

Cambridge University Press  
978-1-107-00648-5 - Music in Roman Comedy  
Timothy J. Moore  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

## MUSIC IN ROMAN COMEDY

The plays of Plautus and Terence were profoundly musical: large portions of all the plays were sung to accompaniment, and variations in melody, rhythm, and dance were essential elements in bringing both pleasure and meaning to their performance. This book explains the nature of Roman comedy's music: the accompanying *tibia*, the style of vocal performance, the importance of dance, characteristics of melody, the relationship between meter and rhythm, and the effects of different meters and of variations within individual verses. It provides musical analyses of songs, scenes, and whole plays, and draws analogies between Roman comedy's music and the music of modern opera, film, and musical theater. The book will change our understanding of the nature of Roman comedy and will be of interest to students of ancient theater and Latin literature, scholars and students working on the history of music and theater, and performers working with ancient plays.

TIMOTHY J. MOORE is Professor of Classics and Comparative Literature at the University of Texas at Austin. He is author of *Artistry and Ideology: Livy's Vocabulary of Virtue* (1989), *The Theater of Plautus: Playing to the Audience* (1998), *Roman Theatre* (2012), a translation of Terence's *Phormio*, and numerous articles on Livy, Tibullus, Roman comedy, Petronius, ancient music, and Japanese *kyogen* comedy. He has produced a web site in which he sings songs of Plautus in their original rhythms. He has lectured widely in North America, Europe, and China on topics including music archaeology, Western and Japanese comedy, Greek and Roman music, and analogies between Roman and American musical comedies. He also has extensive experience as a singer and as a performer in musical theater. He has received fellowships from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, the American Academy in Rome, and the Loeb Classical Library Foundation, and a Mellon Faculty Fellowship at Harvard University.

Cambridge University Press  
978-1-107-00648-5 - Music in Roman Comedy  
Timothy J. Moore  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

Cambridge University Press  
978-1-107-00648-5 - Music in Roman Comedy  
Timothy J. Moore  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

# MUSIC IN ROMAN COMEDY

TIMOTHY J. MOORE



**CAMBRIDGE**  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press  
978-1-107-00648-5 - Music in Roman Comedy  
Timothy J. Moore  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS  
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town,  
Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi, Mexico City  
Cambridge University Press  
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK  
Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)  
Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9781107006485](http://www.cambridge.org/9781107006485)

© Timothy J. Moore 2012

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception  
and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,  
no reproduction of any part may take place without the written  
permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2012

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library*

*Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data*

Moore, Timothy J., 1959–  
Music in Roman comedy / Timothy J. Moore.  
p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-107-00648-5 (hardback)

1. Music, Greek and Roman – History and criticism. 2. Classical drama (Comedy) –  
History and criticism. 3. Music and literature – History – To 500. I. Title.

ML169.M84 2012

781.5'52093763 – dc23 2011049199

ISBN 978-1-107-00648-5 Hardback

---

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or  
accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to  
in this publication, and does not guarantee that any content on such  
websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

---

Cambridge University Press  
978-1-107-00648-5 - Music in Roman Comedy  
Timothy J. Moore  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

*For Mike*

Cambridge University Press  
978-1-107-00648-5 - Music in Roman Comedy  
Timothy J. Moore  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

Contents

List of illustrations	<i>page</i> ix
List of tables	x
Acknowledgments	xiii
Abbreviations	xv
Introduction	I
Sources	4
Meter and musical accompaniment	15
<i>Numeri innumeri</i>	16
Other music	17
1 <i>Tibiae</i> and <i>tibicines</i>	26
<i>Tibicines</i>	27
<i>Tibiae</i>	35
2 Song	64
Livy and the role of the actor in <i>cantica</i>	64
Importance of the voice	77
Qualities of the voice	80
Speaking and singing	92
3 Dance	105
Cinaedic dancing	106
Gestural dance	114
Dancing with the feet	119
The role of dance	121
<i>Rudens</i> : dance drama?	131
4 Melody and rhythm	135
<i>Tibicen</i> and singer	135
Melody	139
Rhythm	144
5 Meters	171
The standard: trochaic septenarius	172

Cambridge University Press  
 978-1-107-00648-5 - Music in Roman Comedy  
 Timothy J. Moore  
 Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

viii	<i>Contents</i>	
	Variation 1: iambic senarius	174
	Variation 2: other iambo-trochaic meters	177
	Variation 3: non-iambo-trochaic meters	190
6	Arrangement of verses and variation within the verse	210
	Stichic arrangement and polymetry	210
	Catalexis	211
	Systems	214
	Musical variety within the verse	215
7	Musical structure	237
	Opening scenes	242
	The first singing character	245
	Trochaic septenarii and the advancement of the plot	247
	Trochaic septenarii “false starts”	251
	ABC succession	253
	Duration and content of musical units	255
	Contrast between characters	258
	Musical parallels	258
	Units of action	260
	Musical reversals	263
	Endings	265
8	Polymetry	267
	Four principles of polymetry	267
	Some polymetric passages	274
	Polymetric and stichic meters	300
9	<i>Pseudolus</i>	305
	Structure	305
	The polymetric songs	311
10	<i>Adelphoe</i>	352
	Conclusion	372
	Appendix I The meters of Roman comedy	380
	Appendix II Meter and character type	385
	Appendix III Musical features by play	395
	Appendix IV Exceptions to the ABC pattern	399
	Appendix V Polymetric passages	403
	<i>Works cited</i>	410
	<i>Index locorum</i>	431
	<i>General index</i>	444



Illustrations

1	Comic wall relief from Pompeii. Naples, National Museum. © 2010 Photo Scala, Florence. Courtesy of the Ministero Beni e Att. Culturali.	page 32
2	Bell krater (Campanian red-figure ware), Italy, Campania, The Libation Painter (attributed to). Late classical/Hellenistic Period, 350–325 BCE fired clay, 36.6 × 33.5 cm. diameter, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Felton Bequest, 1973 (D14-1973).	34
3	Zummara. Photo by Michael Whisenhunt. Courtesy of Museum Vosbergen.	37
4	Puwi-puwi. Photo by Michael Whisenhunt. Courtesy of Museum Vosbergen.	38
5	Bassoon reeds. Photo by Michael Whisenhunt. Courtesy of Museum Vosbergen.	38
6	Carlo Mariani. Courtesy of Carlo Mariani.	43
7	Fresco, House of Menander, Pompeii. Photo by Michael Whisenhunt.	48
8	Berlin Painter (sixth–fifth century BCE) (attributed to). Amphora, obverse, young man singing and playing a cithara. Greek, Attic. Late archaic period. C. 490 BCE. Terracotta, h. 16 5/16 in. (41.50 cm.). Fletcher Fund, 1956 (56.171.38). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY, U.S.A. Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art	84
9	Mosaic with dancer and <i>tibia</i> player. One of three late Roman mosaics with circus and arena scenes. Detail of mosaic A. Museo Pio Clementino, Vatican Museums, Vatican State. © Photo Scala, Florence.	160

# Tables

1.1	Descriptions of <i>tibiae</i> in the <i>didascaliae</i> and Donatus	page 57
2.1	Verses in meters other than iambic senarii by character type	89
4.1	Allowable time-units in trochaic septenarii	148
4.2	<i>Rudens</i> 414 (tr7)	148
4.3	<i>Rudens</i> 414 divided into cola	149
4.4	<i>Rudens</i> 414 divided into metra	150
4.5	<i>Rudens</i> 414 divided into feet	151
4.6	<i>Rudens</i> 414 with note values of syllables	153
4.7	<i>Rudens</i> 414 with “beats” from the <i>tibicen</i>	163
4.8	<i>Rudens</i> 414 with time signatures	165
4.9	<i>Rudens</i> 414 with short weak elements lengthened to produce uniformity	166
4.10	<i>Rudens</i> 414 with long elements of short feet lengthened to produce uniformity	167
4.11	<i>Rudens</i> 414 with long elements of long feet shortened to produce uniformity	167
4.12	<i>Rudens</i> 414 with long feet shortened to produce uniformity	168
5.1	<i>Rudens</i> 1 (ia6)	174
5.2	<i>Rudens</i> 923 (tr8)	178
5.3	<i>Heauton Timoroumenos</i> 257 (ia8)	180
5.4	<i>Epidicus</i> 184 (ia8)	181
5.5	Iambic octonarii and slaves	182
5.6	Iambic octonarii and messengers	182
5.7	<i>Epidicus</i> 337 (ia7)	185
5.8	Iambic septenarii and female love interests	186
5.9	Iambic septenarii and prostitutes	186
5.10	<i>Amphitruo</i> 238 (cr4)	192
5.11	<i>Cistellaria</i> 1 (ba4)	193

Cambridge University Press  
 978-1-107-00648-5 - Music in Roman Comedy  
 Timothy J. Moore  
 Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

*List of tables*

xi

5.12	<i>Bacchides</i> 619 (ba2bacol)	193
5.13	<i>Rudens</i> 220 (an8)	200
5.14	<i>Casina</i> 873/74 (colreiz)	203
5.15	<i>Casina</i> 929 (versreiz)	204
5.16	<i>Persa</i> 29 (wil)	207
5.17	<i>Mostellaria</i> 693 (cr2thy)	209
6.1	Systems in Plautus	214
6.2	<i>Adelphoe</i> 165 (tr8)	219
6.3	<i>Pseudolus</i> 164 (tr8)	219
6.4	<i>Pseudolus</i> 249 (tr8)	220
6.5	<i>Hecyra</i> 519 (tr8)	221
6.6	<i>Aulularia</i> 123–124 (ba4)	222
6.7	<i>Persa</i> 169 (an8)	222
6.8	<i>Persa</i> 181 (an7)	223
6.9	<i>Casina</i> 707 (tr8)	225
6.10	Enjambment in trochaic octonarii	226
6.11	<i>Adelphoe</i> 525 (tr8)	231
6.12	Ictus and accent in <i>Adelphoe</i> 525 (tr8)	231
6.13	<i>Captivi</i> 535 (tr8)	232
6.14	<i>Pseudolus</i> 243 (tr8)	233
7.1	<i>Menaechmi</i> : musical structure	238
7.2	ABC patterns	254
7.3	Average and median number of metrical elements in musical units	256
7.4	Marshall's arcs in <i>Menaechmi</i>	261
9.1	<i>Pseudolus</i> : musical structure	306
10.1	Meter and character in <i>Adelphoe</i>	354
10.2	<i>Demea</i> in <i>deverbia</i>	365
10.3	<i>Adelphoe</i> : musical structure	368
Appendix I The meters of Roman comedy		
AI.1	Plautus and Terence	380
AI.2	Plautus	382
AI.3	Terence	383
Appendix II Meter and character type		
AII.1	Accompanied meters and iambic senarii	385
AII.2	Trochaics	387
AII.3	Accompanied iambics	389
AII.4	Anapests, bacchiacs, and cretics	391
AII.5	Cola reiziana, aeolics, and ionics	393
Appendix III Musical features by play		

Cambridge University Press  
978-1-107-00648-5 - Music in Roman Comedy  
Timothy J. Moore  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

xii	<i>List of tables</i>	
AIII.1	Accompanied and unaccompanied verses and meter changes	395
AIII.2	Polymetric and non-iambo-trochaic verses	397
Appendix IV	Exceptions to the ABC pattern	399
Appendix V	Polymetric passages	403

Cambridge University Press  
 978-1-107-00648-5 - Music in Roman Comedy  
 Timothy J. Moore  
 Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

## *Acknowledgments*

The seeds of this book were planted three decades ago, when I wrote a paper on music in Roman comedy for a class with Philip Wooby at Millersville University. I am grateful to Professor Wooby and his colleague Philip Heesen for a solid training in classics that continues to serve me well. More recently, I have incurred debts from many institutions and individuals. I completed much of the research for this book at the American Academy in Rome, with a fellowship supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities, and in Freiburg and Berlin, Germany, with grants from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. I owe much gratitude to the Academy and its community, and to Eckard Lefèvre and Bernd Seidensticker, my hosts in Freiburg and Berlin, respectively. My research has also received generous support from the Loeb Classical Library Foundation and The University of Texas at Austin, its College of Liberal Arts, and its Department of Classics under chairs Thomas Palaima, Cynthia Shelmerdine, Michael Gagarin, and Stephen White.

Andrew Barker, Susan Boynton, Christopher Bungard, Sander Goldberg, Kelvin Gregory, Florian Hurka, John Largess, Dan McGowan, Gwyn Morgan, Wolfgang Polleichtner, and Thomas Riis read all or part of the manuscript and offered invaluable suggestions, as did the two anonymous readers for Cambridge University Press. I can be stubborn, and remaining weaknesses are my own responsibility. I received priceless assistance from graduate and undergraduate assistants Stephanie Craven, Benjamin Hicks, Amy Lather, Charles Oughton, Lysanna Nally, and James Patterson. My thanks as well to the staff at Cambridge University Press, especially editors Michael Sharp and Christina Sarigiannidou and copy editor Linda Woodward. Without the acute metrical work of Cesare Questa, this book could not have been written: I thank him and his generous troupe of *Plautinisti* at the Università degli Studi in Urbino. Much of the statistical data in this work relies on a database designed by William Porter. Others, too many to name, have helped considerably in bringing this project to

Cambridge University Press  
978-1-107-00648-5 - Music in Roman Comedy  
Timothy J. Moore  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

xiv

*Acknowledgments*

completion. I note in particular Victor Benjamin, Daniela Bini, Marc Bizer, Douglas Biow, David Creese, Ignace de Keyser, Veit Erlmann, Karl Galinsky, Sjeff Kemper, Carlo Mariani, Peter Kruschwitz, Walther Maioli, C. W. Marshall, Richard and Janet Moore, Philip Neuman, Douglass Parker, Kenneth Reckford, Sonia Seeman, William Sheldon, Rabun Taylor, Dick and Rietke Verel, Michael Whisenhunt, and Shiela Winchester.

## *Abbreviations*

Barsby	Barsby, J. (trans.) (2001) <i>Terence</i> . 2 vols. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge, Mass.
<i>CIL</i>	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum</i> .
<i>CRF</i>	Ribbeck, O. (1898) <i>Scaenicae Romanorum poesis fragmenta II: Comiorum romanorum praeter Plautum et Syri quae feruntur sententias fragmenta</i> . 3rd edn. Leipzig.
<i>DAGM</i>	Pöhlmann, E. and M. L. West (eds.) (2001) <i>Documents of Ancient Greek Music: The Extant Melodies and Fragments</i> . Oxford.
<i>IG</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae</i> .
Kauer/Lindsay	Kauer, R. and W. M. Lindsay (eds.) (1958) <i>P. Terenti Afri Comoediae</i> . Oxford (reprint of 1926 edn. with additions by O. Skutsch).
Keil	Keil, H. (ed.) (1855–1928) <i>Grammatici Latini</i> . 8 vols. Leipzig.
Leo	Leo, F. (ed.) (1895–6) <i>Plauti Comoediae</i> . 2nd edn. Berlin.
Lindsay	Lindsay, W. M. (ed.) (1904–5) <i>T. Macci Plauti Comoediae</i> . Oxford.
LSJ	Liddell, H. G. and R. Scott (1968) <i>A Greek–English Lexicon</i> , revised by H. S. Jones. Oxford.
<i>MNC</i> <sup>3</sup>	Webster, T. B. L. (1995) <i>Monuments Illustrating New Comedy</i> . Revised and enlarged by J. R. Green and A. Seeberg. 2 vols. London.
<i>P. Oxy.</i>	Grenfell, B. P. et al. (eds.) (1898–) <i>The Oxyrhynchus Papyri</i> . London.
<i>PCG</i>	Kassel, R. and C. Austin (eds.) (1983–) <i>Poetae Comici Graeci</i> . Berlin.

Cambridge University Press  
978-1-107-00648-5 - Music in Roman Comedy  
Timothy J. Moore  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

xvi	<i>List of abbreviations</i>
TLG	<i>Thesaurus Linguae Graecae, A Digital Library of Greek Literature.</i> <a href="http://www.tlg.uci.edu">www.tlg.uci.edu</a>
TLL	(1900–) <i>Thesaurus Linguae Latinae.</i> Leipzig.
TRF	Ribbeck, O. (1897) <i>Scaenicae Romanorum poesis fragmenta I: Tragicorum romanorum fragmenta.</i> 3rd edn. Leipzig.

Authors and titles of ancient works are abbreviated according to LSJ and the *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, journals according to *L'Année Philologique*. All translations are my own unless otherwise noted.