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Spazziam

A BALLETO BY SALAMONE ROSSI

by JOSHUA R. JACOBSON

In 1876, Samuel Naumbourg, Cantor of the Great Synagogue of Paris, published a collection of Italian madrigals and Hebrew motets by the Renaissance composer Salamone Rossi Hebreo. This edition represented the first reprinting of Rossi's music since the time of its original publication.

Rossi's compositions, issued in Venice between 1589 and 1628, represented the apex of the brief flourishing of Jewish humanism that took place in sixteenth-century Italy. Salamone Rossi was one of a number of Jewish composers, singers, instrumentalists, dancers, artists, poets, writers, and philosophers who managed to express the spirit of the Renaissance in a Jewish context. In the history of synagogue music, Rossi stands as a towering figure, being the first composer ever to set the Jewish liturgy in a polyphonic style.

This period of enlightenment came to an end in the year 1630, when Austrian troops invaded Northern Italy and attacked the city of Mantua, which was a center of Jewish humanism. The entire Jewish community of Mantua was forced to flee, and Rossi's *oeuvre* seemed to have been forgotten.

Naumbourg's rediscovery of his music was aided by the patronage of the Baron Edmond de Rothschild and the (then twenty-five-year-old) composer Vincent d'Indy. But his transcriptions were tainted by the nineteenth-century predilection for "improving" and arranging. Thus the 1876 edition was replete with additions of dynamics, changes of rhythms, pitches, accidentals, and texts, though hardly an explanation was given.

When the Sacred Music Press, under the editorial supervision of Isadore Freed, reintroduced Rossi's vocal music to the American

public in 1954, it was merely in a facsimile edition of Naumbourg's publication.¹ No effort had been made to address the problems of deficient scholarship.

In 1967 a definitive edition of Rossi's sacred music was finally published by the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, edited from the original manuscripts by Fritz Rikko, with assistance from Joel Newman.² Here for the first time contemporary scholarship was applied to present Rossi's synagogue music as it was originally conceived. Yet, to this date, no such complete scholarly edition exists of Rossi's *secular* vocal music. There are several notable publications of single works: Don Malin's edition of the madrigal *Felice chi vi mira!*,³ Rikko's edition of *Ah, dolente partita*,⁴ and Hanoch Avenary's commendable edition of the entire 1589 book of three-part canzonets.⁵

To contribute to the growing Rossi catalogue, I should like to focus attention on an intriguing little work, a *balletto* tacked on as an "appendix" to Naumbourg's volume (which is otherwise devoted exclusively to Rossi's madrigals). Alfred Sendrey correctly identifies this balletto as the finale to a "sacred representation" entitled *La Maddalena*, produced in Venice in 1617 by Giovanni Battista Andreini.⁶

Looking at Naumbourg's edition of the Rossi balletto, one is struck immediately by the rhythmic inconsistency. While the agogic and tonal accents clearly suggest a triple meter, the time signature is given as "C", causing bar-lines to fall before unstressed notes. One might suspect that this is an example of insensitive editing of a composition originally published without bar-lines.

¹*Cantiques de Salomon Rossi Hebreo*, transcrits par S. Naumbourg et Vincent d'Indy, publiés par S. Naumbourg, Out of Print Classics Series of Synagogue Music, reissue (New York: Sacred Music Press, 1954).

²*Hashirim Asher Lish'limo*, edited by Fritz Rikko (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America and Mercury Music Corporation, 1967).

³Don Malin, ed., *Felice chi vi mira!* (New York: Piedmont Music Company, Inc., 1969).

⁴Fritz Rikko and Joel Newman, eds., *Ah, dolente partita* (New York: Frank Music Corp., 1968).

⁵Hanoch Avenary, ed., *Salomone Rossi's First Book of Canzonets* (Tel Aviv: Israel Music Institute, 1975).

⁶Alfred Sendrey, *The Music of the Jews in the Diaspora* (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, publisher, 1970). *La Maddalena* contains music by various composers of the period, among them Monteverdi.

EXAMPLE 1
(The brackets have been added by the author of this article to indicate the natural meter of the music.)

Di Salamon Rossi Hebreo Mantouano Balletto, vâ cantato
è Sonato con 3 Viole da Braccio.

lo; va - go è so - lo far d'augèi pre - de più bel -

lo; va - go è so - lo far d'augèi pre - de più bel -

lo; vago è so - lo far d'augèi pre - de più bel -

bel - le far d'au - gèi pre - de più bel - le

bel - le far d'au - gèi pre - de più bel - le

bel - le far d'au - gèi pre - de più bel - le

RITORNELLO.

bel - le far d'au - gèi pre - de più bel - le

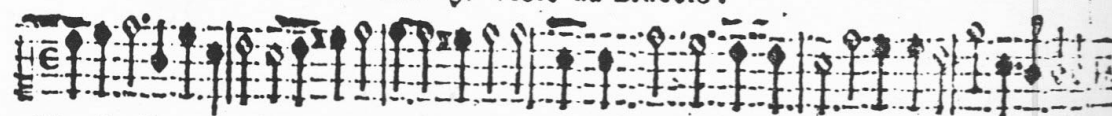
bel - le far d'au - gèi pre - de più bel - le

bel - le far d'au - gèi pre - de più bel - le

However, turning back to the original print of 1617, we can see that Naumbourg had not erred in this instance. Unlike Rossi's sacred music, madrigals, and canzonets, which were all published only in part-books without bar-lines, this balletto was published in score notation. And bar-lines were clearly placed to conform with a non-ingratiating quadruple meter.

EXAMPLE 2

Di Salamon Rossi Hebreo Mantouano Balletto, vâ cantato & Sonato
con 3. Viole da Braccio.



Spazzia pròt'ò vecchiarelle qsto fuolo vagh'è solo far d'Angel' prede piu belle far d'angei prede piu belle



Spazzia pròt'ò vecchiarelle qsto fuolo vagh'è solo far d'angei prede piu belle far d'Angel' prede piu belle



Spazzia pròt'ò vecchiarelle qsto fuolo vagh'è solo far d'Angel' prede piu belle far d'Angel' prede piu belle



Ritornello



Ritornello



Ritornello.

Su le penne de venti Del Sig. Claudio Monteverde 1
 Fra le ruggiade eterne Del Sig. Muzio Effrem 2
 Da la fonte del core Del Sig. Alessandro Galuizzani 3
 Spazzian pròt'ò Di Salamon 4
 IL FINE.

The text of the balletto is attributed by Joel Newman to the producer of the collection, Giovanni Andreini. It may be translated as follows:⁷

<i>Spazziam</i>	Let us move about
<i>pronto</i>	quickly
<i>o vecchiarelle</i>	O old damsels
<i>questo suolo</i>	in this place
<i>vagho e solo</i>	deserted and lonely
<i>far d'Angei</i>	be for the angels
<i>prede</i>	a prey
<i>più belle</i>	most beautiful

Or, less literally: "Let us dance gracefully, O damsels, in this lonely and deserted place. You shall become so beautiful, the angels will long to have you." The only previously published translation, by Alfred Sendrey, renders it thus: "Let us sweep clean, oh little ladies, this ground, beautiful and lonely. Make of birds more beautiful prey."

This suggests a closer look at several interesting details. The opening word of the balletto is given in Andreini's index, on the final page of the original publication, as "Spazzian," and in the original score as "Spazziã." Naumbourg's transcription uses "Spazziam" (both Sendrey and Roth⁸ refer to the title erroneously as "Spezziam"). Sendrey traces his translation "Let us sweep" from the verb "spazzare." A far more reasonable rendition, in keeping with the dance-like nature of the music, is "Let us move about" — from the verb "spaziare."

The word "Vecchiarelle" is misprinted as "vecchiavelle" in Naumbourg; it appears correctly in the Sendrey and Roth works. Similarly, "predo" appears as "prede" in Naumbourg, but is printed correctly in Sendrey. "Angei" (angels) is given as "augei" (birds) in Naumbourg, Sendrey, and Roth. A close inspection of the original publication, however, reveals the printing "augei" only once (second soprano, bar four), "augel" once (soprano, bar four), and "angei" the remaining four times. It is quite easy for a typesetter to invert an "n" so that it becomes a "u". In the context of the poem, the word "angels" seems to make more sense than "birds."

⁷Joel Newman, *The Madrigals of Salamon de' Rossi*, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation (New York, Columbia University, 1962). I am indebted to Professor Benedetto Fabrizzi of Northeastern University for his help in the translation of this balletto.

⁸Sendrey, *op. cit.*, p. 265, and Cecil Roth, *The Jews in the Renaissance* (New York: Harper and Row, 1959), p. 291.

Printed below is my transcription of the balletto. The rhythmic values have been halved, the bar-lines have been replaced to accommodate the innate flow of the music, and the text has been revised to present the version most likely intended and discussed above.

EXAMPLE 3

(Allegro moderato)

soprano () ()

Spaz-ziam pront' o vec-chia - rel - le, Ques - to

alto () ()

Spaz-ziam pront' o vec-chia - rel - le, Ques - to

tenor () ()

Spaz-ziam pront' o vec-chia - rel - le, Ques - to

(♩ = ♪) () () () ()

suo - lo va - go e so - lo, Far-d'an - gei pre - do più bel - le. Far d'an-

() () () ()

suo - lo va - go e so - lo, Far-d'an - gei pre - do più bel - le Far d'an-

() () () ()

suo - lo va - go e so - lo, Far-d'an - gei pre - do più bel - le Far d'an

Ritornello **violin** ()

gei pre - do più bel - le. *fine*

() () **violin** ()

gei pre - do più bel - le. *fine*

() () **cello (or gamba)** ()

gei pre - do più bel - le. *fine*