

Giovanni Maria Artusi, *Delle imperfezioni della moderna musica* [On the imperfections of modern music], Venice, 1600

Such composers, in my opinion, have nothing but smoke in their heads if they are so impressed with themselves as to think they can corrupt, abolish, and ruin at will the good old rules handed down from days of old by so many theorists and excellent musicians, who are the very ones from whom these modern musicians have learned awkwardly to put a few notes together...

In the end, since they lack a good foundation, they are eaten away by time and fall to the ground, and those who put them up are made a laughingstock.

Of course I recognize that new discoveries are not only a good thing, but a necessary one... But if one's purposes can be achieved by following the teachings and the good old rules handed down by authority and followed by musicians everywhere, why then go beyond their bounds in search of extravagant novelties? Don't you know that all the arts and sciences have long since been regulated by theorists and that their basic principles and rules have been handed down to us so that, as long as they are kept to, we shall be able to understand one another?...

Compositions like [Monteverdi's], then, are the product of ignorance. For such composers it is enough to set up a great roar of sound, an absurd confusion, an array of defects, and it all comes from the ignorance which keeps them benighted.