



The Italian Cantastorie

The Guitar

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The guitar defines the rhythmic and harmonic framework of the ballata and the storia. The guitar accompaniment should also be always uniform. There is a special relationship between the storyteller and his guitar.

The shows' leaflets normally indicate the storyteller's name "and his guitar". It's as if it were one of his physical parts or his second voice. One of Orazio Strano's five children, Vito, who teaches guitar at the conservatory in Sydney... had tried to follow his father's footsteps before becoming a guitar professor, he wanted to be a storyteller like Orazio. But Vito was a guitar virtuoso, and he knew of harmonisations, embellishments and ornaments.

He decided to re-interpret the story of 'Pope John XXIII' written by his father. He added his own personal touch with the use of more elaborated guitar melodies. The result was a huge flop. Music should not overlap with or set limitations to the other aspects in the cantastorie's performance. A storyteller's performance is not centred on the musical aspect. Music serves a wider narrative. The guitar melodies are rather brief.

They may occur at the end of the octects or as an introduction to the stories.

For example... [Guitar playing]

Another example for an introduction would be: [Guitar playing]

These are brief musical interludes based on the melodic structure, which is repeated throughout. The musical repertoire is not very large.

Diego Carpitella, one of the fathers of Italian ethnomusicology, defined a storyteller's musical dimension as being 'indifferent'. According to Carpitella, they are indifferent to music. He was right, which is not to say that music has no value in the economy of the performance but rather, the music is there to sustain the thinking process.