This book explores the fascinating life of the most documented musician of the seventeenth century. Born in 1626 into a bourgeois family in Pistoia, Italy, Atto Melani was castrated to preserve his singing voice and soon rose to both artistic and social prominence. His extant letters not only depict the musical activities of several European centers, they reveal the real-life context of music and the musician: how a singer related to patrons and colleagues, what he thought about his profession, and the role music played in his life. Whether Atto was singing, spying, having sex, composing, or even rejecting his art, his life illustrates how music-making was always also a negotiation for power. Providing a rare glimpse of the social and political contexts of seventeenth-century music, Roger Freitas sheds light on the mechanisms that generated meaning for music, clarifying what music at this time actually was.

Roger Freitas is Associate Professor in the Department of Musicology, Eastman School of Music, University of Rochester. His writing has appeared in journals including the Journal of Musicology, Music and Letters, and Opera News. This is his first book.
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Portrait of a Castrato

Politics, Patronage, and Music in the Life of Atto Melani

Roger Freitas
For my wonderful parents, Ron and Mickey Freitas
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Library sigla and abbreviations

The following library sigla and abbreviations are used throughout this study. They are adapted from the sigla used in the Répertoire international des sources musicales, with additions to accommodate other sources used here.

B  Belgium  
   Bc  Brussels, Conservatoire Royal de Musique, Bibliothèque

D  Germany  
   Kl  Kassel, Gesamthochschul-Bibliothek, Landesbibliothek und Murhardsche Bibliothek, Musiksammlung
   Mbs  Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Musiksammlung

F  France  
   Pae  Paris, Archives de la Ministère des Affaires Étrangères  
      Pae, CP  —, Corrrespondence politique  
      Pae, MD  —, Mémories et documents
   Pan  Paris, Archives Nationales
   Pc  Paris, Bibliothèque du Conservatoire National de Musique  
      (within F Pn)
   Pm  Paris, Bibliothèque Mazarine
   Pn  Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France

GB  Great Britain  
   CfM  Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, Department of Manuscripts and Printed Books
   Ckc  Cambridge, King’s College, Rowe Music Library
   Lbl  London, British Library
   Och  Oxford, Christ Church Library

I  Italy  
   Bc  Bologna, Civico Museo Bibliografico Musicale
   Fas  Florence, Archivio di Stato  
      Fas, MdP  —, Archivio Mediceo del Principato
   FEas  Ferrara, Archivio di Stato  
      FEas, Arch. Bent.  —, Archivio Bentivoglio d’Aragona, Lettere sciolte
   Fn  Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale
   MAas  Mantua, Archivio di Stato
   MOas  Modena, Archivio di Stato
Library sigla and abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sigla</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MOe</td>
<td>Modena, Biblioteca Estense e Universitaria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nc</td>
<td>Naples, Conservatorio di Musica S. Pietro a Maiella, Biblioteca</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PS</td>
<td>Pistoia, Basilica di S. Zeno, Archivio Capitolare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSas</td>
<td>Pistoia, Archivio di Stato</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSav</td>
<td>Pistoia, Archivio della Curia Vescovile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSc</td>
<td>Pistoia, Biblioteca Comunale Forteguerriana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rc</td>
<td>Rome, Biblioteca Casanatense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rvat</td>
<td>Rome [Vatican City], Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUss</td>
<td>Subiaco, Monastery of Santa Scolastica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOas</td>
<td>Turin, Archivio di Stato</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHH</td>
<td>Chapel Hill, N.C., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Music Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAuc</td>
<td>Los Angeles, University of California at Los Angeles, William Andrews Clark Memorial Library</td>
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</table>
Note on the original texts of translations

Because this project depends so heavily on correspondence, the volume of quoted material is formidable. To avoid bloating the size (and cost) of the published volume, I agreed with Cambridge University Press to place the original language of all translations on a website operated by the Press. The URL for that site is www.cambridge.org/9780521885218. The entries are organized by chapter and then by footnote number. So, for example, to find the original Italian of the passage cited by footnote 15 in chapter 2, one would go to the web page for chapter 2 and then look under note 15.

As readers will quickly discern, I have not modernized the spelling and punctuation of the original-language materials. While I recognize that such updating is standard, especially in Italian, I do not pretend to the necessary text-editing skill, especially for so large and diverse a body of material. The issues go far beyond orthography, and in several cases the actual sense of passages depends on interpretations of the intended words. Instead, I have modified the text only in the following ways: I have tacitly expanded all abbreviations when their meaning was not in doubt (as is usually the case). The only exception has been in the use of honorifics (e.g., S.A.S.ma for Sua Altezza Serenissima), which, for reasons of space, I have left abbreviated. I have converted the sometimes variable use of diacritical marks to modern practice, but I have not altered diacriticals in situations where a modern word has been written as two: for example, I convert “perche” to “perché,” but leave “per che” alone. Original punctuation and capitalization have been retained.

Citations of all the letters have been simplified in the body of the text to save space. For each letter, I give the author, addressee, place of origin, and date. This information can then be compared to either Appendix A (for Atto’s letters) or Appendix B (for the letters of others), where full bibliographic information is provided.
Note on the editing of musical examples

For all of the musical examples and associated texts in this volume (which appear in chapter 6), I have followed the principles I adopted in my edition of Atto Melani’s cantatas, published as Atto Melani, Complete Cantatas, Collegium Musicum: Yale University, series 2, vol. 15 (Middleton, Wis.: A-R Editions, 2006). Please see pages 95–97 of that edition for a full statement of the methodology. Fundamentally, the edition follows a “best-text” approach rather than tracing sources back to a theoretical, composer-approved version. The specific procedures used are fairly standard, and so few additional comments are necessary. I do use four types of accidentals: (1) normal accidentals generally render all accidentals present in a source, including those considered redundant by modern standards; (2) accidentals in square brackets correct conflicts between seventeenth-century and modern usage (e.g., regarding the length of time an accidental might apply); (3) small accidentals represent purely editorial suggestions; (4) accidentals in parentheses are purely cautionary. In a slight divergence from my published edition (where brackets were used), I have employed a larger and smaller font in the bass figures to indicate original versus editorial figures, respectively. Finally, all solid slurs are original, while dotted slurs are editorial. Again, the complete edition provides fuller information.

Figures 6.1 and 6.2 present the music of Luigi Rossi and Giacomo Carissimi and so do not stem from my edition, but I have retained the same basic approach. My sources for this music are as follows:


Figure 6.2 I Bc, MS X.234; as edited in Robert Rau Holzer, “Music and Poetry in Seventeenth-Century Rome: Settings of the Canzonetta and Cantata Texts of Francesco Balducci, Domenico Benigni, Francesco Melosio, and Antonio Abati” (Ph.D. diss., Univ. of Pennsylvania, 1990), 933–45.
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So many people have helped me so generously in the long course of this project that I almost hesitate to try to thank them all. But the pleasure of publicly acknowledging my debts is irresistible. This project began life as a dissertation, and so I start by thanking again my advisor and (now happily) friend, Ellen Rosand: her advice and support remain very important to me. One of the advantages in working on a seventeenth-century topic is the generosity that characterizes so many scholars in the field. Right at the beginning of this project, Robert L. Weaver offered me both his encouragement and his many microfilms of Melani music and documents. During my early research trips to Florence, Jean Grundy Fanelli shared much of her experience in the libraries of Tuscany as well as kind hospitality at her home. Over the years, Margaret Murata has offered all sorts of valuable advice and has helped me locate many missing bits of information: her heart must drop every time she finds another of my emails in her inbox with “just a quick question.” Beth Glixon has generously notified me whenever she ran across a useful reference in her Venetian archival explorations, and more recently Valeria De Lucca has done the same while scouring the Colonna materials. During his long stays in Italy, my colleague and friend James Leve alerted me to a number of documents he found during his own work and cheerfully looked things up for me. More recently, I want to thank my department chair Patrick Macey for his (very) patient support of my work and his always helpful suggestions. And for assistance in a number of different ways I express my gratitude to Jennifer Brown, Ralph Locke, Kimberlyn Montford, and Massimiliano Sala.

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di Stato in Pistoia; the Archivio di Stato and Biblioteca Estense in Modena; the Archivio di Stato in Mantua; the Archivio di Stato in Lucca; the (former) Civico Museo Bibliografico-Musicale in Bologna; the Archivio di Stato in Turin; the Archivio di Stato, Biblioteca Casanatense, Biblioteca della Accademia dei Lincei, and Archivio Doria-Pamphilj in Rome; the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana at the Vatican; the British Library in London; and, finally, the Bibliothèque Nationale, Bibliothèque Mazarine, Archives Nationales, and Archives de la Ministère des Affaires Étrangères in Paris.

Finally, I am pleased to acknowledge the following financial awards, which either directly or indirectly supported my work: two pre-dissertation fellowships from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation; a fellowship (funding a junior leave) from the National Endowment for the Humanities; a fellowship from the American Academy in Rome; a subvention from the Donna Cardamone Jackson Publication Endowment Fund of the American Musicological Society; and support from my home institution, the Eastman School of Music, University of Rochester, in the form of leave time, the support of the Professional Development Committee, and a Provost’s “first-book” subvention.

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