

Events and Emergencies: What the
Sources Can and Cannot Tell Us
about Performing Seventeenth-
Century Italian Opera

Jennifer Williams-Brown,
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Performing 17th-Century Opera

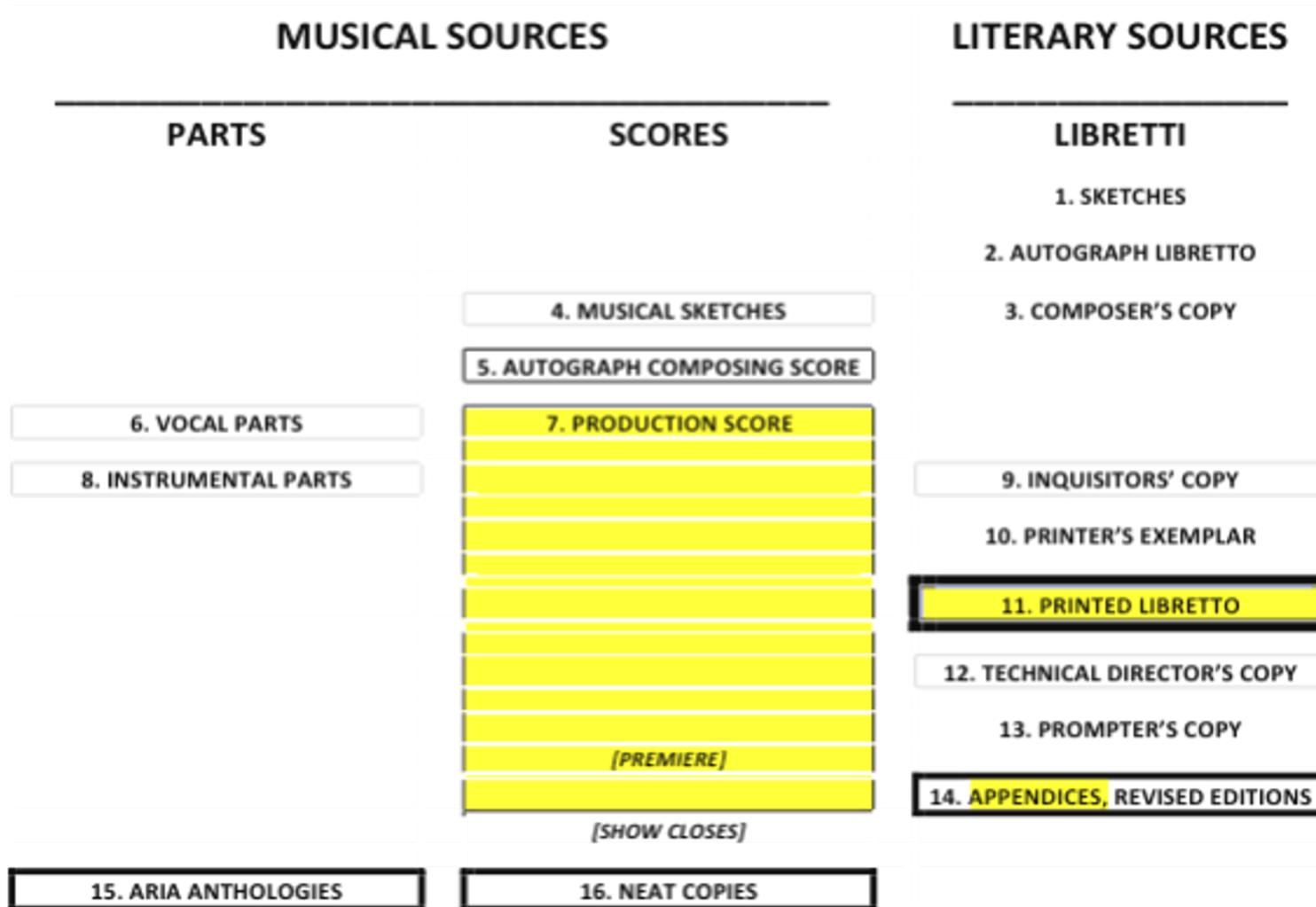
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Excerpt from Cavalli's contract
with the Teatro S. Cassiano, 1658

- *Signor Cavalli [is] obligated...to attend in person all the rehearsals that will be necessary, as well as to transpose, change, cut, and add whatever might be necessary in the music in service of the opera, as dictated by the events and emergencies that tend to happen on such occasions.*

Written Sources Generated by a Typical Premiere Season in 17th-Century Italy *(Yellow = Surviving Sources of La Calisto)*





Francesco Cavalli, *La Calisto*, f. 48v

(Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana)

Endymion's aria "Lucidissima face," Act II, sc. 1

Ma. 4. a
Ma.

sisti sui splendo-ri

luci di ti ma fa ce

di. Tessa glià le rose non sturbino i tuoi giri e la ma pa:

La Calisto, Act II, scene 1

edited by Jennifer W. Brown (A-R Editions, 2007)

Atto secondo Scena prima

Le Cime del Monte Liceo
Endimione

[Night. During this scene, Diana, as the Moon, rises in the sky in a silver chariot drawn by white stags.]

[Enter] ENDIMIONE

Er-me so-lin-ghe ci-me, Ch'al cer-chio m'ac-co-sta-te Del-le lu-ci-a-do-ra-te, In voi di no-vo-im-

[Violone]
Basso continuo

-pri-me, Con-tem-pla-tor se-cre-to, En-di-mi-o-ne l'or-me; Le va-ri-a-te

for-me Del-la stel-la d'ar-gen-to Lu-sin-gan-do, e ba-cian-do, Di chia-re not-ti

traj so-lin-ghi-or-ro-ri, Sul-la ter-ra, e su-i sas-si i suoi splen-do-ri.

[Vn. 1]
[Vn. 2]
ENDIMIONE
[Vnc.]
B.c.

Lu-ci-

-dis-si-ma fa-ce, Di To-

-sa-glia le no-te Non stur-bi-noj tuoi gi-ri, e la

pa-ce. Da-gl'At-lan-ti-ci mon-

Tra-boc-can-do le ro-ter; Fe-bo, de!

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- *Signor Cavalli [is] obligated... [to have] **all the copies and originals that will be necessary made at his own expense,** without the theatre managers having to hear any complaints, whether about paper or copyists or anything else.*

1. TRANSPOSITION

Aria (Endymion) transposed up a fourth ("Alla 4.a alta")

La Calisto, f. 48v

Handwritten musical score for the Aria "Endymion" from *La Calisto*, folio 48v. The score is transposed up a fourth. It features a vocal line with lyrics and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics include: "sisti i suoi splendori", "Luci di tanta luce", and "di Tessaglia le rose non turbino i tuoi giri e la sua pa...". The score is written in a single system with multiple staves. The tempo is marked "Allegro" and the time signature is 3/8. The key signature is one sharp (F#).

2. REWRITING

New recitative (Endymion) notated in soprano register

La Calisto, f. 55v

Handwritten musical score for Endymion in soprano register, from *La Calisto*, f. 55v. The score is written on five staves, with the vocal line in soprano register. The lyrics are in Italian and include:

piaga
per mano le mie piaghe il rogo alla mia vita
more more a la sua fe
ui vita pro mi
pena raddoppian

The score features various musical notations, including clefs, time signatures, and dynamic markings. The lyrics are written in a cursive hand below the notes.

3. CUTS

Scene (Endymion) crossed out

La Calisto, f. 58v

The image shows a page of handwritten musical notation from a manuscript, identified as *La Calisto*, folio 58v. The page is marked with a large, prominent red 'X' that crosses out the entire musical score. The score is written in brown ink on aged, yellowish paper. It consists of several systems of staves. The first system has a vocal line with the lyrics: "pro var la sempre accerba e piu rindo bre. siete siete in ev:". The second system continues the vocal line with: "non e siete siete in ev no ve:". Below these are two systems of lute tablature, each labeled "Ritornello". The final system is a vocal line with the lyrics: "A penna! mal sof fer so non sente troppo fiere de la re:". The notation includes various musical symbols such as clefs, time signatures, and note heads. The red 'X' is drawn with a thick red line, indicating that the scene has been crossed out.

4. ADDITION

Cavalli's annotation "The shepherd scene goes here"

La Calisto, f. 60r

60

me dio Chi crede a femi na re l'acqua semi na, e prima suelle =
re rova man fene va antica ro ue re che mai como ue re suo cor che gese =
ra fede muta bi le Chi crede a femi na mai sempre inabile nell'acqua semina.

Sinfonia
Sinfonia

Qui na La Scena
di B. G. B.

VOCAL LINES MISSING

Furies' duet replaced by bass line only

La Calisto, f. 98v

The image shows a page of handwritten musical notation for the opera La Calisto, folio 98v. The score is written in brown ink on aged paper. It features a duet for two Furies, with the vocal lines crossed out with diagonal lines. The bass line is preserved. The lyrics are written in Italian. The time signature is 3/2. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The score is organized into systems, with the first system containing the vocal lines and the bass line, and the second system containing the bass line and lyrics. The lyrics are: "mille fauilles del pesto Ache voute", "A mille fauilles del pesto Ache voute av", "feruenti la fera accendete ogn' Arque nel sangue am", "denti la fera accendete ogn' Arque nel sangue am", "morsi la sete s'offenda ch'offese giu:", "morsi la sete l'horrenda ch'offese giu:". The bottom of the page has the text "Furia" and "A mille fauilles" written in the left margin, and "Sub. la" and "inf:" written in the right margin.

mille fauilles del pesto Ache voute
A mille fauilles del pesto Ache voute av
feruenti la fera accendete ogn' Arque nel sangue am
denti la fera accendete ogn' Arque nel sangue am
morsi la sete s'offenda ch'offese giu:
morsi la sete l'horrenda ch'offese giu:
Furia
A mille fauilles
Sub. la
inf:

Only Surviving Vocal Part from 17th-Century Opera
Cavalli, *Artemisia*, Act I, sc. 11 (autograph)
Discarded page from part for Erisbe (crossed out)

~~Handwritten musical score for Erisbe, Act I, sc. 11 of Cavalli's *Artemisia*. The page is crossed out with a large 'X' and contains the following lyrics:~~

~~60~~

~~Il feroce di giorno mio: he l'anche finito il sen la d'impia grece~~

~~Amor bruto mai con via felice Stanco no-~~

~~l'atte l'ist'omin gradami non più come ne più come bruto no' lice~~

~~Amor bruto mai con via felice ma l'armi~~

~~Se l'ingiusti e l'anni mio l'ist' an drico un' h'la Condi e la p'...~~

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La Calisto, Act I, scene 1
(Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana)
hand of Maria Cavalli, annotations by Francesco Cavalli

La Calisto. 7

Atto Primo

Scena Prima. *Giove, e Mercurio*

Giove *Gie* *Gie*

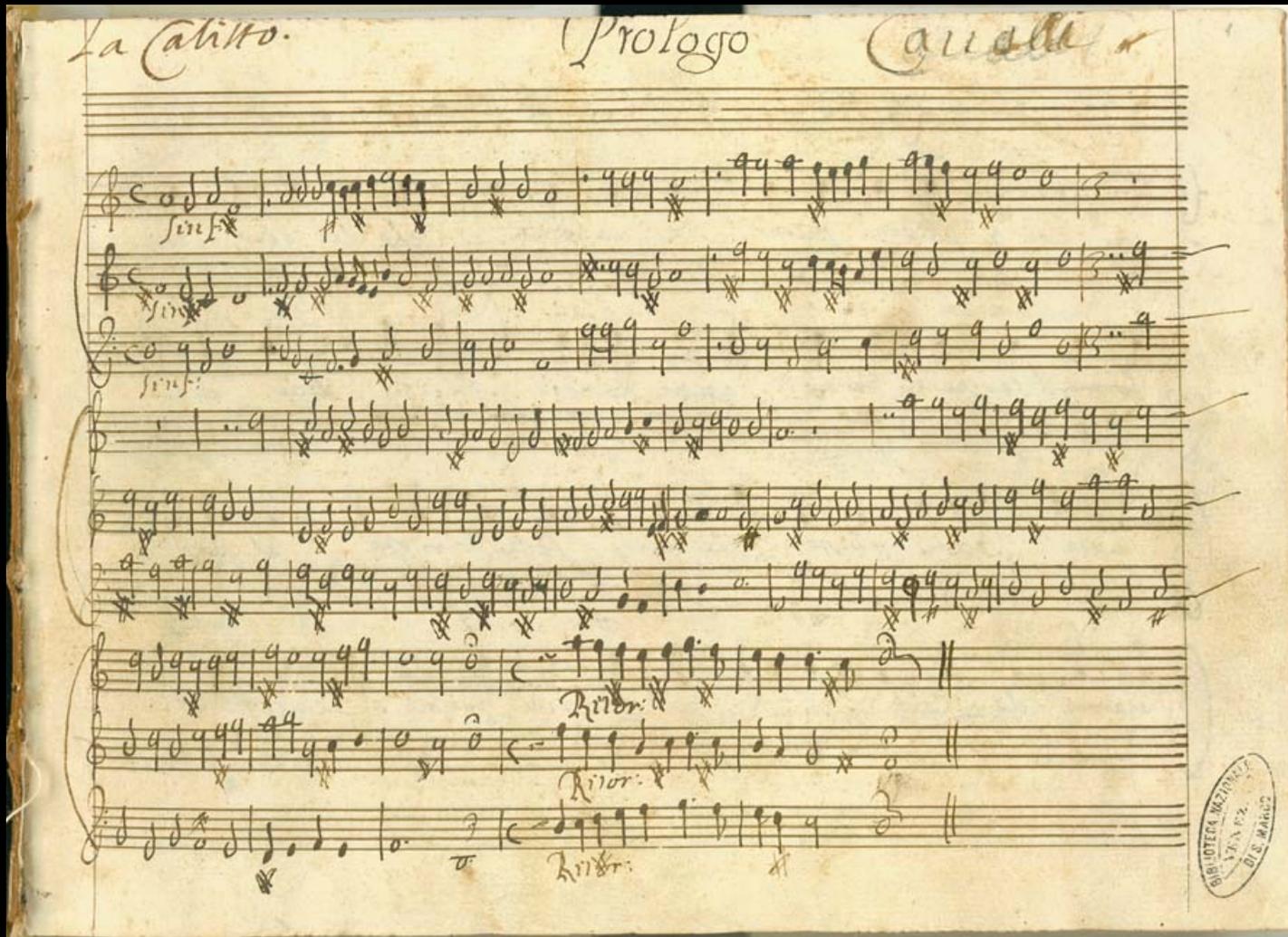
dal fuoco sul mi nato non stempravo le fiamme delle
sfere i raffini, ogn'orbe e' in vero ben l'infimo Hemisfero serba
caldi na pori ancora ardente già la terra lan-
guenti con mille bocche e mille chiude febri ci rante alti soc-

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La Calisto, end of Prologue;
"Sinfonia" added later

The image displays a page of handwritten musical notation on aged paper. The score is organized into several systems of staves. The first system includes a vocal line and two instrumental lines, all marked with the tempo instruction *Calino*. The second system continues the vocal and instrumental parts, with the vocal line labeled *Steno* and the instrumental line *Arava*. The third system shows the vocal line and a new instrumental line, both marked *Sinfonia*. The fourth system consists of three staves of instrumental music, likely for a string ensemble, with various performance markings such as *tr* (trills) and *acc* (accents). The notation is in a historical style, featuring a variety of note values and rests.

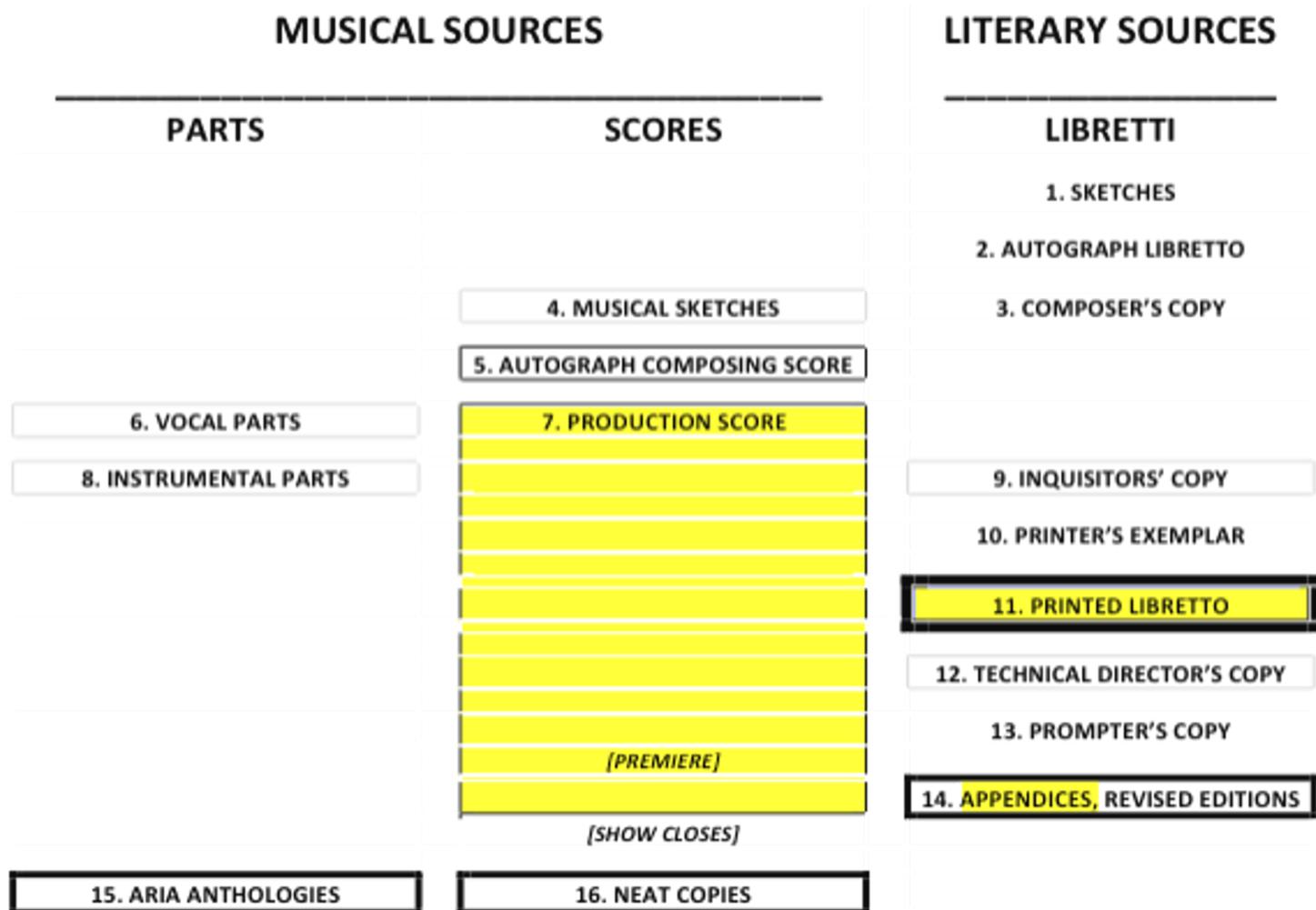
La Calisto, f. 97r

bar 1, bass line: semibreve altered to tied minims

94

The image shows a page of handwritten musical notation for the opera La Calisto, folio 97r. The page is numbered 94 in the top right corner. It features five staves of music. The first staff is a vocal line with the lyrics: "pura ferro ve altroue il piede io giro". The second staff is a vocal line with the lyrics: "Giun. Buca spacciata, e rea credi fuggire de". The third staff is a vocal line with the lyrics: "gladilveri suoi sorli e ne fandi i Castighi sovran". The fourth staff is a vocal line with the lyrics: "e me mo ranti? inossa Hora se le mie piume n'con". The fifth staff is a vocal line with the lyrics: "duca il mo Giove e in li bi di ni noue da le me sorli". The bass line, which is the focus of the caption, is the first staff of the second system, showing a semibreve note that is altered to two tied minims.

Written Sources Generated by a
 Typical Premiere Season in 17th-Century Italy
(Yellow = Surviving Sources of La Calisto)



Letter from Giovanni Grimani, owner of the Teatro SS.
Giovanni e Paolo, Sept. 11, 1655
to Cornelio Bentivoglio in Ferrara

- “Only the original [production score] can be found, in the possession of Signor Cavalli, but it is all **so worked over, and so filled with annotations that it could not be understood**; rather if it were necessary to have it copied, the assistance of the same Cavalli would be necessary.”

INSTRUMENTAL LINES MISSING

Scribe left 3 empty staves; Cavalli later filled in bass line only

La Calisto, f. 89r

89

her un Con sor re io son ni so luto ni so luto uo gl
eser go du ra uo gl eser Vogl
eser go du ra
Ritor:
Ritor:
Non uo in ste ni li re sul uo go fis ri re de