



The Italian Cantastorie

Storie and Ballate

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Storie are normally structured in octets. These stanzas are made of eight hendecasyllable lines. Often small ballate can be inserted within the structure of a storia. That has different poetical and musical features. For each stanza of the storia there is a corresponding music module. This music module is normally divided into two parts. The first four and the last four lines are sung using two different melodies. These modules are repeated from the beginning to the end of the story. They have to engage the audience while preserving the story's consistency. This is a fascinating aspect of storytellers' music: it's repetitive, yet it never tires.

This music structure allows variations and interruptions also leaving room for speech. It's quite a flexible structure, it's a linear structure with very simple melodies with intervals - like the third or the fifth – which all fall within a tonal framework. There aren't any significant modulations

in storytellers' harmonic and melodic structures. In this way music helps to achieve that moral detachment from history previously mentioned. If I were to add any kind of frills and embellishments to the music these might infer a moral judgement in regard to specific facts. Music must reset the story. Sometimes a refrain may be added to the flow of the story. The use of sestinas and quatrains is now commonplace alongside the octet