

Victor Coelho, "Francesco da Milano," in *Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*. Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1999-), English translation

Francesco Canova da Milano (Francesco Milanese; Francesco da Parigi; Monzino)

Born Monza, 18 August 1497, died 2 January 1543. "Il Divino," as he was known during his lifetime—a title otherwise bestowed only upon Michelangelo—Francesco da Milano was the most important and influential lutenist of the Italian Renaissance. He flourished during a period when most Italian courts were dominated by *oltremontani*, and can thus be considered as the first Italian-born musician of the Renaissance to achieve international fame. His compositions circulated widely and with regularity in Europe, through single-author prints, large retrospective anthologies, and manuscripts; they continue to appear in English and Continental sources until the middle of the seventeenth century, his works achieving a "classic" status at a time when dramatic changes in musical style and modifications to the instrument itself rendered most of the sixteenth-century lute repertory obsolete.

Life and Patronage: The earliest information about Francesco's life comes from the horoscopes prepared by Girolamo Cardano (1543) and Luca Gaurico (1552), which laid the groundwork for the pioneering studies by Slim (1964, 1965) and the more recent archival work by Pavan (1991, 1995, 1997). Francesco was born into a musical family in Monza, one of three sons fathered by Benedetto Canova (the name of Francesco's mother is not known), a clever entrepreneur who invested in property, founded a company that produced gold and silver thread, and capitalized on his son's distinguished musical career to further his family's economic and social status (Pavan, 1994). No details have yet emerged about Francesco's musical

training other than Gaurico's unverified claim that he studied with Giovanni Angelo Testagrossa, the lute teacher to Isabella d'Este.

The bulk of Francesco's professional life was spent in Rome, where he served, with various interruptions, from 1514 to 1539 in the successive papal households of Leo X Medici, Adrian VI Dedal, Clement VII Medici, and Paul III Farnese. Francesco began his papal service early on in Leo's pontificate, and remained as one of the pope's private musicians (sometimes listed along with his father) until the end of the papacy in 1521. Continuing his employment into the ill-fated pontificate of Clement VII, Francesco performed before such figures as Castiglione and Giovio in 1524, and Isabella d'Este in 1526. He returned to Milan shortly before the Sack of Rome, becoming a canon in S. Nazaro Maggiore in 1528. A period of residence in Piacenza is intimated in a verse by the Florentine poet Francesco Berni from 1528, in which the poet calls on Francesco to leave Piacenza and join his forlorn admirers in Venice. Neither this trip nor Fétis's claim that Francesco served as organist at the Duomo of Milan around 1530 has been confirmed (see Slim, 1964). A sojourn in Paris is also a possibility given the attribution of some of his works in the Siena Lute Book (*NL - DHgm 28 B 39*) to a "Francesco da Parigi," and the fact that Francesco's first published work (a corrupt reading of his Fantasia 24) appeared in a Parisian source licensed by the royal court, Attaignant's *Tres breve et familiere introduction* of 1529.

Upon his return to Rome around 1531, Francesco entered the service first of Cardinal Ippolito de' Medici, and after 1534, that of Pope Paul III, where his duties

included teaching lute to the pope's grandson Ottavio Farnese. Francesco's most famous student, however, was Perino Fiorentino degli Organi (1523-52), a Florentine lute virtuoso in his own right who became a member of Paul III's household at the age of thirteen and whose works were later published alongside his teacher's. In 1536, three books devoted exclusively to Francesco's compositions were published in Naples and Venice, by Sultzbach and Marcolini, respectively, as well as an important Milanese lute anthology by Casteliono that contained five of Francesco's pieces along with selections by Albert de Rippe, Marco dall'Aquila, and Pietro Paolo Borrono. A fifth book from that year (Brown, 1547/4) that is devoid of both a publisher's name and date, is identical to the Marcolini volume and predates it; Pavan's elaborate hypothesis about its political background is inconclusive; see Pavan, 2000.) Some of Francesco's travels as a member of the papal *musica* during this second Roman sojourn have been documented: in 1533 he accompanied Clement VII to Bologna for his meeting with Charles V; and in 1538 Francesco was the only musician brought to Nice by Paul III for his meeting with Charles V and Francis I. Thus, Francesco's music was requested at functions in which diplomatic honor was at stake, suggesting a connection among papal taste, ceremony, and compositional style (see Coelho, 2002). In 1538 Francesco appears as one of the "gentilhomini e camerieri" of Cardinal Alessandro Farnese (Dorez, 1932), and he is also documented back in Milan following his marriage to the noble Milanese Chiara Tizzoni in the same year. We know little either of Francesco's activities after this time, or of the cause and place of his death. A tombstone was erected by his father at Santa

Maria della Scala in Milan, a church long since replaced by the famous opera house of the same name. Many attempts have been made to identify Francesco in sixteenth-century paintings of lutenists. But it is a seventeenth-century portrait copy in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana in Milan, portraying a bearded "Francesco del liuto" with a music book in front of him open to a page from Arcadelt's madrigal *Quand'io penso al martire* (a work that was, in fact, intabulated by Francesco), that is recognized as the only true likeness of the lutenist.

Sources, Style, and Reputation: Of the approximately 125 compositions that are assumed to be by Francesco, less than half of them were published during his lifetime, and many new and unique works attributed to him continued to appear almost fifty years after his death. Not surprisingly, the Francesco catalogue as it stands now reveals a stylistic and technical inconsistency that cries out for serious analytical scrutiny, a topic that Francesco scholars have shown a puzzling reluctance to broach. It is fairly clear that many attributions to Francesco cannot be accepted uncritically, and in seeking to ascertain what exactly Francesco did and did not write, recent studies have confronted this issue from a range of musicological perspectives, including 1) how the economics and occasional unscrupulousness of print culture might influence attribution; 2) how the veracity of manuscript attributions can be judged on stylistic grounds; and 3) through an examination of the broad patterns of reception and revival that shaped Francesco's posthumous reputation (see Coelho, 1996).

Francesco's publications of 1536 show a dramatic evolution from the more rhapsodic

and formulaic styles contained in the Petrucci lute books of 1507-1508, revealing instead a new contrapuntal artistry that is derived from his adaptation of polyphonic vocal techniques to the lute. It is logical to assume that the music in these prints (and possibly later ones, too) had their compositional origins during the composer's service to the Medici popes in the 1510s, '20s and '30s, and, by extension, fundamentally conceived within, and informed by, the literary and humanistic culture around Leo X and Clement VII (see Coelho, 2005). His fantasias and ricercars draw on traditional lute idioms, to be sure, but his main influences are the formal, motivic, and contrapuntal features of the frottola (as seen in Ricercar 2—numberings refer to Ness, 1970), motet (Fantasia 21), French chanson (Ricercar 3, 16), and the new Italian madrigal (Ricercar 6), which Francesco amalgamated into a broad-based instrumental style. Some works even contain programmatic elements similar to the Parisian chanson—the climax of trumpet calls at the end of Fantasia 1, for example. Many if not most of his fantasias are based on subjects borrowed from vocal music (see Mengozzi, 1990), similar to the way a Bembo text was indebted to Petrarch. One can say that Francesco helped develop the fantasia from a purely preludial genre of music to an *artistic creation* that is informed by rhetorical and humanistic text/musical considerations. Turning to his intabulations, the four sacred settings that appear in the 1536 prints are based on either the exact vocal models (*Pater Noster / Ave Maria, Stabat Mater*) or at the very least are by the same composers (Josquin, Compere) that are represented in manuscripts copied for the Capella Sistina and Capella Giulia. Indeed, Compere's *O Bone Jesu* is from a slightly older repertory of the

generation prior to Francesco, but it reflects a composer who was probably in Rome around 1495—just before Francesco's birth—and whose music remained in the chapel repertory, reflecting the antiquarian taste of the papal chapel that persists through the first half of the sixteenth century. As for the more numerous secular settings, Francesco's preference for the French chanson as a model for intabulation provides the clearest example of the noble Florentine taste that was adopted in Rome during Medici papacies (see Coelho, 2002). Many of these chansons were copied into Florentine manuscripts during this period, or they represent composers whose works were known by the Medici, such as Févin and, of course, Richafort, whose music was sung in the papal court and who received a benefice from Pope Leo X in 1516.

Due to the exclusive ten-year privilege granted to Marcolini to print lute tablatures in 1536, which he did not exercise again prior to its expiration, the publication of Francesco's lute music did not resume until 1546, three years after the composer's death. The Venetian prints of that year introduce mostly new intabulations, all of them chansons, based on models by Garnier, Sermisy, Certon, Layolle, Gombert and Janequin, including a brilliant arrangement of the latter's famous *Chant des oyseaux*. By contrast, the publications of 1547 contain a dozen new fantasias, showing a more fluid and pervasive point-of-imitation technique (Fantasia 39), an increased concern for formal symmetry and sectionalisation (Fantasia 38), mono-thematicism (Fantasia 30, Fantasia 33), and paraphrase or parody technique—Fantasia 36 is based on Francesco's intabulation of Richafort's *De mon triste plaisir*, while Fantasia 30 appears to paraphrase the first subject of the madrigal

Quanto sia lieto il giorno by Verdelot, whose earliest supporters included Francesco's patron Pope Clement VII. Taken together, the printed works of 1536, 1546, and 1547 represent the core of Francesco's total output and are distinct from the works attributed to him in later sources by their stylistic homogeneity. They were easily the most familiar pieces to the public and many were reprinted well into the 1570s.

The same cannot be said for the thirteen fantasias that appear in the *Intabolatura de lauto libro settimo* (whose claim on the title page that the works are based on the composer's own copies is probably a good example of the hyperbole used by publishers). Ness (1970) has described these works as exhibiting a "rambling formal structure, an absence of linear clarity, and a preponderance of jagged, nervous embellishment." The large majority of these works may well be *opera dubia*, similar to the thirteen equally uncharacteristic fantasias attributed to Francesco in Borrono's *Intavolatura di lauto* of the same year, and the six fantasias attributed to him in Vincenzo Galilei's *Intavolature de lauto*, which are, at best, pastiches, and at worst largely the work of Galilei himself (see Coelho, 1996; Meadors 1984). Not surprisingly, none of these pieces was ever reprinted. (Curiously, Fantasia 51, from the *libro settimo*, has become one of the most often-played fantasias by lutenists today.)

One encounters the same problems of attributions in the manuscript sources. Some sources, like the Siena Lute Book, transmit reliable, even excellent readings of Francesco's music and seem to have been copied carefully by a professional lutenist working from reputable sources. Other manuscripts, like the Cavalcanti Lute Book (*B*

– *Br II 275*) contain along with concordances to previously published works, entirely new pieces attributed to Francesco that are difficult to authenticate on stylistic grounds (see Coelho, 1996). Francesco's works are especially prominent in Florentine manuscripts, a tradition that may have its origins in the excellent relations he had with the two Medici popes Leo X and Clement VII, and his tutelage of Perino Fiorentino. A recently discovered manuscript in Castelfranco Veneto (*I – CFVd*, s.s.; see Rossi, 1996) contains previously unknown works by Francesco that are among the most convincing to date and thoroughly evocative of the elegant discourse, refinement, and rhetorical expression of the Francesco fantasia.

Francesco da Milano's works reveal an extraordinary amalgamation of styles drawn from many current trends of vocal music, and his work as a whole contains some of the most inventive music of the sixteenth century. In addition, his works established a new technical standard, and they provided a contemporary stylistic model for players to imitate that was as distinguished as a Josquin motet or Arcadelt madrigal, his own music becoming a rich source for parody and imitation by other lutenists.

1. Editions

Arthur J. Ness, ed. *The Lute Music of Francesco Canova da Milano (1497-1543)* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970)

Ruggiero Chiesa, ed. *Francesco da Milano: Opere complete per liuto* (Milan: Suvini Zerboni, 1971)

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2. WORKS

2.1.1 For solo lute:

91 fantasias (or ricercars) and 31 intabulations excluding embellished works, parodies, and works of doubtful authenticity
1 Tochate; 1 Tirate

2.2 For two lutes

3 works (Spagna, Canon, Fantasia)

2.3: Intabulations

2.3.1 Motets

1 Pater noster a sei (Josquin)
2 Ave Maria a sei (Josquin)
3 Stabat mater dolorosa (Josquin)
4 O bone Jesu (Compère)

2.3.2 French Chansons:

5 Mon per si ma marie
6 Le plus gorgais du monde
7 Chi voleno dir de moy [Que voulez vous dire de moy] (2nd part of Josquin's *Si j'ay perdu mon amy*)
8 Tu discois
9 Fors seulement (Févin)
10 Nos bergiers
11 Joliet est marie
12 Se la natura)
13 Gentil galans
14 Rousignol (Mouton)
15 Las je me plains (Sermisy)
16 Pour quoy alles vous seulette
17 La Bataglia (Janequin)
18 La Bataglia francese (Janequin)
19 Reveillez moi (Garnier)
20 Pour avoir paix (Layolle)
21 Hors envieux retirez vous (Gombert)
22 Sur toute fleurs jayme la margarite
23 Pourtant si je suis brunette (Sermisy)
24 Fortune alors (Certon)

25 Martin menuyt (Sermisy)
26 Martin menoit (Janequin)
27 Le chant des oiseaux (Janequin)
28 De mon triste desplaisir (Richafort)
29 Vignon vignetta (Sermisy)

2.3.4 Italian Madrigals

30 Quanta beltà (Arcadelt)
31 Quando' il penso al martire (Arcadelt)

Four intabulations attributed to Francesco by Vincenzo Galilei, *Il Fronimo* (Venice, 1568/1584).

3. Printed Sources (giving first appearance of fantasias and intabulations)

*Numbering of dates below follows Howard Mayer Brown, *Instrumental Music Printed Before 1600* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965)

1542₄: *Intabolatura da Leuto del Divino Francisco da Milano...* (n.p.).

1536₃: *Intabolatura di liuto de diversi... di M. Francesco da Milano* (Venice: Marcolini)

1536: *Intavolatura de viola o vero Lauto... Libro Primo della Fortuna e Libro Secondo* (Naples: Sultzbach) [not listed by Brown]; facsimile rpt/ Geneva: Minkoff, 19

1536₉: Giovanni Antonio Casteliono, *Intabolatura de Leuto de diversi autori...* (Milan: Casteliono)

1546₆: *Intabolatura de lauto di Francesco da Milano* (Venice: Gardane)

1546₂₀: *Carminum pro testitudine, Liber III* (Louvain: Phalèse)

1547₂: *Intabolatura de lauto di M. Francesco Milanese et M. Perino Fiorentino* (Venice: Gardane)

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1548₃: *Intavolatura di lauto del divino Francesco da Milano et dell' eccellente Pietro Paulo Borrono* (Milan: Castellionno)

1548₄: *Intabolutura de lautto libro settimo... del Divino M. Francesco da Milano* (Venice: Scotto)

1563₇: *Intavolature di lauto di Vincenzo Galilei Fiorentino* (Rome: Dorico)

4. Manuscripts containing unique works :

B – Br II 275

GB – Cu Dd.2.11

I - CFVd s.s.

I – Fn Magl. XIX 168

NL - Dhgm 28.B.39

D – Mbs Mus. Ms. 266

5. Bibliography:

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Otto Gombosi, "A la recherche de la forme dans la musique de la Renaissance: Francesco da Milano," in *La musique instrumentale de la renaissance*, ed. J. Jacquot (Paris: CNRS, 1955), 165-76.

H. Colin Slim, "Francesco da Milano (1497-1543/44): A bio-bibliographical study," *Musica Disciplina* 18 (1964), 63-84 and *Musica Disciplina* 19 (1965), 109-28.

Yves Giraud, "Deux livres de tablature inconnus de Francesco da Milano," *Revue de musicologie* 55 (1969), 217-19.

James McWhorter Meadors Jr., "Italian Lute Fantasias and Ricercars Printed in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1984).

Arthur J. Ness, "The Herwarth Lute Manuscripts at the Bavarian State Library" (PhD. diss. New York University, 1984).

Arthur J. Ness, "The Siena Lute Book and its Arrangements of Vocal and Instrumental Part Music," in *Proceedings of the International Lute Symposium: Utrecht 1986* (Utrecht: Stimu, 1986), 30-49.

Stefano Mengozzi, "'Is this Fantasy a Parody': Vocal Models in the Free Compositions of Francesco da Milano," *Journal of the Lute Society of America* 23 (1990), 7-17.

Franco Pavan, "Francesco Canova and his Family in Milan: New Documents," *Journal of the Lute Society of America* 24 (1991), 1-14.

Philippe Canguilhem, "Les deux éditions de 'Fronimo' (1568 et 1584) et la place du luth dans la pensée musicale de Vincenzo Galilei (PhD diss., Université de Tours, 1994).

Franco Pavan, "*Ex paupertate evasit*: Francesco da Milano et sa famille," in *Le Concert des voix et des instruments à la Renaissance*, ed. J.-M. Vaccaro (Paris: CNRS 1995), 361-70.

Victor Coelho, "The Reputation of Francesco da Milano (1497-1543) and the Ricercars in the Cavalcanti Lute Book," *Revue Belge de Musicologie* 50 (1996): 49-72.

F. Rossi, "Pacolini da Borgotaro *versus* Pacalone da Padova: Francesco da Milano nell' antologia di Castelfranco Veneto," in *Trent'anni di ricerca musicologica: studi in onore di F. Alberto Gallo*, ed. P. Dalla Vacchia & D. Restani (Rome, 1996) 167-96.

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Jane A. Bernstein, *Music Printing in Renaissance Venice: The Scotto Press (1539-1572)* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

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Franco Pavan, ed. *Francesco da Milano: Intabolutura da leuto* [facsimile] (Bologna: Forni, 2000)

7 Victor Coelho, "Francesco da Milano," in *Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*. Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1999-), English translation

Franco Pavan, "Francesco (Canova) da Milano," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd edition, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: MacMillan, 2001), 9: 166-68.

Victor Coelho, "Papal Tastes and Musical Genres: Francesco da Milano 'Il Divino' (1497-1543), and the Clementine Aesthetic," in *The Pontificate of Clement VII—History, Politics, Culture*, ed. K. Gouwens and S. Reiss (Aldershot, 2005), 277-92.