

GIOVANNI CELLINI, *PIFFERO* OF FLORENCE

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Service for a municipality offered one of the most secure sources of employment for a musician during the Early Modern Period. All cities of any size employed instrumentalists for a variety of functions ranging from signalman to entertainer, and occasionally including services such as messenger and spy.¹ In Florence—where the situation for musicians was fairly typical of European cities—the position provided steady employment with a salary that was comparable to a number of other trades, and was more or less paid regularly.² It also could include a variety of perquisites such as housing, clothing, food, tips, the possibility of earning additional pay by performing at private functions, and a decent pension after years of faithful service.³ Employment as a civic musician, therefore, held an ideal combination of advantages for someone in the artisan class.

These civic musicians must have been the most constant daily source of musical sound for the average Florentine citizen of the period, and yet we know very little of their lives or professional careers. Their repertory was rarely written; it consisted of traditional material passed on only by rote, and much of it was improvised. Some of what they played could hardly be classified as musical—military signals, for example, or the fanfares for jousts—but not all of their contributions can be so easily dismissed. The needs of the commune for instrumental music expanded over the centuries, beginning with the earliest known ensemble in the late thirteenth century, the *trombadori*, consisting of six large trumpets, one drum, and a *cenamella*.⁴ As the city became increasingly conscious of public ceremony, the need for musical ensembles grew until, by the end of the fourteenth century, the civic musicians had evolved into three separate ensembles;⁵ the original *trombadori* remained, and two new groups came into existence: the *trombetti* (seven small trumpets), and the *pifferi* (three shawms plus, after the middle of the fifteenth century, a slide trumpet and by century's end, a trombone).⁶ Each ensemble had specific functions and repertory, and shortly after its origin it was the *pifferi* that began to develop into a fairly sophisticated musical ensemble. A close look at incidents from the life of one of the members of the Florentine *pifferi* at the end of the fifteenth century will allow us to see these musicians in a clearer light.⁷

The one civic musician about whom quite a bit of information has survived is Giovanni di Andrea di Cristofano Cellini (1451-1527), who was a member of the Florentine *pifferi* between 1480 and 1514. In addition to various types of civic documents that record specific kinds of employment information, we also have the narrative account in the autobiography

of his son, the artist Benvenuto Cellini, which supplies a few candid details not usually available concerning this type of minor figure. There is reason to suspect exaggeration in some of the stories and personal claims made by Benvenuto, and we shall see that not all of those concerning his father stand up to close scrutiny either.⁸ But much of what he relates in reference to his father's career with the civic *pifferi* can be checked against the surviving civic records. When put together, the two sources render a rather compelling portrait of some aspects of the father's career, and by extension therefore, of the lives of civic musicians in Florence.

In an attempt to establish a long and distinguished family lineage, Benvenuto claims both to be a descendent of one Fiorino of Cellino, a captain with Julius Caesar's army, and he further professes to be related to other distinguished families in Ravenna and Pisa. This exalted ancestral claim can probably be dismissed as wishful thinking, but we can affirm as accurate his list of the ancestors closer to his own lifetime; he identifies himself as the son of Maestro Giovanni, son of Andrea, son of Christofano (sometimes written as Christoforo) Cellini.⁹

Benvenuto does not mention a profession in conjunction with his great-grandfather, Christofano, but the Florentine pay records establish the presence of several men with the name "Cristofano" as members of the civic musicians. A Christofano Andree (i.e. Christofano, son of Andree) was a member of the *trombadori* as early as 1394, moving to the *trombetti* in 1399, and the name appears each year until 1458 when he is replaced in the *trombetti* by Sandro di Christofani, presumably his son.¹⁰ This may seem too early a date for this Christofano to be the great-grandfather of Benvenuto (born in 1500), but the sculptor speaks of his grandfather Andree as being more than 100 years old in 1503.¹¹ The dates, therefore, would make this a possible connection, although no other name is ever provided for this Christofano, and therefore the possible relationship must remain only a conjecture based on the similarity of names and the observable tendency of certain trades and vocations to repeat within a family.¹²

We are told by Benvenuto that his grandfather, Andree (Andrea), was an architect and that his father Giovanni learned that trade from him and was also well versed in drawing as well as music. This would seem to be a bit of an exaggeration: in the 1487 *Catasto* (tax records), Andrea Cellini lists his profession as *muratore* (bricklayer). His son Baccio (Bartolomeo) Cellini, Giovanni's brother and Benvenuto's uncle, was an architect.¹³ One also might be inclined towards skepticism in regard to Benvenuto's claims concerning his father's versatility in arts other than music but for the historical fact that in 1504 Giovanni was one of the eleven citizens—and the only musician—chosen to decide on the placement for Michelangelo's *David*. The jury on that occasion consisted of five artists, including Andrea della Robbia, three goldsmiths, an embroiderer, the civic herald, and Giovanni Cellini.¹⁴ Benvenuto claims that his father's many talents also included both artistic craftsmanship—especially working with ivory—and that of an engineer; he refers to his father having made machines for lowering bridges and other mechanical devices of that type. In 1480, however, as Benvenuto tells it, Giovanni set these other interests aside in order to take steady employment with the civic *pifferi* so that he could marry.¹⁵

The earliest official record of Benvenuto's father is his appointment to the civic *pifferi* in 1480.¹⁶ Giovanni was to take the place of Justus Cornelius, who had been a member of the ensemble since 1472,¹⁷ and was to receive the same salary and benefits given to the other members of the ensemble. Giovanni's career with the civic musicians, however, did not proceed as smoothly as it might; eleven years after his appointment he was dismissed and replaced by one Adamo d'Adamo from Freiburg, who was assigned to play the soprano part—presumably the part formerly played by Giovanni. According to Benvenuto, the cause of that dismissal was none other than Lorenzo the Magnificent and his son Piero, who believed that Giovanni was squandering his talents as a member of the *pifferi*, and therefore arranged for his dismissal in order that he would be able to spend more time developing his other artistic talents.¹⁸ This may actually have been the reason, although it would seem to be an unusual way for the Medici to assist a talented artist. The official civic documents fail to specify the reason for not reappointing Cellini, but the Priors are careful to see that he receives all of the pay that was due to him for his services.¹⁹

In June of 1495 Giovanni was reinstated and appointed to play the *contro alto* and *contro basso* parts, and it is in these official documents of reappointment that we encounter a statement that at least partially supports Benvenuto's claim concerning the cause of the dismissal. According to the document, "some private individuals" had requested his removal. We may conclude that these must have been people with some political power, but whether it was actually Lorenzo and his son remains a point of conjecture. Giovanni's return to the ensemble was far from reluctant as his son implies; he was quite anxious for the reappointment. In order to ingratiate himself with the *Signoria* and the ensemble, for several months he served as a substitute without pay—a position traditionally given to an apprentice who was being considered for membership—temporarily replacing Daniele de Johannis,²⁰ and later made an official request for an appointment with benefits but without salary.²¹

This situation is not quite as odd as it may seem. The reason for the lack of salary in the reappointment had to do with the fixed number of members of the *pifferi*. The size of each of the musical groups was set by official decree of the Florentine government and money was allocated for a specific number of salaried employees. Since all four positions in the *pifferi* were occupied, it would have been quite difficult to add one more salaried member, and therefore Giovanni had to wait until the resignation of one of the members in order to apply for a salaried position, and thus he could be appointed only as an unsalaried substitute. We notice, however, that he was given an official appointment, and was to receive the "benefits" of the office.²²

"Benefits" refers to several kinds of goods and privileges including the uniform which was replaced twice each year: at Christmas time and the feast of St. John (June 24). In addition, the *pifferi* (as well as the other musical ensembles) collected extra fees when they played for other communities or private celebrations (processions, wedding receptions, etc.), and the members of the group all shared equally in these rewards.²³ Further, if he stayed with the ensemble until he was deemed old enough to retire, Giovanni could look forward to a comfortable pension.²⁴ The two most basic benefits for the musicians, and probably

most gratifying, had to do with food and housing. Full members of the ensemble received a housing allowance, although the records make it clear that this was not immediately granted to all (see below), and the families of the musicians were allowed to eat at the *mensa* in the *Signoria* on the days when they performed there.²⁵ Thus, by appointing Giovanni to the *pifferi*, even though it was in a traditionally junior position, the civic officials could provide the reward of benefits, and in that way he also remained well placed to become a full member on the occasion of the next opening.

The records show that he served in the unsalaried position for the next two years without incident until June of 1497, when Adamo d'Adamo resigned, and Giovanni was elected to a full appointment with salary, and assigned to play the contre basso and soprano parts, a position that was confirmed three months later.²⁶ Were it not for another document we might assume that the resignation of Adamo and resultant appointment of Giovanni were simply fortuitous events. The documents record, however that Giovanni did not leave anything to chance; he apparently bought the position from Adamo—a practice that was clearly against the law, although in this case for an unspecified reason, the charges were dismissed.²⁷

[margin: notification was declared not valid as below.]

Corradus Pandulfi of Germany, hatmaker of the parish of S. Felice of Florence, and Johannes Ambrosius Dominici of Milan, cloth weaver of the parish of San Lorenzo of Florence, have testified under oath how Johannes Andree Christofori Cellini, *piffero* of the city, in order to obtain that office, bought it from Adamo Adami, formerly *piffero* of this community, in whose place he was elected, and to that same Adamo he paid fifty florins in the month of April 1497 or approximately at that time. And they were mediators of this sale so they know all these things, and therefore they petition that the laws be observed against the said Johannes and that he be fired.²⁸

This document gives rise to several interesting questions that, unfortunately, cannot be answered: Was Adamo's departure from the *pifferi* the result of the offer of fifty florins from Giovanni, or was he intending to move on and wished to sell his place? What caused the two mediators to turn on Giovanni and report him to the authorities after first acting on his behalf? Since Giovanni had clearly violated the law, why was he not dismissed?

From this point until his retirement in 1514, the records document Giovanni Cellini's membership in the civic *pifferi* without further incident. Benvenuto writes that his father remained loyal to the Medici family throughout their exile, and when Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici ascended to the Papacy in 1513 as Pope Leo X, he invited Giovanni Cellini to move to Rome. According to Benvenuto, his father refused that invitation, and as a consequence he was dismissed from the Florentine ensemble.²⁹ It was at this point—his father's dismissal—that Benvenuto claims to have begun to devote most of his time to learning the art of the goldsmith. (In addition to the reason that Benvenuto was probably

more interested in being a goldsmith, because Giovanni was dismissed, Benvenuto lost the opportunity to succeed his father as a member of the *pifferi*.)³⁰

The facts regarding Giovanni's retirement are somewhat confused by yet another version that Benvenuto tells in conjunction with an anecdote involving another of the civic musicians. In the second story the dismissal is credited to some underhanded activity by Pierino da Volterra, one of the *pifferi* who is identified as Giovanni's former student, and who had received a recent promotion in the civic ensemble. The story is told as a confrontation between the two men when, in the heat of the argument, Giovanni accuses Pierino of being the cause of his dismissal from the *pifferi*; a deed, he points out, that was hardly a just reward for Giovanni's assistance in respect to Pierino's promotion.³¹

Once again the public records tell a slightly different story, but one that leaves some room for Benvenuto's versions. The official statement in the documents of 1514 is that Giovanni did not play very well any more and was considered to be too old to be able to execute the daily obligations of a civic *piffero*. Instead, citing his thirty-six years of faithful service to the commune and the fact that he was a pauper, the civic government awarded him the usual pension for retiring civic musicians, eight lire per month.³²

Although Benvenuto's story does not seem to agree exactly with the records, the official reason of "not able to fulfill performance services" could actually be an allusion to his reluctance to travel to Rome. And someone must have told the officials that Giovanni was unable to play well any more—perhaps this was Pierino. As fitting and just punishment for Pierino, Benvenuto adds the following tale: shortly after the confrontation with Giovanni, Pierino was repeating the story to friends while repairing his house, when the floor gave way and he sustained injuries that resulted in his death, thus fulfilling a curse placed on him by Giovanni.³³

The civic records are again lacking in all the details necessary to confirm Benvenuto's story, but some of the elements are present. Pierino, noted in the pay records as Pietrus Nicholai de Vulterris, was appointed to the *pifferi* in 1509 and assigned to play *contro alto*,³⁴ although he was not given the benefit of the housing subsidy until 1512, quite probably what Giovanni referred to as his "promotion."³⁵ Pierino was replaced in the *pifferi* in 1521 by his brother Girolamo (Hieronymus Nic[ol]o de Vulterris), and the records state that the reason was because of Pierino's death.³⁶ Cellini's story, therefore, is at least partially supported by the documents, although the actual circumstances surrounding Pierino's death, including Giovanni's curse, may have been somewhat embellished (or invented) in the telling.

After Giovanni's dismissal, his position in the *pifferi* was assigned to one Gianjacomo Stephani de Cesena,³⁷ and seven months later all four Florentine *pifferi* were sent to Rome to perform at the request of Giuliano de' Medici (brother of the Pope).³⁸ This trip to Rome was only for a short visit, and there may not be any connection between it and the story Benvenuto relates involving his father's refusal to go to Rome. We do know, however, that the Medici popes continued to recruit Florentine musicians for their own ensemble.³⁹ Benvenuto tells a story from later on in his career about being invited to perform for Pope Clement VII (Giulio de' Medici, nephew of Leo X), and then to join the group on a perma-

ment basis. His invitation came through one Gianjacomo de Cesena whom he identifies as a musician in the pope's ensemble. The date of the event must have been somewhere after 1526, the date when Gianjacomo was granted a leave of two months from the Florentine ensemble in order to return to Rome once again to serve the pope; a leave from which he never returned.⁴⁰ From 1514 until 1526 Giovanni Cellini's name can be found among those retired members of the *familia* who were receiving a pension.⁴¹ Benvenuto relates that when he returned to Florence from a short trip to Mantua in 1527, he learned that his father had died of the plague.⁴²

Benvenuto's autobiography provides ample testimony that both he and his father were quite versatile musicians. Benvenuto claims that his father not only performed on a number of instruments but that he also constructed some. At various points of the narrative he describes his father as playing bowed strings (*violi*), and woodwinds (*flauto* = recorder, *piffaro* = shawm). On another occasion he mentions that Giovanni constructed organs with wooden pipes (*organi con canne di legno*), harpsichords (*gravicembali*), lutes and harps (*liuti, arpe*), and that he taught Benvenuto to play recorder, cornetto, and shawm, to sing, and to compose. From this we can reasonably assume that in addition to the instruments named above, Giovanni probably also sang and performed to some extent on cornetto, keyboard, lute, and harp, and that he must have had considerable theoretical and compositional training in order to teach his son.

The autobiography also makes it clear that Giovanni believed that Benvenuto was unusually gifted in music, and had hoped that his son would devote himself to a career of composing and playing with the *pifferi*. The son records having played with the Florentine *pifferi* at the *Signoria* when he was still so young that he performed while seated on the shoulders of a servant. He identifies these performances as during the time when Piero Soderini was Gonfaloniere, thus establishing it as prior to Benvenuto's twelfth birthday.⁴³ There are no official records that support this claim, but we know from other documents that the members of the civic musical ensembles had apprentices who often were members of their own family, and that when sufficiently proficient, these apprentices performed with the official ensemble.

Benvenuto chronicles his own extensive involvement in musical affairs during his youth, much of it promoted by his father, and which became continually of less interest to young Benvenuto as he began to exploit his talents as sculptor and goldsmith. In addition to performing with the civic *pifferi*, Benvenuto states that his father sent him for six months to Bologna to study the shawm with a master known as Antonio, with whom he studied daily.⁴⁴ Upon his return to Florence, Benvenuto continued to perform with the brothers Pierino and Girolamo da Volterra, both (successively) members of the Florentine *pifferi*, indicating that he probably played at a high level.

In the process of filling in the impersonal facts preserved in the civic documents, Benvenuto Cellini's autobiography provides a rare glimpse of the life of a civic musician and allows us a chance to see that at least some members of the Florentine *pifferi* were well-schooled musicians.⁴⁵ In an analysis of the music performed for banquets in Ferrara in 1529, Howard Brown discusses a sophisticated repertory of composed polyphony and

speculates as to how many performers it might take to present the variety of instrumental and vocal ensembles described in the account; he speculates that the court musicians in the early sixteenth century were probably quite versatile.⁴⁶ A number of recent studies of musicians in various courts during that period make it clear that instrumentalists were expected to play a number of different kinds of instruments.⁴⁷ Both Giovanni and Benvenuto answered that description and would have been capable of performing much of the written repertory of their day—both vocal and instrumental—in addition to the traditional improvised repertory of the *pifferi*.

The events surrounding the musical careers of both Cellinis give us some insights into the musical world in which they lived, and provide strong evidence that the Florentine *pifferi* was a very musical ensemble. There is no doubt that Giovanni was quite talented. As suggested by his involvement in the important decision about the placement of Michelangelo's *David*, he was also recognized as an artist of some stature. In addition, the list of the members of the *pifferi*, (*tibiatores* in the documents), on several occasions single out Giovanni as *maestro*—leader. The extent of his versatility as performer on woodwinds, keyboard, bowed and plucked strings, as well as instrument-making, undoubtedly was not duplicated by all members of the *pifferi*, but there is no hint in Benvenuto's narrative that it was unusual for a single musician to play several kinds of instruments and sing. He mentions himself performing on cornetto and recorder with members of the Florentine *pifferi*, and since neither of those soft instruments is usually found in the company of a loud shawm, the other musicians must also have played some soft instruments.⁴⁸

We are also given here a glimpse of the way in which an aspiring musician learned the tools of his trade, which would seem to have been through apprenticing himself to a master. The relationship of student and teacher is only hinted at in the documents, but on a number of occasions in the wording of the official appointment of a new musician to the civic ensembles there is the implication that the candidate is known to the ensemble and has already demonstrated his proficiency—which suggests a system of apprenticeship. Giovanni taught not only his son, but also Pierino da Volterra, who must have been his apprentice, and when Benvenuto went to Bologna for further study he associated himself with one Ercole del Piffero, and reports that he was able to earn some money from performances through this connection.⁴⁹ In addition, there were throughout Northern Italy some rather famous performer-teachers, and although Giovanni was himself a *maestro*, he sent Benvenuto to Bologna to study with a master. William Prizer has documented both a Mantuan *piffero* who sent his son to Ferrara to study trombone with a master, and another member of the same *pifferi* who taught a school for young players of wind instruments at court.⁵⁰ We can see, therefore, that the musicians in the various cities of northern Italy maintained a network that kept them informed of who and where were the master players and teachers, as well as where were the desirable jobs.

There may have been some hierarchy in the part assignments within the Florentine *pifferi*, because many of the official notices of appointment specify the part that the new musician is to play: soprano, *contro alto*, or *contro basso*. Originally Giovanni was hired to play the soprano line, but upon his reappointment in 1495 he was given the *contro alto* and

contro basso part. That assignment would seem logical: we can assume that once Adamo was hired to play soprano, that part would have remained his responsibility even when Giovanni was re-admitted. But in 1497, when Adamo left making way for Giovanni's full appointment, he was assigned not to the soprano part but to "the *contro basso* part, or in some cases the soprano line," meaning that someone else was given the soprano part as a principal assignment. This suggests a possible ascending hierarchy of assignments such as: *contro alto*, *contro basso*, soprano, and that seniority played a part in the distribution of parts. It also attests to quite a bit of performance versatility on the part of the performers, since the three different parts require completely different types of lines in improvised polyphony—which must have still made up a major part of the repertory of the *pifferi*.

Apparently, at this time in the Florentine *pifferi* the trombone played the tenor, since that is the only part that is never mentioned in conjunction with the shawm assignments. Johannes Tinctoris tells us in his treatise of 1477, however, that it is the bombard (tenor shawm) that plays the tenor part, and the trombone plays the contratenor.⁵¹ There are two possible explanations for this obvious contradiction: it is possible that the practice in Florence was different from that of the locations familiar to Tinctoris. A more probable answer, however, is that Tinctoris was describing an earlier practice, as seen in the compositions of Dufay and Binchois, for example.⁵² During that period the soprano and tenor parts were the controlling outline of the composition, with the contratenor serving mostly as harmonic-rhythmic filler. In imitation of this, Tinctoris tells us that matching instruments—soprano and tenor shawm—were assigned to the structural lines, leaving the harmonic filler to the trombone. The earliest statement about specific assignment of parts in the Florentine *pifferi* is 1480, and by that time the compositional practices had changed; harmonic control of a polyphonic composition—and therefore an important structural element—moved from tenor to bass, and at the same time the range of the lowest part was extended downward. It is possible, therefore, that the assignment of parts was changed to reflect both the new structural arrangement of the compositions and the practical problem of range: that the low bass part was assigned to a bombard or a bass shawm, while the tenor part, now in approximately the same range as the old contratenor part, was given to the trombone. This is not a completely satisfactory explanation, because in the late-fifteenth century distribution of four voices, the functions of the parts do not align themselves as earlier. Although the tenor of a four-part composition is no longer the harmonic bass, it is a melodic line and thus retains a structural function, albeit melodic structure rather than melodic-harmonic. The line that corresponds to the earlier contratenor function—harmonic-rhythmic filler—is the alto, a part assigned to a shawm. Whatever the reason, the Florentine documents make it clear that after 1480 the shawm players performed the soprano, alto and bass parts, and that all performers were expected to be sufficiently versatile to handle any of them.

The music performed by the Florentine *pifferi* must have included written polyphony, although the exact repertoire is not known. The principal instruments they played, shawms and trombone, were capable of encompassing the ranges and chromatic demands of anything written at the time, as were many of the other instruments Giovanni Cellini is reputed to have played, and thus their repertory would not have been constricted by

technical limitations. Benvenuto describes his experience playing cornetto on the soprano line of motets in the pope's instrumental ensemble in the 1520s, which underlines the point that instrumentalists adopted vocal repertory (sacred as well as secular).⁵³ The members of the Florentine *pifferi* were very capable musicians, and there is good reason to believe that they participated in performances of a variety of repertory for the enjoyment of the noble families of Florence. The Medici took special interest in the ensemble, and Benvenuto's claims of close friendship between his father and members of that family may not be entirely fabricated. When in 1489 the trombone position in Florence became vacant, Lorenzo de' Medici became personally involved first with an unsuccessful attempt to recruit the Mantuan trombone player Bartolomeo Tromboncino,⁵⁴ and then with a successful offer to the German trombonist Augustein Schubinger (who also performed on the cornetto).⁵⁵ One may be certain that this type of Medici involvement in the membership of the *pifferi* had to do with their own private needs for instrumental performance, supplementing the vocal performers and composers that they had carefully placed in the various church and cathedral positions.

There have been speculations about a repertory written specifically for the *pifferi* in various cities, but although that point is still under discussion, there is general consensus that instrumentalists of the time played vocal music as well as their traditional repertory including improvised polyphony.⁵⁶ Although we shall never know the exact nature of the unwritten repertory, several music manuscripts of Florentine origin survive from the period under discussion, which stand as clear evidence of the repertory current in the fashionable circles for whom the *pifferi* would have performed. The music they contain represents the entire gamut of sacred and secular music written by local composers as well as those of international reputation.⁵⁷ We can be fairly certain that during the time of Giovanni Cellini, the Florentine *pifferi*, playing both on their traditional instruments and on a variety of others (and perhaps even singing), were capable of performing all of the written polyphonic music of their day, both sacred and secular, and there is little question that they would have chosen from all those sources to augment their traditional repertory when performing in their official capacity for the *Signoria*, and in their unofficial capacity for the private affairs of the nobility.⁵⁸

We may wonder what were the daily activities of these musicians. The only regular requirement for the services of the *pifferi*, at least as specified in the Statutes, was to play at the *mensa* for the members of the *Signoria* each day before and after the noon and evening meals.⁵⁹ The Statutes also specify that they were to accompany the *Signoria* when they moved about the city on official business,⁶⁰ and to be present for special ceremonies including those in conjunction with distinguished state visitors, but these would have occupied them only for short periods of time and on only a few days in any month.⁶¹ The total commitment for the *pifferi*, therefore, would seem to have been daily duties at the noon and evening mealtimes, and occasional calls for processions and ceremonies (in addition to time spent in rehearsal). We are left to speculate as to what they did during the remainder of each day, and the possibility exists that they spent it at other trades.

There is one curious statement in Benvenuto's autobiography that his father, as well as all civic musicians, were members of the guilds; as he puts it, some even of the greater guilds of silk and wool.⁶² It is possible that they functioned as musicians for events sponsored by the guilds,⁶³ but it is more likely that actual membership in the guilds is a sign that they carried on the trade that was a part of the jurisdiction of the particular guild. And the fact that the musicians were members of several different guilds would seem to eliminate the possibility that membership had to do with their status as musicians (i.e. a musician's guild).⁶⁴

The suspicion arising from this is that membership in the civic musical ensembles may not have required full-time attendance nor precluded the practice of other trades. The evidence for this is scanty, but includes, in addition to the above, two incidents that curiously involve barbers: in 1511, one Francesco de Bartholomeo di Giuliano, a barber, was appointed to play the *cemmabelle* with the *trombadori*, which suggests that he may have been practising both professions at the same time,⁶⁵ and earlier, in 1414, a barber who was petitioning for admission to the guards of the *Signoria* found it important to note that he could sing, play instruments, and knew foreign languages.⁶⁶ Benvenuto also states that he accepted the musical position offered by Pope Clement VII but continued to work as a goldsmith,⁶⁷ and that during the period from 1502 to 1511, his father, while a member of the Florentine *pifferi*, also served the civic government as an engineer.⁶⁸ Luca Landucci records that in 1509, after the death of the architect Simone del Pollaiuolo whom he had employed to build a temple to San Giovanni Evangelista near the church of San Lorenzo, he involved Giovanni Cellini to pursue the project; again suggesting that Giovanni was actively involved in trades in addition to that of musician.⁶⁹

In context, Benvenuto explains the guild membership as something that was true during his father's day, which implies that it was no longer possible; that by mid-century, musicians in the employ of the Granduke were fully occupied with their official musical duties.⁷⁰ I have no further information along this line, but it would explain how Giovanni could have supported his family during the two years he served in the *pifferi* without pay, and how he also practised the trades of instrument maker and engineer during a career that would seem to have been completely occupied by membership in the *pifferi*. If this speculation is correct, a position with the civic musicians was potentially even more beneficial financially than it appears; in addition to a decent salary that was comparable to the other (full-time) members of the *familia*, the musicians would have had the opportunity to substantially increase their incomes outside of their obligations to the *Signoria*, both in their capacity as musicians and in the practice of their other trades.

Giovanni Cellini obviously enjoyed the life of service as a civic musician and urged his son to follow in his footsteps.⁷¹ Benvenuto, as we know, chose to pursue his other artistic talents after age fourteen, although he apparently continued to enjoy music and play instruments for many years. For Benvenuto, who had much larger aspirations in both the artistic and political arenas, the career of civic musician was far too confining. But for someone such as Giovanni Cellini, possessing a high degree of musical talent and an ambition to exercise that talent daily in the beautiful city of Florence, membership in

the civic *pifferi* was ideal; it offered secure employment, a rewarding musical career, and time to pursue other interests.⁷²

NOTES

¹ According to Alan Atlas, most fifteenth-century courts customarily employed its trumpeters as diplomatic messengers. "Aragonese Naples and Medicean Florence: Musical Interrelationships and Influence in the Late Fifteenth Century," in *La Musica a Firenze al tempo di Lorenzo il Magnifico*, ed. P. Gargiulo (Florence: L.S. Olschki, 1993), p. 17. For a detailed recent investigation of the musicians in one area of Europe, see Keith Polk, *German Instrumental Music of the Late Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

² Documentary surveys of the Florentine instrumental ensembles can be found in Luigia Cellesi, "Documenti per la storia musicale di Firenze," *Rivista musicale Italiana* 34 (1927): 579-602; 35 (1928): 553-582; and Giuseppe Zippel, *I suonatori della Signoria di Firenze* (Trent, 1892). Primary source material for this article was gathered at the Archivio di Stato in Florence. Abbreviations used in citing those sources are: ASF = Archivio di Stato, Florence; PR = Provvisioni Registri; SC = Signori e Collegi, Deliberazioni in Ordinaria Autorità; CC = Camere del Comune.

³ On the benefits and rewards for minor bureaucrats, see G. Brucker, "Bureaucracy and Social Welfare in the Renaissance: A Florentine Case Study," *Journal of Modern History* 55 (1983): 1-21; and A. Pini, "La 'Burocrazia' comunale nella Toscana del trecento," *La Toscana nel secolo XIV: Caratteri di una civiltà regionale*. ed. S. Gensini (Pisa: Pacini, 1988): 215-40.

⁴ They are first recorded in one of the earliest extant civic records of the commune: ASF:PR No. 3, for 8 February 1292. The nature of the instrument called *cenamella* is not securely known. In later documents the word *cenamella* or a similar one is used to denote a reed pipe, and is described as such in *Vocabolario degli Accademici della Crusca*, 6 vols. (Florence: D.M. Manni, 1729-38), 4: 800. In that case the word in this context could mean either a bagpipe or a shawm; see T. McGee, "Information on Instruments in Florentine Carnival Songs," *Early Music* 10 (1982): 454. The *Grande dizionario della lingua Italiana*, ed. S. Battaglia (Turin: Unione tipografico-editrice torinese, 1961), 2: 955-56, identifies the instrument as a cymbals or a single drum, which may be a confusion with the words *cemmanella* and *cembanella*. Giuseppe Zippel, *I suonatori della Signoria di Firenze*, p. 6, translates *cimballellarus* as a player of the *cembalo*, undoubtedly meaning a tambourine with jingling bells rather than the later use of *cembalo* to refer to a keyboard instrument. The *Grande dizionario*, 2: 963, offers "cymbals player" as a translation for *cimballellarus*. I am indebted to Giovanni Ciappelli for assistance with these meanings.

⁵ On the growing use of public ceremony in Florence, see R. Trexler, ed., *The Libro Cerimoniale of the Florentine Republic* (Geneva: Droz, 1978).

⁶ For a recent summary of the history of the Florentine civic musicians up to 1520, see Keith Polk, "Civic patronage and instrumental ensembles in Renaissance Florence," *Augsburger Jahrbuch für Musikwissenschaft* 3 (1986): 51-68. On the nature of the "brass" instrument in the Florentine *pifferi*, see Timothy J. McGee, "Misleading Iconography: The Case of the 'Adimari Wedding Cassone'," *Imago Musicae* 9-12 (1992-95): 139-57.

⁷ For a detailed study of the civic *pifferi* in Mantua and their duties, see William Prizer, "Bernardino Piffaro e i pifferi e tromboni di Mantova: strumenti a fiato in una corte italiana," *Rivista Italiana di Musicologia* 16 (1981): 151-84. For a detailed discussion of civic musicians in Siena see Frank A. D'Accone, *The Civic Muse: Music and Musicians in Siena during the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).

⁸ Benvenuto wrote his autobiography in his fifty-eighth year—1558—and therefore, in addition to the intentional overstatement of his own importance, there is the added concern that there may be unintentional distortion in some of his reminiscences and recollections of his early years, as well as possible misunderstanding of stories related to him early on by his father concerning events that took place prior to his birth and during his childhood. There are several editions and translations of Cellini's *Vita*; those consulted were: C. Cordié, ed., *Opere di Baldassare Castiglione, Giovanni Della Casa, Benvenuto Cellini* (Milano: R.Ricciardi, 1960); and J.A. Symonds, transl., *The Autobiography of Benvenuto Cellini* (1927; reprint, Garden City, NY, Doubleday, 1948).

⁹ Cordié, *La Vita*, pp. 501-2, Symonds, *The Autobiography*, p. 4.

¹⁰ First listed in Camere del Comune No. 4 fol. fol. 264r (1394-95) with *trombadori*; changed to the list of *trombetti* in ASF:CC, Camarlinghi, Uscita No. 320, 7 December 1399 (no fol. #s); last listed in ASF:CC, Debitori e Creditori No. 1, fol. 83v, 1458.

¹¹ Cordié, *La Vita*, p. 505; Symonds, *The Autobiography*, p. 7.

¹² The succession of members of the same family in various musical groups was not only a result of inherited talents, but was also a feature of the employment tradition whereby the incumbent was allowed to nominate his successor. See Brucker, "Bureaucracy and Social Welfare," pp. 8-10, for the use of this privilege for private gain or as a substitute for a dowry in order to attract a prospective son-in-law.

¹³ *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia italiana, 1960-), 23: 439-44. The only official record I have found that mentions someone with this name is from the year 1483, when one Marci Andree de Cellinis is restored from the banishment placed on him for taking goods from Bartolomeum de quietis deargenta Iude. ASF:PR no. 174, fol. 36r. I am unable to confirm whether this is Benvenuto's grandfather, another relative, or simply a coincidence of names.

¹⁴ Record of a public hearing held on 25 January 1503 [1504], taken from Archivio dell' Opera del Duomo, *Deliberazioni*, 1496-1507, and published in Johann Wilhelm Gaye, *Carteggio inedito d'artisti dei secoli XIV, XV, XVI* (Florence: Molini, 1840), 2: 455-462; reprinted in C. Seymour, Jr., *Michelangelo's David: A Search for Identity* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1967), p. 139. I am indebted to Eve Borsook for this reference.

¹⁵ Cordié, *La Vita*, p. 508; Symonds, *The Autobiography*, pp. 8-9.

¹⁶ ASF:PR no. 170, fol. 122, for 13 February 1479 [80].

¹⁷ ASF:CC no. 15, 1469-73, fol. 6. Justus succeeded his father, Cornelius Pieri di Fiandre (Flanders), who had been a member of the *pifferi* since 1452.

¹⁸ Cordié, *La Vita*, p. 508; Symonds, *The Autobiography*, p. 9.

¹⁹ ASF:PR no. 182, fol. 77, 20, December 1491.

²⁰ The appointment first appears in ASF:SC, no. 97, fol. 21r, 20, February 1494 [95], which states that he is appointed to play *contro alto* and *basso*, and then again on fol. 29v, for 8 March, which states that he will replace Daniele: "ad sonand in locum Danelis." Daniele must have been on a temporary leave, because his name appears on the list of the *familia* in that year and for several years afterwards.

²¹ ASF:PR no. 186, fol. 62v-63r, 20 June 1495.

²² Florence was not alone in adding members without pay to the musical ensembles. For discussions of this practice slightly later in Bologna and Bruges, see Osvaldo Gambassi, *Il Concerto Palatino della Signoria di Bologna* (Firenze: L.S. Olschki, 1989), document 285; and Keith Polk, "Ensemble Instrumental Music in Flanders—1450-1550," *Journal of Band Research* 2 (1975): 13-14.

²³ See Brucker, "Bureaucracy and Social Welfare," p. 6.

²⁴ Retirement pension was granted to a member of the *familia* who had reached the age of sixty with fifteen or more years of continuous service. On these benefits see Brucker, "Bureaucracy and Welfare"; and Pini, "La 'Burocrazia'."

²⁵ Should a musician not perform as scheduled each day, one of the penalties was that he could not eat at the *mensa*. See ASF: SC Deliberazioni Speciale Autorità no. 38, fol. 14r, 30 October 1493.

²⁶ ASF:SC no.99, 1497, fol. 58r, for 30 June 1497; and PR No. 188, fol. 27v, for 26 October 1497.

²⁷ The prohibition of the sale of these offices is discussed in Brucker, "Bureaucracy and Social Welfare," p. 13, and n. 68.

²⁸ [margin: notificatio fuit declaratum non valere, ut infra] Corradus Pandulfi de Alamania bertretarius populi s. felicitatis de Florentia, et Iohanes Ambrosius Dominici de Mediolano, textor drapporum populi s. Laurenti de florentia, comparverunt coram me notario infrascripto et testibus infrascriptis, et eorum iuramento notificaverunt qualiter Ioannes Andree Christofori Cellini, pifferus dicte dominationis pro habbendo dictum eius offitum illud emit ab Adamo Adami olim piffero dicte dominationis, loco cuius fuit electus et eidem Adamo prosperta solvit Florenos 50 largos del mense aprilis 1497 vel alio veriori tempore, et ipse discessit dedicto offitio. Et quia fuerunt mediatores huiusmodi venditionis, ideo sciunt hec omnia, et propterea petunt observari leges contra dictum Ioannem et eum haberi pro capso, et protestant etc. omnia contenta in lege prohibente alienationis huiusmodi locorum etc. Que omnia acta fuerunt in cancelleria mei notari infrascripti et in presentia Ioannantonii de Parma et Antonii de Sancto Cassiano, faval rotellini dicte dominationis, testibus, etc. ASF:SC No. 100, fol. 86r, for 28 July 1498.

²⁹ Benvenuto's story in this case is somewhat confused. He blames the dismissal on the Gonfaloniere Jacopo Salviati, but in this he is mistaken: Salviati never held that office.

³⁰ On the tradition of familial succession in the music ensembles of Florence, see Timothy J. McGee, "In the Service of the Commune: The Changing Role of Florentine Civic Musicians, 1450-1532," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 30 (1999): 727-43.

³¹ Cordie, *La Vita*, p. 514; Symonds, *The Autobiography*, pp. 15-16.

³² ASF:SC No. 116, fol. 29v, for 30 March 1514. There would seem to be a slight miscalculation in the years of service credited to Giovanni: only thirty-four years had elapsed since his earliest appointment in 1480, not subtracting the three years he was dismissed and the two during which he was appointed without salary.

³³ Cordié, *La Vita*, p. 515; Symonds, *The Autobiography*, p. 16.

³⁴ ASF:PR no. 200, fol. 4v, for 23 April 1509. The records note that his father had been a member of the *trombetti* for more than twenty-three years.

³⁵ ASF:PR no. 201, fol. 80v, for 25 February 1511 [1512].

³⁶ ASF:CC Notaio no. 131, fol. 58, for 17 June 1521.

³⁷ ASF:SC no. 116, fol. 29v, for 30 March 1514. Gianjacomo (Johannes Jacobo de Cesena) was one of two *pifferi* working in Cesena who were hired in 1514 by Lorenzo II de' Medici to work in Florence. (The other was the trombone player Johannes Justi d'Alamanca, alias Giovanni Como). In 1519, following Lorenzo's death, Gianjacomo transferred to the private musicians of Pope Leo X; he returned to Florence in 1522, and in 1526 transferred back to the service of the Pope; see below. On the varied employment career of Giangiacomo, see Richard Sherr, "Lorenzo de' Medici, Duke of Urbino, as a Patron of Music," *Renaissance Studies in Honor of Craig Hugh Smyth*, 2 vols. (Florence: Giunti Barbéra, 1985), 1: 628-38; and Anthony M. Cummings, "Gian Maria Giudeo, sonatore del Liuto, and the Medici," *Fontes Artis Musicae* 38 (1991): 312-3; and H.-W. Frey, "Regesten zur Pápstlichen Kapelle unter Leo X. un zu seiner Privatkapelle," *Die Musikforschung* 9 (1956): 57, 140.

For a recent discussion of the context of this musician's activities, see Anthony M. Cummings, *The Politicized Muse: Music for Medici Festivals 1512-1537* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), pp. 105-14.

³⁸ ASF:SC No. 116, fol. 102r, 19 September 1514.

³⁹ On Florentine musicians in Rome see H. Colin Slim, "Musicians on Parnassus," *Studies in the Renaissance* 12 (1965): 134-63; André Pirro, "Leo X and Music," *Musical Quarterly* 21 (1935); Cummings, "Gian Maria Giudeo"; and Sherr, "Lorenzo de' Medici."

⁴⁰ ASF:SC No. 128, fol. 12r, for 15 February 1525 [1526]. When Gianjacommo had overstayed his leave by an additional three months, the Florentine officials ordered him to return; fol. 106r, for 7 November 1526. Apparently he did not return, because his name is missing from the list of payments to the civic *pifferi* beginning with the next year. On Gianjacommo see note 37 above.

⁴¹ The latest record I was able to find was in ASF:SC No. 128, fol. 26r, for 17 April 1526.

⁴² The plague in Florence lasted between May and November 1527 and killed 40,000; Cordié, *La Vita*, pp. 584-85; Symonds, *The Autobiography*, p. 77, and n. 102.

⁴³ Soderini was elected *Gonfaloniere* for life on 22 September 1502, but on 31 August 1511 he was dismissed from office. Description of his election, dismissal from office, and banishment in Lucca Landucci, *Diario Fiorentino*, ed. Iodoco Del Badia (Florence: Sansoni, 1883), pp. 250; English transl. A. de Rosen Jervis, Luca Landucci, *Luca Landucci, A Florentine Diary* (1927; reprint, Freeport, NY, Books for Libraries Press, 1971), pp. 200, 258, 265.

⁴⁴ He does not mention exactly what he studied, but the reference is undoubtedly to Antonio Capistraro, a Bolognese instrumentalist and member of the *pifferi* mentioned in a letter by Giovanni Spataro; see Susan Forscher Weiss, "Bologna Q 18: Some Reflections on Content and Context," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 41 (1988): 88. Prof. Weiss has kindly informed me by private correspondence that Antonio was a member of the Concerto Palatino from at least 1513 to 1529 (records from 1506-12 are lost); see Gambassi, *Concerto Palatino*, pp. 612-17.

On Bologna as a center of Italian instrumental playing, see Keith Polk, "Foreign and Domestic in Italian Instrumental Music of the Fifteenth Century," *Musica Franca: Essays in Honor of Frank A. D'Accone*, ed. Irene Alm, Alyson McLamore, and Colleen Reardon (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon Press, 1996), pp. 323-32.

⁴⁵ Giangiacomo de Cesena, for example, played shawm and cornetto, and was also an artist. See Cummings, "Gian Maria Giudeo," p. 313, n. 3.

⁴⁶ Howard Mayer Brown, "A Cook's Tour of Ferrara in 1529," *Rivista Italiana di Musicologia* 10 (1975): 216-41, esp. 222.

⁴⁷ For example, see William Prizer, "North Italian Courts, 1460-1540," *The Renaissance*, ed. Iain Fenlon, London, 1989, pp. 133-55; Keith Polk, "Patronage and Innovation in Instrumental Music in the 15th Century," *Historical Brass Society Journal* 3 (1991); and Keith Polk, "Innovation in Instrumental Music 1450-1510: The Role of German Performers Within European Culture," in *Music in the German Renaissance*, ed. John Kmetz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 202-14.

⁴⁸ The performance of cornetto with shawm is not unknown during this period, but there is no evidence of recorder and shawm. The earlier, somewhat rigid separation into loud and soft instruments was compromised by this time. In the early sixteenth century the cornetto is often found with trombones as a standard combination, and both instruments were used in conjunction with voices, thus suggesting that the trombone had become a part of both loud and soft ensembles, see Polk, "Innovation," p. 210.

⁴⁹ Ercole was probably Ercole Albergato, who worked in Ferrara, Mantua, and Bologna as actor, string musician, stage designer, and composer. I am grateful to Susan Forscher Weiss for this information.

⁵⁰ Prizer, "Bernardino Piffero," pp. 157, 159-60. Also see Polk, "Innovation," p. 206.

⁵¹ J. Tinctoris, *Liber de arte contrapuncti*, 1477, transl. Albert Seay as *The Art of Counterpoint* (n.p.: American Institute of Musicology, 1961); quoted in Polk, *German Instrumental Music*, p. 80.

⁵² This point is somewhat complicated by the fact that earlier in the century the repertory of the *pifferi* was probably improvised rather than written. I am assuming that, as described in numerous treatises of the fifteenth century, the improvised and written practices were similar.

⁵³ Benvenuto's statement leaves two interesting but unanswered questions. The event was the Ferragosto, the Pope's annual celebration on the first of August, and he says that he was playing motets for the Pope while he was "at table." It would be interesting to know if the ensemble included voices, or was only instrumental—the description suggests that it was an instrumental performance. Also, he claims that the ensemble rehearsed two hours a day for eight days, which means that an ensemble of professionals rehearsed for sixteen hours in order to play a few motets!

⁵⁴ See Francesco Luisi, *La musica vocale del Rinascimento* (Turin: ERI, 1977), p. 70.

⁵⁵ See Polk, *German Instrumental Music*, pp. 71, 77. Schubinger worked in Florence from 1489 to 1494. Polk has speculated that the textless German composition *Coda di Volpe* (originally *Der fuchs schwantcz*) in Florence, BN Banco Rari 229, may be connected to Schubinger's presence in Florence at the time the manuscript was being assembled; *German Instrumental Music*, pp. 140-41.

⁵⁶ Lewis Lockwood has claimed that the manuscript Rome, Casanattense 2856 is the book referred to in the Ferrara records as "a la piferesca"; *Music in Renaissance Ferrara, 1400-1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 225-26; and see the repertory discussed in Polk, *German Instrumental Music*, Chapter 6. H. Brown has identified those compositions with titles rather than text incipits as intended for instrumental performance, see his *A Florentine Chansonnier From the Time of Lorenzo The Magnificent*, *Monuments of Renaissance Music*, vols. 6, 7 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), vol. 6. But see my questions concerning some of the underlying assumptions in identifying any repertory as instrumental, in Timothy J. McGee, "Singing Without Text," *Performance Practice Review* 5 (1993): 1-31.

⁵⁷ A discussion of the manuscripts and their repertory can be found in various articles published in *La musica a Firenze*, ed. Gargiulo. One of the most interesting of these is Florence BN, Banco Rari 337, a bass partbook which is the sole survivor of what was once a set of four, containing a varied secular repertory written by international and local composers (e.g. Josquin, Coppini), and the only surviving texted version of Isaac's *Alla Battaglia*. It is tempting to suggest that the set of partbooks may have been the property of the *pifferi*, although there is not enough evidence to substantiate this.

⁵⁸ Polk, "Ensemble Instrumental Music in Flanders—1450-1550," pp. 12-27, has documented the performance of motets by the civic musicians of the Low Countries in the last quarter of the fifteenth century, making it clear that secular musicians and secular occasions were not limited to secular music. Also see his discussion of repertory in *German Instrumental Music*, Chapter 6.

⁵⁹ *Statuta Populi et Communis Florentiae*, 3 vols. (Freiburg, 1778-83), Rubrica XL, vol. 2, pp. 541-44. Nicolai Rubinstein, *The Palazzo Vecchio, 1298-1532* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), p. 103, locates the dining room as the *Sala dei Gigli* on the second floor of the Palazzo Vecchio in which, according to the inventory of 1532, there was a round table for the musicians.

⁶⁰ The members of the *Signoria* were quite restricted in their movements outside of the palace during their two months in office. See Brucker, "Bureaucracy and Social Welfare," p. 5.

⁶¹ On the extent of these ceremonial activities see Trexler, *The Libro Cerimoniale*.

⁶² Cordié, *La Vita*, p.508; Symonds, *The Autobiography*, p. 9.

⁶³ During the same period in England the various guilds sponsored theatrical and social events, and regularly hired musicians including members of the civic ensembles for these occasions. See Joanna Dutka, *Music in the English Mystery Plays*, *Early Drama, Art, and Music 2* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1980), and the numerous publications of *Records of Early English Drama* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979-).

⁶⁴ There was no guild specifically for musicians in Florence.

⁶⁵ ASF: PR no. 201, fol. 26r. for 30 April 1511.

⁶⁶ ASF: PR no. 104, fol. 5r., cited in Brucker, "Bureaucracy and Social Welfare," p. 8.

⁶⁷ Cordié, *La Vita*, pp. 534-36; Symonds, *The Autobiography*, pp. 36-38.

⁶⁸ Cordié, *La Vita*, pp. 508-09; Symonds, *The Autobiography*, p. 10.

⁶⁹ Landucci, *Diario*, pp. 272, 296-97; and Jarvis, *Landucci*, pp. 217, 236.

⁷⁰ On the Florentine musicians after 1532, see Warren Kirkendale, *The Court Musicians in Florence During the Principate of the Medici* (Florence: L.S. Olschki, 1993).

⁷¹ There was also another son two years younger than Benvenuto, a professional soldier named Giovanfrancesco, who apparently was known as Cecchino del Piffero; Cordié, *La Vita*, pp. 605; Symonds, *The Autobiography*, pp. 94-95. From the nickname we may speculate either that Giovanni taught him musical skills as well, or, more likely, that the *piffero* reference is to his father. Benvenuto never mentions his brother in a musical connection.

⁷² I am grateful to the following for assistance with this article: Giovanni Ciappelli, Domenico Pietropaolo, Keith Polk, Randall Rosenfeld, Susan Weiss.