

PREFACE*

Looking at it in retrospect, the layout of this book is possibly a bit confusing. For example, some may object that having the chapter on *Orfeo* precede that on *Euridice*, which predates *Orfeo*, results in an awkward inversion of the chronological order that usually characterizes a legitimate historical analysis. To make things worse, the discussion of *Orfeo* is punctuated with references to *Euridice* and aspects of it addressed only later, in the second chapter, thereby forcing the reader to occasionally leaf through back and forth. There is not much one can respond to those legitimate objections, except to try to explain a few things.

This book has been purposefully cast in the very same form in which the discoveries illustrated in it have occurred. First and foremost the Dantean resonance in *Orfeo*, which I have been keen on since 2008 and which has been a primary source of renewed wonder. Subsequently, there has been the serendipitous discovery of a link between the opera and a little known sixteenth-century document, providing at least some working answers to many of the questions I had been entertaining about Striggio and Monteverdi's opera. Finally, there has been the unavoidable fallout of all these questions and answers as they pertain to *Orfeo*'s primary competitor, *Euridice*, which in turn shed new light on Rinuccini's opera and its own academic ramifications – specifically, those pertaining to another little known sixteenth-century document to which the opera can be linked.

As already mentioned, this is not meant to be a justification. It merely explains the rationale behind a book that could possibly be construed as lacking in orderly form. Rather, it is just a book cast in a form that follows that often wayward path of scientific enquiry and discovery.

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