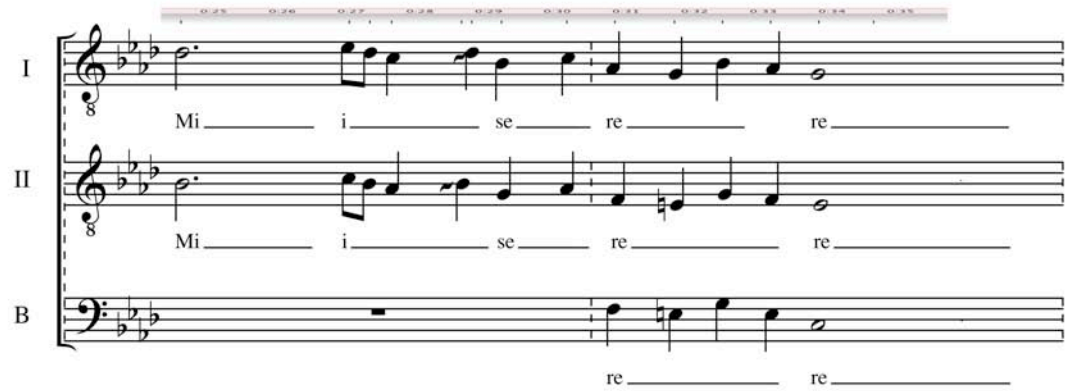
- rare homo-rhythmic episodes always coincident with the parallel motion of all parts (with exclusive use of chords in root position and the succession of harmonic degrees comparable to other manifestations of chordal polyvocality – see MACCHIARELLA 1995).

Future investigations in this regard, systematic comparisons with the manuscript sources, on the route specified by the precious field-researches achieved in years by the mentioned scholars, will allow us to monitor the phenomenon Ceriana and the constant evolution of the sacred polyphonic practice, far from been crystallized in its present form.

The following is the transcription of an example of one of the four *Miserere* from the repertories of the confraternities, as is performed by the *Compagnia Sacco*: it is the *Miserere di Santa Caterina,* the most evident sacred piece showing, despite its "archaic medieval" origin, evident formal and stylistic characters derived from the nineteen century musical taste:

Miserere di Santa Caterina - 2000
(CD AMORI 13)

Compagnia Sacco
(Soloists: Giovanni Martini, Nicodemo Martini)



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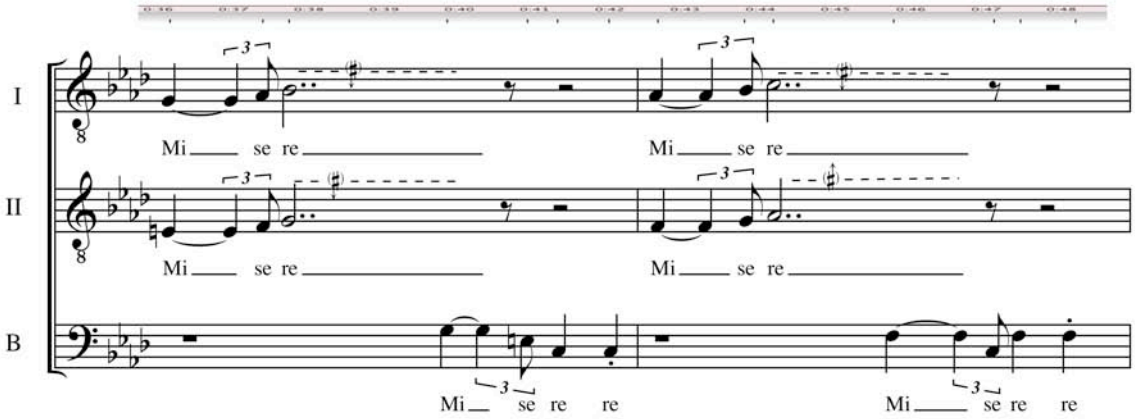
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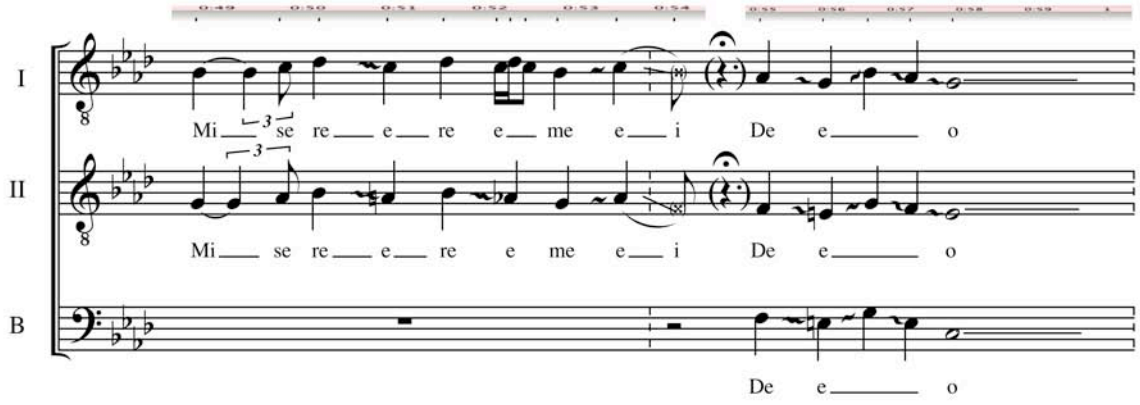
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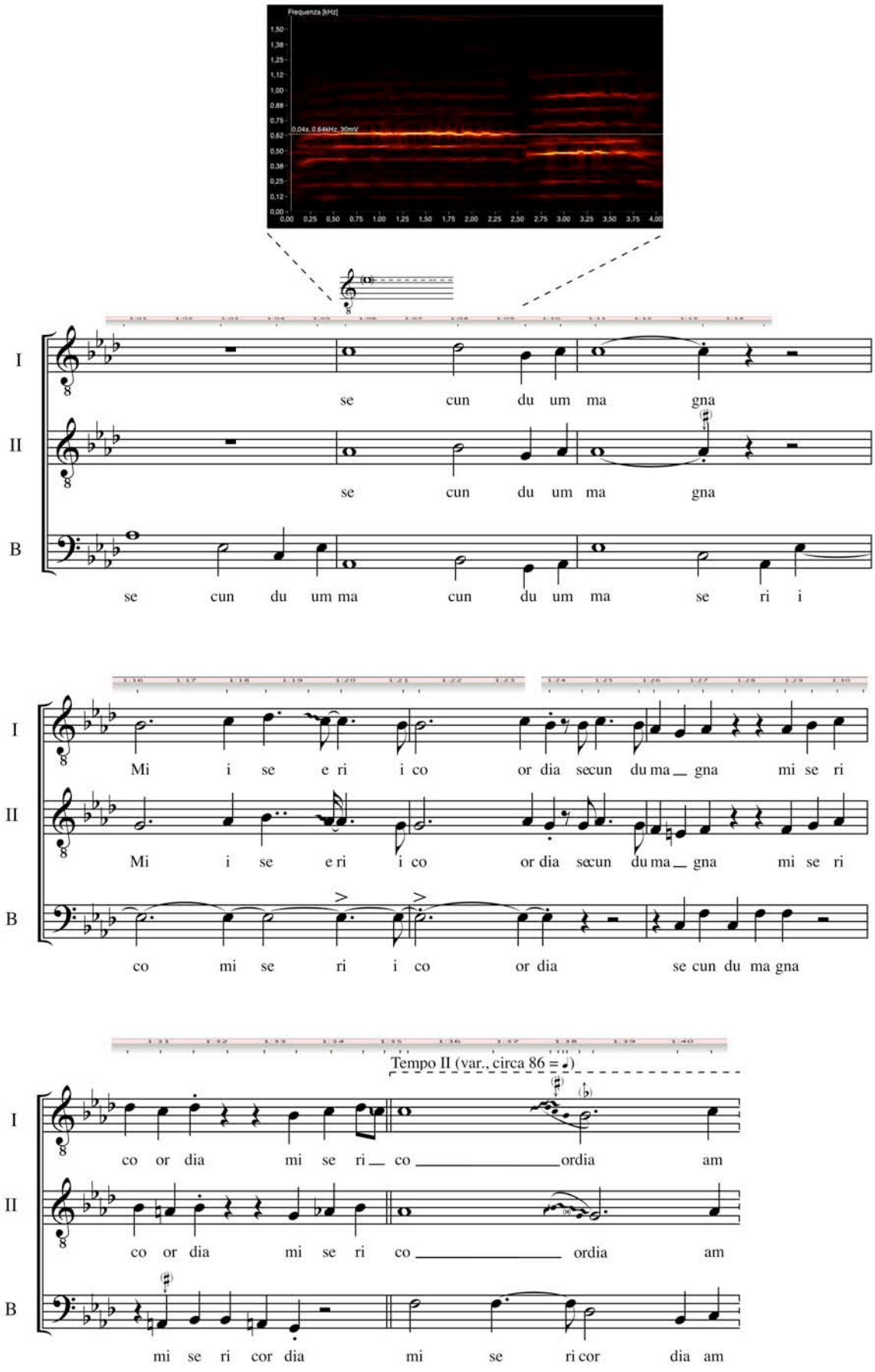
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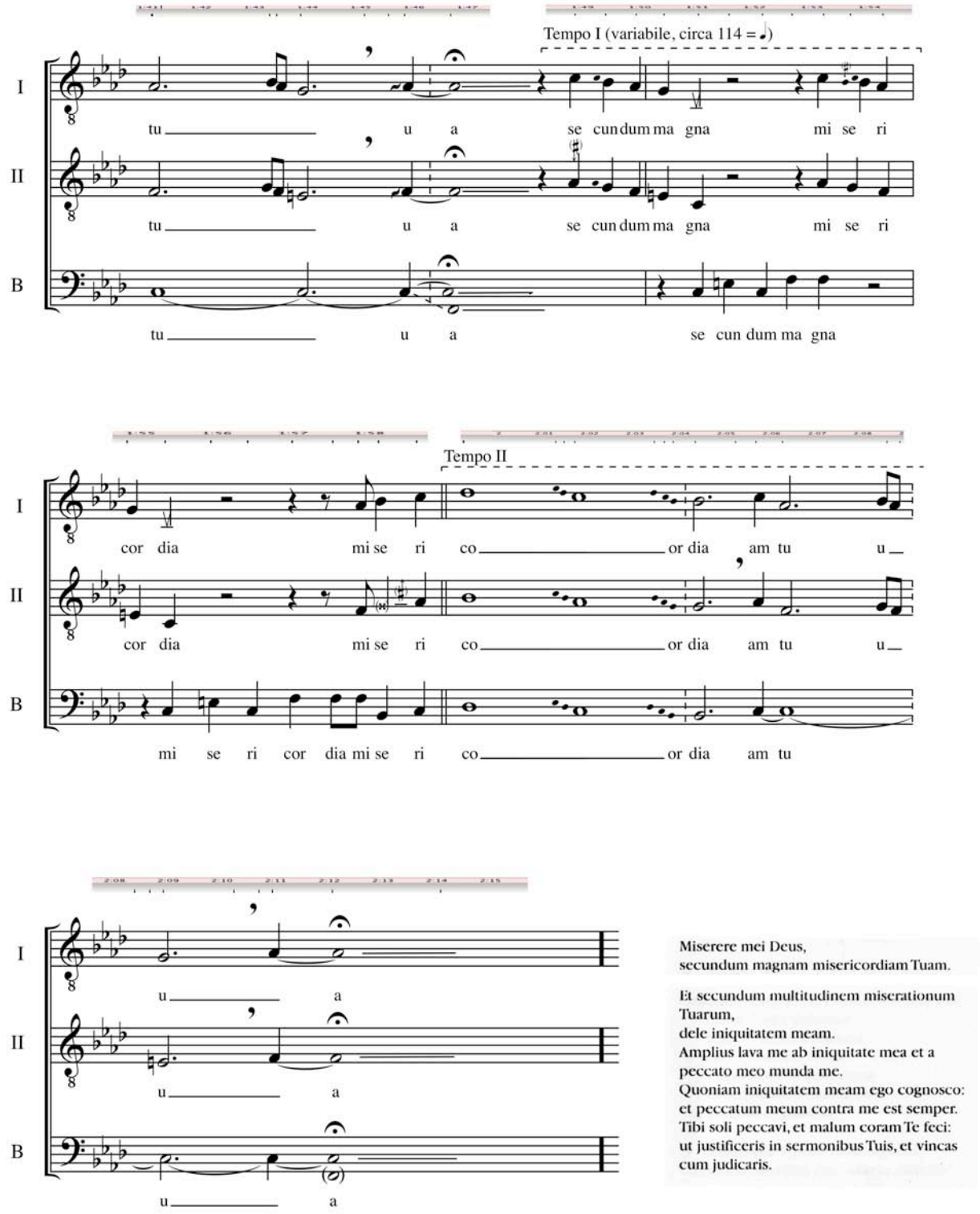

Miserere di Santa Caterina, performed by the *Compagnia Sacco* (excerpt); transcription by Ilario Meandri from the track n. 6 of CD *Batüi* - AMORI 2000 13). A part of this *Miserere* can be heard in the DVD at 35'33" - 36'45".

"Free time" parts, or weakly articulated ones, are transcribed as non measured melodies. Only major tempo variations have been notated (i.e. shifts between Tempo I and Tempo II, whom in this analysis a structural value is assigned to); while the slight *ritardandos* and *accellerandos* determined by the

vocal performance can be deduced by means of measure size (as note-head positions are linked to the time bar) and will be not noted down here through conventional musical signs (es. *acc*., *rit*.).
Worthy in this repertoire, and particularly in Santa Caterina's *Miserere*, is the mediation between (at least) two opposite tensions. The piece is embedded in a strong Nineteenth Century hieratic rhetoric; this is a clear evidence of the influence of a local organist-composer testified by the written documents found by the historical research; his personality can be traced as a musician probably cultivated within a musical background including the brass-band practice, whose outcomes can be heard here in the disposition of the voices and in the voice leading choices, combined with a particular melodic grandiloquence. This musical identity mediates with another aptitude, that witnesses the persistence of a strong layer of orality, a chordal mentality that often rearrange and mitigates the contrapuntal aptitude of the piece. With the purpose to highlight those differences the latter parts have been transcribed through resort to non-measured note-heads and duration lines.
A strong phantom voice can be heard at ca 1' 06" (3rd block, system 1, measure 2). Audible as a tenor voice, this effect is determined by the dynamic impact of a sum of partials of basses and lead voices (one of the strongest component being the II voice third harmonic – a twelfth above the fundamental - as highlighted in the sonogram. See on this topic Giuliano d'Angiolini's analysis of phantom voices in a sacred Sardinian brotherhood repertoire - D'ANGIOLINI 2005, p. 64 et seq.). Despite the fact that the effect is not intentionally sought by the singers, that kind of stochastic phantom voices can be heard at times in the sacred as well in profane repertoire, and witnesses the particular tone color of the voices, a typical timbre amalgam comparable with other repertoires of Italian chordal polivocality.
The *Compagnia Sacco* also performs in concert a part of the religious repertory of the confraternities: as individuals, they pertain to one of the four devotional associations, and some of them sing in the respective choirs. But the manner of interpreting these songs by the Compagnia as a whole, is worth of a remark, *en passant*: their interpretation is very interesting, but at the same time, there are a lot of difference between brotherhoods' chant and Sacco's own "dramatization of the sacred" - both the aspect are relevant, both being different ways of theatralicalization of the rites: but the brotherhoods theatricalize the rite in a devotional way and from inside, in forms related to global and local taste for the Catholic ostentation of the religion, of the liturgical apparatus, from the Baroque era up today. On the other hand, the Sacco singers show their hegemony over the entire musical world of Ceriana assuming the religion as a repertory segment of their musical centrality. In these occasions they show a larger distance from the warm heterophonic, instable, "vibrating" way of singing of the brotherhoods; on the contrary, their way is something "cold", and just for this aspect, it needs an exterior aid by means of theatricalization: it is *theatrical* but not "dramatic" enough.

7. THE PROFANE REPERTORY

In Ceriana way of polyphonic non-religious singing there are three parts: a treble soloist, (called, in the local terminology, "primo", *the first*), a medium register soloist (said "secondo", *the second*) and a low register drone on the dominant, performed by a relevant number of singers. This arrangement of the voices is really uncommon in Italian singing traditions: owing to this singularity, very often rises the question about the possible origin of this vocal procedure, among scholars but even within the singers of the Compagnia or among their "supporters": the explanation we have more frequently heard tells of the possibly early relations between the Ponente and the Byzantine culture, someone

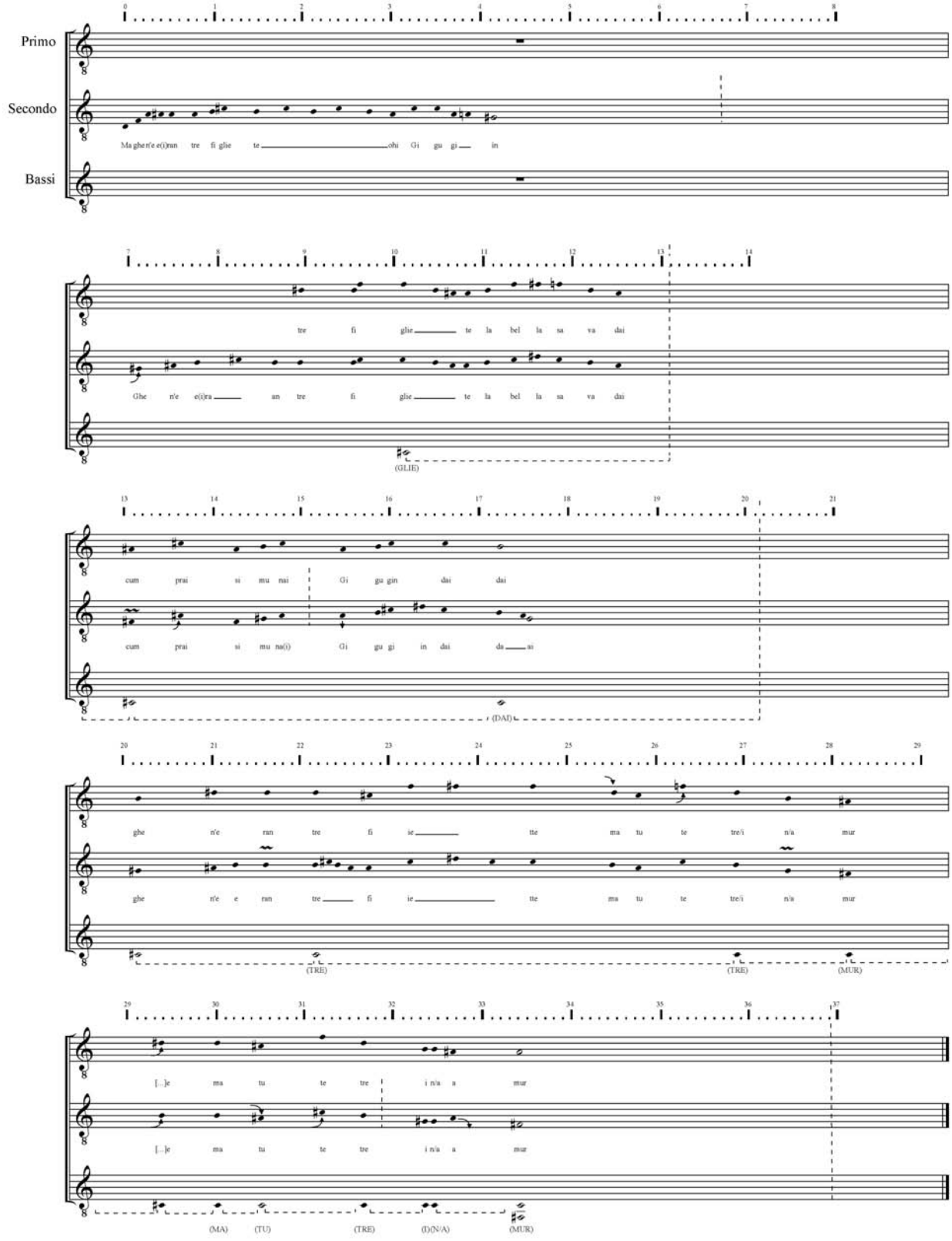
arguing that, the woods in the high valley being rich of conifers very apt to be transformed in boat-trees for the vessel sailing in all directions across Mediterranean sea, in the Western Liguria could have been frequent the presence of sea-men coming from the East Europe, induced to push themselves in the internal valleys in search of the *materia prima* for their sailboats. No historical evidence, obviously, can be provided to asseverate such explanations: in fact, no traces of this singing style are at disposal along the coastal territories, where the great presence of bays and harbors should have yet more facilitate such intercultural exchanges. The only functional generative explanation can be traced referring to the harmonic structures of the songs, based on paths wandering from the tonic and the dominant: the drone being resting on the dominant, save for the resolution in the cadence phrases tending toward the tonic, it is reasonable to establish the soloist voices upon a drone; what is less obvious is that the voices resting on a fixed accompanying tone (apparently resting: they move across micro-displacements which are essential for the quality of singing) sing the text of the song, "breathing" and "vibrating" within their apparently fixed and impassible role according to the text itself, its dramatic or narrative or joking inflections: this kind of interpreting the pedal singing goes far beyond the harmonic rules, and furnishes a special mix of expressive intensity and of strong "ripieno" sustain to the first and second voices, who have the responsibility of imposing the pathos and the accomplishment of the songs, especially of the narrative ones. Another peculiarity of the Ceriana drone singing refers to the rigid frame the two soloist voices are inscribed within: this schema responds to the general harmonic pattern in the traditional multipart singing in Northern Italy, being resting upon a parallel relation based on thirds: in all the other local styles, however, this paradigm involves a repartitions of the accompanying voices in the different registers or parts, each based on a corresponding organization of thirds and sixths; only in Ceriana, all the voices, excepting the first and the second, sing the pedal a fifth below the fundamental of the soloist headline. This last, anyway, is not treated as a stable melodic pattern: both the first and the second voices, as a rule, moves themselves according to the embellishments that unavoidably enriches the articulation of the phrase (often the first and the second voices temporarily and harmonically diverge in this practice from the basic third equilibrium and each from the simultaneous choice of the other), now and then enacting a sort of traditional *contrappunto*.

The secular singing mostly consists of narrative songs and polyvocal ballads; it is formally characterized by the action of mixed plurilinear proceedings, in three structural parts: parallelism (tenor and counter-tenor in balance of thirds), drone held on a single sound (a number of singers in unison, occasionally in interval of a fifth in cadence), with monodic incipit "a raccogliere" (that is "in form of gathering": FACCI 1991).

'E tre figliete - 2009

(As sung in the film)

Compagnia Sacco

(Soloists Giovanni Martini - Nicodemo Martini)

'E tre figliete, performed by the *Compagnia Sacco* (excerpt); transcription by Guido Raschieri from version sung in the DVD at the San Giovanni feast.

It takes place in a kind of intermediate stylistic line between the mainstream way "imposed" by the Compagnia Sacco (their presence is also crucial here) and the way as shown by the remaining singing universe in Ceriana (also in a historical perspective, for now omitted here). Also listening to the soloist voices is worth noting the different vocal behavior of the second voice (*Secondo*, Giovanni Martini, called *'u Lassu*), more free and flourished, and the first voice (*Primo*, Demo Martini). The bass voices show an adherence to the text greater than one can hear in the versions published in the CDs or performed during the stage-concerts, where prevails a sort of *tapis chantant*, a perfect controlled singing machine. They, the basses, here manifest themselves as not really accurate, so being partially different from the "homogenized" pedal of the Company itself; the transcription does not fully respect the whole result of the mixing voices, subtly heterophonic, that is also dictated by external presences (also of "not Italian" guests, who nevertheless sing freely and passionately). Words pronounced by the drone voices are given in brackets, because the real articulation is actually not so homogeneous. All this builds a bridge back into the past, recalling at least the forms of singing we can compare, listening to the recording of this song made by Alan Lomax in 1954.

8. CHANGES OF SINGING MODE SINCE LOMAX'S RECORDINGS IN 1954

The Italian scholar Giuliano d'Angiolini (D'ANGIOLINI 2002) produced so far the most interesting observations about the differences existing between the mode of singing detectable in the Alan Lomax recordings and the manner of the contemporary singing, with very thorough analysis of the current practice. The summary that follows is strongly in debt with his work; moreover, no other scholar has been so far able to produce more significant contributions to organic matter. He concentrates his research on groups of older singers, aiming to compare different modes of expression. D'Angiolini writes: "We can define the musical evolution occurred in Ceriana from fifties to today as characterized by a slow trend towards "Italianization" of singing, as in parallel happens with the language". This awareness is also *emic*: we can quote, for example, a singer of the "Blacks" who compares the transformations of the dialect in reshaping the singing, intended like a lost in singing style, of its markedly idiomatic trait (personal communication, Ceriana, October 2004). This process is reflected primarily in simplifying of the tonal style, partially normalized, cleansed from the dross, from the spectral density, from the nasal and head-voice emission. In fact one can suspect that what appears to be a hearing topos of the ethnomusicological listening ear (density in the harmonic spectrum), is in fact just the opposite: an attempt by the singers to limit the range of harmonic emission so that the tapering of the parts generates the idiomatic "tonal chord". This bias is illuminating. It is today that the voices are more dense in terms of spectrum (for a sonogrammatic discussion of these issues see LORTAT-JACOB 1996 and, for a critical revision of Lortat-Jacob's analyses: D'ANGIOLINI 2005).

According to d'Angiolini, the tonal complexity decreases the harmonic clarity: as it weakens the contact with an old-style mode of expression (or rather with the collective reality that generated it) and as the proceedings of multipart singing approach a harmony of western academic origin, the complexity of the sound quality is expunged from the expressive system. Today the style of voice-emission of most of the singers is with "relaxed throat": a particular type of vibrato, a "tenorizing" emission (Beniamino Gigli' style, the famous Italian tenor of the past).

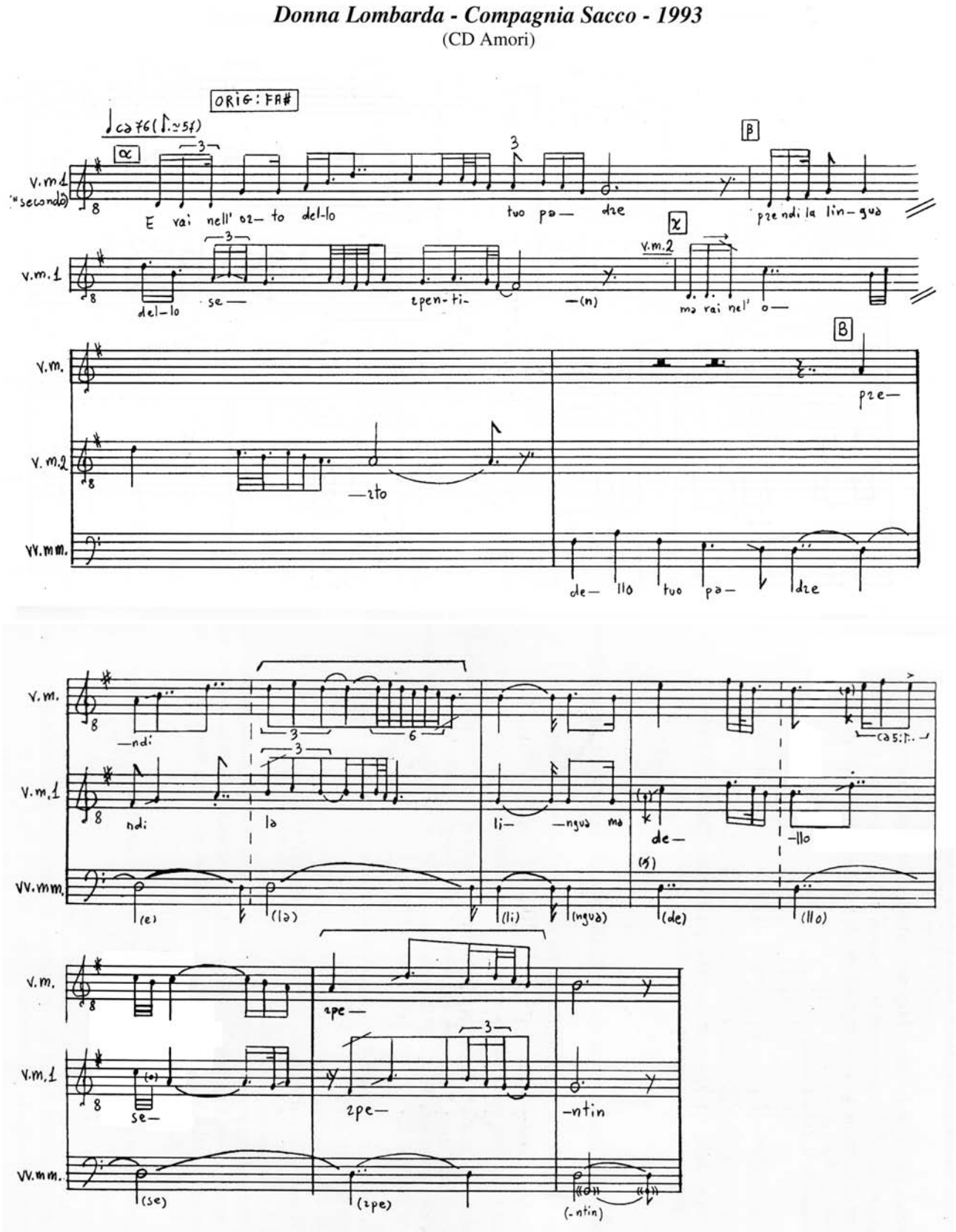
The question about the harmonical manners is more problematic, and according to d'Angiolini, now a trend toward forms derived from academic harmony is increasingly in progress. One can observe a larger stiffness of the vocal behavior that often consists of parallel movements, most often based on interval of thirds (but not exclusively), while in the past the relative independence of the voices and the use of ornamentation generated a more complex harmony. Today there is a relative homogeneity of the repertoire and of ornamental melodic formulas. Comparing the contemporary practice with the Lomax recordings allows some considerations to emerge: when the soloist singer relaunches the polyphonic resumption, here in the past he used to heavily reinterpret the part of the melody just performed by the choir. The alternation of different singers in the same role also produced a remarkable variability in the soloist *incipit* (it is active therefore a formulaic system: see Leydi about the ballad singer Teresa Viarengo; LEYDI 1995). So the singers were, as Roberto Leydi writes about the lineaments of the ballad-singer in Northern Italy, real "performers" in the sense of a mastery of the compositional processes of the narrative song: not just "repeaters" of songs and music listened for and retained in memory, but repositories of a knowledge "from within" of the reference expressive system and of the performing stylems. Both in the recordings of the elder singers and in those made by Lomax in 1954, the harmony is made extremely complex by a relative independence of melodic curves: in addition, there is frequently the presence of chords sequences (*in motu recto*: in straight motion) formed by empty fifths (a chord containing only a perfect fifth with no thirds), a characteristic that makes multipart singing from Ceriana comply with the managing strategies of the parts findable in other polyvocal Italian occurrences. The harmonic interval of reference for the two upper voices is quite clearly identifiable in the third. However - and this is one of the major contributions given by the d'Angiolini's analysis - the *balance of the third* is constantly deferred and reassessed during the performance and the melodic outlines drawn by the tenor and countertenor take the form of curves of *parabolic* type.

Much of the expressive (and stylistic) identity of the secular repertoire lies in the melismatic details that underlines these parabolic movements, decorating them all over the time. The morphology of ornamental formulas can be clarified by future analysis: some formulas are recurrent, such as those of the choral ripresa, or those at the cadential phase; other formulas show a greater instability, such as those that lead to an anticipation of the tonic. The melodic formulas of the two tenors are polarized around a point of balance, of harmonic stillness: an interval of third. But at the same time, the melismatic profiles of singing continually defer the harmonic balance. This melodic-formulaic pleasure (distance, approach, encounter, balance and deferred equilibrium) gives rise to the characteristic *movement* of the melodic profane singing in Ceriana: a feature of the phrasing that projects his qualities on the perception of *narrative time* - this last not measured - whose nature is strongly connected with the ornamental progression of the voices: on the one hand the embellishment is configured as a strategy for exploration of the melodic grades; on the other it is directly responsible for the construction of *narrative time*. The parabolic melodic structure and the phrase, through this melismatic movement, will gradually move away from harmonic equilibrium with the drone, and will return to it in the cadential phases. But the singers, in this removal, do not follow melodies provided with a precise identity: there are mostly lines of force which govern the phrasing articulation, sometime toward the high (maximum total harmonic tension), sometime toward the low (homeostasis with the drone in fourth and sixth).

As Giuliano d'Angiolini argues, it is the continuous disruption of the balance in the interval of a third by one of two voices (breaking that keeps a good heterophonic quality) that engenders the melodic movement, and the perception of a *temporal articulation* proper of the narrative singing. D'Angiolini defines this behavior, in the case of older singers and practice of embellishment, which is attested by Lomax recordings, as a sort of *heterophony* in thirds (D'ANGIOLINI 2002: 174). With regard to interpretation, the 1954 recordings testify to a greater performing power and an intense participation in the expression. This tension is today replaced by a "monumental pace", characterized by a slowdown and a normalization of tactus; a greater homophony, which gives rise to more compact and solemn harmony. This process of formalization, this tendency to uniformity of performing formulas now tends to flatten the differences in structure and in performance between one song and the other, like that by d'Angiolini identified as a process of crystallization and of stagnation engendered, among other things, by the recent concertistic experiences and recordings productions, which have lead to the tightening of boundaries of the "vocal work" and the emergence of a new sensibility for the formal completeness of the performance: a singing made autonomous that now becomes a discrete, homogeneous, enclosed, entity, with secure boundaries.

These are the most manifest innovations with respect to the past, according to the analysis of d'Angiolini (D'ANGIOLINI 2002: 172, 175 et seq.):
- marked parallelism of melodic movements;
- strict order of entrances of the voices, without margin of uncertainty;
- introduction of a measured melody of bass voices only (not present in the recordings of 1954), between the monodic incipit and the choral *ripresa*;
- dynamic crescendo of the drone;
- emancipation of the bass voices from the drone role (resolution on the tonic at the end of verses).

Many questions remain open for a full analysis of the harmonic problems that the repertoire raises. However, on this road, one can consider a few suggestions by Pietro Sassu, a leading Italian scholar of multipart singing: he, in an article with an emblematic title ("Folk liturgy in gestures and sounds") suggested, as a frontier territory for the ethnomusicological research in Italy, to take seriously into consideration the relationships between gestures (postures, attitudes, proxemics) and sounds, in order to interpret them more deeply, and reveal their affective rhetoric (SASSU 1993).
On this road d'Angiolini, with a well-chosen image, finds that the melodic profile of the singers can be interpreted as *seismographs of passion* (D'ANGIOLINI 2002: 191). But gesture and gaze are involved too. Semiosis involves the gesture, the association between gesture and enunciated is indeed one of the strongest characters. The gestural model is part of the competence of the performer and projects itself into the performance. "Together they contain meaning in the manner of hieroglyphics. Gesture transcribes nothing, rather it produces figuratively the message of the body. Gesturality is defined therefore (as is utterance) in terms of distance, tension, and patterns rather than as a system of signs. It less governed by a code (is not in an always incomplete and local way) than submitted to a norm [...] The gesture does not record anything, but figuratively produces the messages of the body." (ZUMTHOR 1990: 155). So the gesture spatially creates the external shape of the vocality. It establishes the time unit articulating its recurrences. The problem of *meaning* in music, brilliantly tackled by Giuliano d'Angiolini, begins to put themselves in these terms, starting with the complex relationship

between body and voice. Here below is a transcription of the *Donna Lombarda*'s incipit that we will shortly discuss. For what concerns relationship between body movements and singing, it is noteworthy that the whole musical form here excerpted is stressed by body movements and cueing strategies adopted by the singers (especially, but non solely, by the leading voices). Although each gesture belongs to the personal repertoire of a singer, it is possible to recognize some common movements and in particular – as there is no space here for a longer coverage – we would like to briefly signal a simple interesting figure directly related to the harmonic structure of the piece. Gestures as well are here *seismographs of passion,* as they serve both as a cueing strategies and as dramatic interpretation of the harmonic rhetoric of the phrase. For instance, on the B section, that sees the choir's *ripresa*: after the entrance of the drone voices, the two lead singers will stress the entrance and the following passage from the V to the I_4^6 degree by bending the knee and faintly flexing the body. The entrance is often a place for a *ritardando* and such movement will conduct the passage V-I: during the passage the bodies will regain a more relaxed position and the lifting movement corresponds to the slight glissando of the voices (from A-B for v.m. 1; F#-G for v.m. 2). Please note that in this traditional context, voice disposition in ${}_4^6$ on the tonic has not to be interpreted as a dominant function, as is the 2nd inversion of the chord in classical functional harmony; instead the homeostasis of the voices in the I_4^6 inversion has here to be considered as a resting point (being the drone tonic resolution a fifth down, e.g. on the last measure, just a stronger *fermata* signal, an habit that is actually quite recent and, according to d'Angiolini, is a sign of the homologation to a more conventional tonal grammar). Thus the singers' bodies reach their maximum tension along with the harmonic movements of the piece and gestures are both interpreting and "conducting" the harmonic resolution. Every singers share this common gestures, although every singer interprets the gesture rhetoric in a personal recognizable way, as a peculiar sign of his presence and singing-way: gesture is, as harmony, a way to conceive the single's presence among the collective, and thus the singer's movements are part of song rhetoric and contributes to the dramatic interpretation of the harmonic movements. To remain in the context of the movement described, Giovanni Martini and Giannino Ferrari are surely among the singers whose gesture are more recognizable. The same "leaning attitude" can be experienced in many other passages and, for instance, the particular gesture idiolect of Giovanni Martini, when he performs the v.m. 2 in *Donna Lombarda*, is recognizable in the v.m. 2 entrance (third measure). Here the gesture is both interpretation and cueing, but in a slightly different manner: in the seventh minor interval (D-C) the C is usually extremely sharped (more than a quarter tone) and is stressed by the same previously described movement, plus a marked head bowing that compose not only the gesture rhetoric of the singer, but is also responsible of the raised pitch (as the gesture has a direct influence on the vocal emission), and this, in turn, serves as an excellent device to keep the entire choir perfectly tuned, as at every reprise of the ballad the raised C tone compensates the natural tendency of the choir to flatten during the performance.

*Donna Lombarda***,** performed by the *Compagnia Sacco*; transcription by Giuliano d'Angiolini from the track n. 10. of CD *U mese du granu* - AMORI 1993 AM001. [Courtesy of the author. See D'ANGIOLINI 2002: 220-221)

9. MONODIC AND POLYVOCAL IN THE SECULAR REPERTORY

The system based on collecting voices ("a raccogliere") with responsorial chorus, provides for the enunciation of the entire verse by the soloist. An enunciation, as d'Angiolini says, of the mere narrative content and without affective inflection, with a musical naturalness and a purely informative objectivity. The chorus responds and resumes the verse, amplifying and developing its deep lyrical and dramatic character. (D'ANGIOLINI 2002: 188 et seq. This peculiar ballad singing style and the "ballad system" has been extensively described in LEYDI 1995 and LEYDI 2001). A process meant to create a contrast between the enunciation of the fact (the event described by the harshness of the news) and the pathetic development that derives from that. This procedure is a formal character of the polyphonic ballad, in many areas of Northern Italy; and it reveals also, as we believe, the sense of any polyphonic translation of a monophonic ballad. In *Donna Lombarda* (a very largely known ballad; see LEYDI 1995: 66-77), the soloist enunciation is melodically built on the triad of the chord (as a "fanfare" motive) with the simple alternation of tonic and dominant; the soloist enunciation is performed on a not measured rhythm, clearly faster, not lyrical and with a more relaxed and lighter character.

The alternation between polyvocal and monophonic resumptions increases the *sense of presence* of the soloist voice, like a *turning point* in the narrative articulation. Although the intervention of the soloist is extremely shorter than the choir's *ripresa*, this growing presence implies the feeling of a slowdown in the narrative; it also creates a strong expectation, a tension toward the new choir's *ripresa* (D'ANGIOLINI 2002: 190). With these considerations d'Angiolini works about a hermeneutic perspective that had already been indicated by Roberto Leydi, just about the ballads, greatly enriching it and bringing it to a very advanced level of interpretation. Wondering about the nature of this *narrating voice* and defining it in the light of the Brechtian distance from the object of narration, Leydi explained how this "aesthetic distance" is shared by the performers (see LEYDI 2001: 23-77); and indeed, what distinguishes a good performer from a mediocre one, is the very gift of being able to produce, in singing, the perception of this distance, i.e. the talent of possessing this "secret". As regards the ballad and the narrative singing, the text-music relationship is performed in this space, it *happens* in the place of this distance. According to d'Angiolini, an amplification of the narrative intensity occurs at the choir's *ripresa*; it is powerfully evocative, being generated by an increase in harmonic tension, and is further enhanced by the entry of the highest voice. This amplification is also aroused by the wideness of the melodic range and of the ornamentation and by reasons of tonal character (the voices meet together again and *seek* the right blend of the overtones). Giuliano d'Angiolini (2002: 189-190) further writes:

> The ballad lends itself to the heartfelt expression of the soloist's word, and to a sort of ecstasy of the choral word. [...] The lyricism of the ballad is thus (in music) in contrast with the harshness and severity of the tale. [...] But the polyvocal *ripresa* is an anticipation, in the immanence, of the tragedy to come, it expresses its dramatic constancy and the *yearning* melancholy of the *fact-already-happened*. The ballad, with its cyclic and immutable structure, and with such a pathetic amplification, is the musical form of the ineluctable [...]. A particular existence of the temporal consciousness occurs here: if in the narrative text one experiences an evolution of the story, in the music the story is cancelled by the repetition of a present without perspective, with no horizon. [...] Everything happens as if the tragic event that is told does not constitute a particular altered state of the world, but rather an invariable nature, indeed a truth of nature, a kind of its ineluctable essence. So that the fact not only has taken place, but continues to take place every day...

10. Cultural debate in Ceriana about the "canon" of singing

Despite the rigorous feeling with which the traditional singing practice in Ceriana is performed and valued as a precious heritage, there are also in the village some singers who believe that the traditional way of singing is not so appreciable just because of the formal peculiarities of the "ancient" style. Two inclinations can be individuate, knowing that they are interconnected: on one hand, the viewpoint of musicians whose formation and practice are linked to the standardized rules of the harmonic language and organization of ensemble music-making, as brass band or choir conductors; they cultivate a theoretical thinking about music and promote a consequent method in organizing musical activities which are very critical against the traditional sensibility, intended as something to be overcome or to be considered "imperfect" and worth of "improvements": so it cannot fail to encounter a part of the singers who aims to change and "ameliorate" the style and to update the fundamental forms according to a different point of view. On the other hand, people who loves a "modern" conformist fashion in singing, aligned with the style of the urban conventional popular music. The first subjective component, believing in the superiority of the "academic" musical theory and practice, is a minority, but its influence cannot be ignored if one aims to understand the complex dynamics of the cultural life in Ceriana. These musicians are permanently committed, even if always contested, in inducing all the singers in general, and especially those performing in the choirs of the brotherhoods, to see that their style and vocal settings must be standardized, in the belief that it should be submitted to "modern" choral rules, deemed as absolute and as a sort of normalization toward the schemes in harmonization, expression and voice emission itself, presumed to be obvious and compulsory in every "advanced" form of choral singing. The nucleus where this opinion founds its stronger rootedness is the *Coro della Valle*. At a first glimpse, this formation seems to be considered as something extraneous in regard to the traditional musical reality of Ceriana: this is a matter of fact, because the performing character and the musical culture itself of the *Coro* are vastly different from those which pertain in the original Cerianasca tradition, especially if considering the stylistic contents, the way of organizing the choir itself, the habits ruling within it relating to the way of learning the repertory, of arranging the voices and their relationship in the different parts, of adopting by participants an "artificial" breathing and emission of the vocal sound (all these aspects can be shortly observed in the film's sequence showing different choral formations, among them the *Coro della Valle*, performing on the stage during a summer vocal festival).

But in regard with the global musical life in Ceriana the role of the *Coro della Valle* cannot be ignored: this is true, not only for the obvious aspect of its "citizenship", but above all for the function played by its founder in mediating amongst the traditional repertory and the contemporary urban "bourgeois" musical fashions, which anyway penetrated in the Cerianese culture through radio and TV programs and for the relevant influence derived from the musical enterprises in Sanremo, meant as an alternative to the old local musical system. This mediation has influenced also the "minor" repertories, more closely related to the female world, with its propensity toward the lyrical, intimate mood. In other words, a "parlor" style of singing, sometime monodical, with the guitar accompaniment, with a smooth voice emission, has acted to appropriating songs pertaining to the domestic world, "marginal" in relation with the hegemonic one represented by the religious and secular male formations, the brotherhoods and the *Compagnie* traditional choirs: paradoxically, just

for its insertion in the deep house traditions of the women, this music has crossed the pretending modernization of the *Coro della Valle* style and can have been influenced by it. Or we can argue that both these worlds, even if so different in their dynamics and in their inclinations, could have been subjected to parallel inspiration from the "modern" entertainment music from outside. The *Coro* was established in 1960, in a first period acting as an "Alpine chorus", that is as a chorus conformed on the model of harmonization of the parts and of the quality of the voice emission of the well-known *Coro della S.A.T* (Società degli Alpinisti Tridentini), founded in Trento in 1926, that had "the responsibility of the partial reduction of the traditional folk styles of some Italian areas to poor subcultural late romantic models" (see LEYDI 2008: 167). In Ceriana, the *Coro della Valle* soon changed its repertoire, turning to the performance of songs in the western Ligurian dialect, including those of oral tradition. They, however, are always undergone a process of harmonization to fit the choral structuring of the group that has remained essentially that of its beginning: there are five voices, but one must consider that the first tenors have rather the function to superimpose a clear tone to the ensemble of the other voices (BALMA 1989: 3). The choir uses a guitar accompaniment and its founder, Gio Batta "Nino" Perretti, was in the habit also of singing traditional songs in monodic version, sometime in minor mode, in an intimate vocal style, near to that of a crooner, rather that to the "classic" folk manner of the narrative soloist songs of Northern Italy. This way of singing indicates a cultural contiguity with the style of the so-called "canzone all'italiana" (singing in Italian style) of the '30s and '40s, that is to an urban bourgeois taste for the popular song imposed by the broadcast of the radio programs: a part of this production was committed in creating "local" traditions, built around to song texts in different dialects, on the model of the celebrated Neapolitan song. In Ceriana, part of this taste was impersonated by an interesting author of lyrics, Antonio Crespi (1895-1982) a poet-composer who gave an original contribution to the attempt of establish an "authorial" experience inspired by the place, but aesthetically linked to the mainstream diffused through the radio programs and deriving from the nineteenth century *romanza*.

It was not yet been completely elucidated what kind of real repercussion the presence of the *Coro della Valle* has produced on the traditional singing practices. We know that some effort was made in the '60s and in the beginning of the '70s, with the aim to intervene to "fix" the *Miserere* of the Santa Caterina and Santa Marta confraternities. A number of clues can be derived from recordings not focused on the excellences of the Cerianasca tradition, where for example one can heard a lullaby as *Adormite curumbu* subsumed into the repertory of the *Coro*. This song, already recorded by Lomax in 1954, was obviously sung in its primary context in a monodic manner, by a female voice: now it takes part of the repertory of the *Mamme Canterine* as a multipart song, even if a lot of the *Mamme* knows a "personal" monodic version of it.

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1954	rec. by Alan Lomax* (Compagnia Sacco)	
	La fontanella [E la mia maire l'è poverina]	Col KL 5173/Pull OLP 107
	Donna lombarda	- -
	Vieni in barchetta	Canti delle tradiz. marinare**
	Son barcaiolo	
	* For the other recordings collected during this first field research by Alan Lomax in Ceriana [Collection 24-1, 26 items], see: Accademia Nazionale di S. Cecilia *I* RAI- Radiotelevisione Italiana / Centro nazionale studi di musica popolare, *Catalogo sommario delle registrazioni,* 1948-1962. Roma, n.d. (p. 83); Associazione italiana "Museo vivo", *Inventario delle fonti sonore della musica di tradizione orale italiana*. Roma, 1973 (part 1, pp. 321-323); RAI-Radiotelevisione italiana, *Folk. Documenti sonori. Catalogo informativo delle registrazioni musicali originali*. Roma. 1977 (pp. 59-61).	** Published not for sale by the Società Finanziaria Marittima FINMARE, G. Nataletti editor.
1962	rec. by Roberto Leydi and Luciano Berio*** (Compagnia Sacco)	
	Se ben che son piccina (incatenatura]	Dischi del sole DS 15****
	Siamo quattro genovesi (I ladri piemontesi]	- -
	La povera Rosetta	Dischi del sole DS 14****
	Donna lombarda	Dischi del sole DS 18****
		Dischi del sole DS 110/12
	La sentinella (Era una notte che pioveva]	Dischi del sole DS 13****
	*** 8 items recorded.	**** 33rpm, 17 cm. record
1962	rec. by Giorgio Nataletti***** (Quintetto dei Menestrelli di Ceriana)	
	Di chi l'è sta bela figlia (La figlia del capitano / I marinai]	allegato al volume *Tuttitalia* Liguria (SADEA) (1962)
	***** For the other recordings (14 items) by G. Nataletti in Ceriana (Collection 67, 1962), see: Accademia Nazionale di S. Cecilia / RAI-Radiolelevisione ltaliana / Centro nazionale studi di musica popolare, *cit*. (pp. 211-212); Associazione italiana "Museo vivo", *cit*. (part 1, p. 325); RAI-Radiotelevisione italiana, cit. (p. 64), and now BALMA, MAURO, GIULIANO D'ANGIOLINI (eds), *Musiche tradizionali del Ponente Ligure. Le registrazioni di Giorgio Nataletti e Paul Collaer* (1962, 1965, 1966), Roma 2007, Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia - Squilibri.	
1969	rec. by Roberto Leydi****** (Compagnia Sacco)	
	L'è la figlia d'un paisàn [Cattivo custode]	Albatros VPA 8088
	Lingua serpentina	Albatros VPA 8126
	****** 12 items recorded. Other recordings (not published) were made in Ceriana by R. Leydi in 1967 (17 items) and by S. Mantovani, in 1971 (7 items).	
1975	rec. by Ana Lomax Chairetakis******* (Compagnia Sacco)	
	En te slu carlevà	Folkways FES 34041
	******* Recordings made in Washington DC, during the Smithsonian's Folk Festival 1975.	
1977	rec. by Edward Neill (Coro della Valle)	
	Miserere (Salmo 50)	Dynamic ET 200
1985	rec. by Mauro Balma******** (Compagnia delle Figlie di Maria)	
	Quasi cedrus (Lezione dell'Ufficio della Beata Vergine Maria) (6:45)	Albatros AL8 21
	******** In the M. Balma's archive hundreds items recorded in Ceriana are collected. A part of them (rec. on 1.1 1.1983) are retained in the Archivio fonti orali ed etnomusicali - Ufficio Musei e Beni culturali della Regione Liguria. Further documents from Ceriana are stored in the Edward Neill archive (Genova).	

SONG TEXTS

'E tre figliete

Ghe n'eiran tre figliete, *o gigugin*
Ghe n'eiran tre figliete *la bela savadai*
Cumprai, simunai, gigugin, dai dai
Ghe n'eiran tre figliete ma tüte e trei d'amò

Severina la più bella, *o gigugin*
Severina la più bella la bela savadai
Cumprai, simunai, gigugin, dai dai
Severina la più bella si mise a navigar

L'ha navigau trei giurni, *o gigugin*
L'ha navigau trei giurni *la bela savadai*
Cumprai, simunai, gigugin, dai dai
L'ha navigau trei giurni, l'anello cadde in mar

«O pescator dell'onda, *o gigugin*
O pescator dell'onda la bela savadai
Cumprai, simunai, gigugin, dai dai
O pescator dell'onda, venite a pescar qua

Pescate il mio anellino, *o gigugin*
Pescate il mio anellino la bela savadai
Cumprai, simunai, gigugin, dai dai
Pescate il mio anellino che mi è caduto in mar»

«Quando l'avrò pescato, *o gigugin*
Quando l'avrò pescato la bela savadai
Cumprai, simunai, gigugin, dai dai
Quando l'avro pescato, che cosa mi vuoi dar?»

«Cento zecchini d'oro, *o gigugin*
Cento zecchini d'oro la bela savadai
Cumprai, simunai, gigugin, dai dai
Cento zecchini d'oro e ina bursa ricamà»

«Cento zecchini d'oro, *o gigugin*
Cento zecchini d'oro la bela savadai
Cumprai, simunai, gigugin, dai dai
Cento zecchini d'oro ed un bacin d'amor»

[«Cento zecchini d'oro,
bella non fan per me:
Solo un bacin d'amore,
bèla voglio da te»]

'E tre figliete

There were three young maids, *ô gigugin*
There were three young maids, *la bela savadai*
cumprai, simunai, gigugin, dai dai
There were three young maids, as beautiful as love

Severina, the loveliest, [*sim.*]
Went sailing on the sea

She sailed for three days
And her ring fell into the sea

"Ô fisherman of the waves,
Come and fish around here

And catch up my little ring
That has fallen into the sea."

"When I catch it
What will you give me?"

"A hundred gold coins
And an embroidered purse"

"A hundred gold coins
And a kiss of love"

["A hundred gold coins, my lovely
Are no good to me"

"All I want, my lovely
Is a kiss of love from you"]

’A barbiera
«O barbiera che fai la barba, ué ma che fa
e la barba che fa, la barba, e ma ai passeger»
[«O barbiera che fai la barba
me la vuoi fare la barba anche a me?»]

«Io la barba te la faria, ué ma ne ho
e paura ne ho, paura, e ma del mio marì

Mio marito l’è ’ndaito in Francia, ué ma con la
e speranza, con la speranza e ma di ritornar

Ma che torni che non ritorni, e la vo’
e la barba la vo, la barba, e ma la voglio tagliar»

[E l’è vent’anni che fo la barba,
non ho mai visto una barba così]

’A Pinota
e La Pinota a ne va ai bâli a ne va ai bâli per ben ballà

Candu l’è staita metà deu bâlu e a la Pinôta gh’è vegniu mà e ma

U dutüre che l’è rivau ‘u ghe dumanda ma cosa n’ha:

«Mi n’ho ina spina ‘n tu mézu au cœre che a nun me lascia ciü respira

«e A meijna l’è in grande amore e che ben prestu l’ariverà»

La figlia d'in paisan
L'è la figlia d'in paisan,
trullallà là là là là là
e che tüti dise che 'u l'è la ciü bèla

La faremo remirar
trullallà là là là là là
e ma da trei surdati armati

Ma 'u ciù belu de 'sti tre
trullallà là là là là là
e 'u se l'ha piglià e purtaita via

(Se) L'ha purtaita via lontan
trullallà là là là là là
'n t'ina préijiun profonda (e) 'scüra

La gh'è staita sète an
trullallà là là là là là
e sensa veder né sol né lüna

[e A la fin dei sete an
trullallà là là là là là
e lo suo papà 'u l'è 'ndà a trovare

«O papà caro papà
trullallà là là là là là
uè ma cose ne dise di me la gente?»

«Tutti parlan mal di te
trullallà là là là là là
o che ne sei figlia stà rubaita»

«No, no, no, che non su' arrubà
trullallà là là là là là
o mi ne son figlia maritata »

«Chil'è mai lo tuo marì?"
trullallà là là là là là
«ma l'è 'u ciü bèllo dell'armaita»]

[È la figlia di un contadino e tutti dicono che è la più bella
Faremo montare la guardia a tre soldati armati
Il più bello di quei tre se l'è presa e portata via
L'ha portata via lontano in una prigione profonda e oscura
C'è stata sette anni, senza mai vedere né sole né luna
(Alla fine dei sette anni suo papà è andato a trovarla
«O papà, caro papà, cosa dice di me la gente?»
«Tutti dicono male di te: che sei una ragazza rapita»
«No, no, no che non sono rapita, io son figlia maritata»
«E chi è mai il tuo marito?» «È il più bello dell'armata »)]

Donna lombarda

«Donna lombarda, Donna lombârda
Se vuoi venire a cénar con me»

«Mi venireva ben volentieri
Ma ne ho paura dello mio marì»

«Il tuo marito farlo (fallo) morire
Farlo morire che ti inségnerò:

ué Vai nell'orto dello tuo padre
Prendi la lingua dello serpentin

Prendi la lingua del serpentino
Mettila dentro *e* nel più buon vin»

E (quando) alla sera 'riva il marito
«*e* O moglie mia portami da ber»

[«Tu lo vuoi nero? Tu lo vuoi bianco?»
«Prendilo pure come lo voi te»]

«Come la vale, o moglie mia,
Ch' l'è questo vin l'è così torbidì?»

«Sarà la pompa dell'antro ieri
Ché ha né l'ha fatto così torbidì»]

N'avea un bambino di pochi mesi
Che appena appena incominciò a parlar

«*e* O padre mio non lo bevete
Che questo vino l'è stato avvelenà»

«*e* All'onore di questa spada
Donna lombarda *ma* devi morir

ué ma All'onore di questa spada
O moglie mia, e *ma* bevilo te»

Maire fiurentina

Cose ne pagheressi
O maire fiurentina
Per riturnare in Parma
E mi ne paghereva
Lu mei cavâllin giancu
Con la briglia e con la sella
E mi ne vurereva
Solo in baijin d'amore
o Da te bambina bèla
E mi ciütostu che dare
Stu disonore
e Alla parentela mia
E mi ne vurereva
Che ne fusse brüjau Pârma
E ma ascì 'a Lombardia

[Cosa pagherei, o madre fiorentina, per ritornare in Parma. E pagherei il mio (un) cavallino bianco, con la briglia e con la sella. Io vorrei solo un bacino d'amore da te, bambina bella. Piuttosto che dare questo disonore alla parentela mia, vorrei che fosse bruciata Parma e anche la Lombardia.]

Barcaiolo

«Barcaiolo, son (/bel) barcaiolo
Son di un arte assai galante
E se vuoi essere la mia aimante
Noi ce ne andremo in alto mar

Quando in largo mare saremo
D'un bel fuoco ne accenderemo
E qualche cosa cucineremo
e All'usanza del barcaiol»

«Barcaiolo, bel barcaiolo
In largo mare portaime via
e Voglio andar dalla mamma mia
A raccontare il mio disonor»

«Il mio onore l'ho perso in barca
L'ho perso in barca col barcaiolo»

Appena giunta in riva al mare
N'ho incontrato una vecchierella:
«E dove vai, o Ninetta bella?
E dove vai col tuo disonor?»

«Io me ne vado in cima ai monti
A vestirmi da eremita
E sono stanca di questa malavita
Che non la posso più sopportar»

Stanotte in sogno

Stanotte in sogno *ué ma* io la vidi
Che verso il tempio il piede muoveva
e ma Il suo volto *e* a me risplendeva
e Sembrava un angelo, pareva un fior

La man le presi *ma* (e) gliela baciai
Ed in quel mentre mi risvegliai
Io la cercai ma non la trovai
e O Dio che sogno che menzogner
Ma da quel giorno mai più io la vidi
E notte e giorno sospireremo
e Vieni o bèlla *ma* sopra il mio seno
e ma Senti il cuore a palpitar

La Marietta

La Marietta in mezzo al prato
Mi ha rubato un fior di rosa
Vieni, vieni o mia morosa
Dammi il fiore che m'hai rubato
Io l'ho giurato: ti sposerò

Il bel fior che mi hai donato
Me l'ho messo sul cappello
Or ne ho colto uno più bello
Quando sposo quella Marietta
e Stretta stretta la voglio tener

La Marietta l'ho sposata
L'ho sposata l'altro ieri
Or non ho altri pensieri
La Marietta or l'è mia sposa
L'è un fior di rosa, la voglio amar

Tanti fiori son nei prati
E fra questi un gelsomino
Fa sognare un bel bambino
L'è la gioia della Marietta
Che rassomiglia al suo papà

Lenga serpentina

Cuse ti n'hai da dì, o lenga serpentina?
Gh'ai ditu au mei amù che sun pecina
Se sun pecina sun de pocu tempu
Basta che u mei amù serà cuntentu

Ma tu che ti ne vegni *ma* da 'stu paradiso
Dimme che pena n'ha 'e 'nnammurai
'E 'nnammurai nun ha pena nisciüna
E invidiusi n'ha sempre caicüna

Barcun du mei amure ti fussi n'ei s-ciapau
Che candu passu mi ti n'ei serrau
Ti n'ei serrau au giurnu ma per lu sole
Ti n'ei d'uvertu 'a nœite per far l'amore

Amore, amore fai che se piliemu
Se nu puremu vive *ma* stenteremu
Se nu puremu vive *ma* cun stentare
Anderemu sciü 'ste porte a dumandare

Se nu puremu vive *ma* sciü 'ste porte
Anderemu cian cianin fino alla morte
Se nu puremu vive *ma* sciü 'ste porte
Anderemu cian cianin fino alla morte

[Cos'hai da dire, o lingua serpentina?
Hai detto al mio amore che son piccina
Se son piccina è perchè sono di poco tempo (sono giovane)
Basta che il mio amore sia contento
Ma tu che vieni da quel paradiso
Dimmi che pena hanno gli innamorati
Gli innamorati non hanno nessuna pena
Gli invidiosi ne hanno sempre qualcuna ù
Balcone del mio amore che tu sia guastato
Che quando passo io sei sempre chiuso
Sei chiuso di giorno per il sole
Sei aperto la notte per far l'amore
Amore, amore, fai in modo che ci intenderemo
Se non potremo vivere (bene) stenteremo
Se non potremo vivere stentando
Andremo alle porte a domandare
Se non potremo vivere (domandando) alle porte
Andremo pian pianino verso la morte]

Dunde l'è la mia morosa?

Ma dunde l'è la mia morosa
Che in ti bali a nu gh'è?

Ma l'è ridotta in camerella
Con le scarpe rotte ai piè

E m'ha mandài ca dì ca vegna
Che ghe duneron le me

Ma mi ghe duneron le bianche
E le nere son per me

E ma le bianche per ballare
E le nere per marciar

E nui ne marceremo al giorno
E alla notte a far l'amor

[Ma dov'è la mia morosa, che ai balli non c'è?
È ridotta in cameretta con le scarpe rotte ai piedi
Mi ha mandato a dire che venga che gli darò le mie
E gli darò le bianche e le nere son per me
E le bianche per ballare e le nere per camminare
E noi cammineremo di giorno e alla notte faremo l'amore]

’U mese du granu a)

Stu chi l’è ’u mèse che fiurisce il grâno
e L’è naitu ina bella figlia co ina rœsa in mano

ué L’è naita in Francia e bâtesà in Sardegna
e Ghe metteremo nome la Diana Stella

O Diana Stella faimene ina grâsia
e Che vega lu mei amor (amù) candu passa de ‘n ciassa

Passa (passerà) de’n ciassa e ’u passerà cantando
e Con gli occhi rivolti al cielo, ’l cuore sospirando

Sospira cuore che raijiun ti n’hai
e La bella se ne marida e ma tu non lo sai

Sa (se) se marida saverà chi a prende
e Ma queste sun rœse e fior che nu se pœne rènde

[Questo è il mese che fiorisce il grano
È nata una bella fanciulla con una rosa in mano
È nata in Francia e battezzata in Sardegna
Le metteremo per nome “Diana Stella”
O Diana Stella fammi una grazia
Che veda il mio amore quando passa in piazza
Passerà in piazza e passerà cantando
Con gli occhi rivolti al cielo e il cuore sospirando
Sospira cuore che ne hai ben donde
La bella si marita e tu non lo sai
Se si marita saprà chi prendere
Ma queste sono rose e fiori che non si possono rendere]

U mëse du granu b)
Štuchì l’è u mëse che sciurìsce ’l grano
Stuchì l’è u mëse che sciurìsce ’l grano
Che l’è nàitu ina bèlla figlia
Cu ina röṣa in mano

E l’é nàita ’n Fransa e bateṣà in Sardégna
Ré nàita ’n Fransa e bateṣà in Sardégna
É ghé metterémo nome
Ra Diana štélla

Diana štélla e fàimene ina gràsia
Diana štélla fàimene ina gràsia
E che véga lu méi amor
Candu (u) passa de’n ciàsa

E u passa d'én ciàsa e u passerà cantandu
Passà d'én ciàsa u passerà cantandu
E cogli occhi rivolti al ciélo
'L cuore sospirando

Sospira cuore che raižùn ti n'ài
sospira cuore elle raižùn ti n'ài
ué la bèlla sé né marida
e ma tu non lo sai

Sa se marida e a saverà chi a prénde
Sa se marida (a) saverà chi a prénde
e ma quéste sun rose e fior
che sun se pöne rènde
sa se marida (a) saverà chi a prénde
e ma quéste sun rose e fior
che nun se pone(n) rènde

Questo è il mese che fiorisce il grano / è nata una bella bambina /
con una rosa in mano // È nata in Francia e battezzata in Sardegna
/ e la chiameremo / Diana stella // O Diana stella fammi una grazia
/ ch'io veda il mio amore / quando passa d'in piazza
// Passa d'in piazza e passerà cantando / e con gli occhi rivolti al cielo
/ e il cuore sospirando // Sospira o cuore che n'hai ben ragione
/ e la bella la si marita / e lu non lo sai // Se si marita saprà chi si prende
/ ma queste son rose e fiori / che non si possono rendere.

U menestrun de Seriana
(Incatenatura da osteria - Versione registrata da Roberto Leydi -
cantori anonimi, in osteria, 10 dicembre 1962)

... cieli bigi
vedo fumar coi milla
comignoli di Parigi

Parigi oi cara noi lasceremo
la vita uniti trascorreremo
dai dolci affanni compènso avrai
la tua salute rifiorirà
la tua salute rifiorirà

Fior di giaggiuolo
gli angioli bèli stanno in paradiso
e bèlli come te ce n'è uno solo
fior di pianura
io mi son data a te fidènte e pura
ed ora gli occhi tuoi mi fan paura
fiorin di canna
chi vuol la canna vadi alla Maremma
Chi vuol la figlia innamori la mamma

Pappàrapappapappappàra ...

Ai sargènti ghe fa mà i dènti *
au furéi ghe fa mà i pé(i)
o Segnù bèliu
sousìsa è raviöi carne d'agnélu
ai sargènti ghe fa mà i dènti
au furéi ghe fa mà i pé(i)
maladéti
castagne séche nu e vören mangià
ch'arèsten séchi
castagne séche nu e vören mangià
ch'arèsten séchi

Ma quando l'amica mia se n'andò via
ebbi una stretta al cuor ma non fiatai
prese la roba sua lasciò la mia
come se non l'avessi amata mai
quando l'amica mia se n'andò via
il giorno apprèsso
m'ébbi un esprèsso
dalla mia bella ingrata
s'era pentita
della sua vita
poi s'era avvelenata
ma il giorno apprèsso
m'ébbi un espresso

dalla mia bella ingrata
s'éra pentita
della sua vita
poi s'éra avvelenata

E la mia mamma è morta
m'à fatto a testamènto
m'à lasciato la chitarra
m'à lasciato la chitarra
e la mia mamma è morta
mi à fatto a testamènto
mi à lasciato la chitarra
il mio divertimènto
e l'ò prestata a tanti
nessùn me l'à mai rotta
e l'ò prestata al parroco
e l'è prestata al parroco
e l'ò prestata a tanti
nessùn me l'à mai rotta
ué l'ò prestata al parroco
e me l'à tutta rovinà

E dàghela ricciola
ué dàghela bionda
e dàghiela biona bionda bionda sul sofà
e dàghiela ricciola
ué dàghela bionda
e dàghela biona bionda bionda sul sofà

Il marito all'osteria
e la moglie è sola in cà
e col piede sulla culla
a cantare la ninnanà
a chi manca le scarpétte
e chi manca gli scarpòn
chi à una figlia da maritare
è una grande soddisfaziòn

* Ai sergenti gli fa male i denti / ai furieri gli fa male i piedi / o signore bello / salciccia e ravioli e carne
d'agnello // ai sergenti gli fa male i denti / ai furieri gli fa male i piedi / maledetti / castagne secche non
ne vogliamo mangiare / che muoriamo.