

REGOLE, PASSAGGI di MUSICA (1594)

by Gio. Battista Bovicelli

(Preface)

Introduction by Giancarlo Rostirolla

Translated by Jesse Rosenberg

Editor's Note: Bovicelli's Regole, Passaggi di Musica is one of the most important of the many Italian diminution manuals which appeared in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Though primarily designed for singers, it is an indispensable source of information for instrumentalists, who of course must imitate the most perfect of all instruments, the human voice. We are grateful to the Società Italiana del Flauto Dolce, who in 1986 published a facsimile edition of Bovicelli's treatise in the series Pratica di musica, for permitting us to publish, in translation, Giancarlo Rostirolla's introduction to this treatise.

The material which follows Rostirolla's introduction includes Bovicelli's title page, dedication, remarks to the readers (A i lettori), and the author's informative preface (Avertimenti per li passaggi), with numerous musical examples. Not included here is the exclusively musical portion of the treatise: the tables of passaggi and the embellished madrigals and motets.

Translator's Note: I should like to thank Bruce Dickey for his invaluable assistance in the preparation of this translation. Readers may wish to consult Mr. Dickey's article on the accento, which appeared in the previous volume of this Journal, for further information on Bovicelli and his style of embellishment.¹

INTRODUCTION

The art of embellishing a vocal or instrumental line with ornaments and *passaggi* is of very ancient origin. Even within the field of Western music, it is enough to recall Gregorian chant, the melodies of the troubadours, the first examples of monodic instrumental music, or the upper parts of the *ars nova* repertoire to make us aware of how much the practice of extemporaneous improvisation, borrowed from oral traditions and from the ancient civilizations of the orient, have conditioned the technique of melodic construction during the past centuries. Toward the end of the fifteenth century these procedures began to be codified, with rules for diminishing and embellishing (especially in cadential formulae) melodies constructed with large note values. In this way the boundaries of the performers' options were set, and at the same time, an aid was provided them which reflected the actual performance practice of their time.

Beginning in 1535, the year in which *La Fontegara* by Silvestro Ganassi was published in Venice, there was a flowering of manuals on the technique of embellishment, intended for use by singers and instrumentalists. Of notable interest in the context of this tradition is the method of Giovanni Battista Bovicelli, *Regole, Passagi di Musica*, printed in Venice by Giacomo Vincenti, at both the behest and the expense of a great family of music printers in Milan, the heirs of Francesco and Simone Tini.

The theoretical-practical *Regole* of Bovicelli were intended for singers performing madrigals, canzonette, motets, psalms, etc., as declared in the frontespiece. These rules, then, document vocal practice at the end of the 16th century, being the fruit of the performing experience of a great singer, active in the context of important ecclesiastical musical chapels and virtuosic ensembles in the service of Italian cardinals and princes.

We have little information regarding the professional career of the author of the work which is here reproduced, but it is sufficient to give an idea of his level of singing and the prestige of the institutions and patrons by whom he was employed. Bovicelli was born in Assisi, in the Papal State, one of the biggest centers of Umbrian spirituality, and therefore the seat of important musical-ecclesiastical institutions, where he probably received his earliest musical training. His date of birth, still unknown, may be placed approximately around the middle of the sixteenth century. His first experience with the professional musical world occurred with his being hired (15 July 1569) as a soprano and tenor in the Chapel of the Santa Casa di Loreto, where he remained until 15 June 1575 save for a brief period (16 September 1574 to 14 April 1575). After a biographical lacuna of three years we find him in Rome, active as a tenor in the Cappella Giulia of St. Peter's in the Vatican (from 15 June 1578 until 18 January 1581, with a period of absence from 5 June 1579 until 7 December 1579). Subsequently, and perhaps also at the same time, he worked in the service of cardinal Guglielmo Sirleto and of the Duke Giacomo Boncompagni, passing later to the service of the Chapel of the Cathedral of Milan, thanks to the recommendation of Sirleto himself made to Carlo Borromeo, Cardinal of S. Prassede, on Bovicelli's behalf.

By 12 September 1584 Bovicelli had already been working in the Milanese cathedral for some time, and his fame as a virtuoso came to the attention of one of the most important musical courts of Italy during this period, that of the Gonzaga at Mantua. On this date, Bovicelli wrote to Cardinal Sirleto from Milan: "[...] By this letter I wish to make known to you how the Duke of Mantua has been pressing me to enter his service as a musician, offering me very high provisions, much greater than those which I have here; nor has he been content merely to search me out on more than one occasion, but has also written several insistent letters to the cardinal [...]"

It does not appear that the singer ever moved to the chapel of Guglielmo Gonzaga. We do know, however, that after the death of Borromeo, from the moment when "being in Milan was not comfortable for me" (letter of 3 November 1584), and also for the financial reasons cited in the document, Bovicelli attempted to return to Rome in the service of Cardinal Sirleto. Unfortunately we know nothing of the period between 1592, a year in which he still declared himself "*musicò* of the Cathedral of Milan," and 16

September 1622, at which time he was back in Assisi working in the musical chapel of the Cathedral of San Rufino, where his presence is documented until 1627.

Bovicelli was therefore a singer of church music and, contemporaneously, “virtuoso di camera,” in line with a practice rather common among professionals of the time. His activity as composer is limited to a “falso bordone” and a psalm, which conclude the series of sacred pieces, lightly embellished, inserted by way of example in the last section of the method. Of these compositions only the melodic lines for voice published here are known, the pieces not appearing in other known printed or manuscript sources. The name of Bovicelli is thus tied above all to his theoretical work *Regole, Passaggi di Musica*, of which only two exemplars have survived. The first, complete, is conserved in the Civico Museo Bibliografico Musicale “G. B. Martini” in Bologna; the second, missing several pages, is in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris.

The method is divided into four sections. The first furnishes a series of notices for the correct placement of the text under the notes, a problem even now for the singer (and naturally also for the transcriber) of Renaissance vocal music. In the present context, a more important reason for Bovicelli’s inclusion of this section is that the correct placement of syllables will permit a correct rendering of *passaggi* and diminutions, and, at the same time, enable the performer to respect the syllabic and accentual structure of the text, placing the embellishments on those vowels which favor a better articulation.

The second section takes into consideration the musical context to be subjected to embellishing, and gives precious advice regarding the choices which the performer must make in order not to alter excessively the melodic line, and avoid situations which may disturb the contrapuntal interactions with the other singing parts. The choice of notes to diminish, as well as the corollary parallel to the respect for an adequate phrasing which avoids monotonous repetitions and gives to the performer the possibility of “taking a breath” in the correct manner, are the aims which a good singer must keep in mind.

Similar to other methods of this type (such as those of Rognoni and Conforti, which closely precede the present method, in 1592 and 1593 respectively), that of Bovicelli dedicates a large section (the third part) to the different ways of “diminishing” a number of musical phenomena, including the interval between two notes laying a second, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth apart, stepwise ascents and descents, long notes, and several cadential formulae.

The fourth part is practically the corollary of what has been set forth in the preceding three sections: a practical demonstration of how it is possible to diminish the vocal parts of secular and sacred compositions. The favored composers: Palestrina, above all, then Cipriano de Rore, Victoria, Merulo, Giulio Cesare Gabucci, Giovanelli, and the author of the treatise himself (Giulio Cesare Gabucci, originally of Bologna, was maestro di cappella of the Cathedral of Milan in the years in which Bovicelli worked in this institution attending to the completion of his method). It is interesting to find, among Bovicelli’s musical examples, the cantus of Palestrina’s madrigal *Io son ferito ah! lasso*, very well known during the second half of the century, a real *banco di prova* of the time, which had already appeared in lute tablature in Vincenzo Galilei’s *Fronimo* (Venice,

1569 and 1584) and in the collection of diminished pieces assembled by Giovanni Bassano (Venice, 1591).

The theoretical and technical contents of Bovicelli's treatise have been examined by Howard Mayer Brown and other scholars . . . , and compared with analogous printed treatises of the preceding period, from the above-mentioned method of Ganassi (1535) to that of Conforti (1593); readers who desire a general, objective framework on the art of embellishments in the second half of the 16th century are referred to these studies. Unfortunately we do not have any documentation which might throw some light on the actual use which performers made of *passaggi* and diminutions in particular musical contexts. A partial answer to the question may perhaps be furnished by those instrumental pieces which survive in manuscript or in tablatures with the ornaments indicated. One must keep in mind that the virtuosi who performed in vocal ensembles, whether sacred or secular, or with instrumental ensembles, usually enjoyed a sensitive public, a learned and refined patronage, which would not have tolerated listening to compositions with the melodic lines rendered unrecognizable by boring and interminable (even if virtuosic) stretches of *passaggi et cadentie*, just as it would not have enjoyed the inevitable discords and dissonances deriving from the execution of four-part counterpoint with all of the parts diminished. Perhaps greater liberties were taken by ecclesiastical singers, above all in the performance of Psalms and "falsi bordon," where ecclesiastical authority was less strongly felt. In any case, the methods of Bovicelli and his predecessors should be considered as didactic guides for the virtuoso who wanted to acquire an excellent technique in this sort of artifice, manuals which, often with formidable technicalities and aristotelian systemization, permitted the exploration, to the point of exasperation, of all the technico-musical possibilities of diminution. But so far as the practical application of these rules in particular musical contexts was concerned, it was up to the "virtuoso" singer or instrumentalist to make a discreet use of it, as a way of making the performance more pleasing without altering excessively the nature of the musical composition. In this way, musical performers of the Renaissance, finding themselves between two flames—composers on the one hand, and on the other *musici speculativi*—could inform themselves with the opinions of theorists on the level of a Zarlino or a Bottrigari, who bitterly criticized the *practici* (practical musicians) of the time for making immoderate use of embellishments, disturbing the listeners, and creating possibilities of error and cacaphony in performance.

That of Bovicelli remains, however, one of the most important treatises on vocal embellishment immediately preceding the advent of the accompanied monody of Caccini, who preferred to indicate directly those diminutions and cadences which he felt were necessary in the performance of his own airs, almost as though he wished to prevent any damage to his own creations due to a performer's arbitrary interpretation.

The following quotation from Tommaso Ludovico Grossi da Viadana is significant for clarifying the new esthetic and performance position at the beginning of the 17th century. "Above all, not adding anything beyond that which is found printed in them [the *concerti*]; since there are certain singers who, merely because they find themselves

favored by nature with a bit of *gargante*, never sing in the manner in which singers ought to sing; they are unaware that today such things are not much appreciated, but rather are quite poorly esteemed, particularly in Rome, where the true profession of good singing flourishes.”

The practice of diminution as documented in the treatise of Giovanni Battista Bovicelli was nevertheless to remain alive for much of the 17th century.

Giancarlo Rostirolla



Musical rules and *passaggi*. Madrigals and motets embellished by Giovanni Battista Bovicelli of Assisi, singer in the cathedral of Milan. To the most illustrious and excellent Signor Giacomo Buoncompagni, Duca di Sora, etc. with privilege. Venice, Giacomo Vincenti, 1594, at the behest of the heirs of Francesco and Simon Tini, booksellers in Milan.

To the illustrious
and excellent prince
Il signor Giacomo
Buoncompagni,
Duke of Sora,
Marchese of Vignola, Sig. d'Arpino, a& Arce, and General of the
men of arms in the state of Milan
and my most respectable patron

The marvelous virtues (o illustrious and excellent prince) which, in the guise of so many rays of sun, continually shine out from your unconquerable and most noble spirit, capable of inflaming not only exalted geniuses, but penetrating also into the lowest subjects, have been able thus to warm and illuminate me in such a manner that (though the terrain be sterile) I have produced this modest fruit, such as it is. But as in the case of fruit, the effect of which is so much better preserved at the beginning, where it is closer to its cause for being, just so, your Excellency being both the principle and cause of this my written offspring, every debt required that to You alone, under the shield of whose grace it can be preserved and defended far better than elsewhere, it would be dedicated. I do this also in remittance of the debt which I owe to the kindness which your Excellency has shown to me at various times, with many signs of courtesy, which would have the force of placing the spirit of anyone under obligation. And in the hope that you will not disdain this small demonstration of my great affection, to your Excellency I humbly bow, praying our Lord every true contentment for you.

REGOLE,
PASSAGGI
 DI MUSICA,
 MADRIGALI E MOTETTI
 PASSEGGIATI:

I GIO. BATTISTA BOVICELLI
 D' ASSISI,

Musico nel Duòmo di Milano .

ALL'ILLVSTRISS. ET ECCELLENTISS. SIG.

IL SIG. GIACOMO BVONCOMPAGNI,
 Duca di Sora, &c.

CON PRIVILEGIO.



IN VENETIA,
 APPRESSO GIACOMO VINCENTI.

M. D. XCIII.

A istancia delli Heredi di Franccesco, e Simon Tini, Librari in Milano.

Milan, 12 August 1594
Your Illustrious Excellency's
most devoted and most obligated servant
Gio. Battista Bovicelli

To the readers:

It is hardly possible to say how marvelously and stupendously Art has always played with Nature, how (almost like the monkey does to the man) it has always striven to imitate it, to do all that with which Nature has so marvelously impressed it. But if Art has ever seemed marvelous in such imitation, then Music has been doubly marvelous. For seeing the beautiful order in this our world, one thing occurring alternately with another, and everything together producing a sort of mute harmony, there have been those who, recognizing the great order in the movement of the heavens, have simulated this with a harmony of sweet voices. And Art, I say, beholding this nature, and wishing also to compete with it, has taken that order and that harmony, which are understood only by the intellect with subtle discourse, and set itself the task of representing them to the senses, both in order to produce something of practical use, and, as the proverb goes, in order "to add to things found." After voices had first been brought together in harmony, it was attempted by very many to bring to greater perfection that which at its inception had been crude, and to this end music has now been transformed. Now I, too, have pondered the idea of writing something about the manner of making *passaggi*, since on one hand I have been amazed to see how great a difference there is between my views and those of others who have written on the subject, while on the other hand I have been reassured to see that the task would not be excessively demanding. Mine is not the case of a merchant who retires from his trade instead of remaining to sell his goods, because there are too many others of the same profession; to me it appears rather that this diversity of things, and of opinions, is beautiful to the world, and a great ornament to it. But may everyone, coming to know my thoughts regarding these few Rules and *passaggi*, be assured of my intention, which is simply to be of use, however much I am able, nor may I ever fall into the thought of injuring or imposing upon anyone. I say this especially for those who might wish to admonish me for having myself admonished others with regard to certain vices. And should some raise the objection that I have arranged several passages which seem impossible to sing with lively voice [i.e. rapidly?], I will answer that if singers are gifted by nature with a good vocal disposition, then it is possible for them to handle even more difficult *passaggi* than those I have written, as everyone who truly understands this art concedes to me. Aside from giving examples of *passaggi*, I have also wished to include a number of rules. Some of these are intended to teach how one may avoid certain defects which often occur in singing, while others provide instruction as to the way in which one may easily sing *passaggi*, and carry them well [*portarli bene*]. For greater brevity and clarity I have organized these rules under two major headings, those rules regarding notes and those regarding words.

Suggestions [*avvertimenti*] for *Passaggi* by Gio. Battista Bovicelli [ETC]

Suggestions [*avvertimenti*] for the sung text:

Just as in writing one must always keep the entire sentence in mind, in order that the words fit together well, and to ensure that the individual words not be affected in any way which renders the sentence defective, thus also in singing, and particularly in forming *passaggi*, one must not only attend to the notes, but also to the words, and exercise great judgment in their proper distribution.

Great care must therefore be taken that when dividing notes in order to make *accenti* or *passaggi*, one does not fall into some barbarism, such as making long syllables short, or short ones long, which would be no less an absurdity than fitting out a horse with short stirrups for a rider with long legs, or the contrary.

When the *passaggi* are of equal notes, which is to say, notes of the same value, only rarely if ever do they articulate a new syllable, but rather continue until the end the first syllable begun, since this is more pleasant:

The image shows three staves of musical notation. The top staff has four notes with lyrics 'Al', 'le', 'lu', and 'ia.' below them. The middle staff shows a 'passaggio' where the syllable 'Al' is spread across many notes, with 'le', 'lu', and 'ia.' also indicated. The bottom staff shows another 'passaggio' where the syllable 'Alle' is spread across many notes, with 'lu ia.' indicated at the end.

Example 1

This is especially true when, amidst such a great fury and velocity of notes, one can hardly make out the words being sung unless one finds oneself close to the person singing: and especially also when, as frequently occurs, the same syllables are joined together with different vowels to make one *passaggio*, some [vowels] are better than others, so that 'a,' 'e' or 'o' are preferable to 'i' and 'u,'² which are uncomfortable for the voice due to the difference in pronouncing them. Though there are some who hold the opinion that for ease in singing a *passaggio*, one may delay several syllables above a single note, then break it into as many other notes of smaller value as correspond to the number of syllables, still I say that this seems to many inappropriate, perhaps, as we have said, due to the force of breaking that note. In any case (and this is said with good grace towards all) at no time have I considered that it is never at all good to do this, but rather

that it is possible only so long as it does not bring about some barbarism, and so long as there are not too many notes on the same pitch, and that they not be said too hurriedly [*con furia*].

One may, then, without any of the difficulties mentioned above, vary the words and the notes, when the notes are not all of the same value.

Al lc lu ia.

Example 2

Wherever there are passages of many notes, especially at the end of *groppetti*, which always finish with sixteenth or thirty-second notes, one must, as much as possible, avoid pronouncing a new syllable on the note immediately following the *groppetto*, but must rather proceed more moderately, using notes of slightly longer value.

& ferm per.

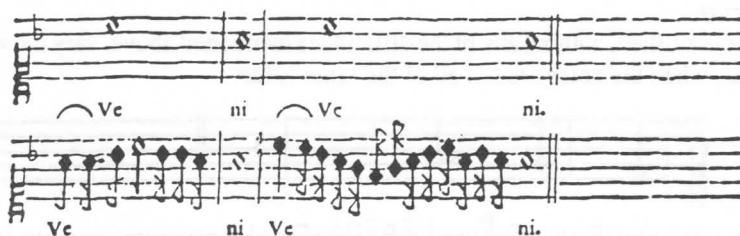
Example 3

I say that one must avoid this as much as possible because there are those times when one cannot avoid it. In such cases one must moderate the voice in such a manner that in completing the word, the gentleness of the voice tempers the bitterness arising from the velocity of the notes.

Al lc lu ia.

Example 4

That which has been said of the *groppetti* may also be observed after the tremolo, that is, do not begin another syllable at this point. A new syllable may nevertheless be articulated when the last two notes of the tremolo, or the last two notes with which one wishes to make a *passaggio*, are on the same pitch.



Example 5

Regarding the placement of the words under the notes, it must be warned that these words should not only be set properly, so that no barbarism results, as mentioned above, but also that they make the best effect possible, because many times a syllable produces a more graceful effect under one note than under another, as may be clearly seen in the following examples.



Example 6

Finally, they are guilty of a great vice, those who never finish a word which they are singing, but continue rather to repeat the first two or three syllables, saying, for example, "Benedi" [rather than] "Benedictus," resembling those suffering from dental afflictions, who chew their food over and over before swallowing it.

Recommendations regarding the notes

Regarding the notes (including *passaggi*, *groppetti*, leaps, and all else which may be reduced to notes), great judiciousness is demanded first of all in making *passaggi* or *accenti* the notes of [longer] values. Here one must listen carefully to the movement of the other parts to ensure that never, aside from the end, should all the parts come to a stop at the same time upon the same continuation of harmony. Below are two examples which illustrate the way in which one must execute this variation. At times, for example, one will go from C *sol fa ut* to G *sol re ut* and C *sol fa*, as in the first example, or from D *la sol re* to A *la mi re* and then to D *la sol*, as in the second example.

Example 7 is a musical score consisting of six staves. The top two staves show a melody with various ornaments, including slurs and grace notes. The bottom four staves show a more complex rhythmic pattern, possibly a bass line or a second melody, with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes. The score is written in a single system and ends with a double bar line.

Example 7

In order to avoid, as the saying goes, always repeating the same old song many times over, which is tedious for the listener, an excellent type of ornamentation is to embellish a melody with *passaggi* involving the same pitches, but handled differently. Just as writing may be greatly tedious to those who read it, and oratory languid to those who listen, if these are lacking in colorful figures, so too are *passaggi* in singing, if they are not of diverse types, and which therefore, though decked out in lively colors, produce only annoyance instead of delight. I mean to say that *passaggi* may at times involve notes of equal value, and at other times may employ the same notes, but somehow varied, in such a manner that even if these *passaggi* use the same pitches, they will nevertheless seem different, due to the different manner of rendering them.

Example 8 is a musical score consisting of two staves. The top staff shows a simple melody with a few notes and a double bar line. The bottom staff shows a more complex rhythmic pattern, possibly a bass line or a second melody, with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes. The score is written in a single system and ends with a double bar line.

Example 8

Furthermore, when one sings, in order to give grace to the voice, whether at the beginning or at any other point (though in this, as in everything, judgment is needed), one may begin a third or a fourth lower than the indicated pitch, according to the particular consonances present in the other parts, and particularly of the contralto, since the soprano [in beginning this ornament below the indicated pitch] may often create a unison with this part. (And the same which is said of the soprano to the contralto is valid for the other parts as well). In this, however, it must be warned that the longer the first note is held, and the quicker the second, the more graceful it is for the voice. This gracefulness will be lacking any time that the notes are of the same value. Because ease and lightness in singing, as we said above, consist of nothing else but the varying of notes of greater and lesser value, as may also be seen below.

Essemio catruo. Essemij buoni. De us.

De us De us De us.

Poor example Good examples

Example 9

This may easily be seen in the *gropetti*, which may finish one of two ways, the first with notes of the same value, and the second, which is the aim of the *gropetto*, so to say, slowing down. This second type succeeds much better for the most part, because it gives more grace to the voice, and is also more comfortable for finishing the words well, since one does not end with that fury, which one must avoid as much as possible, as has been said above. Nevertheless, for the sake of variety one must at times use the type involving equal notes, especially when we are not constrained by the words.

De us.

De us.

Example 10

The same *gropetti*, not speaking of the voice, but of the notes, one may do in various ways upon on the same note, that is, that there may be more than one *gropetto* upon the same note, whether they are *note sequenti* [equal notes?] or *raffrenate* [slowing down?],³ or the two together.

Groppetto raffrenato

Example 11a
Slowed-down groppetto

Groppetti di note uguali

Example 11b
Groppetti of equal notes

That which we have said of the *groppetti*, that is, that they should finish with slightly longer notes, one may also say of the *passaggi*. This longer value, however, one must understand as never reaching that of the white notes, because this would produce a contrary and ugly effect, but rather in the same way that one uses in riding a horse: when in the middle of running a long race, a rider does not attempt to bring his horse to a sudden stop, but rather pulls the reins little by little in order to slow its steps.

Esempio cattiuo. Esempio bono.

A men A men.

Bad example Good example

Example 12

In the tremolo, which is nothing but a trembling of the voice above a single note, the notes must always proceed by step. Nor may the tremolo *di viva voce* be done in another

manner, and this one must do above the indicated note, taking care not to add a new syllable until at least the third note, as as has been said above with regard to the words.

Esempio cattivo. Esempij buoni.

A men A men Amen.

Bad example Good examples

Example 13

Among the embellishments proceeding by step are the *accenti*, which are sung upon minims. With sound judgement, these may be varied in several ways using different note values, which will therefore produce a different effect, even if in singing them there seems to be little difference. One may not, however, place them upon quarter notes, since these *accenti*, being all of sixteenth notes or thirty-seconds, which are extremely rapid, cannot be varied, but sung in one manner only. It is possible, however, to use the tremolo in such cases, but fast, and not formed [*formato*].

Alle note segnate si deve fare il tremolo formato.

Example 14

On the indicated notes one must make the tremolo “formed.”

Alle note segnate si deve fare il tremolo, ma non formato come di sopra.

Example 15

On the indicated notes one must make the tremolo, but not “formed” as above.

Even where it is written out, it is to be performed as shown in the above examples. In any case, anyone who wants it to be clearer must write it thusly (this applies, however, only to the “formed” [tremolo]).

**Example 16**

Tremolo "formed" upon the two indicated notes

Regarding the eighth notes, there must not be many of them in one breath [*tirata*] unless they go by step. This is because when singing, not in the *cappella* style, but in the *concerto* style, where the beat must be heavy [*grave*], eighth notes which do not proceed by step seem almost to give the impression of studying a lesson. One may remedy this, however, by dotting every other eighth note, since from this variety of note values a different effect is produced.

The thirty-second notes, aside from the placement of the voice, must be very distinct, nor must they be used too often unless, as we have said above, they proceed by step. In these sixteenth notes, a very beautiful effect is produced when in one *tirata* of many step-wise notes one holds the first longer than the following, as for example:

**Example 17**

It is to be warned that not all of the thirty-second notes are pronounced in the same way. At times times they must be distinguished from each other in such a way that one hears the difference between them, even in the voice; this is the case when they are used in *tirate*. When they serve, on the contrary, for the facilitation of a leap of a third, which cannot occur in the middle of a *tirata*, where only two notes of lesser value are found, those must not be made to sound with too much force; in this way they will be more graceful. The two kinds of thirty-second notes are illustrated in the following examples.

Example 18 consists of two staves of music. The top staff features a series of notes with various rhythmic values, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. The bottom staff contains a more complex rhythmic pattern with many sixteenth notes and rests, interspersed with longer note values. Both staves include dynamic markings such as 'p' and 'f', and articulation marks like slurs and accents.

Example 18

In the leaps, equally, at times it is well to give them a certain liveliness, pronouncing the highest note with a little emphasis. When the first note is of the same value as the following, one must pronounce equally them equally, without any difference of voices.

For these same *accenti* it is to be noted that in the leaps, every time that the note preceding the leap is of longer value, the note of the leap must not be expressed with much force, but touched with grace.

Example 19 shows two staves. The top staff has a few notes with dynamic markings 'A' and 'men.'. The bottom staff features a series of notes with dynamic markings 'A', 'men.', 'A', and 'men.' below them. There are also slurs and accents over the notes, illustrating the concept of grace in leaps.

Example 19

Though the continued presentation of many leaps is more suited to instruments than to the voice, if such leaps are accomodated well to the words, they may succeed admirably. As mentioned above, care must be taken that the higher note of each skip is sounded gracefully, and without that force which is so displeasing.

Example 20 consists of two staves. The top staff has notes with dynamic markings 'A', 'men.', 'A', and 'men.'. The bottom staff features a series of notes with dynamic markings 'A', 'men a', 'men.', 'A', 'men a', and 'men.' below them. There are also slurs and accents over the notes, illustrating the concept of grace in leaps.

Example 20

Just as it would be very displeasing to someone who writes, if the words are sad⁴ to set them to cheerful words, or sad notes placed under cheerful words, thus in singing one must, as much as possible, imitate the words. Sad words, for instance, are not to be adorned with *passaggi*, but rather with *accenti* and a lamenting voice. If the words are cheerful, use *passaggi*, and make them very lively, with varied notes, as shown here below:



Example 21

In any case, as the proverb has it, every rule admits some exception, and thus it is permitted at times to make *passaggi* also under sad words (if so the consonance and the harmony of the parts require), even if perhaps they do not express all of that sadness which the words require. One must not do this, however, without exercising judgment, or in the absence of circumstances which seem to require *passaggi*.

There are those who, in order to accommodate the *passaggi* to their own manner of singing, will hold for two or three beats a note which should last for one, for what reason I know not. I do know that it is more praiseworthy in making *passaggi* to keep strictly to the tempo indicated in the music, with the exception of the penultimate note.

One must also avoid the following manner of ending cadences, for the more it is done, the worse it is.



Example 22

Finally in all *passaggi*, cadences, and *accenti*, and in every other manner of singing, one must take a breath in time, and with judgment. One must take special care not to take a breath between those notes which serve for *accenti*, until one reaches at least part of the last note, nor in the middle of *passaggi*, when the notes are of the same value, and this is valid for the end of every *passaggio* and cadence.

In concluding my presentation of these few rules, I cannot but speak also of those who, I know not whether from weakness of chest or because they fear that they are lacking in breath, inhale before every little group of notes, stopping, as do horses afraid of each small shadow, and for whom therefore I would like this small warning to serve as a spur. The problem, which arises only from insufficient instruction, and appears most commonly among those just beginning to sing, consists in breaking at times the very note one is singing, that is to say, finishing a note by taking a very quick breath, thus rendering the intonation of that note almost impossible to hear, but on the contrary making almost more noise with inhaling than with the voice. Some also, in order to avoid several of these vices (for one cannot give rules to cover all of them) clench their teeth, almost as if they were about to die, and thus from time to time need to breathe; others direct the voice into the nose, others to the throat. Still others, finally, from the beginning of the song, and even from the very first note, begin desperately to make *passaggi*, and what is still worse, to sing in that manner called today *di gorga*, omitting all of the words, and this is most displeasing and a very great defect in one who wishes to sing well. When beginning a song one must therefore abstain from them for the space of three or four *tempi* [= measure?], unless however the second or third (I do not say the first) *tempo* offers an opportunity which merits their being admitted.

NOTES

1. Bruce Dickey, "L'accento: In Search of a Forgotten Ornament," *Historic Brass Society Journal* 3 (1991): 98-121.
2. Similar remarks regarding the vowels 'i' and 'u' can be found in the writings of Bovicelli's contemporaries. See Giulio Caccini, *Le Nuove musiche* (Florence, 1601 [=1602]; reprint ed., New York: Broude Bros., 1973), p. [iii]; and Francesco Rognoni Taeggio, *Selva de varii passaggi* (Milan, 1620; reprint ed., Bologna: Forni, 1983), p. [ii].
3. Bovicelli's intentions in this passage are obscure. *Note seguenti* literally means "following notes." From the accompanying musical illustration it appears that he means *note uguali*, or "notes of equal value." *Note raffrenate* literally means "restrained notes," hence, presumably, "decelerating in speed"—not a particularly apt description for the musical illustration so labeled.
4. The word *molte* which appears here is probably a misprint for *meste*.