

*The University of Hong Kong
Department of Music*

**RESEARCH COLLOQUIA
FALL 2017**

Jeffrey Levenberg
(The Chinese University of Hong Kong)

The Prince of Venosa and of Musicians in the Mirror

How to raise the young future Prince of Venosa, Emmanuele Gesualdo, to be a proper prince was a persistent challenge for the extended Gesualdo family in the decade following the execution of Emmanuele's mother by his father. While remarkably much is known about Carlo Gesualdo's "loss of custody" of his son, Emmanuele's formative education has remained a mystery. A newly recovered source, *Libellus de rationem scribendorum carminum* ("A Little Book on the Method of Songs that are to be Written"), penned by one Johannes Franciscus Marcus with a dedication to Emmanuele, now solves this mystery. The subject matter of this commemorative treatise could hardly have been coincidental: While Carlo was composing modern music in his castle, Emmanuele was mastering the Latin classics in his uncle's library. I propose that the *Libellus* was designed to be a "mirror" for the future Prince of Venosa and (as his father was known among some) of Musicians. To rear a proper prince as depicted in the "mirrors for princes" literature, the extended Gesualdo family kept Emmanuele's father all but out of the picture. Among other evidences in support of my reading of the *Libellus*, I unveil hitherto unseen text-paintings in Carlo Gesualdo's sacred music that are most unbecoming of a proper prince.

Jeffrey Levenberg is an assistant professor of Western music history and a beginner *guqin* student at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. His research focuses on Carlo Gesualdo and also encompasses cross-cultural studies of early music. His work has been supported by the HK RGC, the USA NEH, Villa I Tatti, and others. His most recent publication (in *Recercare*) reconsiders Athanasius Kircher's *Musurgia universalis*. Next spring he is convening a conference on "Music between China and the West in the Age of Discovery" at CUHK and cordially invites the HKU music community to join in.

WEDNESDAY 11 OCTOBER 2017, 5:00PM
SEMINAR ROOM 11.01, 11/F RUN RUN SHAW TOWER, CENTENNIAL CAMPUS
THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

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For further information, call 3917 7045

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