

Giovanni Battista De Vecchis and the Theory of Melodic Accent from Zarlino
to Zingarelli

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‘If only the illustrious Zingarelli had been granted a longer life, or less demanding duties, and had ordered and reduced his teachings into a textbook for the young’, opined his former student Giovanni Battista De Vecchis, ‘how immensely beneficial and useful it would have been for lovers of art! Although far inferior to Zingarelli (and who could match him?), I have not spared any effort or diligence in undertaking the difficult task, and after many years of meditation and incessant research into the products of the finest minds, I present to the discerning public my work, complete in all its parts, with the object of setting out that which relates to a regular musical composition’.¹

It took De Vecchis thirteen years to complete the task. Spurred into action by news of Zingarelli’s death in 1837, he began to assemble and chronicle the teachings he had received as a student at the Naples Conservatoire, eventually publishing them as a two-volume ‘Compendium of Counterpoint of the Ancient and Modern Neapolitan School of Music’ (1850). As a professional maestro, De Vecchis regarded his work primarily as a practical course of instruction in time-honoured methods, intended, according to his preface, to assist his young apprentices at the Abbey of Montecassino to revive the glories of ‘a Durante or a Cimarosa’. He was also aware that it would help to preserve for posterity a distinguished heritage of teachings, many of which were taught orally and seldom written down. Already by that time Niccolò Zingarelli (1752–1837) was widely revered as ‘the last custodian of the great traditions of the ancient Neapolitan school’.² Descended from an old musical family, at

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¹ Giovanni Battista De Vecchis, *Compendio di contrappunto dell’antica e moderna scuola di musica napoletana*, 2 vols. (Naples, 1850), i. preface: ‘Se al chiarissimo Zingarelli fosse tanto bastata la vita, o meno frequenti fossero state le occupazioni, da ordinare e ridurre in una istituzione per la Gioventù i suoi insegnamenti, quale immenso beneficio, di quanta utilità non sarebbe stato il suo lavoro per gli amatori dell’arte! Benchè di gran lunga inferiore allo Zingarelli (e chi potrà eguagliarlo?) non ho risparmiato né fatica, né diligenza, mi accinsi alla difficile impresa, e dopo molti anni di meditazioni, e di ricerche incessanti nelle produzioni dei più chiari ingegni, presento al Pubblico intelligente il mio lavoro, in tutte le parti completo, avendo per oggetto svolgere ciò, che si attiene ad un componimento regolare di Musica’. Little is known about De Vecchis other than that he studied under Zingarelli at Naples sometime between 1813 and 1837 and went on to become *maestro di musica* at the Royal Abbey of Montecassino.

² Adriano [Adrien] de La Fage, ‘Niccolò Zingarelli [I]’, *Gazzetta musicale di Firenze* 2/5 (1854), 19–20 at 19: ‘l’ultimo depositario delle grandi tradizioni dell’antica Scuola napoletana’. La Fage, formerly a student of Giuseppe Baini at the Vatican, knew Zingarelli from 1833 to 1836. For an

the age of seven he and his two younger brothers were taken in by the Conservatorio di Santa Maria di Loreto in Naples, where his recently deceased father, Riccardo Tota Zingarelli, had been *professore di canto* since the time of Durante and Porpora. One brother later took up his father's position at the conservatoire, while the other played double-bass at the San Carlo theatre. Zingarelli himself studied throughout the 1760s with Fenaroli, Speranza, and Sacchini and went on to find fame as a successful opera composer. He spent the final quarter of his life passing on his knowledge and experience to a younger generation, as Director (from 1813) of the newly amalgamated Naples Conservatoire.

Although the provenance and quality of his teaching were beyond reproach, he appears to have delivered his lessons, like so many inspiring educators before and since, in a haphazard and unsystematic way. 'Zingarelli's teaching has been much criticised', conceded his friend Adrien de La Fage, 'and it must be admitted that he didn't present it in any progressive order'.³ Italian archives contain an enormous quantity of *partimenti*, *solfeggi*, and other student exercises bearing his name, much of it unpublished. It was De Vecchis's task to impose some order on this material and to make sense of it in the first volume of his Compendium. But these documents relate only to the initial stages of training in composition. In Naples, as elsewhere in Italy, students would undergo years of arduous practical instruction in *armonia* and *contrappunto* before they were allowed to progress to finishing classes in *composizione*, which equipped them with professional skills such as how to structure a musical discourse, text-setting, and instrumentation. Since nothing of this advanced stage of training is known to have survived in Zingarelli's hand, De Vecchis must have relied on his own student notes when compiling his second volume on *composizione*, supplementing them with reference to relevant sources. Taken as a whole, De Vecchis's Compendium presents modern musicology with a wealth of information on the Neapolitan ('partimento') tradition, setting out in detail not only many of the theories and practices taught at the eighteenth-century conservatoires but also methods of formal organization, text-setting, and instrumentation bequeathed to Bellini, Mercadante, and their contemporaries. It is, in short, one of the most thorough and illuminating guides to the Neapolitan musical tradition of the nineteenth century. Yet, with the notable exception of Giorgio Sanguinetti's

overview of Zingarelli's life and works, see Maria Caraci Vela, 'Niccolò Zingarelli tra mito e critica', *Nuova rivista musicale italiana* 22/3 (1988), 375–422.

³ Adriano de La Fage, 'Niccolò Zingarelli [IV]', *Gazzetta Musicale di Firenze* 2/10 (1854), 38: 'Fu assai censurato l'insegnamento di Zingarelli: ed è forza confessare che non presentava un ordine progressivo'.

pioneering research, it has been entirely overlooked by scholars.⁴

In this article, I investigate just one aspect of Zingarelli's teachings as recorded by De Vecchis: his method of setting words to music. By placing this neglected but important source in historical context and putting forward an interpretation, I aim to contribute fresh material to the growing literature on rhythm and text-setting in *primo Ottocento* opera and, more specifically, on the pedagogical traditions of the Neapolitan conservatoires. Although recent years have witnessed rapid advances in research on these once widespread musical practices, vast archives of material remain unexplored and significant questions unanswered. In this respect, the article is intended to supplement the chapter on rhythm in my study of compositional theory and practice in nineteenth-century Italian opera.⁵ There, I surveyed mostly northern Italian writings in light of Friedrich Lippmann's theories (1973–75) and Anton Reicha's *Trattato della melodia* (1830), focussing in particular on Bonifazio Asioli's method of generating a 'melodic rhythm' (*ritmo melodico*) from the accents of poetry and of varying the resulting pattern of strong and weak beats through the expressive vocal inflections of the 'musical speech-accent' (*accento musicale*). The Neapolitan tradition was represented (on pp. 87–9) primarily by Giuseppe Staffa's 1856 analysis of rhythm in 'Via caro sposino' from Donizetti's *Don Pasquale*. The close reading of De Vecchis undertaken below suggests that Asioli's notion of *ritmo melodico* conformed in many respects to much older doctrines of 'grammatical accent', that the analytical symbols appended by Staffa to Donizetti's melody signified the number of these grammatical accents within a phrase, and that the term *accento musicale* was coined only in 1815 as a synonym for long-established categories of 'rhetorical' and 'expressive' accents.

Because so little documentary evidence survives to testify to the Neapolitan method of training apprentice composers in text-setting, this article sets out to interpret and contextualise De Vecchis's instructions by determining their origins. It traces the genealogy of the concept of 'accent' as understood by early nineteenth-century composers and in the process attempts to disentangle the confusion created by successive reinterpretations of an Italian theory of *qualitative* rhythmopoeia established in the sixteenth century, which accounted for rhythm, metre, and pitch contour through a threefold division of accent. Since it is unfeasible to trace the full history of this theory, the article explores only its origins, its treatment by Zarlino, its significance in writings by De Vecchis and other nineteenth-century

⁴ Giorgio Sanguinetti, 'Decline and Fall of the "Celeste Impero": the Theory of Composition in Naples During the *Ottocento*', *Studi Musicali* 36/2 (2005), 451–502.

⁵ Nicholas Baragwanath, *The Italian Traditions and Puccini: Compositional Theory and Practice in Nineteenth-Century Opera* (Bloomington, 2011), 66–139.

Italian musicians, and the confusing alternative terminology circulated by Rousseau's *Dictionnaire de Musique* (Paris, 1768).

In the broadest sense, the article draws attention to De Vecchis's Neapolitan doctrine of uniting words with melody as an historical example of a 'drastic' approach to conceptualising music, in Abbate's (and, ultimately, Jankélévitch's) terms;⁶ one that recognised the priority of unruly human performance over abstract rationalisation, in contrast to the better-known 'gnostic' theories of Sulzer, Schulz, Kirnberger, and Koch, with their emphasis on notated rather than performed melodies and their subordination of rhythm (as spoken, sung, or played) to readily quantifiable metric grids.⁷

DE VECCHIS'S COMPENDIUM AND THE IMPORTANCE OF ACCENT

De Vecchis's *Compendium* is arranged as a progressive course of instruction, designed to be completed over a notional period of eight years. In keeping with the curriculum at the Naples Conservatoire, the six books of the first volume represent six successive years of study in harmony and counterpoint, ranging from simple figured basses to multi-voiced canons and fugues and ending with a treatise on plainchant in Roman neumes, as used in Italian churches throughout the nineteenth century. The three books of the second volume correspond to two final years of advanced training in composition. The first book is entitled 'On the Ideal' (*Dell'Ideale*), the second 'On the Method of Joining Music to Words' (*Del Modo d'unire la Musica alle Parole*), and the third 'On the Method of Scoring Musical Compositions' (*Del Modo di strumentare i Componimenti Musicali*).

It is interesting to note how late words were introduced into this Neapolitan educational system, given the predominance of vocal genres in Italian musical life. Before setting a single verse to music, students were expected to possess a complete mastery of harmony and counterpoint and to be able to compose all manner of complicated exercises. More than that, they had to demonstrate a sound grasp of basic models for correct musical construction, or 'ideal' forms, in the Platonic sense, of melodic and rhythmic discourse. These were covered in De Vecchis's first book of advanced skills, 'On the Ideal', which laid

⁶ Carolyn Abbate, 'Music – Drastic or Gnostic?', *Critical Inquiry* 30 (2004), 505–36.

⁷ Johann George Sulzer, Johann Abraham Peter Schulz, and Johann Philipp Kirnberger, *Allgemeine Theorie der schönen Künste in Einzelnen: nach alphabetischer Ordnung der Kunstwörter auf einander folgenden, Artikeln abgehandelt*, 2 vols. (Leipzig, 1771–74); Johann Philipp Kirnberger, *Die Kunst des reinen Satzes*, 2 vols. (Berlin, 1771–79); Heinrich Cristoph Koch, *Versuch einer Anleitung zur Composition*, 3 vols. (Leipzig, 1782, 1787, 1793).

down rigorous guidelines for piecing together standard arrangements of phrases and periods according to rules of musical punctuation; for ensuring an agreeable and proportionate relationship of rhythms at different levels, from individual phrases, through groups of phrases, to an overall sense of balance and symmetry (or *euritmia*, as it was called, following classical precedents); for rendering the musical expression appropriate in terms of affect, character, and corresponding tempo; for choosing a suitable style; for structuring entire compositions in deference to the ancient theory of design, conduct, and finishing (*disegno, condotta e perfezionamento*); and, finally, for constructing extended melodies according to standard formulas through instruction in the writing of *solfeggi*.⁸

By the time students progressed to the last stages of training, as presented in De Vecchis's second book of advanced skills, 'On the Method of Joining Music to Words', they were steeped in conventional musical lore. Their every compositional decision was underpinned by a richly stocked and deeply ingrained lexicon of preconfigured materials, which could be adapted to meet any professional eventuality. While hardly a recipe for innovation and originality, this did at least guarantee them the advantages of compositional fluency and faultless technique. It also meant that the study of text-setting concentrated more on the rhythms, meanings, and expressive inflections of speech, especially as refined through poetry, than on melodic contours, for which there were plenty of versatile ready-made 'ideal' shapes. According to Zingarelli's method, as set out by De Vecchis, the first and most important consideration in setting text to music was *accent*.

A DIGRESSION ON THE MEANING(S) OF ACCENT

It is crucial to understand what the term signified in this context. Before the mid-nineteenth century accent was commonly understood to refer to the correct, meaningful, and expressive *pronunciation* of words, whether delivered by means of ordinary speech, poetic recitation, religious cantillation, or song. It was known to derive from *ad cantus* or *accentus*, a Latin translation of the ancient Greek word *prosōidía* or prosody, meaning literally that which is added by the voice 'to the song/poem' (*pros + ōdé*).⁹ Since 'prosody' is normally used in

⁸ Sanguinetti, 'Decline and Fall', 481–93, provides an expert summary of De Vecchis's teachings on form.

⁹ W. Sidney Allen, *Accent and Rhythm: Prosodic Features of Latin and Greek: A Study in Theory and Reconstruction* (Cambridge, 2009), 86; David Hiley, *Gregorian Chant* (Cambridge, 2009), 197. See also Michael D. Green, 'A History of the Word "Accent" in Music Theoretical Sources from the Sixteenth Century to the Present', PhD Diss., University of Chicago, 1991. The rules for interpreting the pitch content of ancient Greek accentuation, as far as they can be reconstructed, are outlined in

modern English to refer to the rhythm, stress, and intonation of everyday speech, De Vecchis's notion of accent is perhaps better understood in terms of Quintilian's *pronuntiatio*, one of the five canons of classical rhetoric, which signified the studied and artful delivery of an oration. Correctness in delivery, whether as plain pronunciation or lofty *pronuntiatio*, involved factors such as syllable stress (or length) and verse metre. Meaningfulness required an observance of punctuation and verse (or phrase) rhythm. Expressiveness relied on intonation (or pitch) and a variety of voice inflections. These three properties of pronunciation were understood to relate as much to vocal melody as to speech. By extension, the concept of (speech-)accent could also be used in connection with instrumental melodies from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries (including those that drew upon the rhythms, step patterns, and gestures of dance).

The word 'accent' has since acquired many alternative meanings, leading to a potential for errors in the reading of historical sources such as De Vecchis's *Compendium*. Its association with the initiation-points of a pulse measured in units of two or three beats, known today as 'metrical accent', has its origins in rhythmic theories newly formulated in northern Germany towards the end of the eighteenth century, which were taken up and developed by later scholars as the *Akzenttheorie*.¹⁰

The simplistic conflation of accent with dynamic or agogic stress arose in the mid-eighteenth century. As Joshua Steele complained in 1779, 'Modern musicians, very improperly, use the words *accented* and *unaccented* in the place of thesis and arsis'.¹¹ This shift in meaning was encouraged by the introduction of symbols denoting 'accent' in publications aimed at an emerging market of aspiring but unschooled amateurs, such as Corrette's 'Easy Method for Learning to Play the Violin in the French and Italian Style' (1738) or Geminiani's 'Treatise on Good Taste' (1749).¹² Professionals had no need for such

Charles H. Cosgrove and Mary C. Meyer, 'Melody and Word Accent Relationships in Ancient Greek Musical Documents: The Pitch Height Rule', *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 126 (2006), 66–81.

¹⁰ Sulzer, Schulz, and Kirnberger, *Allgemeine Theorie*; Kirnberger, *Die Kunst des reinen Satzes*; Koch, *Versuch einer Anleitung*. For a recent assessment, see Roger Mathew Grant, 'Epistemologies of Time and Metre in the Long Eighteenth-Century', *Eighteenth-Century Music* 6/1 (2009), 59–75. An overview of the *Akzenttheorie* may be found in William E. Caplin, 'Theories of Musical Rhythm in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries', in *The Cambridge History of Western Music Theory*, ed. Thomas Christensen (Cambridge, 2002), 657–94.

¹¹ Joshua Steele, *Prosodia rationalis or An Essay towards Establishing the Melody and Measure of Speech* (London, 1779), 11; quoted in George Houle, *Meter in Music, 1600–1800* (Bloomington, 1987), 79.

¹² A survey of accent markings can be found in Clive Brown, *Classical and Romantic Performing Practice 1750–1900* (Oxford, 1999), 95–137.

crude and rudimentary devices. Reducing the intricacies of their correct, meaningful, and expressive performances to a handful of notational conventions inevitably resulted in ambiguity and misunderstanding. By the 1800s a bewildering range of markings were used to represent accentuation, as witnessed by the continuing debate over the ‘long accent’ or ‘short diminuendo’ in manuscripts and editions of Schubert, Chopin, and others.¹³ Koch commented on the unavoidable limitations of any such symbols for expressive accents in his *lexicon* (1802).¹⁴

Recent empirical investigations of melodic accent have tended to marginalise the historical evidence and to formulate their own terminology, in keeping with the open definition of accent in Cooper and Meyer (1960) as ‘a stimulus (in a series of stimuli) which is *marked for consciousness*’, whether by dynamic, agogic, harmonic, melodic, timbral, or any other means.¹⁵ While they occasionally explore the influence of linguistic speech contours in the perception of accent, they do not generally acknowledge its origins in the idea of pronunciation as a highly evolved mode of human communication.

Further possibilities for confusion arise in the use of the French terms *accent* (*plaintif*), *aspiration*, or *plainte* and the German *Accentus* or *Superjectio* to signify a type of ornament, deriving from plainchant traditions and corresponding to the placement of an upper or lower appoggiatura on an accented syllable.¹⁶ In Italy, archaic melodic formulas

¹³ A recent addition to the debate may be found in David Hyun-Su Kim, ‘The Brahmsian Hairpin’, *Nineteenth-Century Music* 36/1 (2012), 46–57. In Bonifazio Asioli’s textbook on singing for the Milan Conservatoire, *Scale e salti per il solfeggio: preparazione al canto e arietta* (Milan, 1816), 24–7, the long accent was used to signify a variety of voice inflections, including the appoggiatura and the *vibrazione di voce*, which was ‘a part of the *messa di voce*, taken from the middle to the end’. The symbols above the syncopated high As of the aria ‘Casta Diva’ in the first edition of Bellini’s *Norma* (Milan, ca. 1831) were most likely understood (by, e.g., Chopin) to indicate similar ‘vibrations of the voice’. Asioli also defined an *accento della frase* (a crescendo and decrescendo corresponding to an ascending and descending pitch contour).

¹⁴ Heinrich C. Koch, *Musikalisches Lexicon* (Frankfurt am Main, 1802), cols. 52–54.

¹⁵ Grosvenor Cooper and Leonard B. Meyer, *The Rhythmic Structure of Music* (Chicago, 1960), 8. A representative example of an empirical approach may be found in David Huron and Matthew S. Royal, ‘What is Melodic Accent? Converging Evidence from Musical Practice’, *Music Perception* 13/4 (1996), 489–516, which identifies seven types according to preference criteria: treble, bass, registral extreme, interval size, interval ascent, interval descent, and contour pivot.

¹⁶ See Dietrich Bartel, *Musica Poetica: Musical-Rhetorical Figures in German Baroque Music* (Lincoln, 1997), 170–76; Catherine Gordon-Seifert, *Music and the Language of Love: Seventeenth-Century French Airs* (Bloomington, 2011), 198; and Frederick Neumann, *Ornamentation in Baroque and Post-Baroque Music* (Princeton, 1978), 103–23. The French ‘plaintive accent’ often involved a short flip at the end of a long note; see Marin Mersenne, *Harmonie universelle: contenant la théorie et la pratique de la musique*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1636–37), ii. 356. Johann Gottfried Walther, *Musikalisches Lexicon oder musikalische Bibliothec* (Leipzig, 1732), 5, offered this as the first

known as the seven *accenti ecclesiastici* continued to be used to punctuate biblical recitation well into the nineteenth century.¹⁷

DE VECCHIS ON THE THREE KINDS OF ACCENT

The ancient meaning of accent as prosody and expressive vocal delivery (*pronuntiatio*) endured in Italy because there was a long history of equating speech and poetic recitation with singing. The practice of *parlar cantando*, the song-like delivery of improvised poetry, began during the time of Dante¹⁸ and *improvvisatori*, such as the renowned Corilla Olimpica, continued to entertain tourists well into the nineteenth century.¹⁹ In addition, Italian maestros tended to preserve and maintain the authority of antiquated theories as a matter of course. In deference to classical authorities such as Aristoxenus of Tarentum (born ca. 375 BC), medieval and renaissance writers observed no essential difference between recitation and song, distinguishing only the ‘continuous’ and ‘intervallic’ pitch-contours of speaking and singing.²⁰ Both were considered accentual music. Gioseffo Zarlino (1517–90) even analyzed lines from Virgil, Horace, and Cicero in terms of the intervals traversed by the smoothly undulating contours of the ‘continuous’ speaking voice.²¹ A similar identity of poetry and song continued to inform Italian theories of music until the turn of the twentieth century.

De Vecchis’s introduction to text-setting invoked this tradition in its emphasis on the

definition of accent. Johann Mattheson, *Der vollkommene Capellmeister* (Hamburg, 1739), 268–69, discussed accent as a type of appoggiatura or *le port de voix*, adding that Heinichen allowed any interval to be used. It could also mean the application of a mordent to the upper note of a descending leap.

¹⁷ Angelo Bonfanti (ed.), *Dizionario delle origini invenzioni e scoperte nelle arti, nelle scienze, nella geografia, nel commercio, nell’agricoltura ecc.* (Milan, 1828), 18; Luigi Rusconi, *Dizionario universale archeologico-artistico-tecnologico* (Turin, 1859), 26. The seven accents were called *immutabile, medio, grave, acuto, moderato, interrogativo, and finale*.

¹⁸ Elena Abramov-van Rijk, *Parlar cantando: The Practice of Reciting Verses in Italy from 1300 to 1600* (Bern, 2009), traces the term to a treatise appended to Sommacampagna, *De li rithimi volgari* (1384).

¹⁹ Ellen Lockhart, ‘Italian Half-Song from Corilla to Rossini’, paper delivered at the 17th Biennial Conference on Nineteenth-Century Music, Edinburgh, June 2012.

²⁰ Aristoxenus, *Elementa Harmonica*, 1:8–9; discussed in Lionel Ignacius Cusack Pearson, *Aristoxenus, Elementa Rhythmica: The Fragment of Book II and the Additional Evidence for Aristoxenean Rhythmic Theory* (Oxford, 1990), 68.

²¹ Gioseffo Zarlino, *Sopplimenti musicali* (Venice, 1588), 266–68. Seth J. Weiner, ‘The Quantitative Poems and the Psalm Translations: The Place of Sidney’s Experimental Verse in the Legend’, in *Sir Philip Sidney: 1586 and the Creation of a Legend*, ed. J. A. van Dorsten, Dominic Baker-Smith, and Arthur F. Kinney (Leiden, 1986), 193–220 at 200, traces Zarlino’s comments to Antonius Lullius, *De Oratione Libri Septem* (Basle, 1588), 406–10.

importance and power of accent, or pronunciation:

The composer will be able to adapt music to words well and to express the sentiment they denote when he knows their true meaning and correct pronunciation, as much in prose as in poetry; and if he also knows how to set correctly the short syllables, as well as the long, in those parts of the bar that suit them, since these must be kept in music as they were originally. Moreover, this also serves to maintain the harmony of the poetic verses and to avoid spoiling the meaning of the diction as if it were prose. Since the entire power of the pronunciation of words is contained in the accent, it is appropriate to begin this book by speaking of the musical accent and the accent of words, in order to understand better the relationship and harmony between them that must always be present in any circumstance.²²

He went on to define three types of accent, ‘grammatical, rhetorical, and expressive’ (*grammatico, oratorio, e patetico*), which were understood to apply analogously to words and music. They formed the cornerstone of De Vecchis’s Neapolitan method for composing vocal melody, much as they had – as different national accents – throughout the rest of Europe during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.²³ The grammatical accent pertained to the stressed (long) and unstressed (short) syllables of correct pronunciation and the mechanisms for representing them through musical notation, as determined by the language. It gave rise to an entire theory of rhythm and metre, as explained below. The rhetorical (or oratorical, or, after Rousseau, logical or rational) accent ensured that the meaning of the text and its verse metre were clearly conveyed, by marking out the necessary divisions of the melody, or its ‘punctuation’, and by highlighting words of particular importance and the main syllabic accent or rhyme pattern of the verse. The expressive (or musical or, after Rousseau, pathetic) accent was often considered together with the rhetorical accent, since it signified the many and varied vocal inflections that heightened the expressivity and meaning of a given verse. All manner of pitch schemata, embellishments, and eloquent departures from conventional verse rhythm belonged to this accent. It should not be confused with the

²² De Vecchis, *Compendio*, ii. 37: ‘Il Compositore allora può bene adattare la Musica alle parole, ed esprimere quel sentimento, che dinotano; quando conosce il vero significato di esse, e la di loro giusta pronunzia, tanto in prosa, quanto in Poesia; e ciò, per collocare giustamente, le sillabe brevi, come le lunghe, in quei siti della battuta, che gli si conviene; dovendosi queste conservare tali ancora colla Musica, come sono originalmente. Dippiù, ciò ancora serve, per mantenere l’armonia dei versi nella poesia, e per non guastare tanto in questa, quanto nella prosa il significato delle dizioni: Siccome tutta la forza della pronunzia delle parole è riposta nell’Accento, così conviene incominciare in questo Libro a parlare dell’Accento Musicale, e delle parole; per far meglio capire quella relazione, ed armonia, che deve trovarsi sempre fra di loro in ogni circostanza’.

²³ As acknowledged by, e.g., Brown, *Classical and Romantic Performing Practice*, 8.

occasional use of the term ‘musical accent’ to indicate a metrical stress, or the musical equivalent of a ‘poetic accent’. This more straightforward definition gained currency among a small number of progressive German-influenced writers in Italy during the nineteenth-century.²⁴ For everyone else, *accento musicale* continued to mean expressive inflections of the voice.

THE MASORETIC AND BEMBIST ORIGINS OF THE THREE ACCENTS

The origins of De Vecchis’s three accent types and their relevance to methods of composition can be established in the renaissance, when humanist scholars attempted to theorise a union of vernacular verse and music by identifying the qualitative accents of contemporary poetry and prose with the rhythms, pitches, and expressive devices of melody. The same threefold classification of accent is found in hundreds of sources dating back to the sixteenth century, set out with remarkable consistency and only minor variations in terminology. The earliest such accounts relate primarily to ecclesiastical chant, as, for instance, in the writings of Andreas Ornithoparcus (ca.1490–1550).²⁵ By the later sixteenth century the three classes of accent commonly applied also to discussions of vernacular poetry and music.

In his reactionary *Sopplimenti musicali* (1588), Zarlino provided a detailed

²⁴ The earliest Italian writer to restrict *accento musicale* to metrical stress appears to have been Carlo Gervasoni, *Nuova teoria di musica ricavata dall’odierna pratica* (Parma, 1812), 354. Cesare Orlandini, *Dottrina musicale esposta in sei ragionamenti scientifici* (Bologna, 1844), 413, employed the terms *accento musicale* and *accento poetico* to signify dynamic accents tied to metre. But he also defined poetic accent as ‘all the expressive modifications of the speaking voice’ (410). His sixth dissertation presented a conventional survey of Italian verse types from the *endecasillabo* to the *trisillabo*, including a suggestion that the grave, acute, and circumflex accents of ancient Greek correlated with the *piano*, *tronco*, and *sdrucchiolo* endings of Italian poetry. Melchiorre Balbi, *Grammatica ragionata della musica considerata sotto l’aspetto di lingua* (Milan, 1845), 149, devised his own terminology for three levels of metrical accent: the *accento minore* on any beat of the bar, the *accento maggiore* on the first beat of the bar, and the *accento massimo o metrico* on the first beat of every other bar. He explained departures from metric regularity as an *accento apparente o eccezionabile*. Abramo Basevi, *Studio sulle opere di G. Verdi* (Florence, 1859), 55, 70, 120, 152, 242, and 278, used *accento musicale* exclusively to denote metrical stress, usually relating to the first beat of a bar. He criticised the Italian version of *Les vèpres siciliennes* because ‘the musical accent doesn’t always correspond to the grammatical’ (242). Older traditions nevertheless continued to occupy the majority of Italian writings. In 1902, for instance, Amintore Galli, *Piccolo lessico del musicista* (Milan, 1902), 10, defined *accento* as ‘the inflection of the voice’, adding that it was ‘synonymous with expression’.

²⁵ Andreas Ornithoparcus [Vogelhofer], *Musicae actiuae micrologus libris quator digestus* (Leipzig, 1517). Eng. trans. of book three, ‘Ecclesiasticum declarans Accentum’, by John Dowland as *His Micrologus: Or Introduction Containing the Art of Singing* (London, 1609), 69.

discussion of accent in relation to vocal melody that foreshadowed many aspects of Zingarelli's practical method of text-setting, as reported by De Vecchis. The two accounts differ in terms of Zarlino's inclination, characteristic of the renaissance, to ground his theory in ancient precedents and to stress its mystical properties. In defining *melopoiea*, or the union of poetry and melody, as the 'dark and secret power of pronunciation',²⁶ Zarlino alluded to a widespread belief in the existence of a god-given 'original poetry' of humanity.²⁷ The prospect of recreating, or at least emulating, this supposedly perfect and divinely sanctioned fusion of words and melody proved irresistible to renaissance scholars. What finer model for constructing a theory of melody could there be, they reasoned, than the primeval song of the ancients, as recorded in the legendary speech-melodies of Greek *mousiké* or, better still, in the uncorrupted cantillation of the Bible, as gifted to Moses by God (according to Nehemiah 8) and re-established by Ezra in the sixth century BC, following the return of the Jews from Babylonian exile? For Zarlino, the three types of accent used by the 'original' people to praise God through a heightened form of pronunciation, or song, were in principle universally valid for all languages, including Italian:

Among us as well as other nations, then, there are three kinds of accent, viz., grammatical, rhetorical, and musical, as may be discerned in this regard from their usage among the Hebrews. [.^ .^] They call the grammatical accent טעם or *ta'am*, i.e., "taste", for the pronunciation of every word requires it. It makes the voice sound more emphatic. Then they call the rhetorical accent מהג or *meteg*, i.e., "retention" or "retardation" or "brake", for with it they come to deliver words elegantly. As to the musical accent, they call it נגינה or *neginah*, i.e., "harmony", for by using it they come to deliver words with melody.²⁸

²⁶ Zarlino, *Sopplimenti*, 320: 'un'ascosa & oscura forza di Pronuncia'.

²⁷ As Weiner argues convincingly in 'The Quantitative Poems', 204.

²⁸ Zarlino, *Sopplimenti*, 322–23, trans. Don Harrán, *In Search of Harmony: Hebrew and Humanist Elements in Sixteenth-Century Musical Thought* (Rome, 1988), 4–5: 'onde tanto appresso de noi, quanto appresso ogn'altra nazione, si trovano esser tre sorti d'Accento; cioè, il Grammatico, il Rhetorico, & il Musico; come potiamo in questa parte conoscere dall'uso, che hanno gli Hebrei. ... Chiamano però l'Accento Grammatico טעם; Taham; cioè, Gusto; percioche ogni prolazione di ciascuna Dittione lo ricerca; mediante ilquale la voce risona più eminentemente. Chiamano dopoi l'accento Rhetorico מהג; Metheg; cioè, Retenimento, ò Retinaculo, ò Freno; percioche con quello ornatamente vengono à pronunciar la parola. Ma l'accento Musico chiamano נגינה; Neginah; cioè, Harmonia; essendoche col suo mezo vengono à pronunciar le parole con modulatione'.

According to Seligmann Baer, 'Die Methegsetzung nach ihren überlieferten Gesetzen dargestellt', in *Archiv für wissenschaftliche Erforschung des alten Testament*, ed. Adalbert Merx (Halle, 1869), i.

Zarlino drew upon earlier writers for this and many other passages in his account of accent and melody, in particular the Hebrew scholar Johann Reuchlin (1455–1522) and the Jewish grammarian Elijah Levita (1469–1549).²⁹ They believed that the ancient system of Hebrew accentuation, the *te'amim*, was the key to rediscovering the 'original' language. If only the cryptic masoretic pronunciation points of the early Rabbis could be decoded, then the harmony preserved in the words of the Bible, especially the poetic books of Psalms, Proverbs, and Job, could be released in sound. Unfortunately, no one knew how to read the signs. The debate over the interpretation of the *te'amim* raged for centuries,³⁰ even though, as is now generally agreed, the tradition of accentuation dated only as far back as the seventh to eleventh centuries AD, when it was re-invented by a group of scholars known as the Masoretes and recorded in treatises by Rabbi Jehuda ben David ibn Chayyug of Fez and Cordoba (940–1010), Rabbi Aharon Ben Asher of Tiberias (fl. 1030), and Rabbi Jehudah Ben Bilam of Toledo (fl. 1080–1110).³¹ The threefold division of accents into grammatical, rhetorical, and musical could be traced only as far back as Chayyug, and even there it could

55–67 and ii. 194–207, *Metheg* means 'bridle' and serves to emphasise a sound by lengthening it. The word *Neginah* means music or song in the Hebrew Scriptures.

²⁹ Johannes Reuchlin, *De accentibus et orthographia linguae hebraicae* (Hagenau, 1518). Elijah Levita, *Masoret ha-Masoret* (Venice, 1538); Latin trans. by Sebastian Münster as *Sefer ha-Ta'ammim ve-sefer Masoret ha-masoret. Accentuum hebraicorum liber unus, ab Elia Iudaeo aeditus* (Basle, 1539). Weiner, 'The Quantitative Poems' and especially Harrán, *In Search of Harmony*, investigate the contexts of Zarlino's chapter on accent in meticulous detail.

³⁰ See James Kugel, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry* (New Haven, 1981), 109–16, 258–59 and 261–64. John Gill, *A Dissertation Concerning the Antiquity of the Hebrew Language, Letters, Vowel-Points, and Accents* (London, 1767), 136, noted: 'About the antiquity of these [accentuation marks in the Bible] there has been a controversy for a century or two past, and which is not yet decided'.

³¹ See Andrew Bruce Davidson, *Outlines of Hebrew Accentuation: Prose and Poetical* (London, 1861), x–xxiii. Ben Asher authored the notes on accentuation reproduced in the first published Rabbinical Bible (Venice, 1518), to which Ben Chayim's comments were added in a second revised edition (1525). Davidson, 5, conceded defeat in the quest to understand the ancient symbols: 'Does, then, the accentuation embody a music? Here we are on the brink of a Serbonian bog, where armies whole of disputants have sunk'. William Wickes, *A Treatise of the Accentuation of the Three So-called Poetical Books of the Old Testament, Psalms, Proverbs, and Job* (Oxford, 1881), 2, likewise gave up the search: 'regarded simply as musical signs, they have no interest or importance at all; for the Jews themselves allow that the musical value of the accents of the three Poetical Books is altogether lost'. Others, unable to make sense of the accents, resorted to anti-Semitism; e.g., Walter Cross, *The Taghmical Art: or, the Art of expounding Scripture by the points, usually called accents, but are really tactical: a grammatical, logical, and rhetorical instrument of interpretation, etc.* (London, 1698), 14: 'the Jews (*falsely*, and not without Satan's cunning) say the use of the accents is musical, an art known only to the Jews'. According to E. J. Revell, 'Biblical Punctuation and Chant in the Second Temple Period', *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 7 (1976), 181–98 at 181, the earliest evidence of accentuation appears in an early Septuagint text (3rd century BC).

not be fully understood.³² Zarlino was well aware of this: ‘Anyone wishing to discuss [the Hebrew accents] reasonably will find it no easy matter, for at the present time the true pronunciations, the true accents and the true musical conventions of every language are lost’.³³ This didn’t prevent him exploiting their aura, however, to conjure up an imaginary historical lineage from the *te’amim* through Virgil to the ‘dark and secret power of pronunciation’ that continued to inform contemporary composition.

The real roots of Zarlino’s three classes of accent lie not in some mythical prehistoric system of notation, but in the humanist turn away from the quantitative accents of Latin and Greek to the less rigidly enforced qualitative accents of modern Italian verse, which was based not so much on ‘measure’ as on rhyme, natural speech inflections, and ‘number’ or syllable count. The two traditions – ‘rhythmic’ vernacular poetry and ‘metric’ classical verse – had developed in parallel since the eleventh century.³⁴ In the renaissance debate over these ancient and modern types of poetry, it was often assumed that the regular metres and feet of ancient verse rendered it closer to music.³⁵ Quantitative verse, with its fixed durations of long and short syllables and its implied pitch relations through grave and acute accents, was already a kind of latent music. It embodied its own ‘harmony’. Similar ideas of Greek *mousiké* inspired the experiments of the French academicians Jean Antoine de Baïf and Pontus de Tyard in the late sixteenth century to recreate a *musique mesurée à l’antique*.³⁶ The later German theory of rhythmopoeia was likewise founded on the authority of ancient Greek quantitative metres as the presumed successors to Hebrew accentuation, as recounted in the first two volumes of Athanasius Kircher’s *Musurgia Universalis* (Rome, 1650) and as realised in Mattheson’s twenty-six *Klangfüße* or ‘rhythmic tone-feet’ corresponding to Greek

³² Davidson, *Outlines of Hebrew Accentuation*, xxi: ‘The most interesting part of Chayyug’s treatise is the passage which offers the new distribution of the accents musically into three orders. It would be important as well as interesting, were there any reason to consider it correct, and could it be understood’. A concise account of these three Hebrew accents appears in John Stuart Blackie, *On the Rhythmical Declamation of the Ancients* (London, 1843), 4–8.

³³ Zarlino, *Sopplimenti*, 325, trans. Harrán, *In Search of Harmony*, 16: ‘del che è cosa difficile, il volerne essatamente ragionare; essendoche in questo tempo sono smarrite le vere pronuncie, i veri accenti, & i veri modi musicali d’ogni lingua’.

³⁴ Margot Fassler, ‘Accent, Meter and Rhythm in Medieval Treatises “De rithmis”’, *The Journal of Musicology* 5/ 2 (1987), 164–90 at 171, claims that by the eleventh century the two verse types were treated equally, both being used for ecclesiastical purposes. See also Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* (Princeton, 1953), 145–48, on the two medieval *ars dictaminis*.

³⁵ As witnessed by the sources compiled in Don Harrán, *Word-Tone Relations in Musical Thought: from Antiquity to the Seventeenth Century* (Stuttgart, 1986).

³⁶ Frances Amelia Yates, *The French Academies of the Sixteenth Century* (London, 1988/1947), 36–76; Gordon-Seifert, *Music and the Language of Love*, 41–43.

Versfüße, which determined rhythmic grouping and metre to a much greater extent than the notional beats of the bar (*Takteile*).³⁷

Zarlino's version of rhythmopoeia was quite different. He regarded modern *unmeasured* verse as the way forward, envisioning a form of expressive speech-song far removed from the everyday accents of vulgar comedies and tragedies.³⁸ In this respect he followed the lead of Venetian poet and literary theorist Pietro Bembo (1470–1547), whose *Prose [.^ .^] della volgar lingua* (Vinegia, 1525) put forward an influential theory, especially for the development of the madrigal, of vernacular Italian poetry based on Petrarch's Tuscan dialect. Bembo stated that words could convey meaning through sound, rhythm, and context as well as their literal sense.³⁹ He outlined a spectrum of affective word-sound types from *gravità* (seriousness) to *piacevolezza* (pleasantness). For Bembo, affective word *quality* involved three things: *numero* (stressed and unstressed syllables), *suono* (the sound of a word, involving both its inner content and its position within a verse or rhyme scheme), and *variazione* (its inherent potential for variety, through a blend of pleasantness and seriousness). Zarlino's espousal of Reuchlin's threefold classification of Hebrew accents owed much to this new, more serious approach to contemporary unmeasured verse. His comments in the *Sopplimenti* testify to the beginnings of an Italian tradition of *qualitative* rhythmopoeia that appears to have lasted until the time of De Vecchis.

ROUSSEAU'S MEDDLING

Similar ideas were to influence the *musique accentuelle* of French airs, as defined by

³⁷ Ernest C. Harriss (ed. and trans.), *Johann Mattheson's 'Der vollkommene Capellmeister': A Revised Translation with Critical Commentary* (Ann Arbor, 1981), 344–62. Houle's discussion of rhythmopoeia in *Meter in Music*, 62–77, deals only with quantitative verse and musical rhythm and overlooks the Italian tradition founded on qualitative verse.

³⁸ Zarlino, *Sopplimenti*, 317, was highly critical of Vincenzo Galilei's suggestion (in *Dialogo di Vicentio Galilei nobile fiorentino della musica antica, et della moderna* [Florence, 1581], 89) that composers should take note of speech-accent from popular entertainments.

³⁹ See Timothy McKinney, *Adrian Willaert and the Theory of Interval Affect: The Musica nova Madrigals and the Novel Theories of Zarlino and Vicentino* (Aldershot, 2010), 110. The classic study of Bembo's influence on the madrigal is Dean T. Mace, 'Pietro Bembo and the Literary Origins of the Italian Madrigal', *The Musical Quarterly* 55 (1969), 68–85. For a recent reassessment, see Giuseppe Gerbino, 'Florentine Petrarchismo and the Early Madrigal: Reflections on a Theory of Origins', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 35 (2005), 607–28. Claude Palisca, *Humanism in Italian Renaissance Musical Thought* (New Haven, 1985), 340–68, discusses the centrality of speech accent to composition in the sixteenth century. D. P. Walker, 'Musical Humanism in the Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries', *The Music Review* 2 (1941), 1–13, 111–21, 220–27, 288–308; 3 (1942), 55–71, offers a useful overview of technical aspects.

Mersenne (1636) in terms of ‘the Grammatical, Rhetorical, and Musical accents, as used by the Hebrews’.⁴⁰ Its aim was to fuse the art of the orator with that of the composer in order to produce a perfect union of words and music, a form of natural speech-melody that would convey the passions with exquisite effect and, in consequence, further the quest for ultimate understanding and ‘divine harmony’.⁴¹ Much of the confusion that persists over the identity of these three accent-types may be traced to Rousseau’s later writings on accent and the ‘natural’ origins of speech. His widely read definition of accent in the *Dictionnaire* (1768) began by outlining its generally accepted meaning as ‘every modification of the speaking voice, in terms of the duration or pitch of the syllables and words that make up the discourse – this reveals a very precise connection between the two functions of *Accens* and the two parts of Melody, namely Rhythm and Intonation’.⁴² But he could not resist tinkering with the three classifications familiar since Zarlino’s time. Mixing up the grave, acute, and circumflex accents of ancient Greek, Latin, plainchant, and modern French with the long or stressed syllables of speech or vernacular poetry, he assumed, incorrectly, that the grammatical accent encompassed not only stressed and unstressed syllables but also higher or lower pitch: ‘the grammatical *Accent*, which encompasses the rule for *Accens* properly speaking, [is that] through which the sound of syllables is low or high and the quantity of each syllable short or long’.⁴³ In all previous accounts, pitch had been regarded either as a property of the musical accent or as a matter for compositional artifice, meaning the application of formulaic melodic patterns such as scales and arpeggios. Rousseau’s confusion appears to have arisen from his reliance on Furetière’s ‘Universal Dictionary’ (1690) and his inability to keep apart its numerous definitions of word-*accens* and melodic-*accent*, as evident in the following passage, itself lifted from Mersenne: ‘There are three types of *accens*, the grave, acute, and circumflex. The Hebrews have the Grammatical, Rhetorical, and Musical *accent*. The *accent* in music is an inflection or modification of the

⁴⁰ Mersenne, *Harmonie Universelle*, ii. 365: ‘l’accent de Grammaire, de Rhétorique et de Musique, don’t usent les Hebreux’.

⁴¹ Cf. Gordon-Seifert, *Music and the Language of Love*, 186–87, and David Allen Dunce, ‘Persuading the Affections: Rhetorical Theory and Mersenne’s Advice to Harmonic Orators’, in *French Musical Thought, 1600–1800*, ed. Georgia Cowart (Ann Arbor, 1989), 149–75.

⁴² Rousseau, *Dictionnaire de Musique* (Paris, 1768), i. 1: ‘On appelle ainsi, selon l’acception la plus générale, toute modification de la voix parlante, dans la durée, ou dans le ton des syllables & des mots dont le discours est composé; ce qui montre un rapport très-exact entre les deux usages des Accens & les deux parties de la Mélodie, savoir le Rhythme & l’Intonation’.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, i. 2: ‘On distingue trois de ces genres dans le simple discours ; savoir : [1] l’*Accent* grammatical qui renferme la règle des *Accens* proprement dits, par lesquels le son des syllables est grave ou aigu, & celle de la quantité, par laquelle chaque syllabe est brève ou longue’.

voice or word to express the passions and affects, whether naturally or by artifice'.⁴⁴

Attributing pitch to the grammatical accent was by no means the least of Rousseau's blunders. In what was presumably a misguided attempt to simplify the established terminology, he went on to rename the rhetorical accent, following long-established traditions of Greek scholarship, as the 'logical or rational Accent'.⁴⁵ Although its function remained essentially the same as before, underscoring the punctuation and structure of a text to ensure comprehensibility and to bring out 'the greater or lesser connections between propositions and ideas', its new label occasioned a great deal of uncertainty. Most damagingly of all, Rousseau burdened the third type of accent, the musical or, following older French traditions, 'pathetic',⁴⁶ with the additional adjective 'oratorical'. While he may have been right in presuming that 'oratorical' captured the meaning of this type of accent more accurately, he overlooked its superficial resemblance to the existing concept of 'rhetorical' accent. This led inevitably to the two becoming muddled, in spite of the fact that Rousseau's new 'pathetic or oratorical accent' functioned in the same way as the old 'musical accent', as described in sources from Zarlino and Mersenne to nineteenth-century Italian theorists. It 'expresses the feelings which agitate the person speaking and which are communicated to listeners', Rousseau explained, 'by means of various inflections of the voice, a more or less elevated tone, [or] quicker or slower speech'.

⁴⁴ Antoine Furetière, *Dictionnaire [sic.] Universel, Contenant généralement tout les mots François, tant vieux que modernes, et les termes de toutes les sciences et des arts*, 3 vols. (The Hague and Rotterdam, 1690), i. 16: 'Il y a trois fortes d'*accens*, l'aigu, le grave, & le circonflexe. Les Hebreux ont l'*accent* de Grammaire, de Rhetorique, & de Musique. L'*accent* en Musique est une inflexion ou modification de la voix, ou de la parole, pour exprimer les passions & les affections, soit naturellement, soit par artifice'. Furetière was paraphrasing 'Proposition XI' from 'Livre Sixiesme de l'Art de Bien Chanter, Partie III, De la Musique Accentuelle', in Mersenne, *Harmonie Universelle*, ii. 366.

⁴⁵ This and the following quotations are translated from Rousseau, *Dictionnaire*, i. 2: '[2] l'*Accent* logique ou rationel, que plusieurs confondent mal-à-propos avec le précédent [grammatical]; cette seconde sorte d'*Accent*, indiquant le rapport, la connexion plus ou moins grande que les propositions & les idées ont entr'elles, se marque en partie par le ponctuation: enfin [3] l'*Accent* pathétique ou oratoire, qui, par diverses inflexions de voix, par un ton plus ou moins élevé, par un parler plus vif ou plus lent, exprime les sentiments dont celui qui parle est agité, & les communique à ceux qui l'écoutant'.

⁴⁶ The term *pathétique* gained currency in seventeenth-century France as a synonym for Mersenne's *accent de musique*. It signified 'expressive' in the Aristotelian sense of *pathos*: an appeal to the emotions and sympathies of the audience. See, e.g., Charles Perrault, *Parallèle des Anciens et des Modernes en ce qui regarde les arts et les sciences, Tome quatrième, ou il est traité de l'astronomi [...]* (Paris, 1697), 9: 'song is only a more marked and more emotional sort of pronunciation than ordinary speech' (*le chant n'est en quelque sorte qu'une prononciation plus marquée & plus pathétique que la prononciation ordinaire*).

Rousseau's meddling was thankfully corrected by a number of later German writers,⁴⁷ but not without creating potential for further confusion. Sulzer, Schulz, and Kirnberger (1771–74) sensibly ignored the mistaken attribution of pitch to the *grammatische Accent* and confined it to long and short syllables. They also dispensed with Rousseau's *accent logique et rationnel* and replaced it with *oratorische Accent*, presumably regarding this as an unproblematic synonym for the more usual *rhetorische*. The third type of accent, which they associated with expressive tones of voice, was labelled simply *pathetische*. Hiller (1780) followed their account closely, explicitly dismissing Rousseau's logical accent.⁴⁸ The same year, Reichardt dropped the misleading word 'oratorical' from the historically established *pathetische und musikalische Accent* but unfortunately kept *logische* in place of the more conventional *rhetorische* for the second type of accent.⁴⁹ Koch settled on the terms *grammatische*, *oratorische*, and *pathetische* in his musical dictionary (1802).

SCOPPA MEDDLES FURTHER

In his 'True Principles of Versification' (1811–14), which promoted a new theory of French prosody based on a comparison with the more regular structures of Italian verse,⁵⁰ Paris-based librettist Antonio Scoppa attempted to define every known type of accent, including 'prosodic, oratorical, pathetic, logical, grammatical, national, musical, and printed'. For insights into their musical application, he relied heavily on Rousseau's flawed discussion of accent in the *Dictionnaire* (1768) and Giovenale Sacchi's antiquated and impractical theory of quantitative poetic feet (in *Della divisione del tempo nella musica nel ballo e nella poesia* [Milan, 1770]). He defined the *accent oratoire* in terms similar to Rousseau's logical and

⁴⁷ A useful overview of the German reception of Rousseau's ideas can be found in the fifth chapter of Roman Hankeln, *Kompositionsproblem Klassik: Antikeorientierte Versmetren im Leidschaffen* (Cologne, 2011).

⁴⁸ Johann Adam Hiller, *Anweisung zum musikalisch-zierlichen Gesange, mit hinlänglichen Exempeln erläutert* (Leipzig, 1780), 27–28.

⁴⁹ Johann Friedrich Reichardt, *Oden und Lieder von Göthe, Bürger, Sprickmann, Voß und Thomsen, mit Melodien bey dem Klavier zu singen* (Berlin, 1780), ii. preface. Antoine Joseph Reicha, *Art du compositeur dramatique ou cours complet de composition vocale divisé en quatre parties et accompagné d'un volume de planches* (Paris, 1833), i. 10–11, also retained the *accent logique*.

⁵⁰ Scoppa's muddled account of the *tempi forti* or strong beats of the Italian grammatical accent led to misunderstanding and an entirely new method of text-setting known as *temps fort*, which required the nuances of French verse to conform to an artificially regular (i.e., Italian) rhythm, such as a succession of crotchet-quaver units in compound time. See Andreas Giger, *Verdi and the French Aesthetic: Verse, Stanza and Melody in Nineteenth-Century Opera* (Cambridge, 2008), 10–11: 'Modern attempts at describing French versification in librettos have completely ignored this theory'.

rational accent, as ‘the inflection of the voice that does not arise from the actual syllable or word pronounced, but from the sense that it provides to the entire phrase [.^.^.] by means of various faster or slower, or more or less elevated, modifications of the voice’.⁵¹ He dismissed the *accent pathétique* as little more than ‘a particular type of oratorical accent: it is the accent of the passions’.⁵² Both were combined together to form what Scoppa called the *accent musical*, which encompassed every conceivable means to transfer the expressive inflections of the voice to music. It resulted from ‘the oratorical and pathetic, the prosodic, the grammatical, and also the national accent of the language sung; with this essential difference, that all of its movements, its lowerings and raisings of the voice, are modified by specific intervals and measured [in time]’.⁵³

Scoppa’s all-purpose *accent musical* was first noted in Italy by Sicilian maestro Giuseppe Bertini, whose seminal musical dictionary of 1815 (compiled largely from French sources) summarised it as ‘the outcome of the oratorical and pathetic accents’.⁵⁴ From there it found its way into many later Italian sources. In his musical dictionary of 1826, Milan-based pedagogue Pietro Lichtenthal explicitly restored the traditional threefold division of accent to Scoppa’s universal *accento musicale*. The numbers in the extract below were designed to correspond to the *metrical* stress of the grammatical accent, the *durational* lengthening of the oratorical accent, and the *pitch* contours of the pathetic accent:

Musical Accent. A stronger and more sculptured inflection of the voice, a more marked stress, applied to a passage or a particular note of the metre, rhythm, or musical phrase, whether (1) articulating this note more strongly or with relative force, (2) giving it a longer note-value; or (3)

⁵¹ Antonio Scoppa, *Les vrais principes de la versification développés par un examen comparatif entre la langue italienne et la française*, 3 vols. (Paris, 1811–14), i. 61: ‘On peut distinguer les différentes espèces d’accent par les épithètes suivantes: accent *prosodique*, *oratoire*, *pathétique*, *logique*, *grammatical*, *national*, *musical*, *imprimé*. [...] On désigne par accent *oratoire*, cette inflexion de voix qui résulte non pas de la syllabe ou de la parole matérielle que nous prononçons, mais du sens qu’elle sert à donner dans la phrase [...] par les différentes modifications de la voix plus ou moins vive, plus ou moins élevée’; See also ii. 494.

⁵² *Ibid.*, i. 62: ‘L’accent *pathétique* est un espèce particulière de l’accent *oratoire*: ces l’accent des passions’.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, i. 65: ‘L’accent *musical* n’est que l’accent oratoire et pathétique, le prosodique, le grammatical, et même le national de la langue chantée ; avec cette différence essentielle, que tous ses mouvemens, ses abaissemens ou élévations de la voix modifiée ont des intervalles certains, et qui sont mesurés’.

⁵⁴ Giuseppe Bertini, *Dizionario storico-critico degli scrittori di musica e de’ più celebri artisti di tutte le nazioni*, 4 vols. (Palermo, 1815), iv. 56: ‘Nel 2 tomo [del *vrais principes de la versification*] tratta egli dell’*accento musicale*, che secondo lui non è, che il risultato dell’accento oratorio e patetico’.

detaching it from the others through a sufficiently distinct higher or lower pitch. Such musical accents belong to melody; others can also be drawn from the harmony, combining various devices to give greater energy to certain notes of the metre and to mark in this way the melodic shapes of the rhythm.

It is generally agreed that there are three kinds of accent in music: grammatical, oratorical, and pathetic.⁵⁵

Essentially the same threefold classification of *accento musicale* reappeared again and again in nineteenth-century Italian writings.⁵⁶ One of the clearest accounts, supported by examples demonstrating the *tempi forti e deboli* of the grammatical musical accent, can be found in the eleventh lesson of De-Macchi's 'Theoretical-Semiographical Principles of Music' (1853).⁵⁷ Since De-Macchi was a disciple of one of Padre Mattei's favourite students, Luigi Felice Rossi, his detailed description suggests that similar doctrines were taught in Bologna as well as Naples.

DE VECCHIS ON THE GRAMMATICAL ACCENT

Grammatical accents belonged fundamentally to *words*. They marked the stressed syllables of normal pronunciation. By means of what De Vecchis called the 'grammatical *musical* accent' – not really an accent at all but a series of conventional metric frameworks – trained composers could simplify and reduce the rhythms of speech to notational formulas. The foundation of this method, De Vecchis explained, rested on 'the almost imperceptible reinforcement, or increase of time, that all first notes and strong beats of the bar naturally

⁵⁵ Pietro Lichtenthal, *Dizionario e bibliografia della musica*, 4 vols. (Milan, 1826), i. 6–8, plagiarised in Rusconi, *Dizionario universale*, i. 25: 'ACCENTO MUSICALE. Inflessione di voce più forte e più scolpita, un vigore più spiccato, applicato ad un passo, ad una Nota particolare della Misura, del Ritmo, della frase musicale, sia 1) articolando tale Nota più fortemente, o con forza graduata; 2) dandole un maggior valore di Tempo; 3) distaccandola dalle altre mercè d'una intonazione assai distinta al grave od all'acuto. Siffatti accenti musicali spettano alla melodia; se ne possono anche cavare altri dall'armonia, riunendo varj strumenti per dar maggior energia a certe Note della Misura, e contrassegnare per tal modo le figure del Ritmo. Tanto nel discorso che nella musica l'accento è di tre sorte: *grammatico, oratorio e patetico*'.

⁵⁶ See, e.g., Bonifazio Asioli, *Il Maestro di Composizione, ossia seguito del Trattato d'armonia*, 3 vols. (Milan, 1832), iii. 41 (critiqued, rather unfairly, in Geremia Vitali, *Della necessità di riformare i Principj elementari di musica di Bonifazio Asioli* [Milan, 1850], 26); Giovanni Pacini, *Cenni storici sulla musica e Trattato di contrappunto* (Lucca, 1834), 28; Raimondo Boucheron, *Filosofia della musica o estetica applicata a quest'arte* (Milan, 1842), 56; Stefano Pagliani and Gerolamo Boccardo, *Nuova enciclopedia italiana: ovvero, Dizionario generale de scienze, lettere, industrie, ecc.* (Turin, 1875), i. 170; and Galli, *Piccolo lessico*, 10.

⁵⁷ Luigi Davide De-Macchi, *Principii teorico-semeiografici della musica* (Turin, 1853), 19–20.

possess'.⁵⁸ These 'strong beats' (*tempi forti*) could, in theory, appear on any beat or subdivision of a bar, because they were determined by rhythmic groupings that operated simultaneously on several metrical levels.⁵⁹

<INSERT EXAMPLE 1 NEAR HERE>

Example 1 reproduces the seven music examples that De Vecchis used to illustrate the workings of the 'grammatical musical accent'. He indicated what he considered to be strong and weak beats by assigning the Italian terms *For[te]* and *Deb[ole]* to individual rhythmic values, leaving a few inexplicably unmarked, and highlighted strong beats of particular interest, somewhat inconsistently, with staccato dots. His commentary to No. 1 (in Example 1) began with the straightforward observation that 'in even [duple or quadruple] time the accent falls on the first note of the bar, and, if this contains four notes of equal value, then the accent falls on the third note as well as the first'. But this particular metric order was neither fixed nor stable. It was entirely contingent on one specific 'if', and there were many others. With reference to Letter B of the same example, he went on to explain that 'if a crotchet in the bar contains two notes [quavers], then the first of these is long, or rather the accent falls there, and the second is short, or weak, since it lacks accent; and if a crotchet contains four notes [semiquavers], then the accent is found on its first and third notes, or, put another way, they have the strong beat and the second and fourth have the

⁵⁸ De Vecchis, *Compendio*, ii. 37. The following studies greatly assisted my interpretation of the grammatical accent: the metrical theories of Christopher F. Hasty, *Metre as Rhythm* (Oxford, 1997) and Justin London, *Hearing in Time: Psychological Aspects of Musical Metre* (Oxford, 2004); the reappraisal of eighteenth-century German theory in Claudia Maurer Zenck, *Vom Takt: Überlegungen zur Theorie und kompositorischen Praxis im ausgehenden 18. und beginnenden 19. Jahrhundert* (Vienna, 2001) and Danuta Mirka, *Metric Manipulations in Haydn and Mozart: Chamber Music for Strings, 1787–1791* (Oxford, 2009); the differentiation of 'Franco-Italian metre' from 'German metre' in the pioneering research of William Rothstein, 'National Metrical Types in Music of the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries', *Communication in Eighteenth-Century Music*, ed. Danuta Mirka and Kofi Agawu (Cambridge, 2008), 112–159, and 'Metrical Theory and Verdi's Midcentury Operas', *Dutch Journal of Music Theory* 16/2 (2011), 93–111; and the perceptive discussions and analyses of verse, accent, and melody in Andreas Giger, *Verdi and the French Aesthetic*, Yonatan Malin, *Songs in Motion: Rhythm and Metre in the German Lied* (Oxford, 2010), and Gordon-Seifert, *Music and the Language of Love*.

⁵⁹ In this respect, they conform closely to Koch's theory of metrical stresses (*Ruhepunkte des Geistes*) falling on the *Takteile* (main metrical divisions of the bar), *Taktglieder* (subdivisions of the main metrical beats), and *Taktteilglieder* (smaller subdivisions of the beats), as explained in Hasty, *Metre as Rhythm*, 28–29; London, *Hearing in Time*, 31 (as 'metrical types'); and Mirka, *Metric Manipulations*, chapter 6. Essentially the same teachings appeared in Wolfgang Caspar Printz, *Phrynis mitilenaeus, oder Satyrischer Componist* (Dresden and Leipzig, 1696), 18, and Giuseppe Tartini, *Trattato di musica secondo la vera scienza dell'armonia* (Padua, 1754), 115–16.

weak beat'.⁶⁰ These formulaic frameworks of strong and weak beats did not necessarily correspond to individual syllables or 'accents'. They merely highlighted the many *possible* places where they might fall. Two weak syllables might scan onto a single weak beat, for instance, or two consecutive verse-feet might operate on different metric levels. Take, as a familiar example, the trochaic words 'London's burning': they could be scanned onto two quavers followed by two crotchets, or onto two crotchets followed by two quavers, both settings corresponding to the same metric pattern: strong-weak-strong-weak. In practice, this variety of metric levels meant that a slow cantabile melody in common-time might encompass many potential strong beats at the level of the semiquaver, while a fast two-four tempo might sustain a single strong beat over two bars. Because the same principle of relativity between different metric levels applied to any rhythmic grouping in any time signature, many melodies were understood to feature irregular mixtures of grammatical accents, determined by the natural rhythms of a language.

De Vecchis attempted to cover the most common eventualities in the remaining sections of Example 1. In the commentary to Nos. 2 to 4, he argued that the rules for triple metres, although slightly looser than those for duple or quadruple, likewise allowed potential strong beats to function in various parts of the bar. He described three basic archetypes, conforming to a long tradition of dividing the tactus into 'even' or 'uneven' up and down motions of the hand. 'In uneven [triple] time', he maintained,

the [grammatical] accent is on the first note of the bar, and if this is made up of three notes of equal value, then the accent can be either on the first and second notes with the third weak, or on the first and third notes with the second weak: see No. 2. If, however, in a triple-time bar made up of three notes, the first note of the measure is a dotted crotchet, the second a quaver, and the third a crotchet, then the accent is always on the first and third notes of the bar: see No. 3.⁶¹

Recognizing the irregularity of rhythm in practice, De Vecchis also allowed for a mixture of

⁶⁰ De Vecchis, *Compendio*, ii. 38. De Vecchis's first example corresponds closely to Hasty's example 1.3 in *Metre as Rhythm*, 19.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, ii. 38: 'Nei tempi dispari, l'Accento è nella prima nota della battuta, e se questa è composta di tre note d'equal valore, allora l'Accento può essere, o nella prima, e seconda nota, e la terza debole, o pure l'Accento è nella prima nota, e terza, e la seconda debole. Vedi Esempio N. 2. Quando però in una battuta di tempo disparo composta di tre note, cioè la prima nota della battuta fosse una semiminima col punto, la seconda una croma, e la terza una semiminima; allora l'Accento, è sempre sulla prima, e terza nota della battuta; Vedi Esempio N. 3.'. Similar rules for triple rhythmic groupings can be traced to Paolo Luchini's *Della Musica* (ca. 1588–98) and before; see Harrán, *Word-Tone Relations*, 303.

duple and triple rhythmic groupings at different metric levels. ‘If, in a bar of triple time, for example in three-four’, he declared, with reference to No. 4, ‘the first note of the bar is made up of two quavers, the first with or without a lengthening dot, then the accent is always on the first quaver and on the second crotchet of the beat, while the third beat is weak’.⁶²

In No. 5 of Example 1, the same set of general rules was applied to ‘the three quavers of the main divisions of the time in 12/8 and 6/8’, illustrating in addition the fluidity of the bar-line in capturing a given rhythm with conventional notation. The separate rule for triplets and sextuplets, exemplified by No. 6, decreed that ‘Triplets have the [grammatical] accent on their first and third notes, while sextuplets have the accent sometimes on the first, third, and fifth, and at other times only on the first and fifth’.⁶³ Potential applications of this rule can be observed in bars two and three of No. 6, where De Vecchis appears to have strayed instinctively from the abstract framework of strong and weak beats toward a fully notated melody, incorporating more than one note to a syllable or accent.

Each of these rhythmic archetypes could be subject to distortion through syncopation; especially, De Vecchis remarked, ‘when the composer wants to emphasise a few essential monosyllables of the diction, which always produces a beautiful effect’. The general rule in such cases stated that ‘Syncopated notes always take the accent and are regarded as the first of the bar, because they normally double the value of the notes on which the accent falls as a rule’. Syncopation was regarded as ‘a union of two notes, one weak and one strong, and the weak serves to reinforce the accent and to increase the value of the strong note’.⁶⁴ De Vecchis demonstrated this in connection with the first system of No. 7 of Example 1, in which the minim on the second beat was described as the ‘principal accent’ and understood to function as if it were notated as tied crotchets (‘of a strength as if it were

⁶² *Ibid.*, ii. 38: ‘Se poi in una battuta di tempo disparo, e sia per esempio in tempo quattro tre il primo tempo della battuta fosse composto di due Crome, e la prima avesse ancora un punto; allora l’Accento è sempre nella Prima Croma, e nella nota che sta nel secondo tempo, ed il terzo tempo è debole’.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, ii. 38: ‘Le Terzine hanno l’Accento sulla prima, e terza nota; le Sestine hanno l’Accento ora sulla prima, terza, e quinta; ed ora sulla prima, e quinta solamente’.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, ii. 38: ‘Le note Sincopate hanno sempre l’Accento, e vengono considerate come le prime della battuta; perché, ordinariamente hanno doppio valore delle note in cui per regola vi cade l’accento. [...] Propriamente la Sincopa, è l’unione di due note, una debole, e l’altra forte, e questa debole, non fa altro che corroborare l’Accento, ed aumentare il valore della nota forte; perciò pare che in simili casi, e particolarmente quando sono molte note di seguito sincopate, la Melodia si trova squilibrata, e fuori d’Accento, il Compositore può avvalersi delle note Sincopate, e particolarmente, quando vuol far rimarcare qualche Monosillabo essenziale della dizione lo che produce sempre un bellissimo effetto’.

notated like this': *vale come se così fosse segnata*). Annotations beneath the stave confirm that the syncopated note received a 'stronger' accent (*più Forte*) than the initial downbeat of the bar. In this instance the grammatical accent was treated as if it were subject to the lengthening emphasis of the rhetorical, testifying to the fluidity of the three accent types and their interrelationships.

All of these basic rules and guidelines were explained and justified more fully in subsequent chapters that dealt with 'the grammatical accent of words'. This involved detailed discussion of all factors relating to correct natural pronunciation, including prosodic conventions (governing elements such as diphthongs and elisions), poetic metres, rhyme schemes, and the delivery of standard Italian verse-types from two to eleven syllables. Much of this information would have been superfluous for native speakers. 'The musician who knows his own language', as Rousseau observed, 'rarely needs to think about this [grammatical] *Accent*; he cannot sing his air without perceiving whether he speaks correctly or incorrectly'.⁶⁵ De Vecchis acknowledged as much in his blunt observation that grammatical blunders 'have always been criticised by both learned men and idiots'.⁶⁶ There were nevertheless aspects of pronunciation that required a degree of conscious reflection; for instance, how to avoid faulty breathing (*aspirazione*) when setting a melody. This occurred when the last syllable of a verse/phrase was prolonged in such a way that it seemed to merge with the beginning of the next. In the first system of Example 2, De Vecchis presented a 'badly aspirated phrase', in which a continuous semiquaver rhythm gave the impression that the phrase ending with 'spontaneo' flowed into the next, beginning with 'd'Egeria'.⁶⁷ He corrected it on the system below by articulating the grammatical accents more clearly, by adding a gap for breath between the phrases, and by restoring the diphthong of 'd'Egeria' that was essential to the *senario* (six-syllable) verse metre. In an alternative demonstration of *aspirazione*, reproduced in the last two systems of Example 2, De Vecchis showed how to improve a shapeless contour of undifferentiated syllables by adding breathing points between each amphibrach of the verse.

<INSERT EXAMPLE 2 NEAR HERE>

⁶⁵ Rousseau, *Dictionnaire*, i. 5 : 'le Musicien qui sait sa langue a rarement besoin de songer à cet *Accent* [grammatical]; il ne saurait chanter son Air sans s'apercevoir s'il parle bien ou mal'.

⁶⁶ De Vecchis, *Compendio*, ii. 42: 'Il compositore deve prevedere, che simili spropositi grammatici, non avvengano nei suoi componimenti; quali difetti sono stati sempre censurati dagli uomini di senno, e dagl'idioti'.

⁶⁷ De Vecchis presumably intended his adolescent students at Montecassino to notice that his chosen verse, concerning 'a casual glance from chaste Egeria', continued in the original with 'Meanwhile in Lesbia...' (cf. Francesco Gianni, *Poesie, Tomo I* [Naples, 1806], 122).

Taken together, De Vecchis's in-depth guidelines established that the 'grammatical musical accent' was a multi-level network of metric templates that enabled composers to generate stylised representations, through the corrupting but unavoidable apparatus of an imprecise system of notation, of the 'grammatical word accent', which signified the intrinsic stressed (or long) syllables and rhythms of normal pronunciation. The formulas set out in Example 1 were intended to be read as latent symbols for the actual speech rhythms of Italian recited verse. The precise form of notation depended more on the composer's choice of affect and style than on the rhythm of the grammatical accent. Consider, for instance, De Vecchis's alternative settings of the *sdrucchiola* word (strong-weak-weak) *Pòvero* in Example 3. 'As long as the accented syllable is connected to the strong beats', he maintained, 'and the last two syllables can be uttered in half the time allotted to the long syllable, then the *sdrucchiola* word will be pronounced well in music'.⁶⁸ But this seemingly prescriptive guideline encompassed a great deal of flexibility. The word could be set in any time signature, whether duple, triple, simple, or compound. The stated proportion between long and short syllables did not need to be strictly observed, as corroborated by the 6/8 bar in the second system of Example 3. Most radically, the strong beats (*tempi forti*) of the grammatical accent could shift position within the bar. While the accent appears on the initial downbeat of each bar for most of Example 3, conforming to expectations, in the final system, which demonstrates 'the best way to notate a *sdrucchiola* word that ends a musical phrase or period',⁶⁹ it coincides with the middle of the bar, giving rise to the seeming anomaly of a *weak* downbeat.

<INSERT EXAMPLE 3 NEAR HERE>

For musicians trained according to Zingarelli's method, as reported by De Vecchis, there was no anomaly in this. It was a consequence of the essential disparity between word-rhythm as heard and as notated. While the dominant metre of a composition was determined by the principal accent of the verse and acknowledged by the choice of time signature and the placement of bar-lines, it was governed at all times (and, if necessary, annulled) by *rhythm*, whether drawn from the fluid natural accents of speech, the more rigid verse-feet of

⁶⁸ De Vecchis, *Compendio*, ii. 39: 'La parola sdrucchiola allora viene pronunciata bene nella Musica, quando la sillaba coll'Accento sta collocate nei tempi forti, e le due ultime sillabe, che si trovano dopo l'Accento, si possano proferire con la metà meno di tempo di quello assegnato alla sillaba lunga'.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, ii. 39: 'quando poi si dovesse dar termine a qualche Frase Musicale o Periodo, con una parola Sdrucchiola, allora va meglio segnata come nell'Esempio'.

quantitative poetry, or the physical movements of dance.⁷⁰ An alternative interpretation of the final four bars of Example 3 – as a couple of instances when a composer might be forced to disregard the accents of word-rhythm to meet the demands of a structurally more important metre – is founded on a nineteenth-century inclination to prioritise notation over performance (or ‘gnostic’ approaches over ‘drastic’).⁷¹

All classical musical authorities agreed on the primacy of rhythm as heard over the measurement of pulse. The writings of Aristoxenus are instructive in this respect. As transmitted through later sources such as Aristides Quintilianus’s *Peri Mousiké* (3rd century AD), St Augustine’s *De Musica* (ca. 389 AD), and the Venerable Bede’s *De Arte Metrica* (ca. 701 AD), they exerted a powerful influence on western music theory, directly or indirectly, right up to the emergence of new ideas in the late eighteenth century. Aristoxenus defined rhythm as an abstract entity that could be realised only through three forms of ‘rhythmicized substance’ or ‘rhythmicables’ (*rhythmicizomenon*): ‘speech, or a series of words; *melos*, or a series of notes; and bodily movement’.⁷² The art of applying rhythm to words, music, and gesture (or, more specifically, dance) he called *Rhythmopoeia*. Aristoxenus’s theory established the rule that rhythm, in Bede’s oft-quoted formulation, ‘can exist without metre, but metre cannot exist without rhythm’.⁷³ Or, in Mattheson’s pithy phrase, rhythm is the mother while metre is the dutiful daughter.⁷⁴ Closely associated teachings continued to inform music theory and practice throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In Mattheson’s division of *Rhythmik* into mensuration and movement, for instance, the former

⁷⁰ Koch, *Versuch einer Anleitung*, and Joseph Riepel, *De Rhythmopoeia oder Von der Tactordnung*, volume 1 of *Anfangsgründe zur musikalischen Setzkunst*, 5 vols. (Regensburg and Vienna, 1752), allowed for changes in composed metre while the notation remained constant; see Mirka, *Metrical Manipulations*, chapter 4, and 209 on ‘changing the metrical level of *Takteile*’.

⁷¹ Vestiges of this nineteenth-century preference for abstract metric system over actual rhythm may be discerned in Cooper and Meyer, *The Rhythmic Structure of Music*, 96: ‘[Metre] constitutes the matrix out of which rhythm arises.’ Hasty, *Metre as Rhythm*, 6, argued that ‘the assumptions of homogeneity and determinism that derive at least in part from notational practice...are responsible for the opposition of metre and rhythm.’ See also Malin, *Songs in Motion*, 61.

⁷² These unwieldy translations are from Lewis Rowell, ‘Aristoxenus on Rhythm’, *Journal of Music Theory* 23 (1979), 63–79 at 72, and Cusack Pearson, *Aristoxenus: Elementa Rhythmica*, xxxiii.

⁷³ From Bede, ‘De arte metrica’, in *Opera Bedae Venerabilis Presbyteri, Anglosaxonis: viri in diuinis atque humanis literis exercitatissimi*, ed. Ioannes Hervagius [Johann Herwagen] (Basle, 1563), i. 57. See also Marcus Fabius Quintilianus, *Institutio Oratoria of Quintilian*, iii, trans. Harold Edgeworth Butler (London, 1921), 45–48.

⁷⁴ Mattheson, *Der vollkommene Capellmeister*, 195: ‘Im sechsten Haupt-Stücke dieses Theils haben wir von der Mutter, nemlich von der *Rhythmik* geredet; in diesem zehnten soll nun auch der Tochter, d. i. der *Metric* mit wenigen gedacht werden’.

served only to capture the feeling or ‘movement’ in notation.⁷⁵ Riepel placed great emphasis on the rhythmic character of phrases, classifying them as active (*beweglich*), inactive (*unbeweglich*), barely alive (*lebendig*), and completely dead (*totte*).⁷⁶ In Italy, the principle of Aristoxenus’s three *rhythmizomenon* endured until the late nineteenth century, as may be gathered from the habitual division of melodic rhythm into separate categories such as *ritmo delle parole*, *ritmo della versificazione*, and *ritmo nel ballo*, and from the downgrading of metre to mere accompanimental or ‘harmonic rhythm’ (*ritmo armonico*).⁷⁷ A leading article in the Milanese journal *L’Italia musicale* (1853), for instance, after emphasising the essential relationship between rhythm and melody, attributed only two subordinate functions to measure: ‘it realises a particular element of rhythm, i.e., periodicity; and it helps to maintain one of the main requirements of beauty by imparting a sense of order to a series of sounds, just as architecture does to a collection of levels and lines’.⁷⁸ Recent studies have lent theoretical support to this historical idea of metre as a property of rhythm, whether ‘projected’ or ‘entrained’ by the listening subject.⁷⁹

THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE GRAMMATICAL

The more specific doctrine of grammatical accent outlined by De Vecchis likewise had a long history. It conformed, for instance, to Zarlino’s summary edict that musical rhythm must follow the accents of natural speech, since ‘wherever the musical accent occurs, the grammatical accent must also’.⁸⁰ The concept of strong and weak beats, operating simultaneously on different metric levels in groupings of two or three, corresponded closely to the theory of ‘good and bad notes’ found in countless sources from the *Musica enchiridiadis*

⁷⁵ See Hasty, *Metre as Rhythm*, 22–25.

⁷⁶ Riepel, *Anfangsgründe*, i. 5–19.

⁷⁷ These different categories of rhythm in nineteenth-century Italy are discussed in depth in Baragwanath, *The Italian Traditions*, 66–139.

⁷⁸ Anon, ‘Sguardo allo stato degli studi estetici-musicali’, *L’Italia Musicale* 5/2 (1853), 7–9 at 7: ‘La misura ha due uffici; essa manifesta un elemento particolare del ritmo: la periodicità, e contribuisce ad effettuare una delle principali condizioni del Bello, producendo il sentimento dell’ordine in un assieme di suoni, come lo produce l’architettura in un assieme di piani e di linee’.

⁷⁹ According to Hasty, *Metre as Rhythm*, xi, ‘the metrical is inextricably tied to all those aspects of music that together form the elusive and endlessly fascinating creature we call “rhythm”.’ London, *Hearing in Time*, 18, traces his theory of entrainment – the mental construction of metre – to Koch’s notion (following Batteux) of ‘resting-points’ (*Ruhepunkte des Geistes*).

⁸⁰ Zarlino, *Sopplimenti*, 324, trans. Harrán, *In Search of Harmony*, 13: ‘dov’è l’Accento Musico, bisogna che vi sia l’accento Grammatico’.

(9th century AD) through Gaffurius (1496) and Diruta (1593) to Koch (1802).⁸¹ Although mostly concerned with the articulation of fingering, bowing, and tonguing in instrumental genres, this theory had its origins in the actual rhythms of syllabic accents, verse feet, and dance steps. One of the clearest and most succinct explanations can be found in Georg Muffat's *Florilegium secundum* (1698). Having studied in Paris with Lully and in Rome with Pasquini, Muffat was familiar with German, French, and Italian musical traditions and was able to back up his description with a list of current terms. The parallels with De Vecchis's rules for the subdivision of measures and the treatment of dotted notes are striking:

Of all the notes found in any composition to be played, there are those that are good (*nobiliiores; edle; buone e principali; bonne; noble ou principales*), and others that are bad (*ignobiliiores; seu viliores; schlechte; cattive, ò vili; chetives ou viles*). Good notes are those that seem naturally to give the ear a little repose. Such notes are longer, those that come on the beat or essential subdivisions of the measures, those that have a dot after them, and (among equal small notes) those that are odd-numbered and are ordinarily played down-bow. The bad notes are all the others, which like passing notes, do not satisfy the ear so well, and leave after them a desire to go on.⁸²

The definition of *gute* and *schlimme* (or *schlechte*) *Takt-theile* in Walther's musical dictionary (1732) similarly prefigured De Vecchis's advice on the many potential places where strong and weak beats could occur in a measure of duple time:

⁸¹ For an overview, see Houle, *Meter in Music*, 81–84 and 124–34 and Patricia Ranum, *The Harmonic Orator: The Phrasing and Rhetoric of the Melody in French Baroque Airs* (New York, 2001), 56–59. Descriptions of *note buone e cattive* can be found in Girolamo Diruta, *Il Transilvano, dialogo sopra il vero modo di sonar organi & istromenti da penna* (Venice, 1593), 6–7, and Lorenzo Penna, *Li primi albori musicali per li principianti della musica figurata* (Bologna, 1684), 38–42. Accounts of *gute und schlechte Takt-theile* can be found in Johann J. Quantz, *Versuch einer Anweisung die Flöte traversière zu spielen* (Berlin, 1752), 105; Leopold Mozart, *Versuch einer Grundlichen Violinschule, entworfen und mit 4. Kupfertafeln sammt einer Tabelle versehen* (Augsburg, 1756), 261–63; Friedrich W. Marpurg, *Anleitung zur Musik überhaupt, und zur Singkunst besonders* (Berlin, 1763), 76–80; Daniel Gottlob Türk, *Klavierschule, oder Anweisung zum Klavierspielen für Lehrer und Lernende, mit kritischen Anmerkungen* (Leipzig und Halle, 1789), 91; and Koch, *Versuch einer Anleitung*, 303–11, and *Musikalisches Lexicon*, cols. 50–52. Rameau discussed *Temps bon* and *Temps mauvais* in his *Traité de l'harmonie reduite à ses principes naturels: Du rapport des raisons & proportions harmoniques* (Paris, 1722), 296–99. This theoretical tradition substantiates Mirka's suspicion (in *Metrical Manipulations*, x) that the consistency of rules for assigning strong and weak beats in German writings 'strongly suggest that they belonged to the body of common knowledge normally transmitted to beginning composers'.

⁸² Georg Muffat, *Suavioris Harmoniæ Instrumentalis Hyporchematicæ Florilegium secundum* (Passau, 1698); quoted in Houle, *Meter in Music*, 82.

Tempo di buona [ital.] is the good part of the beat. Under the even tactus, the first of two minims, or the first half of the beat is good; also the first and third of four crotchets, the first, third, fifth, and seventh of eight quavers and so forth, because these tempi, or odd-numbered parts of the [evenly divided] beat are suitable for the placement of a caesura, a cadence, a long syllable, a syncopated dissonance, and above all a consonance (from which comes its name – *di buona*).⁸³

Underlying the theory of good and bad notes was the doctrine of ‘inner length’ or ‘intrinsic quantity’ (*quantitas intrinseca*), which stipulated that some notes were naturally more pronounced and significant than others, regardless of their actual (or ‘external’) notated value. As Mattheson (1739) put it, ‘neither the raising of a note nor even its external value alone could make it long or prominent, in the present sense; but the inner content and the vocal accent are the decisive factors here. [.^.^ .] it is virtually the same as with coins, which also have an external and inner content, often quite different’.⁸⁴ His accompanying music examples confirmed that the accented syllables or strong beats (*anschlagende Note* or *Anschlag*, as opposed to *Nachschlag*) did not have to coincide with those of the dominant notated metre. A rhythmic group (or iambic foot) consisting of an unstressed and stressed syllable could, for instance, have its strong beat placed on the second crotchet of a three-four bar, following an implicitly weak downbeat.⁸⁵ *Anschlag*, in this context, meant ‘struck-note’ or ‘downbeat’ in terms of both the initial beat of a notated measure *and* the accented note belonging to any of its subdivisions, whether duple or triple. A bar could accordingly contain many such downbeats, remaining latent unless activated by the setting of a particular rhythm. Only through this broader interpretation can Mattheson’s identification of grammatical accent with *Anschlag*, in his *Critica Musica* (1722), be understood to relate to actual composition: ‘In melody, *Accent* and downbeat notes are *synonymous*, and even I know of no better way to express the word *Accent*, as a musical term, than downbeat’.⁸⁶ This long tradition of multiple moveable downbeats appears also to have informed later eighteenth-century German theory. In their ‘General Theory of Fine Arts’, for instance, reissued many times from 1771, Sulzer, Schulz, and Kirnberger defined the grammatical

⁸³ Walther, *Musikalisches Lexicon*, 598; translation adapted from Houle, *Meter in Music*, 83.

⁸⁴ Harriss, *Johan Mattheson’s ‘Der vollkommene Capellmeister’*, 372.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 349–50.

⁸⁶ Johann Mattheson, *Critica Musica* (Hamburg, 1722), i. ‘Der melopoetischen Licht-Scheere: zweyte Schneutzung,’ 44: ‘In melodia sind *Accentus* und *anschlagende Noten* *Synonima*, ja eben das Wort *Accentum*, qua terminum musicum, wüste ich nicht besser zu verteutschen als durch *Anschlag*’.

musical accent as the long or stressed notes that ‘fall on the good time of the bar’.⁸⁷

THE RHETORICAL (OR ORATORICAL) AND MUSICAL (OR PATHETIC) ACCENTS

Notwithstanding changes in terminology, the rhetorical and musical accents, in essence as Zarlino described them, influenced many sources until at least as late as Mathis Lussy’s *Traité de l’expression musicale: accents, nuances et mouvements dans la musique vocale et instrumentale* (Paris, 1874), with its analogous if idiosyncratic categories of ‘metric’, ‘rhythmic’, and ‘pathetic’ accents.⁸⁸ Zarlino offered little advice, however, on how to interpret them in regard to composition, other than to observe their usage in ancient Hebrew. His discussion of the rhetorical accent seems at first to focus on the correct identification of long and short syllables:

Some write concerning these accents that the rhetorical one is an artificial retention of the breath, practiced in syllables for reasons of ornament and suavity. Its advantage lies in letting one know which syllables have to be pronounced longer or shorter, for no one would question that oratorical number consists of these two durations, long and short, and is measured both by time and by rhythm.⁸⁹

In a later passage, however, which cautioned the composer against too strict an observance of grammatical longs and shorts, he took care to differentiate the two accents: ‘in his compositions he ought always to follow the rhetorical accent in matters of time, and not the grammatical one, as it is unsuitable’.⁹⁰ Resolving this seeming contradiction requires a closer look at the Hebrew *Metheg*. According to Samuel Luzzatto, professor at the Rabbinical

⁸⁷ Sulzer, Schulz, and Kirnberger, *Allgemeine Theorie der schönen Künste*, i. 13: ‘Die grammatischen Accente in der Musik sind die langen und kräftigen Töne. [...] Diese Töne fallen auf die gute Zeit des Takts’.

⁸⁸ Cf. Green, ‘A History of the Word “Accent”’, 252–69.

⁸⁹ Zarlino, *Sopplimenti*, 323, trans. Harrán, *In Search of Harmony*, 6: ‘Et di questi Accenti scrivono alcuni, che’l Rhetorico, è un’artificioso ritenimento dello Spirito, che pratica intorno le Dittioni per cagione d’ornamento & soavità; essendo in questo utile, acciò si sappia quali sillabe si habbiano da proferir lunghe ò brevi; percióche non è dubbio, che’l Numero oratorio consta di questi due tempi, ò lungo ò breve; è insieme misurato dal tempo & dal Rhythmo’.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 325, trans. Harrán, *In Search of Harmony*, 17: ‘nelle sue Compositioni debbe sempre seguire l’accento Rhetorico; nella materia del Tempo; & non il Grammatico; percióche non è al proposito’. Sensing the ambiguity of this formulation, Ercole Bottrigari, in book three of *Il Trimerone de’ fondamenti armonici* (ms., Bologna, 1599), replaced Zarlino’s rhetorical and grammatical accents with the musical and rhetorical; see Harrán, *In Search of Harmony*, 58–60.

Institute of Padua in 1829–65 and an expert on the traditions of Italian *ebraisti*, it served to emphasise a word of particular importance by lengthening one of its sounds, most often a vowel.⁹¹ The rules for its use were extraordinarily complicated, but it was generally affixed to sounds that did not already carry a primary accent. In the context of sixteenth-century vocal melody, it could only have been interpreted to mean the application of durational or agogic accents to individual words, both to enhance the sense of a phrase and to clarify its punctuation. Since Italian vernacular poetry tended to direct the meaning of a verse towards its end, reserving a marked cadence for the principal accent on either the final, penultimate, or antepenultimate syllable, it was inevitable that the rhetorical accent would serve to lengthen the last stressed syllable of a standard metre. In practice, consequently, it most often doubled the duration of the final long syllable of a verse, in accordance with Zarlino's rather opaque comments (drawn from St. Jerome's preface to the Book of Job) on the mensural proportions of 'oratorical number' at the level of 'rhythm', meaning normal grammatical longs and shorts, and at the higher level of 'time'. On occasion, should the sense or structure of a verse demand it, the rhetorical accent could also be applied to lengthen other syllables.

On the properties of the musical accent, Zarlino was less forthcoming. In a passage guaranteed to please his patron, Pope Sixtus V, and not to offend the sensibilities of the counter-reformation, he defined it only in terms of its origins in the primeval song gifted to Moses, which enabled the early human to 'erupt in contortions of the body with the song of his voice and with those artful movements of the tongue in which music truly consists, to offer clear and abundant praise to the majesty, the omnipotence, the wisdom and the benignity of the Highest Maker'.⁹² Despite claiming a direct link between surviving forms of this ancient Hebrew verse, as represented in Levita's *Masoret ha-masoret* (1538), and the *ottava rima* of Boccaccio and Tasso, he nevertheless knew, as already cited above, that 'the true pronunciations, the true accents, and the true musical conventions of every language are

⁹¹ Samuel Davide Luzzatto, *Grammatica della Lingua Ebraica* (Padua, 1853), 35, 47–75, explained the rules for this 'semi-accent' and its 'musical' application.

⁹² Zarlino, *Sopplimenti*, 323, trans. Harrán, *In Search of Harmony*, 7–8: 'Ma dell'accento Musico, dicono, che Mosè amico di Dio & Scrittore antichissimo fù quello, ch'insegnò ridur la concepata allegrezza della mente sotto certi articoli & membri con suoni non vani; accioche alcuno de mortali; dopo l'haver considerato i beneficij, & le grandezze di Dio, & essendo pieno d'allegrezza; adunati tutti i Sensi insieme; come da un fonte copiosissimo prorumpendo ne i movimenti del Corpo col Canto della voce, & con l'arteficoso moto della lingua insieme ne i quali consiste veramente la Musica; distintamente potesse & abundantamente lodar la Maestà, l'Onnipotenza, la Sapienza, & la Bontà del Sommo Fattore'.

lost', adding, in regard to the musical accent, that the composer 'will have to rediscover it'.⁹³ Given that the word *Neginah* meant simply music or song in the Hebrew Scriptures, the musical accent could only have been taken to signify those inflections of the voice that served to heighten the expressivity of speech, turning it into song. It must have referred above all to pitch.

Italian writers of the *primo Ottocento* were similarly vague as to the precise applications of these rhetorical and musical accents, presumably because they were taught through practical lessons in *vocalizzo* and *solfeggio*.⁹⁴ De Vecchis labelled them using Lichtenthal's Rousseau-inspired terms 'oratorical' and 'pathetic', avoiding Scoppa's catch-all *accento musicale*, and defined them in relation to the expression of affects: 'they are the practical means for representing the degree of expressive force in a melody, as required by the feelings expressed through the words'.⁹⁵ The remainder of his advice emphasised that it was not possible to assign any fixed rules to the use of these accents in composition, with the significant proviso that the composer should be guided not only by a sense of diction and by the words but also by the contents of the preceding book on the standardised 'ideal' forms of melodies. This meant that he could avoid the difficult task of offering specific advice by appealing to the already well-schooled faculties of the composer:

Melodies will, however, be expressive and elegantly accentuated if the accents assigned to them truly agree with the expression of the sentiments of the words. Otherwise the expression in performance will succeed only in sounding artificial, exaggerated, and awkward, as is so often the case in *buffa* arias. Before applying expressive accents to words, the prudent composer should examine and ponder them thoroughly. He will then be able to make progress with the melody of the phrases, applying the most suitable accents for correct expression, and will be assured of the success of a piece of music.⁹⁶

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 325, trans. Harrán, *In Search of Harmony*, 16–17: 'Ma quanto all'accento Musico, egli avrà da ritrovarlo'.

⁹⁴ As Florentine professor Luigi Picchianti observed, in 'those *solfeggi* specifically designed to impart the refined style of *bel canto* [...] one must pay great attention to accentuation and the punctuation of melody' (*Principj generali e ragionati della musica teorico-pratica* [Florence, 1834], 70).

⁹⁵ De Vecchis, *Compendio*, ii. 43: 'sono quelli mezzi pratici co' quali s'indica il grado di forza d'espressione nelle melodie, richiesti dai sentimenti che esprimono le parole'.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, ii. 43: 'Le Melodie però, allora saranno espressive, ed elegantemente accentate, se gli accenti assegnateli, realmente convengono all'espressione dei sentimenti delle parole; in caso contrario l'espressione nell'esecuzione, riuscirebbe affettata, caricata, e goffa, come tante volte s'usa nelle arie Buffe; l'accorto Compositore prima d'assegnare gli Accenti d'espressione alle parole, deve prima esaminarle e ponderarle bene, e poi potrà far progredire convenevolmente, la melodia delle

CONCLUDING REMARKS

As a general principle – for the most part orally transmitted and only occasionally and inadequately captured in writing – the threefold classification of accent seems to have proved versatile and useful enough to form a theoretical basis for setting words to melody in Italy at various times from Zarlino to Zingarelli. Taking De Vecchis’s unusually detailed account as a guide, it served to divide the composition process into three fundamental stages, in which techniques of notation were always subordinate to conceptualisation. The first stage involved an awareness of the correct speech rhythm of a given text and an understanding of its underlying pattern of grammatical accents or stressed syllables, as well as an ability to represent the resulting rhythm through conventional notation, taking account of inherent metre. The second stage ensured that this simplistic reduction to strong and weak (or good and bad) beats did not obscure the meaning of a verse or its rhyme scheme, by applying rhetorical accents to bring out the sense of important words and to underscore the punctuation by lingering on poetic cadences. The third and final stage related to pitch contour and expressive inflections, whether modelled on perceived fluctuations in actual speech or, more often, on culturally conditioned ‘artificial’ constructs such as scales, arpeggios, and formulaic embellishments.

Evidence of this method in action can be seen in Giuseppe Staffa’s 1856 analysis of rhythm in arias by Mercadante and Donizetti, in which he appears to have indicated the number of actual or potential grammatical accents within each component verse-phrase with figures above the melody. Metre was relegated to a separate system of figures attached to the accompaniment.⁹⁷ Asioli’s teachings for the Milan conservatoire betray a reliance on similar sources, albeit repackaged in progressive new terms. His account of *ritmo melodico* conformed in many respects to the ancient doctrine of the grammatical accent, conflated in part with the rhetorical, and his idea of expressive modifications brought about through (Scoppa’s) *accento musicale* was founded on an older notion of musical or pathetic accent. These and many other confusing reinterpretations of the Masoretic/Bembist theory of melodic accent not only hint at the vitality of the tradition but also help to explain its virtual absence from modern music scholarship. As a practical tool for teaching the art of word-melody in all its drastic unruliness, it evidently lent itself to fluid adaptation by individual maestros. This, as well as the lack of written sources, makes it difficult for music historians

Frafi, con quegli accenti più idonei alla giusta espressione, e così si può esser sicuro del buon effetto del pezzo di Musica’.

⁹⁷ Giuseppe Staffa, *Metodo della Scuola Napolitana di composizione musicale. Parte Seconda: Trattato di Composizione* (Naples, 1856), 9.

to construct a coherent narrative. Modern writers on rhythm and metre in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century music have tended to rely instead on more clearly articulated accounts in printed sources intended primarily for the leisured classes; especially the systematic *Akzenttheorie* first set out in Sulzer's *Allgemeine Theorie* (1771–74) and earlier guides to notation through the division of beats. This reliance on material for 'amateurs and dilettantes', rather than on evidence relating to how future composers actually learnt their craft, has fostered a preoccupation with notation and metre – aspects of music which readily lend themselves to systematic analysis and description – at the expense of insights into historical practices which prioritised the less easily reducible human properties of sounding rhythm.