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THE DEVELOPMENT AND MATURATION OF  
BRASS MUSIC IN RENAISSANCE ITALY, ca. 1400-1600

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## ABSTRACT

All areas of the arts flourished during the Renaissance, yet none underwent quite as dramatic a change as secular instrumental music. The music of brass instruments in particular grew in utility, demand, and complexity over a trajectory spanning 200 years. Vocal music dominated both the sacred and secular arenas from antiquity through the medieval period, but by the late 1300s instrumental music began to gradually gain in importance. This paper investigates the steady growth that brass music underwent from ca. 1400 to 1600, specifically within the realm of Italian secular music, and culminating with the printed instrumentation of brass instruments found in later sacred music.

The civic instrumental ensembles of Florence were the first such bands in Italy, and had the greatest effect on brass music of the Renaissance. The *trombadori*, *trombetti*, and *pifferi* originated as simple bands of civic musicians, whose musical output contained little to no artistic emphasis. Over time the *pifferi*, a shawm and trombone ensemble, grew into one of the most progressive and influential ensembles of the Renaissance. While the *trombadori* and *trombetti*, both all-trumpet ensembles, remained largely static in form and function during this period, the *pifferi* underwent numerous changes in size, instrumentation, repertoire, salary, exposure, and demand. The Florentine *pifferi* likely inspired the creation of *pifferi* ensembles in city-states across Italy.

Factors that influenced the development of the *pifferi* include the civic bands of Renaissance Germany, and the sophistication of the trombone as a musical instrument. Many German towns had established shawm and trombone ensembles prior to the formation of the Florentine *pifferi*. The Florentine ensemble's creation was likely a response to these

contemporary German ensembles. The Florentine *pifferi*, however, reached a level of artistic sophistication that no German ensemble of the day could match.

The trombone emerged as an instrument due to the limitations of the slide trumpet, which in turn was a response to the restrictions of the natural trumpet. Around 1350, instrument makers, likely in Germany, added a telescopic slide to the natural trumpet, creating a way for performers to alter the length of the instrument during performance. During the next 100 years, this slide evolved into the double “U” shaped slide characteristic of the modern trombone. As instrument making grew more refined, trombones appeared more frequently in *pifferi* ensembles, until by 1524 the trombone was the dominant instrument in the *pifferi*.

The *pifferi*’s repertory consisted largely of dance music and instrumental arrangements of vocal works. The sacred motet served as the primary resource from which these vocal works were drawn. However, many crossovers between sacred and secular music took place in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, involving not just the music of the *pifferi* ensemble, but the instruments and musicians as well. All of these factors contributed, either directly or indirectly, to the publication of Giovanni Gabrieli’s *Sacrae Symphoniae* in Venice in 1597: the first piece in history to specify an ensemble instrumentation of brass instruments.

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## INTRODUCTION

Instrumentation is an element of music often taken for granted in the twenty-first century, yet the concept of notated instrumentation in a piece of music was a foreign one to the musicians and composers of the Renaissance. Secular musical activity prior to the fifteenth century was based in an oral tradition where even notated music was scarce. In ca. 1400, however, that began to change. While all areas of the arts matured and flourished during the Renaissance, none underwent quite as dramatic a change as secular instrumental music. The music of brass instruments in particular grew in utility, demand, complexity, and prestige over a trajectory spanning 200 years. Vocal music dominated both the sacred and secular arenas from antiquity through the medieval period, but by the late 1300s instrumental music began to gradually gain in importance. From ca. 1400 to 1600, secular brass music underwent a metamorphosis from its innocuous beginnings as a tool of daily life into a grand art form on par with the greatest Masses and motets of the Renaissance. This progress culminated in the printed instrumentation found in Giovanni Gabrieli's *Sacrae Symphoniae* of 1597. The canzonas in Gabrieli's collection contain the first recorded instances of ensemble instrumentation—a ubiquitous element of music today, but something unheard of in the late sixteenth century. Perhaps what is most significant, however, is that the instrumentation is of brass instruments.

Brass instrumental music can be traced back to the secular ensembles in the employ of cities across Europe in the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries. The civic instrumental ensembles of Florence were the first such bands in Italy, and had the greatest effect on brass music of the Renaissance. The *trombadori*, *trombetti*, and *pifferi* originated as simple bands of civic musicians, whose musical output contained little to no artistic emphasis. Over time the *pifferi*, a shawm and trombone ensemble, grew into one of the most progressive and influential

ensembles of the Renaissance. While the *trombadori* and *trombetti*, both all-trumpet ensembles, remained largely static in form and function during this period, the *pifferi* underwent numerous changes in size, instrumentation, repertoire, salary, exposure, and demand. The Florentine *pifferi* inspired the creation of *pifferi* ensembles in city-states across Italy, including in Venice in the mid-fifteenth century. This undoubtedly had a further effect on sacred music in Venice, as that is where Gabrieli's collection of canzonas and sonatas was first published in 1597.

Factors that influenced the development of the *pifferi* in Italy—first in Florence, and then elsewhere—include the civic bands of Renaissance Germany and Flanders, and the sophistication of the trombone as a musical instrument. Many German towns had established shawm and trombone ensembles prior to the formation of the Florentine *pifferi*. The Florentine ensemble's creation was likely a response to these contemporary German ensembles. The Florentine *pifferi*, however, reached a level of artistic sophistication that no German ensemble of the day could match.

The trombone emerged as an instrument due to the limitations of the slide trumpet, which in turn was a response to the restrictions of the natural trumpet. Around 1350, instrument makers, likely in Germany, added a telescopic slide to the natural trumpet, creating a way for performers to alter the length of the instrument during performance. During the next 100 years, this slide evolved into the double “U” shaped slide characteristic of the modern trombone. As instrument making grew more refined, trombones appeared more frequently in *pifferi* ensembles, until by 1524 the trombone was the dominant instrument in the *pifferi*; that year the Florentine *pifferi* consisted of three trombones and two shawms.

Part of the repertoire of the *pifferi* ensembles consisted of instrumental arrangements of vocal works. As the human voice is capable of singing all the notes of the chromatic scale, it was

likewise necessary for the instruments of the *pifferi* to have access to all the notes of the chromatic scale as well—which the trombones and shawms of these ensembles were able to do. These vocal works could be drawn from secular songs, but largely they were drawn from the sacred motet repertory. Numerous crossovers between the secular *pifferi* ensembles and the sacred music arena took place during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, involving the music, the instruments, and the musicians themselves. The *Sacrae Symphoniae* represents the final, lasting product of these intersections.

The other large part of *pifferi* repertoire, improvised dance music, also played a large role in the maturation of the *pifferi* ensemble. The dance music repertory acts as one connecting factor among the numerous civic wind bands across all of Europe that flourished between ca. 1400 and 1600. This paper will first examine the civic bands of Florence and the rest of Italy before moving on to a discussion of the external factors that influenced the development of these Italian ensembles, specifically the German/Flemish influence and the growth of the trombone. After an analysis of the *pifferi*'s repertoire, this paper will conclude with a dissection of the ways in which the increasing prestige of the *pifferi* ensemble resonated within the realm of sacred music, leading ultimately to the first instance of specified ensemble instrumentation in 1597 at the hands of Giovanni Gabrieli.

## CHAPTER 1: The *Pifferi* Ensemble in Florence and Across Italy

The city of Florence stood at the epicenter of many cultural turning points of the Renaissance. All areas of the arts—music, dance, art, architecture, and theater, to name just a few—saw numerous advancements at the hands of the creative, ambitious, and proud Florentines living at the time. The development of the civic instrumental ensembles of Florence typifies the progressive motion of all the arts at this time. The *trombadori*, the *trombetti*, and the *pifferi* were the three civic instrumental ensembles of Renaissance Florence. All were active from the late fourteenth century through the sixteenth century, although the *trombadori* ensemble was in fact founded much earlier. The *trombadori* and the *trombetti* were trumpet ensembles, while the *pifferi* began as an all-shawm ensemble that later evolved to include trombones as well. All three ensembles flourished throughout the Renaissance, but it was the *pifferi*, in particular, who grew from a simple band of functional musicians into the musical ambassadors of one of the greatest cultural centers of the Renaissance. According to Nesta De Robeck, “no time or surroundings could well have been more favourable to the development of secular music than the court of Florence during this period.”<sup>1</sup> The advancements in secular instrumental music brought on by the *pifferi* had a lasting impact that resounded across Italy, and echoed well into the late sixteenth century.

### The Three Civic Wind Ensembles of Florence

The *trombadori* were the first of the three civic wind ensembles of Florence to be formed. References to the *trombadori* appear in official public documents from as early as 1292. These documents list the personnel of the *trombadori* as: six trumpet players, one drummer, and one

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<sup>1</sup> Nesta De Robeck, *Music of the Italian Renaissance* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1969), 64.

*cenamella* player.<sup>2</sup> Their duties as civic employees included performing in public ceremonies—such as to announce the arrival of important foreign dignitaries, or the passage of new laws—and serving with the military.<sup>3</sup> A document from 1295 cites the *trombadori* as fulfilling their “usual duties and obligations,” so it is possible they were in existence for a while prior to 1292.<sup>4</sup> They may have been asked to perform at a public event for the purposes of entertainment once in a while, but their primary reasons for providing music were almost universally utilitarian.

Whatever the occasion, the music performed by the *trombadori* always had a functional purpose. The *trombadori* did not play music for the sake of music. Rather, everything they played served some social, political, or militaristic function.<sup>5</sup> The fanfares they performed at jousts or tournaments, the announcement of new laws, and the arrival of foreign nobles all served as indicators to the public that something of considerable importance was about to take place. When the *trombadori* served with the military they were required to play signals that transmitted orders from one camp of soldiers to another. In no case did the *trombadori* ever perform in what might be considered today to be a concert setting. Even if they were instructed to play a dance at a public festival, it was a perfunctory responsibility only. Their reasons for providing music were always functional, woven into the fabric of daily life, and the music itself was likewise bland and utilitarian in nature.

By the late 1300s, Florentines began to put a greater emphasis on pomp and ceremony.<sup>6</sup> According to Timothy McGee, “as the city became increasingly conscious of public ceremony, the need for musical ensembles grew,” to a point where one ensemble was no longer enough to

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<sup>2</sup> Timothy J. McGee, “In the Service of the Commune: The Changing Role of Florentine Civic Musicians, 1450-1532,” *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 30, 3 (Autumn 1999): 728.

<sup>3</sup> Keith Polk, “Civic Patronage and Instrumental Ensembles in Renaissance Florence,” in *Augsburger Jahrbuch für Musikwissenschaft*, (Tutzing, Germany; Schneider, 1986): 53.

<sup>4</sup> McGee, “In the Service,” 729.

<sup>5</sup> Timothy J. McGee, *The Ceremonial Musicians of Late Medieval Florence* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2009), 51.

<sup>6</sup> McGee, “In the Service,” 729.

cover all public functions.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, in 1386 the *Signoria* of Florence approved the formation of two more civic ensembles: the *trombetti* and the *pifferi*. The *trombetti* was an ensemble of all trumpets, while the *pifferi* initially consisted of two shawms and a bagpipe.<sup>8</sup> The *trombetti* was created to supplement the *trombadori* in their functional duties of performing for public announcements, important arrivals, and militaristic proceedings. The *pifferi* was created, initially, to complement the *trombadori*'s performances at their ever-increasing number of entertainment-related functions. The *pifferi*'s formation marked the beginning of the growing importance of music for the sake of music—what might be called entertainment, or art music—and set the civic wind band on a long, steady path to artistic acceptance.

From this civic ensemble expansion in 1386 until the fall of the republic in 1532, the *trombadori* and the *trombetti* remained static in both instrumentation and responsibility. *Trombetti* membership varied in number—from two trumpets at its inception up to as many as seven—but never deviated from being an all-trumpet ensemble. *Pifferi* membership, however, changed significantly over the years in both size and instrumentation. By 1400, the bagpipe had already been replaced by a third shawm, allowing for a more homogenous ensemble sound.<sup>9</sup> In 1437, a fourth shawm joined the ensemble—likely a tenor shawm, which was called a bombard.<sup>10</sup> And six years later in 1443, one of the three shawms was replaced by a trombone, turning the ensemble into a quartet of two shawms, bombard, and trombone.<sup>11</sup>

The next official change to the *pifferi*'s instrumentation occurred in 1514 with the addition of a second trombone player, turning the group into a quintet. In the intervening years, however, from 1443 to 1514, a fifth or even sixth player did join the ensemble temporarily for

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<sup>7</sup> Timothy J. McGee, "Giovanni Cellini, *Piffero* of Florence," *Historic Brass Society Journal* 12 (2000): 210.

<sup>8</sup> McGee, "In the Service," 730, and McGee, *Ceremonial Musicians*, 131-32.

<sup>9</sup> McGee, *Ceremonial Musicians*, 161.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 148.

<sup>11</sup> Polk, "Civic Patronage," 59.

exceptionally important civic occasions. In 1531, the year before the fall of the Florentine republic, a third trombone replaced the bombard, setting the final make-up of the *pifferi* at two shawms and three trombones. The increasing role of the trombone in the *pifferi* is directly related to the early history of the trombone and will be discussed further in Chapter 2.

The duties of the *pifferi*, at its founding in 1386, included performing at the Mensa of the *Signoria*, at occasional religious functions at the church of Orsanmichele, and in the public square for feast days and other ceremonial occasions.<sup>12</sup> These public ceremonial occasions included dances, banquets, and processions, especially in conjunction with the visits of important foreign nobles. Their duties at Orsanmichele included special church celebrations such as “the vigil of the feast of the Blessed Virgin, Easter, and whenever the image of the Mother of God was exhibited, as for example when the *tavola* of Santa Maria del Impruneta was paraded through the streets in times of crisis.”<sup>13</sup> Their most important job, however, was performing at the Mensa.

The Mensa, where the *Signoria* ate its meals, was, at the end of the fourteenth century, a private, closed-door affair; only members of the *Signoria*, the servants who brought them their food, and the musicians were allowed in.<sup>14</sup> Those citizens elected to the *Signoria* served rather short terms of two months in length.<sup>15</sup> Thus, over the years, a great number of important and influential Florentine citizens served on the council, and had the opportunity to be serenaded by the *pifferi* twice a day for the duration of their terms. As time went on, the *Signoria* began to invite other nobles and citizens of Florence not currently on the council to dine with them at the

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<sup>12</sup> McGee, “In the Service,” 730.

<sup>13</sup> McGee, *Ceremonial Musicians*, 133.

<sup>14</sup> Timothy J. McGee, “Dinner Music for the Florentine Signoria, 1350-1450,” *Speculum* 74, 1 (1999): 95-96.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 145.

Mensa. Foreign nobles and visiting dignitaries eventually earned invitations as well.<sup>16</sup> This allowed more and more people to hear the music performed by the *pifferi*, which likewise contributed to the spread of the *pifferi*'s reputation.

The *pifferi*'s repertory at this early stage deserves a quick mention here. At this point in music history, secular music was rarely written down, so there is no concrete evidence that shows exactly what these musicians performed on a daily basis. Contemporary documents—pay records, personal diaries, etc.—can shed some light on the subject, but a large part of what we deign to know about secular Renaissance wind music is, of necessity, conjecture. It is likely that their repertory included the tenors of popular dance styles at the time, including the *saltarello*, *ballo*, and *bassadanza*, which could be performed either monophonically or with improvisatory elaborations.<sup>17</sup> A surviving document of 1459 describes a ball attended by an anonymous author where he heard the Florentine *pifferi* perform such dances; the author even identifies a few dance tenors by name.<sup>18</sup> A more in-depth look at specific musical examples of secular wind instrumental music will occur in Chapter 3.

The gradual transparency of the Mensa, and the subsequent increased exposure of the *pifferi*, can likely be related to the so-called “myth of Florence” that resided in Florentine public consciousness at the time. According to Donald Weinstein, “to the citizens of Florence their city was a living creature with a destiny shaped by God. Divine Providence had attended her birth and continued to guide her throughout her history.”<sup>19</sup> Florence was not a typical Italian city, but a society deliberately created for a higher purpose, with all the privileges and responsibilities such an entity contains. The *Chronica de origine civitatis*, an anonymous history of Florence dating

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<sup>16</sup> McGee, *Ceremonial Musicians*, 134.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 149 and 213.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 213.

<sup>19</sup> Donald Weinstein, *Savonarola and Florence: Prophecy and Patriotism in the Renaissance* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1970), 34.

from the thirteenth century, claimed that the city was originally founded by the Romans, and thus had a special duty to the world as the “daughter of Rome” and its once great empire.<sup>20</sup> It is the interplay between Florence’s two histories, sacred and secular that, according to Weinstein, makes up the myth of Florence.<sup>21</sup> Florentines felt that they had a political, social, and religious obligation to set an example for which other Italian cities could aspire. This sentiment fueled the city’s increasing demand for public ceremony and entertainment—a demand that the *pifferi* were eager to satisfy. The Statute of 1415 identified the *pifferi* as a musical extension of the *Signoria*, and therefore as a symbol of political power and influence.<sup>22</sup> The opening up of the Mensa gave the *Signoria* a new way to impress the nobility, both domestic and foreign: with their talented musicians.

The expansion of the Mensa audience was not the only change in the *pifferi*’s duties during this time; the number and type of functions at which they performed evolved as well. While their performing duties always included public ceremonies, religious functions at Orsanmichele, and mealtimes twice a day at the Mensa, by the later part of the fifteenth century the *pifferi* had begun receiving invitations to perform privately as well, both within Florence and abroad. Civic documents dating from the latter half of the fifteenth century contain many requests of the *Signoria* to loan out their civic musicians for private events at the homes of various influential families of the city.<sup>23</sup> All three of the Florentine civic ensembles, in fact, received requests “to perform at feasts outside the city of Florence and in diverse lands and places,” as well as at home in Florence.<sup>24</sup> The requests grew so great in number—for the *pifferi* most of all—that the city of Florence had to pass another law requiring express permission of the

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 36-7.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 36.

<sup>22</sup> McGee, “In the Service,” 730.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 742.

<sup>24</sup> McGee, *Ceremonial Musicians*, 168.

*Signoria* before any civic ensemble could leave the boundaries of the city for performance purposes.

The difference between functional, utilitarian music and entertainment music crystallized during this period with the evolution of the *pifferi* and the constancy of the *trombadori* and *trombetti*. The major difference between the private invitations each group received is that the *trombadori* and *trombetti* were often asked to travel for the purposes of fanfares, jousts, or various militaristic functions, while the *pifferi* traveled in order to perform entertainment music at foreign courts and festivals. The repertoire performed by these ensembles also demonstrates this divide between functional music that assisted in everyday life and art music that entertained the hearts and minds of Florentine citizens. The six trumpeters of the *trombadori* would often perform in unison, or perhaps in canon, but the intricacy of the music ended there; little of what they played was considered entertainment, or “art” music. According to Keith Polk, “it seems clear that their [the *trombadori*’s] function was more often ritualistic rather than musical. This [function]...was retained in communal subsidies until the fall of the Republic in 1532.”<sup>25</sup> Their origins seem to lie in the signal trumpets carried by the city watch—medieval watchmen kept trumpets in their guard towers and would use them to sound warning signals to alert the town of danger. Over time, these civic employees sometimes formed musical ensembles, especially in German and Flemish cities north of Florence.<sup>26</sup> The German influence on the Florentine civic ensembles will be examined in greater detail in Chapter 2, however, it is clear that the *trombadori*’s civic role never strayed far beyond that of a practical ensemble of musicians, and thus the music they played never needed elaboration. The *trombetti*, being made up of all natural

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<sup>25</sup> Polk, “Civic Patronage,” 53-54.

<sup>26</sup> Keith Polk, *German Instrumental Music of the Late Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 111.

trumpets, had a similar handicap regarding both repertory and use, and is not discussed at length here.

The *pifferi*, by contrast, always consisted of instruments capable of playing all the notes of the chromatic scale. As the northern polyphonic tradition infiltrated Italy, the *pifferi*'s repertory adapted to accommodate this new instrumental fascination. Polyphony was already in vogue in sacred vocal music at the time, owing greatly to the composers of the Burgundian tradition. The *pifferi*'s expansion of 1443 to a shawm-shawm-bombard-trombone instrumentation lent itself well to an instrumental adaptation of music; the two shawms, in the treble register, could mimic the soprano and alto vocal parts, while the bombard could act as the tenor, and the trombone could fill in for the bass. Both of these elements—the instrumental expansion from an all-reed ensemble to three reeds and one brass instrument, plus the pervasive northern polyphonic influence—coincided with the firing of all the incumbent *pifferi* members and the hiring of four brand new foreigners into the *pifferi*.<sup>27</sup> The desire for this new musical trend brought with it a desire for musicians already experienced at polyphony—specifically, Germans. In fact, the city of Florence passed a statute just two years later in 1445 decreeing that, from that point on, all members of the *pifferi* were required to be foreigners.<sup>28</sup> The *pifferi* did not read music when performing, however, though they may have used vocal scores as a guide; primarily, they improvised.

By 1475, civic instrumental musicians had settled on three basic approaches to performance: play a piece as written, add embellishments, or improvise.<sup>29</sup> Most often, the trombone in the *pifferi* would play an exact or slightly embellished tenor, while the shawms

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<sup>27</sup> McGee, *Ceremonial Musicians*, 162.

<sup>28</sup> Polk, "Civic Patronage," 59.

<sup>29</sup> Keith Polk, "Instrumentalists and Performance Practices in Dance Music, c.1500," in *Improvisation in the Arts of the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. by Timothy J. McGee (Kalamazoo, MI: Western Michigan University Press, 2003): 98.

improvised counterpoint above, and the bombard improvised slower counterpoint below. Sometimes, however, the bombard and trombone would switch roles, since both instruments could cover the same tessitura. Shawmists in the *pifferi* frequently took turns improvising rather than play at the same time, so often as the *pifferi* performed the aural effect was that of a trio. Various iconographic sources seem to confirm this three-part performance practice within the four-member *pifferi* ensemble.<sup>30</sup>

As the idea of imitative counterpoint continued to take hold after 1500, the make-up of *pifferi* performances shifted. Gradually, the borrowed tune, which had been played by the bombard or the trombone, moved to the shawms as a soprano voice.<sup>31</sup> In conjunction with the upper voice's new prominence, the bass likewise gained in importance. A repeated bass line in either the trombone or the bombard replaced the prior repeated tenor line, and the inner voices—of a now more common four-voice texture—took over the primary contrapuntal improvisation duties. Specific musical examples will be discussed more in-depth in Chapter 3.

The dramatic sophistication of the *pifferi*'s repertoire in comparison to the other civic instrumental ensembles of Florence is reflected in the pay scales of each ensemble throughout the fifteenth century. At the start of the century, the salaries of the three ensembles were roughly equal to one another. Members of the *trombadori*, as the oldest and most established ensemble at the time, each took home 5 florins per month, while members of the newly formed *trombetti* and *pifferi* each earned 3 florins per month.<sup>32</sup> By the end of the century, the *trombadori* still commanded a pay of 5 florins per month, while the members of the *trombetti* had along the way earned a slight raise to 4 florins per month. The salary of the *pifferi*, however, increased greatly, coinciding with the ensemble's expanding instrumentation, more complex repertoire, and

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<sup>30</sup> McGee, *Ceremonial Musicians*, 213.

<sup>31</sup> Polk, "Performance Practices," 102.

<sup>32</sup> McGee, "In the Service," 731.

increased visibility both within Florence and abroad. Their pay rose steadily to 11 florins per month by century's end, with an extra 8 florins each month going exclusively to the trombone player.<sup>33</sup> The *pifferi*'s civic role had thus altered considerably from that of a small group hired to play dinner music at the Mensa into that of a prominent cultural and political icon that intimated the very pride and wealth of Florence.

### **The *Pifferi* Template Elsewhere in Italy**

The changes to the *pifferi*'s function, repertoire, salary, and instrumentation—especially in relation to the trombone—all combined to make the *pifferi* the leading instrumental ensemble of the city of Florence. Their presence at the Mensa led to countless invitations from private nobles, both in and out of Florence, requesting their presence for evenings of secular music and dancing. As the *pifferi* traveled further and further from Florence for just such occasions, their reputation and talent inspired other Italian city-states to follow suit. Civic pride, and a desire not to be outdone, motivated cities such as Siena, Bergamo, Venice, Ferrara, and Rome to establish their own *pifferi*, modeled after the Florentine ensemble.

Siena established its *pifferi* in 1408, the first city after Florence to do so. The relative closeness of these founding dates, 1386 and 1408, is most likely due to Siena's close proximity to Florence and to the two cities' cultural and political ties. The Sienese ensemble originally consisted of three shawms, the same as the Florentine ensemble's instrumentation of that year.<sup>34</sup> By the mid-fifteenth century, the instrumentation had changed to two shawms, a bombard, and a

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Frank D'Accone, *The Civic Muse: Music and Musicians in Siena During the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 443.

trombone, again following the standard set by the Florentines.<sup>35</sup> According to an official city document of 1408, the Sienese *pifferi* was created “for the honor of the entire city,”<sup>36</sup> which reinforces the image of the *pifferi* as a cultural symbol of a city and as a mark of prestige. The salaries of the Sienese ensemble also reflect a comparable pay scale to that of the Florentine civic ensembles. Frank D’Accone writes:

From their very beginnings in Siena the members of the wind band [*pifferi*] were given higher stipends than the trumpeters, who indeed suffered salary cuts so that there would be sufficient funds to pay the newcomers. The disparity in salaries remained constant throughout the rest of the century.<sup>37</sup>

This is also reflective of how the importance of trumpet ensembles—functional, utilitarian—steadily decreased as cities placed a greater and greater emphasis on the entertaining dance music of *pifferi* ensembles.

Bergamo, being geographically quite far from Florence, did not establish a *pifferi* ensemble of its own until 1491.<sup>38</sup> Curiously, the effect of the Florentine ensemble on Bergamo seems to be negligible at best. The *pifferi* represented Bergamo’s first attempt at an art music ensemble, though their salary—less than half its trumpet ensemble, the *tubatori*—belies any of the importance associated with other Italian *pifferi* of the time.<sup>39</sup>

The Venetian *pifferi*, by contrast, was a much more typical ensemble in the mold of the Florentine paradigm. The Venetian statute authorizing the creation of a *pifferi* in 1458 reads:

[I]t is to the advantage of the dignity of such a state always to have well-equipped, sufficient, and good trumpet, trombone, and *piffaro* players,

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<sup>35</sup> Jeffrey Kurtzman and Linda Maria Koldau, “*Trombe, Trombe d'argento, Trombe squarciate, Tromboni, and Pifferi in Venetian Processions and Ceremonies of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*,” *Journal of Seventeenth-Century Music* 8, 1 (2002), accessed December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2011, <http://sscm-jscm.press.illinois.edu/v8/no1/kurtzman.html>, 4.3.

<sup>36</sup> D’Accone, *The Civic Muse*, 516.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 534.

<sup>38</sup> Gary Towne, “*Tubatori e Piffari: Civic Wind Players in Medieval and Renaissance Bergamo*,” *Historic Brass Society Journal* 9 (1997): 177.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 180.

who at all times and in every case are at the command of the most illustrious Prince and most excellent *Signoria*, just as all the lords, *Signorie*, and communities of the world have, even those subject and submissive to us, and especially for the upcoming celebrations.<sup>40</sup>

This Venetian document is valuable because it explicitly refers to “well-equipped, sufficient, and good” musicians “just as all the...communities of the world have,” which can no doubt be a reference to the Florentine and Sienese ensembles already well in existence by 1458. The instrumentation chosen for the Venetian *pifferi* was actually slightly ahead of its Italian counterparts: three shawms and two trombones.<sup>41</sup> The Florentine ensemble, for example, occasionally employed a fifth member, but did not add a permanent fifth member until the early sixteenth century. The Venetian *pifferi*, in addition to their secular responsibilities modeled after the Florentine ensemble, were also at the command of the Doge of Venice, and as such likely had more sacred duties to attend to than other Italian *pifferi*.<sup>42</sup> The Venetian ensemble takes on particular importance in the late sixteenth century, and will be discussed further in Chapter 3.

Although Ferrarese court culture was centered around secular vocal music—especially the *frottola* while under the patronage of Lucrezia Borgia around the turn of the sixteenth century—some of the court musicians also performed in the Ferrarese *pifferi*.<sup>43</sup> Ferrara had an established *pifferi* sometime in the early fifteenth century, made up of shawms and, at an unspecified point after 1452, trombones also.<sup>44</sup> Furthermore, pay records from 1488-91 show the

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<sup>40</sup> Rodolfo Baroncini, “Zorzi Trombetta da Modon and the Founding of the Band of ‘Piffari’ and Tromboni’ of the ‘Serenissima,’” *Historic Brass Society Journal* 16 (2004): 3.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>42</sup> Rodolfo Baroncini, “Zorzi Trombetta and the Band of ‘Piffari’ and Trombones of the ‘Serenissima,’ New Documentary Evidence,” *Historic Brass Society Journal* 14 (2002): 68.

<sup>43</sup> William F. Prizer, “Isabelle d’Este and Lucrezia Borgia as Patrons of Music: The Frottola at Mantua and Ferrara,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 38, 1 (Spring 1985): 30.

<sup>44</sup> Kurtzman and Koldau, “Venetian Processions,” 5.11.

*pifferi* members earning twice as much as the singers employed by the court, and, in some cases, three times as much.<sup>45</sup>

Continuing the mealtime tradition established by the Florentine *pifferi*, the Ferrarese *pifferi* also performed on occasion at private banquets held by the duke. A cookbook written by a steward to the Este family of Ferrara describes in detail three banquets—two in 1529, one in 1532—at which a different form of entertainment accompanied each course: either vocal music, instrumental music, actors, tumblers, jugglers, entertainers, or any combination thereof. The banquet of May 20, 1529 included seventeen courses, and featured performances by a shawm ensemble at the ninth and fourteenth courses, and as a finale.<sup>46</sup> By this point the *pifferi* ensemble of shawms and trombones had become a standard dance music ensemble, and it is highly likely that one or more trombones accompanied these courses as well.<sup>47</sup> In fact, during the ninth course, all the guests got up as they assumed the appearance of shawms indicated the meal was over and the dancing was about to begin.<sup>48</sup> Trombones certainly were a part of the Ferrarese banquets of 1529 and 1532, as they are listed as performing with cornetti during various courses of all three banquets.<sup>49</sup>

The Roman *pifferi* ensemble went through several interesting changes of its own, albeit later on than the Florentine ensemble. In 1525, The Roman *pifferi* consisted of the common instrumentation of two shawms, bombard, and trombone, but by the turn of the seventeenth century this had altered to become a sextet of four trombones and two cornetti.<sup>50</sup> This expanded further in 1660 to five trombones and four cornetti, and shifted to six trombones and three

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Howard Mayer Brown, “A Cook’s Tour of Ferrara in 1529,” *Rivista Italiana di Musicologia* 10 (1975): 238-9.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 232.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 238.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 233.

<sup>50</sup> Kurtzman and Koldau, “Venetian Processions,” 5.3.

cornetti by 1676.<sup>51</sup> Other factors beyond the Florentine *pifferi* clearly impacted the changes to the Roman *pifferi* in the seventeenth century, but its genesis was undoubtedly Florentine. The duties of the Roman ensemble were remarkably similar to those of the Florentine *pifferi*: performing during meals of the Prior, occasional religious functions, and providing public dance music on feast days.<sup>52</sup>

The citizens of Florence have never been what one might call humble. Part of an inscription on the walls of the public government building, dating from 1255, reads: “Florence is full of riches; her rule brings happiness to Tuscany; she will be eternally triumphant over her enemies; she reigns over the world.”<sup>53</sup> Florentines have viewed their city ever since as an economic, military, social, political, and cultural powerhouse. In the Renaissance, their self-granted status as one of the superior cities of the world left them with a need to, essentially, prove it. To keep their place among the other European cities and their increasing indulgences, Florence needed a “versatile musical ensemble of a very high quality.”<sup>54</sup> The *pifferi* filled that void. The changes to the *pifferi*’s size, instrumentation, duties, salary, and repertory all indicate the remarkable, lasting importance that this ensemble accrued throughout the fifteenth century. The other civic instrumental ensembles of Florence, the *trombadori* and the *trombetti*, served as vital measuring sticks in the early days of the *pifferi*, and their steadfastness as the *pifferi* soared to ever greater heights was an essential stepping stone along the way. The *pifferi*’s cultural status and influence radiated out from Florence across the entirety of the Italian peninsula, and affected instrumental music greatly in the decades to come.

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Weinstein, *Savonarola*, 37.

<sup>54</sup> McGee, “In the Service,” 743.

## CHAPTER 2: External Influences on the *Pifferi* Ensemble

There were many factors that contributed to the formation and evolution of the *pifferi* ensembles of Florence and other Italian city-states, but perhaps the two most important were the influence of the wind bands and musicians of Germany and Flanders, and developments in the materials, design, and construction of the trombone. Urban centers in the regions of Germany and Flanders had wind bands on their civic payrolls decades before the Italians did. These bands performed at the same types of public occasions—including banquets, processions, and dances—as the Florentine *pifferi* later performed at as well. German town band instrumentation likewise expanded from three to four players, settling as a quartet of two shawms, bombard, and trombone—or from time to time as two shawms and two trombones—by the early fifteenth century, earlier than the similar expansion of the Italian bands.<sup>55</sup> The talent level of German musicians was also universally desired throughout Europe, in Italy and elsewhere during the fifteenth century, especially when it came to German trombonists. Although the Florentine *pifferi* brought the shawm and trombone ensemble to an unparalleled level of sophistication, the *oltremontani*—people north of the Alps—were a vital part of that process.

Looking at the trombone specifically, Keith Polk states “almost all the sources which refer to the trombone in the early fifteenth century make it clear that its early history was inseparably bound with the development of the shawm band.”<sup>56</sup> The most significant moment of change for the Florentine *pifferi* occurred with the addition of a trombone player in 1443. The technical superiority of the trombone compared to the slide trumpet allowed the *pifferi* ensemble to continually adapt and expand its repertory to suit the needs of its audience. As the prestige of

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<sup>55</sup> Keith Polk, “Instrumental Music in the Urban Centres of Renaissance Germany,” *Early Music History* 7 (1987): 180, and David Whitwell, *The History and Literature of the Wind Band and Wind Ensemble Volume 1: The Wind Band and Wind Ensemble Before 1500* (Northridge, CA: Winds, 1982), 114.

<sup>56</sup> Polk, “Urban Centres,” 169-70.

the *pifferi* grew into the sixteenth century, so too did the presence of the trombone within the *pifferi*'s instrumentation. The codependency of the trombone and the *pifferi* is an essential part of the historical development of Renaissance brass music.

Before going further, a distinction ought to be made regarding nomenclature. In Italy between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries, the term *pifferi* referred to the civic shawm and trombone ensembles of the various city-states, as well as to the shawm players themselves. In Germany, the shawm and trombone ensembles were never referred to as *pifferi*, but instead, in Nuremberg payrolls for example, as *stadtpfeifer*, or sometimes simply *pfeifer*.<sup>57</sup> A more generic term for the shawm and trombone ensemble of the Renaissance is provided by the composer Johannes Tinctoris who, in his treatise *De inventione et usu musicae* of ca. 1487, calls it the *alta cappella*.<sup>58</sup> In the Renaissance there was no standard designation for a shawm ensemble with a brass instrument on the contratenor part; in reality the terms *pifferi*, *stadtpfeifer*, and *alta cappella* are just three of the most common. Despite the abundance of regional names, all of these terms refer to the same basic entity. For clarification, throughout the remaining chapters the terms *alta cappella* or “*alta band*” will be used to indicate ensembles outside of Italy, while the term *pifferi* will refer to the Italian ensembles.

### **Development of the Trombone**

As outlined in Chapter 1, the trombone's status in the *pifferi* ensemble grew from its initial role as a tenor drone instrument in its addition to the ensemble in 1443 into that of the dominant instrument in 1531, when the ensemble was altered to contain three trombones and two

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 82.

<sup>58</sup> Polk, *German Instrumental Music*, 80 and G.B. Lane, *The Trombone in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1982), 25.

shawms. The increasing prevalence of the trombone in the *pifferi*'s instrumentation is largely due to the great strides in instrument making that occurred throughout the fifteenth century. The trombone as it is known today, a brass instrument with a double slide, may not have existed in 1443 when official Florentine civic documents first mention payment for service of a "trombone" in the *pifferi*. The instrument these documents are likely referring to is the slide trumpet—a brass instrument with a single slide.<sup>59</sup>

Both the trombone and slide trumpet are derived from the natural trumpet, a straight tube of either wood or metal with a mouthpiece at one end and a flared bell at the other, which is known to have existed in prehistoric times. Ancient trumpets made of silver and bronze were discovered in the tomb of the Egyptian pharaoh Tutankhamen, and are depicted in Egyptian paintings dating from the fifteenth century B.C.<sup>60</sup> The full history of the trumpet from antiquity to the Renaissance is too large a topic to be discussed here, suffice to say that by the Renaissance the trumpet had acquired a connotation of power through its ubiquitous use as a symbol of religious, civic, and military authority.<sup>61</sup> Ensembles such as the Florentine *trombadori* and *trombetti* are perfect examples of the trumpet's cultural significance in the civic realm. It was common in many European centers of the Middle Ages to have, at the very least, a duo of natural trumpets on payroll for aristocratic and civic duties.<sup>62</sup>

Due to their fixed lengths, natural trumpets were limited in terms of pitch content to the notes of a single harmonic series. For the fanfares played by trumpet duos and all-trumpet ensembles such as the *trombadori*, this was not a problem. An *alta* band, however, with its more sophisticated repertory, could not always make do with such limitations. A portion of the *alta*

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<sup>59</sup> Keith Polk, "The Trombone, the Slide Trumpet, and the Ensemble Tradition of the Early Renaissance," *Early Music* 17, 3 (1989): 393.

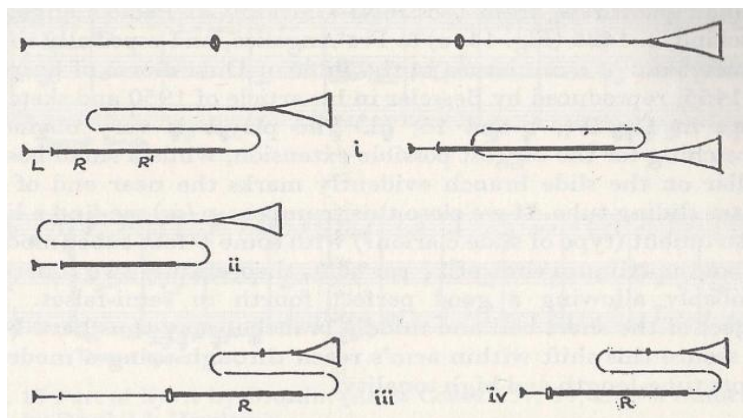
<sup>60</sup> Anthony Baines, *Brass Instruments: Their History and Development* (New York: Dover, 1993), 53.

<sup>61</sup> Trevor Herbert, *The Trombone* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 47.

<sup>62</sup> Polk, *German Instrumental Music*, 61.

*cappella* repertoire came from instrumental arrangements of vocal works. Since the human voice is capable of singing all the pitches of the chromatic scale, a need arose in the *alta cappella* for an instrument that could do the same or, at the very least, an instrument that could more closely mimic the voice. Some time around 1350, instrument makers in Germany added a telescopic slide mechanism to the natural trumpet, which allowed players to physically alter the length of the instrument, giving them access to the pitch collections of three or four harmonic series.<sup>63</sup>

Other designs of natural trumpets were conducive to the addition of a telescopic slide as well, including the “S” shaped trumpet and the “folded” trumpet. In both of these latter two cases, the length of the tubing involved is significantly greater than in a straight natural trumpet, which therefore pitches the “S” trumpet and folded trumpet in a lower harmonic series than the natural trumpet. The “S” trumpet first appeared in ca. 1375, followed approximately a quarter-century later in ca. 1400 by the folded version.<sup>64</sup> For practical performance reasons, both the “S” and folded trumpets would have been significantly easier to play and slide at the same time than the straight trumpet. Figure 1 shows some of the different possible slide trumpets of the fifteenth century, including versions of the straight, “S,” and folded designs.



**Figure 1: Fifteenth-Century Slide Trumpets<sup>65</sup>**

<sup>63</sup> Polk, “Slide Trumpet,” 395 and Herbert, *The Trombone*, 45.

<sup>64</sup> Polk, *German Instrumental Music*, 57.

<sup>65</sup> Baines, *Brass Instruments*, 97.

The letters “L” and “R” in the diagram indicate how the performer likely held the instrument with his or her left and right hands. The left hand, positioned near the mouth, supported the section of the instrument containing the inner sleeve of the slide. This freed the right hand up to slide the bulk of the instrument out and back based on the desired pitch. Renaissance slide trumpets, in either the “S” or folded variety, were most likely pitched in D, meaning that the “closed” slide position would produce the note of the harmonic series with D as its fundamental.<sup>66</sup> A straight trumpet pitched in D would have been impractical to use, as the instrument would have been far too long for one person to slide one-handed. A higher-pitched, and therefore shorter length, straight trumpet was also not desirable, however, because such an instrument would have had a tessitura too far above the range of the contratenor line that the slide trumpet was required to play in the *alta* band’s arrangements of vocal works. While the “S” trumpet and folded trumpet were both pitched in a desirable range for the *alta* band, the compactness of the folded trumpet made it easier to perform on, and therefore the best choice for early brass musicians.

The biggest flaw of the folded slide trumpet was the fact that the entire instrument had to be supported by a performer’s hands in front of his or her body. A player’s right arm had to be strong and flexible enough to slide the instrument at the same time, as well. These difficulties paved the way, ca. 1450, for the appearance of an instrument with a double slide, conceived in the manner of the “folded” slide trumpet, except with half of the instrument in front of the body and half extending back beyond the player’s shoulder.<sup>67</sup> The invention of the doubled “U” shaped slide allowed for the harmonic to be lowered by a perfect fourth, or further, in half of the

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<sup>66</sup> Keith McGowan, “The World of the Early Sackbut Player: Flat or Round?” *Early Music* 22, 3 (1994): 453.

<sup>67</sup> Lane, *The Trombone*, 63.

physical space as the single slide instrument.<sup>68</sup> The distance from “closed,” or “first,” position was now halved, and the distance between all subsequent positions halved as well.

The earliest extant slide trumpet unfortunately dates from well beyond this period, in 1651.<sup>69</sup> It was made in Naumburg and pitched in either D or E-flat.<sup>70</sup> Vivian Safowitz performed a comparison study of this slide trumpet and a replica of a Baroque E-flat alto trombone with regards to slide position distances. A generalization of her findings—reproduced in Table 1—while not a study of fifteenth-century instruments, nevertheless gives some insight into how great an improvement the double-slide trombone offered over the folded single-slide trumpet. The sixth position listed in Table 1 is technically a false position on the slide trumpet, and would have required players to bend the tone with their lips in order to get it in tune.

| <b>Position</b>        | <b>Double-slide Distance</b> | <b>Single-slide Equivalent</b> | <b>Distance to the New Position</b> |
|------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>First to Second</b> | 1 ¾”                         | 3 ½”                           | 3 ½”                                |
| <b>Second to Third</b> | 3 ¾”                         | 7 ½”                           | 4”                                  |
| <b>Third to Fourth</b> | 6 ¼”                         | 12 ½”                          | 5”                                  |
| <b>Fourth to Fifth</b> | 9 ¼”                         | 18 ½”                          | 6”                                  |
| <b>Fifth to Sixth</b>  | 11 ¼”                        | 22 ½”                          | 4”                                  |

**Table 1: Comparison of Alto Trombone and Slide Trumpet Position Distances<sup>71</sup>**

The slide trumpet, therefore, had five real positions: the first, “closed” position, and four “open” positions: second, third, fourth, and fifth. The distance between second and third position on a slide trumpet, four inches, is halved to two inches on the trombone; all other position distances are similarly halved. Not only did this allow all the open positions of the slide trumpet to be

<sup>68</sup> Baines, *Brass Instruments*, 107.

<sup>69</sup> McGowan, “Early Sackbut Player,” 443.

<sup>70</sup> Lane, *The Trombone*, 37-8.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

played much closer to the player's body on the trombone, but it also created more positions along the same length of slide. The modern trombone, by contrast with the slide trumpet, has seven positions: one closed, and six open.

Since a portion of the trombone extended beyond the back of the performer, this allowed some of the instrument's weight to rest on the performer's shoulder. The rest of the weight was now taken up by the left hand, holding the middle of the instrument near the player's mouth with an equal amount of tubing extending to each side of the player's grip. On the slide trumpet, the player held the instrument at one end, as opposed to the middle. A trombone player's right hand was thus significantly freer to move the actual slide mechanism back and forth when compared to a slide trumpet player's right hand, which had to both slide the instrument and support the bulk of the instrument's weight.

Doubling the length of the slide lowered the pitch of the trombone a perfect fourth to A, down from the slide trumpet's pitch of D. This settled the tessitura of the trombone in a range even more conducive to the contratenor voice. A chart from Aurelio Virgiliano's manuscript *Il docimelo* of ca. 1590 is extremely helpful in pinpointing the pitch of the closed position as A.



**Figure 2: Trombone Positions Chart from *Il docimelo*<sup>72</sup>**

Interestingly, this chart in Figure 2 only identifies four positions on the trombone, although seven were technically possible. The reason for this is, despite the trombone's capability to play all the

<sup>72</sup> McGowan, "Early Sackbut Player," 452.

notes of the chromatic scale, musicians at the time did not think in terms of chromatics; the four positions identified in the chart are diatonically the A, G, F, and E harmonic series—or, in terms of positions: first, third, fifth, and sixth. All the pitches trombones were required to play were contained in those four series, so performers regularly overlooked the A-flat, G-flat, and E-flat series: second, fourth, and seventh position. Referring back to Table 1, it can be seen that the furthest position utilized by Renaissance trombone players, sixth position, is roughly eleven and one-quarter inches away from first position, which is less of a reach than fourth position on the slide trumpet: twelve and one-half inches. In terms of performance practicality, the double-slide trombone was a vast improvement in many ways over the slide trumpet. Thus, between the years of 1450 and 1500, the trombone reached widespread use in place of the slide trumpet, due to its efficient slide mechanism, improved weight distribution, and more suitable tessitura.<sup>73</sup>

After ca. 1450, the art of trombone making quickly became perfected by the metal smiths of Nuremberg. The Neuschels of Nuremberg were the leading instrument makers of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. According to F. W. Galpin, “Hans Neuschel, of Nuremberg, stands forth as not only the most eminent maker and player of his time, but as one whose genius had vastly improved the instrument both in its shape and in the quality of its tubing.”<sup>74</sup> The Neuschel dynasty of instrument makers includes Hans Neuschel the Elder, mentioned by Galpin, Hans Neuschel the Younger, and Jorg Neuschel. Part of the reason their trombones were so widely desired by the towns and courts of Europe is that they not only made their instruments well, but they also played.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Lane, *The Trombone*, 63.

<sup>74</sup> F. W. Galpin, “The Sackbut, its Evolution and History. Illustrated By an Instrument of the Sixteenth Century,” in *Proceedings of the Musical Association*, 33<sup>rd</sup> Session, 20 November 1906 (Taylor & Francis, 1906): 11.

<sup>75</sup> Polk, “Urban Centres,” 182.

Supposedly, a mural in the Town Hall of Nuremberg by Albrecht Dürer depicting the town band ca. 1500 contained two shawmists, a cornettist, and two trombonists, with the principal trombonist being a representation of Hans Neuschel the Elder.<sup>76</sup> Unfortunately, this mural was destroyed during the Allied bombings of World War II.<sup>77</sup> However, another iconographic source depicting Neuschel does remain. The *Triumph of Maximilian I* is a series of engravings made by several of the leading artists of ca. 1512, commissioned by the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I “to create an impression of splendour.”<sup>78</sup> These woodcuts depict a wide array of the musicians in Maximilian’s entourage. The woodcut containing Neuschel was, interestingly enough, also made by Dürer. In Dürer’s notes for the engraving, he writes, “...on this same little wagon there are to be five: shawms, trombone players, and bent horns; and Neyschel is to be the master.”<sup>79</sup> This could be either Neuschel Jr. or Sr., as some sources list the Elder’s death date in 1503 and others list it in 1533, but it is likely the Younger.

The town of Nuremberg was established in the eleventh century, and by the mid-fifteenth century had built up a very high reputation for metal crafts of all kinds.<sup>80</sup> This can be probably be attributed to the numerous mineral deposits north of the city, including the Mansfield copper mines and the Rammelsberg deposits, which are capable of yielding silver, zinc, lead, and nickel, in addition to copper; in the sixteenth century, the Mansfield mines produced over one thousand tons of metal per year.<sup>81</sup> The metal guilds, such as the Guild of Copper Smiths, were therefore very well established and respected in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, due to the abundance of material and their undoubtedly refined crafting techniques. Guild secrets were very carefully

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<sup>76</sup> Lane, *The Trombone*, 69.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 194.

<sup>78</sup> Polk, *German Instrumental Music*, 92.

<sup>79</sup> Lane, *The Trombone*, 70.

<sup>80</sup> Herbert, *The Trombone*, 63.

<sup>81</sup> Don Smithers, “The Trumpets of J W Haas: A Survey of Four Generations of Nuremberg Brass Instrument Makers,” *The Galpin Society Journal* 18 (1965): 25.

guarded; it was even recommended that marriages of male members be restricted to daughters of other guild members, both to control membership and to protect the tricks of the trade.<sup>82</sup>

Neuschel the Elder earned his master's rights as a member of the Guild of Copper Smiths in 1479; he therefore must have been a skilled craftsman in numerous aspects of metallurgy, and not just instrument making, although by 1482 he was receiving payments for his services as a repairer of brass instruments.<sup>83</sup>

The Neuschel family's shift of focus to instrument making must have occurred in the early sixteenth century when the Guild of Trumpet Makers, an offshoot of the Guild of Copper Smiths, was supposedly formed, although some sources attest that the instrument makers who separated themselves from the copper guild continued their work independent from any sort of guild setup.<sup>84</sup> Regardless, Neuschel-made trombones were soon being made on special order for court band and civic bands across Europe. There are extant business letters of the third-generation-Neuschel, Jorg, that detail some of his many high profile customers, including the King of England, Henry the VIII.<sup>85</sup> Between 1540 and 1542, Jorg Neuschel corresponded with Duke Albrecht of Prussia on an order the duke had placed for twelve "German trumpets," twelve "Italian trumpets," a tenor trombone, and some mouthpieces and crooks for trombones that must have already been in the duke's collection.<sup>86</sup> In 1545, Jorg Neuschel wrote to another customer confirming an order of five tenor trombones and one "Mittel Posaune, which will serve as a discant to the Bass."<sup>87</sup> He goes on to list the prices that he sold this same order of six trombones for to both the King of England and the King of Poland, seemingly in an attempt to negotiate a

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Herbert, *The Trombone*, 64.

<sup>84</sup> Smithers mentions the Guild of Trumpet Makers, while Lane says, "the masters who specialized exclusively in the manufacturing of trumpets and trombones gradually separated from the rest of the copper-foundry smiths and carried on their work as a free art." See Smithers, "Four Generations," 25, and Lane, *The Trombone*, 72.

<sup>85</sup> Galpin, "The Sackbut," 14.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 12.

fair price from this unidentified customer. Neuschel as well as the Schnitzer family, who took over the instrument making business following Jorg's death, also provided trombones and trumpets to customers in Spain, Denmark, France, Holland, Italy, and Moscow.<sup>88</sup> The fact that kings, dukes, and nobles from so many different countries all ordered their instruments from this one town of Nuremberg, and more specifically from this one family of instrument makers, is a testament to the skill, quality, and craftsmanship contained in the trombones of the Neuschels. Another important instrument making family of the Renaissance, the Bassanos, moved from Venice to London in the early sixteenth century, yet they never attempted to make trombones. Rather than force the Bassanos to try, as he certainly had the power to do so, the King of England instead ordered his trombones from Nuremberg, half a continent away. The Bassano family will be looked at in greater detail in Chapter 3.

There is no direct evidence that the trombone, or even the slide trumpet, were invented in Nuremberg, although the conjectural evidence is compelling. The fact that this one location became so well-known for instrument making is an indication of the growing importance of the trombone not just in the *pifferi*, but in all of Europe. This is also one small example of the influence that the people and cities north of the Alps had on the Florentines, and there are many more.

### **The Oltremontani Influence**

Wind bands of the Renaissance reached their zenith in the *pifferi* ensembles of Florence and other Italian city-states, but their origins were German. Civic ensembles of shawms and trumpets are listed in the pay records of various German-speaking cities by the mid-to-late-fourteenth century, including Dortmund (1363), Augsburg (1368), Deventer (1390), and

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<sup>88</sup> Lane, *The Trombone*, 72.

Brunswick (1403).<sup>89</sup> Florentines referred to the musicians of these Flemish and German towns as the *oltremontani*—people north of the Alps. Their influence can be seen in numerous aspects of the Florentine *pifferi*, and more broadly in various aspects of secular wind music at the time.

In 1384, a trio of German instrumentalists, two shawmists and a bagpipe player, traveled to Florence and put on a public concert. Unfortunately for them, they were arrested and thrown in jail for breaking a law that forbade anyone except the government's official civic musicians from playing music in public. Officially, they were arrested for *mattinate*, which is a broad term meaning "music in the morning."<sup>90</sup> The only Florentine civic wind ensemble in 1384 was the *trombadori*, who did give the occasional public concert for entertainment, despite the fact that their primary duties, as mentioned in Chapter 1, were functional and utilitarian in nature. The *pifferi*'s formation two years later in 1386 with the exact same instrumentation as the visiting German ensemble is too fortuitous to be accidental. In the arrest record of 1384, the German instrumentalists are referred to as "pifferi."<sup>91</sup> Furthermore, in 1388 the *pifferi*'s duties expanded to include playing *mattinate*.<sup>92</sup> There seems to be a clear connection between the visiting German ensemble and the formation of the *pifferi*, which coincided with the Florentine citizenry's growing preference for ceremony and celebration that also occurred in the late fourteenth century.

A similar inclination towards entertainment music and away from purely functional music actually took place among the *oltremontani* prior to the shift that occurred in Florence.

According to Keith Polk:

About mid-[fourteenth]-century, however, there was a new vogue for wind bands which placed a distinctly higher value on more musical activities...

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<sup>89</sup> Polk, *German Instrumental Music*, 61-3.

<sup>90</sup> McGee, *Ceremonial Musicians*, 140.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

The outline of the development was clearest in the cities, where it was obvious that the central ingredients in the early wave of civic ensembles were the shawm and the bombard. By about 1380...a third part, the contratenor, was added in many prominent bands [.]<sup>93</sup>

There was no one standard of instrumentation for German or Flemish civic wind bands in the late fourteenth century. The third player that began to appear ca. 1380 could either be another member of the shawm family, a bagpipe, or some sort of trumpet—in which case it would likely be a slide trumpet. The bagpipe's ability to sustain drones made it the most popular choice to play the contratenor part. As brass instrument making grew more refined, however, the bagpipe was typically replaced by either a slide trumpet or a trombone.

Neither was there a standard blueprint available containing the specific duties of the civic *alta* bands. The trend towards more musical activities was a slow one that gradually gained steam until the Florentines picked up on it and formed their own *alta* band, the *pifferi*, in 1386. The town band of Bruges, for example, performed regular public concerts in the main town plaza in 1350, a tradition possibly started much earlier.<sup>94</sup> However, Bruges is likely representative of only a minority of towns this early in the fourteenth century. *Alta* bands of most other cities did not perform for entertainment purposes—music for the sake of music—until ca. 1380 and into the early decades of the fifteenth century. When they did, the events at which they played included processions, banquets, and dancing, especially in conjunction with the visits of important foreign nobles—all similar to the duties the *pifferi* were later assigned.<sup>95</sup>

Regardless of specific duty, ensembles of all-shawms, or a combination of shawms and brass instruments, were prevalent in Germany in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. Between 1350 and 1440, at least 75 different German cities had subsidized civic wind

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<sup>93</sup> Polk, *German Instrumental Music*, 60.

<sup>94</sup> Whitwell, *Wind Ensemble Before 1500*, 118.

<sup>95</sup> Polk, *German Instrumental Music*, 116.

ensembles.<sup>96</sup> A further 75 *alta cappella* bands, and possibly more, existed during this period as the private wind ensembles of German nobles and bishops, in addition to the civic ensembles.<sup>97</sup> Records indicate a civic trio of two shawms and a “trumpet” in Deventer in 1390.<sup>98</sup> The Duke of Guelders, who visited Deventer in 1404, had in his employ in 1408 an ensemble of “2 trumpers ende 3 pipers.”<sup>99</sup> In 1408, the Bishop of Brunswick traveled with a private ensemble of three “pipers” and a “trumper.” The Burgundian court supported a four-member ensemble in 1411, which included one player on an instrument called the *trompette des ménestrels*.<sup>100</sup>

Nomenclature was nowhere near unified among the many German and Flemish towns of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. It is reasonable to assume, however, that any word with a root of “trump” or “tromp” in the local civic records probably refers to some sort of trumpet or slide trumpet that quickly became a standard part of the *alta cappella*. Two types of trumpets are noted separately in Burgundian court records between ca. 1412 and 1468: the *trompette des ménestrels* and the *trompette de guerre*.<sup>101</sup> The “war trumpet” always appears paired with kettledrums, while the “minstrel trumpet” is always mentioned along with shawms and bombards. The reason that court scribes qualified each entry as either *des ménestrels* or *de guerre* is likely because they were in fact two different instruments. The “war trumpet” is probably the natural, straight instrument; the “minstrel trumpet” is likely either the slide trumpet or trombone.<sup>102</sup>

Records in which scribes notated the brass instrument that accompanied the shawms as “trumpet” or “trumper” were probably not meant to describe natural trumpets, despite the

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<sup>96</sup> Polk, “Slide Trumpet,” 391.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Polk, *German Instrumental Music*, 61.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 60 and 67.

<sup>101</sup> Lane, *The Trombone*, 20.

<sup>102</sup> Ross W. Duffin, “The *Trompette Des Menestrels* in the 15<sup>th</sup>-Century *Alta Capella*,” *Early Music* 17, 3 (1989): 397.

name—such as the Deventer record of two shawms and a “trumpet” in 1390.<sup>103</sup> The slide trumpet had only been invented a few decades prior, and had not reached widespread use among German town bands just yet. A reasonable explanation for the terms “trumpet” and “trumper” is that most people had never seen such instruments before, and did not know what to call them. This was the case in Italy some decades later, after the slide trumpet made its way into the *pifferi* ensembles. In Florence, the addition of the slide trumpet to the *pifferi* in 1443 is listed in city records as *trombone grosso* or *tromba retorta*.<sup>104</sup> Yet a statute passed two years later in 1445 lists the same musician as a player of *tube tortuose*, or “bent trumpet.”<sup>105</sup> This goes to show that even within the same city, different scribes had different opinions on what to call the odd new instrument that had found its way into the *alta* bands of Europe.

While Florence did not expand its *pifferi* ensemble beyond three members until 1443, some *alta* bands of the *oltremontani* did so much earlier. The Duke of Guelders had four or even five members in his private ensemble as early as 1408; the Burgundian Court ensemble had four in 1411. Hamburg and Breslau even had established four member bands sometime in the thirteenth century.<sup>106</sup> When the Florentines did expand their *pifferi*, not only was it with the addition of a brass instrument, but it was also with a German instrumentalist. According to Timothy McGee:

The addition of a slide trumpet (*trombone*) to the 1443 civic *pifferi*, therefore, is yet another sign of the continuing northern influence on the musical tastes of Florence as well as on all of northern Italy. The addition also parallels the growth of the presence of northern polyphonic music and personnel in the chapel choirs that were first established at the Duomo and the Baptistry in 1439, in imitation of northern practices.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Polk, “Slide Trumpet,” 392.

<sup>104</sup> Polk, *German Instrumental Music*, 59.

<sup>105</sup> McGee, *Ceremonial Musicians*, 162.

<sup>106</sup> Whitwell, *Wind Ensemble Before 1500*, 126.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 165.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, this addition to the *pifferi*'s instrumentation was followed by a law in 1445 stating that all future members of the *pifferi* were required to be foreigners. While it is true that this statute was eventually overturned, the nationality of the trombone player in the *pifferi* remained exclusively German until the end of the fifteenth century.<sup>108</sup>

Florence did not add a permanent fifth member to its *pifferi* ensemble until 1514 but, again, they took their cue from the *oltremontani*. By mid-century, the Duke of Saxony, for example, had a personal wind band of three shawms and two trombones.<sup>109</sup> In 1485 the council of the city of Ghent ordered banners to be made for the "2 trombones and three pipers of the city."<sup>110</sup> The city of Bruges placed a similar order for banners around this time, "2 for the sackbuts and 3 for the shawms."<sup>111</sup> When the Florentine ensemble did expand in 1514, it was with the addition of a second trombone player, the same as these Flemish town bands.

All of the German and Flemish *alta* bands mentioned above are listed with some sort of brass instrument as a member of the group from the early fifteenth century, yet it took until mid-century for the Florentine *pifferi* to add a brass contratenor player of their own. There is no clear evidence that explains why the Florentines waited so long to follow suit; the fact that they did add a slide trumpeter in 1443, however, shows that they were aware of this aspect of *oltremontani alta cappella* instrumentation. One reason could simply be that the Florentine *pifferi* ensemble, formed later than its northern counterparts, had to evolve on its own in terms of repertoire before it could fully mimic a German *alta* band. This is nothing more than speculation, but it is reasonable to assume that as the *pifferi*'s duties grew—in part due to their increasing exposure at the Mensa of the *Signoria*—the tastes of their audience grew as well.

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<sup>108</sup> Polk, "Civic Patronage," 59.

<sup>109</sup> Baroncini, "Founding of the Band," 4.

<sup>110</sup> Keith Polk, "Ensemble Instrumental Music in Flanders—1450-1550," *Journal of Band Research* 11, 2 (Spring 1975): 15.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

Nevertheless, the changing size and instrumentation of the *pifferi* represents a clear attempt by the *Signoria* to mimic the popular *oltremontani* ensembles of the time. As Harvey Weinstein writes: “the myth of Florence’s great destiny had, by the mid-fifteenth century, at the latest, become a conscious tool of official civic rhetoric.”<sup>112</sup> The Florentines, never wanting to be outdone, created for themselves a musical group modeled after their northern neighbors and, through the *pifferi*’s close association with the *Signoria*, a symbol of the city’s stability and pride. Keith Polk also offers this view:

I would suggest that the northern instrumentalists were valued not only for their technical competence *per se*, but probably also for their skill in polyphonic improvisation. By about 1450 a healthy tradition of improvised instrumental counterpoint was firmly planted in Italy, enriched by an interplay between players of diverse nationalities.<sup>113</sup>

Keeping the “myth of Florence” in mind, it is easy to see how the Franco-Flemish polyphonic style of improvised performance that pervaded the *alta cappella* bands of the *oltremontani* had an expected effect on the citizenry of Florence. After all, what better way to duplicate the sounds of the German bands than by hiring German musicians?

Perhaps no one musical center north of Italy had as much of an impact on Florence and elsewhere as the Court of Burgundy. The reign of Duke Philip the Bold (1364-1404) represents one of the first great instances of a wealthy patron showing a strong interest in music and the arts. Philip the Bold paid to send his private minstrels to some of the famous minstrel schools in Ghent (in 1378) and in Germany (twice in 1386), instructing his minstrels to buy new instruments while on their trips.<sup>114</sup> His court was reportedly more brilliant, with more and better musicians, than that of the king of France. During his reign, “the Burgundian court increasingly became the most lavish and influential in Europe, setting a pattern of grand ceremony and

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<sup>112</sup> Weinstein, *Savonarola*, 59.

<sup>113</sup> Polk, “Civic Patronage,” 60.

<sup>114</sup> Whitwell, *Wind Ensemble Before 1500*, 217.

elegant style that was widely imitated.”<sup>115</sup> Florence was one of the many urban centers influenced by Philip’s court and its emphasis on entertainment and celebration; the creation of the *pifferi* falls right in the middle of his reign.

As progressive as the Florentine *pifferi* was, it is interesting to see how strongly the *oltremontani* influence really was on its inception. Florence was not the first city to hire foreign musicians into their ensembles. Philip the Bold did so in Burgundy in the early years of his reign. A musician named Frederic l’Alement appears in Burgundian payrolls of 1368—“l’Alement” suggesting that Frederic was from Germany. Six years later in 1374, the Duke gave ten francs to another of his musicians, Louis Mulier, “to pay the expenses of himself and his horse while going to Germany to fetch some minstrels for my lord.”<sup>116</sup> By 1378, the instrumentalists of the Burgundian court included three Germans, two Frenchmen, and one Sicilian.<sup>117</sup> While this could be interpreted as a sign of a dearth of musical talent within the Burgundian court itself, this is highly unlikely. Instead, a more reasonable explanation is that Duke Philip desired the very best musicians at his court, and the best were mostly to be found in Germany. Even among the *oltremontani* in the late fourteenth century, there existed a performance hierarchy. It is no small wonder that the *Signoria* of Florence eventually turned to the northern countries for their musicians as well.

Philip the Bold’s actions in seeking out the very best in his patronage of music and the arts laid the groundwork for a strong musical culture that culminated in the compositions of Guillaume Dufay and his contemporaries of the fifteenth-century Burgundian School. In addition to the vocal polyphonic works that made their way into the *pifferi*’s repertoire, instrumental

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<sup>115</sup> McGee, *Ceremonial Musicians*, 141.

<sup>116</sup> Craig Wright, *Music at the Court of Burgundy 1364-1419: A Documentary History* (Ottawa, Canada: Institute of Mediaeval Music, 1979), 24.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

works first heard at Philip's court became popular across Europe as well. The courtly *basse danse*, a series of highly stylized dances in varying tempos and meters, became refined and quite popular during Philip's reign.<sup>118</sup> Music for these dances was performed initially by a trio of two shawms and a bagpipe, although the bagpipe was replaced by a slide trumpet in 1410, which later gave way to the trombone.<sup>119</sup> These dances, including the *saltarello*, *ballo*, and *bassadanza* proper, made up a substantial portion of the *pifferi*'s repertory, especially in the later fifteenth century, and will be looked at in greater detail in Chapter 3.

The Florentine *pifferi* was the first such group south of the Alps.<sup>120</sup> As mentioned in Chapter 1, the nearby city of Siena soon followed the Florentine example and created its own *pifferi* ensemble. In 1446, three years after Florence remade its *pifferi* ensemble into a quartet featuring a German trombonist, Siena did the same thing. The Sienese Commune fired its incumbent *pifferi* musicians in October of 1446 and by November had replaced them with three shawmists from Avignon and a trombonist "da Alamania."<sup>121</sup> This demonstrates not only the German effect on the Florentine *pifferi*, but also the Florentine *pifferi*'s effect on the other city-states of Italy. Without the strong influence of the northern countries, the Florentine *pifferi* may never have reached the heights that it did, nor would it have inspired such mimicry in the rest of the Italian peninsula. The standards of the German and Flemish town bands—insofar as size, instrumentation, and function are concerned—provided a template that the Florentines could follow. *Oltremontani* musicians had approximately a thirty-year head start on the *pifferi*, so when it came time for the Florentines to add a trombone player to their ensemble, hiring a German musician was an inspired, if obvious, choice. The fact that most of the progress in the

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<sup>118</sup> McGee, *Ceremonial Musicians*, 141.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 141-42.

<sup>120</sup> McGee, "Dinner Music," 106.

<sup>121</sup> D'Accone, *The Civic Muse*, 521-23.

development of the trombone occurred in Germany only serves to solidify the actions of the Florentines, the Sienese, and even the Burgundians a century earlier. Talented German instrument makers and players, such as the Neuschels of Nuremberg, were desired across Europe during the fifteenth century. Their infiltration of so many foreign civic wind bands, and the trombones they brought with them, are two of the biggest factors that propelled the *pifferi* of Florence to the forefront of the *alta cappella* arena in the early sixteenth century.

### CHAPTER 3: The Repertoire and Lasting Effect of the *Pifferi* Ensemble

Italian *pifferi* ensembles and their German *alta cappella* counterparts grew tremendously in function, size, instrumentation, and prestige during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. But it is often easy to forget, amid a sea of extant business letters, personal writings, and civic pay records, that the primary purpose of these ensembles was to perform music for the sake of entertainment. Scholars are forced to piece together a hypothesis of what these ensembles actually sounded like through the few sources that have survived. As mentioned in Chapter 1, *pifferi* musicians frequently improvised their performances, and as a consequence very little of the music they played was ever written down. A study of brass Renaissance music would be incomplete without looking at the actual music they played, but the few manuscripts that are extant do not specify instrumentation. Only through a simultaneous reading of contemporary treatises, personal accounts, pay records, iconographic sources, and these manuscripts can a reasonably accurate recreation of the *pifferi*'s sound be attempted. Of vital importance to a project such as this are the few, but extremely valuable, sources of dance music that survive to this day.

The first printed source to indicate ensemble instrumentation, the *Sacrae Symphoniae* of Giovanni Gabrieli, published in 1597, is a collection of polychoral sacred music for eight or more individual parts, something the *pifferi* would not have played. However, despite a seeming disconnect between the secular *pifferi* ensemble and this collection of sacred canzonas, the two are actually very simply related. Gabrieli's instrumentation relies heavily on trombones, whose early history, as discussed in Chapter 2, is intricately tied to the *pifferi* ensemble. Gabrieli also indicates cornetts, the instrument that eventually replaced the shawm in certain *pifferi* ensembles, such as the Roman ensemble, by the end of the sixteenth century. The early repertoire of the

*pifferi* was influenced by sacred music of the fifteenth century, and as the repertoire changed so, too, did the *pifferi* ensemble itself. Nowhere is this more visible than in the Florentine *pifferi*, the leading secular ensemble of the Renaissance. As the *pifferi* became a symbol of civic wealth and pride, their influence began to slowly bleed back into the sacred realm. Sacred/secular crossovers, beyond just the similarities of instrumentation, occurred more and more frequently throughout the sixteenth century until the historical publication of the *Sacrae Symphoniae*.

The *pifferi*'s repertoire evolved and expanded partly as a result of the other changes to the ensemble, specifically the growth from three to four and eventually five players, and the addition and increasing prevalence of the trombone. Rather than to say the repertoire was completely reactive to these other factors, however, a fairer assumption is that all these changes took place concurrently. In some respects, the *pifferi* evolved as a response to a change in the repertoire. By 1597, shockwaves from the *pifferi* had resounded within sacred music to manifest themselves, in one respect, through the publication of Gabrieli's monumental work.

### **The Music of the *Pifferi***

The *pifferi*'s repertoire largely consisted of two broad categories: dance music and instrumental elaborations of vocal works.<sup>122</sup> These vocal works were usually either motets performed in a non-liturgical setting or instrumental arrangements of popular chansons.<sup>123</sup> The earliest dance music performed by the *pifferi* was based on a simple paradigm of two-part polyphony. One instrument would sustain the pitches of an existing tenor melody, while a second instrument performed a fast moving, improvised treble part above the tenor.<sup>124</sup> In the common three-part polyphony of the mid-fifteenth century, the third instrument would add a contratenor

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<sup>122</sup> McGee, *Ceremonial Musicians*, 229.

<sup>123</sup> Egon Kenton, *Life and Works of Giovanni Gabrieli* (Rome: American Institute of Musicology, 1967), 489.

<sup>124</sup> McGee, *Ceremonial Musicians*, 212.

line between the tenor and treble parts that was generally less florid than the treble, but more elaborate than the sustained tenor.<sup>125</sup> In the early three-member *pifferi*, the bombard played the tenor while both shawms improvised above. In the *pifferi* after 1443, the bombard still held the tenor line, the newly-added trombone now played a slightly decorated contratenor—in a range either below or above the bombard, but eventually settling below—and the two shawms would alternate improvising a treble line; all four musicians rarely played at the same time.

Occasionally during performance, the bombard and trombone would switch roles as well.

The dance music that made up the bulk of the *pifferi*'s repertory comes from the Renaissance *basse danse* tradition. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the *basse danse*—a broad term that encapsulates many different dances of varied meters and tempos—originated at the court of Burgundy early in the fifteenth century during the reign of Philip the Bold. These sophisticated court dances spread quickly across Europe to England, Spain, Germany, and especially Italy.<sup>126</sup> The four dances contained in the *basse danse* tradition are listed and briefly described in Table 2.

| Dance                    | Meter | Description                           |
|--------------------------|-------|---------------------------------------|
| <i>bassadanza proper</i> | 6/4   | slowest <i>basse danse</i>            |
| <i>quarternaria</i>      | 4/4   | not much is known                     |
| <i>saltarello</i>        | 6/8   | also called the <i>pas de Brabant</i> |
| <i>piva</i>              | 4/4   | fast and lively, peasant dance        |

**Table 2: Descriptions of Renaissance *Basse Danses***<sup>127</sup>

The meters listed in Table 2 are the modern-day equivalents of each of the dances. Very little is known about the *quarternaria*, but some descriptions exist of the other three *basse dances*.

Barbara Sparti mentions a festival poem from the early fifteenth century that describes a

<sup>125</sup> McGee, *Ceremonial Musicians*, 212, and Herbert, *The Trombone*, 54.

<sup>126</sup> McGee, *Ceremonial Musicians*, 141.

<sup>127</sup> Whitwell, *Wind Ensemble Before 1500*, 144, and Barbara Sparti, "Improvisation and Embellishment in Popular and Art Dances in Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Italy," in *Improvisation in the Arts of the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. by Timothy J. McGee (Kalamazoo, MI: Western Michigan University Press, 2003): 124.

*saltarello*, for example, “accompanied by the ever-present *pifferi e tromboni*, performed outdoors for hours on end, with couples skipping and promenading around, changing partners, resting, and joining the fray again.”<sup>128</sup> This excerpt is interesting also because it alludes to the common practice of having shawms and trombones supply the music for dancing. This is continually mentioned in archival sources, and it is regretful that there are little to no surviving scores that can further corroborate their ubiquitous presence in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

The *saltarello* was a fast, up-tempo dance in a meter of 6/8 or possibly 2/4.<sup>129</sup> The *piva* was an even lighter, bouncier dance in a fast 4/4 or 4/8 that was commonly associated with the lower class; the nobility tended to look down on the villagers that danced the *piva* during their seasonal festivals.<sup>130</sup> Edward Bowles, in describing the dancing tradition in Burgundy from 1363 to 1467, says that, “while the nobility preferred to dance the courtly basse-dance, the people chose carols, country dances, and mumming.”<sup>131</sup> By “country dances” he is most likely referring to the *piva*. Although some dance teachers reportedly looked down on the *piva*’s low pastoral origins, many still included the steps of the *piva* in their published dancing treatises.

The “basse-dance” mentioned by Bowles likely means the *bassadanza* proper, which was somewhat unique compared to the other three *basse dances* in that each individual tune involved its own complicated series of steps. For the other dances, the generic *saltarello* or *piva* sequence of steps could be applied to any number of tenors played in the corresponding meter. Each *bassadanza*, however, was uniquely choreographed to a specific tenor.<sup>132</sup> The series of steps for each individual dance took people time to learn and rehearse. Often, in advance of an important

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<sup>128</sup> Sparti, “Art Dances,” 118.

<sup>129</sup> McGee, *Ceremonial Musicians*, 217.

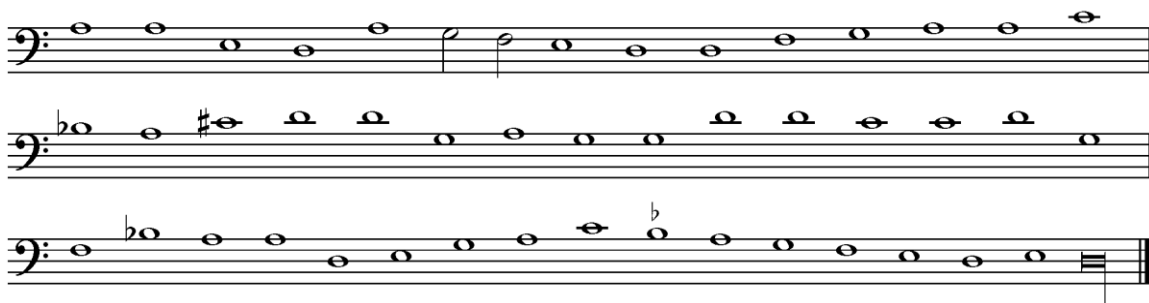
<sup>130</sup> Sparti, “Art Dances,” 120.

<sup>131</sup> Edmund A. Bowles, “Instruments at the Court of Burgundy (1363-1467),” *The Galpin Society Journal* 6 (1953): 49.

<sup>132</sup> McGee, *Ceremonial Musicians*, 216.

wedding or banquet, the noble planning the event would hire a dancing master to teach the steps to the guests. More than twelve dancing treatises written by these dancing masters of the Renaissance are extant, and one of them in particular is quite useful to a study of the music that accompanied the *basse danse*.

The Italian dancing master Antonio Cornazano published a dancing manual in 1455 in which he notated three monophonic *basse danse* tenors as a sample of the music that would accompany a performance of the steps in his treatise.<sup>133</sup> His use of the word “tenor” is significant because it implies that the melodies he provided were understood as the basis for polyphonic improvisation. Cornazano’s three tenors are *Cançon di pifari dicto el Ferrarese*, *Collinetto*, and *Rei di Spagna*.<sup>134</sup> The third one, also known simply as *La Spagna*, is given in Figure 3.



**Figure 3: *La Spagna* Tenor from Cornazano Dance Treatise<sup>135</sup>**

*La Spagna* is of great interest not only because of its notation in Cornazano’s treatise, but because it also appears elsewhere in polyphonic settings. Manfred Bukofzer discovered *La Spagna*, with the title of *Casulle la nouele*, in an incunabulum about dance by Michel Toulouze, printed sometime before 1496.<sup>136</sup> Toulouze’s version places *La Spagna*’s tenor in the lower voice, as expected, and includes a very florid treble line above. An excerpt of this setting is

<sup>133</sup> Manfred F. Bukofzer, *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Music* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1950), 191.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., 197, and McGee, *Ceremonial Musicians*, 217.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid., 192.



Figure 4: Two-Part Setting of *La Spagna* Tenor by Toulouze, Measures 1-17<sup>137</sup>

shown in Figure 4. The instrumentation is not specified, but it is likely a two-part keyboard setting of *La Spagna*, which must have been a very well known melody of the time. There is also a three-part setting of *La Spagna* in the *Cancionero Musical de Palacio* by Francisco de la Torre, printed in 1552 in Madrid, but likely composed much earlier.<sup>138</sup> This version, sadly, also does not specify instrumentation. The title of Torre's arrangement is *Alta*, which seems to be a valuable indicator that this three-part arrangement was performed by *alta* bands, if not for the fact that "alta" is also the Spanish word for "saltarello." This is the actual reason for *Alta* being the title.<sup>139</sup> *La Spagna* is generally characterized as a *saltarello*, just one of many tunes to which the *saltarello* steps could be danced to, and apparently a very popular one. In total, over 360

<sup>137</sup> McGee, *Ceremonial Musicians*, 218, and Bukofzer, *Renaissance Music*,

<sup>138</sup> Bukofzer, *Renaissance Music*, 204, and Baines, *Brass Instruments*, 101.

<sup>139</sup> Daniel Heartz, "Hoftanz and Basse Dance," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 19, 1 (Spring 1966): 18.

different arrangements of *La Spagna* exist, for keyboard, lute, or unspecified instrumentation, and often under different names.<sup>140</sup> The melody's frequent presence in numerous prints under various names not only speaks to this particular tune's popularity, but also serves as an example of the oral tradition of the *pifferi* musicians.

Since much of what the *pifferi* performed was improvisatory, as long as each member had memorized the tenor, they could theoretically perform the same tune for hours. As discussed in Chapter 2, German musicians, particularly trombonists, were desired in the *pifferi* ensembles of Italy because of their great musical talent. It stands to reason that as these musicians came south, they brought memorized dance tenors with them and taught them to their new band members in Florence, Siena, and other Italian cities. This musical tradition thus spread in a similar manner as the oral tradition of storytelling. Even after other cities formed their own *pifferi*, the Florentine ensemble was still requested to perform abroad, and during these travels they surely had time to meet other musicians and exchange melodies, keeping this oral musical tradition alive. Scholars today are indebted to the few authors that did in fact notate these melodies as it allows them, through detective work, to piece together a vivid musical picture of instrumental dance music during the Renaissance.

Eileen Southern discovered two polyphonic settings of another of Cornazano's valuable tenors, *Collinetto*, in the Buxheim organ book of ca. 1460-1470.<sup>141</sup> Both organ pieces are called *Collinit* and are in three-part polyphony. Despite being set for a keyboard instrument, the polyphonic versions of *Collinetto* in the Buxheim book offer a clear picture of how the *pifferi* would have sounded with one shawm on the florid upper part, one shawm resting, the bombard on the tenor melody, and the trombone on the contratenor, freely moving above and below the

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<sup>140</sup> These names include, in addition to the ones mentioned above, *Falla con misuras*, *La bassa Castiglyra*, and *La baixa de Castilla*. See: Bukofzer, *Renaissance Music*, 196, 197, 204, and Heartz, "Basse Dance," 19.

<sup>141</sup> Eileen Southern, "Some Keyboard Basse Danses of the Fifteenth Century," *Acta Musicologica* 35 (1963): 116.

bombard. The *Collinetto* tenor and the beginnings of both Buxheim settings are shown in Figures 5, 6A, and 6B.

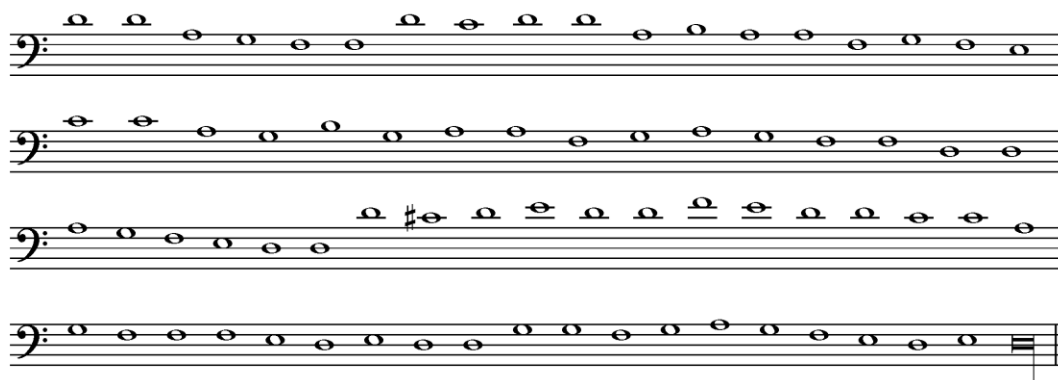
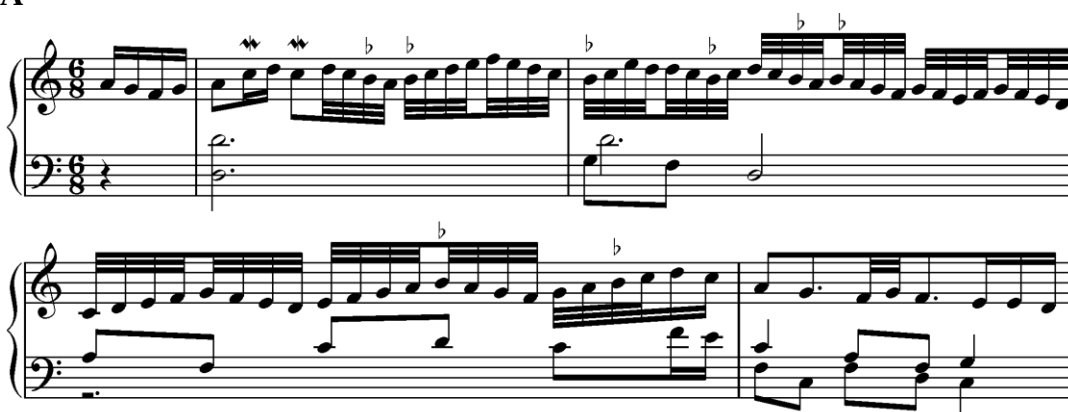


Figure 5: *Collinetto* Tenor from *Cornazando Dance Treatise*<sup>142</sup>

6A



6B



Figure 6A & B: Opening Measures of the *Collinit* Keyboard Settings<sup>143</sup>

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., 117.

The difference in notation between the two keyboard settings reflects the versatility of some dance tenors. For the generic dances, the same tenor could be used in different meters, depending on whether the dancers wanted a *piva* or a *saltarello*, for example. As long as all notes of the tenor were equal to each other, the overall rhythm could be changed to suit the desired steps.<sup>144</sup>

*Basse dances* were performed polyphonically by the *alta cappella* at the court of Burgundy and across Germany, Italy, and the rest of Europe during the fifteenth century. This much can be confirmed from extant literary documents, iconographic sources, and certain remarks in the dance manuals.<sup>145</sup> The few polyphonic settings that survive in manuscript form are either for keyboard instruments, lute, or an unspecified instrumentation. One reason for this is that *alta cappella* members of the fifteenth century were well-educated, highly trained, professional musicians who did not need to read music, though they were certainly able to. The keyboard settings in the Buxheim organ book, for example, were probably never intended as performance aids for these musicians. Rather, the organ book, the *Cancionero Musical* by Torre, and other printed sources were meant to be used by amateur musicians who probably only had access to a portative organ or a lute, and could not afford a complement of three shawms and a trombone. Music lessons on wind instruments were a privilege of the rich, but that does not mean that the lower classes refrained from performing music; they just did not perform in their own wind instrumental ensembles.

Also, there were not many teachers of wind instruments available in the mid-fifteenth century. The technique of trombone playing, still in its primitive stages, was a closely guarded secret, just as the techniques of instrument making were in the guilds of Nuremberg. This is another reason why so many foreigners were hired into Italian *pifferi* ensembles, and why even

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<sup>144</sup> Hertz, "Basse Dance," 18.

<sup>145</sup> Bukofzer, *Renaissance Music*, 194.

the highly musical court of Burgundy sent its minstrels abroad to become better musicians, as mentioned in Chapter 2. During most of the fifteenth century the best teachers were to be found in Germany. By the turn of the sixteenth century, playing technique had disseminated across Europe; music schools were founded in Italy, the first being in Naples as early as 1470.<sup>146</sup> The number of capable *pifferi* musicians, though still small, increased gradually into the sixteenth century, as the repertoire became more complex.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, there were three approaches to instrumental performances by 1475. Musicians could play a piece: as written, with embellishments, or improvised. These three approaches grew out of the polyphonic approach to the *basse danse*; the tenor was always played “as written,” meaning from memory but without ornamentation; the contratenor added simple improvisatory embellishments around the tenor; and the treble improvised a highly contrapuntal line above both other parts. By 1500, the idea of imitative counterpoint began to spread. The Florentine *pifferi* had been a quartet since the mid-fifteenth century but during performances had ostensibly been a trio; around 1500 they began to finally perform as a quartet.<sup>147</sup> They continued taking the same three approaches to the performance of ensemble music, but the emphasis shifted from mostly improvisatory to more notated music. According to Keith Polk:

With the early sixteenth century came a preference for a different kind of dance. Repetitions became more explicit, and phrases were often arranged asymmetrically (often in pairs, and often, in modern terms, in four-measure units). Moreover, choreographies became more standardized so that one set of steps could be applied regardless of which tune was chosen. This was a vastly less involved repertory and was much easier for the dancers to learn. The symmetries and the repetitions, of course, also made the repertory easier for the musicians to grasp as well.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> Grace O’Brien, *The Golden Age of Italian Music* (London: Jarrolds, 1948), 59.

<sup>147</sup> Polk, “Performance Practices,” 100.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, 101-102.

The specific *bassadanza* had previously been the most popular of the *basse danse* forms played by the *pifferi*. Each *bassadanza* tenor had its own unique choreography, and every note in the tenor corresponded to one step of the dance.<sup>149</sup> Cornazano's treatise, as well as other dance treatises of the fifteenth century, identified nine different "natural" steps and three "accidental" steps that could be combined in any number of ways to create one of these courtly dances.<sup>150</sup> *Bassadanzas* consisted of all "natural" steps; their counterpart, the *ballo*, was also uniquely choreographed for each tenor, and featured combinations of both "natural" and "accidental" steps.<sup>151</sup> These *bassadanze* and *balli* were long, elaborate, asymmetrical, and hard to remember.<sup>152</sup> The difficulties were slightly less for the musicians as opposed to the dancers, but even so, to provide music for an entire evening of dancing required a considerable amount of memorization and improvisational skill on the part of the shawmists and trombonist. They had to know the exact tenors that the dancers had learned the choreography for, the proper tempo to perform each melody at, and how many repetitions of each tune to play. The generic *saltarelli* and *pive* were more desirable in the long run; perhaps that explains why the *saltarello La Spagna* was arranged hundreds of times during the Renaissance. Gradually, other generic dance forms entered the repertoire as well, such as the *gagliarda* and *corrente*, in more regular rhythms and repeats as described by Polk.<sup>153</sup>

The shift from a three-part to a four-part texture brought significant changes to the *pifferi*'s performance practice. The added voice, the second treble shawm, took away a fair amount of room in which the other treble shawm had previously improvised. This invariably led

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<sup>149</sup> Bukofzer, *Renaissance Music*, 202.

<sup>150</sup> Jennifer Nevile, "Disorder in Order: Improvisation in Italian Choreographed Dances of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries," in *Improvisation in the Arts of the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. by Timothy J. McGee (Kalamazoo, MI: Western Michigan University Press, 2003): 147.

<sup>151</sup> McGee, *Ceremonial Musicians*, 216. McGee erroneously claims only seven natural steps, as opposed to nine.

<sup>152</sup> Polk, "Performance Practices," 101.

<sup>153</sup> Sparti, "Art Dances," 121.

to a tempering of improvisation in favor of the fuller sonorities of a quartet. As early as 1484, *alta* bands in the Netherlands were directed to perform four-part motets.<sup>154</sup> This is the earliest confirmation of a civic wind band playing notated music, a trend that carried over into Italy, another example of the pervasive *oltremontani* influence. The polyphonic sacred style of placing the most important part in the topmost voice bled into the *pifferi*'s performance practice of dance music, which in turn brought about a new emphasis on the bass voice. Whereas previously the most important part of a *basse danse* performance, the tenor, was buried in a middle voice with embellishments and improvisations on either side, now the middle voices—in the new four-part texture—took a subordinate role to the prominent outer voices, performed by the upper shawm and the trombone.<sup>155</sup>

The best surviving source of this new *pifferi* style can be found in Tielman Susato's *Danserye* of 1551. Susato was a member of the civic wind ensemble at Antwerp in the 1530s and 1540s—probably a shawmist, but his primary instrument is not known for certain.<sup>156</sup> Twice he notated several four-part arrangements performed by the Antwerp band for publication, once in 1531 and once in 1551; the earlier one is unfortunately lost.<sup>157</sup> The *Danserye* of 1551 is a collection of four-part dances published in part books, labeled Discant, Conratenor, Tenor, and Bass. The title page of each partbook contains the subtitle: "suitable for performance on all musical instruments."<sup>158</sup> This collection is notable not just for the music it contains, but also for the part labels and this title phrase; they represent an early attempt at instrumentation that

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<sup>154</sup> McGee, *Ceremonial Musicians*, 227.

<sup>155</sup> Polk, "Performance Practices," 102.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, 104.

<sup>157</sup> David Whitwell *The History and Literature of the Wind Band and Wind Ensemble Volume 2: The Renaissance Wind Band and Wind Ensemble* (Northridge, CA: Winds, 1983), 189.

<sup>158</sup> Adam von Ahn Carse, *The History of Orchestration* (New York: Dover, 1964), 24.

follows the growing tendency in the sixteenth century of publishing music in an effort to get compositions played by a broader range of people.

The last piece in book one of the *Danserye*, called “Saltarelle,” is in 6/4 time, and probably is a late example of the fifteenth-century *saltarello*, arranged in four parts. Two of the other pieces in book one are called “basse danse,” but this is likely a holdover term from the earlier generations of civic wind bands, as the style of both is markedly different from any of the courtly dance styles described earlier. One of these, “Basse Danse *Mon Desir*,” is notated in score form in the Appendix. This particular dance is laid out in symmetrical phrases of eight measures, four measures, eight measures, and four measures, each one marked with repeat signs. The regularity of the phrases makes them easily adaptable; musicians could repeat any particular section multiple times if necessary, and likewise the dancers could repeat the same sequence of steps without fear of losing track of their place in the dance.

It is impossible to determine if Susato actually composed all of the arrangements in the *Danserye* or if he merely collated them, but in the sixteenth century a growing number of musicians did venture into the field of composition. Niccolò Brandini of the Sienese *pifferi*, Bartolomeo Tromboncino of the Mantuan court, and Augustein Schubinger of Augsburg are just some of the many shawmists and trombonists who began composing, arranging, and publishing collections of dance music in the sixteenth century.<sup>159</sup> This rise in composer-performers is directly a result of the growing publication industry of the time. Ottaviano Petrucci first printed music using movable type in 1501, and by 1540, with the added speed of new single-impression printing, the music publication business was booming.<sup>160</sup> The center of music printing was in

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<sup>159</sup> Polk, “Performance Practices,” 111, and Polk, *German Instrumental Music*, 142.

<sup>160</sup> Tim Carter, “Music-Printing in Late Sixteenth- and Early Seventeenth-Century Florence: Giorgio Marescotti and Zanobi Pignoni,” in *Music, Patronage, and Printing in Renaissance Florence*, ed. Tim Carter (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2000): 27.

Venice, but publication houses appeared later in Rome, Milan, Naples, Ferrara, and Florence, as well as other city centers outside of Italy.<sup>161</sup> Volumes of instrumental dances were printed in Paris in 1559, in England ca. 1553, and in the Low Countries—Susato’s collection, for example—in 1551.<sup>162</sup> Frustratingly, none of them specify instrumentation, aside from the occasional incipit along the lines of Susato’s “suitable for performance on all musical instruments.” The lack of instrumentation may have been a conscious decision: by not pigeonholing any particular publication to only a shawm consort, or only an *alta* band, or only a string ensemble, publishers made the scores appealing to as wide an audience as possible. Moreover, though, the lack of instrumentation is just a continuation of the traditional performance practice. Notated music for *pifferi* performance, for example, was still a relatively new phenomenon; the tradition had been a memorized, improvisatory one wherein the musicians innately understood what each instrument’s role was. The written instrumentation was unnecessary.

That is not to say, however, that notated music was nonexistent. Zorzi Trombetta di Modon (Modena) is a very interesting figure in the history of the wind band. He served as a trumpeter in the Venetian mercantile navy from 1444 to 1449.<sup>163</sup> While aboard the ship the *Serenissima*, he kept a notebook in which he sketched, among other things, two- and three-part contrapuntal pieces based on preexisting tenors. The two-part works undoubtedly reflect the way he and his fellow naval trumpeters performed at meal times aboard the galleys in the Venetian navy. Rodolfo Baroncini speculates that the three-part pieces were intended for a standard *pifferi* trio of two shawms and a trombone.<sup>164</sup> Zorzi was a founding member of the Venetian *pifferi* in

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<sup>161</sup> Ibid., 27, 29.

<sup>162</sup> Polk, “Performance Practices,” 111.

<sup>163</sup> Baroncini, “New Documentary Evidence,” 60-61.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid., 63.

1458, in which he played the trombone—or slide trumpet—and, late in his career, the shawm. He seems to also have been the de facto leader of the ensemble from its inception until his death in ca. 1495-1502. The Venetian *pifferi*, as mentioned in Chapter 1, consisted of five members at its creation: three shawms and two trombones. This was probably modeled after the *alta* bands of the *oltremontani* some of whom, such as the Duke of Saxony's band mentioned in Chapter 2, had five members around this time.

In 1490, Zorzi's son Alvise Trombetta was elected into the Venetian *pifferi*, turning the ensemble into an equal sextet of three shawms and three trombones.<sup>165</sup> By 1493, however, it appears Zorzi switched from the trombone to the shawm, unbalancing the instrumentation of just three years earlier. Alvise is noteworthy in his own right because of arrangements he made in 1494 for performance by the Venetian *pifferi* of some motets by Obrecht and Busnois.<sup>166</sup> The instrumentation of these motets—mentioned in a letter by Alvise, not in the music itself—is four shawms and two trombones, the same as the Venetian ensemble of that year.<sup>167</sup> Alvise's fame seems to have spread after this, as he later received requests from Ferrara and Mantua asking him to make arrangements for their court musicians as well. He did so, and for many varied ensembles, including: five trombones; four trombones and two cornetts; four trombones and four shawms; and eight recorders.<sup>168</sup>

Clearly, these arrangements were not intended for use by the *pifferi* of Ferrara and Mantua, but the fact that Alvise made them points to his probable stature as a musician of considerable skill. He likely learned how to play and read music from his father. It was common in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries for families to pass the same trade from generation to

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<sup>165</sup> Ibid., 69.

<sup>166</sup> Baroncini, "Founding of the Band," 7.

<sup>167</sup> McGee, *Ceremonial Musicians*, 230.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

generation. This can be seen in the Neuschel dynasty of instrument makers as well as in Zorzi and his sons—all three of whom eventually joined the Venetian *pifferi*.<sup>169</sup> In Florence, Giovanni Cellini and his son Benvenuto were both members of the *pifferi* as well, as shawmists.<sup>170</sup>

While the basis of Alvisi's arrangements for other Italian cities is not known, it is reasonable to assume that they were arrangements of motets, as were his works for the Venetian *pifferi*. The sketches his father made while in the navy were based on popular chanson tenors, including one by Dunstable used as the basis of a two-part piece.<sup>171</sup> Instrumental arrangements of vocals works, such as these, were always a part of the *pifferi* repertoire, though any direct mentions such as these are few and far between. The greater part of the *pifferi* repertoire, in both the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, was dance music. As the dances changed, naturally so did the music. While none of the dance music that survives today mentions specific instrumentation on the parts themselves, there are enough written records and collections published by *pifferi* musicians for scholars today to reasonably assume that this is the music they played. In the vocal arrangements that made up the other side of the *pifferi*'s repertoire, the music and the ensemble itself both influenced and was influenced by the concurrent events happening in sacred music.

### **The Intersection of Sacred and Secular**

The *pifferi*'s repertory included instrumental arrangements of vocal works that were often drawn from sacred music repertoire. Alvisi Trombetta's arrangements of motets by Obrecht and Busnois demonstrate this borrowing. As mentioned above, archival documents specify that some *alta* bands of the *oltremontani* performed motets as well. The town band of Bruges, for example,

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<sup>169</sup> Alvisi was the second of Zorzi's sons to join the Venetian *pifferi*, after Girolamo. See Baroncini, "New Documentary Evidence," 67.

<sup>170</sup> McGee, "Giovanni Cellini," 210-211.

<sup>171</sup> Baroncini, "Founding of the Band," 7.

had a collection of motets specially prepared for them in 1484.<sup>172</sup> The vast majority of *pifferi* ensembles had duties that included performing in church, so it is reasonable to assume that even where it is not mentioned, *pifferi* ensembles played arrangements of motets that were popular in their respective cities. The Florentine *pifferi*'s duties always included playing for feast days and other special occasions at the church of Orsanmichele. The Sienese *pifferi* performed weekly at mass in the palace chapel.<sup>173</sup> The Roman *pifferi* occasionally performed within the cupola of St. Peter's.<sup>174</sup> Dance tenors would not be appropriate for church, but the vast amount of preexisting sacred music certainly would. The polyphonic style of this repertory fit well alongside the polyphonic secular music played by the *pifferi*, and undoubtedly influenced their secular performance somewhat. The *pifferi*'s practice of taking a dance tenor and improvising counterpoint above and below may have grown out of the fauxbourdon or faburden approaches to sacred composition. It is possible that these practices developed concurrently. Composers such as DuFay and Busnois lived in cities that had extremely talented *pifferi*; Busnois's music was even appropriated for use in the Venetian ensemble. While there is no direct link between these methods of chant harmonization and dance elaboration, the potential of a connection is tantalizing.

One possible correlation, however, is the *Missa La Basse Danse* by Guillaume Faugues, written in ca. 1460-75. Little is known about Faugues beyond that he was a French composer in the mid to late fifteenth century. Five masses by Faugues are extant, and interestingly all are based on secular cantus firmi.<sup>175</sup> The *Missa La Basse Danse* is a typical polyphonic mass setting;

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<sup>172</sup> Polk, "Flanders," 21.

<sup>173</sup> D'Accone, *The Civic Muse*, 583-584.

<sup>174</sup> Kurtzman and Koldau, "Venetian Processions," 5.3.

<sup>175</sup> Rob C. Wegman, "Faugues, Guillaume," in *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, accessed March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2012, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/09363>.

the most unusual aspect of it is that Faugues actually labeled the tenor “La basse danse.”<sup>176</sup>

Faugues constructed the piece such that “the contrapuntal voices frequently start three-part points of imitation around the slow-moving tenor.”<sup>177</sup> This is a similar approach to most fifteenth-century parody masses and is also in a way related to the *pifferi*’s approach to dance music. The *basse danse* used by Faugues was thought to be lost until Eileen Southern discovered a similar tenor sketched by an anonymous scribe on the back binding leaf of a Nuremberg manuscript from ca. 1455.<sup>178</sup> She subsequently identified it as *Luffil*, the title of two keyboard settings in the same Buxheim organ book that also contains two arrangements of one of Cornazano’s dance tenors. Faugues may have thought the tenor was so well known—as *La Spagna* clearly was, for example—that labeling it in the score was unnecessary. The *Luffil* tenor’s existence in sacred and secular arrangements is one example of how popular songs could make the crossover from the secular repertory to the sacred repertory, and vice versa—as witnessed in the Bruges motet books as well as the arrangements of Alvisi Trombetta. Musicians, as well as music, also made this crossover.

Civic wind musicians often traveled to cities outside of their primary location of employment for the purposes of performing. Not very many, however, were invited to do so by the Pope. The first of the Medici Popes, Leo X, lived in Florence prior to his election. He was a contemporary of the Cellinis mentioned earlier, Giovanni and his son Benvenuto—the famous artist. Many details of Giovanni’s life are preserved in his son’s autobiography, a valuable resource to scholars today.<sup>179</sup> Giovanni was one of eleven citizens, and the sole musician, named

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<sup>176</sup> Southern, “Some Keyboard Basse Dances,” 120.

<sup>177</sup> Rob C. Wegman, “Guillaume Faugues and the Anonymous Masses ‘Au chant de l’alouete’ and ‘Vinnus vina,’” *Tijdschrift van de Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis* 41, 1 (1991): 28.

<sup>178</sup> Southern, “Some Keyboard Basse Dances,” 120.

<sup>179</sup> For a recent edition of Benvenuto Cellini’s autobiography, see Benvenuto Cellini, *Benvenuto Cellini: Sculptor, Goldsmith, Writer*, ed. Margaret A. Gallucci and Paolo L. Rossi (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 2004).

to a panel in 1504 that decided on where Michelangelo's *David* should be placed within the city.<sup>180</sup> Being chosen for this duty was surely an honor. Giovanni's selection is an indication of the high esteem with which his fellow citizens viewed him, and likely also of his artistic and musical talent. He must also have had a good relationship with Leo X, or at the very least Leo was impressed with Giovanni's shawm playing, because when Leo ascended to the papacy in 1513, he invited Giovanni to travel to Rome with him and serve in the Pope's private ensemble.<sup>181</sup> Unfortunately, Giovanni declined, and was subsequently fired from the Florentine *pifferi*.<sup>182</sup> Official city records claim that he was dismissed because his age—he was 62 at the time—detrimentally affected his playing ability, but Benvenuto's autobiography claims his father's dismissal was due to his refusal of the Pope's request.<sup>183</sup>

Luckily, this refusal did not deter Pope Leo X's interest in the Florentine *pifferi*. Despite having an abundance of capable musicians in Rome, Leo often requested Florentine musicians for performances in Rome. In 1519, Leo borrowed the *pifferi* to assist in a production of Ariosto's *I suppositi*.<sup>184</sup> Benvenuto Cellini was a member of the *pifferi* at this time. After his father's dismissal in 1513, Benvenuto supposedly gave up music in favor of becoming a goldsmith, but he evidently pursued both trades after all.<sup>185</sup> His talent must have been considerable. In some ways, he even seems to have followed directly in his father's footsteps, as many musical families of the Renaissance did. In ca. 1520, Benvenuto journeyed to Rome alone and played motets on the cornett alongside the Pope's personal ensemble.<sup>186</sup> Eventually, this led

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<sup>180</sup> McGee, "In the Service," 736.

<sup>181</sup> McGee, "Giovanni Cellini," 213.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid., 214.

<sup>184</sup> McGee, *Ceremonial Musicians*, 231.

<sup>185</sup> McGee, "Giovanni Cellini," 213-14.

<sup>186</sup> McGee, *Ceremonial Musicians*, 231.

Pope Clement VII—the second of the Medici Popes—to offer Benvenuto a permanent job in the Pope’s ensemble sometime after 1526, a position he accepted.<sup>187</sup>

Pope Leo X’s enjoyment of the Florentine *pifferi* could have stemmed from either their religious duties—at Orsanmichele, or on rare occasion at Santa Maria del Fiore—or their secular duties at the Mensa or elsewhere. In his youth, Leo X—then Giovanni de’Medici—took music lessons from Heinrich Isaac and played the lute.<sup>188</sup> His fondness for instrumental music likely stemmed from this childhood pursuit, and influenced his support of such music even into his papacy. His nephew Giuliano, who later became Pope Clement VII, continued this support into his own tenure as the head of the Catholic Church.

Among Leo X’s artistic pursuits outside of music was the work of Raphael, with whom Leo developed a close relationship. It is the work of a student of Raphael’s, however, that is of interest to the present topic. Between 1517 and 1519, many of Raphael’s art students contributed to the colonnade of the Loggia of Raphael in the Vatican; among them was a painter named Giovanni da Udine.<sup>189</sup> Two paintings of his, mirror images of one another on opposite sides of a plaster column, depict various ensembles of musical instruments that performed often together during the Renaissance, one of which is an ensemble of three shawms and one trombone. The paintings altogether depict five gatherings of instruments, with a considerable amount of detail: three recorders and three curved cornetts; two straight cornetts; a quartet of crumhorns; three shawms and one trombone; and three viols.<sup>190</sup> The gathering of the *pifferi* band is given in Figure 7.

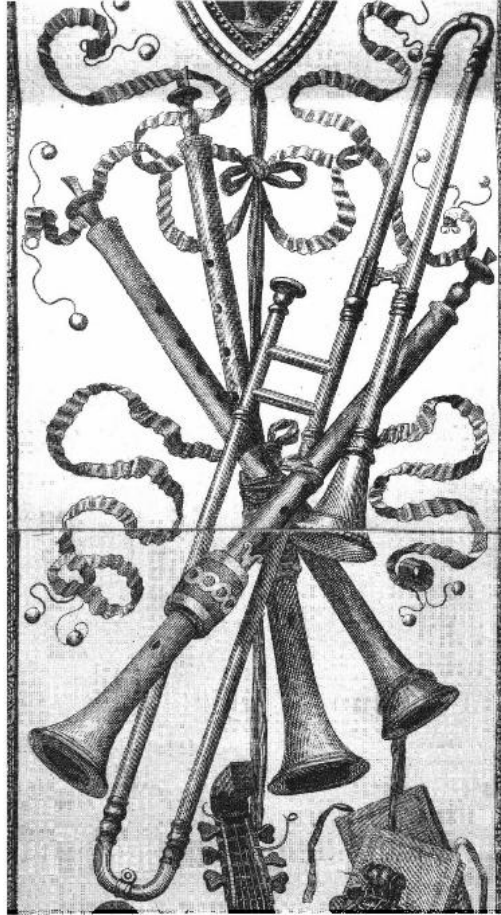
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<sup>187</sup> McGee, “Giovanni Cellini,” 214-15.

<sup>188</sup> McGee, *Ceremonial Musicians*, 193.

<sup>189</sup> Herbert Myers, “The Instrumental Trophies of Giovanni da Udine in the Vatican,” *The Galpin Society Journal* 63 (2010): 3-4.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.



**Figure 7: Painting of *Pifferi* Instruments in the Loggia of Raphael in the Vatican<sup>191</sup>**

Not only is this painting important due to its existence as an iconographic source of the *pifferi* ensemble, but also because of the detail with which Da Udine painted each of the instruments. The painting itself has faded considerably since the early sixteenth century, but in the late eighteenth century an engraver named Giovanni Volpato made copper engravings of Da Udine's works, which enable present-day scholar to accurately reconstruct what the original paintings looked like.<sup>192</sup> The image in Figure 7 is taken from one of Volpato's copper plates. They are not exact replicas; Volpato did take some liberties with his engravings. For example, the stays on the trombone that connect both tubes of the outer slide together would have been

<sup>191</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid., 3.

square and detachable in Da Udine's day, but Volpato depicts the rounded stays common to eighteenth-century instruments.<sup>193</sup>

The presence of this highly secularized ensemble in a painting on Vatican grounds is an indication that the boundaries between the civic wind bands and the church were breaking down. *Pifferi* ensembles had been performing for religious functions for over a century when Da Udine painted this column, but the extent of the crossover had not been so visually stated prior to this. Whether Leo X had a hand in the instruments Da Udine ultimately depicted is unknown. Leo X was a strong supporter of instrumental music, and the Florentine *pifferi* in particular. There is potential for a link between this and the paintings in the Loggia. Da Udine had painted musical instruments prior to these two works, in his "Ecstasy of St. Cecilia" of 1514 and the "Miraculous Draught of Fishes" of 1515-16.<sup>194</sup> Raphael's decision for da Udine to paint this particular column for Leo X was a serendipitous one, at the very least.

Perhaps the most startling aspect of this painting is that in the lower right hand corner, there are two partbooks dangling from the end of one of the shawms. Da Udine surely would not have included this detail if the members of the *pifferi* could not read music. Out of all five gatherings of instruments, this is the only one to contain any hint of notated music. The significance of that can not go unstated. As mentioned earlier, *pifferi* musicians performed from memory during celebratory occasions, but for their church duties it is far more likely that they read their parts from vocal motet books. This has to have been the case in Bruges in 1484, and it stands to reason that that was the case all over Europe. In the sixteenth century, publishing houses started churning out volumes of dance music composed or arranged by *pifferi* musicians. It follows that all *pifferi* musicians, highly trained as they were, could read music.

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<sup>193</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>194</sup> The "Ecstasy of St. Cecilia" is now in the Pinacoteca Nazionale in Bologna, and the "Miraculous Draught of Fishes" is in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. See Myers, "Instrumental Trophies," 5.

Bruges city records of 1552 mention payments to a Jan Leunis for the preparation of partbooks for the civic band of three shawms and one trombone.<sup>195</sup> At this point in the mid-sixteenth century, these books could have contained dance music, arrangements of sacred motets, or both. Part books were in use by the Bruges *alta cappella* prior to this, because documents also mention that the musician Maarten Rooryck was forced to resign from the city band in 1550, provided he return his partbook.<sup>196</sup> It is possible that partbooks were used continuously in Bruges from the first mention of the motet collection in 1484 up to the new books made by Leunis in 1552, and afterwards. The city of Bruges, therefore, must have frequently, if not always, employed musicians of a high enough caliber that they could read music. The inclusion of what can only be considered partbooks in the paintings by Da Udine implies a similar level of musical literacy among *pifferi* ensembles all across Europe.<sup>197</sup>

### **Bassano, the Cornett, and Giovanni Gabrieli**

Another trend that grew in the sixteenth century was the inclusion of the cornett in the *pifferi* ensembles of some European cities. The Sienese *pifferi* for example consisted of “flutes, trombones, and cornetts” sometime after 1556.<sup>198</sup> The city of Siena had always listed its *pifferi* members as players of “pifferi” (shawms) and trombones prior to this. The undated document listing “cornetts” is the first appearance of the word “cornett” in Sienese documents and thus must be describing a different instrument than the shawm. The Roman *pifferi* also contained trombones and cornetts as opposed to trombones and shawms, though this change took place

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<sup>195</sup> Whitwell, *The Renaissance Wind Band*, 178.

<sup>196</sup> Polk, “Flanders,” 22.

<sup>197</sup> Myers, “Instrumental Trophies,” 13.

<sup>198</sup> D’Accone, *The Civic Muse*, 577.

closer to the turn of the seventeenth century.<sup>199</sup> The *pifferi* of Bologna vacillated between shawms and cornetts as a complement to the trombones beginning in 1537, and continuing through the rest of the sixteenth century.<sup>200</sup> Documents in Mantua mention pairings of trombones and cornetts from as early as 1505.<sup>201</sup> Even Florence, the birthplace of the many innovations of the *pifferi* discussed in Chapter 1, began to pair trombones and cornetts after the fall of the Florentine Republic in 1532.<sup>202</sup>

Outside of Rome, whose *pifferi* at one point reached an instrumentation of four cornetts and five trombones, the cornett seems to have been used most heavily in England. According to David Lasocki and Roger Prior:

During the second half of the sixteenth century, cornetts and sackbuts were used increasingly to accompany voices on special occasions in the larger English cathedral and collegiate choirs...By the reign of James I, as we have seen, the Court wind musicians were using cornetts and sackbuts for special ceremonies in the Chapel Royal. The tone of the sackbut and, especially, the cornett was flexible and refined enough to allow them to play purely instrumental music and to accompany voices.<sup>203</sup>

Cornett players were hired often and freely for both sacred and secular performance occasions in England in the sixteenth century. The major reason for the cornett's prevalence is that the famous Bassano family of instrument makers moved to London in 1540 and established a workshop there that operated for three generations.<sup>204</sup> The Bassanos made cornetts for the King of England—as well as crumhorns, recorders, flutes, lutes, and viols—throughout the sixteenth century and into the early seventeenth century.<sup>205</sup>

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<sup>199</sup> Kurtzman and Koldau, "Venetian Processions," 5.3.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid., 5.8.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid., 5.12.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid., 5.7.

<sup>203</sup> David Lasocki and Roger Prior, *The Bassanos: Venetian Musicians and Instrument Makers in England, 1531-1665* (Brookfield, VT: Ashgate, 1995), 176.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>205</sup> David Lasocki, "The Anglo-Venetian Bassano Family as Instrument Makers and Repairers," *The Galpin Society Journal* 38 (1985): 120-21.

Similar to the Neuschels of Nuremberg, the Bassanos were also performing musicians. Alvise Bassano was a member of the Venetian *pifferi* in 1515—on either shawm or cornett—and his father Jeronimo, patriarch of the Bassano clan, likely was a member as well, on the sackbut.<sup>206</sup> Jeronimo had six sons, four of whom—Alvise, Anthony, Jasper, and John—traveled from Venice to London in 1531 to join the “shawms and sackbuts” of King Henry VIII.<sup>207</sup> They traveled back and forth between Italy and England periodically during the next decade, eventually settling in London by 1540 as richly employed musicians of the King. Jeronimo and a fifth son, Baptista, moved to England in the late 1530s as well; only Jacomo Bassano remained in Venice, although the English Bassanos kept close ties with the Venetian Bassanos during the rest of the sixteenth century.

The English Bassanos were given ample quarters within the dissolved monastery of the Charterhouse where they could live and set up a workshop for building and repairing instruments—all for no rent, by order of Henry VIII.<sup>208</sup> For the King of England to make a gift to the Bassanos out of their living and working quarters shows just how greatly he valued their talents, both as musicians and craftsmen. He seems to have only purchased instruments from their shop once it was established, except trombones, for some reason. The Bassanos could perform on every instrument they made—cornett, crumhorn, flute, lute, recorder, shawm, and viol—as well as the trombone, but they inexplicably never made a single trombone during their entire tenure as craftsmen in England (ca. 1540 to 1665).<sup>209</sup> A member of the Bassano family held a place in the King’s trombone consort from 1538 until the consort’s amalgamation with the

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<sup>206</sup> Ibid., 114.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid.

<sup>208</sup> Lasocki and Prior, *The Bassanos*, 17.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid., 173-74.

cornett into a “wind consort” in 1628.<sup>210</sup> Yet the King still ordered his trombones from Jorg Neuschel of Nuremberg, as mentioned in Chapter 2. While this could be a slight on the craftsmanship of the Bassanos, more than likely it is instead another piece of evidence that the German instrument makers could not be beat when it came to constructing trombones.

Regardless, the English Bassanos were more famous for the cornetts they made than anything else, including their more than capable skills as performers. Some Bassanos were in the King’s flute consort, the members of which often doubled as a cornett. An inventory of Henry VIII’s instruments made in 1547 lists sixteen flutes and sixteen cornetts as the performance instruments of the flute consort.<sup>211</sup> Many of these instruments were likely made by and performed on by the Bassanos. A chest of instruments “made by the Bassani brothers” offered for sale to the city of Brussels in 1571 included a matching set of ten cornetts of all different pitch ranges, soprano to bass.<sup>212</sup> Whether or not the city did purchase this particular chest is unknown, but some instruments from the English workshop were sold to Belgium in the sixteenth century, as well as to France, Spain, and Germany.<sup>213</sup>

David Lasocki and Roger Prior identify two different maker’s marks that can be found on surviving woodwind instruments of the sixteenth century, including forty-eight extant cornetts. One is a “rabbit’s foot” mark, and the other is an inscription, “HIER.S,” which sometimes appears in various forms (HIERO.S, HIER.S, HIE.S).<sup>214</sup> The “rabbit’s foot” mark cannot be proven to be a mark of the English Bassano workshop, although it is probable. The inscription, however, is an abbreviation of the Latin form of Jeronimo Bassano’s first name—Hieronymus—and does identify those instruments as Bassano originals. Instruments with either of the two

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<sup>210</sup> Ibid., 174.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid., 175.

<sup>212</sup> Lasocki, “Bassano Family,” 120.

<sup>213</sup> Lasocki and Prior, *The Bassanos*, 226.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid., 224.

marks—never do both marks appear on the same instrument—have been found in such locations as Augsburg, Bologna, Brussels, Hamburg, Leipzig, Leningrad, London, Nuremberg, Oxford, Paris, Rome, and Vienna.<sup>215</sup> The English Bassanos maintained a prolific instrument making business for well over one-hundred years; the reach of their business seems only to have been rivaled by the trombone makers of Nuremberg. Their advancement of the cornett in particular is an important moment in the history of the *pifferi*.

During this prosperous time in England, the Venetian Bassanos, led by Jacomo, son of Jeronimo, maintained a decent business as well. Jacomo continued in the family trade of instrument making after his father and five brothers left Venice for London. In 1539, he and his son-in-law Santo Bassano signed a lucrative contract with three members of the Venetian *pifferi* to be the sole providers of new instruments for the ensemble. The terms of their contract required them to make brand new cornetts, shawms, flutes, recorders, and crumhorns for the *pifferi*, in multiple sizes, as if to fill a consort of each—except for the crumhorn.<sup>216</sup> Jacomo's family had only recently left Venice; prior to their departure his brother Alvise and his father had both been members of the *pifferi*, so this contract was likely made for this personal connection as well as for the reputation of the Bassanos as instrument makers.

Jacomo's son-in-law had actually been born Santo Griti, but upon marrying Jacomo's daughter Osetta and joining the Bassano business, he also took on their last name.<sup>217</sup> This practice was something not unheard of in sixteenth-century Venice. Santo's most important role as a member of the Bassano clan, however, is that he was the father of the great Giovanni Bassano.

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<sup>215</sup> Ibid., 223-24.

<sup>216</sup> Giulio M. Ongaro, "16<sup>th</sup>-Century Venetian Wind Instrument Makers and Their Clients," *Early Music* 13, 3 (1985): 394.

<sup>217</sup> Ongaro, "Wind Instrument Makers," 392, and Lasocki and Prior, *The Bassanos*, xxiii.

Sometimes recorded in civic documents as Zuane, Giovanni Bassano did not continue his family's trade of instrument making, but instead made a career for himself as a prolific performer, composer, and teacher. He first played cornett with the Venetian *pifferi* in a performance at the Basilica of St. Mark's in 1576, when he was only 15 or 16 years old.<sup>218</sup> By the 1590s he had become the leader of the *pifferi*, as Zorzi Trombetta had been over a century earlier.<sup>219</sup> As a composer and teacher, Giovanni Bassano published numerous writings, including a treatise on ornamentation in cornett playing (ca. 1585), a book of capriccios for unspecified instrumental ensemble (1588), a collection of madrigals and chansons (ca. 1591), a book of motets (1598), and a collection of madrigals and canzonas (1602).<sup>220</sup>

He also led the *pifferi* in performances at the Scuola Grande di San Rocco, where Giovanni Gabrieli was organist from 1585 to his death in 1612.<sup>221</sup> Whether Giovanni Bassano met Gabrieli there or at St. Mark's, where Gabrieli was also the organist, is unknown, but they did develop a strong and lasting friendship. Giovanni Bassano was appointed *maestro di canto* at St. Mark's in 1595, and he routinely played cornett during liturgical services on Gabrieli's compositions, alongside the other famous cornettist of St. Mark's: Girolamo Dalla Casa. Denis Arnold speculates that many of Gabrieli's works for cornett were written specifically for Bassano and Dalla Casa, as it is unlikely any other cornettist in Venice at the time possessed enough skill to perform the parts as well as those two could.<sup>222</sup>

Giovanni Gabrieli's canzonas and sonatas published in the *Sacrae Symphoniae* of 1597 were performed during worship services at St. Mark's with Dalla Casa and Giovanni Bassano playing cornett in the ensemble. This much is confirmed in employment records and payment

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<sup>218</sup> Lasocki and Prior, *The Bassanos*, 253.

<sup>219</sup> Eleanor Selfridge-Field, "Bassano and the Orchestra of St. Mark's," *Early Music* 4, 2 (1976): 153.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*, 153, 154, 157.

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.*, 153.

<sup>222</sup> Denis Arnold, *Giovanni Gabrieli* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), 53.

records of St. Mark's from the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth centuries.<sup>223</sup>

The purpose of these works was first and foremost for use as worship aids; they were not solely for commercial gain, despite the fact that they were printed by one of the major Venetian publishing houses. Gabrieli was not trying to take the exalted level that the secular *pifferi* ensembles reached earlier in the sixteenth century and create a spiritual successor in musical form. Nevertheless, he did so.

A second volume containing instrumental works, entitled *Canzoni e sonate*, was published in 1615, three years after Gabrieli's death, but the collection of relevance to this study is the volume from 1597. The *Sacrae Symphoniae* contains sixteen instrumental works.<sup>224</sup> Numbers one through six are for eight instruments—in two four-part choirs—and in the *Sacrae Symphoniae* they follow the eight-part motets. Seven through twelve are for ten instruments in two five-part choirs and follow the ten-part motets. Thirteen through fifteen are for two six-part choirs of twelve instruments total, and the sixteenth and final instrumental work is for fifteen parts, arranged into three choirs of five instruments each.<sup>225</sup> Of the sixteen works, only five have any mention of instrumentation.<sup>226</sup> The titles of each of the five works, and the given instrumentation by Gabrieli, are listed in Table 3.

Gabrieli's instrumentation is heavily weighted towards cornetts and trombones, the two instruments that owe the greatest debt to the *pifferi* ensembles wherein they received their peak exposure to the general public. The German and Flemish *alta* bands of the fifteenth century that first contained the cumbersome slide trumpet exposed a need for a new chromatically viable

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<sup>223</sup> Selfridge-Field, "Bassano and the Orchestra," 155.

<sup>224</sup> The instrumental works of the *Sacrae Symphoniae* of 1597 have all been reprinted in volume ten of the Gabrieli *Opera Omnia*, edited by Richard Charteris. See footnote 227 for citation.

<sup>225</sup> Richard Charteris, introduction to Giovanni Gabrieli, *Opera Omnia*, vol. 10, *Instrumental Ensemble Works in Sacrae Symphoniae (Venice, 1597), Printed Anthologies and Manuscript Sources*, ed. Richard Charteris, *Corpus Mensurabilis Musicae*, no. 12 (Rome: American Institute of Musicology, 1998), xi.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*, xv.

|                 |  | No. 6 (a.8) | Sonata pian e forte              | No. 12 (a.10) | Canzon in echo duodecimi toni |  |                    |
|-----------------|--|-------------|----------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------|--|--------------------|
| Primus Chorus   |  | Cantus      | cornetto                         | Cantus        | cornetto                      |  | Primus Chorus      |
|                 |  | Altus       | trombone                         | Altus         | cornetto                      |  |                    |
|                 |  | Tenor       | trombone                         | Quintus       | cornetto                      |  |                    |
|                 |  | Sextus      | trombone                         | Tenor         | cornetto                      |  |                    |
| Secundus Chorus |  | Septimus    | violino                          | Sextus        | trombone                      |  | Secundus Chorus    |
|                 |  | Quintus     | trombone                         | Septimus      | cornetto                      |  |                    |
|                 |  | Octavus     | trombone                         | Octavus       | cornetto                      |  |                    |
|                 |  | Bassus      | trombone                         | Nonus         | cornetto                      |  |                    |
| No. 10 (a.10)   |  |             | Canzon duodecimi toni            | Decimus       | cornetto                      |  |                    |
| Cantus          |  | cornetto    | Bassus                           | trombone      |                               |  |                    |
|                 |  |             | [no other instrumentation given] | No. 16 (a.15) |                               |  | Canzon quarti toni |
| Primus Chorus   |  | Cantus      | cornetto                         | Cantus        | cornetto                      |  | Primus Chorus      |
|                 |  | Altus       | cornetto                         | Altus         | trombone                      |  |                    |
|                 |  | Quintus     | cornetto                         | Tenor         | trombone                      |  |                    |
|                 |  | Tenor       | cornetto                         | Quintus       | trombone                      |  |                    |
|                 |  | Sextus      | trombone                         | Bassus        | trombone                      |  |                    |
| Secundus Chorus |  | Septimus    | cornetto                         | Septimus      | cornetto                      |  | Secundus Chorus    |
|                 |  | Octavus     | cornetto                         | Octavus II    | trombone                      |  |                    |
|                 |  | Nonus       | [not given; likely cornetto]     | Nonus         | trombone                      |  |                    |
|                 |  | Decimus     | cornetto                         | Octavus I     | trombone                      |  |                    |
|                 |  | Bassus      | trombone                         | Sextus        | trombone                      |  |                    |
|                 |  |             |                                  | Undecimus II  | cornetto                      |  | Tertius Chorus     |
|                 |  |             |                                  | Duodecimus II | trombone                      |  |                    |
|                 |  |             |                                  | Undecimus I   | trombone                      |  |                    |
|                 |  |             |                                  | Decimus       | trombone                      |  |                    |
|                 |  |             |                                  | Duodecimus I  | trombone                      |  |                    |

**Table 3: Instrumentation in the *Sacrae Symphoniae* (1597) by Giovanni Gabrieli**<sup>227</sup>

brass instrument. German instrument makers happily responded with the trombone, which went on to receive a greater and greater role in both secular and sacred musical life throughout the fifteenth and entire sixteenth centuries. The cornett's origins are somewhat murkier, but as the instrument gained popularity in Italy it eventually reached the Bassano family, who not only created quality cornetts to distribute across all of Europe, but also brought virtuosic cornett playing to the attention of the master of the Venetian polychoral style, Giovanni Gabrieli.

Of interest also are the designations Gabrieli used to label each part with the context of a polychoral ensemble division. Each piece contains a Cantus, Altus, Tenor, and Bassus part at its

<sup>227</sup> The information for this table was drawn from: Giovanni Gabrieli, *Opera Omnia*, vol. 10, *Instrumental Ensemble Works in Sacrae Symphoniae* (Venice, 1597), *Printed Anthologies and Manuscript Sources*, ed. Richard Charteris, Corpus Mensurabilis Musicae, no. 12 (Rome: American Institute of Musicology, 1998).

core. For the rest of the ensemble Gabrieli numbers each part sequentially—Quintus, Sextus, Septimus, and so on—until reaching the full complement of eight, ten, twelve, or fifteen. This follows in the vein of Susato’s partbook labels—Discant, Contratenor, Tenor, Bass—of 1551, which can also be found in other dance collections published in the mid-sixteenth century. Labeling instrumental parts for universally understood voice ranges, as opposed to specific instruments, was a common practice at the time of the *Sacrae Symphoniae*’s publication. No one, however, had taken it to the same lengths as Gabrieli. A piece for fifteenth distinct instrumental parts was unusual in 1597; the very novelty of such a large-scale work intimated a printed instrumentation. Kenton summarizes that lute books, organ tablatures, and other solo performance works contained definite instrumentation before this.<sup>228</sup> Gabrieli’s publication, however, was the first to orchestrate in an ensemble medium—an ensemble of late Renaissance *pifferi* instruments.

The Florentine *pifferi*, the first such group in Italy, took their cue from the *oltremontani* and by doing so created a gateway through which the *alta cappella* filtered into a country ripe for new ways of symbolizing their newfound civic pride. The political significance of a *pifferi* ensemble attained dizzying heights first in Florence and then elsewhere, reaching Venice in 1458. In Venice, the *pifferi*, the music printing business, the Bassano family, and the cornett all collided in a fantastic explosion of musical energy that found release in the *Sacrae Symphoniae*. Despite always having some sacred performing duties listed in their job description, *pifferi* ensembles were labeled as secular wind bands in every city of Renaissance Europe. But even so, certain pieces of music managed to sidle from one repertory to the other, sacred to secular or secular to sacred. Certain individuals—Pope Leo X, Giovanni da Udine, Alvisi Trombetta, and Giovanni Bassano among them—aided this crossover in their own small ways. What to Giovanni

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<sup>228</sup> Kenton, *Giovanni Gabrieli*, 487-88.

Gabrieli must have been an innocuous publication of liturgical compositions was in fact, to music history, the virtual culmination of a two-hundred year trajectory of brass music. In the orchestration of Gabrieli's *Sacrae Symphoniae*, the civic wind bands of Europe, and the trombone in particular, reached explicit status as instruments of high art.

## APPENDIX

### Basse Danse *Mon Desir* from Susato's *Danserye* (1551)<sup>229</sup>

The musical score is presented in two systems, each with four staves. The first system contains measures 1-4, and the second system contains measures 5-8. The music is written in a common time signature (C) and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notation includes various note values (eighth, sixteenth, and quarter notes) and rests. The score concludes with a double bar line and repeat signs.

<sup>229</sup>Tielman Susato, *Danserye: Das Dritte Musikbüchlein. Tänze für Blockflötenquartett Oder Andere Melodieinstrumente* ed. Nikolaus Delius (New York: Schott, 1989), 24-25.

This musical score is written for a piano and consists of 12 staves. The first four staves form the first system, and the next eight staves form the second system. The notation includes treble and bass clefs, repeat signs, and first and second endings. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

**System 1 (Staves 1-4):**

- Staff 1 (Treble Clef):** Four measures of music. Measures 1 and 3 contain eighth-note patterns, while measures 2 and 4 contain quarter notes and rests.
- Staff 2 (Treble Clef):** Four measures of music. Measures 1 and 3 contain eighth-note patterns, while measures 2 and 4 contain quarter notes and rests.
- Staff 3 (Treble Clef):** Four measures of music. Measures 1 and 3 contain eighth-note patterns, while measures 2 and 4 contain quarter notes and rests.
- Staff 4 (Bass Clef):** Four measures of music. Measures 1 and 3 contain eighth-note patterns, while measures 2 and 4 contain quarter notes and rests.

**System 2 (Staves 5-12):**

- Staff 5 (Treble Clef):** Four measures of music. Measures 1 and 3 contain eighth-note patterns, while measures 2 and 4 contain quarter notes and rests. A first ending bracket spans measures 3 and 4, with a second ending bracket spanning measures 5 and 6.
- Staff 6 (Treble Clef):** Four measures of music. Measures 1 and 3 contain eighth-note patterns, while measures 2 and 4 contain quarter notes and rests. A first ending bracket spans measures 3 and 4, with a second ending bracket spanning measures 5 and 6.
- Staff 7 (Treble Clef):** Four measures of music. Measures 1 and 3 contain eighth-note patterns, while measures 2 and 4 contain quarter notes and rests. A first ending bracket spans measures 3 and 4, with a second ending bracket spanning measures 5 and 6.
- Staff 8 (Bass Clef):** Four measures of music. Measures 1 and 3 contain eighth-note patterns, while measures 2 and 4 contain quarter notes and rests. A first ending bracket spans measures 3 and 4, with a second ending bracket spanning measures 5 and 6.
- Staff 9 (Treble Clef):** Four measures of music. Measures 1 and 3 contain eighth-note patterns, while measures 2 and 4 contain quarter notes and rests. A first ending bracket spans measures 3 and 4, with a second ending bracket spanning measures 5 and 6.
- Staff 10 (Treble Clef):** Four measures of music. Measures 1 and 3 contain eighth-note patterns, while measures 2 and 4 contain quarter notes and rests. A first ending bracket spans measures 3 and 4, with a second ending bracket spanning measures 5 and 6.
- Staff 11 (Treble Clef):** Four measures of music. Measures 1 and 3 contain eighth-note patterns, while measures 2 and 4 contain quarter notes and rests. A first ending bracket spans measures 3 and 4, with a second ending bracket spanning measures 5 and 6.
- Staff 12 (Bass Clef):** Four measures of music. Measures 1 and 3 contain eighth-note patterns, while measures 2 and 4 contain quarter notes and rests. A first ending bracket spans measures 3 and 4, with a second ending bracket spanning measures 5 and 6.

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