

Although the melodies of the Roman theater are lost to the modern world, the texts of Roman comedy that survive nevertheless contain an important key to bringing the plays to life: the meters. One meter of Roman comedy, the iambic senarius, was spoken, and every other verse type was sung with accompaniment by the pipes (Moore 1998, Marshall ch. 5). This metrical distinction between speech and song is fundamental to understanding how music functioned on the Roman stage, and representing sung passages should play a vital role in modern productions of Plautus and Terence. One need not produce plays, however, to make use of song: singing lyrics can be a priceless aid both in a scholar's appreciation of what Plautus and Terence accomplished and in a teacher's explanations of meter and its effects. Our workshop, which consists of two presentations and a brief performance, explores (with participation encouraged from workshop attendees) ways of rendering song in Roman comedy through the lens of a particularly masterful Plautine *canticum*, *Pseudolus* 1103–1135.

The first presentation, "Singing Plautine Lyrics," focuses on reflecting the rhythm of Roman comedy's music while singing the texts. Exact melodies are not as integral for realizing the distinction between spoken and sung passages as is simply singing. With a copy of the text and the scansion (cf. Questa), reciters of Plautus can, without difficulty, improvise a tune to match the rhythm—which may actually have been practiced in Plautus and Terence's day (cf. Marshall ch. 6, Slater). Our test case from *Pseudolus*, with its variety of metrical forms, illustrates not only the divergence between Plautus' speech and his song but also the different theatrical effects that the different meters can produce.

In the second presentation, "Performing Plautine Lyrics," attention turns to the challenges of incorporating song into modern stage productions of Roman comedy. Every Plautine *canticum* fulfills important dramatic roles, including serving as a transition from one section of the play to the next. To be successful in adapting a passage in lyric meters for performance by a non-professional actor, a composer has to compromise: the original text must be modified to make the song accessible to the student singer as well as to the audience. Sometimes it may even be desirable to insert spoken lines into the musical number. *Pseudolus* 1103–1135 is itself a kind of hybrid, blending characteristic features from slave songs and soldier songs.

Following the second presentation comes a rehearsed performance of the *canticum*, as described in that presentation, with three vocalists, "pipes" (i.e., a recorder), and, if available, a piano. The entire workshop lasts approximately 2.5 hours, with one hour for each of the two main presentations (including a participatory component for workshop attendees), and time for questions and discussion after each presentation (led by the presenter) and at the end (led by the workshop organizer).

Singing Plautus in both performance and non-performance contexts enlivens his works and brings us closer to what contemporary productions were like. Thinking about singing Plautus, furthermore, can reveal new insights about and connections within Roman comedy: certain meters, for instance, can take on an almost leitmotivic quality, expressing certain emotions or traits in the character singing them, and the mere act of singing (or not singing) communicates to the audience information about the characters they see onstage (see, e.g., Moore 1999, 2001a, 2001b, 2004). This workshop illuminates the role of song in Roman comedy in a firsthand way, taking us from talking about Plautus' music to experiencing it.