ual friendship: “transformative relationships.” In her most appealing and original chapter, Furey offers a compelling analysis of the way these intellectuals “imbued their relationships with transcendent value, even as they used their relationships to seek the divine.” Only a few missteps—e.g. concerning the lay status of Colet and Pole—blemish an otherwise command performance. The footnotes are thorough, and the bibliography is complete. All in all, Furey has brought welcome new light to her subject.

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Gaspare De Caro.

Euridice. Momenti dell’Umanesimo civile fiorentino.

Bologna: Ut Orpheus Edizioni, 2006. Pp. 252.

In this volume, Gaspare De Caro brings together eleven articles he had previously published between 2000 and 2004 in the journal *Hortus Musicus*. As the title of the collection and of the journal indicate, these articles/chapters have a strong focus on musicological interests, especially as they apply to sixteenth and seventeenth-century Florentine culture. At the same time, they also engage, first and foremost, with twentieth-century theories and debates on civic humanism advanced by scholars such as Hans Baron and Eugenio Garin, not to mention the scholarship of musicologists such as Claude V. Palisca or historians of science such as Alexandre Koyré. De Caro is quick to point out that he is not interested in providing a systematic interpretation of his own for the nexus between music and civic humanism; instead, he is content “to underline the point of view of [his] scholarship, not the results” (12). This volume is then a debate, or perhaps a discussion, with eminent twentieth-century scholars (for the most part now deceased) and not an analysis of sixteenth- or seventeenth-century sources—which makes it fascinating for colleagues interested in critical theory, though not necessarily for scholars looking to augment and expand the collective databank of information on late Renaissance music, spectacle, or even cultural theories.

De Caro’s first chapter, “The Infancy of Myths: Civic Humanism,” examines Hans Baron’s notion of civic humanism and how it came into being in the highly conflictual cultural and political climate of the Weimar Republic. De Caro points to Baron’s close linking of civic humanism with Florentine republicanism and the ideological scheme of the *Kleinstaat* that pervaded his interpretation. This chapter thus sets the scene for an interpretation of late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-

century musical theatre that will be very much in line with the idea of civic humanism and its link between politics and the arts. The second chapter, "The Borders of the Possible: Humanism and Ficinian Gnosis" undertakes, instead, a close dialogue with Alexandre Koyré on the debate between Aristotelianism and the new Galilean science. Chapter 3, "Humanisms and Musical Reform: Re-Reading Palisca," is, as its title indicates, a similar close dialogue with the famous musicologist and argues against his homogenizing interpretation of sixteenth-century debates on science and music advanced by figures such as Girolamo Mei, Piero Vettori, or the two Galilei. Next, De Caro turns to "The Academy of the Alterati, the Academician Pier Vettori, and the A Matter of History" in a chapter that brings much-needed attention to a late sixteenth-century academy and a long-lived intellectual (1499–1585), neither of which generally receive their due attention.

At this point De Caro sets aside introductory considerations and begins an extensive multi-chapter analysis of the birth of musical drama in Florence by focussing on *Euridice*, Ottavio Rinuccini and Jacopo Peri's famous *melodramma*, first performed on 6 October 1600. In chapter 5, "Eurydice by the Arno," De Caro contextualizes the reprise of the Orpheus and Eurydice story within traditional Florentine ideologies that go back to Angelo Poliziano's *Fabula di Orpheo* and to Ficino's "priscus magus." This is followed in chapter 6, "*Euridice*, or on Diversity," by a different sort of contextualizing, this time "on the reasons for the *Euridice*" and the circumstances for its first staging at a time when one could hear "voices of diffidence and dissent." Chapter seven looks at "Ottavio Rinuccini and the Road of Reason," pointing out that far too little attention has been paid to the political content of Rinuccini's text and reminding us that, throughout the seventeenth century, "allegorical mythologies and historical references" were "first and foremost an instrument of political authority." From Rinuccini, De Caro then turns to "Jacopo Corsi and Florentine Pride" in order to argue strongly against the traditional scholarly view that Corsi was supposedly uninterested in politics or in theoretical or philosophical discussions on music and theatre. From *Euridice* and its two authors, De Caro moves next to "The Fables of Narcissus: Conjectural Variations on the Lost *Dafne* by Giulio Caccini," a brief chapter in which he takes Caccini to task for advancing the supposed falsehood that opera was born not at court with the *Euridice* of 1600, but privately in the Camerata dei Bardi with his *Dafne* of 1597. De Caro is clearly annoyed at Caccini, so much so that he opens his chapter by pointing out bluntly that "Like all great liars, Giulio Caccini [...] used to weave subtle elements of truth in the thread of his fables, even though the mischievous tangle [he created] fed more the credulity of posterity than that of his contemporaries." Having set the story straight and given its primacy

back to *Euridice*, De Caro returns to the *melodramma* dear to his heart in chapter 10, “The Libretto for the *Euridice*, or on Musical Tragedy.” In a way this chapter echoes chapter 5 by advancing the idea of a “unilinear Florentine sobriety” in Rinuccini’s libretto for the *Euridice*, to be found “in the narrative path from death to return.” However, as De Caro points out over the course of the chapter, Rinuccini’s look back at an earlier time also points to his awareness of a changing present in which the ideals of the past are no longer espoused. The final chapter, “The Interpreter as Historian: The Case of the *Euridice*,” opens with the question: “What distinguishes good interpretations from bad ones?” The author is clearly opening a can of worms and diving straight into a debate on scholarly (and theatrical) approaches that reaches well beyond the simple case of an early seventeenth-century musical drama. De Caro rejects the category of “baroque opera” and invites us to look further into the “new manner of singing” (“nuova maniera di canto”). The volume ends with an appendix containing Ottavio Rinuccini’s political poetry.

Although often more engaged with contemporary scholarship than with the primary sources, this collection of articles does, nonetheless, contribute to our greater understanding of the birth of *melodramma* in Florence at the turn of the seventeenth century. This reader would have preferred to see more editorial attention paid to the author’s prose; clarification of some of his allusions, which seem directed very much to a public of specialists to whom the works of Girolamo Mei, for example, are all well known; more direct citation of primary sources, rather than citation of secondary scholarship on them; a tighter connection between the contents of the chapters and of the appendix, which seems to have been placed somewhat gratuitously in this volume; a bibliography of cited sources; and a bibliography of where and when, exactly, these eleven articles were first published in *Hortus Musicus*. On the whole, however, this collection holds together well and contributes a number of challenging ideas to the discussion on theatre and politics in late Renaissance Florence.

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