

CESARE BENDINELLI

(~1542 - 1617)



Tutta l'arte della Trombetta 1614

Complete English Translation,
Biography and Critical Commentary

by

Edward H. Tarr

with a contribution by Peter Downey

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Cesare Bendinelli: Biography

Positions

Cesare Bendinelli was from Verona.¹ If we assume him to be identical to the “Cäsar Bindinel from Verona” who was mentioned in archival documents of the court of Schwerin from 1562 to 1564² as a “*fremder*” trombonist, that is, one coming from outside, and if we postulate a two-year period of apprenticeship and another four years as a journeyman, further assuming that his appearances in Schwerin were among his earliest, we arrive at a date of birth around 1542. During the late 16th century it was not at all unusual for trumpeters to play other instruments, cornetto being the most frequent secondary instrument. (Two centuries later, trumpeters were often expected to play the violin.) The combination of trumpet and trombone was certainly possible as well, especially in the case of trumpeters specializing in the low register of their instrument. However, I must confess a certain uneasiness at seeing Bendinelli, who soon after was known as a *high* trumpet player, listed as a trombonist.

Between 1567 and 1577, probably into 1580, Bendinelli served as a court trumpeter at the Imperial court of Vienna. He was taken into service there on 1 August 1567, at a salary of 15 guilders monthly and a new uniform each year.³ Before 1571 he married, for in that year he received a gratification of 20 guilders for his wife, who had been seriously ill.⁴ In 1573 his salary was raised to 17 guilders a month.⁵ The last we learn of him in Vienna is that his salary was paid through the end of 1576; unfortunately, the archival volumes for 1577-80 are missing.⁶

In 1580 Bendinelli was taken on at the court of Munich.⁷ He remained there until his death.⁸ During his Munich tenure he had various titles: first “Instrumentist” (that is, player of more than one instrument), then “Musikus” (a more important title than the previous one, corresponding to “master”), only in 1586 “Obrister Trommeter” (“Chief Court Trumpeter”), finally “Komponist” (to which a *Magnificat* testifies that survives in the Music Department of the Bavarian State Library).⁹ His ducal employers were first Wilhelm V (reigned 1579-97) and then Wilhelm’s son Maximilian I (r. 1597-1651). The music at this court was of the highest order, under Orlando di Lasso (1532-94), who had served as music director there from 1556.¹⁰ At the time of Bendinelli’s arrival, the number of trumpeters in the courtly trumpet ensemble had dwindled from the 15 who had been employed at the beginning of Lasso’s tenure to six (plus a kettledrummer).¹¹ The duties of the court trumpeters – who in the archival documents are always listed separately from the other instrumentalists and singers – were to give solemnity to the acts of the Duke and his family by playing at table, in church (on high feast days such as Christmas), at courtly weddings, and at the Duke’s comings and goings.

Bendinelli’s Mastery as a Trumpeter

That he could modify his instrument’s heroic sound can be deduced from an anonymous Latin eulogy:

AD CAESAREM BENDINELLUM MUSICAE SCIENTISSIMUM

Caesaris invicti timuerunt classica gentes
Dum iubet exciri Galla cruenta iuba.
Sed tua cum primum nostras dulcedine perflat
Aures, celesti qua canis arte, tuba;
Non pavidi trepidant homines iam Caesaris arma,
Caesaris at sonitus aure bibisse iuvat.¹²

Attempt at a translation: “People feared the trumpet calls of invincible Caesar, / while the red-maned Gallic cock provoked to battle. / But since your trumpet, on which you play with heavenly art, / for the first time caressed our ears with sweetness, / no longer do the anxious people fear the noise of Caesar’s battle; / on the contrary, it is a joy to have heard Caesar’s [Bendinelli’s] sounds with one’s own ears.”

Trumpet Purchases – the Schnitzer Trumpet (1585)

During Bendinelli’s tenure, the strength and quality of the courtly trumpet ensemble was improved, in particular by the acquisition of large numbers of new trumpets, generally in Nuremberg. The first purchase during this period was made in 1586, when the cornetist Vileno Cornazzano was sent there to bring back two new trumpets.¹³ One of these was probably the trumpet in pretzel shape made by Anton Schnitzer in 1585, an instrument donated by Bendinelli in 1614 to the Accademia Filarmonica in Verona. (See **Illustration 1** and the discussion further below.)

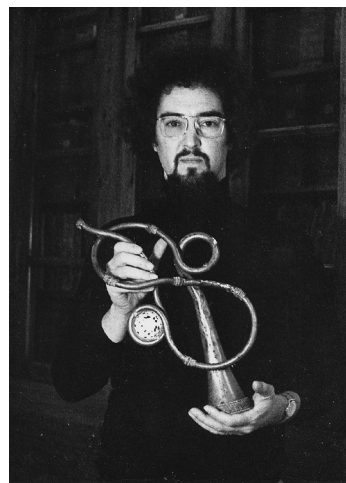


Illustration 1: Edward H. Tarr holding Bendinelli’s trumpet, in the library of the Accademia Filarmonica in Verona. The instrument was made by Anton Schnitzer in 1585.

This instrument consists of three parts. The first runs from the mouthpiece end to the ferrule that appears after the first lateral loop (containing a medal). The second part is in the shape of an S and ends underneath the ferrule near the author’s right thumb. The third part starts at the second lateral loop and runs to the end

of the bell. As **Illustrations 2-4** show, that instrument was made with the finest mastery of all the techniques of instrument-making. Presumably to save expensive metal, Schnitzer soldered two pieces of butted-up tubing to each other in two different places, without covering them with a ferrule (visible in Illustrations 2 and 3). Furthermore, this instrument still possesses, in one of the side loops, the coat of arms of the Munich court, a feature lacking from the well-known sister instrument in the Vienna musical instrument collection¹⁴ (see **Illustration 5**).



Illustration 2: The bell of Bendinelli's trumpet. Note the wire loop at the edge of the bell rim (at left) for attaching a banner; the characteristic pattern at the bell seam; and, especially, the seam of the tubing (at the bottom of the loop of tubing visible in this photograph (in a plane with the right edge of the bell) one can see clearly how Schnitzer butted two sections of tubing together with great artifice, without the usual metal ferrule to cover the meeting point.



Illustration 3: The meeting-point of the bell with the middle section of tubing, under the ferrule that is just visible at the upper right-hand corner of the photograph. The instrument is made of two sections of tubing and the bell section. It is also visible how Schnitzer butted the main bell section (with the square-tooth-patterned seam) to its continuation (with the straight seam) at the outside of the lateral loop. Note also, at the side of the loop, the holder for a second medal, which was lost at the time this photo was taken.



Illustration 4: Detail of the bell garland, showing the date. The entire inscription reads as follows:

MACHT ANTONI SCHNICZER ZU NVRMB^E M DLXXXV.



Illustration 5: Detail of the ornamental medal, which is gilded and displays the coat of arms of the Munich court. An apparently similar medal was once present in the other loop of tubing; it was reconstructed and inserted there in 1985 by the Basel goldsmith Kurt Degen. A similar instrument, made by Schnitzer in 1598 and now preserved as no. 181 in the musical instrument collection of the Art Historical Museum of Vienna, does not have any medals at all.

These five pictures were made in 1973, shortly after the trumpet had become known. It was still in an unrestored state. Its appearance changed considerably during restoration, which Rainer Egger and Kurt Degen (Basel) carried out in 1985. The instrument maker Egger discovered that the lower curve of tubing lying over the bell had received its position at some later time by an exertion of force, thereby forcing the seam open for some 10 centimeters. When he brought the tubing back into its

be drawn into a whirlpool. Bendinelli prayed to the Virgin Mary of Aufkirchen (a village south of Munich near Starnberg), and in a vision she appeared and averted the accident. In his gratitude, Bendinelli had two votive paintings of the event made and hung in the pilgrimage churches of Aufkirchen and Loreto.

A research trip that the author made to Loreto in order to unearth the second votive painting yielded the disappointing information that nearly all the votive pictures there, including Bendinelli's, had been destroyed in the early 19th century on Napoleon's order. **Illustration 7** shows the one in Aufkirchen, which fortunately has survived.



Illustration 7: Votive painting donated by Bendinelli in 1582 to the Pilgrimage Church in Aufkirchen, near Starnberg (Bavaria). The legend tells how Bendinelli was under way on the Danube when the rudder broke; his ship was sucked into a whirlpool, and the boat with its occupants drifted dangerously towards treacherous rocks. Bendinelli's prayers were rewarded when the Virgin Mary of Aufkirchen appeared miraculously, saving the party from certain death by drowning.

A translation of the text is as follows:

After the highly esteemed Cesare Bendinelli – servant of His Roman Imperial Majesty and also of His Serene Bavarian [Majesty], [having been] called in 1582 by His Imperial Majesty to his service – was under way on the Danube River again to Vienna, [his boat] traveled through a whirlpool. Being in danger of certain death, in that the whirlpool had broken the boat's rudder and the boat was being swirled around and [was] about to be swallowed up, this Bendinelli kneeled, and the likeness of Our Dear Lady of Aufkirchen - whom he had seen only once before in his entire life - appeared to him in a halo, coming as a protector.

Just as the boat was going around for the fourth time in said whirlpool, one [of the passengers] threw down a board at the bow, so that the water might not drown them. It sank in the depths, the boat shot out over it, and the many [passengers] who [were] on it remained uninjured. For this reason – because of such grace and the sign of such a miracle, the holiest Virgin Mary and her dear child preserving [them] by their intercession – the said Bendinelli promised to give this [votive] panel to this house of God, as well as to [that] of Loreto (no less worthy of such a panel), and to distribute alms to the poor according to his capacity.³¹

In the votive panel, Bendinelli appears as a distinguished gentleman of middle age, with a pointed beard, praying on his knees. An enlargement of this section of the votive painting appears as **Illustration 8**.



Illustration 8: Detail from the votive painting, showing Bendinelli on his knees, praying.

Cesare Bendinelli: Tutta l'arte della Trombetta (1614)

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Translations

TITLE



The Entire Art of Trumpet [Playing]

With [a] new invention, concerning the syllables placed under the military calls. By Cesare Bendinelli, from Verona, musician and leader of the trumpet ensemble of the most serene [duke] of Bavaria. A very easy method for those who wish to learn the profession [of trumpet playing]. The work's contents are in large part by the author; the remainder was gathered by him with the greatest diligence from [the] greatest players of his time. A useful and easily understood work, which directs itself at those [persons] who understand music.

PREFACE

Whoever wishes to learn to play the trumpet and to understand the present work, in order to use it for his needs, must first of all be healthy and possess a good constitution, good teeth, and a good chest. If he wishes to begin playing, he should place the trumpet gracefully on his mouth, whereby attention should be paid to [the fact that] the [trumpet's] bell should stay [in] a quite horizontal [position], pointing neither upwards nor downwards. He should avoid puffing up his cheeks, as it is a terrible vice and deforms the player. He should learn then to lead his chin (*maneggiar il barbozzo*) [together] with the notes of each register – this is called “accenting the trumpet” and gives it elegance. When [the pupil] has succeeded in this, and knows how to play all the notes (*uoci*) well, he can then learn to sing and play by means of the tongue, whereby it does not matter whether [the tongue] is reversed (*rouersia*), direct (*dritta*), [double] (*Theghedhegheda*), pointed (*pontile*), or otherwise, as long as the player finds it easy and becomes used to it, because he will then be able to investigate his instrument and pass over to matters of greater importance. Wherever he finds the following notes $\sharp \flat$ with the dots beneath [them], he should lead his chin to accentuate; and wherever he finds the following [notes] $\text{♯} \text{♭}$ he should always pronounce [the syllable] “dran”, hardly touching the first note and passing to the other with a kind of accent. This “dran” is