

VIVALDI, "MOTEZUMA"
AND THE OPERA SERIA
ESSAYS ON A NEWLY DISCOVERED
WORK AND ITS BACKGROUND

EDITED BY
MICHAEL TALBOT



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for Kees Vlaardingebroek

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FOREWORD

Michael Talbot

AROUND THE YEAR 1976, WHEN I WAS ENGAGED on my first general life-and-works study of Vivaldi (confusingly, it was the second to be published, although the first to be penned), I came to the pessimistic conclusion that:

The disappointing response to stage performances in recent times of [Vivaldi's] *L'Olimpiade*, *La fida ninfa* and *Griselda* suggests that Vivaldi's operas will be hard to revive in their present form. One way of rescuing their best music while preserving a little of the integrity of the original would be to present in concert performance all the arias for one (or more) of the characters in an opera. Recording offers another possible route to salvation¹.

How wrong I have been proved on the first point, even though the newly won, and increasing, popularity, in the last few years, of recitals and recordings of groups of arias, and the by now frequent recording of complete operas, have vindicated the other two. The fact is that by 1978, the second *annus mirabilis* (the first was 1939) of the modern Vivaldi revival — and also, not by coincidence, the tercentenary of his birth — only *L'Olimpiade*, *La fida ninfa* and *Tito Manlio* had achieved a staged performance, and only the third-named opera had earned more than a *succès d'estime*. Since then, steadily and incrementally, virtually the whole of Vivaldi's operatic music has had an outing, while audience appreciation and critical respect have risen by leaps and bounds. We have now reached the stage where, in their search for novelty, artists and recording companies have to venture down the byways of Vivaldi's operatic music: collaborative works (*Il Tigrane*, RV 740); incompletely preserved works (*Catone in Utica*, RV 705, *Armida al campo d'Egitto*, RV 699, *Motezuma*, RV 723); pasticcios (*Tamerlano*, RV 703, *Rosmira fedele*, RV 731); groups of arias from otherwise lost works; even arias of uncertain provenance.

¹. TALBOT, Michael. *Vivaldi*, London, BBC Publications, 1979, p. 86. An even more pessimistic view is taken in LANDON, H. C. Robbins. *Vivaldi: Voice of the Baroque*, London, Thames and Hudson, 1993, p. 40, where one reads: "this [opera] is the one aspect of his [Vivaldi's] multi-faceted career which arouses little or no interest in the twentieth-century listener".

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What accounts for this truly astonishing turnaround in the fortunes of Vivaldi's stage music? It is not something shared by the generality of late baroque opera. We are hardly more likely today to hear or see an opera of Alessandro Scarlatti (despite the eulogies rightly paid by musicologists to this master) or of Johann Adolf Hasse, the darling of the mid-eighteenth century, than we were thirty years ago. Like Handel, whom he resembles in certain important ways, Vivaldi is a case apart.

There are perhaps three reasons why Vivaldi the *operista* flourishes while, say, Albinoni, Porpora and even, at least by comparison, Galuppi languish. The first is that, to adopt the modern language of marketing, his is a recognized 'brand'. The appreciation of his operas is an extension of the appreciation of his instrumental music and the better-known parts of his sacred vocal music. The modern public reception of classical music, as I have argued elsewhere, is primarily composer-centred, not genre-centred or even (usually) artist-centred². We derive interest in the artwork from interest in the artist, from which it is inseparable; and it is logical and natural that we should seek to gain as wide and comprehensive a knowledge of the artist's oeuvre (as also of his life and human personality) as we can. Not to take an interest in Vivaldi's operas would, in the end, place a question mark over the worth of his concertos. So the present-day vogue for Vivaldi's operas is driven not so much by an interest in opera seria or historical performance in themselves (although this interest exists, and overlaps with that pertaining directly to the composer) as by an insatiable curiosity about Vivaldi the man and Vivaldi the artist.

The second reason is largely fortuitous. By a stroke of good fortune, we possess, more or less intact, the composer's personal musical archive in the shape of what are commonly known as the 'Turin manuscripts': more precisely, the Vivaldian manuscripts, mostly autograph, of the Foà and Giordano donations in the Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria, Turin. Had we not — thanks to the persistence and astuteness of Alberto Gentili, their discoverer, and to the generosity of the named benefactors — had access to this vast hoard of music, the survival of Vivaldi's operas would be exiguous indeed: we would possess precisely one complete score (of *Teuzzone*, RV 736) and one incomplete score (of *Motezuma*, RV 723), not counting numerous isolated arias and aria groups scattered to the four winds. Of operas by major composers before Hasse, only those of Handel, for similar reasons, have had a higher survival rate. The fifteen single-authored operas of Vivaldi preserved in complete, or almost complete, form may represent less than a sixth of those (totalling 94) that he claimed in January 1739 to have written, but, in absolute terms, they form a sizable and fully representative cross-section of his contribution³. Their number is neither so huge as to create

². See TALBOT, Michael. 'The Work-Concept and Composer-Centredness', in: *The Musical Work: Reality or Invention?*, edited by Michael Talbot, Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 2000 (Liverpool Music Symposium, 1), pp. 168–186.

³. Scholars are inclined to regard the figure of 94 operas as very inflated, since published librettos have been recovered for little more than half that number. Vivaldi did not habitually tell outright lies, so far as

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a deterrent to their exploration (as in the case of, say, Telemann's orchestral suites) nor so small as reach a saturation point too quickly.

The third reason is, simply, that Vivaldi was an exceptionally accomplished composer of opera, and one capable of learning from experience. Most of the criticisms that have in the past been levelled at his operas (for example, references to their supposedly 'undramatic' qualities) are not specific to his stage works but apply to the opera seria tradition *tout court*. Greater understanding of this tradition (perhaps 'tolerance' would often be a more appropriate term than 'understanding'), as well as of the wider aesthetic and social context in which it operated in its own age, has by now largely blunted such criticisms. Moreover, the successful conversion of this body of works, via non-staged live performance or recordings, effectively into 'concert' music means that even those music-lovers who remain alienated from the operatic experience — on aesthetic, social or even purely economic grounds — need no longer deny themselves access to this repertory.

Since the heady days of the 1940s and 1950s, when Vivaldi's music came on stream in a big way for the first time since the eighteenth century, its revival has periodically received a welcome boost from the discovery of new works. Most of the earlier post-war discoveries — up to about 1970 — were made by the Danish scholar Peter Ryom in connection with his preparation of a new, comprehensive Vivaldi catalogue⁴, but since then Ryom has been joined by a large group of scholars sucked in to the Vivaldi treasure trail. Even nowadays, rarely a year goes by without the discovery of some previously buried music, be it only a stray aria. Sometimes, the prizes are greater: the twelve 'Manchester' Sonatas turned up in 1973, and more recently, four sacred vocal works, three of them major, have surfaced in the Sächsische Landesbibliothek – Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Dresden, where they had long escaped detection by being wilfully misattributed by the copyist of the music to Baldassarre Galuppi⁵.

one can judge, but in other instances, he is known to have massaged statistics in his own favour (as when he told Edward Holdsworth in 1733 that he had published seventeen — rather than twelve — collections of instrumental music, counting the two *libri* of a single collection separately). Perhaps, the "94" operas included pasticcios arranged by him, his contributions to operas of multiple authorship, revised versions of existing operas, non-operatic dramatic works (such as serenatas) and so on.

⁴. The full-length version of Ryom's Vivaldi catalogue, *Antonio Vivaldi: Thematisch-systematisches Verzeichnis seiner Werke (RV)*, appeared from Breitkopf & Härtel, Wiesbaden, only in 2007, although it was preceded by three shorter or partial versions: RYOM, Peter. *Antonio Vivaldi: Table de concordances des œuvres*, Copenhagen, Engstrøm & Sødning, 1973; ID. *Verzeichnis der Werke Antonio Vivaldis (RV): Kleine Ausgabe*, Leipzig, Deutscher Verlag für Musik, 1974, revised edition 1979; ID. *Répertoire des œuvres d'Antonio Vivaldi: Les compositions instrumentales*, Copenhagen, Engstrøm & Sødning, 1986. The Ryom numbers quoted in this essay do not take into account the modifications to the numbering introduced in the newest catalogue.

⁵. On these Dresden works (RV 795, RV 803, RV 807 and RV Anh. 35a), see ID. 'Vivaldi ou Galuppi? Un cas de doute surprenante', in: *Vivaldi. Vero e falso. Problemi di attribuzione*, edited by Antonio Fanna and Michael Talbot, Florence, Olschki, 1992 (Quaderni vivaldiani, 7), pp. 25-40; TALBOT, Michael: 'Recovering

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However, until the rediscovery of major portions of *Motezuma* in 2003, an event triggered by the return to Berlin from Kiev of music belonging to the Sing-Akademie zu Berlin that had widely been presumed lost in the aftermath of World War II, operas — or, to be more precise, entire scenes and acts of operas, complete with their recitative — had been absent from this process. This is one reason for the great significance of the find. Another is that the early 1730s (*Motezuma* dates from 1733) is, for all genres cultivated by Vivaldi, a particularly vital artistic period. Although his decline in esteem had already begun in Italy, his reputation north of the Alps was intact, and in certain ways his works from these years reflect an ‘international’ orientation, as demonstrated by his revival of interest in imitative counterpoint⁶.

There is a completely different, and perhaps for the future even more important, side to the revival of *Motezuma* in the shape of the legal dispute that erupted over the attempts to stage the opera in 2005. A performance in Barga was blocked, while one in Düsseldorf was made possible only by a favourable last-minute court judgement⁷. This is not the place either to discuss the cause of the dispute or to venture an opinion on its outcome, except to say that the legal ownership and copyright status of old works held in unique manuscript copies in libraries seems destined to remain a minefield — and increasingly so in a period when the advent of digital cameras has turned the acquisition of photographic copies into a self-service activity.

However, before the opera was staged — and even longer before its premiere recording by Alan Curtis and *Il Complesso Barocco* arrived in 2006 — it was given a first outing, in its mutilated state, at a concert performance at De Doelen in Rotterdam on 11 June 2005 under the baton of Federico Maria Sardelli with the ensemble *Modo Antiquo*⁸. This event, details of which are set out at the end of this foreword, was the brainchild of the then concert manager of the hall, Kees Vlaardingerbroek, who ‘in another life’ happens also to be a Vivaldi scholar. Vlaardingerbroek had the happy idea of complementing the concert with a two-day symposium held on 11 and 12 June 2005 that I had the privilege of organizing and chairing⁹. Papers read on that occasion by Reinhard Strohm, Steffen Voss,

Vivaldi’s Lost Psalm’, in: *Eighteenth-Century Music*, I (2004), pp. 61–77; STOCKIGT, Janice B. – TALBOT, Michael. ‘Two More New Vivaldi Finds in Dresden’, in: *Eighteenth-Century Music*, III (2006), pp. 35–61.

⁶. I discuss this ‘contrapuntal revival’ in a forthcoming book, *Vivaldi and Fugue*, to be published in the ‘Quaderni vivaldiani’ series.

⁷. The official document recording the judgement of the Oberlandesgericht Düsseldorf (reference I-20 U 123/05), dated 16 August 2005, is a good starting point for studying the terms of the dispute between the Verein Sing-Akademie zu Berlin and the promoters of the Düsseldorf production.

⁸. It was likewise Sardelli who directed the Barga performance (in the event, not a staged performance but a concert performance of extracts) and the staged production in Düsseldorf. The Curtis recording, with a musical reconstruction of missing portions by Alessandro Ciccolini, is from DG Archiv, 00289 477 5996.

⁹. A 46-page souvenir programme for the concert and symposium (“De wereldpremiere van Antonio Vivaldi’s *Motezuma*. Opera in concert. Zaterdag 11 juni 2005”) was published. This is well worth acquiring,

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Jürgen Maehder and Melania Bucciarelli form the starting points for the essays on the same or similar subjects by these authors in the present volume¹⁰. The brief given to the speakers was that their freely chosen subject should be closely relevant in some way to the opera *Moteczuma*, and in his or her different fashion each fulfilled this request.

Right from the start, Vlaardingerbroek envisaged that the papers of the symposium would become the seed-bed of a later publication, for which De Doelen generously set aside a subsidy. Four papers were, of course, in themselves insufficient to make up the entire content of a normal-length book. The decision was therefore taken to amplify them with an introduction and separate essay written by myself, as designated editor, and to seek the assistance of further authors willing to fill in other 'spaces' within or around the subject of *Moteczuma*. Happily, three further collaborators were found — Kurt Markstrom, Micky White and Frédéric Delaméa — and I must record here my sincere thanks to them for coming on board.

A decision had to be taken over whether to employ the authors' respective mother tongues for the contributions or to present them uniformly in a single language. I have a personal bias towards single-language presentation (provided, of course, that the language in question is widely understood), which guarantees, at least, that whoever can read one essay can read them all. Another advantage is that this enables a more comprehensive index to be prepared, thereby facilitating cross-referencing between the essays. So English became the chosen language. I have naturally worked on the translations, where needed, in close collaboration with the authors, who have invariably known enough English to put me right whenever I erred. All the translations from other languages, also those of quotations, are my own handiwork unless otherwise indicated.

So what does our volume contain? Its hub, so to speak, from which the spokes of the other contributions radiate in all directions, is the opening essay by Steffen Voss, which introduces, characterizes and contextualizes the libretto and score of Vivaldi's *Moteczuma*. Voss has written on *Moteczuma* before — an essay reporting the music's discovery and describing the contents and physical properties of the Berlin source in detail appeared in a recent article¹¹ — but the present essay deals more with the opera's musical, literary and historical significance than with its physical substance.

The next two contributions deal with Vivaldi's operas of the same period. Reinhard Strohm, the first volume of whose massive study of the composer's operatic oeuvre has just

both for Kees Vlaardingerbroek's informative programme note and for the transcription of the complete libretto with parallel Dutch and English translations.

¹⁰. A further paper read at the symposium, by Enrico Careri ("On the Modern Revival of Italian Operas of the Early Eighteenth Century"), is not included in the present volume simply because it has appeared elsewhere in closely related form.

¹¹. Voss, Steffen. 'Die Partitur von Vivaldis Oper *Moteczuma* (1733)', in: *Studi vivaldiani*, IV (2004), pp. 53-72. This is the earliest study of the opera's music.

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appeared¹², discusses Vivaldi's operas of the first half of the 1730s (from the Prague *Farnace* of 1730 to the composer's setting of Metastasio's famous *L'Olimpiade* libretto), showing the ways in which *Moteczuma* (1733) conformed to, and in a few instances departed from, Vivaldi's usual *modus operandi* during those years.

The essay by Micky White and myself, largely biographical and documentary in content, investigates a very peripheral figure for us today, but possibly one who briefly loomed large in Vivaldi's thoughts in the 1730s: his nephew Pietro Mauro, who first tried his hand at operatic singing and management before eventually throwing in the towel and settling down to become Venice's premier music copyist. As the essay suggests, a messy scandal that occurred during one of Mauro's operatic ventures may have rebounded a little, however unfairly, on his uncle.

We turn next to consider the Hispanic, and, more especially, the American dimension of the opera's libretto, which was written by a Venetian author, Alvise (Luigi) Giusti. Juergen Maehder's essay draws attention to the highly politicized and ideologically coloured historiographical tradition surrounding the Spanish conquest of Central and South America, including (in this instance) the Aztec empire. The moral legitimacy of the subjugation of a people through sheer military force and the exploitation of it and its territory for the benefit of a colonizing power were in Vivaldi's time hardly questioned (as they were not to be generally in Europe until well into the second half of the twentieth century). But the extreme cruelty of the conquest in Mexico, as elsewhere, provoked an adverse reaction, particularly among those who were serious about the promotion of Christianity and (European) civilization. This tension between the (in the eyes of their time) noble ideals of the Conquistadors and their often base actions occasionally surfaces in literary treatments, as well as historical accounts, of the *Conquista*. Maehder examines Giusti's libretto minutely to see how a sophisticated author from a state neutral in European politics (and thus with no axe directly to grind), the Venetian Republic, was able cautiously to bring small elements of this critical tradition to a libretto that to a large extent found itself forced to bend historical accuracy to the imperatives of opera seria, including the genre's mandatory happy ending.

Melania Bucciarelli's essay offers a relevant parallel to Maehder's subject — the portrayal of the Ottoman East in Venetian opera — and at the same time, by focusing on a somewhat earlier Vivaldi opera, his *Armida al campo d'Egitto* (1718), sheds light on Vivaldi's evolution as an *operista*, also bringing to the fore the individuality of his librettist, the still relatively obscure Giovanni Palazzi. While political relations between Venice and the Ottomans, and popular conceptions (or misconceptions) of Oriental *mores*, form the backdrop to the opera, the antithesis between East and West becomes subordinated to that of its perceived correlates: femininity and masculinity. Bucciarelli has a lot of interest-

¹². STROHM, Reinhard. *The Operas of Antonio Vivaldi*, Florence, Olschki, 2007 (Quaderni vivaldiani, 12).

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ing information, too, about the adaptation of Tasso's epic *La Gerusalemme liberata* for the operatic stage, the cultural significance of the *locus amoenus*, and the role of nature images in baroque opera.

A further two essays attempt a wider contextualization of *Moteczuma* and Vivaldi's other late operas. Kurt Markstrom, who has specialized as a researcher in the music of the first generation of Neapolitan composers whose music took the operatic scene by storm in the 1720s (Porpora, Leo, Vinci), looks for mutual influences in the operas written by Vivaldi and Vinci in the second half of the 1720s, and, more specifically, in settings by the two composers of the same librettos. He finds a respectful rivalry and a clear willingness to learn from the other. If the main beneficiary was initially Vinci (for Vivaldi, the older composer, had anticipated many of the innovations associated with the Neapolitan school), the balance very soon shifted. This interchange was sadly cut short by Vinci's premature death in 1730.

Michael Talbot returns to an old topic that has been rather 'quiet' for a while: that of the periodization of Vivaldi's music: in particular, the idea of a late compositional style, to which, chronologically at least, *Moteczuma* ought to relate. He concludes that there is a 'long' late period beginning in the mid-1720s (and connected with the advent of the Neapolitans), but that there is also a stylistic mutation in the mid-1730s, after which, for example, Vivaldi shows decreasing interest in contrapuntal techniques and adopts more wholeheartedly the symmetrical phrase structure and lean texture characteristic of the dominant *galant* style.

The most original and provocative essay is left, deliberately, until last. This is Frédéric Delaméa's argument for a 'historically informed' style of stage production for Vivaldi's (and other baroque) operas, to match the 'historically informed' style of musical performance that long ago won the day. The issue is of enormous import and could one day transform our experience as opera-goers more radically than we can imagine. To banish 'director's theatre' from the operatic domain when, unless a parallel reform takes place, it will continue to hold sway in the spoken theatre for repertoire from Shakespeare onwards might be thought utopian, even by those who agree with the reasoning. But stranger cultural transformations have occurred in the past. Delaméa's vision is in no way negative: essentially, he is arguing for the right of the librettist — ironic as this may seem — to be accorded the full respect due to an *auteur*, and also, in a more modest way, for the far from obscure world of eighteenth-century scenography, costume design and dramatic gesture to be revived or, when this is not fully possible, intelligently imitated. As Delaméa shows with precise reference to *Moteczuma*, we do not really have to 'reinvent' for an opera what has already been painstakingly invented for us (as we can verify from the sometimes surprisingly complete directions contained in the libretto), and which, not surprisingly, fits the aesthetic of the words and of the notes perfectly.

No book is complete without its quotient of thanks and acknowledgements. Since the time of the Rotterdam symposium Kees Vlaardingebroek has moved on to become the

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artistic director of the 'flagship' *ZaterdagMatinee* programme on Radio 4 in the Netherlands. Let this volume be a tribute to his many services, both musicological and musical, to the Vivaldian cause, and also, retrospectively, to his leadership over many years at De Doelen. I would like also to thank Roberto Illiano for accepting the book on behalf of Brepols and guiding it through the successive stages of its production, and Massimiliano Sala (*Centro Studi Opera Omnia Luigi Boccherini*, Lucca) for the pagination of the book. A final word of thanks goes, naturally, to each and every member of the team of authors. As editors go, I am unusually interventionist, and the authors have been very tolerant of my interference in this regard.

Let me end on a technical point. Although the present collection of essays is designed to form a more or less coherent book bearing in from various angles on a single topic, *Motezuma*, realism tells me that many readers will wish to consult the essays separately, even singly. To that end, the bibliographical details of the footnoted citations for each essay are self-contained, with the inevitable result that certain publications are cited in full more than once in the course of the volume. The Bibliography at the end is simply a summation of the works cited in the volume as a whole. So, finally: "Leggi, e vivi felice" (as Vivaldi might have said).

LIVERPOOL, June 2008

Saturday, 11 June 2005 at 8:15 p.m.

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ANTONIO VIVALDI: *Motezuma*
(world premiere)

MODO ANTIQUO

Federico Maria Sardelli, *conductor*

cast:

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Marie-Nicole Lemieux – *mezzo-soprano* (Mitrena)
Dominique Labelle – *soprano* (Asprano)
Emanuela Galli – *soprano* (Fernando)
Renata Pokupic – *mezzo-soprano* (Ramiro)
Jeni Bern – *soprano* (Teutile)

Kees Vlaardingbroek and Mauricio Fernández, *casting*

CHAPTER ONE

ANTONIO VIVALDI'S DRAMMA PER MUSICA *MOTEZUMA*. SOME OBSERVATIONS ON ITS LIBRETTO AND MUSIC¹

Steffen Voss
(HAMBURG)

THE LIBRETTO OF VIVALDI'S DRAMMA per musica *Motezuma*, ascribed to the Venetian poet Alvisè (Luigi) Giusti, was not the first dramatic treatment of the history of the downfall of the Aztec empire under the reign of its ruler Mochtezuma II. There had been several spoken tragedies on the subject written earlier: *La conquista de México*, a piece by the Spanish poet Antonio Enríquez Gómez (1600-c.1661), published posthumously in 1668 under his pseudonym of Fernando de Zárate, was followed closely by John Dryden's *Indian Emperor* (1665), the 'sequel' of his 'semi-opera' *The Indian Queen*, which treats for the first time the greed and cruelty of the Spanish invaders. In 1702 a classicist French tragedy on the same subject, Louis Ferrier de La Martinière's *Montezume* (not published, text lost), impressed the young Voltaire. Geographically closer to Giusti and Vivaldi is a less well known classicist prose tragedy *Motezuma* by the Modenese lawyer Alfonso Cavazzi, printed in 1709². None of the pieces could have served as a direct source for Giusti, since he develops his dramatic action in a totally different and independent manner, with extreme freedom vis-à-vis the historical facts. These facts were drawn from the popular book *La Historia de la Conquista de México* by the Spanish chronicler Don

¹. This essay is partly developed from a paper given at the conference *Le arti della scena e l'esotismo in età moderna*, held at the Centro di Musica Antica Pietà dei Turchini at Naples in May 2004. See Voss, Steffen. 'La musica riscoperta del dramma per musica *Motezuma* di Antonio Vivaldi', in: *Le arti della scena e l'esotismo in età moderna*, edited by Francesco Cotticelli and Paologiovanni Maione, Naples, Turchini Edizioni, 2006 (I Turchini. Saggi, 3), pp. 285-298. Many new aspects included in the following article are inspired by ideas and information that the author received from papers heard at this stimulating conference.

². MOTEZUMA / IMPERADORE / DEL MESSICO. / TRAGEDIA / DEL DOTTORE / ALFONSO CAVAZZI / MODENESE, Modena, Bartolomeo Soliani, 1709.

Antonio de Solís y Ribadeneyra (1610-86), which had been published in Venice in an Italian translation in 1704³.

In the twentieth century Vivaldi's opera was immortalized in the novel *Concierto barocco* by the Cuban poet Alejo Carpentier. The story of this book concerns a Mexican nobleman who witnesses during a trip to Europe the first performance of *Motezuma* at the Teatro S. Angelo in Venice in 1733. While he is attending the performance, he argues with the composer over what he considers to be an illegitimate travesty of his country's most cherished national myth. There have even been two films based on Carpentier's novel⁴. In 1993 Jean-Claude Malgoire performed and later recorded a pasticcio opera with music from different Vivaldi operas, but based on the original *Motezuma* libretto.

The rediscovered manuscript belonging to the collection of the Sing-Akademie zu Berlin, which is the only known musical source of the opera, is a typical score in oblong format, written out by a Venetian copyist active in the fourth or fifth decade of the eighteenth century. The only other Vivaldi manuscript copied out by him is a chamber cantata today preserved in Dresden⁵. The score is incomplete: sizable portions of the first and third acts (in both cases, the beginning and the end) are missing. Only Act II is preserved in its entirety⁶.

The three acts were most probably originally preserved as separate volumes, for otherwise it is difficult to explain how complete gatherings from the end of Act I and the start of Act III have been lost. On the other hand, the gatherings were numbered serially throughout the whole manuscript, which allows us today to calculate the precise extent of the missing pages.

The music in the score follows — apart from apparent mistakes by the copyist and some orthographic variants — the version of the text transmitted by the printed libretto⁷. The portions of the recitatives that are virgulated in the libretto are left out⁸. But also the later additions to the opera known to us from texts printed on *fogli volanti* (cancels) that were inserted into the libretto — an additional aria for Motezuma's daughter Teutile ("Il

³. *Istoria della conquista del Messico, della popolazione, e de' progressi nell'America Settentrionale, conosciuta sotto nome di Nuova Spagna. Scritta in Castigliano [...] e tradotta in Toscano da un'Accademico della Crusca.* [i.e., Filippo Corsini], Venice, Andrea Poletti, 1704 (after a first edition, Florence, 1699).

⁴. MONTES-BAQUER, José. *Concierto baroco* (TV Production, Germany, 1982, music by Hans Werner Henze), and LEDUC, Paul. *Baroco* (Argentina, 1989).

⁵. RV 657, in D-DI, Mus. 1-J-7.4.

⁶. For a more detailed description of the score and its make-up, see VOSS, Steffen. 'Die Partitur von Vivaldis Oper *Motezuma* (1733)', in: *Studi vivaldiani*, IV (2004), pp. 53-72.

⁷. A detailed comparison of the sources is made in PANCINO, Livia. 'Le opere di Vivaldi nel raffronto fra libretti e partiture. IX: *Motezuma*', in: *Studi vivaldiani*, V (2005), pp. 3-11.

⁸. Virgulating lines of a libretto — that is, prefacing them with *virgolette*, or inverted commas — was a standard means of identifying lines that belonged to the drama but which, for whatever reason, were omitted from the musical performance.

nocchiero coraggioso”) and a substitute aria for Mitrena (“A svenare il mostro indegno”, replacing “S’impugni la spada” at the end of Act 1) — are absent from the score.

The poet of the opera is presumed to have been the young Luigi Giusti⁹, a Venetian lawyer who later became an official of the Austrian government in Milan and associated himself with the Enlightenment movement in Lombardy, thus coming into contact with the circle of Cesare Beccaria. This fact sheds an interesting light on the political dimension of the author’s treatment of the historical subject of the fall of the Aztec empire and of the imperialistic politics of the Spanish Conquistadors. Although the Spanish leader Fernando (the historical Hernán Cortés) is treated as the glorious hero of the drama, his character is not free from arrogance and cruelty, as is observed by Motezuma’s wife Mitrena during her diplomatic conversation with him.

In any discussion of the special, ‘exotic’ aspects of the *Motezuma* libretto it is important to distinguish the more individual ideas from the many commonplace, conventional melodramatic ingredients of the drama. At first sight, Giusti’s libretto might appear more extraordinary than it actually is. Many standard conventions of opera seria are observed, notwithstanding the distinctive exotic setting and the rare choice of a subject drawn from early modern history.

The principal man of the drama, Fernando Cortés, is treated rather conventionally as a typical military hero of opera seria. The manner in which he subdues his American opponents is hardly distinguishable from that of any leader from ancient Greece or Rome who conquers Oriental or barbarian countries belonging to the ‘Old World’.

Conversely, Motezuma’s character and his relationship towards the female members of his family parallel the way in which the protagonist of Antonio Maria Lucchini’s *Farnace*, set to music by Vivaldi in 1727 (RV 711), treats his wife Tamiri and their infant son. It seems that Lucchini’s popular text served as a model for Giusti, as suggested by the almost identical expositions of both dramas: In both cases, a defeated king, fleeing his enemies, comes on stage and orders his wife to commit suicide and kill their only

⁹. Recently, Michael Talbot has shown that the Venetian poets Girolamo and Alvisè Giusti were actually two persons from the same family, the first being the uncle of the second. Since both authors published opera librettos around the same time, they were often mistaken for each other, even by Venetian chroniclers. Besides *Motezuma*, perhaps only *Argenide*, written in the same year and for the same theatre and set to music by the young Baldassarre Galuppi, is from the pen of Alvisè (Luigi) Giusti. See the article on Luigi Giusti in NEGRI, Francesco – CICOGLIA, Emanuele, in: *Biografia degli italiani illustri nelle scienze, lettere ed arti del secolo XVIII*, edited by Emilio de Tipaldi, 10 vols., Venezia, Alvisopoli, 1834–1835, vol. II, pp. 275–277, and the recent article by MESCHINI, Stefano, in: *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, Rome, Istituto della Enciclopedia italiana, 1960—, vol. LVII (2001), pp. 186–189. Since Luigi left Venice for Milan in 1733 or 1734, the texts published after this period in Venice (for example *L’inganno scoperto*, 1735) should be attributed to his uncle. On the separate identity of the two men, see TALBOT, Michael. ‘Miscellanea’, in: *Studi vivaldiani*, VI (2006), pp. 159–164: 163–164. In 1737 Luigi Giusti wrote the text to a sacred cantata for the feast of St Joseph for a Milanese congregation (Sartori, no. 4967), which proves that he was then still active as an author of *poesia per musica*.

child in order to avert captivity. Another model that could have influenced Giusti was Agostino Piovene's *Bajazet/Tamerlano* libretto, chosen in 1735 as the text of a pasticcio opera prepared for Verona by Vivaldi, where three arias from *Motezuma* were re-used. In addition, Metastasio's frequently set dramas *Alessandro nell'Indie* and *Adriano in Siria* show similar characteristics.

In most of these operas, which portray a 'clash of cultures' between a barbarian king and a civilized, magnanimous conqueror, the former is characterized as an authoritarian patriarch, a jealous husband (typified by Metastasio's Poro in *Alessandro nell'Indie*) who often drives his wife or daughter into agonizing conflicts. In all these instances, 'barbarian' status suffices to characterize a person automatically as cruel, aggressive and treacherous (albeit also extremely vigorous and brave) and endowed with a almost excessive sense of honour, as his frequent attempts to commit suicide after defeat attest. Very often, he conceals his identity, posing as a simple soldier, in order to enter his enemy's camp unobserved, plotting the assassination of his hated adversary or some other mischief. A late representative of these operatic barbarian kings is Verdi's Ethiopian king Amonasro from *Aida*, with his cruel, exploitative behaviour towards his daughter and his disguise as a humble soldier when taken prisoner by the Egyptians. Vivaldi's *Motezuma* has more in common with these operatic villains than with his historical model, who was described as a melancholy, passive character struggling in vain to maintain peace with the foreign invaders. The American italianist Nancy d'Antuono has recently developed a very interesting theory about Giusti's treatment of historical events¹⁰: since his drama describes the siege of Tenochtitlán and the city's final submission in 1521, which took place in the year after Mochtezuma II's death, she assumes that the Mexican emperor presented in the play is Mochtezuma's warlike nephew and successor Guatimozín, although the latter, being only in his twenties when subsequently executed by Cortés, can hardly have been the father of a nearly adult daughter like the hero of Vivaldi's opera. But, on the other hand, the description of Guatimozín's wife by de Solís as "stimabile per il garbo, e per la vivacità del movimento [...] bellezza però più virile, che delicata" might well have served as a model for Giusti's invented character of Mitrena.

Since historical sources recount that daughters of Mochtezuma were married to Spanish soldiers¹¹ (like Teutile to Fernando's brother Ramiro in the opera), and the previous events reported by Mitrena in her long conversation with Fernando in Act II recall actions that genuinely took place during Mochtezuma's lifetime, Giusti seems to

¹⁰. D'ANTUONO, Nancy. 'Tra storicità e fantasia. La *Historia della conquista de Mexico* (1684) di Antonio de Solís e il *Motezuma* del poeta Alvisse Giusti (1733) con alcuni riferimenti al *Concierto barroco* di Alejo Carpentier (1974)', in: *Le arti della scena [...]*, *op. cit.* (see note 1), pp. 271-283.

¹¹. One of them, Tecuichpo (1510-1550), had three different Spanish husbands, and also had a child from Cortés, *cf. ibidem*, p. 275, note 18.

have amalgamated characteristics taken from both Mexican rulers in order to create a dramatically effective fictional stage character.

The most interesting invented character of the drama is Motezuma's wife Mitrena. Since the action takes place in a foreign country that must have seemed to Vivaldi and his European contemporaries like a fairytale land, she is allowed to appear as an Amazon-like warrior-queen, which would have been very unlikely for a classical Western heroine. Carpentier describes her as an "American Semiramis", which is a very good comparison, for the legendary Assyrian queen served as a prototype for all the baroque *donne guerriere* who appeared on Italian opera stages in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries¹². Mitrena leads her own army to free her captive husband after her diplomatic accords with Fernando — in political terms, perhaps the most interesting scene of the libretto — have broken down. And while Motezuma is seized by blind anger, which drives him into committing rather thoughtless and irrational acts, she is the more intelligent character, even with her negative traits: In her discussion with Fernando she behaves hypocritically, flattering the "civilized Europeans" at the expense of her own people, whom she calls "quella idiota gente". Her attempted murder of Cortés by setting on fire the tower in which he is held prisoner is an extremely vicious and cruel act. At the end of the opera, aided by her husband, she attacks the brothers Fernando and Ramiro, rushing forward from a hiding place during the festivities in honour of the Spanish victory. The Spanish leaders are saved only by the magnanimous interventions of Teutile and Asprano.

What makes Mitrena's character so ambiguous is her second, more female 'half' as a tender mother and wife. She tries to dissuade Motezuma and Fernando from fighting a duel in Act II, opposing her moving pleas for help to their aggressive war cries during the terzetto "A battaglia, a battaglia t'aspetta" (see Exx. 1 and 2). Her grief for the impending sacrifice of her daughter and for the supposed death of her husband, which drives her to madness, fills large portions of the scenes in the last act.

The distribution among the characters of the vocal ranges is very important for the realization of the dramatic conception of the opera. Motezuma was sung by a baritone, Massimiliano Miller¹³, who appeared during the same period in typical tenor roles in Vivaldi's operas: for example, as King Admeto in *Dorilla in Tempe*, and as

¹². See the discussion of this dramatic topos in FREEMAN, Daniel E. 'La guerriera amante: Representations of Amazons and Warrior Queens in Venetian Baroque Opera', in: *Musical Quarterly*, LXXX (1996), pp. 431-460.

¹³. This apparently German or Austrian singer might be identical with the composer Maximilian Miller, from whom sacred works are extant in the collections of two important Southern German / Austrian Benedictine abbeys: a Requiem Mass at Göttweig, dated 1740 (Ms. no. 356), and the offertory *Cum tubis tympana* at Ottoheuren (shelfmark MO 649a). Cf. *Der Göttweiger Thematische Katalog von 1830, Vol. 1: Faksimile der Originalhandschrift*, edited by Friedrich Wilhelm Riedel, Munich-Salzburg, Katzbichler, 1979, p. 62.

Ex. 1: Vivaldi, *Moteczuma*, terzetto “A battaglia, a battaglia t’aspetta” (*Moteczuma*, Fernando, Mitrena, II.5), bars 1–3.

Allegro

Fernando
A bat - ta - gliã, a bat - ta - gliã! T'a - spet - ta il mio bran - do, lo sde - gno, l'o -

Moteczuma
A bat - ta - gliã, a bat - ta - gliã! T'a - spet - ta il mio bran - do, lo sde - gno, l'o - nor

Basso
Violini e viole col basso

p

Ex. 2: Vivaldi, *Moteczuma*, terzetto “A battaglia, a battaglia t’aspetta” (*Moteczuma*, Fernando, Mitrena, II.5), bars 56–59.

(Allegro)

VI I-II
Viola

Mitrena
Voi stel - le, pla - ca - - - - te que - st'a - ni - me i - ra - te!

King Clistene’s servant Alcandro in the composer’s setting of Metastasio’s *L’Olimpiade*. Fernando, on the other hand, was played by the *primo uomo* of the production, the male soprano Francesco Bilanzoni. It is interesting to observe that in Vittorio Amadeo Cigna-Santi’s later libretto for Gian Francesco de Majò’s opera for Turin (1765) the tables are turned: here, Moteczuma is the tragic and sentimental character, and therefore interpreted by the *primo uomo*, whereas Cortés, as a typical martial hero, is assigned to a tenor¹⁴.

Mitrena was the part of the *prima donna*. In the libretto the role is assigned to Vivaldi’s protégée, the contralto Anna Girò. She was famous for her closeness to the composer (hence her nickname “Annina del prete rosso”) and specialized in tragic roles. Her parts

¹⁴. On Cigna-Santi’s very popular libretto, which was set subsequently by many other composers, including Paisiello, Galuppi and Zingarelli, see MAIONE, Paologiovanni. “Parli poi con stupore de’ miei casi il mondo intero”: il mito di Moctezuma sulla scena europea”, in: *Le arti della scena* [...], *op. cit.* (see note 1), pp. 343–364.

habitually contain short, affecting or dramatic arias and *accompagnato* recitatives with strong contrasts of emotion, where she could display her histrionic talents, while she was normally spared bravura arias with their long coloratura passages.

The other characters were all sung by high voices: Ramiro was a breeches role for the mezzo-soprano Angiola Zanutchi; the tender and melancholy character of Teutile was sung by Giuseppa Pircker, an Austrian¹⁵ soprano; while in Vivaldi's hands the *ultima parte* of the Mexican general Asprano became, ironically, the most taxing and showy of the male roles, designed for the young and promising soprano castrato Marianino Nicolini.

Nicolini had already taken part one year earlier in Vivaldi's Mantuan production of *Semiramide*, RV 733. Asprano's aria "Nell'aspre sue vicende", the final piece in Act 1, is a textual parody of an aria that Nicolini had sung in this opera. This is one of the rare instances of Vivaldi's re-use of older music in the *Motezuma* score, which consists — a rare case among his dramatic compositions — for the greater part of newly composed music.

The premiere of Vivaldi's *Motezuma* on 14 November 1733 marked the composer's reappearance at the Teatro S. Angelo after five years of absence from what could be called his "home stage". He was successful with operas in other cities such as Rome, Mantua and Florence, while in his native city younger, modern composers of the Neapolitan school such as Vinci, Leo and Hasse dominated the major Venetian stages. *Motezuma* was the first in a series of new operas with which Vivaldi tried to repeat his earlier successes.¹⁶ The surviving music of *Motezuma* should therefore be seen in the context of the Venetian masterpieces from this period of stylistic maturity: *L'Olimpiade*, RV 725, and *Griselda*, RV 718.

The Berlin fragment of the score contains two arias for each of the six characters (two of them only incomplete). Two further pieces (the above-mentioned aria for Asprano and the short final chorus) can be reconstructed, since Vivaldi re-used their

¹⁵. She was not, as sometimes suggested, identical with a singer called Gioseppa Todeschini or Tedesca, who sang at the Teatro S. Angelo in 1734 and 1735 (cf. the catalogue *Venetian Opera Libretti: A Microfilm of Raccolta de' drammi, A Collection of 1,286 Opera Libretti Held by the University of California, Los Angeles, Woodbridge (CT), Research Publications International, 1993*). Giuseppa Pircker seems to have sung only once before on a Venetian stage: in Giovanni Porta's and Pietro Metastasio's *Issipile* at the Teatro S. Giovanni Grisostomo in 1732. In a libretto for a Veronese production of Hasse's *Artaserse* (carnival 1733) she is called "Picher da Vienna". Her relationship with the couple Franz Joseph Karl and Marianna Pircker, who performed with Pietro Mingotti's troupe and later entered the service of the Duke of Württemberg, still has to be established.

¹⁶. According to Eleanor Selfridge-Field, the work was found to be "agreeable" but was not highly praised. The dances, by Giovanni Gallo, were more cherished than the opera itself, according to a report in the Roman journal *Il diario ordinario* (via private correspondence dated 15 August 2005).

music in other scores. The centrepiece of the second act is the terzetto for Mitrena, Fernando and Motezuma, while on the surviving pages of the third act the ‘mad scene’ for Mitrena, a complex, multisectional *accompagnato* interrupted by *secco* recitatives, has been preserved. As the first page of the soldiers’ chorus that opens the last tableau of this act is extant, we know the scoring (solo trumpet, strings, three-part chorus) and the musical character of this piece.

All six roles in the opera are provided with demanding and expressive music. Especially the imperial couple Motezuma and Mitrena — the characters who bear, as we have seen, the most ‘exotic’ characteristics — are also from a musical point of view attractive dramatic stage characters.

Motezuma’s arias from Acts I and II reveal a majestic character of great tragic impact. “Se prescritta in questo giorno” is a piece in the tradition of the baroque *ombra* aria — normally a piece in a slow tempo in which the character invokes the spirit of a deceased person. In this instance, Motezuma, taken prisoner by the Spanish army, bids his wife farewell and predicts his own reappearance among his enemies as a haunting, avenging spirit. Vivaldi choses the ‘topical’ tonality for this species of music: E flat major. In the A section the richly embellished cantabile line of the vocal part is set against a lively string accompaniment with strong dynamic accentuations and figures composed of semiquaver scales for the violins, which illustrate the tormented situation of the emperor and the restless wandering of his spirit (“Spirito errante”, illustrated in Ex. 3). In the more dramatic B section Vivaldi creates an effective contrast, illustrating the words “o nell’armi” with an aggressive *concitato* texture, and “o nei riposi” with soft, slow tremolo figures in the strings.

Ex. 3: Vivaldi, *Motezuma*, “Se prescritta in questo giorno” (Motezuma, I.15), bars 36-46.

(Andante)

VI I

VI II

Viola

Motezuma

Basso

Se pre - scrit - ta in que - sto gior - no, spo - sa a-

f p f p f p f p

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40

f p f p

f p f p

f p f p

-ma - - ta, è la mia mor - te, non te - mer, ché sem - pre in-

f p f p

44

-tor - no spir - to, er - ran-

Motezuma's position as the tragic protagonist of the play is emphasized by the fact that he is the last character who is allowed to sing an aria in this opera. This final aria of desperation, effectively contrasted with the ensuing gleeful D major chorus of the Spanish soldiers, is a so-called *aria parlante* — a dramatic piece void of coloratura or excessive word repetitions, having a more or less syllabic, recitative-like intonation of the words, which gives the performer an opportunity to display his/her qualities as a capable singer-actor.

Incessant, urging broken chords on unison violins form the orchestral background of this Allegro E minor piece. Motezuma's desperate rhetorical questions "Dov'è la figlia?

Dov'è il mio trono?" are followed by general pauses lengthened by fermatas (Ex. 4). These effective interruptions of the perpetuum-mobile-like string texture illustrate the confusion and perplexity of the defeated monarch. Later, Vivaldi transferred this short but effective piece to his pasticcio *Tamerlano* (Verona 1735), RV 703, where the Ottoman emperor Bajazet sings it without any alteration to the words in a closely comparable dramatic situation.

Ex. 4: Vivaldi, *Moteczuma*, "Dov'è la figlia" (Moteczuma, III.10), bars 6-11.

(Allegro)

VI I-II

Viola

Moteczuma

Basso

Do-v'è la fi - glia? Do-v'è il mio tro - no? Non son più pa - dre,

più re non so - no. La sor - te bar - ba-ra non ha più af - fân - no.

The Amazon-like character of Mitrena is displayed in her final aria in Act I, "S'impugni la spada", which follows directly after a short prayer taking the form of an accompagnato recitative. This is a piece full of difficult and extended coloraturas, not very typical for an aria written for Anna Girò. Her lack of virtuosity may have forced Vivaldi to replace

this aria later with another piece, “A svenare il mostro indegno”, of which only the words have survived.

Mitrena calls for bloody revenge, and Vivaldi's music is an aggressive, startling catalogue of vocal difficulties, with note-repetitions, extended scale-passages and extreme leaps for the singer (see Ex. 5). The use of a pair of horns increases the martial character of the music. Unfortunately, only the first three bars of the B section of this aria survive, since the final pages of the first act are missing. But they are enough to show that Vivaldi wrote a contrasting B section, choosing a slow tempo (*Andante*), the tonality of D minor and triple metre (3/8), since the *affetto* of the poetry changes completely at this point, giving way to compassionate feelings of the heroine for her imprisoned husband: “O sposo adorato, mi pesa il tuo affanno”.

The aria that closes the second act, “La figlia, lo sposo”, is another *aria parlante*. Vivaldi originally composed this aria for Anna Girò in the role of Tamiri in his 1732 Mantuan version of *Farnace*. It must have been a very successful piece, suiting Girò well, since it was later inserted and sung by her in other operas, such as *Catone in Utica* (RV 705) and *Siroe, re di Persia* (RV 735) — but always with its text altered and adapted to the new dramatic situation. Although the aria concludes a scene in which Mitrena appears once again as the vengeful warrior queen, ordering her followers to set fire to the tower where Fernando is held prisoner, she expresses private feelings in this aria. Grief for the impending sacrifice of her daughter and fear for the life of her husband, who has escaped only at the last moment from the onslaught of his enemies, consume her mind: a state illustrated by Vivaldi with short, broken-up phrases in the vocal line that are profiled against a hectic, off-beat accompaniment.

Ex. 5: Vivaldi, *Motezuma*, “S'impugni la spada” (Mitrena, I.16), bars 31-46 (strings omitted).

(Allegro)

Mitrena

S'im-pu - gni la spa - - - - - da, ci veg - ga, il ti-

Basso

31

34

- ran - - - no, si mo - ra, si ca - - - - -

37

da. ma

40

sia il no - stro fa

It is interesting to observe that Giusti and Vivaldi give each of the two main characters one *ombra* aria (Mitrena’s “Là su l’eterna sponda” from Act 1 (music lost) and Motezuma’s “Se prescritta in questo giorno”) and a fast *aria parlante* in a minor key (Mitrena’s “La figlia, lo sposo” and Motezuma’s “Dov’è la figlia”) — an obvious and intentional parallelism.

The highlight of the third act is Mitrena’s mad scene. The string accompaniment enters when Mitrena learns from Asprano that her husband has perished in the flames and Fernando has managed to escape. Enraged by her grief, she incites the Mexicans to pursue the fugitive Spanish general and to take bloody revenge. The strings illustrate with their *unisono* demisemiquaver scales Fernando’s flight by swimming across the Mexican lagoon (see Ex. 6), while Mitrena’s own desperate cries for vengeance are accompanied by semiquaver tremolo figures in *concitato* style. When she realizes that her hopes for vengeance are vain, Vivaldi returns to the simple style of *recitativo secco*. A longer dialogue follows, with the dramatic *coup de scène* of the entry of Ramiro and his soldiers, who deliver Teutile from her imminent sacrifice and destroy the pagan temple. When Mitrena sees her daughter being dragged off by the Spaniards, she lapses into resignation. Here, Vivaldi again resorts to *accompagnato* recitative, employing very expressive harmonic means: The words “vedova sconsolata, persa la figlia, e desolata il regno, senza cor, senza nume e senza speme, in odio al ciel” occur over a chromatic bass line descending over a tritone from *e* to *B_b* (Ex. 7).

The surviving music that Vivaldi wrote for the *primo uomo* of the piece, the soprano castrato Francesco Bilanzoni, might at first appear less attractive than the pieces already described. Both arias for Fernando are rather short movements that convey his arrogance towards his enemies. They are written in a light, modern style; only the first of them has a few short coloratura passages and difficult chains of trills. In both pieces the meaning of the

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Ex. 6: Vivaldi, *Moteczuma*, Accompagnato "Dunque è un errore" (Mitrena, III.6).

VI I-II
Viola

Mitrena

Basso

Dun - que, è un er - ro - re de - gli oc - chi tuo - i ciò che rap - por - ti.

Dun - que vin - ci - to - ri noi siam. Fer - nan - do, e - stin - to fu -

- ga - ce a nuo - to var - ca la mes - si - can la - gu - na e in al - tro li - do

text is expressed very directly by the music. In "I cenni d'un sovrano" Fernando expresses the desire to teach his enemy to bow his proud head ("capo altero") before him, a gesture mirrored by the descending melodic line of the voice. In "Sei troppo facile" Fernando mocks Asprano and accuses him of cowardice. The soldier's timidity is reflected by the light, three-part string accompaniment *senza basso*. In this very short aria, sudden dynamic contrasts, abrupt phrases and the menacing fermata at the beginning of the B section on the word "mirami" paint Fernando as a rather dangerous and despotic character.

Ex. 7: Vivaldi, *Motezuma*, Accompagnato “Ed ho cor di soffrir? E taccio ancora?” (Mitrena, III.9), excerpt.

VI I-II
Viola

Mitrena

Basso

ve - do - va, scon - so - la - ta, per - sa la fi - glia e de - so - la - to, il

re - gno, sen - za cor, sen - za nu - me e sen - za spe - me, in o - dio al Ciel.

Both surviving arias for Ramiro, sung by the mezzo soprano Angiola Zanucchi, come in the second act. Their expressive character is typical of the music written for this singer, who created the role of Licida in *L'Olimpiade*, where she received the beautiful aria “Mentre dormi amor fomenti”. The first aria, “Quel rossor che in volto miri”, is a lyrical piece with a rich, independent string accompaniment requiring from the singer good breath control in the extended coloratura passages. “In mezzo alla procella” is a typical sea storm aria, which starts with the soft entrance of divided violas and second violins, before the sudden advent of the storm is signalled by the entry of the first violins with chords broken in demiquaver triplets, which are set against demisemiquaver scales in the second violins. The character of this piece is similar to that of the famous aria “Sorge l’irato nembo” from *Orlando furioso*, although the vocal line in *Motezuma* is much less virtuosic.

The two arias for Teutile are both lyrical, melancholy pieces in a 3/4 minuet metre. In “Un guardo, o Dio” Teutile bids her mother farewell before being led by priests to the temple in order to be sacrificed. Vivaldi chooses the ‘pure’ tonality of C major; the melodic line is simple and tuneful, but the bass line interrupts and disturbs this serene mood at several points with broken semiquaver chords. With the melancholy sweetness

of the C minor aria “L’agonie d’un alma afflitta”, in a light, three-part homophonic texture, Teutile bids a stoical farewell to life. Here, Vivaldi approaches the *galant*, moving style of the rising Neapolitan school. Unfortunately, the beginning of this aria is missing from the score.

The two coloratura arias for the soprano castrato Marianino Nicolini in the role of Asprano are the showiest pieces of the opera, leaving aside Mitrena’s “S’impugni la spada”. Especially the second aria, “D’ira e furor armato”, which the angry soldier sings after being mocked and insulted by Fernando, attracts attention because of the obbligato trumpet part, which competes with the voice in long and difficult coloratura passages. One interesting aspect of this piece is the fact that the first melodic phrase of the voice is taken from an older composition by Vivaldi, the aria “Al balenar del brando” from the opera *L’inganno trionfante in amore* (Venice, 1725), RV 721¹⁷, scored for solo soprano and strings. Not only do the two arias share the melodic motive of the first vocal entry (see Exx. 8 and 9), but the overall structure of the two pieces is also very similar. With their 58 and 59 bars, respectively, they have nearly the same length. The very regular tonal structure is also similar, the only difference being that the B section in “Al balenar del brando” modulates at its close from B minor to F sharp minor, whereas “D’ira e furor armato” remains in the relative minor key. In both B sections the accompaniment consists of the basso continuo line, doubled an octave higher by unison violins and violas. As the metrical schemes of the aria texts are likewise similar (they each consist of two three-line stanzas of *settenari*), these parallels cannot be viewed as simple coincidence. Of course, through the conversion of the original aria into a concerto-like piece with an important obbligato trumpet part, the character of the new piece differs totally from the earlier model, as can already be seen in the opening bars of the ritornello, with its fanfare-like instrumental motive (Ex. 9), which has nothing in common with the start of the first vocal section.

Is Vivaldi’s *Motezuma* a demonstration of musical exoticism? As we have seen, the musical style of this opera is free from the barbarisms that were often adopted by baroque

¹⁷. The aria is preserved in a collection of arias belonging to Johann Mattheson’s adaptation for Hamburg of Giuseppe Maria Orlandini’s *Nerone* (D-Bsb, Mus. ms. 9059), where it is assigned to the title character. None of the many Hamburg librettos of this opera contains the text of Vivaldi’s aria. Since the opera concerns Nero’s adulterous love for his friend Ottone’s wife Poppea, the words (“Al balenar del brando / che il regio fianco adorna / l’audace tremerà. / E per salvar sé stesso / scorgendosi depresso / la sposa renderà”) (“At the flash of the sword that adorns this regal flank the audacious man will tremble. And in order to save himself when he discovers that he is defeated he will give back [his] wife”) fit astonishing well into the new context. The authenticity of the aria is proved by a second source, a copy by a Venetian scribe belonging to the collection of the Benedictine abbey of Lambach, Austria (Mus. archiv Sig. 796) I am grateful to Peter Deinhammer, Lambach, for providing me with digital photographs of this source.

Ex. 8: Vivaldi, *L'inganno trionfante in amor*, RV 721, "Al balenar del brando" (Feraspe, 1.6), bars 1-11.

Allegro

The musical score is arranged in four systems. Each system contains four staves: Violin I-II (top), Viola (second), Feraspe (third), and Bass (bottom). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C). The tempo is marked 'Allegro'. The score shows measures 1 through 11. The first system covers measures 1-3, the second system covers measures 4-6, and the third system covers measures 7-11. The Feraspe part is mostly silent, with some activity in measures 7-11. The lyrics 'Al ba - le - nar' are written under the Bass staff in measure 10.

VI I-II

Viola

Feraspe

Basso

4

7

Al ba - le - nar

ANTONIO VIVALDI'S DRAMMA PER MUSICA *MOTEZUMA*

Ex. 9: Vivaldi, *Motezuma*, “D’ira e di furor armato” (Asprano, II.8), bars 1–4 and 12–15.

Allegro

The musical score is arranged in five staves. The top staff is for Tromba (Trumpet), VI I-II (Violins I and II), Viola, Asprano (Soprano), and Basso (Bass). The key signature is G major (one sharp) and the time signature is common time (C). The tempo is marked 'Allegro'. The first system shows bars 1-4, and the second system shows bars 12-15. The Asprano part has the lyrics 'D'i-ra.e fu-ror ar-ma' written below it. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamics like 'p' (piano).

and classical composers for the portrayal of exotic locales¹⁸. It was possible to ‘align’ the plot of the drama with a classical Western context, such as one located in the history of the foreign wars of ancient Greece or Rome. Nevertheless, even if we have to admit that Giusti’s text is no great literary work of art, its exotic and magnificent settings, its sombre

¹⁸. On Vivaldi’s use of ‘barbarisms’ in his instrumental music, see FERTONANI, Cesare. ‘Vivaldi e l’esotico’, in: *Le arti della scena, op. cit.* (see note 1), pp. 299–309.

13

to, ne - mi - co_a que - sto re - gno, nc-

and tragic atmosphere and its unfiltered clash of conflicting human passions, which mirrors the historical ‘clash of cultures’ between Old and New Worlds, inspired Vivaldi, as we have seen, to compose some of his best operatic music, manifested especially in the tragic grandeur¹⁹ of the music for the two Mexican protagonists of the drama: Motezuma and Mitrena.

¹⁹. Jean Racine justified his choice of a subject from modern history in the preface of his *Bajazet* (1672) by its exotic setting in Turkey, which was able to evoke the same effect of strangeness and distance required for the necessary tragic pathos as the familiar subjects from Greek mythology or ancient history: “On peut dire que le respect que l’on a pour les héros augmente à mesure qu’ils s’élignent de nous. [...] L’élignement de pays répare en quelque sorte la trop grande proximité des temps” (“One may say that the respect that one has for heroes grows proportionately as they become distant from us. [...] Geographical distance compensates to an extent for a lack of chronological distance”). See also ALIVERTI, Maria Ines. ‘Effetto lontananza. La storia di Tahmash-kuli Khan alla Salle des Machines (1756)’, in: *Le arti della scena, op. cit.* (see note 1), pp. 463–506: 463.

CHAPTER TWO

VIVALDI AND HIS OPERAS, 1730–34: A CRITICAL SURVEY

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THE SURVIVAL OF THE SCORE OF *MOTEZUMA* outside the collection of Vivaldi manuscripts in the Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria, Turin, and consequently its late discovery, has made it a rather special case for us¹. But was the work a special case for Vivaldi, for his performers or for his audience? If *Motezuma* had been preserved in Turin, would it have exercised our imagination more than, for example, the brilliant although incomplete score of *Armida al campo d’Egitto* (1718)? The newly recovered, reconstructed and fêted *Motezuma* ought to be viewed in its contemporary contexts for a better understanding. As a context to be outlined in the following essay, I have chosen Vivaldi’s operas and their biographical circumstances in the years 1730–34: crucial years for a Venetian opera composer who had for the first time tried his luck north of the Alps, but for some reason returned after two seasons to re-establish himself in Italy, not without difficulty at first. (When the famous Antonio Lotti resumed life in Venice after his residence as opera director at the court of Dresden in 1717–19, he stopped writing operas altogether.) Vivaldi’s experiences as an opera composer and opera producer in the years 1730–34 have hitherto been little investigated; perhaps the newly researched details that follow will tell us something about his self-evaluation as a musician and man of the theatre — and also about the position of *Motezuma* in his career².

¹. The only other Vivaldian opera score now known to exist outside Turin is the scribal copy of *Teuzzone* of 1719, in the Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin. In my present research I have not yet discarded the idea that the survival of both manuscripts in the same city may not be a coincidence.

². The following paragraphs are based on the corresponding chapters of my book *The Operas of Antonio Vivaldi*, Florence, Olschki, 2008 (Quaderni vivaldiani, 13).

A. PRAGUE, 1730-32

Vivaldi's personal involvement in the operatic repertory of Count Sporck's theatre under the impresario Antonio Denzio concerns three revivals and two operas that were apparently newly composed for Denzio. The production of a Vivaldi opera at the Sporck theatre did not usually require his presence during the preparations or performances. Denzio was capable of mounting successful performances of Vivaldi's operatic music. There is, for example, *La tirannia castigata*, given by Denzio in 1726, which consisted mainly of Vivaldi's music — drawn from *La costanza trionfante degl'amori e de gl'odii* (1716) — although the composer perhaps never saw Denzio's libretto³. I should like to argue here that *Alvilda, regina de' Goti* was a similar Denzio arrangement, compiled on the basis of music sent by Vivaldi from Venice. In the other cases, the level of the composer's involvement varied.

FARNACE (Teatro Sporck, Prague, spring 1730)⁴.

This production might conceivably have been prepared with Vivaldi's assistance in April 1730, although he was back in Venice by 4 May⁵. The music is attributed to the "sempre celebre Sig. D. Antonio Vivaldi Maestro di Capella di S.A.S. il Sig. Principe Filippo Langravio d'Hassia Darmstath". Vivaldi had premiered *Farnace* in carnival 1727 at S. Angelo and repeated it there the following autumn (probably because his first autumn opera, *Orlando*, did not please). *Farnace* became his most frequently revived opera in the 1730s, and he may well have proposed its Prague performance as well. But evidence that he was actively involved is hard to find. The cast hired by Denzio in this season was very different from the Venetian casts of 1727 (carnival and autumn), the main contrast being that Denzio himself sang the title role as tenor, although it had been composed for a contralto (Maria Maddalena Pieri). The drama was remodelled to allow the elimination of the role of Aquilio, some of whose musical material was given to Gilade, and for the extended scenes involving an added comic servant, Grillone. The last-named part was surely composed by the music director, Matteo Lucchini, who would also have been responsible for the transpositions and the new recitatives. Otherwise, apart from a changed line of chorus text⁶, only two arias were new: Selinda's "Allor io ti dirò" (II.2, possibly

³. A detailed description appears in FREEMAN, Daniel E. *The Opera Theater of Franz Anton von Sporck in Prague*, New York, Pendragon Press, 1992 (Studies in Czech Music, 2), pp. 153-159.

⁴. Libretto in Italian and German on facing pages; see BELLINA, Anna Laura - BRIZI, Bruno - PENSA, Maria Grazia. *I libretti vivaldiani. Recensione e collazione dei testimoni a stampa*, Florence, Olschki, 1982 (Quaderni vivaldiani, 3), p. 61, no. 18.4. See also FREEMAN, Daniel E. *Op. cit.* (see note 3), pp. 159-165 and 259-260.

⁵. HELLER, Karl. *Antonio Vivaldi*, Leipzig, Reclam, 1991, pp. 207-210.

⁶. I.4, coro "Contro al corso dell'onda profonda": the city of Eraclea was now situated, surely only for theatrical convenience, on the banks of the river Licus instead of the Black Sea, thus the *Pontus Euxinus* did not need to be shown, and its mention was expunged from the text.

replacing “Lascia di sospirar”⁷ and Gilade’s “Di quelle pupillette” (II.4, possibly a parody of Aquilio’s “Talor due pupillette”). Had Vivaldi been in charge of the production, he would probably have inserted more of his own arias from other operas, which was his usual practice in revivals. *Farnace* enjoyed “great approbation” in this spring season at Prague, according to a handwritten note in the libretto copy once owned by Count Johann Joseph von Wrtby senior, even if its performances were interrupted by a riot⁸. It remains doubtful whether Vivaldi would have accepted, let alone enjoyed, the comic scenes, which made of the heroic drama *Farnace* a mixed-style work — distantly comparable with the *Tito Manlio* of Mantua, 1719, but not with any other Vivaldi production.

ARGIPPO (Teatro Sporck, Prague, autumn 1730).

It is generally presumed, although not documented, that between summer 1730 and spring 1731 Vivaldi visited Bohemia on a second trip away from Venice. The evidence for the Bohemian sojourns includes, for example, autograph lute music composed for Count Wrtby⁹; but this evidence is not specific regarding the date of the second trip.

Argippo was a libretto by Domenico Lalli, first given in this form in Venice, 1717, with music by Giovanni Porta, and again in Milan in 1722, with music by Stefano Andrea Fioré. Denzio’s libretto retains nine closed numbers from 1717 and 1722, joined by ten new ones (for example, the chorus “Di Cingone”, I.4). Seven anonymous arias have been found in a manuscript at Regensburg (D-Rtt): most of their texts are unique to the Prague libretto, and they were possibly composed by Vivaldi for that production¹⁰. Several items were borrowed from other operas — not all by Vivaldi himself. Three arias from Metastasio’s *Siroe, re di Persia* may have had either Vivaldi’s or Vinci’s music. Anna Cosimi (Zanaida) sang “L’incerto mio pensiero”, an aria text performed by her in Vivaldi’s *Siroe* of 1727. “Chi quel timor condanna” probably came from Vinci’s *Catone in Utica*, as performed at Florence in carnival 1729, in the same season as Vivaldi’s *Atenaide*. From *Atenaide* itself Cosimi obtained Giustina Turcotti’s aria “In bosco romito”. So *Argippo* was a genuine pasticcio opera, of the kind that Vivaldi himself used to produce (an earlier example is his *Cunegonda* of 1726).

⁷. This was probably not a parody of “Allor che mi vedrò” in Vivaldi’s *Giustino* (1724), I.11, because the text consists of four *endecasillabi*, and the affect is quite different.

⁸. FREEMAN, Daniel E. *Op. cit.* (see note 3), pp. 135 and 260.

⁹. TALBOT, Michael. *Vivaldi. Fonti e letteratura critica*, translated by Luca Zoppelli, Florence, Olschki, 1991 (Quaderni vivaldiani, 5), pp. 39-40; HELLER, Karl. *Op. cit.* (see note 5), pp. 208-213; BENTHEIM, Oskar Prinz zu, and STEGEMANN, Michael. ‘Vivaldi in Böhmen. Wenige Fakten, viele Fragen’, in: *Informazioni e studi vivaldiani*, IX (1988), pp. 75-88. Heller assumed that Anna Girò accompanied Vivaldi to Bohemia on this trip, but she sang in carnival 1731 at Turin.

¹⁰. MACEK, Ondřej. ‘Nuove scoperte sull’*Argippo* praghese’, paper delivered at the conference “Antonio Vivaldi. Passato e futuro” (Venice, June 2007). A discussion of Macek’s recent reconstruction of the opera and of an anonymous *Argippo* given in 1730 at Vienna will appear shortly in *Studi vivaldiani*.

If Vivaldi had sent a score from Venice setting Lalli's drama, he would have enriched it with far more arias from his other works, rather than inserting arias on new texts that were newly composed. The fact that Denzio's libretto attributes the music to Vivaldi *tout court*, whereas the one of *Alvilda* (see below) specifies that the recitatives were not his, likewise implies that Vivaldi was really 'the composer' of *Argippo* — a few numbers by Vinci and perhaps also Fioré and Porta notwithstanding — and that he was present in Prague for the production. This argument might contribute to establishing his movements in autumn 1730.

ALVILDA, REGINA DE' GOTI (Teatro Sporck, Prague, spring 1731).

The libretto states: "La Musica è tutta del S. D. Antonio Vivaldi, fuorché li recitativi, e le Arie Bernesche" (i.e., recitatives and buffo arias were not set by Vivaldi). As was customary, they were composed by the local *maestro di cappella*, Giovanni Dreyer, in 1730–31. Among the performers of *Alvilda* were two, Anna Cosimi and Girolama Madonis, who were significant collaborators in Vivaldi productions before and after 1731. Without rehearsing the opera himself, the composer could know in Venice what sort of music to choose for them.

The text of the opening scene is a parody (i.e., a *contrafactum*) of the opening scene of *Dorilla in Tempe* of 1726. It includes the first two choruses with their solo interludes; the music of *La primavera* is obviously required by the scansion of the words in the opening choruses ("D'insegne al ventillar"). Thus a segment of an existing score by Vivaldi was the basis for the new libretto text. This is the pattern throughout the opera: the aria texts of *Alvilda* are mostly parodies of extant Vivaldi compositions¹¹. Similarly, the final scenes and probably the sinfonia were borrowed from *Dorilla*. The other operas from which large segments were re-employed here were *L'inganno trionfante in amore* (1725) and *Cunegonda* (1726). The case of *Alvilda* is compatible with the idea that Vivaldi sent musical manuscripts from Venice which then served Denzio for an adaptation of an old libretto. For comparison, the Prague production of Vivaldi's *Dorilla in Tempe* under the new music director Antonio Costantini (1732; see below) was based on the complete score, which was revised by inserting new items: a very different procedure.

DORICLEA (Teatro Sporck, Prague, carnival 1732)¹².

This opera was performed long after Vivaldi's return to Italy in spring 1731; Denzio may have used a score left to him by the composer. The dual-language libretto is strikingly independent in textual detail from its prototypes, *La costanza trionfante degl' amori e de gl'odii* (1716) and *Artabano, re de' Parti* (1718), and has a newly written *argomento*. The roles of

¹¹. Most of these are identified in FREEMAN, Daniel E. *Op. cit.* (see note 3), pp. 168–169.

¹². BELLINA, Anna Laura - BRIZI, Bruno - PENSA, Maria Grazia. *Op. cit.* (see note 4), pp. 53–54, no. 15; FREEMAN, Daniel E. *Op. cit.* (see note 3), pp. 170–174, p. 266.

Olderico and Eumena are cut; Farnace is now the young son of Tigrane. Intermezzi were also performed. Denzio sang Artabano, a role he himself had created in 1716; his only new aria, “In premio”, and his aria “Di vendetta” are deleted by hand in the example of the libretto in the Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, Milan. Of the texts for the closed numbers of *La costanza*, only five are new. For the second time since *La tirannia castigata* (1726) the impresario adapted Vivaldi’s *La costanza* to suit different performance conditions, endeavouring to allow as much as possible of the original music still to be heard.

DORILLA IN TEMPE (Teatro Sporck, Prague, spring, 1732).

The changes vis-à-vis the Venetian original of 1726 were significant. Two substitute arias for Filindo, now sung by Margherita Flora, were borrowed from Mirinda in *Arsilda, regina di Ponto* (1716), and all the arias for Dorilla were changed¹³. The choruses were mostly retained; instead of ballets, intermezzi (composed by Antonio Costantini) were added. Despite the attribution of the music to Vivaldi, some new arias were probably by Johann Adolf Hasse:

I.8. Spera sì che menzognera: ?Spera sì, che amor pietoso, Hasse, *Cleofide*, 1731.

I.10. Un bell’ardire può innamorarmi: Se un bell’ardire / può innamorarti, Metastasio, *Ezio* (Porpora 1728, or Hasse 1730?).

II.3. Resto qual pastorello: Parto qual pastorello, Hasse, *Artaserse* 1730.

II.7. Se vedi che splenda / o mesto mio core: Se brami che splenda / al mesto mio core, Hasse, *Tigrane* 1729¹⁴.

Denzio’s new *argomento* in the libretto praises Vivaldi’s music, however: “[...] the play should be very charming, not only on account of the beauty of the decorations and the simplicity of the plot, but more especially on account of the harmonious and cheerful music of Signor D. Antonio Vivaldi who, with this composition in particular, has gained admiration for his ingenious invention in several Italian theatres”¹⁵. Denzio also apologises for the lack of a German translation — although nothing is missing in the dual-language libretto — and hopes that after about 50 operas performed in Prague,

¹³. FREEMAN, Daniel E. *Op. cit.* (see note 3), pp. 174-178 (with errors concerning the vocal ranges) and p. 266; BELLINA, Anna Laura - BRIZI, Bruno - PENSA, Maria Grazia. *Op. cit.* (see note 4), pp. 53-54, no.16.2.

¹⁴. The proposed Hasse arias were widely copied at the time; they are the only ones found in the sources that have compatible texts.

¹⁵. “[...] la Favola [...] dovrebbe riuscir molto amena, non solo per la vaghezza delle decorazioni, e semplicità dell’intreccio, ma molto più per l’armoniosa, ed allegra Musica del Signor D. Antonio Vivaldi, che, in questa composizione particolarmente, ha resa ammirabile in più Teatri d’Italia la sua spiritosissima idea [...]”.

spectators will no longer have a problem with the Italian tongue, which is in any case familiar to persons of rank¹⁶.

B. NORTHERN ITALY, 1731-33

FARNACE (Teatro Omodeo, Pavia, May 1731)¹⁷.

It is not known at present how Vivaldi came to choose the Teatro Omodeo at Pavia (or the Teatro Omodeo to choose Vivaldi) for a revival of this successful opera. The opera house was provincial, but its proximity to Milan, with its Habsburg administration, provided influential spectators. The libretto is dated 4 May 1731 and dedicated, probably by the impresario, to Delfina del Carretto Visconti, whose Habsburg connections are much emphasized. The music is attributed to Vivaldi. Unusually, three patrons of the composer are mentioned: two of these (Liechtenstein and Lorraine) resided at the Habsburg court, where Vivaldi may have been visiting in 1730 or 1731¹⁸.

John W. Hill's identification of the score preserved in the Turin volume Giordano 36 with the Pavia libretto is one of those that have unnecessarily been doubted: even if the textual contents were less congruent, the statistical likelihood that all the vocal ranges of the score would be exactly matched by those of the singers in the cast list of another *Farnace* libretto is tiny indeed¹⁹. The version transmitted by Giordano 36 depends directly on the *Farnace* of 1727, although there is some transposition and adaptation. The sinfonia in Giordano 36 derives in its first two movements from *Dorilla in Tempe*.

The casting of the opera betrays Vivaldi's hand. Tamiri was the part composed for Anna Girò, who had sung it in 1727 — so why was anything changed in her role? “Leon feroce”, for example, replaced “Non trova mai riposo” in 1.13, albeit with the more suitable parody text “Eroi del Tebro”²⁰. Girò seems to have complained that she had too

¹⁶. “[...] è da sperarsi, che dopo la rappresentazione di cinquanta Opere in circa goduta in questa regia Città, non sia allo spettator più malagevole omai la cognizion della lingua Italiana, quivi per altro commune alle persone ben nate”.

¹⁷. BELLINA, Anna Laura - BRIZI, Bruno - PENZA, Maria Grazia. *Op. cit.* (see note 4), pp. 61-62, no. 18.5.

¹⁸. On the personalities involved, see TALBOT, Michael. ‘Vivaldi and the Empire’, in: *Informazioni e studi vivaldiani*, VIII (1987), pp. 31-50: 42-43; VITALI, Carlo. ‘I nove “principi di altezza” corrispondenti di Vivaldi e la dedica enigmatica del Concerto RV 574. Alla ricerca dell’indirizzario perduto’, in: *Informazioni e studi vivaldiani*, XVI (1995), pp. 59-88: 67-70.

¹⁹. HILL, John W. ‘Vivaldi’s Griselda’, in: *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, XXXI (1978), pp. 53-82.

²⁰. TALBOT, Michael. ‘Vivaldi in the Sale Room: A New Version of “Leon feroce”’, in: *Informazioni e studi vivaldiani*, XII (1991), pp. 5-16, discusses a newly discovered manuscript copy of “Leon feroce”, confirming the suggestion made earlier in HILL, John W. *Op. cit.* (see note 19), pp. 71-74, that “Eroi del Tebro” (libretto 1731) was a parody of it. The text of “Leon feroce” did not originate, however, in *Oronta*

little heroic material — an imbalance that Vivaldi was only too ready to redress. Girò's self-awareness and skills had changed. She had sung in 1730-31 in operas by Hasse, Broschi and Porpora (*Dalisa*, *Ezio* and *Poro*, respectively), alongside Faustina Bordoni and Farinelli.

SEMIRAMIDE (Teatro Arciduciale, Mantua, December 1731).

In carnival 1732 operas were performed at Mantua in the old Teatro Arciduciale “detto il comico”, which was later superseded as civic opera house by the newly built “Regio Ducale Teatro Nuovo”, inaugurated on 27 December 1732. For the season of carnival 1732 Vivaldi held the responsibility of impresario, as attested by documents recently discovered in Mantua. One of these, found by Luigi Cataldi, is a receipt for keys to theatre boxes, signed by the composer on 22 December 1731 — in fact, the control of theatre boxes was a typical privilege of theatre managers²¹. Cataldi originally read “22 [dicem]bre 1732”, which would indicate the following season, but the correct reading of the document is actually “1731”. Further documents, recently brought to light by Paola Cirani, explicitly identify Antonio Vivaldi as the “impresario” of the Mantuan carnival season of 1731-32²².

A notion entertained by some scholars that Vivaldi was also involved in the carnival operas of the following year at the new “Regio Ducale Teatro Nuovo” should not be dismissed entirely²³. The Mantuan operas in carnival 1733, *Cajo Fabrizio* and *Demetrio*, were not Vivaldi's, but their libretti are lost. *Cajo Fabrizio* was probably Hasse's, since no other setting is known to have existed by 1733. *Demetrio* had been set in 1732 by Hasse (carnival, S. Giovanni Grisostomo, Venice), by Giovanni Antonio Giay (carnival, Teatro delle Dame, Rome) and by Gaetano Maria Schiassi (28.8. 1732, Regio Ducal Teatro, Milan). Schiassi was favoured by the Mantuan court at the time. Hasse's *Demetrio* was performed in the same carnival of 1733 at Verona; the Mantuan version may well have been Schiassi's. Admittedly, it seems incredible that Vivaldi should have acted as impresario without producing one of his own scores. But then, we do not know in what forms the two operas of 1733 appeared: were they Vivaldian pasticcio operas? His foremost singers in 1732-34, Anna Girò and Marianino Nicolini, sang at Mantua in carnival 1732, but no engagement in carnival 1733 is known for them.

The Mantuan libretti of *Semiramide* and *Farnace* of 1732 bear dedications, signed by “L'impresario”, who must be Vivaldi himself. *Semiramide* is dedicated to Prince Joseph, son

(Orlandini, 1724), as Talbot suggests, but was derived from Apostolo Zeno's *Ormisda* (Vienna, 1721) via Orlandini's setting of that drama (Bologna, 1722).

²¹. CATALDI, Luigi. ‘I rapporti di Vivaldi con il “Teatro detto il Comico” di Mantova’, in: *Informazioni e studi vivaldiani*, VI (1985), pp. 88-108: 98; TALBOT, Michael. *Vivaldi. Fonti [...], op. cit.* (see note 9), p. 51, no. 26.

²². CIRANI, Paola. ‘Vivaldi e la musica a Mantova. Documenti inediti e nuovi spunti di riflessione’, paper delivered to the conference “Antonio Vivaldi. Passato e futuro” (Venice, June 2007).

²³. HELLER, Karl. *Op. cit.* (see note 5), p. 214.

of Landgrave Philip, and mentions earlier services — although these had probably been provided in other musical genres²⁴.

FARNACE (Teatro Arciduciale, Mantua, January 1732)²⁵.

The revision produced a skilful blend of the 1727 and 1731 versions; the majority of the closed numbers were derived from the 1727 (carnival) version, but six arias newly introduced in 1731 were retained; three items from before 1731 were restored. The new arias were only three. Girò premiered the *aria parlante*, “La madre, lo sposo”, which remained in her repertory until 1737.

A BID FOR DRESDEN?

A manuscript today preserved in the Sächsische Landesbibliothek — Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Dresden (Mus. 2389-J-1, pp. 8-159)²⁶ is a well-balanced collection of twenty-five numbers, mostly autograph, that could be used to supply an entire pasticcio opera, with fourteen arias for soprano, seven for alto, two for tenor, one for bass, and a terzetto for SAT. Two alto arias are identified by Vivaldi as being suitable also for a bass. Whether or not this option is taken, the cast required to sing this collection in an opera would comprise three sopranos, two altos, a tenor and a bass. The items derive from *Atenaide* (six arias), *La fida ninfa* (eight arias and the terzetto “S’egli è ver”), *Semiramide* (six arias) and *Farnace* (1731) (three arias); a solitary item originating in *La fede tradita e vendicata* (1726) may have been an insertion in one of these later operas. The collection must have been assembled between carnival 1732 and autumn 1733, since arias from carnival 1732 but none from *Motezuma* (autumn 1733) are included. All the arias are copied in their original vocal registers, except “Sin nel placido soggiorno”, which is here for soprano (but in *La fede tradita* for alto). The aria texts, unaltered from the originals, do not make up the story of any known libretto, unless one were to write a new one (which could perhaps be done).

This collection may originally have been a set for a pasticcio opera yet to be created, which Vivaldi offered to an impresario. It is also possible, as Michael Talbot maintains, that the collection was intended for Dresden as part of a “portfolio of music for solo voice

²⁴. On the career and musical accomplishments of Joseph, see TALBOT, Michael. ‘Vivaldi’s “Academic” Cantatas for Mantua’, in: *300 Years Academia Philharmonicorum Labacensium 1701-2001. Proceedings of the International Symposium held in Ljubljana on October 25th and 26th 2001*, edited by Ivan Klemenčič, Ljubljana, Založba ZRC, 2001, pp. 155-168: 157-159.

²⁵. BELLINA, Anna Laura - BRIZI, Bruno - PENZA, Maria Grazia. *Op. cit.* (see note 4), pp. 62-63, no. 18.6.

²⁶. Catalogued in RYOM, Peter. ‘RV 749’, in: *Informazioni e studi vivaldiani*, XIV (1993), pp. 5-49: 26-27. The first three arias in the same volume are also by Vivaldi, but unrelated.

(soprano and alto)”, partnering a collection of nine chamber cantatas, two motets and the psalm *Laudate pueri Dominum* (RV 601) — manuscripts now extant in Dresden²⁷. Vivaldi seems to have sent the collection to Dresden in summer-autumn 1733, when, following the death of Elector Friedrich August I, the appointment of a new *Oberkapellmeister* was officially in prospect. J. S. Bach sent his *Missa* (BWV 232), asking for a “court predicate”, and Jan Dismas Zelenka submitted eight opera arias (ZWV 176) in the hope of gaining an appointment²⁸. Vivaldi’s submission may have had a similar purpose. The reason why I believe that the opera items were not simply a portfolio of solo arias compiled for demonstration purposes is that they require a wide distribution of voice-ranges (not just soprano and alto) that was typical for an opera, and include a terzetto; their number and musical-stylistic balance is ideal for an opera of the kind that Antonio Denzio would construct in Prague from Vivaldi arias (as he did with *La tirannia gastigata*, 1726, and *Alvilda*, 1731). Still, the presumed despatch of the operatic arias to Dresden alongside the vocal music in other genres may well have occurred because these arias were not required, or had been returned, by an impresario.

Assuming that the collection was originally intended for an opera, for which opera house might this have been? The Dresden *Hofoper* was inactive during the period 1731–34, although Vivaldi could have speculated on its re-opening, especially if he really did intend the collection *ab initio* for Dresden. Mantua, Pavia, Verona and Florence are ruled out as destinations because the arias were already well known there. S. Angelo and S. Giovanni Grisostomo are possible destinations — in the former house, only a tenor was then lacking; in the latter, one soprano part would have had to be reassigned to an alto. Antonio Denzio in Prague is the most logical recipient, however. His company underwent a crisis in 1732–33 — but that might be exactly the reason why the set, which Vivaldi would have offered to Denzio for good money in 1732, was sent not to Prague, but, a year later, to Dresden.

LA FIDA NINFA (Teatro Filarmonico, Verona, 6 January 1732)²⁹.

Marchese Scipione Maffei was both the author of this libretto and the creator of its venue, the Teatro dell’Accademia Filarmonica, for whose inauguration the opera was performed³⁰. After the original plan for *La fida ninfa* (with Giuseppe Maria Orlandini as

²⁷. TALBOT, Michael. *The Chamber Cantatas of Antonio Vivaldi*, Woodbridge, The Boydell Press, 2006, pp. 168–170.

²⁸. STROHM, Reinhard. ‘Jan Dismas Zelenkas italienische Arien, ZWV 176’, in: *Zelenka-Studien II. Referate und Materialien der 2. Internationalen Fachkonferenz Jan Dismas Zelenka (Dresden und Prag 1995)*, edited by Wolfgang Reich and Günter Gattermann, Sankt Augustin, Academia Verlag, 1997, pp. 251–278.

²⁹. BELLINA, Anna Laura – BRIZI, BRUNO – PENZA, Maria Grazia. *Op. cit.* (see note 4), pp. 68–69, no. 21. Further on this work, see STROHM, Reinhard. *The Operas of Antonio Vivaldi [...]*, *op. cit.* (see note 2), forthcoming.

³⁰. The play and its production are discussed in FOLENA, Gianfranco. “Prima le parole, poi la musica”: Scipione Maffei poeta per musica e la *Fida ninfa*, in: *Vivaldi veneziano europeo*, edited by Francesco Degrada,

composer) was thwarted by the intervention of the Venetian authorities, Vivaldi was commissioned to set the libretto, apparently at short notice, in November 1731, perhaps on the recommendation of a Habsburg-connected patron³¹. One of the drawings and plans for the theatre and stage-sets from the Bibiena workshop, identified by Muraro and Povoledo, shows the auditorium and stage as it was in 1729, during a rehearsal³². But this is not, as they suggest, a rehearsal of *La fida ninfa*, for which no music existed as yet. The costumes and characters seen on stage are heroic, not pastoral: a princess in a dress with long tail; two ladies-in-waiting; a hero in Roman dress; and soldiers. So the drawing should be read as an idealized picture of the new theatre, not as the representation of a particular situation.

La fida ninfa was followed in the same carnival season by Zeno's and Giacomelli's opera *Gianguir*. For the two operas, an orchestra of professionals was summoned from other cities: an unusual procedure perhaps facilitated by Vivaldi's contacts with such players. He was certainly busy in Mantua at the same time, preparing his two carnival operas there — and the Mantuan court had a good orchestra³³. One reviewer of the Verona performance (Francesco Lando) seems to have thought that some of the singers were under-rehearsed³⁴: this may be explained, in general terms, by the extremely brief lapse of time between commission and performance, but perhaps also relates specifically to the fact that Vivaldi was in Mantua and therefore could not — as he normally did — coach the singers in his own house.

C. SANT'ANGELO, 1733-34

MOTEZUMA (S. Angelo, Venice, 14 November 1733)³⁵.

Alejo Carpentier's *Concierto barroco* (1974), a phantastic tale woven around the performance of Vivaldi's *Motezuma*, redefines baroque culture as a post-modern, inter-

Florence, Olschki, 1980 (Quaderni vivaldiani, 1), pp. 205-233. Further details and a study of the music are found in BIZZARINI, Marco - BORIN, Alessandro. 'La fida ninfa di Antonio Vivaldi: Introduzione', in: Antonio Vivaldi, *La fida ninfa*, edited by Marco Bizzarini and Alessandro Borin, Milan, Ricordi/Istituto Italiano Antonio Vivaldi, 2007.

³¹. For example, Vivaldi's patrons listed in the libretto of *Farnace* (1731): Prince Philip of Hesse-Darmstadt, Duke Franz Stephan von Lothringen, Prince Joseph von Liechtenstein.

³². MURARO, Maria Teresa - POVOLEDO, Elena. 'Le scene della *Fida ninfa*: Maffei, Vivaldi e Francesco Bibiena', in: *Vivaldi veneziano europeo* [...], *op. cit.* (see note 30), pp. 235-252: 238-239 and figures 1 and 5.

³³. See CATALDI, Luigi. *Op. cit.* (see note 21), p. 91.

³⁴. BIZZARINI, Marco - BORIN, Alessandro. *Op. cit.* (see note 30), pp. 6-7.

³⁵. SELFRIDGE-FIELD, Eleanor. 'Dating Vivaldi's Venetian Operas', in: *Informazioni e studi vivaldiani*, v (1984), pp. 53-64: 61.

cultural universe. Carpentier was attracted to *Motezuma* because he believed it to be the “first serious opera” inspired by the conquest of Mexico, as narrated by Antonio de Solís in 1685³⁶. Carpentier and his musicological advisers noted a character called Montezuma (a misspelling of Moctezuma) in Henry and Daniel Purcell’s semi-opera *The Indian Queen* (1695). They underestimated, however, the incidence of American topics in English Restoration literature in general³⁷. *The Indian Queen* is set entirely among Americans and describes not the *Conquista* but an earlier event, the rise to power, in 1502, of the famous Mexican ruler Moctezuma. This tragedy of misused power provides an apology for the conquest: it certainly confirms narrations (accepted by Carpentier and Giusti) that characterize the so-called Aztec rule as a blood-soaked tyranny.

The first Italian opera about the New World was not *Motezuma* but Pietro Ottoboni’s *dramma per musica Il Colombo, ovvero l’India scoperta* (Rome, 1690). In early-eighteenth-century Venice, ‘exotic’ operas were so popular that the novelty of *Motezuma* was probably not much noticed. The plot superficially resembles a palace intrigue in the classical-heroic vein. Apostolo Zeno, an authority in this genre, had also inaugurated a Chinese fashion in opera with his *Teuzzone* of 1706. Domenico Lalli, who was interested in French dramas, including those of Voltaire, may have influenced the librettist’s choice of an American topic, although for his own libretti Lalli preferred the more widely popular East-Asian settings. A Voltairian element in the libretto is the motif of the unnecessary human sacrifice with which the priests threaten Motezuma’s daughter. Voltaire connected the colonial debate with an anti-clerical critique of both Christian and ‘native’ religions in his tragedy *Alzire, ou les Américains* (1736). This idea was adopted by King Frederick II of Prussia, who in 1754 drafted his *Montezuma* opera for Berlin. The Venetian *Motezuma* predated not only that work but also Voltaire’s influential tragedy.

Antonio Vivaldi’s *Motezuma* was not only an ambitious drama: as a musical work, it was also part of the Venetian autumn season routine. It offered audiences the attractions of some new singers, a new libretto, new music and presumably new stage-sets. Vivaldi, after several years of absence, was returning to the opera house whose musical director he had been in 1726–28 and which he and his father had directed as impresarios as far back as 1713–15. *Motezuma* also brought back an old stage-hand in the form of the scenographer Antonio Mauro (or Mauri), and the familiar feet of the ballet troupe of Giovanni Gallo (or Galletto). Mauro and Gallo had both already worked for Vivaldi in his S. Angelo season of 1726–27.

³⁶. SOLÍS Y RIBADENEYRA, Antonio de. *Historia de la Conquista de México* (1684); cf. Alejo Carpentier in *Montezuma, pasticcio de Jean-Claude Malgoire*, edited by Jean-Claude Malgoire, Atelier Lyrique de Tourcoing, 1992 (Les cahiers, 13), p. 29.

³⁷. On the English semi-operas, see PRICE, Curtis A. *Music in the Restoration Theatre: With a Catalogue of Instrumental Music in the Plays, 1665–1713*, Ann Arbor (MI), UMI Research Press, 1979.

The eighteenth-century Venetian opera catalogues attribute the libretto of *Motezuma* to Girolamo Giusti, a name inserted by hand in some examples of the libretto³⁸. The same catalogues also cite “Giusti” or “Girolamo Giusti” as author of the following libretti: *Belmira in Creta*, *Argenide* and *L’inganno scoperto*. The Corniani catalogue, however (Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, Racc. dramm. 6007, no. 736), attributes a revival of *Argenide* at S. Angelo in autumn 1738 to “Alvise Giusti Veneziano”. Steffen Voss has argued that *Motezuma* is by Alvise Giusti, a classically educated Paduan lawyer and poet (1709–66) who had contacts with Zeno at Venice but in 1734 left for Milan in order to take up a post in the Habsburg administration³⁹. But as Michael Talbot has recently established, Girolamo Giusti (b. 1703) was Alvise’s uncle⁴⁰. A literary evaluation of the four libretti in question favours the idea that *Motezuma* is by the same man as *Argenide* — Alvise Giusti — and that *Belmira in Creta* may also be by him⁴¹.

All four libretti originated in close contact with the Vivaldi circle and share overlapping ideas. The plots combine classicist dramaturgy with ‘ethnic’ locations. If more than one author is involved, then *L’inganno scoperto* stands apart from the other three dramas⁴². *Argenide* and *Motezuma* certainly betray the same ‘pen’; *Argenide*, the carnival opera, is more classical or heroic, whereas *Motezuma*, performed in the autumn, has a more ‘pastoral’ subject by virtue of its exotic setting. The preface to *Argenide* refers to its Aristotelian ‘unities’ (“loco”, “tempo”, “azione”) — a classicist mannerism also found, for example, in Domenico Lalli’s *Arsilda, regina di Ponto*. *Motezuma* is inspired by the heroic tragedies of Zeno, Lalli, Metastasio (*Catone in Utica*) and Lucchini. The beginning of Act 1 is comparable in several respects with that of Lucchini’s *Farnace*, featuring a beleaguered royal couple who are considering suicide and a young son (a daughter, in *Motezuma*) who becomes implicated in her parents’ doom. This constellation was derived, in turn, from Francesco Silvani’s *dramma per musica La pace generosa* (Venice, Teatro S. Salvatore, 1700)⁴³. So Alvise Giusti had Venetian precedents to build upon; one of these was the work of Vivaldi’s close collaborator Antonio Maria Lucchini. Giusti had also served S. Angelo with a libretto in the season immediately preceding *Motezuma*.

³⁸. RYOM, Peter. ‘Les catalogues de Bonlini et de Groppo’, in: *Informazioni e studi vivaldiani*, II (1981), pp. 3–29: 22 and 28; ID. ‘Deux catalogues d’opéras’, in: *ibidem*, III (1982), pp. 13–43: 15 and 28.

³⁹. Voss, Steffen. ‘Die Partitur von Vivaldis Oper *Motezuma* (1733)’, in: *Studi vivaldiani*, IV (2004), pp. 53–72. Voss reports (p. 53) that Giusti, when in Milan, published poetry and wrote sacred cantata texts.

⁴⁰. TALBOT, Michael. ‘Miscellany’, in: *Studi vivaldiani*, VI (2006), 159–164: 163–164.

⁴¹. For details, see STROHM, Reinhard. *The Operas of Antonio Vivaldi [...]*, *op. cit.* (see note 2).

⁴². That Alvise Giusti had left Venice by 1735 may be a tempting argument in favour of this grouping, but he could have sent the libretto from Milan.

⁴³. That *Farnace* was “tessuto sul soggetto” (woven over the plot) of Silvani was noted in contemporary Venetian catalogues — for example in the Corniani catalogue, Milan, Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, Racc. Dramm. 6007, no. 619. See RYOM, Peter. ‘Les catalogues’ [...], *op. cit.* (see note 38), p. 21, and ID. ‘Deux catalogues’ [...], *op. cit.* (see note 38), p. 25.

The impresario at S. Angelo in the season of 1733-34 was perhaps Fabrizio Brugnolo, who had been active in Venetian opera for a similarly long time as Antonio Vivaldi; in 1720-29 Brugnolo had been the director of the small Teatro S. Margherita (delli Carmini), which in 1728 presented Vivaldi's opera *Dorilla in Tempe*. According to Remo Giazotto, Brugnolo was involved (as impresario?) with S. Angelo from 1730 until at least May 1732⁴⁴. It is documented, however, that the impresario (or one of the impresarios) for Vivaldi's *L'odio vinto dalla costanza*, given at S. Angelo in carnival 1731, was Giuseppe Tonini. Brugnolo may have had a hand in the revival, in carnival 1731, of *Armida al campo d'Egitto* at S. Margherita.

In any case, the impresarial agreements for 1733-34 did not at first extend into carnival. The carnival operas were three: Albinoni's *Candalide* (5 January), on a libretto by Bartolomeo Vitturi; Vivaldi's pasticcio *Dorilla in Tempe* (around 2 February), arranged by Vitturi, and his own *L'Olimpiade* (17 February), once again arranged by Vitturi. The change from Giusti to Vitturi was paralleled by a significant change in the singing cast: the two leading ladies for *Motezuma*, Anna Girò and Giuseppa Pircher ("detta la Tedesca"), left the company before carnival. Girò sang in carnival 1734 at the Teatro Filarmonico of Verona, Pircher in Milan. The contralto Anna Cattarina Dalla Parte replaced Girò as *prima donna* in *Dorilla* and *L'Olimpiade*: for the first and only time in her career, she played something better than a secondary male role. Pircher's replacement, Marta Arrigoni, was still completely unknown. Only Angela Zanuchi remained to sing male roles in both carnival operas. The cast was augmented by a tenor, Marc'Antonio Mareschi, whose previous experience had peaked in two seasons spent with Antonio Bioni's company at Breslau. Neither della Parte nor Mareschi appeared in *Candalide*. It seems, therefore, that the casting in Vivaldi's operas was changed or assembled at short notice⁴⁵.

Why did Girò leave for Verona in carnival 1734? Had she remained at S. Angelo, her interesting role of Mitrena in *Motezuma* could have been followed by those of Aristeia and Dorilla. Although one might speculate that she quarrelled with the maestro, a more realistic explanation of her apparent defection is that Vivaldi himself had planned to produce operas in carnival 1734 at the Teatro Filarmonico, with Girò as *prima donna* — and perhaps also with Giuseppa Pircher, who had already sung there in carnival 1733. This did not come about: the works performed were Giacomelli's *Lucio Papirio dittatore* (libretto by Zeno) and Orlandini's *Arsace* (libretto by Salvi)⁴⁶. Whereas Girò had to fulfil her Verona contract,

⁴⁴. GIAZOTTO, Remo. *Antonio Vivaldi*, Turin, ERI, 1973, pp. 238-239.

⁴⁵. The S. Angelo productions of autumn 1732 and carnival 1733 had also differed in cast; only four singers were engaged for the autumn opera.

⁴⁶. HILL, John W. 'Vivaldi's *Griselda*' [...], *op. cit.* (see note 19), pp. 53-82: 67, n. 20, suggests that Vivaldi may nevertheless have been impresario at the Teatro Filarmonico in carnival 1734, since Girò sang a Vivaldi aria in *Lucio Papirio dittatore*. Somewhat stronger evidence for Vivaldi's personal involvement in the production would be required, however.

Vivaldi seems to have obtained, at short notice, a contract for the second half of carnival at S. Angelo, enabling him to produce *Dorilla*, which ran on stage for only two weeks, and *L'Olimpiade*. This explanation of the changes in cast also sheds light, as we shall see, on the presence of textual and musical material from an otherwise unknown *Lucio Vero* in the score of Vivaldi's *L'Olimpiade*.

DORILLA IN TEMPE (2 February 1734).

In this revival of Lucchini's *dramma eroico-pastorale* as a pasticcio opera, most of the solo numbers of 1726 were replaced, or at least reconsidered, in 1734. This is all the more remarkable as the production, evidently a stop-gap inserted between Albinoni's *Candalide* and Vivaldi's newly composed *L'Olimpiade*, involved Antonio Mauro as scenographer and Giovanni Gallo as ballet-master, the two men having co-authored the original *Dorilla in Tempe* at S. Angelo, 1726. It would thus be logical if the stage-sets and choreography closely reflected those of the 1726 production. Vivaldi's working score, (Turin, Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria, Foà 39, ff.142-295), is a scribal copy taken partly from that version, which the composer himself then adapted; the "Sinfonia da ballo" and choruses for the second act were most probably copied from the original version of 1726⁴⁷. The *sinfonia*, linked with the action by the music of the first movement of *La primavera* (RV 269), was perhaps not taken directly from the score of 1726 but came from that of *Alvilda*, in which the whole opening tableau had already been re-used (see above). In fact, Vivaldi personally underlaid the words to the choruses in Foà 39, probably because they were copied from a score of *Alvilda*, which had different words.

Four arias in Foà 39 do not correspond to the libretto text (I.1C, I.2, I.7 and II.7); one aria text (III.3) is missing in the score; some recitatives have variants. This relatively small discrepancy has given rise to unnecessary doubts about the dating of the score and its relationship to the 1734 production⁴⁸. The vocal registers of the singers of 1734 correspond exactly to the score — something that almost never happens unless libretto and score belong to the same production. Foà 39 consistently matches the libretto of 1734, but preserves some earlier variants. Here follows a survey of the arias that were

⁴⁷. The copyists' hands collaborating on this score are discussed in EVERETT, Paul. 'Vivaldi's Italian copyists', in: *Informazioni e studi vivaldiani*, XI (1990), pp. 27-86: 41-42. 'Hand 40' also made the copies of arias from Vivaldi's *L'Olimpiade* contained in the collection Berkeley, University of California at Berkeley, MS 120 (R 166-168).

⁴⁸. RYOM, Peter. 'Les doubles dans les partitions d'opéra de Vivaldi', in: *Informazioni e studi vivaldiani*, XV (1994), pp. 15-49: 17-18; PANCINO, Livia. 'Le opere di Vivaldi nel raffronto fra libretti e partiture. IV: "Dorilla in Tempe"; "Farnace"', in: *ibidem*, XX (1999), pp. 5-56: 6-7. Only TAMMARO, Ferruccio. 'I pasticci di Vivaldi: "Dorilla in Tempe"', in: *Nuovi studi vivaldiani: Edizione e cronologia critica delle opere*, edited by Antonio Fanna and Giovanni Morelli, Florence, Olschki, 1988 (Quaderni vivaldiani, 4), pp. 147-184: 152, links the score in Foà 39 with the 1734 production.

new in 1734, containing all the attributions to composers other than Vivaldi that I have assembled over some time⁴⁹.

In 1.1 the Farinelli aria “Mi lusinga il dolce affetto” from Hasse’s *Catone in Utica*, Turin, carnival 1732⁵⁰, was perhaps inserted at the request of the Neapolitan castrato Bilanzoni, who had sung in Hasse’s opera (although not this aria). The text in the libretto, “La speranza lusinghiera”, is probably a parody, intended to be underlaid to Hasse’s music; with a few adjustments of upbeats, it fits the notes very well.

In 1.2, the score preserves Dorilla’s “La speranza ch’in me sento”; the music has Vivaldian traits. The substitute aria in the libretto, “Vedrai che se sdegnata”, was composed by Vivaldi for Girò in the *Semiramide* of 1732 (music lost).

1.3. The words of “Dall’orrido soggiorno” have been entered by Vivaldi himself — thus the piece may have existed earlier in a different Vivaldi opera.

1.4. Nomio’s “Se al mio ben rivolgo il ciglio” is not composed in Vivaldi’s usual manner, but has much in common with Giacomelli’s “Forte lume” (see below). The words are a clumsy parody, almost devoid of rhyme and metre, of some earlier text; the scribal hand is unprofessional. Angela Zanuchi perhaps acquired this aria in Naples, where she sang in 1731–32.

1.7. “Non è ver, che il nostro core”, a gnomic text typical of Metastasio, is in fact a parody of “Non è ver, benché si dica” in *Issipile* (1731). The music is Hasse’s setting of this text (Naples, spring 1732). The text in the score, “Saprò ben con petto forte”, fits neither the music nor the drama, whereas the one printed in the libretto does. The aria was apparently copied already in a parodied state with “Saprò ben”, but the new parody text “Non è ver, che il nostro core” was then made to fit both the music and the Metastasian original better.

1.9. “Rete, lacci e strali adopra” is Giacomelli’s “Forte lume esposto al vento”, a widely circulated aria from his *Alessandro Severo*, 1732, which he had composed for Marianino Nicolini — our Filindo — himself.

11.1. Dorilla’s new aria, “Come l’onde in mezzo al mare” (E flat, allegro, C), is quite conceivably by Vivaldi; the poetry is somewhat too light-hearted for its context and may be a parody text.

11.2. “Vorrei da lacci sciogliere”, is Leonardo Leo’s famous setting (*Demetrio*, Naples, 1732). The music is attributed to “Leo” in Foà 39; a copy of the aria assigning it to “S. Angelo” and thus probably to this production, is extant in the collection Berkeley, MS 120 (see note 48). Perhaps the aria was imported from Naples by or for Bilanzoni. It is one of the loveliest pieces of the decade: not only on account of the striking syncopations expressing “lacci” or its ‘purple patch’, a recurring augmented triad illustrating the birth

⁴⁹. For details of the other pieces, see STROHM, Reinhard. *The Operas* [...], *op. cit.* (see note 2).

⁵⁰. On its music, see TAMMARO, Ferruccio. *Op. cit.* (see note 48), pp. 171–172.

of hope (“fosti la prima a nascere”) but also for its generally charming and poised melody and its colourful harmonies. Vitturi wisely left the text untouched, as it is so well matched to the notes.

II.5, “Se ostinata a me resisti” (F Major, 3/8). This ‘fury’ aria is by Leo’s older Neapolitan colleague Domenico Sarri (*Valdemaro*, 1726) and was originally texted “Se si perde il buon nocchiero”. The new words, entered by Vivaldi, were a re-arrangement of those in the *Dorilla* of 1726 (“Ti consigli col tuo onore”)⁵¹.

II.6, textless. The words were to be entered by Vivaldi after Vitturi had composed them; those printed in the libretto, “Se amarti non poss’io”, fit the vocal line perfectly. Only a rudimentary sketch of the music is given, however: a viola part is missing entirely; there are hardly any dynamics; seven bars are deleted. The composer is uncertain.

II.7. The substitute aria is “Bel piacer saria d’un core” from Metastasio’s *Semiramide riconosciuta* (1729), probably in the otherwise lost setting by Geminiano Giacomelli (Milan, 1730)⁵². The parody text, “Se penar per un bel volto”, was not entered in the score but printed only in the libretto.

II.9. “Non vo’ ch’un’infedele” is the second aria after “Rete, lacci”, sung by Filindo (Nicolini), which Giacomelli composed for him in 1732: a musically ambitious piece on account of its leaps and high register (*e'- b'*), but contained within the rhythmic framework of a minuet. Vivaldi himself entered the words — which had been omitted by the copyist, although they were the same as in the original setting. Perhaps new words were envisaged but did not come forward in time.

III.3. Nomio’s “Fidi amanti al vostro amore”, printed in the libretto, is missing in the score, although indicated by a cue. For reasons of poetic scansion, the music is unlikely to have been that of “Fidi amanti che costanti” of *Dorilla in Tempe* (1726), and cannot have been that of “Or di Roma forti eroi” in *Farnace* (1738) (I.13), as proposed by Tàmmaro⁵³. The two *Dorilla* arias have similar incipits because the text reviser of 1734 evidently wished to maintain some of the original words while adapting the poetry to different music.

III.6. “Più non vo’ mirar quel volto” was lifted from *Atenaide*, music and text both being copied by a scribe.

III.7. The concluding heroic aria, “Non ha più pace”, belongs to Elmiro (Bilanzoni): Hasse’s setting had been created for Caffarelli in 1732 and was already widely known, for example in London. It underwent several minor revisions here⁵⁴.

⁵¹. Printed in PANCINO, Livia. *Op. cit.* (see note 48), p. 18.

⁵². The music is not Vinci’s or Porpora’s.

⁵³. TÀMMARO, Ferruccio. *Op. cit.* (see note 48), pp. 163-164.

⁵⁴. Described *ibidem*, pp. 178-179.

L'OLIMPIADE AND LUCIO VERO.

As mentioned earlier, it had probably been Vivaldi's original plan to perform operas at Verona in carnival 1734. He seems to have offered the Teatro Filarmonico a setting of Zeno's *Lucio Vero* and perhaps also another work (*Dorilla in Tempe?*). When this did not materialize and Vivaldi remained in Venice without *La Girò*, he used some of the arias intended for Verona at S. Angelo instead. In addition to arias imported into *L'Olimpiade* from other completed scores (*Siroe, re di Persia* and *La fida ninfa*), at least five came from the abandoned *Lucio Vero* project, as can mostly still be seen from the original cues in the score:

I.3B. "Il fidarsi della spene" is a parody of "Non lagnarti, amato bene" (the cue is "Ani:", i.e., Aniceto) in Zeno's *Lucio Vero*⁵⁵.

II.2. "Se tu sprezzar pretendi" is a parody of "Or più tremar non voglio" (Metastasio, *Demofonte*). The provenance from *Lucio Vero* is uncertain.

II.3. "Sta piangendo la tortorella" comes from Zeno's *Lucio Vero*.

II.7. "Qual serpe tortuosa" is originally from *La fida ninfa* (II.9), but the score assigns it to Claudio (with preceding recitative, which is deleted) in Zeno's *Lucio Vero*.

III.3. Vivaldi's manuscript has an aria with the text "Sperai vicino il lido", which comes from Metastasio's *Demofonte* (I.4) — but a cue in the score assigns it to "Vol:" — i.e., Vologeso in Zeno's *Lucio Vero*. The aria had obviously been intended for *Lucio Vero*, although it used a text from *Demofonte* (as was probably the case also with "Or più tremar non voglio"; see above). In order to make the aria suit the context of *L'Olimpiade*, Vivaldi then underlaid the words that Megacle had to sing in Metastasio's drama at this point, "Lo seguitai felice". Thus he used one Metastasio text to serve as the parody of another.

III.4. "Per salvar quell'alma ingrata" is a parody of "Aure lievi che spirate" in *La fida ninfa*, but the cue "Luci:" — i.e., Lucilla — assigns this aria likewise to Zeno's *Lucio Vero*.

Many of these imports are bravura or simile arias; some do not fit well into the drama (for example, I.6, III.4). The two textual borrowings from Metastasio's *Demofonte*, a drama premiered in Vienna on 4 November 1733 and not yet heard in Italy, establish that the libretto of Vivaldi's *Lucio Vero* postdates November 1733.

It is clear from the pattern of the borrowings that *Lucio Vero* and *L'Olimpiade* cannot both have been projected for carnival 1734; thus the latter work was an afterthought, a substitute. In contrast to the pasticcio *Dorilla in Tempe*, where arias were routinely inserted to satisfy singers' demands, in *L'Olimpiade* Vivaldi seems virtually unwilling to compose musically ambitious arias for his protagonists. Perhaps this was merely a question of compositional economy: Zanuchi, Dalla Parte and Arrigoni were better served in *L'Olimpiade* with technically simple but energetic or expressive songs. The music for the tenor and bass is good throughout, but likewise in an expressive rather than virtuosic

⁵⁵. This identification has been provided by Alessandro Borin.

manner. Although the role of the libretto reviser in the decisions concerning *L'Olimpiade* is uncertain, it is manifest that Vivaldi had his own views on the match between fine singing, musical style and drama. He conceived of *L'Olimpiade* as an opera of nostalgia, passion and intimacy, with a few pictorial concessions to the two castrati, Nicolini and Bilanzoni.

The musical influence of the 'Neapolitan' composers Sarri, Leo and Hasse, and of their North-Italian follower Geminiano Giacomelli, is more striking in *Dorilla in Tempe*, where seven or eight arias by those composers were inserted, than in *L'Olimpiade*, an independent and sensitive Vivaldian reaction to Metastasio, which in turn influenced Pergolesi's setting.

The entire period 1730-34 is one of the most diverse episodes in Vivaldi's artistic and managerial career in opera. The number of productions and venues is very high in comparison with any other five-year period in his career. For much of this time the composer was probably coveting a position of *maestro di cappella* with a transalpine courtly employer; good relations with Prince Philip of Hesse-Darmstadt and other satellites or beneficiaries of the Habsburg empire (the librettists Maffei, Alvise Giusti and Metastasio included?) were surely essential to his aims. *Motezuma* might seem to spell the end of such projects and a return to the home ground — but the composer's plan to produce operas at the philo-Austrian Accademia Filarmonica of Verona in 1734 yet again points in the other direction. If we leave aside the Denzio enterprise, which was in any case a satellite of Venetian impresarial opera, we can see Vivaldi's artistic development as being strongly biased towards the visually spectacular forms of the pastoral romance (*La fida ninfa*) on one hand, and the political-heroic mood (*Motezuma*) on the other: two contrasted branches of the operatic aesthetic that were already enshrined, respectively, in Vivaldi's durable successes *Dorilla* and *Farnace*. The special novelty of *Motezuma* — exoticism — is contradicted by the Metastasian classicist pastoral *L'Olimpiade*; but this occurs rather by accident, since this gentle work came into being only because the pathos-laden and gruesome *Lucio Vero* could not be realized. Vivaldi also emulated the grand, heroic style of his rivals (for example those working at S. Giovanni Grisostomo) by giving highly virtuosic arias, often borrowed from younger composers, to the few singers in his cast who were capable of performing them. He developed the repertory of Anna Girò in a similar direction, besides writing for her the tailor-made *arie parlanti*. She had, however, little opportunity to sing these arias under his direction. The singing cast working for Vivaldi in these years was even more diverse than the style of the operas themselves. If there is a common denominator relating to the years 1730-34 that is not simply identifiable with Vivaldi's struggle for survival in the opera market, this has, ultimately, to be an unquenchable aesthetic ambition: the desire to be both big and new at the same time, to offer great drama and consummate musical virtuosity. To us, it may seem that Vivaldi achieved this goal in *La fida ninfa*, *Motezuma* and *L'Olimpiade*. The composer, however, may have been more self-critical about these achievements, since he never revived any of these operas, whereas *Farnace* and *Dorilla* accompanied him throughout this period and partly beyond.

CHAPTER THREE

PIETRO MAURO, DETTO “IL VIVALDI”: FAILED TENOR, FAILED IMPRESARIO, FAILED HUSBAND, ACCLAIMED COPYIST

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THE EPIGRAMMATIC CHARACTERIZATION OF THE SUBJECT of this essay in its title, which, rather like Charles de Brosses’s famous epitaph on Cardinal Pietro Ottoboni, follows a series of damning negatives with a single redeeming positive¹, does justice to a colourful and briefly scandalous minor figure who must have been a great disappointment to his famous uncle, after whom he was nicknamed, in terms of both his personal morality and the progress of his operatic career, yet managed to rescue something from the debris by settling down to become, in time, Venice’s premier music copyist.

The story really begins when, in 1693, at the age of fifteen, Antonio Vivaldi received the Tonsure on his way to full ordination as a priest in 1703. The general and particular reasons why his family set him on this path are quite clear. The general reason is that, for a working-class (*popolano*) family headed by a barber-turned-violinist, to have a son enter the priesthood — the only *carrière ouverte aux talents* then on offer — was a rational long-term strategy². The priest himself would be an educated, well-respected man, able to earn a decent income not only from clerical duties but also from a wide range of ‘white collar’ activities. This income, and the social connections arising from his clerical status, could be used to support his parents in their old age and to lend assistance to his siblings. And precisely because the priest had no wife and children of his own, all his concern, his money and his know-how could be heaped, in the next generation, on his nephews

¹. BROSSES, Charles de. *Lettres historiques et critiques sur l’Italie*, 3 vols., Paris, Ponthieu, 1799, vol. III, p. 389: “OTTOBONI, doyen, neveu d’Alexandre VIII, Vénitien, protecteur de France, fait cardinal à dix-sept ou dix-huit ans, sans mœurs, sans crédit, débauché, ruiné, amateur des arts, grand musicien”.

². See TALBOT, Michael. *The Sacred Vocal Music of Antonio Vivaldi*, Florence, Olschki, 1995 (Quaderni vivaldiani, 8), pp. 44-46.

and nieces³. The particular reason for directing Vivaldi towards the priesthood may have been a negative one: his chronic bronchial asthma, which precluded a non-sedentary life. Doubtless, of course, his musicality and intelligence had already revealed themselves; it may well have been envisaged from the start that he would pursue a parallel musical career, as, somewhat exceptionally, Venetian priests were able to do without excessive censure.

In the case of the Vivaldi family, this strategy mostly paid off, albeit perhaps not quite in the manner anticipated. Antonio became no mere working musician but a European name among both violinists and composers and a periodically very successful impresario. Conversely, his religious activity dwindled to the bare minimum within three years of his ordination: his recitation of Vespers at home, as related in Goldoni's *Memoirs*, is really a symptom not of his piety, real or feigned, but of his lack of external involvement in religious observance⁴. His success as a musician enabled him to rent costly, roomy apartments, where there was space for his parents and unmarried siblings, and to maintain an entourage of family members and possibly others that helped him to solve his locomotion problems and relieve his medical crises. From about the time of the publication of *L'estro armonico* (1711), he became the effective head of his family. His father, Giovanni Battista, made no further progress in his own career at S. Marco and sought no extra salaried posts. He became, so to speak, his son's 'sidekick', much as Antonio had been to him in those early days when both men had been active inside and outside Venice as jobbing violinists. Vivaldi senior matured, perhaps contentedly, into his son's best copyist, his companion, his assistant and perhaps also his accompanist. It is touching to reflect that he died as late as 1736, a mere five years before Antonio.

Antonio's younger brothers went their own ways — as mediocrities or ne'er-do-wells. Of the three who survived into adulthood, we know least about Bonaventura Tomaso (born 1685), who left Venice in 1711, as attested in a document of 1718 reporting a request made to the Curia Patriarcale on his behalf by his father for a *documento di stato libero* confirming his eligibility for marriage⁵.

Francesco Gaetano (1690-1752) followed in his father's footsteps by becoming a barber. In 1721 he fell foul of the law on account of a little horseplay. Pretending to take the nobleman Antonio Soranzo for a doctor, Francesco invited the patrician to examine his pulse and meanwhile dropped his breeches, exposing his male member. Soranzo was not amused: together with some companions, Francesco was banished for a period from

³. This was especially true of the section of the diocesan clergy that had no obligations towards a particular church: the so-called *abati*. Throughout his life, Vivaldi protected his freedom of action by not seeking any clerical appointment.

⁴. GOLDONI, Carlo. *Mémoires de M. Goldoni pour servir à l'histoire de sa vie et à celle de son théâtre*, 3 vols., Paris, Duchesne, 1787, vol. 1, pp. 286-291.

⁵. Venice, Archivio Storico della Curia Patriarcale (hereafter, I-Vap), Registro Matrimoni 1718, p. 429. See GALLO, Rodolfo. 'Antonio Vivaldi, il Prete Rosso: la famiglia — la morte', in: *Ateneo veneto*, CXXIV (1938), pp. 165-172: 168.

Venice⁶. In 1727, after his return to Venice, his name reportedly appears on a document granting permission to a consortium repaving the piazza of S. Marco to unload on the Riva degli Schiavoni (facing the Ospedale della Pietà), and in 1731 he turned his hand to publishing, although he continued to practise as a barber⁷. His professional contact with his famous elder brother does not seem to have been extensive, but a single occasion is known on which he acted as Antonio's intermediary: when, in 1715, he collected money on the latter's behalf from the *marchese* Luigi Bentivoglio d'Aragona⁸. Francesco's son Carlo Stefano (born 1731) moved closer to his uncle's orbit by becoming a music copyist. Although he was born too late to work directly for Antonio, he may have been involved in the copying of some of his uncle's sacred vocal works during the time, in the 1750s, when he worked at the *copisteria* of Iseppo Baldan, who is known fraudulently to have supplied at least four sacred vocal works by Vivaldi (RV 795, 803, 807 and Anh. 35a) under Galuppi's name in a large consignment sent to the Saxon Hofkapelle⁹.

Even more disappointing was the career of the youngest son, Iseppo Caetano (born 1697). It is not known what profession, if any, he practised. In 1723 he was approved for the taking of holy orders, but nothing seems to have become of this¹⁰. In 1728 he was indicted for knifing a grocer's errand boy and was banished for three years from Venice¹¹.

Of Antonio's three sisters who survived childhood, two, Margherita Gabriella (born 1680) and Zanetta Anna (1687-1762), apparently remained unwed. The third, Cecilia Maria (1683-1767), in 1713 married Giovanni Antonio Mauro (of uncertain profession), by whom she had two known sons: Pietro Gaetano (born 18 September 1715) and Daniele (born 14 September 1717)¹². *Faute de mieux*, it was on these two sons — and in particular on the elder, Pietro — that Antonio, in mid-career, must have pinned his hopes for retaining some of the lustre he had brought to the family.

⁶. The episode is recounted in Venice, Museo Civico Correr (hereafter, I-Vmc), Ms. Gradenigo 200, Commemoriali Gradenigo, iv, f. 77v.

⁷. GIAZOTTO, Remo. *Vivaldi*, Turin, ERI, 1973, p. 234. Since the documents on which Giazotto based his claims have not been located independently and inspected by other scholars, a question mark still hangs over them.

⁸. The receipt survives in Ferrara, Archivio di Stato, Archivio Bentivoglio, Corrispondenza generale, Busta 418, ff. 398-399.

⁹. See especially STOCKIGT, Janice B. - TALBOT, Michael. 'New Vivaldi Finds in Dresden', in: *Eighteenth-Century Music*, III (2006), pp. 35-61.

¹⁰. VIO, Gastone. 'Una nuova abitazione di Vivaldi a Venezia', in: *Informazioni e studi vivaldiani*, III (1982), pp. 61-65: 61-63.

¹¹. Venice, Archivio di Stato (hereafter, I-Vas), Avogaria di Comun, Busta 110, Miscellanea Penal, Processo 11.

¹². Pietro's date of birth is given in the notice of his baptism on 6 October 1715 (Venice, Archivio Patriarcale, San Zaccaria, Registri canonici soppressa parrocchia San Provolo, Battesimi III (1703-1752), p. 43). It may be not without significance — also for his uncle Antonio Vivaldi — that Pietro's godfather was the impresario Pietro Denzio, who in December 1714 entered into a contract to manage S. Angelo in the 1715-16 season. On Denzio and this contract, see TALBOT, Michael. 'A Venetian Operatic Contract of 1714', in: *The Business of Music*, edited by Michael Talbot, Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 2002, pp. 1-61.

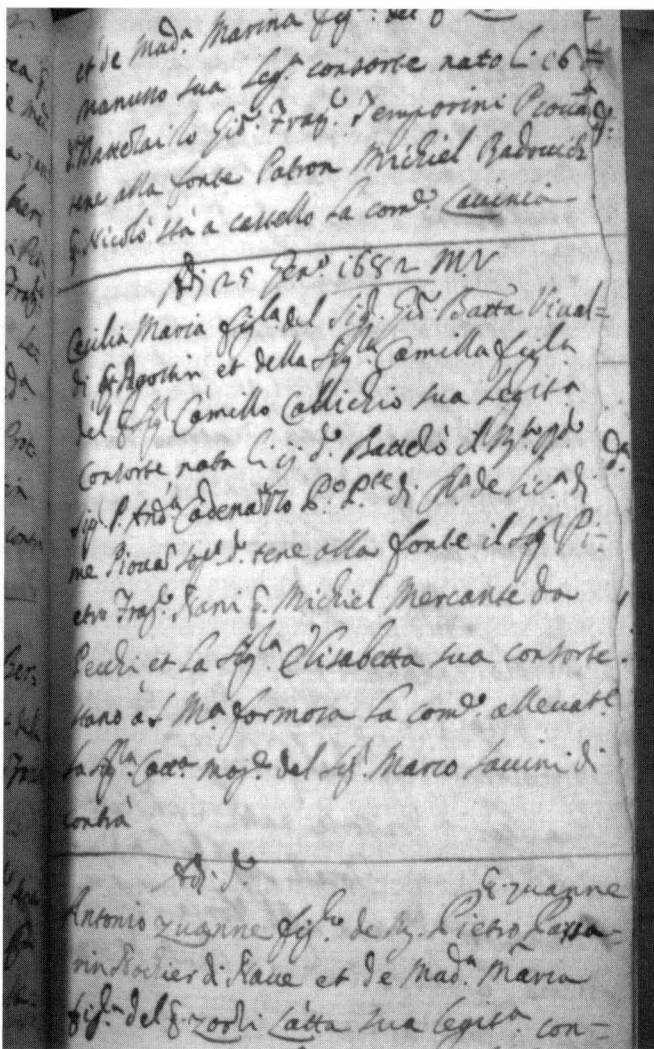


PLATE I: Entry for Cecilia Vivaldi in the register of births for the parish of San Giovanni in Bràgora (San Giovanni in Bràgora, Registri dei Battesimi, 16 maggio 1664 – 20 dicembre 1691).

Pietro Mauro enters the record in autumn 1730, when he took the minor part of Elpino in Bartolomeo Cordans's opera *La Silvia* (based on the same libretto by Enrico Bissarri used by Vivaldi in his homonymous opera for Milan in 1721) at the small Venetian theatre of S. Moisè (see TABLE 1). In the following carnival season at the same theatre (which, following standard Venetian practice, may be regarded as a continuation of the same season, since management and cast remained identical) he sang the similarly modest role of Gisberto in Cordans's *Romilda*, on a libretto by Carlo Pagani Cesa.

The impresario at S. Moisè for that season, Pietro Chechia, is a shadowy but interesting person. He entered the ducal church of S. Marco in 1717 as a trainee priest (*chierico*) and

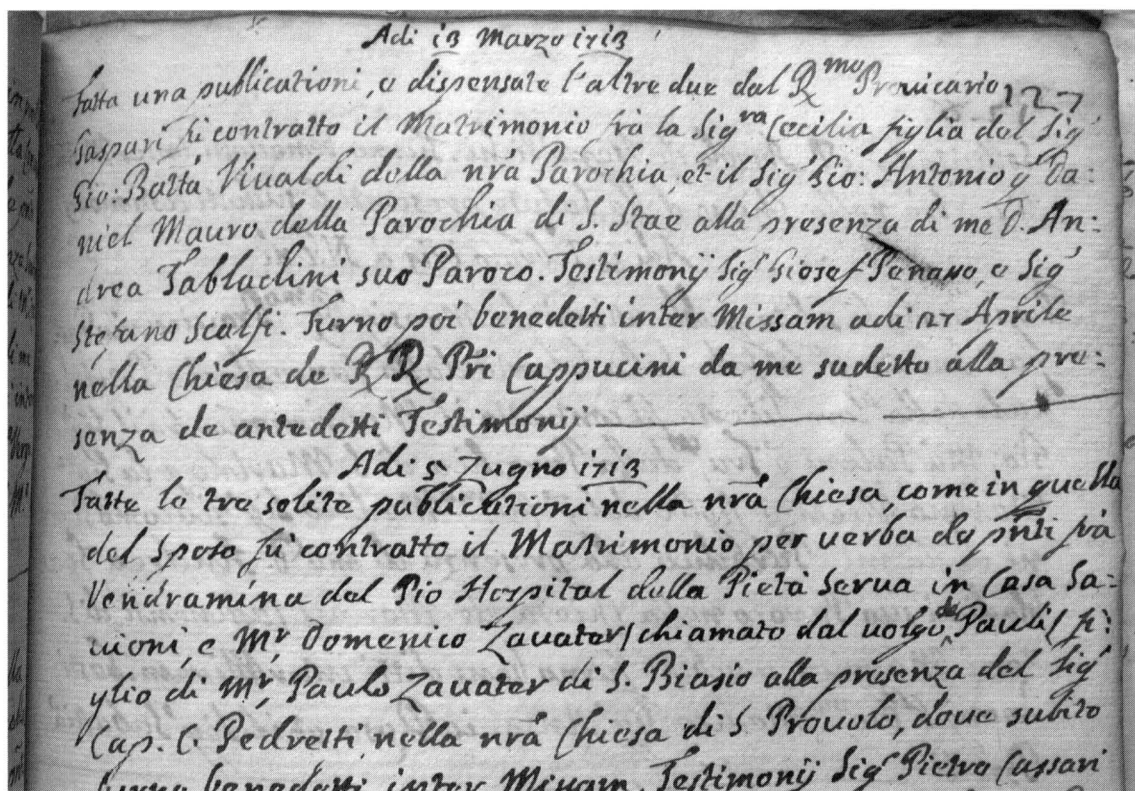


PLATE 2: Entry for Cecilia Vivaldi and Giovanni Antonio Mauro in the register of marriages for the parish of San Provolo (I-Vap, San Provolo, Registro matrimoni 1669-1805, f. 127).

graduated to the position of *giovane di coro* in 1722¹³. He had literary ambitions: the text of one of the works performed in honour of the visit to Venice of Cardinal Pietro Ottoboni in 1726, the cantata for two voices *Fuga di Teseo*, was penned by him. How deeply he involved himself with theatrical management is unclear — he certainly managed the S. Angelo theatre during the Ascension season of 1731, when Cordans' *Gli sponsali d'Enea* was staged. Chechia will certainly have been well known to the Vivaldis, given Giovanni Battista's employment at the ducal church.

At this point we need to ask: who trained Pietro as a singer, and who facilitated his entrée to the stage? His uncle must have been involved professionally in some capacity, of course — but he will have needed in addition some specialist instruction in *maniera*, the art of 'florid song' (which, for example, Vivaldi's former colleague at the Pietà, Pietro Scarpari, could have provided), and, not least, the personal endorsement of the Udinese composer Cordans, who presumably, as the sole composer, directed the music at the theatre throughout the season.

¹³. I-Vas, Procuratia de Supra, Busta 11, Terminazioni in originale, fasc. 34, 9 August 1722.

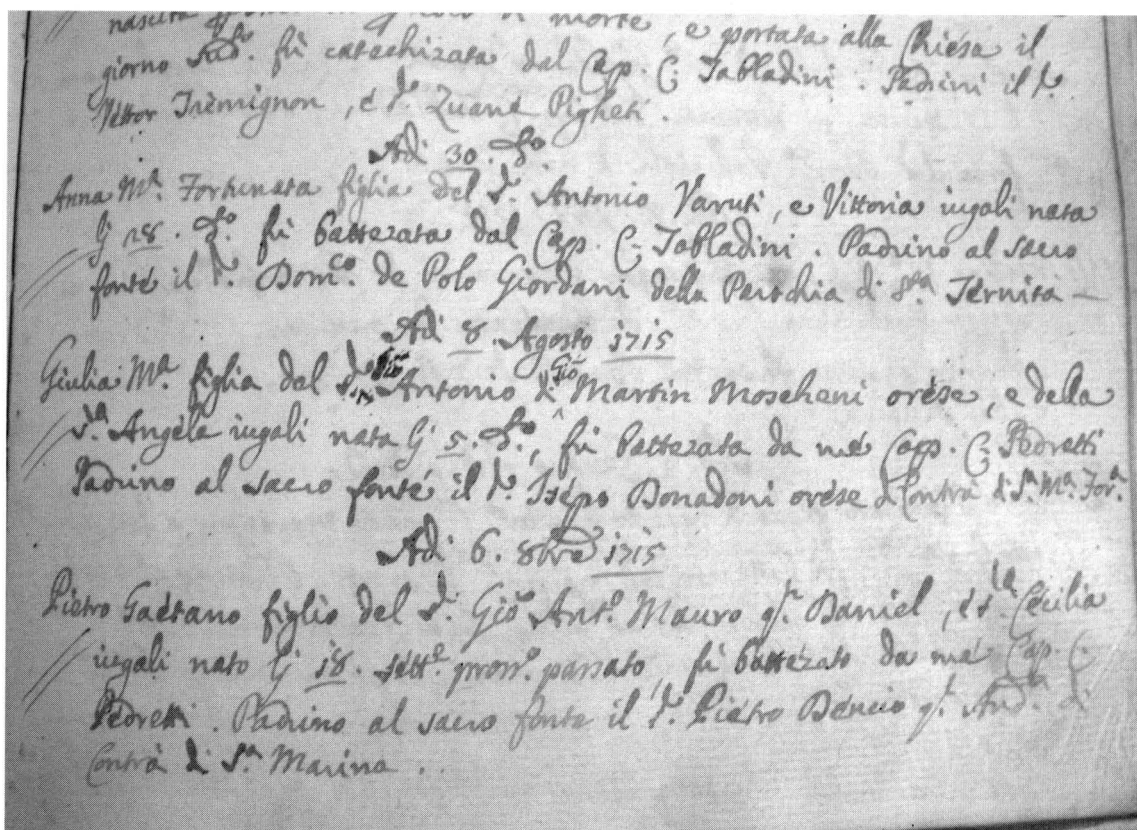


PLATE 3: Entry for Pietro Mauro in the register of baptisms for the parish of S. Provolo (I-Vap, San Zaccaria, Registri canonici soppressa parrocchia San Provolo, Battesimi III [1703-1752], p. 43).

Pietro's debut must have passed off without disaster, since in May 1731 his uncle engaged him for the minor part of Aquilio in a revival of his 'warhorse' *Farnace* (first heard at S. Angelo in carnival 1727) at a production in the Teatro Omodeo, Pavia. "Minor part" is perhaps a slight understatement, for although Pietro's name appears last in the cast list, he has two arias and participates in one duet. If the score in Giordano 36 (Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria, Turin) relates to the Pavia production — and the concordance between score and libretto is not so perfect that one can be absolutely certain of this — Pietro was already a tenor, and by implication was already so when he made his debut. But if the score and the libretto are not directly related, the possibility arises that his voice had not yet broken. It was certainly not out of the question for a promising young singer to sample the stage with unbroken voice, as, for example, the future tenor Annibale Pio Fabri did in Rome in 1711, when he sang the contralto role of Vespetta in Albinoni's *Pimpinone*¹⁴.

¹⁴. Perhaps the case of the famous tenor from Reggio Antonio Barbieri, who sang alongside Pietro Mauro in the Pavia production of *Farnace* in 1731, was similar. Barbieri's first known appearance in opera

The breaking of Pietro’s voice (at the age of sixteen — not unusual for the eighteenth century) might, if true, explain the curious hiatus in his singing career that supervenes at this point. We hear nothing further about him until carnival 1737, when he re-emerges in a dual capacity as tenor and impresario. The parallel with the Venetian tenor-cum-impresario Antonio Denzio (with whom Vivaldi had earlier been in very close contact) is so close — leaving aside the fact that Pietro’s company operated at a much less ambitious level — as to suggest that it supplied the concrete model¹⁵.

What did Pietro do in the meantime? There are hints in the testimony of the veteran impresario Giovanni Orsatto, to which we will come later, that during this time he served an apprenticeship in theatrical management. He may also have been active as a music copyist, following the lead of his brother Daniele, who seems never to have had any other profession. Either Pietro or Daniele could easily be identical with ‘Scribe 16’, the inexperienced and negligent copyist who worked, always under Vivaldi’s close supervision, in the 1730s¹⁶.

TABLE 1 continues with the nine productions in which Pietro Mauro participated, invariably as both impresario and principal male singer, between carnival 1737 and carnival 1741. A very clear picture emerges. One notes, first, that his activity was confined to the smaller cities of the *Terraferma veneta* (with a single excursion to Este). The ability of the companies he recruited — with considerable continuity of personnel from season to season, as TABLE 2 shows — was too modest to have held its own in metropolitan centres such as Venice itself, but by the same token was perhaps the essential condition of its affordability in the provinces. TABLE 2 shows also that not a few of the singers sank without trace after their association with Pietro ended — a sure sign of their limited talent. Recycling was the watchword of Pietro’s operation. The same cast was used, wherever possible, for two different venues: one in the autumn (when many cities held a *fiera*, or annual fair) and one during the following carnival. Thus *Orlando furioso* was heard first at Este, then at Bassano.

The repertory is typical for provincial cities. First, there are no specially commissioned librettos. Every drama (one is speaking of text rather than music) is tried and tested — and often considerably reduced from its original length in accordance with provincial custom. The music is put together from the relatively few scores to which the impresario (acting as director of music) has access, plus the old favourites, the *arie di baule*, of the cast. Most of the nine operas in the table have a clear connection of subject, if not always a firm musical or librettological connection, with the impresario’s uncle¹⁷. *Farnace* leads the way,

dates from 1712, but his next reported appearance comes only in 1718.

¹⁵. The itinerant troupes of Angelo and Pietro Mingotti may also have provided inspiration.

¹⁶. See EVERETT, Paul. ‘Vivaldi’s Italian Copyists’, in: *Informazioni e studi vivaldiani*, XI (1990), pp. 27–86: 57.

¹⁷. Reinhard Strohm has kindly pointed out in private correspondence that the setting of *Orlando furioso* employed by Mauro in 1740 and 1741 stemmed from the 1724 production in Prague under Antonio Denzio.

TABLE I: OPERAS IN WHICH PIETRO MAURO SANG

YEAR	SEASON	CITY	THEATRE	TITLE	LIBRETTIST	COMPOSER	ROLE	STYLE	IMPRESARIO	DEDICATION BY
1730	autumn	Venice	S. Moisè	<i>La Sibbia</i>	E. Bissarri	B. Cordans	Elpino	Pietro Mauro	P. Checchia	anon., 28.10.1730.
1731	carnival	Venice	S. Moisè	<i>Romilda</i>	C. Pagani Cesa	B. Cordans	Gisberto	Pietro Mauro	P. Checchia	P. Checchia
1731	May	Pavia	Onodeo	<i>Famace</i>	A. M. Lucchini	A. Vivaldi	Aquilio	Pietro Mauro	A. Vivaldi	anon., 4.5.1731.
1737	carnival	Treviso	Dolfin	<i>Alcino, re degli Utni</i> (= <i>Romilda</i>)	C. Pagani Cesa	B. Cordans	Alcino	P. M. detto Vivaldi	P. Mauro	P. Mauro
1737	carnival	Treviso	Dolfin	<i>Famace</i>	A. M. Lucchini	A. Vivaldi	Farnace	P. M. detto Vivaldi	P. Mauro	M. Franchi (in verse)
1737	fair (Oct- Nov.)	Treviso	Dolfin	<i>L'Adriano in Sina</i>	P. Metastasio	G. Porta	Osroa	P. M. detto Vivaldi	[P. Mauro]	M. Franchi
1738	carnival	Vicenza	di Piazza	<i>Il Bajazette</i>	A. Piovene	A. Vivaldi (pasticcio)	Bajazette	P. M. detto Vivaldi	P. Mauro	P. Mauro
1738	fair (Oct- Nov.)	Treviso	Dolfin	<i>Artaserse</i>	P. Metastasio	J. A. Hasse	Artabano	P. M. detto il Vivaldi	P. Mauro	anon.
1739	carnival	Vicenza	di Piazza	<i>Alessandro nelle Indie</i>	P. Metastasio	J. A. Hasse	Poro	P. M. detto il Vivaldi	P. Mauro	P. Mauro
1740	fair	Este	Grillo	<i>Orlando furioso</i>	G. Braccioli	G. A. Ristori? / A. Bioni	[Orlando]	(no cast given)	[P. Mauro]	P. Mauro
1741	carnival	Bassano	Nuovo	<i>Artaserse</i>	P. Metastasio	J. A. Hasse	Artabano	P. M. veneto	[P. Mauro]	the full cast, Dec. 1740
1741	carnival	Bassano	Nuovo	<i>Orlando furioso</i>	G. Braccioli / A. Bioni	G. A. Ristori? / A. Bioni	Orlando	P. M. veneto	P. Mauro	P. Mauro

and after it come *Il Bajazette* (Tamerlano), *Alessandro nelle Indie* and *Orlando furioso*. Vivaldi may even have had a hand in giving his nephew access to Giovanni Porta's *L'Adriano in Siria* (premiered in 1737 in Mantua), seeing that the two men worked side by side at the Pietà. *Alcano, re degli Unni*, a retitled *Romilda*, seems, exceptionally, to be a legacy from Pietro's debut years.

How 'hands-on' Vivaldi's assistance to Pietro was is hard to determine. We suspect a controlling presence in at least the 1737–38 season (*L'Adriano in Siria* and *Il Bajazette*). One possible sign of his intervention is the recruitment as leading lady for the first opera of Elisabetta Moro, a veteran contralto in quite a different class from most of Pietro's choices, and one whom Vivaldi had used earlier in his own operas of 1725–26 and 1729. Vivaldi was otherwise unengaged in the autumn of 1737, since his direction of the music at S. Angelo commenced, exceptionally, only at the start of carnival. The older man may occasionally have used Pietro's company as a test-bed for his own singers. Angela Masi (Massi), who opened her long and successful operatic career singing for Pietro the title role in *Alessandro nelle Indie* (carnival 1739), was to continue as Artabano in Vivaldi's *Feraspe* (S. Angelo, autumn 1739).

Pietro tried to turn his family connection into an asset. Although he always signed libretto dedications when acting as an impresario simply as “Pietro Mauro”, in the cast lists of the librettos for 1737, 1738 and 1739 he gives his name as “Pietro Mauro detto il Vivaldi” (or “detto Vivaldi”). Only for the two final productions in Bassano does he suppress the epithet in favour of simple “veneto”. Presumably, his uncle approved — otherwise, the appellation would not have persisted for so long. One glimpses here a hope on Vivaldi's part that the lustre of the family name would carry on into the third generation.

As a singer, Pietro always heads the cast list. Technically, therefore, he was the invariable leading man of his troupe. However, one should not infer automatically from this that he always sang the most arias or the hardest music. The traditional rigid hierarchy of *primo uomo*, *prima donna*, *secondo uomo*, *seconda donna* and minor parts (*ultime parti*) was less easily sustainable in its pure form in the provinces, and the librettos and scores of provincial productions suggest that some degree of levelling often took place. To state the matter delicately: Pietro may have used his power as impresario to confer on himself the glory of *primo uomo* status without quite living up to it in practice¹⁸.

If, as has been suggested, Vivaldi lent his nephew especial support at the end of 1737, there may be a particular reason that has nothing to do with music. In his very first season, Pietro became embroiled in a scandal that could easily have finished his impresarial career almost before it had begun.

If, as seems likely, Antonio Denzio was a relative of Pietro's godfather Pietro Denzio, this introduces an interesting possible personal link and source for the acquisition of other operas in Mauro's repertory.

¹⁸. In *Bajazette*, for example, Pietro, singing the title role, allowed himself only four arias — a number more fitting for a *secondo uomo* than a *primo uomo* — at least, in metropolitan theatres.

The story is best launched by relating that in August 1736 Pietro was — apparently — betrothed to a certain Giulia Scutellari, since a *scrittura* to that effect is preserved in the archive of the Avogaria del Comun¹⁹. We learn from this document, transcribed below as APPENDIX 1, that Giulia was a maid (*cameriera*) living, and perhaps also employed, at “Ca’ Barbaro al traghetto della Madonna”. She was a native of “Aconegliano” (Conegliano) on the *Terraferma* and claimed, perhaps fancifully, a noble affiliation²⁰. The document specifies that the wedding is to take place by the end of the next carnival, or the Octave of Easter 1737, and threatens both parties with sanctions both divine and human if either breaks faith. Giulia signs the document, as do two witnesses, but Pietro’s signature, strangely, is absent.

Whatever the outcome of this entanglement, on 29 April 1737 Pietro Mauro married Domenica Maria Brembilla (the surname is written also as “Brombilla” and “Brambilla”), the natural daughter of Lorenzo Brembilla, at the Venetian church of S. Samuele (see APPENDIX 2)²¹. Domenica, Venetian by birth, was a singer in Pietro’s troupe: she appears under her mother’s maiden name of Fabris as Agilla in *Alcano, re degli Unni* (carnival 1737), and under her married name as Irene in *Il Bajazette* (carnival 1738).

The union was evidently not a happy one, since in 1747 Pietro petitioned the Curia Patriarcale for the annulment of his marriage. Valid grounds for such an annulment were not numerous, but it was possible for one to be granted if the appellant could prove that he or she had not consented freely to it, having been coerced into marriage by pressure from third parties. This was the route taken by Pietro. Bizarrely, he was likely to stand a good chance of winning his case only if he proved that his conduct immediately before marriage had been unusually reprehensible, since public scandal was the only credible trigger for the pressure allegedly brought to bear on him.

The Curia’s records outline in eight paragraphs the claimed circumstances under which the case was being brought²²:

1. Ten years previously (i.e., in late 1736), Pietro Mauro visited the house of Agnese Fabris Brembilla in order to audition her daughter for a part in the forthcoming operas in Treviso. He and she became friendly.

2. Pietro took to staying overnight in Agnese’s house and, just before Christmas 1736, began to have sexual relations with her.

3. Shortly afterwards, Pietro departed with Agnese, Domenica and other members of the troupe for Treviso. The intimacy of Pietro and Agnese was obvious to their companions.

4. When Pietro and Agnese together left the barge in which the party was travelling on the pretext of searching for an inn, the others suspected both intimacy and a pre-existing relationship.

¹⁹. I-Vas, Avogaria del Comun, Misc. di Civil, Busta 2, processo 14.

²⁰. Some bearers of the rare surname Scutellari were indeed noble, for example a certain family from Parma, but it is improbable that a true noblewoman would be employed as a mere chambermaid.

²¹. I-Vap, Registro Matrimoni S. Samuele 1679-1754, Libro XIV, p. 234 (29 April 1737).

²². I-Vap, Filcia Causarum, 1747, Carta n. ant. 130. The file is dated 16 January 1747 [MV].

M. Virginia Domini & S. M. V.
 Don. di. i. d. g. r. o. 1738
 Con la presente scrittura dichiaro io Giulia Scutellari
 in presenza di Dio, Maria Vergine e tutta la Corte
 Celestiale, ecc. ^{mo}tratt. giuramento affomando quanto
 loro espreso sopra questa carta, e sopra una immagine
 di un Cristo Crucifisso per legge Pietro Mauro Musico
 Tomore & mio Legittimo in tutte promettendogli ogni
 perpetua fedeltà e in avvenire a giuramento di steser
 duplice si soua in uocati darmi castigo meriteuole a
 un tanto eccesso. Il che sotto uicuo in presenza
 di Testimoni.
 Io Pietro Mauro giuro a Dio, e Maria Vergine, ed a
 tutto il Barando, come ellego la sig. Giulia Scutellari
 si chiamera in Ca' Barbaro al traqgeto della Madonetta
 e nobile di Conegliano, mia legittima consorte
 promettendogli ogni sincerità e Traquedendo
 al giuramento in uocato tutta la Celestiale Corte soue
 darmi quel castigo meriteuole a un tanto eccesso.

PLATE 4: First page of a *scrittura* attesting Pietro Mauro's engagement to Giulia Scutellari (I-Vas, Avogaria del Comun, Misc. di Civil, Busta 2, processo 14).

5. After arrival at Treviso, Agnese continued to show special favour towards Pietro, offering him food and accommodation in her own room and defending him from criticism. She fell ill and demanded Pietro's continuous presence.

6. During Agnese's illness Pietro initiated a clandestine sexual relationship with her daughter Domenica, on several occasions promising her marriage.

Addi della nra Parroc: il Sig: Alessandro Janzelotti
 costante di camera di S. E. Nunzio della Parroc:
 di Sta Simeone 937

Addi 29 Aprile 1737
 Il Sig: Pietro Figo del q. S. Antonio Mauro ver:
 della Parroc: di S. Apollonia, e la Sig: Domenica maria
 naturale di D: Lorenzo Brembilla, parimente
 veneta della mia Parroc: dispensare le tre solite
 pubblicazioni da mos. Mainardi, come da filza
 no, prima interrogar, ed ottenuto il loro libero
 consenso contrassero matrimonio per verba de
 pni alla pnta del Pdo Sig: P. Seppio Raggi sacer:
 di Chiesa di S. Michiel Arcangelo de S. Giovanni
 Capella del Notario in nra Chiesa, e dallo stesso
 Religioso inter missarum solennia benedetti pni
 desimo, il Sig: Zuanne David al. Salvador
 di Alorno, e Dom: Betta G. Oratio Chier: di Gio:

938

PLATE 5: Entry for Pietro Mauro and Domenica Brembilla in the register of marriages for the parish of S. Samuele (I-Vap, Registro Matrimoni S. Samuele 1679-1754, Libro XIV, p. 234).

7. When Agnese discovered this relationship, she showed her anger publicly and threatened legal action if Pietro did not consent to marry Domenica. Pietro’s mother, Cecilia Vivaldi Mauro, adopted the same position. The wedding accordingly took place.
8. The scandal attracted public attention.

Eleven witnesses were called. One infers that all or most were selected by Pietro and coached in their evidence. Nevertheless, their collective testimony adds a few precious nuggets of information to the above account. They were (in the order in which the document lists them): Giovanni Orsatti (or Orsatto), the impresario²³; the *violone* player (and sock-knitter) Francesco Moro, presumably a member of the troupe²⁴; the singer Margarita Biondi, nicknamed “Gamba”, another member of the troupe (see TABLE 2); Angelo Vio; Giovanni Battista Vegelli; Cecilia Vivaldi Mauro; Daniele Mauro; Francesco Berti (possibly related to the singer Elisabetta Berti); Agnese Fabris Brembilla; Pietro Danieli; his wife Catterina Danieli.

Orsatto declares that about 13 or 14 years previously Pietro sang in his company. Taken literally, this would mean the years 1733 or 1734. Certainly, if the hypothesis of an intermission in Pietro’s singing career beginning at the point where his voice broke is correct, 1733 is not too soon for him to have returned to singing in public. On the other hand, it is in that case strange that no evidence of his activity as a singer in the years 1733–36 survives. Alternatively, Orsatto may have underestimated the number of years, intending to refer to the years 1730 and 1731. Even if Chechia was the nominal impresario at S. Moisè, Orsatto could easily have been pulling the strings behind him, such sub-contraction being a Venetian way of life. It is equally possible that the latter overestimated the number of years and meant to refer to the 1737 season at Treviso, in which case he may have been the ‘godfather’ behind Pietro.

Orsatto confirms, a little circumspectly, the facts of the case, except to say that at the time of the journey (along the river Sile) to Treviso he was unwell and could therefore offer no information on what took place then (by implication, however, he was a passenger on the barge, which would suggest an impresarial connection with the season).

²³. Of Giovanni Orsatto, the dominant impresario in the Veneto in the early eighteenth century, we learn from this deposition, dated 13 April 1747, that he was from Vicenza, that his late father was named Domenico, that he was about 85 years old, and that he had lived in Venice for about 54 years in the *contrada* of S. Maria Mater Domini.

²⁴. This must be the Francesco Moro who applied unsuccessfully for a position as a *violone* player at S. Marco in 1744 (I-Vas, Procuratia de Supra, Registro 155, Decreti e Terminazioni, ff.19v-20). The surname ‘Moro’ is common among Venetian instrumentalists of the period — another Francesco Moro, a priest, was admitted as a player of the *viola da spalla* (a variety of small cello held outwards from the body instead of between the legs) to the S. Marco orchestra in 1689. The thought occurs that the younger Francesco Moro (and perhaps even the singer Elisabetta Moro) may have been a relative of Pietro Mauro: both ‘Mauro’ and ‘Moro’ mean ‘Moor’ (African), and in Francesco’s deposition the spelling ‘Mauro’ is employed in one place. But this may be either a simple coincidence or a scribal error.

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TABLE 2: SINGERS WHO APPEARED IN OPERATIC PRODUCTIONS ALONGSIDE PIETRO MAURO

NAME	OPERATIC CAREER SPAN	PRODUCTION*	ROLE
Alia, Rosa	1737-1740	1737c2	Selinda
		1739c	Timagene
Barbieri, Antonio	1712-1740	1731f	Farnace
Bassi Barbieri, Livia	1727-1739	1731f	Berenice
Berti, Elisabetta	1730-1738	1730a	Egisto
		1738f	Mandane
Biondi, Margarita	1719-1739	1737c1	Romilda
		1737c2	Berenice
		1739c	Gandarte
Brenzoni, Domenico	1737	1737c1	Gisberto
		1737c2	Gilade
Buffelli, Francesca	1733-1748	1738c	Asteria
Cardini, Rosa	1730-1737	1731f	Selinda
Delfini, Cecilia	1729-1731	1730a	Faustolo
		1731c	Rodoaldo
Fabris, Domenica	1737-1738	1737c1	Agilla
		1738c	Irene
Fanara, Elena	1738-1741	1738f	Semira
		1739c	Erisena
		1741c1	Semira
		1741c2	Angelica
Ferandini, Angela	1737-1750	1737f	Sabina
Ferandini, Eleonora	1737-1747	1737f	Farnaspe
Fontanetti, Leandro	1740-1741	1741c1	Artaserse
		1741c2	Astolfo
Franchi, Margarita	1737-1741	1737c2	Tamiri
		1737f	Emirena
		1741c1	Mandane
		1741c2	Alcina
Gabbiati, Giuseppe	1738-1749	1738c	Andronico
Gaspari, Antonio	1710-1731	1730a	Marte
		1731c	Alcano
Girò, Anna	1723-1748	1731f	Tamiri
Masi, Angela	1739-1769	1739c	Alessandro
Monza, Maria	1729-1732	1731c	Agila
Moro, Elisabetta	1722-1741	1737f	Adriano
Orlandi, Chiara	1717-1737	1730a	Silvia
		1731c	Romilda
Rapparini, Cristoforo	1729-1761	1731f	Pompeo
Ritschel, Giovanni Francesco	1737	1737f	Aquilio
Salvioni, Regina	1736-1741	1738c	Tamerlano
		1738f	Arbace
		1739c	Cleofide
		1741c1	Arbace
		1741c2	Medoro
Semolin, Giovanni	1738	1738f	Artaserse
Tasselli, Domenico	1728-1739	1737c1	Romoaldo
		1737c2	Pompeo

* "a" = autumn; "c" = carnival; "f" = *fiera*. See Table 1 for further information.

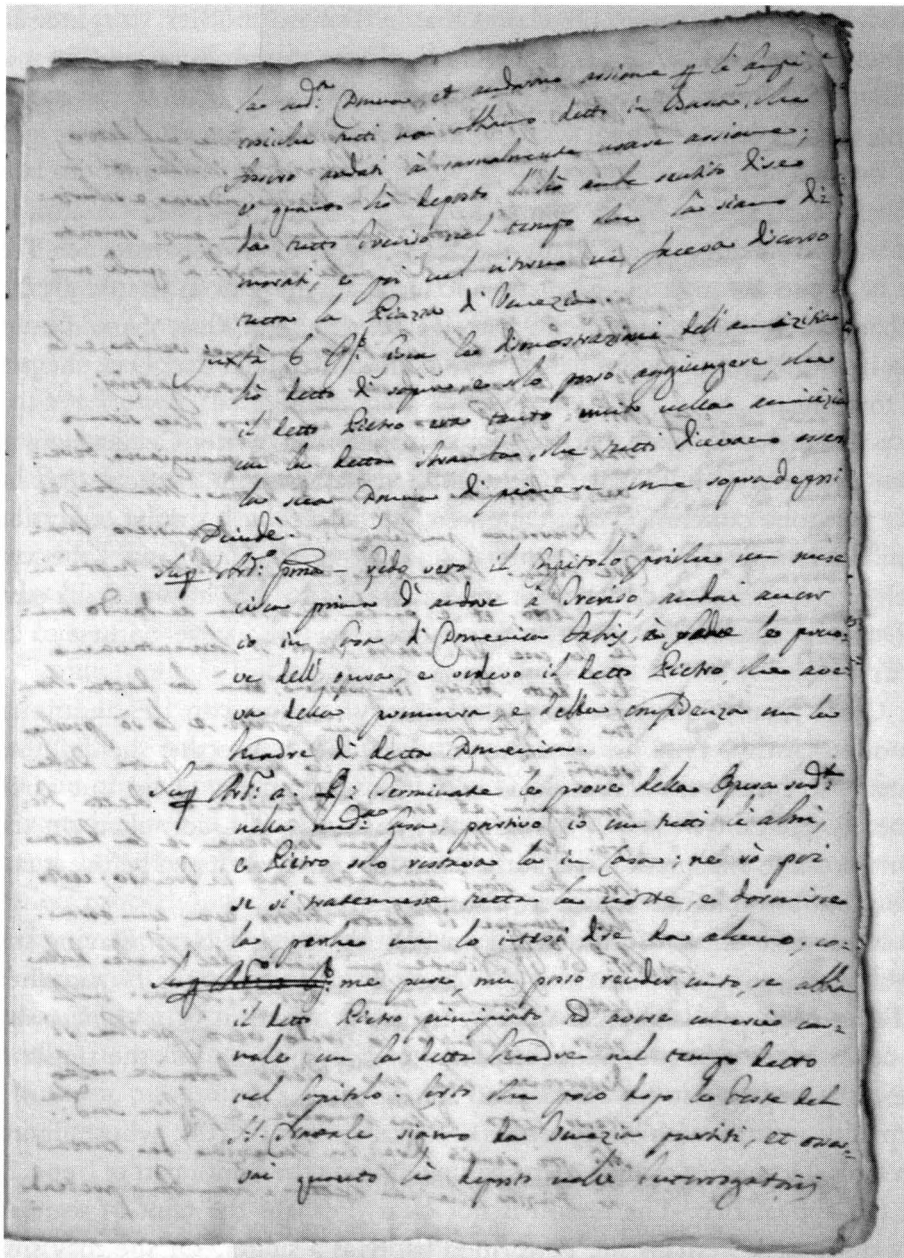


PLATE 6: List of witnesses at the hearing to consider the annulment of Pietro Mauro's marriage (I-Vap, Filicia Causarum, 1747, Carta n. ant. 130).

Moro's deposition is filled with extra salacious detail — harmful to Pietro's reputation but perhaps helpful to his petition. He mentions Agnese's nickname of "Stramba". He states that Pietro's and Agnese's excursion into the fields occurred at a point where a horse drawing the barge, having become lame, was being changed and that their fellow travellers

were well aware of the purpose. He claims that in Treviso mother, daughter and Pietro slept together in one bed. When things went badly for the production, “Stramba” leapt to his defence. To hasten the wedding, the parties applied to Rome for a dispensation from having to issue banns, which was granted only because the illicit affair had become the talk of the town²⁵.

Cecilia Mauro relates on 16 March 1747 that she learned from Orsatto and others of Pietro’s intimacy with Agnese in Venice even before their departure for Treviso and was aware of it also through his frequent nocturnal absences from the family home. She confirms that Agnese threatened Pietro with legal action, and, that, shamed by the gossip concerning her son’s simultaneous liaison with a mother and her daughter, she pressed him to marry Domenica.

It is poignant to observe that, not knowing how to write, Cecilia signs her name with a cross. In a family whose males (Giovanni Battista, Antonio, Francesco) were literate, it was not a foregone conclusion that daughters would receive a similar education.

Daniele Mauro’s deposition, short and to the point, emphasizes the vehemence with which Agnese threatened legal action against Pietro and how Cecilia advised him to marry Domenica to avert worse (he was, of course, not an eye-witness to any of the events in Treviso).

The Curia finally asked Domenica whether she agreed to the annulment. In an attestation of 16 January 1748 (i.e., 1747 *more veneto*) she replied that she did not have the financial means to contest the case and had no wish to become involved, but would respect its outcome. Regrettably, there is no information in the files consulted on the Curia’s verdict. One possible explanation is that the case was simply dropped before it could reach a conclusion, but for a definite answer we must wait.

The immediate effect of the scandal on Pietro’s career is clear. Having sung in the first carnival opera, *Alcano*, Domenica disappears from the second, *Farnace* (her place is taken by Rosa Alia), and she takes no part in the production of *L’Adriano in Siria* the following autumn. Pietro, too, adopts a lower profile. Not he but the singer Margarita Franchi pens the dedications for *Farnace* and *Adriano*.

Normality returns with *Il Bajazette* (Vicenza, carnival 1738), whose libretto Pietro once again signs. Domenica returns to the troupe, singing the minor part of Irene. However, this is her last appearance. The reason is not clear. Perhaps the taint of scandal had not sufficiently dissipated. Perhaps she performed badly as a singer. Or she may simply have been forced to retire through childbirth and the maternal duties that followed (Moro states in his testimony that he stood godfather to a son of his colleague).

The effect on Pietro’s uncle and mentor is likely to have been great. We can now read his famous letter of protest to his Ferrarese protector Guido Bentivoglio d’Aragona

²⁵. This dispensation is recorded in I-Vap, Filzie Matrimoni S. Samuele 1726-1750, Libro XIV, f. 938 (29 April 1737).

(dated 16 November 1737) in a new light. When Vivaldi proclaims the innocence of his relationship with his protégée, the singer Anna Girò, which had been impugned by public gossip, we can discern the shadow of his nephew’s misdeeds. Perhaps Cardinal Tommaso Ruffo, who forbade Vivaldi to enter Ferrara to direct opera, was well aware of Pietro’s conduct and thought: like uncle, like nephew. It will certainly not have helped that Pietro advertised his relationship to the composer so blatantly via his nickname, printed on every libretto. We can now see why public concern over the Vivaldi-Girò relationship, which had remained dormant (if it existed) for over a decade, suddenly came to a head in 1737. It says something for Vivaldi’s sense of family loyalty that instead of casting his nephew adrift, he continued to help him. Indeed, the carnival 1737 season at Vicenza seems to have the character of a ‘relaunch’ that he personally master-minded.

Pietro’s operatic efforts evidently bore little fruit. The move from Treviso and Vicenza to Este and Bassano was all too obviously in a ‘downmarket’ direction, signalling the end of the enterprise. His uncle’s death in July 1741 must have been the last nail in the coffin.

It remained for Pietro to reinvent himself as a music copyist, joining a calling already embraced by his younger brother. Doubtless, he first served an apprenticeship as a lowly worker in one of the city’s *copisterie*. By his change of profession, he greatly lowered his public profile (perhaps not before time), but he almost certainly made a much more valuable contribution to the art of music as a result.

It is difficult to overestimate the centrality, for Italian musical life in the eighteenth century, of the music copyist’s profession. Vocal music — increasingly dominant as the century progressed — had always been transmitted for preference via handwritten copies: partly because underlaid text posed difficulties for typesetters (in Italy, music engraving never took off properly), and partly because the variability of performing conditions for opera and church music alike favoured the customization of scores as opposed to their mass production in identical examples. After the collapse of the Italian music printing industry around 1710 manuscript copies became the normal means of transmission for instrumental music as well. The insistence on brand new music rather than old favourites also acted as a deterrent to music publishing. Charles Burney summed up the situation acutely when he observed, in 1771:

The art of engraving there [Venice] seems to be utterly lost, as I was not able to find a single work printed in the manner we print music in England. [...] Musical compositions are so short-lived in Italy, such is the rage for novelty, that for the few copies wanted, it is not worth while to be at the expence [*sic*] of engraving, and of the rolling-press. Indeed there, as in Turkey, the business of a transcriber furnishes employment for so many people, that it is cruel to wish to rob them of it, especially as that trade seems more brisk and profitable than any other²⁶.

²⁶. BURNEY, Charles. *The Present State of Music in France and Italy*, London, Becket, 1771, pp. 189–190.

Moreover, the profession demanded mental, not only menial, skills of its practitioners. The discussions of the music copyist's art by Scheibe, Grisellini and Rousseau leave one in no doubt that professional and amateur customers drew distinctions between practised and unpractised copyists, careful and careless ones, and ones with and without musical understanding²⁷.

The first traced mention of Pietro Mauro as a music copyist comes in a document of 1745 listing for purposes of taxation (a special charge for the newly introduced public street lighting) the inhabitants of the S. Marco and Castello *sestieri*²⁸. Here, Daniele and Pietro appear together as renters (for the modest annual sum of 12 ducats) of a shop in the Calle Corte della Simia in the S. Salvatore *contrada*. Their profession is given as "Copisti di Musica". However, in similar censuses of 1748 and 1750 their shop is sited in the Calle dei Fabbri close to the Ponte del Lovo, while their domestic residence lies in the *contrada* of S. Pantalon²⁹. They are rising in the world, since the annual rent for their shop is now 16 ducats.

How successful Pietro became in his new profession is evident from a plaudit in the diaries (*Notatori*) of the patrician Pietro Gradenigo — the same man whose commonplace books (*Commemoriali*) contain the account of Francesco Vivaldi's insult to Antonio Soranzo related earlier and, elsewhere, the famous reflection on the once rich Antonio Vivaldi's death as a pauper in Vienna. Gradenigo liked, now and then, to record his opinion of the best tradesmen active at the time in Venice. For example, on 24 August 1760 he noted: "Uno de più esatti Copisti di Note p[er] cantare, e sonare sopra la Parte nella Musica, egli è il sacerdote Giuseppe Baldan stà a San Gio. Grisostomo"³⁰. This compliment refers to Daniele's (and Pietro's?) old employer, the wily priest Iseppo Baldan. On 28 October 1760 Gradenigo pays similar tribute to the violin maker Pietro Guarneri, the maker of wind instruments Domenico Perosa and the organ builder Pietro Nachini³¹. This roll of honour continues after an interruption, and for 4 November we find the entry: "Il migliore copista di note di Musica è Pietro Mauro veneziano, stà di Bottega al Ponte del Lupo, è di Casa

²⁷. SCHEIBE, Johann Adolph. *Der critische Musikus an der Spree*, 2 vols., Berlin, Voss, 1749-1750, vol. 1, pp. 311-315; GRISELINI, Francesco. *Dizionario delle arti e de' mestieri*, 18 vols., Venice, Fenzo, 1768-1778, vol. IX, pp. 307-308; ROUSSEAU, Jean-Jacques. *Dictionnaire de musique*, Paris, Duchesne, 1768, art. 'Copiste', pp. 124-132.

²⁸. I-Vas, *Provveditori alle Pompe*, Busta 13, *Elenchi degli abitanti dei Sestieri di S. Marco e Castello con l'indicazione degli affitti delle case e botteghe 1745*, Busta 13, fasc. 8, S. Salvatore, n. 205. The street name survives today as "Calle della Scimia o delle Spade".

²⁹. *Ibidem*, Busta 16, *Elenchi degli abitanti dei Sestieri di S. Marco e Castello con l'indicazione degli affitti delle case e botteghe 1750*, fasc. 7, and Busta 17, *Elenchi degli abitanti dei sestieri per la tassa di 'ferali' 1748*, fasc. 48. The Calle dei Fabbri and Ponte del Lovo survive under the same names today.

³⁰. I-Vmc, Ms. Gradenigo 67, *Notatori Gradenigo*, VII, f. 57r: "One of the most accurate copyists of vocal and instrumental music is the priest Giuseppe Baldan, whose shop is in [the *contrada* of] S. Giovanni Grisostomo".

³¹. *Ibidem*, ff. 87v-89r.

197	Mauchio Reschi Fachin y Casa	208
198	Tomaso Sber Sartor y Casa e bottega	408
199	Severino Schiano Sartor y Bottega	448
200	Plinio e Lovi Belli e Daniel Bianchi Scalcese y Casa e bottega	1058
201	Pietro Benintendi Saliner y Bottega e volta in cui habitava	428
202	Luame Ciampi Baccavol con 4 figli y Casa e bottega	428
203	Erivoro Beluzzi Caleger y Bottega	728
204	Antonio Busico Corteller y Bottega e Volta	528
205	Li S ^{ri} Pietro e Daniel Mauvi Copisti di Musica pagano al Sopradito y portion di Bottega	128
206	Maria v ^a del S ^{ro} Pietro Segari paga al Sopradito y la volta	68
207	Antonio Buvagadin Buvavol con un fig ^o y Casa e bottega	658
208	Li S ^{ri} Campi e Lanchi Trogèvi y Bottega	408
209	Stefano Bramontin Librer e Stampador y bottega	1508
210	Severino della S ^{ra} Bona Balanzov y Bottega	1368
211	Isseppe Lovzi Scalcese y Casa bottega e magazzini	1288
212	Andrea Sochol Kriolov y Bottega	1188
213	Elena Fachanoni y Casa	1568
214	Il S ^{ro} Gian ^o Zagagnini Buvachiev Paga alla sopradito y Casa	168
215	Ambrosio Poleoni Sanser da Biava con una fig ^a y Casa	428
216	Lucrezia v ^a del S ^{ro} Orazio Polla vint del suo y Casa	1588
217	Un figlio d ^o sopradito Lucrezia con una figlia bavettin y Bottega	508

PLATE 7: Entry showing the rental by Pietro and Daniele Mauro, in 1745, of a shop in the Calle Corte della Simia (I-Vas, Provveditori alle Pompe, Busta 13, Elenchi degli abitanti dei Sestieri di S. Marco e Castello con l'indicazione degli affitti delle case e botteghe 1745, Busta 13, fasc. 8, S. Salvatore, n. 205).

a Sant'Agostino, e carteggia col medesimo Rè di Svezia"³². The correspondence with the King of Sweden was doubtless over orders for copies of music.

³². *Ibidem*, f. 91v: "The best music copyist is Pietro Mauro, a Venetian, whose shop is situated at the Ponte del Lupo ["Lovo" in Tuscan] and whose home is in [the *contrada* of] S. Agostino, and he corresponds even with the King of Sweden".

We have almost come to the end of known references to Mauro as copyist. However one subsequent mention shows that he was still plying his trade in his mid-sixties. On 29 April 1780 the music engravers Innocente Alessandri and Pietro Scattaglia complained to the Venetian magistracy of the Riformatori dello Studio di Padova, which oversaw all matters concerning publishing, that Pietro Mauro, the official copyist of the S. Benedetto opera house, was breaking a prior agreement to give them a monopoly over the sale of music from the operas then running by marketing separately his own manuscript copies³³. The piratical spirit of Baldan evidently lived on.

Pietro's death, recorded in the register of deaths for the parish of S. Agostin (see the transcription in APPENDIX 3) and subsequently entered in the civic necrology, occurred during the night of 4 July 1792 (at "ore 6" according to Italian time, thus six hours after nightfall)³⁴. He had been confined to bed for a week with an acute fever. His burial the following afternoon with Priest and Chapter in attendance suggests that he at least did not die in poverty. Perhaps he remained active as a copyist right up to the end.

CONCLUSION

It is time to sum up what Pietro's life and career mean. First, his activity originally as tenor and later as impresario-cum-tenor throw light on an important development occurring in opera in the 1730s. In the second half of the 1720s two new currents began to make themselves felt. The first was the so-called Neapolitan style, which, although originating with Neapolitan composers (Porpora, Leo, Vinci), very soon embraced virtually the whole of Italian operatic music. The second was the advent of the great series of dramas by Metastasio that concluded the process of reform initiated in the generation of Apostolo Zeno and for a long time provided not only a sizable proportion of the opera seria texts that were set to music by composers but also an essential point of reference for all others.

The second quarter of the eighteenth century was marked by a spilling out of operatic performance even deeper into the Italian provinces, as well as into the Italian spheres of cultural influence north of the Alps. New theatres were built, and old theatres that had previously seldom accommodated opera, if at all, now turned their attention to this sovereign genre. There were many ups and downs in this process, as one would expect from such a risky business, but the overall trend was expansionary.

³³. I-Vas, Riformatori dello Studio di Padova, Filza 43, 29 April 1780, ff. 407-411, discussed and quoted in part in MAMY, Sylvie. *La musique à Venise et l'imaginaire français des Lumières*, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, 1996, pp. 157-160.

³⁴. Venice, S. Maria Gloriosa dei Frari, Parrocchia di S. Agostin, Registri dei morti, Reg. 3 (1735-1808), entry 3081, 5 July 1792; I-Vas, Provveditori alla Sanità, Necrologi, Reg. 979, 5 July 1792.

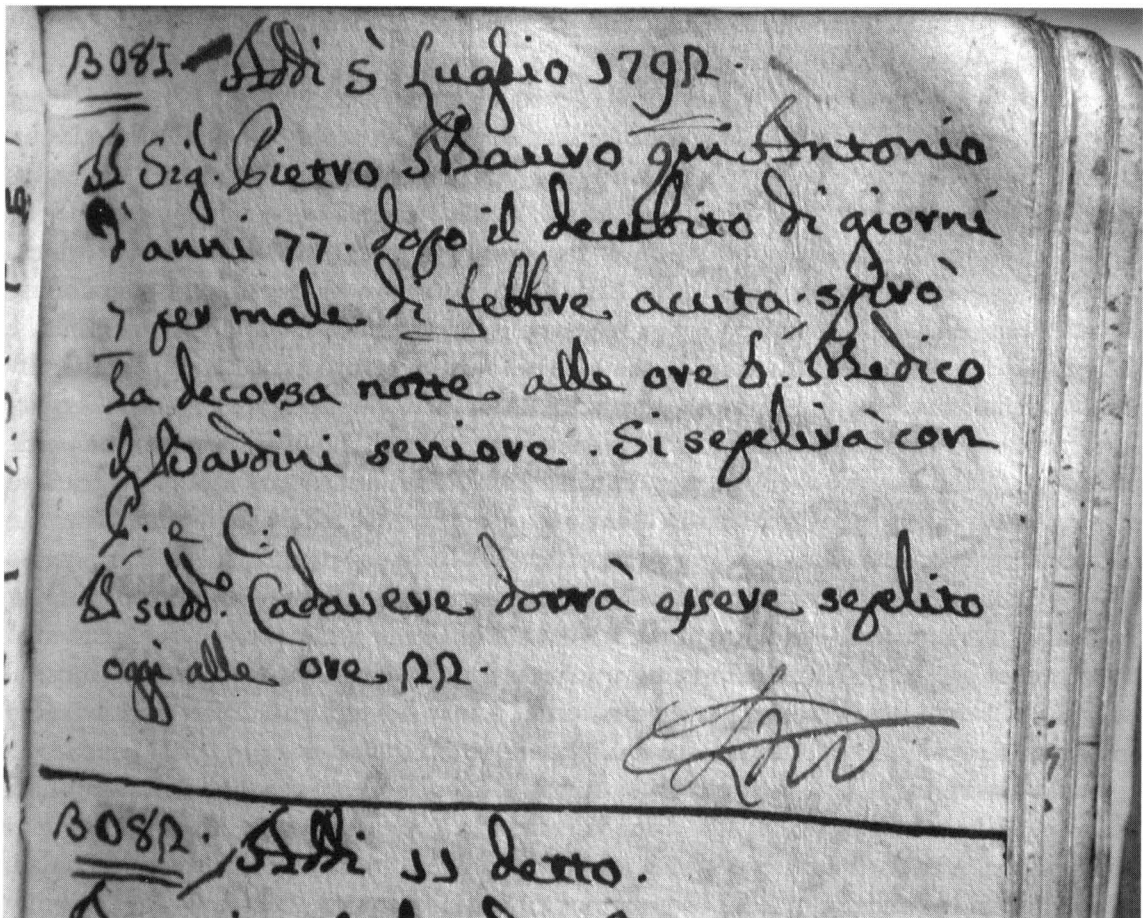


PLATE 8: Entry for Pietro Mauro in the register of deaths for the parish of S. Agostin (Venice, Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari, Parrocchia di S. Agostin, Registri dei morti, Reg. 3 (1735-1808), entry 3081, 5 July 1792).

To sustain this explosion of operatic activity, the number of active singers and impresarios had to increase. Growing numbers brought growing stratification according to ability and cost. At one extreme, there were the prestigious metropolitan opera houses, such as S. Giovanni Grisostomo in Venice or the King's Theatre in London, whose repertory was dominated by new dramas set to new music and which recruited singers individually, season by season, rather than as complete troupes or for several seasons in a row. This lack of regularity reflected the fact that the best singers were open to the highest bidder and did not wish to tie themselves down to fixed patterns. At the other extreme were the smaller provincial houses, with their lower budgets and less munificent patrons. Here, the typical operas were watered-down versions of works first heard elsewhere, perhaps with an increased incidence of pasticcio elements. The artists were predominantly itinerant troupes

of second-rank singers, sometimes augmented by emerging local talent or old stagers past their prime. Pietro Mauro operated solely at this 'bottom end' of the market.

Vivaldi moved mostly in the middle levels of the operatic world. When he acted only as composer or *maestro della musica*, he was able to gain access to some of the better houses, but when he combined this with impresarial activity, he had to set his sights lower and take whatever came his way. In the 1730s, his reputation in slow decline, he continues to make periodic appearances at the smaller Venetian opera houses, S. Angelo and S. Samuele, and even to receive the occasional *scrittura* from a prominent opera house outside Venice (*La fida ninfa* for Verona, *Ginevra, principessa di Scozia* for Florence), but he increasingly resorts, especially outside the carnival season, to provincial ventures, thereby joining, albeit on a slightly higher plane, the world of his nephew. His operatic activity therefore intersects, and partly interacts, with that of Pietro. There is evidence that traffic in repertory and singers occurred between the two men, and Vivaldi doubtless tried to pass on some of his impresarial know-how and to utilize his professional contacts to his nephew's advantage.

The scandal of 1736-37 may have done long-term damage to Vivaldi's career in that it brought to the surface questions about his own conduct. It will certainly have darkened the mood of his last years and dampened any hopes he had entertained of a worthy musical 'succession' within the family. At the same time, it may have played a part in restricting, and in time extinguishing, Pietro's career in opera.

As for Pietro's second career as a copyist, it would take only the identification of his musical handwriting to lay the foundations of a very interesting investigation into this activity. Venetian music copyists mainly remained anonymous, although Baldan, whose title pages affect a mass of ostentatious curlicues that almost threaten the legibility of the words, sometimes acknowledged himself. But if a specimen of Pietro's ordinary handwriting, perhaps a letter or a legal document, one day came to light, it would be an easy matter to match it against the underlaid text of vocal compositions that he copied. He arrived on the scene too late to serve Vivaldi and the last generation of prolific Venetian composers of instrumental music, but will have played an important part in transmitting the vocal music of the Galuppi-Bertoni generation.

Paralleling in some respects his close contemporary Jean-François Rameau (1716-81?), the nephew of the composer who achieved a fictionalized immortality in the book by Denis Diderot named after him, Pietro Mauro was a far from negligible figure. Perhaps we will hear more of this *neveu de Vivaldi* on a future occasion.

APPENDIX I

I-Vas, Avogaria di Comun, Misc. di Civil, B. 2 processo 14.

In Nomine Domini, et B.M.V.

Ven:^a li 12 Agosto 1736

Con la presente scrittura dichiaro io Giulia Scuttellari, in presenza di Iddio, e Maria Vergine, e tutta la Corte Celestiale, con strettiss:^{mo} giuramento, affermando quanto sarà espresso sopra questa carta, e sopra un im[m]agine di un Crocefisso; Che elegga Pietro Mauro Musico Tenore p[er] mio Legittimo Consorte promettendogli ogni perpetua fedeltà, e mancando al giuramento io stessa suplico li sovra invocati darmi castigo meritevole à un tanto eccesso. Il che sottoscriverò in presenza di Testimonij.

Io Pietro Mauro giuro à Iddio, e Maria Vergine, ed à tutto il Paradiso, come eleggo la Sig.^a Giulia Scuttellari Cameriera in Ca' Barbaro al traghetto della Madonetta, è nobile, di Aconegliano, p[er] mia leggitima Consorte promettendogli, ogni sincera fedeltà, e Trasgredendo al giuramento invoco tutta la Celestiale Corte Corte [*sic*] darmi quel castigo meritevole à tanto eccesso.

Di più prendomi strettiss:^{mo} impegno di eseguir l'effetto del Matrimonio dentro à questo Carnovale, ovvero dentro l'ottava di Pasqua, il che affermerò in presenza di Testimoni.

Più che mancando al dato giuramento uno di noi due giurati, un contro l'altro possino usare atti di giustizia affinche resti effettuato quanto si giurò.

Io Giulia Scuttelari affermo.

Io Tomaso Zanpieri fui Testimonio p:^{te} q:^{to} di sopra

Io Domenico Biszocho fui testimonio quanto è sopra.

APPENDIX 2

I-Vap, Registro Matrimoni S. Samuele 1679-1754, Libro XIV, p. 234 (29 April 1737).

Addi 29 Aprile 1737

Il Sig:^r Pierro Fig:^o del q.^m Gio[vanni] Antonio Mauro Ven:^o Della Parroc:^a di S.Aponal, e la Sig:^a Domenica Maria Fig:^a naturale di D.^o Lorenzo Brembilla, parim[en]te Veneta, e dalla mia Parroc:^a dispensate le trè solite pubblicazioni da Mon. Mainardi, come da filza 216, prima interrogati, ed ottenuto il loro mutuo consenso, contrassero matrimonio per verba de p[rese]nti alla p[rese]nza del R[everen]do Sig:^r P. Iseppo Raggi Sacerd:^e di Chiesa di S. Michiel Archangelo de lice[nza], nella Capella del Rosario in nostra Chiesa, e dallo stesso Religioso inter missarum sol[e]mnia benedetti, p[rese]nti Testimo[ni] il Sig:^r Zuanne Dadiè a San Salvador, q.^m Giacomo, e Dom:^{co} Berta, q.^m Orazio Chier:^{co} di Chiesa.

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APPENDIX 3

Venice, Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari, Parrocchia di S. Agostin, Registri dei morti, Reg. 3 (1735-1808), entry 3081, 5 July 1792

3081 Addi 5 Luglio 1792.

Il Sig.^r Pietro Mauro q[uonda]m Antonio d'anni 77. dopo il decubito di giorni 7 per male di febbre acuta; spirò la decorsa notte alle ore 6. Medico il Bardini seniore. Si sepelirà con P. e C:

Il sudd.^o Cadavere dovrà essere sepelito oggi alle ore 22.

CHAPTER FOUR

ALVISE GIUSTI'S LIBRETTO *MOTEZUMA* AND THE CONQUEST OF MEXICO IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY ITALIAN *OPERA SERIA*

Jürgen Maehder
(BERLIN)

*D'abord la découverte de l'Amérique, ou plutôt celle des Américains,
est bien la rencontre la plus étonnante de notre histoire. (Tzvetan Todorov)*¹

THE CLASH BETWEEN THE CULTURES of Europe and Central America, epitomized in the tragic encounter between Motecuzoma II Xocoyotzin and Hernán Cortés, constitutes one of the most fascinating subjects in history. While the subject of the discovery of the Americas had already been employed for the unsuccessful opera *Il Colombo, ovvero l'India scoperta* (Rome, Teatro di Tordinona, 28 December 1690) by Cardinal Pietro Ottoboni (text) and Bernardo Pasquini (music)², the subject of the conquest of Tenochtitlán, today Mexico City (Ciudad de México), and of the *Méxica*, as the inhabitants called themselves, reached the operatic stage only in 1733 with Antonio Vivaldi's opera on a libretto by Alvise (or his uncle Girolamo?) Giusti. Although the identity of the librettist of Vivaldi's opera is still the subject of discussion among scholars, the most recent discoveries, as well as some peculiar features of this libretto, seem to suggest that the eminent legal scholar Alvise Giusti (1709–66) was its author³.

¹. TODOROV, Tzvetan. *La conquête de l'Amérique: la question de l'autre*, Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 1982, p. 12: "First, the discovery of America, or rather that of the Americans, is the most astonishing encounter of our history".

². MAEHDER, Jürgen. 'The Representation of the "Discovery" on the Opera Stage', in: *Musical Repercussions of 1492: Encounters in Text and Performance*, edited by Carol E. Robertson, Washington, Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992, pp. 257–287; ID. 'Cristóbal Colón, Motecuzoma II. Xocoyotzin and Hernán Cortés on the Opera Stage — A Study in Comparative Libretto History', in: *Revista de Musicología [Actas del XV Congreso de la Sociedad Internacional de Musicología, Madrid 1992]*, xvi (1993), pp. 146–184.

³. VOSS, Steffen. 'Die Partitur von Vivaldis Oper 'Motezuma' (1733)', in: *Studi vivaldiani*, iv (2004),

In the course of the eighteenth century a surprising number of operas were written on the subject of the Conquest of Mexico. This essay concentrates on the three most important *Motezuma* libretti in eighteenth-century opera seria; eleven years after the first-ever operatic treatment of the subject by Giusti (Venice, Teatro S. Angelo, 14 November 1733), King Frederick the Great of Prussia wrote a French prose libretto under the title of *Montezuma* that was translated into Italian verse by the Prussian court librettist Giampietro Tagliazucchi and set to music by Carl Heinrich Graun (Berlin, Königliches Opernhaus, 6 January 1755)⁴. The most successful libretto on the subject of Montezuma and Cortés was written ten years after the première of Graun's opera by the "poeta del teatro" of the Teatro Regio of Turin, Vittorio Amedeo Cigna-Santi; it was premiered, with music by Gian Francesco de Majo, in 1765 (Turin, Teatro Regio, 1765) and subsequently received new settings from Josef Mysliveček (Florence, Teatro alla Pergola, 23 January 1771), Giovanni Paisiello (Rome, Teatro delle Dame, January 1772), Baldassarre Galuppi (Venice, Teatro S. Benedetto, 27 May 1772), Pasquale Anfossi (Reggio Emilia, Teatro Pubblico, Fiera dell'Ascensione, 1776), Giacomo Insanguine (Turin, Teatro Regio, carnival 1780) and Niccolò Antonio Zingarelli (Naples, Teatro S. Carlo, 13. August 1781).

As the publication history of the major documents and accounts of the Conquest of Mexico in Italian reveals, the long-standing tradition of the Venetian Republic as a centre for book printing and the book trade made Venice an ideal location to host the first opera on the subject of the conquest of Mexico. Not only the *Cartas de relación* by Hernán Cortés, which appeared as early as 1556 in the third volume of *Delle navigationi e viaggi* by the Venetian official and humanist Giovanni Battista Ramusio⁵, but also an Italian translation of Francisco López de Gómara's history of the conquest of Mexico were published within the lifetimes of some of the protagonists of the *Conquista*⁶. At the end of the sixteenth century a further

pp. 53–72; TALBOT, Michael, 'Miscellany', in: *Studi vivaldiani*, VI (2006), pp. 162–167; 166–167; see also the essays by Steffen Voss and Reinhard Strohm in the present volume.

⁴. MAEHDER, Jürgen. 'Mentalitätskonflikt und Fürstenpflicht — Die Begegnung zwischen Conquistador und mittelamerikanischem Herrscher auf der barocken Opernbühne', in: *Text und Musik. Neue Perspektiven der Theorie*, edited by Michael Walter, Munich, Fink, 1992, pp. 131–179; ID. 'Die Librettisten des Königs. Das Musiktheater Friedrichs des Großen als theatralische wie linguistische Italien-Rezeption', in: *Theater und Öffentlichkeit im 18. Jahrhundert*, edited by Erika Fischer-Lichte and Jörg Schönert, Göttingen, Wallstein, 1999, pp. 265–304.

⁵. RAMUSIO, Giovanni Battista. *Terzo volume delle navigationi et viaggi nel quale si contengono le navigationi al Mondo Nuovo, ali antichi incognito, fatte da Don Christoforo Colombo Genovese, che fu il primo à scoprirlo à i Re Catholici, detto hora le Indie occidentali, con gli acquisti fatti da lui, Et accresciuti poi da Fernando Cortese, da Francesco Pizzarro, & altri valerosi capitani, in diverse parti delle dette Indie, in nome della Ces. Maes. con lo scoprire la gran Città di Temistitan nel Mexico, dove hora è detto la Nuova Spagna, et la gran Provincia del Peru, il grandissimo fiume Maragnon, ed altre città, regni e provincie [...]*, Venice, Giunti, 1556.

⁶. LÓPEZ DE GÓMARA, FRANCISCO. *La terza parte delle Historie dell'Indie, nella quale particolarmente si tratta dello scoprimento della provincia di Iucatan detta Nuova Spagna, e delle cose digne di memoria, fatte da Spagnuoli nella conquista della grande, e maravigliosa città di Messico, e delle altre provincie ad essa sottoposte [...]*, Venice, Ziletti, 1566.

account, the *Historia natural y moral de las Indias* by the Spanish Jesuit José de Acosta, became almost immediately available in an Italian translation by Giovanni Paolo Galucci⁷.

On the other hand, the choice of the titles that were translated into Italian reveals the powerful Spanish influence in many territories of present-day Italy, and also reflects the dominant role of the Catholic faith and of the Pope's political influence on the Italian peninsula. The discovery of the Americas and the conquest of Mexico almost immediately left their mark on the development of European political thought⁸. Only a few years after Columbus's voyages the repartition of the spheres of influence between Spain and Portugal in the Treaty of Tordesillas initiated a legalistic and philosophical discussion that grew more intense after the conquest of Mexico⁹. In the works of Spanish theologians such as Francisco de Vitoria and Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda various strategies directed towards the theological justification of the horrors of the Spanish conquest may be encountered¹⁰; the category of *bellum iustum* — taken from *De civitate Dei* by St Augustine — has been widely applied to the conquests of Mexico and Peru¹¹. The history of the subsequent editions and the translations in other European languages of the central documentary accounts of the Spanish Conquest may be read in a political light¹²; it immediately becomes clear that those writers who had openly criticized the Spanish Conquest — for example, Bartolomé de las Casas, Bernardino de Sahagún and their successors¹³ — did not enjoy a publishing success

⁷. ACOSTA, José de. *Historia natural y moral de las Indias*, Seville, de León, 1596; ID. *Historia naturale, e morale delle Indie*, translated by Giovanni Paolo Galucci, Venice, Basa, 1596.

⁸. HAMILTON, Bernice. *Political Thought in Sixteenth-Century Spain*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1963; *Cuerpo de documentos del siglo XVI sobre los derechos de España en las Indias y las Filipinas*, edited by Lewis Hanke and Agustín Millares Carlo, Mexico City, Fondo de cultura económica, 1943; KEEN, Benjamin. *The Aztec Image in Western Thought*, New Brunswick (NJ), Rutgers University Press, 1990, pp. 71–137.

⁹. ZAVALA, Silvio. *La filosofía política en la conquista de América*, Mexico City, Buenos Aires, 1947; CARRO, Venancio Diego. *La teología y los teólogos-juristas españoles ante la conquista de América*, 2nd edition, Salamanca, 1951 (Biblioteca de teólogos españoles); HANKE, Lewis. *The Spanish Struggle for Justice in the Conquest of America*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1949; ID. *Aristotle and the American Indians: A Study in Race Prejudice in the Modern World*, New York, Regnery, 1959.

¹⁰. VITORIA, Francisco de. *De Indis, sive de iure belli hispanorum in barbaros*, in: ID. *Obras completas*, edited by Teófilo Urdanoz, Madrid, Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1960; GINÉS DE SEPÚLVEDA, Juan. *Democrates segundo o de las justas causas de la guerra contro los indios*, translated and edited by Ángel Losada, Madrid, C. S. I. C., 1951.

¹¹. STRAUB, Eberhard. *Das bellum iustum des Hernán Cortés in Mexico*, Cologne and Vienna, Böhlau, 1976.

¹². KEEN, Benjamin. *Op. cit.* (see note 8), pp. 138–216.

¹³. LAS CASAS, Bartolomé de. *Obra indigenista*, Madrid, Alianza, 1985; MOTOLINÍA, Fray Toribio de. *Historia de los Indios de la Nueva España*, edited by Georges Baudot, Madrid, Castalia, 1985; ZORITA, Alonso de. *Life and Labour in Ancient Mexico: The Brief and Summary Relation of the Lords of New Spain by Alonso de Zorita*, edited and translated by Benjamin Keen, New Brunswick (NJ), Rutgers University Press, 1963; ROMÁN Y ZAMORA, Jerónimo. *Repúblicas de Indias: Idolatrías y gobierno en México y Perú antes de la Conquista*, 2 vols., Madrid, Gómez, 1897; SAHAGÚN, Bernardino de. *Historia General de las Cosas de Nueva España*, edited by Ángel María Garibay K[intana], Mexico City, Editorial Porrúa, 1985; DURÁN, Diego. *Historia de las Indias de Nueva España e islas de tierra firme*, edited by José F. Ramírez, 3 vols., Mexico City, J. M. Andrade and F. Escalante, 1867–1880.

on Spanish or Spanish-dominated soil, nor in Italy generally, whereas these same works were often translated and distributed in Protestant countries. Famous examples of these anti-Spanish publications originate from the Netherlands¹⁴, where an immediate connection to the experience of Spanish oppression could easily be drawn, but they appeared also in France and, to a lesser extent, in Germany¹⁵.

On the other hand, the accounts of the eye witnesses, Cortés's *Cartas de relación* and the *Historia verdadera* by Bernal Díaz del Castillo, continuously enjoyed the favour of the educated public¹⁶. A third category of book, written by committed advocates of the Spanish cause and representing the official historiography as written against what were seen as derogatory publications impugning the honour of the Spanish crown, started to dominate the book market at the end of the seventeenth century¹⁷. The *Historia de la conquista de México* by Antonio Solís y Ribadeneyra (Madrid, 1684)¹⁸ appeared in French translation in 1691, in Dutch translation in 1692 and in Italian translation in 1699 — but English and German translations were not to appear until 1724 (London) and 1750/1751 (Copenhagen/Leipzig), respectively. Since the *Argomento* of Giusti's libretto for Vivaldi's opera cites this book as its main (and perhaps only) source, a brief examination of the author's tendencies is relevant:

Regarding his subject with the eyes of a skilled playwright, Solís gave his history the form of a heroic drama. He omitted from his narrative all that he considered unessential or derogatory to the high dignity of the theme. The work proceeded with rising tension to a climax and resolution. The hero, Cortés, was an instrument of Divine Providence; the Indians were the hosts of Satan, who personally intervened to prevent the light of the Faith from flooding the New World. Following his historical model, Livy, Solís assigned to his Indian as well as his Spanish figures formal speeches that sometimes create an effect of incongruity and fantasy. The style is grave and mannered, but free of Gongorist

¹⁴. LAS CASAS, Bartolomé de, *Tyrannies & cruautez des Espagnols, perpetrées dans les Indes occidentales, qu'on dit le Nouveau Monde: brièvement descrites en langue castillane par l'Evesque Don Frère Barthelemy de Las Casas ou Casaus [...] fidèlement traduites par Jacques de Miggrade: pour servir d'exemple & avertissement aux xvii provinces du pais bas*, Antwerp, Ravelenghien, 1579.

¹⁵. BENZONI, Girolamo. *Historie nouvelle du Nouveau Monde, contenant en somme ce que les Hespagnols ont fait iusqu'à présent aux Indes occidentales, & le rude traitement qu'ils font à ces povres peuples-là*, translated by Urbain Chauveton, [Geneva, Vignon], 1579.

¹⁶. CORTÉS, Hernán. *Cartas y documentos*, edited by Mario Hernández Sanchez-Barba, Mexico City, Porrúa, 1963; DÍAZ DEL CASTILLO, Bernal. *Historia Verdadera de la Conquista de la Nueva España*, 7th edition, Madrid, Espasa-Calpe, 1985 (originally published in 1955).

¹⁷. FERNÁNDEZ DE OVIEDO, Gonzalo. *Historia general y natural de las Indias*, edited by Juan Pérez de Tudela, Madrid, Bueso, 1959; GINÉS DE SEPÚLVEDA, Juan. *Op. cit.* (see note 10); LÓPEZ DE GÓMARA, Francisco. *Conquista de Méjico*, in: *Historiadores primitivos de Indias*, 2 vols., Madrid, Rivadeneyra, 1858, vol. 1, pp. 43ff; SOLÍS Y RIBADENEYRA, ANTONIO. *Historia de la conquista de México, poblacion, y progressos de la America Septentrional, conocida por el nombre de Nueva España*, Madrid, Villa-Diego, 1684.

¹⁸. SOLÍS Y RIBADENEYRA, ANTONIO. *Op. cit.* (see note 17).

obscurity and bombast. Although he criticized Bernal Díaz' homely speech and plebeian fractiousness, Solís made large use of his *Historia verdadera*; he also drew on such well-known sources as Herrera's work, the letters of Cortés, and the histories of Gómara and Acosta¹⁹.

Although Alvise Giusti's libretto appears still to adhere to the seventeenth-century tradition of freely inventing personal conflicts and love relationships²⁰, the librettist nevertheless lived up to some of the intrinsic structural challenges of any libretto aiming to deal with the history of the Conquest of Mexico. Following the logic of the aristocratic genre of opera seria, the encounter between Montezuma and Cortés could be interpreted as a conflict between two competing rulers who clash over the question of the legality of their reign²¹. As has been shown by Eberhard Straub, the *cartas de relación* written during the conquest itself already bear witness to Cortés's conviction that Spanish — and Catholic — sovereignty would prevail over any other claim to power²². In constructing the dialogues between the two ruling parties, Giusti had to bear in mind that the principal role would necessarily be given to Vivaldi's preferred *prima donna*, Anna Girò. In his novel *Concierto barroco* (1974), which is centred around Vivaldi's opera, Alejo Carpentier gave a convincing explanation for the outstanding importance of the role for the leading soprano:

Y aparece la Emperatriz con traje entre Semíramis y dama del Ticiano, guapa y valiente mujer, que trata de reanimar los arrestos de su derrotado esposo, puesto por un "falso ibero" en tan aciago trance. — "No podía faltar en el drama — sopla Filomeno a su amo —: Es Anna Giró, la querida del Fraile Antonio. Para ella es siempre el primer papel"²³.

If we consider the numerous dramaturgical possibilities presented by the subject of the Conquest of Mexico, the author of the first libretto on this subject could not fail to set a precedent for the ensuing treatments of the same plot. Giusti's choice of the elements that constitute the subject matter of Vivaldi's opera appears narrower, more within the classical time-frame, than the treatment of his followers; this feature coincides nicely with Giusti's classicist tendencies identified by Reinhard Strohm in the present volume. Through his decision to start the action of the opera at the point where the Spaniards have

¹⁹. KEEN, Benjamin. *Op. cit.* (see note 8), p. 176.

²⁰. FABBRI, Paolo. *Il secolo cantante. Per una storia del libretto d'opera nel Seicento*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1990.

²¹. MAEHDER, Jürgen. 'Mentalitätskonflikt und Fürstenpflicht [...]', *op. cit.* (see note 4), pp. 131-179.

²². STRAUB, Eberhard. *Op. cit.* (see note 11).

²³. CARPENTIER, Alejo. *Concierto Barroco*, Mexico City, Siglo Vientinuno editores, 1997, p. 61. The same passage reads in the published English translation (*Baroque Concerto*, translated by Asa Zatz, London, André Deutsch, 1991, p. 93): "And enter the empress costumed as a combination Semiramis and Titian subject, a brave and beautiful woman, seeking to lift the spirits of her vanquished husband placed in such an unfortunate predicament by a *falso ibero*. 'No way could she be left out of the play', whispers Filomeno to his master. 'She's Father Antonio's mistress, Anna Giró'".

already entered the city of Tenochtitlán, Giusti gave up the chance to represent one of the most spectacular scenes of the later libretto tradition: the encounter of Moctecuzoma II and Hernán Cortés on the artificial dam connecting the island of Tenochtitlán to the surrounding land²⁴. His formation of the characters of the opera follows the model of symmetrical role constellations that had developed in the course of the tradition of Venetian libretto-writing during the Seicento²⁵. By creating the role of Motezuma's strong-willed wife Mitrena, whose posture contrasts sharply with Motezuma's erratic behaviour, which oscillates between despair and impulsive, aggressive action, Giusti may have been following a specific instruction from the composer to create an appropriate role for Anna Girò. But, at the same time, he created a model for the role constellations of future operas on the subject of the *Conquista*: Mitrena's shadow lingers over Tagliazucchi's Eupaforic as well as over the Guacozingas and Erismenas who populate the various incarnations of Cigna-Santi's libretto.

Therefore, it is Motezuma's betrothed, Mitrena, who, in Scene 4 of Act II, leads the negotiations with the Spanish conqueror, Fernando. Mitrena's opening monologue expresses an exaggeratedly Eurocentric viewpoint that arouses mistrust in Ferdinando: "Sensi d'adulation poco veraci [...]". Her description of Mexican life and manners prior to the arrival of the Spaniards relies on the utopian vision of a primordial paradise, which was apparently influenced by the concept of the *bon sauvage* entertained by the philosophy of the French Enlightenment²⁶:

MIT. Vivea frà l'ombre ancora
 Di natia cecità, fuori del Mondo,
 Ignobile, negletta,
 Questa vasta Region. Frà mille errori
 Di culto, e di costume
 Ogni mente sommersa oltre misura
 Il metodo passava
 D'una civil, e regular coltura.
 Per secoli sì lunghi
 Furo i popoli miei cotanto idioti
 Ch'anche i proprj tesor gl'erano ignoti.
 Ma rischiarar tal nube
 Un dì alfin si dovea. Questo era scritto
 Nei decreti del Ciel, ne si potea
 Tanto esequir, se la natura, e il Cielo

²⁴. MAEHDER, Jürgen. *Cristóbal Colón, Motecuzoma II. Xocoyotzin and Hernán Cortés on the Opera Stage [...]*, *op. cit.* (see note 2), pp. 146–184.

²⁵. FABBRI, Paolo. *Op. cit.* (see note 20).

²⁶. BITTERLI, Urs. *Alte Welt — neue Welt. Formen des europäisch-überseeischen Kulturkontakts vom 15. bis zum 18. Jahrhundert*, Munich, C. H. Beck, 1986; KOHL, Karl-Heinz. *Entzauberter Blick. Das Bild vom Guten Wilden*, Frankfurt a. M., Suhrkamp, 1986; AFFERGAN, François. *Exotisme et altérité. Essai sur les fondements d'une critique de l'anthropologie*, Paris, PUF, 1987.

Non apriva l'arcano, onde potesse
 Un seminume al Mondo
 La linea trapassar co' suoi elletti
 Per incogniti mar sin or negletti.

FER. Sensi d'adulation poco veraci [...]

MIT. Parlo de' pregi tuoi. M'ascolta, e taci.
 Giungesti sul confine
 Di Cozumel al fine. Al primo sbarco
 Di quell'idiota gente
 Qual flagello facesti io non rammento
 (Che troppo dà tormento
 I principj riandar, e troppo è dura
 Anche a pensar una simil sciagura)
 Solo dirò, ch'al ballenar dell'armi
 A quei semplici ignote, e dal terrore
 Lor nemico maggior restaro vinte
 Cento Provincie, e cento a te rendessi
 Tributarie, e sogette; E non contento
 D'aver con tal progresso
 Tolto lo stato ad un Monarca afflitto,
 Ch'usurparsi gli vorresti il nome istesso²⁷.

Mitrena's words "mille errori di culto, e di costume" echo similar expressions in Giusti's source on the history of the *Conquista*, the *Historia de la conquista de México* by Antonio de Solís y Ribadeneyra. Whereas the libretto by Frederick the Great and Tagliazucchi does not even mention the Aztec ritual of human sacrifice²⁸, and whereas Cigna-Santi's libretto, in its 1765 version, opens with the scene of a smoking altar with fresh human blood, Giusti, in precise obedience to his sources, places the announcement of the sacrifice of Mitrena's daughter Teutile, requested by the god "Uccilibos" (= Huitzilopochtli²⁹), at the centre of the conflict of Act II.

ASP. I Maghi al loro Nume
 Uccilibos ricorsi,
 Per impetrar ai pubblici perigli
 Qualche giusto riparo, ebbero, ò Stelle,

²⁷. GIUSTI, Alvise. *MOTEZUMA / DRAMA PER MUSICA / Da rappresentarsi / NEL TEATRO / DI SANT'ANGELO / Nell'autunno dell'Anno 1733 / IN VENEZIA, / Apresso Marino Rossetti, In Merceria / all'Insegna della Pace*, p. 32f. This extract, like the others that follow, is transcribed in the original orthography.

²⁸. MAEHDER, Jürgen. *Die Librettisten des Königs [...]*, op. cit. (see note 4), pp. 265-304.

²⁹. CARRASCO, David. *Religions of Mesoamerica*, San Francisco, Harper & Row, 1990; GONZÁLEZ TORRES, Yolotl. *El sacrificio humano entre los Méxicas*, Mexico City, Instituto Nacional de Antropología y Historia/ Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2nd edition, 1992.

Oracolo sì fiero,
Che mi fa inorridir.

TEU. Ma che rispose?

ASP. “Teutile, ed un Ispano,
Col Sacrificio loro,
L’Impero e il Genitor salvar potranno”;
Ciò disse, e ad un istante
Motezuma presente alla Grand’Ara
Stesa intrepido allor la destra forte
La Figlia, ed un Ispan giurò alla morte³⁰.

Even such a profoundly pro-Mexican writer as Bernardino de Sahagún found only words of horror to utter when confronted with the Aztec ritual of human sacrifice:

No creo que haya corazón tan duro que oyendo una crueldad tan inhumana, y más que bestial y endiablada, como la que arriba queda puesta, no se enterezca y mueva a lágrimas y horror y espanto; y ciertamente es cosa lamentable y horrible ver que nuestra humana naturaleza haya venido a tanta bajeza y oprobrio que los padres, por sugestión del demonio, maten y coman a sus hijos, sin pensar que en ello hacían ofensa ninguna, mas antes con pensar que en ello hacían gran servicio a sus³¹.

When Mitrena refers to the country’s treasures, which were lying undiscovered by its inhabitants, she adopts a highly European, technology-oriented viewpoint of progress in civilization that has been criticized by Jacques Soustelle:

On mesure ici la profondeur de l’illusion, propre à notre civilisation industrielle, qui classe les civilisations selon un critère technologique: âge de la pierre taillée, de la pierre polie, du bronze, du fer, de la machine, de l’électricité, de l’atome. [...] Les Maya de l’époque classique n’ont jamais disposé d’aucun métal. Leurs outils étaient en pierre taillée ou polie. Faut-il donc les classer avec les hommes des cavernes de la Dordogne ou avec ceux des habitations lacustres de la Suisse³²?

³⁰. GIUSTI, Alvise. *Op. cit.* (see note 27), p. 43.

³¹. SAHAGÚN, Bernardino de. *Op. cit.* (see note 13), p. 100: “I do not believe that there is a heart so hard that, on learning of a cruelty so inhuman and more than bestial and diabolical, as that described above, is not softened and moved to tears and to horror and terror; and, certainly, it is a lamentable and horrible thing to see that our human nature should have sunk to such baseness and ignominy that fathers, at the urging of the Devil, kill and eat their children, without thinking that by this they do any offence, but, rather, thinking that by this they do a great service to their gods”.

³². SOUSTELLE, Jacques. *Les quatre soleils. Souvenirs et réflexions d’un ethnologue au Mexique*, Paris, Plon, 1967, p. 91f: “One gauges here the depth of the illusion, peculiar to our industrial civilization, that classifies civilizations according to a technological criterion: the age of chipped stone, of polished stone, of bronze, of

The arrival of Cortés and his troops is portrayed as the awakening of the Aztec culture from ignorance; his characterization as a *semínime* (demigod) refers to the known fact that Emperor Motecuzoma II assumed that the Toltec god Quetzalcóatl had returned in fulfilment of ancient prophecies when he received the news of the arrival of the Spanish ships:

Como oyó la nueva Mochtezuma despachó gente para el recibimiento de *Quetzalcóatl*, porque pensó que era el que venía, porque cada día le estaban esperando, y como tenía relación que *Quetzalcóatl* había ido por la mar hacia el oriente, y los navíos venían de hacia del oriente, por esto pensaron que era él [...] ³³.

While Mitrena seems to argue from a simply 'human' standpoint, which becomes most obvious when she reproaches Cortés for his display of military power at Cozumel, Fernando's verses express the legalistic approach to politics that had dominated European political thought since the age of Greek and Roman Antiquity.

FER. Ministro, e non Tiranno
 Dal Ciel d'Europa a queste parti estreme
 D'Occidente passai. L'Oceano immenso
 Solcai per ogni parte, e furo noti
 Prima d'ora quèi Mar, che credi ignoti.
 Giunsi ne' Regni tuoi, vinsi, pugnai;
 Ma prima tutte usai
 Di clemenza, e virtù l'opre, e le leggi,
 E de' miei fatti egreggi
 Testimoni voi foste, allor, che amici
 Nelle viscere vostre a noi donaste
 Con sacri, e forti impegni
 Fede soggiorni, (più) Vittime, e Regni³⁴.

The great solo scene of Motezuma as prisoner, which in Frederick the Great's libretto, as well as in that of Cigna-Santi, contains extended passages of recitative that were set by almost all composers as *recitativo accompagnato*, finds its parallel in Alvisse Giusti's *Motezuma* in a scene that is strategically situated just before the triumphant finale. Not only does the intended contrast between *scena corta* and *scena lunga* heighten the effect of the final scene,

iron, of the machine, of electricity, of the atom. [...] The Maya of the classical period never used any metal. Their utensils were made in stone that was chipped or polished. Must we then classify them together with the men of the caves in the Dordogne or those of the lakeside settlements in Switzerland?"

³³. SAHAGÚN, Bernardino de. *Op. cit.* (see note 13), p. 725: "When Mochtezuma heard the news, he sent people to receive *Quetzalcóatl*, for it was he who he thought had come, for they had been hoping for him every day, and since there was a story that *Quetzalcóatl* had gone away towards the east, and the ships were coming towards the west, this caused them to believe that it was he [...]".

³⁴. GIUSTI, Alvisse. *Op. cit.* (see note 27), p. 34.

but Motezuma's solo aria also confirms the central role of the Mexican emperor in the balance of power between the protagonists.

ATTO III

SCENA X

Motezuma solo.

MOT. Stelle vincente. Ecco un'empio al Mondo
Della vostra incostanza. Ecco un Monarca,
Che solo si vantava
Di possanza simil ai vostri Dei.
Ludibrio della plebe
Reso scherzo d'ogn'un; vinto, ed oppresso.
Fatto servo ben vil dell'altrui glorie
Argomento felice a nuove storie.

Dov'è la Figlia; dov'è il mio Trono
Non son più Padre; più Rè non sono
La sorte barbara non ha più affanno
Non ha più fulmine il Ciel tiranno,
Ch'esser terribile possa per me.
Vede l'istesso nemico fato,
Che non può farmi più sventurato,
Che se m'uccide, crudel non è.
Dov'è ecc.³⁵

A crucial point in any opera seria dealing with the history of the *Conquista* had to be the end, because the librettist necessarily found himself caught between two conflicting constraints: On one hand, in accordance with the aesthetic canon of opera seria the action had to move to a happy conclusion, with the re-establishment of sovereignty and an *atto di demenza* on the part of the ruler; conversely, any happy finale would be in flagrant contradiction of the known facts of history³⁶. Giusti's solution separates the despair associated with the destruction of Tenochtitlán from the final moments of his opera. The final chorus is twofold, as is the dramaturgical solution. A happy marriage between Motezuma and his beloved Mitrena seals the newly established Aztec sovereignty under the protection of the

³⁵. *Ibidem*, p. 57.

³⁶. MAEHDER Jürgen. 'Cristóbal Colón, Motecuzoma II. Xocoyotzin and Hernán Cortés on the Opera Stage', *op. cit.* (see note 2), pp. 146–184; ID., 'Die Opfer der Conquista — Das Volk der Azteken auf der Opernbühne', in: 'Weine, weine, du armes Volk!' — Das verführte und betrogene Volk auf der Bühne', in: *Kongreßbericht Salzburg 1994*, edited by Peter Csobádi, Gernot Gruber, Ulrich Müller and others, Anif-Salzburg, Müller-Speiser, 1995, pp. 265–287.

Spanish crown. While the chorus initially praises Cortés as the conqueror of Tenochtitlán, a final attempt by Motezuma and Mitrena to kill Cortés is answered by an act of *clemenza* that appears to be in the best tradition of opera seria and which gives way to a second chorus, glorifying the newly established harmony of the noble couple:

ATTO III

SCENA XI

Gran Piazza nella Città del Messico con ornamenti per il Trionfo, Schiavi Messicani, e Bandiere calate da una parte, dall'altra le Schiere vincitrici delli Spagnoli.

Fernando, Ramiro, e Teutile.

CORO Al gran genio guerriero
La caduta d'un Impero
L'alte glorie
Le vittorie
Duce invitto ogn'uno ascriva
Viva il Monarca Ispan Fernando viva.

FER. Popoli vinti, il cui destin vi porta
Nuovo Rè ad adorar, e nuovi Numi.
Con opre, e con costumi
Più corretti, e più degni
In avenir pensate
Non meritar de' nuovi Dei li sdegni.
Quel Soglio ove m'assido
Non è Soglio per me. Or che lo prendo
Alla Spagna lo cedo, e lo diffendo.

(Scende al piano, in tanto il Coro canta.)

CORO Al gran genio guerriero
La caduta d'un Impero
L'alte glorie
Le vittorie
Duce invitto ogn'uno ascriva
Viva il Monarca Ispan Fernando viva.

[...]

MIT. Datevi, alme felici
De' vostri amor il più sicuro pegno.
Che la virtude alfin vinse lo sdegno.

MOT. Ne' vostri Dei gran verità si scorge.
Cade il Messico è ver: ma poi risorge.

CORO Imeneo, che sei d'amori
Dolce ardor, nodo immortale
Per la coppia alma, e Reale
Stringi l'alma, e annoda i cori³⁷.

A comparison of Alvisse Giusti's libretto with the operas by Frederick the Great (in collaboration with Giampietro Tagliazucchi) and by Vittorio Amedeo Cigna-Santi has to take into account the fact that Giusti was writing at the same time that the first reform libretti by Metastasio were being written, whereas Tagliazucchi and Cigna-Santi can both be regarded as followers and beneficiaries of Metastasio's libretto reform, albeit at a different qualitative level. Their libretti on the Montezuma subject appear connected by a common point of origin, despite their obvious differences in political ideology. It is highly probable that Carl Heinrich Graun obtained information about Vivaldi's opera on the subject of the conquest of Mexico during his prolonged stay in Venice, while he was recruiting the personnel for the future court opera in Berlin; this appears even more probable if we consider the long-standing relationship of trust between the King of Prussia and his court composer³⁸. Moreover, between the year of Vivaldi's *Motezuma* (1733) and the first mention of a Motezuma project in the original edition of Algarotti's *Saggio sopra l'opera in musica*³⁹ (1755), the drama *Fernand Cortès* by Alexis Piron had been presented at the Comédie Française in 1744, although its text was published only in 1777⁴⁰. The obvious references to this drama in the opening scenes of the later libretti by Frederick the Great/Tagliazucchi and Cigna-Santi make an indirect influence from France highly probable⁴¹.

A comparison between the first and subsequent editions of Francesco Algarotti's *Saggio sopra l'opera in musica* seems to suggest that the original stimulus for the opera came from Algarotti, who at the time was acting as musical adviser to the Prussian King. In the first edition of his essay, the only known surviving example of which is held by the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana in Venice, Algarotti inserted an enthusiastic description of the possibilities of an opera on the subject of the Conquest of Mexico; in later editions this description was replaced by a reference to the Berlin production of Graun's opera.

³⁷. GIUSTI, Alvisse. *Op. cit.* (see note 27), pp. 58 and 60.

³⁸. HILLER, Johann Adam. *Lebensbeschreibungen berühmter Musikgelehrten und Tonkünstler neuerer Zeit*, Leipzig, Dykische Buchhandlung, 1784; reprint: Leipzig, Edition Peters, 1979, pp. 76-98.

³⁹. ALGAROTTI, Francesco. *Saggio sopra l'opera in musica*, Venice, Pasquali, 1755.

⁴⁰. PIRON, Alexis. *Fernand-Cortès*, in: *Œuvres complètes d'Alexis Piron*, edited by Rigoley de Juvigny, vol. II, Neuchâtel, Société Typographique, 1777, pp. 419-545.

⁴¹. MAEHDER, Jürgen. 'Die Darstellung der Conquista Méxicos im Übergang von der Opera seria des Settecento zur Oper des Empire', in: *Gaspard Spontini und die Oper im Zeitalter Napoléons: Kongressbericht Erfurt 2006*, edited by Detlev Altenburg, Arnold Jacobshagen, Arne Langer and Jürgen Maehder, forthcoming.

Questo [soggetto: *il Montezuma*] potrebbe aprire un bel campo ad un valente maestro di cappella di trasportarne con la musica in un nuovo mondo. Il che egli potrebbe in certo modo fare o con accompagnamenti di certi tali strumenti poco usati tra noi, o con certe particolari melodie; cercando non già modi nuovi, ma strane cantilene. Giocondissimo per gli orecchi verrebbe ad essere il contrapposto della musica spagnuola con l'americana, come per gli occhi la diversità dei vestimenti. Vi aggiugnerebbono grande ornamento le danze religiose, i cori degli Americani supplicanti gl'Iddii del paese a proteggere l'Imperio e i tempj loro, lo sbarco degli Spagnuoli nella città, i combattimenti con armi e con auspicj diseguali, e le peregrine scene rappresentanti la natura e la magnificenza messicana: credo in somma che l'America ne potrebbe fornire all'animo di nuovi piaceri, non meno ch'ella ci faccia nuovi incitamenti al palato e al lusso [...] ⁴².

Moreover, there appears to have existed a link between the the librettists Giampietro Tagliazucchi and Vittorio Amedeo Cigna-Santi; as Margaret Butler has pointed out, Tagliazucchi's grandfather (or, perhaps, his uncle) Girolamo was the literary mentor of Cigna-Santi during the years of his studies in Turin⁴³. But the performance history of both libretti could not have been more diverse: if the opera by Frederick the Great/Tagliazucchi and Carl Heinrich Graun remained limited to a few Berlin performances (because of its anti-Catholic and anti-Spanish stance, it would have been unacceptable to the censorship in most parts of Europe), Cigna-Santi's libretto was to become the 'standard' libretto on the subject of the conquest of Mexico receiving settings from seven eminent eighteenth-century composers, plus one pasticcio (Venice 1789).

Alvise Giusti's libretto opens up an entire tradition of subject matter in opera that was to display a remarkable stability throughout the centuries, albeit subject to the changing political and ideological positions of the respective authors. From Vivaldi's opera of 1733 the tradition has continued up to Roger Sessions's opera *Montezuma* (Berlin, Deutsche Oper, 1963); for centuries, librettists continued to extract similar dramaturgical constellations and situations from the historical sources of the Conquest of Mexico.

⁴². ALGAROTTI, Francesco. *Discorsi sopra differenti soggetti*, Venice, Pasquali, 1755, including *Discorso sopra l'opera in musica* (example in Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Venice), pp. 1-112: 27f.; modern edition: ALGAROTTI, Francesco. *Saggio sopra l'opera in musica* (2nd and 5th editions), edited by Annalisa Bini, Lucca, LIM, 1989, p. xivf. The text is quoted after the first edition: "This [subject: *Il Montezuma*] would provide a fine opportunity for a capable *maestro di cappella* to transport us through music to a new world. Which he could do, in a certain way, either by employing for the accompaniment certain instruments little used by us, or through certain melodic particulars; seeking out not new modes but strange cantilenas. It would be as pleasurable for the ears to have Spanish music contrasted with American, as the diversity of costumes would be for the eyes. Great ornament would be added by sacred dances, choruses of Americans begging their gods to protect the empire and their temples, the disembarkation of the Spaniards into the city, the combats with contrasted weapons and emblems, and the unfamiliar stage sets representing Mexican nature and magnificence: I believe, in sum, that America could provide the mind with new pleasures, not least by creating new incitements to the palate and to luxury [...]".

⁴³. BUTLER, Margaret Ruth. *Operatic Reform at Turin's Teatro Regio. Aspects of Production and Stylistic Change in the 1760s*, Lucca, LIM, 2001 (Le chevalier errant, 2), p. 32.

APPENDIX I

DISCOVERY AND CONQUISTA OF THE AMERICAS ON THE OPERATIC STAGE: LIST OF WORKS

DATE	TITLE	GENRE	AUTHOR(S)	PERFORMANCE	TEXT	MUSIC
c. 1600	<i>El Nuevo Mundo descubierto por Cristóbal Colón</i>	comedia	Lope de Vega Carpio	Madrid	publ. 1890-	—
1690	<i>Il Colombo, ovvero L'India scoperta</i>	dramma per musica (3)	Ottoboni/ Pasquini	Rome, Tordinona	I-Bc; US-Wc	GB-Lbl
1733	<i>Motezuma</i>	dramma per musica (3)	Giusti/Vivaldi	Venice, S. Angelo	I-Vgc	D-Bsb (incomplete)
1741	<i>La découverte du nouveau monde</i>	tragédie (3)	Rousseau/ Rousseau	not performed	publ. 1959	music destroyed
1744	<i>Fernand Cortès</i>	tragédie (5)	Alexis Piron	Paris, Comédie Française	publ. 1777	—
1755	<i>Montezuma</i>	tragedia per musica (3)	Frederick the Great/Graun	Berlin, Opernhaus	D-Bsb, US- Wc	DDT, vol. 15
1765	<i>Motezuma</i>	dramma per musica (3)	Cigna-Santi/ de Majo	Turin, Regio	I-Vcg	P-La, US-Wc
1771	<i>Motezuma</i>	dramma per musica (3)	Cigna-Santi/ Myslivoček	Florence, Pergola	I-Vgc	A-Wgm, A-Wn, I-Fc, US-Wc, P-La (incomplete)
1772	<i>Motezuma</i>	dramma per musica (3)	Cigna-Santi/ Paisiello	Rome, delle Dame	I-Vgc	I-Nc (autograph)
1772	<i>Motezuma</i>	dramma per musica (3)	Cigna-Santi/ Galuppi	Venice, S. Benedetto	I-Vgc	P-La, US-Wc
1775	<i>Montezuma</i>	dramma per musica (3)	Bottarelli/ Sacchini	London, King's Theatre	?	(Favourite Songs, 1775)
1775	<i>Montezuma</i>	ballet	Angiolini/Starzer (?)	Vienna, Burg- Theater	?	?

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1776	<i>Motezuma</i>	dramma per musica (3)	Cigna-Santi/ Anfossi	Reggio Emilia, Pubblico	I-PAi	?
1780	<i>Motezuma</i>	dramma per musica (3)	Cigna-Santi/ Insanguine	Turin, Regio	I-Vgc	P-La
1781	<i>Motezuma</i>	dramma per musica (3)	Cigna-Santi/ Zingarelli	Naples, S. Carlo	I-Bc	I-Nc, I-Rsc, P-La
1787	<i>Fernando nel Messico</i>	dramma per musica (3)	Tarducci/ Giordani	Rome, Argentina	I-Vgc	B-Bc
1788	<i>Il Cristoforo Colombo nell'Indie</i>	ballo eroico tragico	le Fèvre/Brunetti	Florence, Pergola	US-Wc	?
1788	<i>Il Colombo ossia La scoperta delle Indie</i>	farsa (1)	Fabrizi/Mallio	Rome, Capranica	?	?
1789	<i>Motezuma</i>	dramma per musica (3)	Cigna-Santi/"maestri vari"	Venice, S. Benedetto	I-Vgc	?
1789	<i>Fernando Cortez conquistator del Messico</i>	dramma per musica (2)	Cigna-Santi(?)/Mugnes	Florence, Pergola	?	?
1791	<i>Fernand Cortez ou la Vestale du Mexique</i>	drame (4)	Mellier/Belfort	Paris, Théâtre Français	?	?
1792	<i>Columbus or, A World Discovered</i>	historical play (5)	Thomas Morton	London, Covent Garden	US-Wc	—
1797	<i>Columbus</i>	drama	James Hewitt	New York	US-Wc	—
1798	<i>Fernando nel Messico</i>	dramma per musica (3)	Tarducci/ Portogallo	Venice, S. Benedetto	I-Vgc	GB-Lbm, US-Wc, P-La (incomplete)
1799	<i>La selvaggia del Messico</i>	dramma per musica (2)	Prunetti/ Niccolini	Rome, delle Dame	?	?
1800	<i>Columbus, or The Discovered America</i>	drama	P. A. van Hagen	Boston	?	—
1804	<i>Montezuma oder Tippo Saib</i>	Melodram (3)	Ign. von Seyfried/ Jos. von Seyfried	Vienna, Theater an der Wien	?	?

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1809	<i>Columbus</i>	Schauspiel (4)	Klingemann/ Wöber	Berlin, Königliches Theater	publ. 1820	?
1809	<i>Christophe Colomb</i>	comédie historique shakespearienne	Népomucène Lemercier	Paris, Odéon	publ. 1822	?
1809	<i>Fernand Cortez ou la Conquête du Mexique</i>	tragédie lyrique (3)	de Jouy; Esmenard/ Spontini	Paris, Opéra (1st version, 1809); Paris, Opéra (2nd version, 1809); Berlin, Oper (3rd version, 1832)	F-Pn; F-Pn; D-Bsb	F-Pn US-Eu publ. Leipzig, 1832
1815	<i>Christophe Colomb ou la découverte du Nouveau Monde</i>	mélodrame historique (3)	Pixérécourt/ Darondeau	Paris, Théâtre de la Gaîté	publ. 1842	F-Po
1818	<i>Ferdinand Cortez</i>	Schauspiel (4)	Klingemann	Braunschweig	publ. 1818	—
1828	<i>Colombo</i>	melodramma serio (2)	Romani/ Morlacchi	Genoa, Carlo Felice	I-Vgc	D-DI (autograph)
1829	<i>Colombo</i>	melodramma serio (2)	Romani/Ricci	Parma, Regio	I-PAi	?
1829	<i>La conquista del Messico</i>	melodramma (2)	?/V. Fioravanti	Naples, Nuovo	?	?
1829	<i>Colombo alla scoperta delle Indie</i>		?/V. Fioravanti	Naples, La Fenice	?	?
1829	<i>Fernando Cortez</i>	melodramma (2)	Ferretti/Ricci	Rome, Tordinona	I-PAc	?
1831	<i>Cristóbal Colón</i>	melodramma (2)	Romani/Carnicer	Madrid, Real	E-Mm	E-Mm (autograph)
1832	<i>Colombo all'isola di Cuba</i>	azione mimica di mezzo carattere	Monticini/?	Milan, Scala	I-PAc	?
1845	<i>Montezuma</i>	melodramma (2)	?/Giacomo Treves	Milan, Carcano	I-Vgc	?
1847	<i>Christophe Colomb</i>	ode-symphonic	Méry; Chaubet; Saint-Étienne/ David	Paris, Opéra Comique	F-Pn	publ. 1845

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1847	<i>Cristoforo Colombo</i>	melodramma (2)	Romani/Bottesini	Havana, Tacón	?	?
1851	<i>Fernando Cortez</i>	melodramma serio (3)	Brenna/Malipiero	Venice, La Fenice	I-Vgc	I-Vlevi
1851	<i>Cristoforo Colombo</i>	ode-sinfonia (4)	trans. Torre/ Gambini	Florence, Accademia Filarmonica	I-PAc	?
1857	<i>Cristoforo Colombo</i>	melodramma serio (4)	Romani/Mela	Verona, Nuovo	I-Vgc	?
1860	<i>Columbus</i>	Oper (3)	Hickel/Škroup	[1942, Prague, Národní Teatr]	CZ-Pnm	CZ-Pnm
1864	<i>Cristoforo Colombo</i>	ballo storico (5)	Monplaisir/ Giorza	Rome, Apollo	I-Vgc	?
1865	<i>Cristoforo Colombo</i>	melodramma (2)	Romani/Casella	Nice, Impérial	?	?
1879	<i>Tierra! (Cristobál Colón)</i>	cuadro lirico-dramatico(1)	Campos-Arena/ Llanos y Alcaraz	Madrid, Zarzuela	I-Vcg (in Italian translation)	?
1883	<i>Cristoforo Colombo</i>	opera (3)	?/Penco	Genoa, Politeama	I-Vgc	?
1884	<i>Montezuma</i>	opera (3)	Gleason/Gleason	New York (?)	?	?
1892	<i>Cristoforo Colombo</i>	poema vocale sinfonico	Falanca/Gomes	Rio de Janeiro	publ. 1892	BR-Rn
1892	<i>Cristoforo Colombo</i>	dramma lirico (4)	Illica/Franchetti	Genoa, Carlo Felice	publ. 1892	I-Mr (autograph)
1892	<i>Colombo a San Domingo</i>	opera	Golisciani/ Morales	Mexico City, Nacional	?	?
1906	<i>Cristoforo Colombo</i>	dramma (4)	Riva/Alessio	Arona, Collegio dei Filippini	I-Vgc	?
1917	<i>Azora, The Daughter of Montezuma</i>	opera (3)	Stevens/Hadley	Chicago	US-Wc	US-NYp
1928	<i>Armer Columbus</i>	8 Bilder	Zweiniger/ Dressel	Kassel, Staatstheater	publ. 1927	(UE)
1930	<i>Christophe Colomb</i>	opéra (2)	Claudiel/Milhaud	Berlin, Staatsoper	publ. 1930	(Eschig)

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1933	<i>Columbus</i>	Bericht und Bildnis	Egk/Egk	Munich	publ. 1933	(Schott)
1962	<i>Atlàntida</i>	opera (Prol. + 3)	Falla/Falla; Halffter	Milan, Scala	publ. 1961	(Ricordi)
1964	<i>Montezuma</i>	opera (3)	Borgese/Sessions	Berlin, Deutsche Oper	publ. 1964	US-PRu (autograph)
1975	<i>Mare Nostrum</i>	Sitzendes Musik- Theater (1)	Kagel/Kagel	Berlin, Akademie der Künste	publ. 1975	(UE)
1989	<i>Cristóbal Colón</i>	opera (2)	Gala/Balada	Barcelona, Liceu	publ. 1989	(Beteca)
1989	<i>La noche triste</i>	(5 tableaux)	Gruault/ Prodromidès	Nancy, Opéra	publ. 1989	(Choudens)
1992	<i>1492</i>	epopea lirica (4)	Braga/Braga	Santo Domingo, Nacional	publ. 1992	(Bongiovanni)
1992	<i>The Discoverer</i>	opera (3)	Hwang/Glass	New York, Metropolitan	publ. 1992	(Dunvagen)
1992	<i>Die Eroberung von Mexiko</i>	Musiktheater	Artaud/Rihm	Hamburg, Staatsoper	publ. 1992	(UE)

CHAPTER FIVE

TAMING THE EXOTIC: VIVALDI'S *ARMIDA AL CAMPO D'EGITTO*

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EARLY-EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY VENETIAN opera still enjoys only a small place in the musicological investigation of exoticism. Yet the repertoire contains a significant number of suitable candidates for such a study, and among these are operas by Antonio Vivaldi. The Venetians always enjoyed stories of war and love set in distant, exotic lands. The tradition went back to the *commedia dell'arte* and grew stronger towards the end of the seventeenth century, when fully fledged 'Turkish' operas began to appear¹.

No doubt, numerous librettos can be defined as 'exotic' in that they locate the action in a perceived distant or foreign land, include one or more non-European characters, portray unfamiliar rites and strange customs, illustrate foreign architecture and dress characters in exotic clothing. Very occasionally, they indicate the performance of non-European dances and the use of esoteric instruments². These various elements may or may not reproduce their original counterparts with any degree of accuracy, but they all act as effective referents of a culture other than one's own. The search for similar referents in the scores is more problematic — so problematic that we might well question the very appropriateness of the term 'exotic' in connection with this repertoire.

Jonathan Bellman begins the introduction to his book *The Exotic in Western Music* by broadly defining musical exoticism as "the borrowing or use of musical materials that evoke distant locales or alien frames of reference"; these "characteristics and easily recognised musical gestures from the alien culture are assimilated into a more familiar style,

¹. These operas include *Il gran Tamerlano* (1689), *Ibraim sultano* (1691), *La Rosalinda* (1692) and *La principessa fedele* (1709), the last two being likely ancestors of Mozart's *Entführung aus dem Serail*.

². See ALM, Irene. 'Dances from the "Four Corners of the Earth": Exoticism in Seventeenth-Century Venetian Opera', in: *Musica Franca: Essays in Honor of Frank A. D'Accone*, edited by Irene Alm, Alyson McLamore and Colleen Reardon, Stuyvesant (NY), Pendragon Press, 1996 (Festschrift series, 18), pp. 233–257.

giving it an exotic color and suggestiveness”³. Among the recognized and recognizable musical gestures used by eighteenth-century composers to denote the exotic are a series of devices aimed at imitating both the sounds and the rhythms of the Janissary (i.e., Turkish military) bands. The first aim is achieved by using instruments such as cymbals, bass drum, tambourine, Turkish crescent and triangle, plus flutes and piccolos; the second, through “melodic, rhythmic, harmonic, and phraseological devices with no particular timbral associations”⁴, such as “‘hopping’ thirds, turn figures, and frequent or repeated neighbor-note patterns [...] acciaccaturas or other ‘jangling’ before-the-beat ornaments”, to which one may add an insistence on melodic patterns based on the tonic chord and a preference for wide or dissonant chromatic intervals and asymmetrical formal designs. ‘Alla turca’ music, Hunter observes, “is almost always in duple meter; the first beat is often heavily accented and precedes one or more lighter beats”; the harmony “is often quite static, retaining the same chords for several measures at a time and moving quite abruptly from one chord (or even one single-harmony-phrase) to another [...] Alternatively, harmony is eschewed altogether in favor of unison writing”⁵.

Descriptions and occasional transcriptions of Turkish music that might have influenced the formation of the ‘alla turca’ style began to circulate in Europe during the seventeenth century via diplomatic reports, travel accounts, memoirs, treatises and writings on Turkish history, language and culture⁶. Opportunities for hearing Turkish music ‘live’ — including the music of the Janissary bands that accompanied Ottoman ambassadors on their travels to the West — remained, however, rare until after the end of the Ottoman wars and the signing of the Treaty of Passarowitz in 1718. Previously, the Sultan had not maintained diplomatic representation in Europe, so that peace negotiations and any other diplomatic business had to take place in Istanbul⁷.

Venice, from this point of view, was in a privileged situation. Her geographical location on the sea and at the borders of the Ottoman Empire brought her in close

³. *The Exotic in Western Music*, edited by Jonathan Bellman, Boston, Northeastern University Press, 1998, p. ix.

⁴. HUNTER, Mary. ‘The *Alla Turca* Style in the Late Eighteenth Century: Race and Gender in the Symphony and the Seraglio’, in: *The Exotic in Western Music*, *op. cit.* (see note 3), pp. 43-74: 45.

⁵. *Ibidem*, p. 46.

⁶. These include the influential SANSOVINO, Francesco. *Historia universale dell’origine et imperio de’ Turchi*, Venice, Rampazetto, 1564; PRAETORIUS, Michael. *Syntagma musicum*, 3 vols., Wittenberg-Wolfenbüttel, 1614-1615; KIRCHER, Athanasius. *Musurgia universalis sive ars magna consoni et dissoni* [...], Rome, Corbellitti, 1650; DONADO, Giovan Battista. *Della letteratura de’ Turchi*, Venice, Poletti, 1688; TODERINI, Giovanni Battista. *Letteratura turchesca*, 3 vols., Venice, Storti, 1787. For an overview, see CAVALLINI, Ivano. ‘La musica turca nelle testimonianze dei viaggiatori e nella trattatistica del Sei-Settecento’, in: *Rivista italiana di musicologia*, XXI (1986), pp. 144-169.

⁷. See PEDANI, Maria Pia. *In nome del Gran Signore: Inviati ottomani a Venezia dalla caduta di Costantinopoli alla guerra di Candia*, Venice, Deputazione edizione, 1994 (Miscellanea di studi e memorie, 30); and PEDANI FABRIS, Maria Pia. *La dimora della pace*, Venice, Cafoscarina, 1996 (Quaderni di studi arabi, 2).

economic, political and artistic contact with the Middle and Far East, through which she acquired the role of being a mediator between the Christian West and the Islamic East. The cosmopolitan character that always characterized the *Serenissima* was known throughout Europe, and travel reports comment on Venice's unusual degree of ethnic variety. The influence of Islamic art on Venice is still visible today in the architecture of the city⁸, and its centuries-old fascination with the Islamic world is documented by a wealth of writings on Turkish history, language and culture published throughout the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Venetian legislation tended to give the city's economic interests priority over its hegemonic aims in the political sphere. To Turkish merchants who resided in Venice for trading purposes and for a limited period of time the *Serenissima* granted its protection and the freedom to practise their religion. Despite the marked decline in the number and importance of the Islamic community in Venice during the second half of the seventeenth century, one had more chance in Venice than anywhere else in Europe to observe 'real' Turks in action: to inspect their wares, to hear their language, to glimpse their clothing and habits — and to encounter their music.

This relative familiarity with, and tolerance towards, Turkish culture, coexisted, to be sure, with feelings of suspicion, fear and hatred towards the Turks: after all, the century-old wars with the Ottoman Empire had ultimately been responsible for the decline of the *Serenissima* as a diplomatic and economic power during the seventeenth century. Criticism and condemnation extended to Turkish culture, habits and arts, including music⁹.

This combination of incomprehension, condemnation and familiarity with the 'exotic' might explain, in part, why Venetian (operatic) music fails to present us with those "characteristics and easily recognised musical gestures from the alien culture" described by Bellman¹⁰. Indeed, Thomas Betzwieser discerns an absence of exotic musical referents in early-eighteenth-century opera seria as a whole¹¹.

In her study of musical exoticism in the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century theatre, however, Miriam Whaples described how composers ignored any knowledge that they might have had of non-European music and developed alternative strategies for characterizing the exotic, such as the use of specific dances and instruments associated with

⁸. HOWARD, Deborah. *Venice and the East: The Impact of the Islamic World on Venetian Architecture, 1100-1500*, London-New Haven, Yale University Press, 2000.

⁹. See CAVALLINI, Ivano. *Op. cit.* (see note 6).

¹⁰. See FERTONANI, Cesare. 'Vivaldi e l'esotico', in: *Le arti della scena e l'esotismo in età moderna*, edited by Francesco Cotticelli and Paologiovanni Maione, Naples, Turchini Edizioni, 2006 (I Turchini. Saggi, 3), pp. 299-309.

¹¹. BETZWIESER, Thomas. 'Exotismus', in: *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart. Allgemeine Enzyklopädie der Musik, begründet von Friedrich Blume. Zweite, neubearbeitete Ausgabe*, edited by Ludwig Finscher, 26 vols., Kassel-Basel-London-New York-Prague, Bärenreiter; Stuttgart-Weimar, Metzler, 1994—, *Sachteil*, vol. III, pp. 226-246. Diana Blichmann challenges this view in a stimulating study of Vinci's setting of *Didone abbandonata*: "'So che un barbaro sei, né mi spaventi'". Spunti esotici nella *Didone abbandonata* di Metastasio', in: *Le arti della scena e l'esotismo in età moderna, op. cit.* (see note 10), pp. 235-270.

non-European cultures¹². Overall, scholars agree that, even for the more clearly defined ‘alla turca’ music, it is not the ethnic connotation of the musical material *per se* that conveys the exotic in music but its unfamiliar, primitive, extraneous character. Following on this argument that places the ‘exotic’ in relation to its textual context, we might add that Bellman’s ‘easily recognised musical gestures’ may not be as easily recognizable *to us* as they might have been to an eighteenth-century audience — not to mention the fact that Venetian music could have absorbed and incorporated into the vocabulary of Western music elements of non-European music (certain chromatic patterns, for example, or dance rhythms) long before the eighteenth century. At the same time, the *Venetian* audience may have been even more sensitive to minute details able to create the effect of estrangement, thereby adding another component to the definition of exotic: that of reception.

In an earlier study I explored the strategies employed in Francesco Silvani’s opera-pair *Armida abbandonata* (1707) and *Armida al campo* (1708) to engage with the concept of ‘otherness’¹³. Both operas drew on Torquato Tasso’s epic poem *La Gerusalemme liberata* (1575)¹⁴, which weaves military and amorous adventures in an imagined Orient around the central narrative of the conquest of Jerusalem in the eleventh century by Godfrey de Bouillon (Goffredo di Buglione). These episodes include Rinaldo’s captivity in Armida’s garden and his eventual departure, followed by Armida’s (unsuccessful) attempt to wreak revenge on Goffredo’s camp. Drawing on the topical conflict between the Christian West and the Muslim East, these two operas conjure up a vision of the Oriental world constructed in terms of unresolvable oppositions similar to the cognitive processes of Orientalism as famously subjected to a critique by the cultural historian Edward Said¹⁵. They did so not through the obvious use of recognizable musical material evocative of oriental locales but through an accurate selection and organization of well-known poetic material and — most important in the case of Ruggieri’s opera, for which the music survives — through the manipulation of operatic conventions and aria typologies in order to emphasize the ethnic, religious and gender oppositions inherited from Tasso (the Eastern world is represented by the female characters, while the European contingent enlists the male Christian heroes: the ‘exotic’ is inextricably linked to the ‘feminine’). The clash of sensory perceptions — that is, the contrast between what the eye sees (the staging of Armida’s enchanted and seductive garden, and the pursuit of pleasure) and what the ear perceives (the heroic music suggestive

¹². WHAPLES, Miriam K. *Exoticism in Dramatic Music, 1600-1800*, Ann Arbor (MI), UMI Research Press, 1959.

¹³. BUCCIARELLI, Melania. ‘Venice and the East: Operatic Readings of Tasso’s *Armida* in Early Eighteenth-Century Venice’, in: *Music as Social and Cultural Practice: Essays in Honour of Reinhard Strohm*, edited by Melania Bucciarelli and Berta Joncus, Woodbridge, The Boydell Press, 2007, pp. 232–249.

¹⁴. In my previous study the date of publication of *Gerusalemme liberata* is given erroneously as 1587 instead of 1575.

¹⁵. SAID, Edward. *Orientalism*, 3rd edn, London, Penguin, 2003; first published in 1978. See also the same author’s *Culture and Imperialism*, London and New York, Vintage, 1993.

of an ongoing war), also departed from contemporary operatic practice (which strove closely to co-ordinate stage sets, gesture, words and music) and allowed instead the unfolding of a double narrative: one about love, perceived as fiction; the other about war, perceived as reality. The result was that the audience, immersed in the enchanted and unreal world of Armida, was constantly reminded (at a subliminal level) of an ongoing, non-fictional conflict that separated Muslims and Christians, East and West and, ultimately, men and women. Ruggieri's disconcerting, almost 'dry', unconventional —and this particular sense we might even say 'exotic' — musical setting, at variance with the opulent and eye-catching stage-sets, might have been the reason for its negative reception from Prince Ernst August von Braunschweig-Lüneburg-Hannover:

Venise, le 11 de Novembre [1707].

L'on joua hière une opéra pour la première fois. [...] Le suget en étoit assé bon; c'étoit Armide abandonnée, mais il n'y avoit que deus vois passable. Selle qui fesoit Armide avoit si bon air et antroit si bien dans le caractère, que je crois qu'elle orroit réussi à Paris. Même Reno [...] étoit bien fait et avoit for bon air. Ce qui me surprit le plus, e[s]t que les abits étoi[en]t d'un trais bon goût et je dirois quasi qu'ils n'orroif[en]t été gère mieu, s'ils avoi[en]t été fais à Paris, mais les hommes n'avoif[en]t pas de brodequins. Les décorations étoif[en]t assé jolies et d'un goût extraordinaire, mais la musique exécration [...]¹⁶.

In the present essay, I draw on the context and conclusions of my earlier study in order to conduct an investigation into the poetic, dramaturgical, musical and spectacular strategies of another unusual, and very engaging, opera hewn from Tasso's popular epic: Vivaldi's *Armida al campo d'Egitto* (Venice, 1718). As in Silvani's opera-pair, gender plays a fundamental role in the articulation and representation of the concept of 'otherness'; the exploration of female roles and male sexual desires, a pursuit in which poets and composers had engaged since the birth of opera, forge the poetic, dramatic and musical vocabulary of the exotic.

¹⁶. "Venice, 11 November [1707]. Yesterday an opera was played for the first time [...]. The subject was quite good; it was *Armida Abbandonata*, but there were only two acceptable voices. The woman who played Armida had such a good style and entered so well into the character that I think she would have succeeded in Paris. Rinaldo himself [...] was well done and had a very good style. What surprised me most was that the costumes were in very good taste, and I would almost say that they could hardly have been better if they had been made in Paris, but the men did not have brodequins. The decorations were quite pretty and in an extraordinary style, but the music was appalling [...]" I am most grateful to Rashid-Sascha Pegah for kindly allowing me to publish an excerpt from this letter, which he identified at the Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz-Bibliothek – Niedersächsische Landesbibliothek Hannover. I am also indebted to Jasmin Cameron for pointing out to me the existence of this document and for providing an English translation, which I have taken as the basis of my own.

The premiere of Antonio Vivaldi's *dramma per musica Armida al Campo d'Egitto* on 15 February 1718 at the Teatro S. Moisè was accompanied by a number of novelties. *Armida* concluded Vivaldi's short spell at S. Moisè before his departure for Mantua, where he revived *Armida* during the spring of 1718 and where he remained until 1720¹⁷. It marked his initial collaboration with Giovanni Palazzi, a rather obscure character who seems to have worked in the musical theatre almost exclusively for Vivaldi¹⁸, and strengthened his collaboration with the contralto Antonia Merighi, who joined the S. Moisè company in autumn 1717 and was cast (unusually, for a contralto) as *prima donna* in the vigorous role of *Armida*¹⁹. This collaboration had started a few months earlier, with *Tieteberga* and *Artabano, re de' Parti*, and was to continue until 1721²⁰.

Finally, the staging of *Armida al campo d'Egitto* coincided with the conclusion of the Ottoman wars: the fall of Belgrade in August 1717 and the signing of the Treaty of Passarowitz in July 1718. With the Peace of Karlowitz in 1699, Venice extended its dominions in Dalmatia and gained the Morea (Peloponnese); this territory was taken back by the Turks in 1715, and hostilities continued up to 1718. The capitulation of Belgrade to Prince Eugene of Savoy, leader of the imperial armies since 1697, was a decisive event marked by three days of celebrations, which included firework displays, the continuous peal of bells throughout the city and the singing of solemn Masses and the Te Deum in the presence of the Doge, the nobility and the populace at large²¹. Such displays were not new

¹⁷. The only surviving musical score of *Armida* (I-Tn, Foà 38, ff. 2-184) contains Acts I and III only, and documents the first and last known performances of the opera, given at Venice in 1718 (Teatro S. Moisè) and 1738 (Teatro S. Angelo), respectively.

¹⁸. He also penned *Rosilena ed Oronta* (1728) and collaborated with Domenico Lalli on *La verità in cimento* (1720). His *Medea e Giasone* was the only libretto to be set not by Vivaldi but by a different composer, Giovanni Francesco Brusa; this opera opened at S. Angelo on 27 December 1726 (I-Vas, Inquisitori di Stato, Busta 707) with Anna Girò in the role of Erifile. She sang in Vivaldi's *Dorilla in Tempe* in November 1726. The other drama ascribed to him, *Il vello d'oro*, may have been a reworking of *Medea e Giasone*.

¹⁹. Merighi sang also in Vivaldi's *La verità in cimento* (1720) and *Filippo, re di Macedonia* (1721). The other singers in *Armida al campo d'Egitto* (1718) were: the bass Annibale Imperatori Anconitano in the role of Califfo, the soprano Rosa Venturini, Virtuosa di Camera di [...] Principe Antonio Farnese di Parma, in the role of Osmira, Califfo's niece; the soprano Chiara Orlandi detta la Mantoanina in the role of Erminia, Princess Royal of Antioch; the soprano Francesco Natali detto il Perugino as Emireno, General of the troops; the contralto Costanza Maccari Romana in the role of Adrasto; and the male alto Francesco Braganti as Tisaferno.

²⁰. Merighi, with the rest of the cast, also performed in Giuseppe Boniventi's opera *La virtù tra nemici*, staged most likely between November and December 1717. Vivaldi's *Tieteberga* was premiered on 19 October 1717 (I-Vas, Inquisitori di Stato, Busta 707), while his *Artabano, re de' Parti* was approved by the censors on 5 January 1718 (I-Vas, Riformatori, Filza 295); it had previously been introduced as *La costanza trionfante degli amori e de gl'odii* in early 1716 (at S. Moisè).

²¹. On 23 August 1717 two dispatches arrived in Venice with the news, and: "Per si gran vittoria martedì mattina se ne diede l'annuncio al Popolo col suono delle Campane della Chiesa Ducale di San Marco, che fu susseguitato da quelle delle campane delle Chiese della città e si cantò nella stessa mattina nella Chiesa

to Venice; victories over the Turks were always accompanied by extended religious and civic celebrations, while other important events of the Venetian–Ottoman conflict were reflected in poetic and dramatic allegories²². Vivaldi's oratorio *Juditha triumphans*, performed at the Ospedale della Pietà some time during 1716, when Venice was at war with the Turks and seeking alliance with Austria and the Papacy, contains one such allegory, explained in its accompanying *Carmen allegoricum*²³. We cannot exclude the possibility that *Armida al campo d'Egitto*, dedicated to “Federico, Girolamo di Witzendorff, signore di Zeger, e Seedorff” and depicting preparations for the reconquest of Jerusalem, was conceived as a commentary on the recent fall of Belgrade. In the light of these events, and on the eve of the official close of hostilities, Vivaldi's *Armida al campo d'Egitto* emerges as an ironic, ambivalent and engaging voice in the discourse about the Orient.

ARMIDA IN THE VENETIAN OPERATIC TRADITION

Armida al campo d'Egitto stems from a centuries-old tradition of dramatizations of Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata* (see TABLE 1); whereas operas based on Tasso were not new to the operatic stage, this was the first dramatization of Armida's visit to the Egyptian camp as narrated in Cantos XVII and XIX. After Rinaldo's departure, Armida travels to Gaza in Egypt, where Califfo is organizing an anti-Frankish coalition by bringing together leaders and warriors from all over Asia. Tasso devotes 32 stanzas to introducing Califfo and reviewing the myriad ethnic groups making up his army: a feast of diversity. At this point, Armida joins Califfo's army and promises herself in marriage to whoever will bring her Rinaldo's head: Adrasto, Tisaferno and Emireno, the newly appointed commander-in-chief of the Asian army, will become her champions.

Ducale Solenne Messa e Te Deum, coll'intervento di Sua Ser[eni]tà della Serenissima Sig[no]ria e Nobiltà tutta, come si fece in tutte l'altre chiese e per 3 sere consecutive si sono fatti fuochi di gioia per la città” (I-Vas, *Inquisitori di Stato*, Busta 707).

²². See PRETO, Paolo. *Venezia e i Turchi*, Florence, Sansoni, 1975 (Pubblicazioni della Facoltà di Magistero dell'Università di Padova, 20).

²³. TALBOT, Michael. ‘How Operatic is Vivaldi's *Juditha triumphans*?’, in: *Music as Social and Cultural Practice* [...], *op. cit.* (see note 13), pp. 214–231: 221.

TABLE I: OPERATIC DRAMATIZATIONS OF TORQUATO TASSO'S *GERUSALEMME LIBERATA*

YEAR	SEASON	THEATRE	TITLE	LIBRETTIST	COMPOSER	COMMENT
1639	carnival	SS. Giovanni e Paolo	<i>Armida</i>	B. Ferrari	B. Ferrari	
1669			<i>Armida, nemica, amante e sposa</i>	F. M. Santinelli		perhaps not performed
1680			<i>Armida, nemica, amante e sposa</i>	F. M. Santinelli		
1687	carnival	SS. Giovanni e Paolo	<i>La Gerusalemme liberata</i>	G. C. Corradi	C. Pallavicino	
1693	carnival	SS. Giovanni e Paolo	<i>Gli avvenimenti d'Erminia e di Clorinda sopra il Tasso</i>	G. C. Corradi	C. F. Pollarolo	
1703	carnival	S. Fantino	<i>L'honor al cimento</i>	G. Colatelli	T. Orgiani	
1707	autumn	S. Angelo	<i>Armida abbandonata</i>	F. Silvani	G. M. Ruggieri	
1708	carnival	S. Angelo	<i>Armida al campo</i>	F. Silvani	G. Boniventi	
1711	autumn	S. Angelo	<i>Armida in Damasco</i>	G. Braccioli	G. Rampini	
1718	carnival	S. Moisè	<i>Armida al campo d'Egitto</i>	G. Palazzi	A. Vivaldi	
1720	carnival	S. Angelo	<i>Armida delusa</i>	G. M. Buini	G. M. Buini	

Venetians enjoyed the mixture of the magical, the adventurous, the heroic and the exotic that Tasso wove around the theme of the Crusades; moreover, the adventures of the Christian heroes Goffredo, Tancredi and Rinaldo, battling against the Saracens, lent themselves easily to parallels with the Venetian triumphs over the Turks in Tasso's time, and may have also struck a familiar chord a century later, when Venice and other parts of Europe remained under the threat of conquest by the Ottomans. However, Benedetto Ferrari's early dramatization, together with that of Francesco Maria Santinelli (*Armida nemica, amante e sposa* of 1669), focuses on the love entanglements between Armida and Rinaldo, making little or no reference to the raging war that pits the Christians (Rinaldo) against the Muslims (Armida), from whom they are seeking to take Jerusalem. Ferrari's plot encompasses the whole of the Armida-Rinaldo narrative, from their first encounter to their final union, drawing on episodic material from cantos v-xx. Ferrari's and Santinelli's approach to their source text is characterized by the occurrence of close paraphrases rather

than exact quotations. Similar is Colatelli's use of Tasso's poetry in his *Honor al cimento* (1703), a libretto that appears to have originated from Quinault's *tragédie en musique Armide* rather than directly from *Gerusalemme liberata*²⁴.

In his opera-pair *Armida abbandonata* and *Armida al campo*, staged at the Teatro S. Angelo — the first opening on 10 November 1707 with music by Giovanni Maria Ruggieri, and the second on 26 or 27 January 1708 with music by Giuseppe Boniventi²⁵ — Francesco Silvani achieves a stronger dramatic concentration (despite the numerous sub-episodes that embroider the libretto) by starting the drama closer to its dénouement. Whether or not as a result of a (possible) direct influence of Quinault's *Armide*, Silvani's dramaturgical procedures begin to fulfil the precepts of Classical drama that were filtering into opera (in Venice and elsewhere) at that time via the practice of adapting French dramas for the Italian stage.

It is possible that Silvani and the impresario of S. Angelo, Cristoforo Friggeri²⁶, had planned a trilogy to offer their audience the entire narrative arch of Armida and Rinaldo's love, and that the project was thwarted by Silvani's move to the more prestigious Teatro S. Giovanni Grisostomo. This would explain the staging in 1711, still at S. Angelo under the management of Friggeri, of Grazio Braccioli's and Giacomo Rampini's *Armida in Damasco*, which finally concedes a wedding scene to Armida and Rinaldo²⁷.

Unlike *Armida in Damasco* and earlier dramatizations of Tasso's poem, Silvani's opera-pair brings to the foreground the theme of the irresolvable conflict between Muslims and Christians, the East and the West²⁸, which he then articulates through more familiar

²⁴. Charles S. BRAUNER draws similar conclusions and considers Colatelli's libretto an adaptation from Quinault in his *Armida*, Pesaro, Fondazione Rossini, 2000 (I libretti di Rossini, 7), p. xxix.

²⁵. Precise dating is given in I-Vnm, Mercuri 12127 and 12128. The Saturday announcement dated 28 January refers more vaguely to the performance of *Armida al campo* as having taken place "l'altro giorno" (the other day).

²⁶. I would like to thank Beth Glixon for kindly providing me with the unpublished information on the name of the impresario of S. Angelo for the 1707-08 season.

²⁷. Braccioli explicitly declares in the "avviso al lettore" prefaced to the libretto that he was asked to follow in the footsteps of Silvani's example by a "personaggio d'auttorità". Braccioli is better known for his libretto *Orlando furioso* (1713), which marked another 'first' for Vivaldi: his debut as an opera composer and producer in Venice. With this opera, Braccioli and Vivaldi 're-open' the fortunate series of dramatizations of Ariosto's epic poem *Orlando furioso* (1516-32), as a counterpoint perhaps to the old polemics concerning the relative merits of Tasso and Ariosto that began soon after the publication of Tasso's *Gerusalemme*, and had freshly been rekindled in the literary circle of the Arcadian Academy.

²⁸. One exception is Corradi's *Gerusalemme liberata*, a libretto written in 1687, at a time when operas increasingly included references to war and emphasized heroic and patriotic traits. Lorenzo Bianconi and Paolo Fabbri related these characteristics to the need to exorcize feelings of anxiety caused by the recent experience of the first war of Morea against the Ottoman Empire (which concluded in 1699 with an Ottoman defeat). BIANCONI, LORENZO. *Il Seicento*, Turin, EDT, 1982 (Storia della musica, 4), p. 190; FABBRI, PAOLO. 'Tasso e la sua fortuna musicale a Venezia', in: *Formazione e fortuna del Tasso nella cultura della Serenissima: Atti del Convegno di studi nel IV centenario della morte di Torquato Tasso (1595-1995)*, Padova-Venezia, 10-11 Novembre

gender categories. Ruggieri's choices, in particular, often breached operatic convention in order to preserve the bold characterization and opposition between a compact, orderly, male Christian world and a multiform, disorganized, female pagan world²⁹. This vision reflected not necessarily the reality of the political organization of the Ottoman Empire but, rather, the widespread perceptions of a composite, disjointed Middle East, that were popularized over a long period by a large body of writings of various kinds: travel reports, pamphlets, religious writings and historiography, as well as novels, poems and theatrical entertainments³⁰. The prolix title of one of these writings, Michel Febvre's *Teatro della Turchia* (1681), summarizes these views:

TEATRO / DELLA / TURCHIA / Dove si rappresentano i disordini
di essa, il genio, / la natura, & i costumi di quattordici nazioni, / che l'habitano.
/ *La Potenza degli Ottomani sopragrande, le loro tirannie, / gli insulti, e perfidie tanto
contra li stranieri, / quanto verso i suoi popoli. / Il tutto confermato con Esempi, e
Casi tragici / nuovamente successi*³¹.

The "Avviso al lettore" clarifies the scope of the enterprise: "per profitto universale del Christianesimo la Verità ben nota, intorno la potenza sopragrande del Nemico Ottomano, acciò i popoli dell'Europa disingannati, e meglio informati della Forza del Barbaro, vie più s'incoraggiassero con nuovi cimenti alla conquista delli di lui Paesi, più facile, che mai possa immaginarsi, supposta l'unione de' nostri Prencipi".

PALAZZI, VIVALDI AND TASSO

The Muslim world, as a disordered, multiform and divided entity, features prominently in *Armida al campo d'Egitto*. The action takes place in Gaza and does not involve characters from the Christian (and Western) contingent. The stage directions at the beginning of the opera, reminiscent of Tasso's descriptions, firmly locate the action just outside the walls of the Egyptian city, and refer to the multi-ethnic character of the army:

1995, edited by Luciana Borsetto and Bianca Maria Da Rif, Venice, Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti, 1997, pp. 251-258.

²⁹. This interpretation owes much to the fascinating reading of *Gerusalemme liberata* in ZATTI, Sergio. *L'uniforme cristiano e il multiforme pagano: saggio sulla 'Gerusalemme liberata'*, Milan, Il Saggiatore, 1983 (La cultura, 8).

³⁰. PRETO, Paolo. *Op. cit.* (see note 22), and ID. 'Il mito del Turco nella letteratura veneziana', in: *Venezia e i Turchi: Scontri e confronti di due civiltà*, edited by Anna Della Valle, Milan, Electa, 1985, pp. 134-143. See also my 'Venice and the East', *op. cit.* (see note 13), pp. 235-237.

³¹. FEBVRE, Michel (pseudonym of Justinien de Tours). *Teatro della Turchia* [...], Milan, Malatesta, 1681.

Vasta campagna sotto le mura di Gaza, dove l'esercito egizio passò la rassegna, ed il loro re vedesi sotto eminente trono. Due satrapì, uno con sigillo reale, l'altro con spada nuda. Guardie di Circassi.

The costumes must have contributed greatly to the exotic characterization of the Egyptian king, his army and the Circassian guards, as well as of the *dramatis personae* throughout the opera. The ceremonial setting and the traditional warlike attributes of Muslim leaders as referents for their ferocity and cruelty are introduced right at the beginning of the opera, suggesting Califfo's royal status and a heroic context for the opera. However, these images are immediately challenged by the appearance of Armida; the same warlike attributes are now transferred to her and her entourage (warriors and girls) and are used to enhance the danger that her sexual allure poses to Califfo's authority and his men. Armida appears on stage on a magnificent chariot in menacing warrior attire, with a revealing girded-up skirt and a quiver. As Tasso (in the poem) and Tisaferno (in the opera) observe: "par che minacci e minacciando alletta"³². All is ready for a ferocious, bloody attack on the Franks; victory seems, indeed, certain in the hands of such a monumental army that gathers together the most valiant of all Asia. What the opera portrays instead is the fighting over possession of Armida's body and the crumbling of Califfo's power under Armida's sexual force.

Palazzi assembles the opening scenes of Acts I and II by quoting several lines (over 50 per cent of the total) from Cantos IV (Armida's arrival at the Christian camp and her seductive arts), V (Armida's seduction of the Christian warriors) and XVII. Silvani, too, had made use of several literal quotations from Tasso in his *Armida abbandonata*³³, but while in Palazzi's case one could perhaps point to his inexperience, for Silvani one cannot erect such hypotheses. Silvani was not only an extremely successful librettist with more than fifteen years of experience in the theatre and more than 20 librettos under his belt: he had also defended in public the originality (of subject and poetry) of his librettos on more than one occasion, and in 1707 he was on the verge of moving to the most literary-minded of the Venetian theatres, S. Giovanni Grisostomo³⁴. In fact, I am convinced that both Silvani and Palazzi expected their audience to recognize Tasso's lines. Complete familiarity with Tasso's poetry cut across class boundaries, stretching from aristocratic literati and Arcadians to Venetian gondoliers and maidservants. Madrigal settings of the previous century and

³². *Gerusalemme liberata*, XVII, 33; *Armida al campo d'Egitto* (Venice, 1718), I.I.

³³. Unlike Palazzi and Silvani, Ferrari, Santinelli, Corradi and Colatelli all preferred to paraphrase Tasso's lines in addition to adopting the more common procedure of taking over episodes, characters and settings, mixing and matching them together and adding new material — as also Silvani's and Palazzi's librettos do.

³⁴. Silvani began to write for the important Grimani theatre in the autumn of 1708, with his new libretto *California*, which was staged with music by Johann David Heinichen. On Silvani, see ARMELLINI, Mario. *Francesco Silvani e la fortuna italiana della Fede tradita e vendicata (1704-1789)*, Ph.D. Diss., Bologna, Università degli Studi di Bologna, 1994.

vernacular adaptations contributed to this popularity, while travellers to the Serenissima never missed the opportunity to comment on the contests among gondoliers and maids singing Tasso's octaves from memory³⁵. Even Osmira (in *Armida al campo d'Egitto*) recites a complete octave from the poem ("Si come cerva, ch'assetata il passo", from VI, 109)³⁶. These 'Armida' operas could rely on the enormous popularity of Tasso's poem to generate interest; most important, they could engage with the audience through allusions and references to episodes, characters and lines of the poem that were well known, albeit not in a scenic context.

Although it is the recitatives that deliver Tasso's lines, some arias take their cue from the poem, either by raiding its vocabulary and imagery or by articulating and enacting what the verse describes. These arias would have acted as triggers for the audience, recalling associated episodes and lines, especially the more famous ones, and suggesting interpretations and meanings not obviously conveyed by the libretto alone. The opening chorus "Viva del Mondo il Lume" (I.1), for example, is inserted to match Tasso's lines "Tacque, e seguì co' popolari accenti / misto un gran suon de' barbari instrumenti". These lines are not present in the libretto; there are no 'barbari instrumenti' (barbarous — i.e., exotic or primitive, instruments) to be found in Vivaldi's partially autograph score, and I cannot establish whether or not the composer makes musical references to popular tunes or styles. Nevertheless, I would argue that it is possible that the audience 'heard' this chorus through the prism of Tasso's lines and interpreted Vivaldi's asymmetrical alteration of the original metrical scheme devised by Palazzi³⁷, the rudimentary harmony emphasized by a simple motive based on the tonic and dominant triads, and the marked rhythmic unison between the three vocal parts (soprano, alto and bass) plus the instrumental accompaniment (presumably violins 1 and 2, viola and continuo group) — not unusual characteristics in themselves — as a fitting rendition of loud, primitive and vernacular expression³⁸. The equation between primitive, pagan and exotic might have then been completed by the

³⁵. See *Torquato Tasso tra letteratura, musica, teatro e arti figurative*, edited by Andrea Buzzoni, Bologna, Nuova Alfa, 1985; *Tasso, la musica, i musicisti*, edited by Maria Antonella Balsano and Thomas Walker, Florence, Olschki, 1988 (Quaderni della Rivista italiana di musicologia, 19); and *Formazione e fortuna del Tasso nella cultura della Serenissima*, *op. cit.* (see note 28). The latter includes a study of vernacular adaptations of Tasso's poem: VESCOVO, Piermario. 'Una fatica bizzarra e studiosa: El Goffredo del Tasso cantà alla barcarola del dottor Tomaso Mondini', pp. 259-284.

³⁶. The octave is singled out in the libretto (II. 7) and, as Strohm has noticed (STROHM, Reinhard. *The Operas of Antonio Vivaldi*, Florence, Olschki, 2008, p. 215 n203 [Quaderni vivaldiani, 13]), is used also in Vinci's commedia per musica *Li zite 'ngalera* (Naples, 1721).

³⁷. See Strohm's discussion of this chorus in *ibidem*.

³⁸. While these are not unusual characteristics for a ceremonial piece of this kind, the modest dimensions and homophonic texture of this chorus might have been more obvious when compared with the large-scale choruses in other early Vivaldi operas.

references to “Giove”, “Marte”, “Asia” and “the light of the world” — one of Christ’s attributes — that are lavished on Califfo³⁹.

Armida’s first aria, “A detti amabili” (1.3), on the other hand, derives from Tasso’s lines “pur che le mie vendette io vegga in parte, / il rispetto e l’onor stiasi in disparte.” (xvi, 73); Palazzi ends the character’s recitative with these lines and draws on a familiar vocabulary from Canto iv (25), where Tasso introduces the sorceress’s dangerous seductive strategies.

Armida al campo d’Egitto (1718) 1.3⁴⁰

Armida sola

Ritornello	D/ $f\sharp^{41}$	(a+b)
1. A detti amabili misti sospiri scherzi amorosi sguardi ritrosi furtivi e languidi siano a gl’incauti esca d’amor.	D	(a)
2. Sferzar il timido frenar l’audace, a tempo fingere or sdegno, or pace gl’accenda il cor.	$f\sharp$	(b)
3. Ma se poi facile se poi s’avvanza alla speranza la gelosia alle lusinghe segua il rigor.	b	(b1)
4. A detti amabili misti sospiri	D	(a)
	A	
	d	(a1)

³⁹. The references to Greek deities, although common in opera librettos of this time, could function as allusions to Egypt’s past submission to Greece and to its present paganism, over and above their metaphorical meaning.

⁴⁰. The aria given here reproduces the text as presented in the score (the 1718 libretto contains sections 1, 2 and 3 only). For a detailed comparison between the score and the various librettos, see PANCINO, Livia. ‘Le opere di Vivaldi nel raffronto fra libretti e partiture. II: *Armida al campo d’Egitto*; *Teuzzone*; *Tito Manlio*’, in: *Informazioni e studi vivaldiani*, xvii (1996), pp. 5-66: 5-36. In the score, a portion of this aria is crossed out and preceded by a new aria for Armida used in the 1738 revival, “Imparate alle mie pene”, written in a different hand and, according to Strohm, not by Vivaldi. See STROHM, Reinhard. *The Operas of Antonio Vivaldi* [...], *op. cit.* (see note 36).

⁴¹. Upper-case letters represent major keys, lower-case letters minor keys.

scherzi amorosi
sguardi ritrosi
siegua la gelosia,
siegua il rigor, D
alla speranza
alle lusinghe siegua il rigor.

Gerusalemme liberata IV, 25-26

Vanne al campo nemico: ivi s'impieghi
ogn'arte feminil ch'amore alletti.
Bagna di pianto e fa' melati i preghi,
tronca e confondi co' sospiri i detti:
beltà dolente e miserabil pieghi
al tuo volere i più ostinati petti.
Vela il soverchio ardir con la vergogna,
e fa' manto del vero a la menzogna.

Prendi, s'esser potrà, Goffredo a l'esca
de' dolci sguardi e de' be' detti adorni
[...]

This vocabulary can be traced further in the numerous treatises of the Renaissance concerning women and their seductive weapons:

[...] non resta che demandare che arme adopra la donna, mentre che combatte con li suoi amanti. Allora il savio Socrate: Adopra — disse — le belle parole, cenni accorti e canti soavi, simulati risi e sguardi acuti. — Oh crudel' arme! oh arme spietate! arme venenose! arme mortifere⁴²!

Tasso's list of feminine seductive weapons is suggestive of the *quinario* rhythm adopted by Palazzi in Armida's aria (typical of the *canzonetta*); Palazzi might have also been aware of its use (in the *sdrucchiolo* form) in Santinelli's *Armida nemica, amante, sposa* (1669) to characterize the Sirens' song⁴³. Vivaldi plays with the slightly asymmetrical length of Palazzi's text (three stanzas of respectively six, five, and five lines of *quinario*) and creates a 'quasi' *da capo* aria with coda (four sections in all). Repetitions of text do not correspond to repetitions in the music: the theme of "A detti amabili" (a) is repeated (in varied form) for the third stanza and anticipates the reprise of the first four lines of the first stanza concluded by a combination of the last two lines of the third stanza — all with different music (a1, a

⁴². BIONDO, Michelangelo. 'Angoscia doglia e pena. Le tre furie del mondo', in: *Trattati del Cinquecento sulla donna*, edited by Giuseppe Zonta, Bari, Laterza, 1913 (Scrittori d'Italia, 56), p. 108; quoted in BENEDETTI, Laura. *La sconfitta di Diana. Un percorso per la 'Gerusalemme liberata'*, Ravenna, Longo Editore, 1996, p. 62.

⁴³. The *quinario* rhythm features prominently also in Despina's aria "Una donna a quindici anni", of similar content, in Mozart's *Così fan tutte*.

melodic and chromatic variant of theme a). With the bold transition from D major to F \sharp minor at “furtivi e languidi” (b), the modal shifts and the chromatic inflections in the final section, Vivaldi not only emphasizes but also provides tangible proof of Armida’s insidious, capricious and teasing nature. Her attempt to regain Tisaferno’s love in III.3 with the aria “Nò, bel labbro, men sdegnoso” furnishes another instance of Vivaldi’s musical-dramatic enactment of her seductive strategies⁴⁴. Adrasto’s and Tisaferno’s symmetrical and vigorous duet in the previous scene (“Questo ferro e questo petto”) provides a fitting contrast to the unpredictable character of Armida’s aria. However, Vivaldi takes a lead from the imagery and the altered accentuation of their second stanza (moving from the steady trochaic metre of “Questo ferro e questo petto” to the fleeter anapaestic and dactylic “Si per voi vaghe pupille”) to compose a dance-like piece in 3/8 metre, which, in its playful and ornate character, begins to undermine the heroic character of Tisaferno, “Mars’s thunderbolt” (“e Tisaferno, il folgore di Marte / a cui non è chi d’agguagliar si vante”. *Gerusalemme*, XVII, 31), and the ferocious Adrasto (“[...] Adrasto il fero / che di serpenti indosso ha per usbergo”. *Gerusalemme* XVII, 28), thereby showing that Armida’s plan is already working.

While not drawing so heavily on Tasso’s poetry, the rest of the libretto is punctuated by short quotations from *Gerusalemme liberata* (Cantos IV, V, VI, XVI, XVII, XIX, XX), which demonstrate, if not necessarily Palazzi’s poetic skills, at least his thorough knowledge of the poem (or of previous librettos) and his understanding of its parallelisms and contrasts on those occasions when he transfers poetic material from one Tassian character to another (from Erminia to the newly invented Osmira; from Eustazio to Tisaferno; from Rinaldo to Emireno) or when he addresses Tasso’s lines to a character different from the original one (Armida to Emireno instead of to Rinaldo) — sometimes with ironic results, as when Emireno tries to fend off Armida’s insidious seduction with Rinaldo’s words “Saro’ tuo cavalier, quanto concede / la guerra d’Asia” (*Gerusalemme*, XVI, 54, and, from the mouth of the original character, also *Armida abbandonata*, 1707, III.5). Vivaldi may have been aiming for a similarly ironic *Verfremdungseffekt* when he assigned an aria “alla francese” to the Egyptian king Califfo: “So che combatte ancor” (I.10).

Palazzi altogether avoids taking obvious quotations from the cantos that concern Armida and Rinaldo. This abstention is rather unexpected when one considers the obvious parallelisms that this librettist establishes between the pairs Armida–Emireno and Armida–Rinaldo in the poem, as well as the central place assigned to Armida’s seduction of Emireno in the opera. Clearly, Palazzi prefers to take material from sections of the poem

⁴⁴. See Strohm’s description of this aria in *The Opera of Antonio Vivaldi* [...], *op. cit.* (see note 36): “Armida’s teasing reply to Tisaferno’s accusations (“No, lovely mouth, less disdainful”) is so ironic, witty and polite as to make Emireno’s admonitions to her in Act I appear plain and uncouth. The rhetorical enactment of the first line alone opens with a firm ‘No’, which is followed in turn by a flattering ‘bel labbro’, an emphatic (high-pitched) ‘men’, and a ‘disdainfully’ low-pitched ‘sdegnoso’.”

dealing with heroism, war and revenge. Notwithstanding its debt to Tasso's imagery and vocabulary, Palazzi's *Armida* speaks the language of the mainstream operatic tradition and lacks the emotional and psychological depth with which Tasso, Quinault and, to a certain extent, Silvani had endowed her.

ARMIDA'S SPACE: NATURE

This is the first 'Armida' opera in which Rinaldo does not appear. Because of this fact, it lacks the juxtapositions of Armida-Rinaldo, female-male, Muslim-Christian and East-West that characterize many 'exotic' operas, including Silvani's two *Armida* settings. Similarly to Silvani's *Armida abbandonata*, however, the action in Vivaldi's *Armida al campo d'Egitto* is confined within a closed space⁴⁵, the Egyptian camp; as one glimpses from the very beginning of the opera, control of the camp soon passes from its rightful leader Califfo (or Emireno) to Armida, transforming it into her own private space.

In *Gerusalemme liberata* this space is represented by a magnificent palace located in the Fortunate Isles, a distant realm lying beyond the Western lands and the known world that is inhabited by a variety of different civilizations: "[...] Diverse bande / diversi han riti ad abiti e favelle" (*Gerusalemme*, xv, 28). At the centre of this magnificent palace stands a secluded, round, impenetrable and enchanted garden, where luxuriant, continually self-renewing nature reigns (*Gerusalemme*, xvi). Silvani sets his entire *Armida abbandonata* within the natural environment of Armida's garden, while Palazzi locates key events of the opera in the "boschetto ameno [...] luna risplendente" (II.12-16). In Armida's most congenial space, in fact, Palazzi enacts her final and crucial deception practised on Emireno; most important, nature acts as the musical locus of a remarkable series of arias in Acts II and III:

"Farfalletta alla sua face", II.4, Erminia *di dentro* (off-stage)⁴⁶

"Tra l'oscuro di nemi e procelle", II.5, Armida

"Si come cerva", II.7, Osmira

"Augelletti garruletti", II.7, Osmira

"Tal'or il gelsomin piange nel prato", II.11, Adrasto

"Quel torrente, ch'alza l'onde", III.4, Tisaferno

"Agitata da venti, dall'onte", III.5, Adrasto

"Se correndo in seno al mare", III.6, Osmira

"Tender lacci tu volesti", III.8, Armida

⁴⁵. 'Closed' in the sense that there is no connection with the world beyond Gaza: no one arrives and no one leaves after the arrival of Armida at the beginning of the opera. Erminia does not manage to escape, and only at the end of the opera will she be left free to go.

⁴⁶. The imagery of the butterfly attracted to the light in Erminia's aria "Farfalletta alla tua face" (II.4) comes from Canto IV, where Tasso's describes Eustazio's attraction to Armida on first seeing her.

Nature is a constant presence in *dramma per musica*; in their decision to include several simile arias in *Armida al campo d'Egitto*, Palazzi and Vivaldi may simply have bowed to contemporary operatic conventions. Nature images in opera (and poetry) were inspired by the Virgilian theme of bucolic repose, revived and cultivated in the eighteenth century by the Arcadian Academy. The way in which nature was commonly portrayed, with its trees, birds and springs, referred to an ideal landscape encountered time and again in other dramas and poems, with its distant origins in ancient rhetoric. Gradually absorbed into rhetoric, the ideal landscape, the poetical *topos* of the *locus amoenus*, became a source of nature images for any kind of speech and poetry, soon establishing itself as a necessary appurtenance of poetry⁴⁷. Through its close association with music in the pastoral genre of the sixteenth century⁴⁸, it later evolved into an essential ingredient of *dramma per musica*.

In 1715 Pier Jacopo Martello advanced what we may identify as the earliest 'theorization' of opera in his *Della tragedia antica e moderna*⁴⁹. Among his many suggestions on how to write a successful drama, he advised poets always to include simile arias with nature references in their librettos, since nature images would allow them to recreate in the listener, rather than simply to describe, the ideas they wished to express. Nature can channel creative energy and create a bridge between the stage and the auditorium. Moreover, as in its ancient Greek idyllic archetype, the *locus amoenus* can act as a "distraction from the developed world" (but without necessarily entailing the oblivion or repression of reality)⁵⁰. In this role, nature imagery can function as a vehicle for the expression of ideas about contemporary culture and society⁵¹.

In *Gerusalemme liberata* nature comes to encompass 'human' nature and is endowed with a complex subtext. It articulates the antagonism between nature and modern civic society, with its roles, duties and responsibilities; between humanity's wild impulses and deepest desires, and its self-discipline; between youth and maturity; between false belief and true values; between Paganism and Christianity; between East and West. It also articulates the opposition between the feminine and the masculine⁵².

⁴⁷. See CURTIUS, Ernst Robert. *Europäische Literatur und lateinisches Mittelalter*, Bern, A. Francke Verlag, 1948. English translation by Willard R. Trask as *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1953, p. 193.

⁴⁸. See the complex and fascinating study by Giovanni MORELLI 'Et in Arcadia adhuc: Observations on the Continuing Evolution of the "Pastoral Idea"', in: *Music as Social and Cultural Practice*, op. cit (see note 13), pp. 391-413. Here, Morelli explores the fluidity of the pastoral genre and its ability to engage with a variety of themes through the centuries. It is significant that one of its constant elements is music.

⁴⁹. MARTELLO, Pier Jacopo. *Della tragedia antica e moderna*, Rome, Gonzaga, 1715.

⁵⁰. MORELLI, Giovanni. *Op. cit.* (see note 48), pp. 398-399.

⁵¹. See in addition STROHM, Reinhard. 'Les Sauvages, Music in Utopia, and the Decline of the Courtly Pastoral', in: *Il saggiautore musicale*, XI (2004), pp. 21-50.

⁵². See, for example, GÜNTERT, Georges. *L'epos dell'ideologia regnante e il romanzo delle passioni: Saggio sulla 'Gerusalemme Liberata'*, Pisa, Pacini, 1989; *Refiguring Woman: Perspectives on Gender and the Italian Renais-*

Armida embodies the power of nature (and femininity) at its darkest and fiercest. Her aria “Tra l’oscuro di nemi a procelle”, placed halfway through the opera (II, 5), was perhaps a feeble attempt on Palazzi’s part to align Armida’s synergy with the forces of nature. The dark image of the storm in the first line, introduced with the incisive trochaic rhythm, followed by the less incisive dactylic, is suddenly moderated by a flash of lightning. Just as lightning brings light and relief from the darkness of the storm, so, too, the expectation of a positive outcome to Armida’s plan brings a glimmer of hope over Erminia’s fate. Vivaldi’s music for this aria does not survive, but knowing what he made of “Armata di furore”, at the end of Act I, one wonders how he might have treated the nuances in the poetic text, while obviously producing a full-blown storm aria. “Armata di furore” is Armida’s second aria; in its explosion of pathos, it rounds off the delineation of her ethos, which began with her first aria, “A detti amabili”. The poetic text might have offered another composer the possibility of emphasizing further the imagery associated with “vezzi”, “prieghi” and “pianto”; Vivaldi opts instead for a warlike, exuberant display of Armida’s “furore” and “ira” (suggested by the image of Armida’s entry into the battlefield armed with fury) employing hammered quavers and wide descending intervals that contrast with seductive, dangerously sinuous chromaticism on “vezzi” and “prieghi”. The *stile concitato* was, of course, not new in association with such confrontations, and Ruggieri, too, had used it for Armida’s aria “Furie, mostri” in his *Armida abbandonata* of 1707. Although we cannot be sure whether Vivaldi knew Ruggieri’s setting (he certainly knew the composer well), it is possible that Ruggieri’s music provided him with a point of reference in the treatment of such an exciting character⁵³. Both arias draw inspiration from the incisive dactylic rhythm and make ample use of coloratura and descending incisive and cadential intervals, but whereas Ruggieri’s broken, angular melodic line is suggestive of Armida’s inner turmoil and loss of control, Vivaldi’s wider melodic span and characteristic progressions lend this aria a fluid urgency that does justice to the image of Armida’s all-embracing destructive potential.

As the drama progresses, Armida’s power grows, and nature images become more pervasive through the use of related stage sets and arias. Their imagery also helps to diversify the characters: on one hand, the submissive and naive Erminia is likened to a small butterfly, while the gentle and lively Osmira is associated with the images of a thirsty hind, small birds and a gentle stream (“Si come cerva” and “Augelletti garruletti” in II.7; “Se correndo in seno al mare” in III.6); on the other hand, dark and tempestuous clouds

sance, edited by Marilyn Migiel and Juliana Schiesari, Ithaca (NY), Cornell University Press, 1991; MIGIEL, Marilyn. *Gender and Genealogy in Tasso’s Gerusalemme Liberata*, Lewiston (NY)-Lampeter, Edward Mellen Press, 1993; BENEDETTI, Laura. *Op. cit.* (see note 42); ZATTI, Sergio. *Op. cit.* (see note 29).

⁵³. Vivaldi had looked at Ruggieri’s music for inspiration before. He owned an autograph score of Ruggieri’s D major *Gloria* (dated 9 September 1708), today preserved among the Vivaldi manuscripts in Turin, from which he ‘borrowed’ several movements for his own *Gloria* settings, RV 588 and 589.

speak of Armida (“Tra l’oscuro di nemi e procelle”, in II.5); and a turbulent river of Tisaferno (“Quel torrente, ch’alza l’onde”, in III.4)⁵⁴. Nature imagery of a delicate kind (“Tal’or il gelsomin piange nel prato”, in II.11) also provides the grounds for Tisaferno’s allegation of Adrasto’s effeminacy in III.4 and confirms the latter’s devotion to Armida, whatever she may do to him (“Agitata da venti, dall’onte”, III.5). Vivaldi sets this aria as a gigue, with a regular motive formed from semiquavers in 3/8 that remains constant even when the poetic rhythm changes; this is counterpointed against a continuous fluttering of fronds (variable in its intensity) recreated by the strings. The aria can come across as mildly disconcerting. The choice of words in the first line of the two stanzas — “agitata”, “venti”, “rigore” and the ambiguous “onte” (bringing to mind the more conventional “onde”: was Palazzi adapting a text based on the simile of a tempestuous sea?) — sung to the notes of the tonic chord, almost deceives the listener by conjuring up a darker image of, say, a little ship tossed about by a tempestuous sea. The listener’s expectations are thwarted when the image of a tree that bends under the power of the wind is introduced simultaneously with a change from *decasillabo* to *ottonario* and from a faster, more agitated anapaestic metre to a more playful, trochaic one, a transition that Vivaldi ignores. By allowing the music to override the implications of the poetic metre, Vivaldi lets Adrasto’s singing become more ornate, growing more distant from the darker beginning⁵⁵.

Act II is set almost entirely amid nature. After an opening banquet, where Armida reiterates her proposition, the action moves first to the Royal pleasure gardens (II.7–11) and later to a pleasant grove at night (II.12–16). This is where Armida’s deceptions and manipulations are given full play. The series of scenes in the ‘Deliziosa’ opens with a feast of nature images. Osmira first recites an octave from Tasso that establishes a comparison between herself and a thirsty hind chased by dogs, and then leaves the stage after singing a birdsong aria, “Augelletti garruletti”⁵⁶. The following scenes witness a full display of Armida’s manipulatory games, climaxing in her final deception of Emireno: after attracting him to the grove for a meeting with Erminia, she tries to seduce him once more, but, as before, he rejects her. Emireno seeks to avoid confronting Armida and tries to leave the stage quickly without singing an aria, as he had done earlier in II.4⁵⁷; but this time Armida outsmarts him and feigns suicide. Emireno is caught by Califfò while trying to stop her,

⁵⁴. Tisaferno’s aria “Quel torrente, ch’alza l’onde” refers to Adrasto, who is likened to a turbulent river that will eventually ‘die’ in the sea.

⁵⁵. Tasso’s insistence on the use of the adjective “fero” [ferocious] to connote Adrasto is also aimed at enhancing his passive submission to Armida’s sexual power: “Vedele incontra il fero Adrasto assiso / che par ch’occhio non batta e che non spiri, / tanto da lei pendea, tanto in lei fiso / pasceva i suoi famelici desiri.” (XIX, 68).

⁵⁶. This aria was re-used by Vivaldi in *Giustino* (1724). See STROHM, Reinhard. *The Operas of Antonio Vivaldi*, *op. cit.* (see note 36).

⁵⁷. After Armida’s initial attempt in I.12, Emireno pretends to misunderstand Armida’s true intentions and leaves the stage singing “Cerca pur con men rossore”, while he reacts more boldly to her second attempt

and, with Armida's helping hand, the king is led to believe that Emireno was threatening her honour. Emireno is arrested. Armida's control both over him and over Califfo, who now places Emireno's fate into her hands, is established through the aria "Innocente esser vorresti" (II.14), directed *piano* at Emireno, in which she blackmails him.

Simile arias in Act III are placed adjacently and enhance further Armida's growing and pervasive power. She is finally in charge of Emireno's life and about to sign his death warrant when Osmira breaks the news of Erminia's flight and the combat between Adrasto and Tisaferno; most seriously, the whole army is now divided and fighting among itself. The scene culminates in Armida's final aria, "Tender lacci tu volesti", a shameless, arrogant farrago of lies that Reinhard Strohm describes in the following terms:

[...] a massive concerted composition, the only one in this opera requiring two *corni da caccia*. The great variety of textures (including vocal passages accompanied by horns and solo bassoon alone) recalls pictorial concertos about autumn and hunting, including "L'autunno", RV 293⁵⁸.

While the imagery of the hunter and his prey is a most suitable metaphor for Armida and her lovers, the poetic text of this aria refers neither to autumn nor to hunting: it is through Vivaldi's characterizing musical setting that Armida's last aria establishes its association with nature.

ARMIDA'S SPACE: THE CIRCLE

Armida al campo d'Egitto is distinguished by a significant dramatic unity that places Armida and her plans for revenge at the centre of the action and of the constellation of characters. All the characters, without exception, are drawn into her schemes, interact with her and are manipulated by her. Both Osmira (Califfo's niece) and Erminia (Califfo's prisoner) are entrusted to her care by Califfo, who also places Emireno's life in her hands — but all are deceived by her. From a musical point of view (at least from what we can observe in the arias for Acts I and III preserved in the score), Armida towers over the rest of the cast, so far as the number and scale of her arias are concerned, followed by the *seconda donna*, Osmira, whose arias present, instead, a wider expressive spectrum⁵⁹. The consistent and orderly use of Tasso's octaves at the beginning of Acts I and II provides continuity between these sections, and the reprise of the same motive at the end binds the various parts

(II.2) and declares his true love for Erminia in the aria "Lascia di sospirar". At Armida's third attempt (II.4) Emireno avoids confrontation and leaves the stage without singing an aria.

⁵⁸. STROHM, Reinhard. *The Operas of Antonio Vivaldi*, *op. cit.* (see note 36).

⁵⁹. She sings seven arias and one duet; Osmira (S) sings six arias; Erminia (S), four arias; Emireno (S), four arias; Adrasto (A), three arias and two duets; Tisaferno (A), two arias and one duet; Califfo, (B) two arias.

into a unified whole. This means that both Act I and Act II begin with the externalization of Armida's plans for revenge, and that Act III ends on the same theme, leaving the outcome unresolved. The overall design is that of a loop resembling a gigantic *da capo* aria (which begins and ends in C major) — a circular structure like Armida's palace and garden in the Fortunate Isles, and which anthropologists associate with the feminine⁶⁰.

Palazzi, in his first operatic essay, struggles to devise (or perhaps deliberately avoids) a sustainable dramaturgical framework that can justify the presence of several of the scenes and arias (see, for example, II.16 and III.9 — plus III.10 and III.11, which interrupt the climax before the final scene), and creates a drama that lacks true plot development: the unresolved finale serves up once more the externalization of Armida's desire for revenge; since this is a familiar occurrence in the original poem, in other 'Armida' operas and, most important, in earlier scenes of the same opera, Armida's fresh outburst weakens her credibility as a dynamic force. Because of its small scale, the vigorous and incisive chorus sung in unison at the end of the opera ("A pugnar, a ferir, a svenar") goes only some way towards redressing this imbalance. The finale does not provide a resolution of commensurate weight and reflects Armida's disempowerment.

From the point of view of the narrative, the ending brings no winners. The mismatched couples that would normally come together never do. Osmira will not marry Adrasto and is destined instead to take pleasure in suffering, a resolution announced in her last aria "Se penar dovessi amando" (III.10). The aria's extreme simplicity, perhaps unsuited to Osmira's complex character, as Strohm believes⁶¹, might instead have successfully exposed her vulnerability and become a final rhetorical appeal for pity to the audience before the finale — similar, although supported by different musical strategies, to Emireno's pathetic cry in the previous scene ("Son infelice, è vero") and Erminia's planned solo scene afterwards (significantly, there are no further solo scenes or arias for Armida after "Tender lacci tu volesti"). Erminia will not return Emireno's love, and will instead leave Gaza to resume her peregrinations in search of Tancredi, while Tisaferno and Adrasto will carry on competing for Armida's carnal favours. As for the Syrian enchantress, she has obtained neither Rinaldo nor revenge.

CONCLUSION

Califfo's diminished authority (even more evident to those who knew Tasso's depiction of his Christian counterpart, Goffredo), the disarray in which the Egyptian camp

⁶⁰. "The circle was always one of the primary feminine signs [...] associated with the idea of a protected or consecrated space, the center of the motherland, a ceremonial space where all participants are equal". WALKER, Barbara. *The Women's Dictionary of Symbols and Sacred Objects*, San Francisco, Harper & Row, 1988, p. 4, quoted in BENEDETTI, Laura. *Op. cit.* (see note 42), p. 64.

⁶¹. STROHM, Reinhard. *The Operas of Antonio Vivaldi, op. cit.* (see note 36).

is thrown because of Armida, the lack of truly heroic arias, the gradual ‘feminization’ of the drama through the pervasive imagery of nature and Armida’s disempowerment do not conjure up traditional images of a ferocious, menacing Muslim world. True, after the victory of the Holy League and the fall of Belgrade in August 1717 the Venetians did not need to exorcize feelings of anxiety over the Turkish menace any longer and could start to observe with amused distance a once terrifying entity now tamed and immersed in chaos, a victim of its own diabolical weapons. That said, *Armida al campo d’Egitto*, with its ideological ancestry, intertextual allusions, metaphorical associations and compelling music, remains an ambivalent work. While perceptions of a variegated and disjointed East emerge clearly through the vocabulary, the narrative, the poetry, the music and the dramaturgy, images of power and cruelty of the ‘Other’ remain ambiguous, shifting, as they do, between the ‘official’ representative of the Muslim world, Califfo, and Armida. Similarly ambiguous are the means by which Vivaldi and Palazzi achieve effects of alienation (in addition to the more obvious stage directions and costumes) through unusual musical setting and through the lack, or the ambiguous, maladroit treatment, of conventional features of *dramma per musica*: the mismatched couples, the *lieto fine*, the *da capo* form, the *canzonetta* sung diegetically; the build-up to climatic moments, the concluding chorus — features that collectively might have suggested to the audience a *dramma per musica* of an uncouth, ‘barbarous’ kind.

Armida’s problematic morality and menacing sexual allure (“par che minacci e minacciando alletta”) act as a pervasive and propulsive force throughout the drama; her role provides an unparalleled platform for a star singer and places female power centre stage. Yet, this energy is neutralized and objectified through Vivaldi’s eschewal of musical complexity and by her diminished presence in the closing scenes of the opera. As in Tasso, Armida takes shape under the observer’s gaze: Vivaldi depicted a feminized East in order to explore men’s deepest, untamed desires.

CHAPTER SIX

THE VIVALDI-VINCI INTERCONNECTIONS, 1724-26 AND BEYOND: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE LATE STYLE OF VIVALDI

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THE ROMAN CARNIVAL, 1724

THE PATHS OF ANTONIO VIVALDI AND LEONARDO VINCI crossed several times during the mid-1720s. These intersections would be of great consequence in the artistic development of the two composers.

The first intersection occurred in Rome during the Carnival season of 1724, when Vivaldi produced his *Giustino* at the Teatro Capranica and Vinci his *Farnace* at the Teatro d'Alibert¹.

Vinci was the junior composer, making his debut in Rome; his opera was accordingly presented in the 'inferior' position at the beginning of the season, the second opera, following tradition, being better prepared and rehearsed than the first. The young Vinci had established a reputation for himself in Naples, composing a series of successful *com-medie per musica* for the city's comic theatre, the Teatro Fiorentini. The previous year, he had switched to composing opera seria for the Neapolitan court and would soon abandon the comic theatre altogether². Vivaldi, conversely, was the senior composer. This was his

¹. *Giustino: drama per musica da recitarsi nel teatro dell'ill.mo Sig. Federico Capranica nel carnevale dell'anno 1724*, Rome: Bernabò, 1724; libretto in B-Bc, F-Pc, I-Bc, I-Fm, I-MAC, I-Rsc, I-Vgc and US-Wc; see BELLINA, Anna Laura - BRIZI, Bruno - PENSA, Maria Grazia. *I libretti vivaldiani: recensione e collazione dei testimoni a stampa*, Florence, Olschki, 1982, pp. 72-73 (Quaderni vivaldiani, 3). *Farnace: Dramma per musica da recitarsi nel Teatro Alibert pe'l carnevale dell'anno 1724*, Rome, Bernabò, 1724; libretto in D-FRu, F-Pc, I-Bc, I-Fm, I-MAC, I-Rsc, I-Vgc and P-C; see SARTORI, Claudio. *I libretti italiani a stampa dalle origini al 1800: catalogo analitico con 16 indici*, 7 vols., Cuneo, Bertola e Locatelli, 1990, no. 9732.

². Vinci is known to have been in Rome during carnival 1722, his presence attested by a caricature of the composer by Pier Leone Ghezzi that is now in the Pushkin Museum, Moscow: "L. Vinci Napolitano famosissimo / Compositor di Musica per Teatri / fatto da Me Cav. Ghezzi 10 Febbraro / 1722". Reproduced

second or third season in Rome. Vivaldi opera had been introduced to Rome during the carnival season of 1720 at the Teatro della Pace, when the collaborative *Tito Manlio* featured an Act III by the *Prete rosso*. Considering that Vivaldi was busy with the production of *La Candace* in Mantua during this same carnival season, it is unlikely that he was in Rome for that production³. The composer was, however, in the city during carnival 1723, when his *Ercole sul Termodonte* was produced at the Teatro Capranica⁴. Returning to Rome in 1724, not only was Vivaldi again given pride of place within the season at the Capranica, but he was also involved in the first opera of the season, composing Act II of the collaborative *La virtù trionfante dell'amore e dell'odio*⁵.

Although Vinci's opera was produced at the beginning of this season and Vivaldi's opera at the end, there are indications of cross-influence in the scores⁶. Several arias in

in ROSTIROLLA, Giancarlo. *Il 'Mondo novo' musicale di Pier Leone Ghezzi*, Milan, Skira, 2001, p. 244. This trip undoubtedly had some connection with the commission for his first Roman opera.

³. In a famous letter of 1737 Vivaldi stated that he was “tre carnevali a fare Opera in Roma”, which suggests that he was present during all three seasons in which his operas were produced in Rome. The fact that Vivaldi produced *La Candace* in Mantua while also contributing to collaborative operas in two different cities during this single carnival season — *Filippo, re di Macedonia* at S. Angelo in Venice, with G. Boniventi composing the first two acts, and *Tito Manlio* at the Teatro della Pace in Rome, with G. Boni and G. Giorgi respectively contributing Acts I and II — suggests that the composer, having obtained commissions for carnival 1720 in three different cities, found a neat way of accommodating all three: he both composed and produced *La Candace* in Mantua, in fulfilment of his court appointment, and then farmed out the Roman commission to Boni and Giorgi and the Venetian commission to Boniventi, allocating the opening acts to his rather obscure collaborators, while he reserved for himself the more prestigious third act.

⁴. *Ercole sul Termodonte: drama per musica da recitarsi nella sala dell'ill.mo Sig. Federico Capranica l'anno 1723*, Rome, Bernabò, 1723; libretto in I-Bc, I-Fnm, I-Nc, I-Rsc, I-MAC, I-Rvat and US-Wc; see BELLINA, Anna Laura - BRIZI, Bruno - PENZA, Maria Grazia. *Op. cit.* (see note 1), pp. 57-58.

⁵. STROHM, Reinhard. *Giustino by Antonio Vivaldi: Introduction, Critical Notes and Critical Commentary*, Milan, Ricordi, 1991, p. 7.

⁶. As with most of Vivaldi's surviving operas, the score of *Giustino* is preserved in an autograph manuscript in the Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria, Turin, (Foà 34, ff. 1-184), with the non-autograph prefatory title “Il Giustino / Atti tre / Con Sinfonia in principio, e / Coro in fine / Musica di Don Antonio Vivaldi”. The manuscript contains a considerable amount of rejected or alternate material; the entire score, including the alternate material, is published in a scholarly edition, with sketches and variants (presented in twelve appendices) and a very ample commentary by the editor, Reinhard Strohm (see note 5). The separate volume containing the music is entitled *Antonio Vivaldi. Giustino. Dramma per musica di Niccolò Beregan, RV 717*, Milan: Ricordi, 1991. A score of Vinci's *Farnace* survives uniquely in the Santini Collection in Münster (Hs 4243) initialled and dated “Agosto 1729 G.F.C.” at the end of Act III by Francesco Cantoni, the Roman theatre copyist. The manuscript is not copied continuously, but comprises a series of thirty-one separate aria fascicles on a variety of papers and in several hands, each individually titled “Del Vinci / in Alibert 1724”; these fascicles have then been connected by the recitative and the remaining sixteen arias, which have been copied continuously by Cantoni. Whereas the continuously copied parts date from 1729, the independent aria fascicles presumably date from the 1724 production. The connection with the earlier performance is reinforced by the presence of two additional arias that originated from the unexpected revival of the work at the end of the season, the revival that would pit Vinci's opera against Vivaldi's *Giustino*.

Vinci's *Farnace* display characteristics that cannot be observed in his earlier operas, characteristics that are today associated with Vivaldi. For example, "Forte eroe" and "Anche a Giove" are concerto-style arias, the former with contrasted string and oboe parts, and the latter with a prominent unison theme, followed by tremolo sequential passages (Ex. 1).

Ex. 1a: Vinci, *Farnace*, "Forti eroi" (Tamiri, I.14), bars 7-12.

(Andante)

Oboe I
Oboe II

VI I
VI II

Viola

Tamiri
For - ti, e - roi, se - del - la ter - ra ful - mi - nan -

Basso

10

do - tri - on - fa - te co - me, i re - gni

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Ex. 1b: Vinci, *Farnace*, “Anche a Giove” (Gilade, II.6), bars 1-7.

The musical score consists of two systems of four staves each. The first system includes staves for VI I, VI II, Viola, and Basso. The second system continues the same four parts. The music is in 3/4 time and the key signature has one flat (B-flat major). The VI I and VI II staves feature a melodic line with grace notes and some slurs. The Viola and Basso staves provide a harmonic accompaniment with a steady eighth-note pattern.

Since Vinci's opera was produced before Vivaldi's, one would assume that he was either already familiar with the latter's music or became familiar with it prior to composing *Farnace*. In either case, the Vivaldian touches appear to have been added to approximate the style of the composer who would be featured at the rival theatre during his Roman debut. This apparently deliberate strategy also characterizes Vinci's change from comic to serious opera: cultivating the Neapolitan *commedia per musica* to build up a local reputation before switching to the cosmopolitan opera seria, the second being the ultimate genre with which to gain a European reputation.

On the other hand, Vivaldi's *Giustino*, premiered after Vinci's opera, displays some notable instances of the new Neapolitan style associated with Vinci and his colleagues. The arias "Mio dolce amato sposo" and "Il piacer della vendetta" are as modern and Neapolitan as anything in Vinci's *Farnace*. "Il piacer della vendetta," for example, employs slow moving harmonies above a lively *Trommelbaß* accompaniment, supporting a syncopated melody with ornate varied rhythms (Ex. 2).

Ex. 2: Vivaldi, *Giustino*, “Il piacer della vendetta” (Vitaliano, III.1), bars 9-13.

Andante

VI I
VI II

Viola

Vitaliano
chia - ma e già m'al - let - ta per pla - car

Basso

11

Among the latter is an ornamented mordent figure (see bar 12) of which Vinci would make considerable use — especially during the 1730 season, when he produced the first settings of Metastasio’s *Alessandro nell’Indie* and *Artaserse* at the Teatro della Dame.

Hellmuth Christian Wolff has singled out “Mio dolce amato sposo” as exemplifying “how already fully developed” Vivaldi’s operas are in their “timbre and style of what used to be called ‘Neapolitan’ opera”⁷. Regarding the *galant* Neapolitan elements, Reinhard

7. WOLFF, Hellmuth Christian. ‘Italian Opera, 1700-1750’, in: *New Oxford History of Music*, vol. v: *Opera and Church Music: 1630-1750*, edited by Anthony Lewis and Nigel Fortune, London, Oxford University Press, 1975, pp. 73-168: 100-101. Wolff’s assertion that “this aria is in no way exceptional” runs counter to the basic premise of the present essay, but then his example served to advance the revisionist thesis of “the Fairy Tale of Neapolitan opera”, in which he argued that Venetians rather than Neapolitans developed the ‘Neapolitan’ style, proceeding from the principle that most of Vivaldi’s operas “were written before the early operas of Leo, Vinci, and Pergolesi” — and in the process treating the operas of Vivaldi, Vinci, Leo and Pergolesi as monolithic blocks when considering the lines of influence.

Strohm draws attention to the “gently ‘tapping’ quavers in andante tempo, used also for syllabic declamation”, as well as to the “sighing appoggiaturas” and overall “cantabile element” (Ex. 3a)⁸.

Ex. 3a: Vivaldi, *Giustino*, “Mio dolce amato sposo” (Arianna, I.14), bars 8–13.
(Andante)

Paralleling Vinci’s melodic style, each poetic line is given its own melodic phrase, usually conceived in two- or four-bar units in antecedent/consequent relationships, each

⁸. STROHM, Reinhard. *Giustino by Antonio Vivaldi [...], op. cit.* (see note 5), p. 36.

phrase being demarcated by a caesura and rest; among the caesuras, the most common form is the “sighing appoggiatura”⁹. Strohm is critical of this pretty aria because too much emphasis is given to the “rolling melismas” with their “virtuosic armoury [that] approaches what Porpora would have written for Farinelli”, and not enough attention is given to the declamation; he cites several instances of awkward text-setting (see Ex. 3b)¹⁰.

Ex. 3b: Vivaldi, *Giustino*, “Mio dolce amato sposo” (Arianna, I.14), bars 16-20.

(Andante)

VI I

VI II

Viola

Arianna

Basso

(stan) - - - - - te, per - ché mor - rò - - fe - del, mor - rò - - co-

- stan - - - - - te, co - stan - te.

⁹. On the system underlying Vinci’s periodic melody, see MARKSTROM, Kurt. ‘Burney’s Assessment of Leonardo Vinci’, in: *Acta Musicologica*, LXVIII (1995), pp. 142-163.

¹⁰. STROHM, Reinhard. *Giustino by Antonio Vivaldi [...]*, *op. cit.* (see note 5), p. 36.

This bias suggests that Vivaldi is picking up on the more obvious aspects of the Neapolitan style, while missing out on its strong sense of declamation. According to Strohm, only at the end of the second section, on the key phrase “l’ultimo caro addio”, does Vivaldi create the type of “word-gesture in which the Neapolitans like Leonardo Vinci excelled”¹¹.

In describing this new influence in the music of Vivaldi, one should be careful not to overestimate that of Vinci. There was another Neapolitan composer who would have made a major impact on Vivaldi in the previous season, when *Ercole sul Termodonte* came up against Porpora’s *Adelaide* at the Teatro d’Alibert¹². *Adelaide*, designed to showcase the talents of Porpora’s brilliant singing pupil Farinelli, became one of its composer’s most successful and influential works. According to the *Avvisi di Napoli*, it gained “the greatest universal applause”, demonstrating the composer’s “talent, as well as a vivacious spirit”¹³. The success of *Adelaide* would undoubtedly have made an impact on Vivaldi when he composed his next Roman opera, *Giustino*. One notes, in particular, the lavish, ornate and extravagant aspect of some of the coloratura passages — for example, the consecutive trills and the mixture of triplets and dotted rhythms in “Mio dolce amato sposo” and the ornately ‘fussy’ rhythms and syncopations in “Il piacer della vendetta” (see Exx. 2 and 3b), which come closer to Porpora’s *Adelaide* than to Vinci’s *Farnace*, despite the presence of Farinelli in the cast of both operas.

One can, however, specifically pinpoint the influence of Vinci in “Ho nel petto un cor sì forte”, which is distinguished by its unusual obbligato for the *salterio*, a type of psaltery. Although one would naturally assume that Vinci’s Vivaldian concerted aria for this instrument was inspired by Vivaldi’s, the former was in fact performed first. While it is possible that Vivaldi’s aria was already in existence and Vinci copied this very Vivaldian idea along with the style, we have Strohm’s assurance that Vivaldi composed the score to *Giustino* in Rome, six to eight weeks before the premiere¹⁴. Considering its position within the opera, as one of the newly composed arias serving as Act II finale, it is likely that “Ho nel petto un cor sì forte” was composed rather late in that six- to eight-week period (i.e., after

¹¹. *Ibidem*, p. 37.

¹². *Adelaide: drama per musica da recitarsi nel Teatro Alibert pe’l carnevale dell’anno 1723*, Rome, Bernabò, 1723; librettos in B-Bc, D-Fru, GB-Lbm, I-Bc, I-Bu, I-Fm, I-MAC, I-Rn, I-Vgc, US-BE and US-Wc; see SARTORI, Claudio. *I libretti italiani [...]*, *op. cit.* (see note 1), no. 280; a complete score is preserved in Schwerin, Landesbibliothek Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Mus. 4294.

¹³. *Avvisi di Napoli*, 2 February 1723, cited in GRIFFIN, Thomas. *Musical References in the ‘Gazzetta di Napoli, 1681-1725’*, Berkeley, Fallen Leaf Press, 1993, p. 106; Roma, 29 Gennaro: “Nella sera [sabato] nel [...] Teatro d’Alibert andò in Scena il Drama, intitolato Adelaide, che ha riportato il maggiore, e l’universale applauso, non per le comparse delle Scene solite vedersi, ma per la composizione della Musica del Celebre Maestro di Cappella Signor Nicolò Porpora Napoletano, che in tutte l’occasioni ha dato in quest’Alma Città saggio della sua virtù, accompagnata da un vivace spirito”.

¹⁴. STROHM, Reinhard. *Giustino by Antonio Vivaldi [...]*, *op. cit.* (see note 5), p. 10.

the premiere of Vinci's *Farnace*)¹⁵. Vivaldi highlights this new influence by placing these arias in important positions within the opera: as the finales to Acts I and II, sung by the heroine and the hero, respectively, and as the opening aria in Act III, sung by the villain.

That Vivaldi was pleased with his adaptations of the Neapolitan style is proved by his re-use of the aria "Il piacer della vendetta" in his next major operatic work, the serenata *Gloria e Imeneo*, written for the French ambassador to Venice in celebration of the wedding of Louis XV and Maria Leszczyńska, performed in September 1725 at the Palais de France¹⁶. In the serenata, this aria is given special prominence by its position as the opening aria, "Alle amene franche arene", sung as Gloria welcomes the Polish bride on to French soil.

Although *Giustino* and *Farnace* were produced at different times within the season, they would, by chance, end up in direct rivalry with one another. The failure of the second opera at the Teatro d'Alibert, Predieri's *Scipione*, caused an impromptu revival of Vinci's *Farnace*, thereby placing it in competition with the premiere of Vivaldi's *Giustino*. Despite this unforeseen rivalry, both operas appear to have done well. The additional exposure of the music of *Farnace* undoubtedly contributed further to the success of Vinci's first Roman opera. According to Charles Burney: "So great was the success of this drama, that he was called upon to furnish at least one opera every year till 1730, when he composed two"¹⁷. Yet the success of Vinci's opera does not appear to have been detrimental to *Giustino*; according to the flautist Johann Joachim Quantz, who visited the city later that year:

[...] the so-called Lombardic style, heretofore unknown to me, which had previously been introduced in Rome by Vivaldi through one of his operas, and which made such an impression on the inhabitants that they wanted to hear almost nothing that did not resemble this style¹⁸.

¹⁵. Puzzled by the delicate "tinkling sound of the salterio and the violin pizzicato" as being "inappropriate for a hero and warrior", Strohm speculates whether the aria could have been written for a giant psaltery of the type played by Pantaleon Hebenstreit, who may have visited Venice in 1716-17; however, getting him to Rome for carnival 1724 to play in Vivaldi's aria simply on the grounds that the aria does not otherwise sound heroic enough seems a bit forced; the *salterio* player was probably local (perhaps identical with the *abate* Benedetti sketched by Ghezzi); he turns up again in the score of Vinci's serenata *La contesa de' numi* in 1729 and once more in 1732, when Porpora included the instrument in the opening aria of his Christmas cantata *Dorindo, dormi ancor?*

¹⁶. TALBOT, Michael. 'Vivaldi and a French Ambassador', in: *Informazioni e studi vivaldiani: bollettino annuale dell'istituto italiano Antonio Vivaldi*, II (1981): pp. 31-41: 33-35; see also ID. 'Vivaldi's Serenatas: Long Cantatas or Short Operas?', in: *Antonio Vivaldi. Teatro musicale, cultura e società*, edited by Lorenzo Bianconi and Giovanni Morelli, Florence, Olschki, 1982 (Quaderni vivaldiani, 2), pp. 67-96.

¹⁷. BURNEY, Charles. *A General History of Music: from the Earliest Ages to the Present Period (1789)*, with critical and historical notes by Frank Mercer, 2 vols., New York, Dover, 1957 (original edition: 4 vols., London, Payne, 1776-1789), vol. II, p. 916.

¹⁸. QUANTZ, Johann Joachim. 'The Life of Herr Johann Joachim Quantz, as Sketched by Himself', translated by Paul Mueller, in: *Forgotten Musicians*, edited by Paul Nettl, New York, Philosophical Library,

Vivaldi's whereabouts between the premiere of *Giustino* in Rome and that of the serenata composed for the wedding of Louis xv in September 1725, are a mystery¹⁹. Regarding Quantz's remark, it seems likely that he did not return to Venice immediately after Carnival as he had done the previous year, but instead remained in Rome after carnival; it was during this extended stay that he created this vogue for the Lombardic style.

What exactly constituted this Lombardic style is hard to determine. It does not appear to be merely the use of Lombardic rhythms, which, ironically, can be found only in a single aria in *Giustino* ("Dalle gioie del core") as well as in an aria in Act II of the collaborative *La virtù trionfante* "Lascierà l'amata salma")²⁰. The Lombardic style may relate to a performance practice resembling the French *notes inégales* but with 'reversed' inequality, recalling a practice cultivated by Celtic folk musicians in their traditional repertory. Strohm links the spread of the Lombardic style to the singer for whom Vivaldi wrote these two arias, Giacinto Fontana, who was to become one of the most popular singers in Rome, and Vinci's leading 'prima donna'²¹. According to Strohm, Lombardic rhythms become popular in Roman opera after 1725 and, despite the geographical connotations of their name, became associated with the emerging Neapolitan style²². The latter association probably stemmed from the fact that Lombardic rhythms became an integral ingredient in the new rhythmic variety that was to become a hallmark of Neapolitan lyricism, with its free mixture of Lombardic groups, dotted rhythms, triplets, duplets and sextuplets — all enlivened with ornaments and appoggiaturas. The Lombardic style may also be related to the new, lilting quaver-crotchet-quaver pattern, or 'syncope', which recreates a flavour of the Lombardic rhythm at a higher rhythmic level.

1951, pp 280-319: 299; the reference originally appeared in the autobiographical essay published as 'Herrn Johann Joachim Quantzens Lebenslauf, von ihm selbst entworfen', in: MARPURG, Friedrich Wilhelm, *Historisch-kritische Beyträge zur Aufnahme der Musik*, 5 vols., Berlin, Schütz, 1754-78, vol. 1, pp. 197-250: 223: "Das neueste, was mir zu Ohren kam, war, der mir noch ganz unbekannte sogenannte Lombardische Geschmack, welchen kurz vorher Vivaldi durch eine seiner Opern in Rom eingeführet, und die Einwohner dergestalt dadurch eingenommen hatte, das sie fast nichts hören mochten, was diesem Geschmacke nicht ähnlich war".

¹⁹. See TALBOT, Michael. 'Antonio Vivaldi', in: *The New Grove Italian Baroque Masters*, New York, Norton, 1984, pp. 271-323: 281; ID. *Vivaldi*, 2nd edition, London, Dent, 1993 (The Master Musicians), pp. 53-55; STROHM, Reinhard. 'Vivaldi's Career as an Opera Producer', in: ID. *Essays on Handel and Italian Opera*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1985, pp. 122-163: 154-155.

²⁰. Nor are Lombardic groups found in Vivaldi's most famous work, the *Quattro stagioni* cycle, which was published (some years after its completion) by Le Cène in December 1725 as the first four concertos in Op. 8.

²¹. STROHM, Reinhard. *Giustino by Antonio Vivaldi [...]*, *op. cit.* (see note 5), pp. 43-44.

²². *Ibidem*, pp. 9-10; Strohm connects the Lombardic style with the new manner of singing, about which Gasparini makes disparaging remarks, referring to "passetti, di cui n'è condottiero il Naso" — Strohm identifies the "Naso" as Vivaldi.

The influence of Vivaldi turns up again in Vinci's next opera, *Eraclea*, produced in Naples at the Teatro S. Bartolomeo in celebration of the Emperor's birthday on 1 October 1724²³. This influence becomes especially apparent in the aria "In questa mia tempesta", which is a perfect realization of Vivaldi's 'tempesta di mare' style, as exemplified by its frenetic fugal opening (Ex. 4).

Moreover, just as Vivaldi does in *Giustino*, Vinci here highlights this stylistic borrowing by assigning it to the hero's final aria, sung before the *scena ultima*.

VINCI'S PAIR OF VENETIAN OPERAS

The influence of Vivaldi grows even more apparent in Vinci's next two operas, *Ifigenia in Tauride* and *La Rosmira fedele*, which were written for Venice on a commission from the prestigious Teatro S. Giovanni Grisostomo²⁴. Vinci's commissions for the carnival season of 1725 were doubly precious, because this was a Jubilee Year, when the theatres in Rome were closed, thereby making commissions in Venice all the more competitive. This situation may explain why Vivaldi did not receive a commission during this season; as already mentioned, his whereabouts at this time are unknown, although he probably remained in Rome²⁵. That the influence of Vivaldi is even more apparent in this pair of Venetian operas is not surprising. When Vinci obtained his commission from the Teatro S. Giovanni Grisostomo, he undoubtedly set out to adapt his music to the taste of the

²³. *Eraclea: Drama per musica di Silvio Stampiglia [...] Da Lui Rinovato, da rappresentarsi nel Teatro di S. Bartolomeo nell'Autunno del 1724*, Naples, Francesco Ricciardo, 1724; libretto in I-Bc and I-Nc. There is a single surviving score of *Eraclea*, today housed in the library of the Abbey of Montecassino, 6-C-4/6, in three volumes (formerly 126 E 24-26); the inclusion of the incomplete ballet music, and the numerous minute corrections, either in pen or by some very neat cutting and pasting, suggests that the score was copied under the composer's direction and perhaps proof-read by him; *Eraclea* received its modern premiere, conducted by Roberto Zarpellon, at the Festival dell'Aurora in May 2005, in an edition prepared by the author.

²⁴. *Ifigenia in Tauride: tragedia di Merindo Fesario past. arc. Variata ad uso di Cantarsi la Seconda Volta nel Teatro celebre Grimani in S. Gio. Grisostomo nel carnevale MDCCXXV*, Venice, Marino Rosetti, 1725; libretto in F-Pn, I-Bc, I-Mb, I-MOe, I-Pci, I-Rig, I-Rsc, I-Vgc, I-Vnm, US-LAu and US-Wc; see SARTORI, Claudio. *I libretti italiani [...]*, op. cit. (see note 1), no. 12749. *La Rosmira fedele: dramma per musica di Silvio Stampiglia tra li Arcadi Palemone Licurio da rappresentarsi nel Teatro celebre Grimani in S. Gio. Grisostomo, il Carnevale MDCCXXV*, Venice, Marino Rosetti, 1725; libretto in I-Bc, I-Mb, I-Rig, I-RVI, I-Vcg, I-Vgc, I-Unm, SL-Ls, US-BE, US-Lau and US-Wc; see SARTORI, Claudio. *I libretti italiani [...]*, op. cit. (see note 1), no. 20203.

²⁵. According to Strohm ('Vivaldi's Career as an Opera Producer', op. cit. (see note 19), pp. 152-153), Vivaldi's claim that he was "tre Carnovali a far opera in Roma" conflates two different facts: namely that his operas were produced during three different carnival seasons in Rome (1720, 1723 and 1724) and that he was in Rome for three carnival seasons (1723, 1724 and 1725); The same author holds that Vivaldi was probably in Rome during the early part of 1725, not on account of opera but because "the very fact that the 'Anno Santo' was so lavishly celebrated could have attracted Vivaldi who may have hoped to produce concertos and sacred music" (STROHM, Reinhard. *Giustino by Antonio Vivaldi [...]*, op. cit. [see note 5], p. 8).

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Ex. 4: Vinci, *Eraclea*, "In questa mia tempesta" (Decio, III.7), bars 1-16.

Presto

The musical score is arranged in four systems, each with four staves. The top staff is Violin I (VI I), the second is Violin II (VI II), the third is Viola, and the fourth is Bass. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C). The tempo is marked 'Presto'. The first system (measures 1-4) shows the Violin I part with a complex rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes, while the other instruments have rests. The second system (measures 5-8) shows all instruments with active parts. The third system (measures 9-12) continues the complex rhythmic patterns. The fourth system (measures 13-16) concludes the passage with similar rhythmic intensity.

Venetian public. Since the most important point of contact Vinci had previously had with Venetian opera was the production of Vivaldi's *Giustino* in Rome, it seems likely that, when he adjusted his music to Venetian tastes, the style of Vivaldi was uppermost in his mind. The influence of Vivaldi is apparent already from the opening aria, "Spiegati, e di' che l'ami", from *La Rosmira*, with its long sequential theme, rather similar to "Mi fa da piangere" from Act III of Vivaldi's Mantuan opera *Tito Manlio* (Ex. 5).

The scenes associated with the battle in Act I of *La Rosmira* produce a series of Vivaldian arias: "Quest'anima accesa" and "A far straggi" are written in a concerto-like style with unison opening themes and final cadences that are separated by long, sequential passages with tremolo string accompaniments²⁶. Vinci also re-used one of the more Vivaldian arias from

²⁶ According to Robert Freeman, the choruses, the Act II sinfonia, and almost all of the recitative have been 'lifted' directly from Sarro's *Partenope*; see FREEMAN, Robert. 'The Travels of Partenope', in: *Studies in Music History: Essays for Oliver Strunk*, edited by Harold Powers, Princeton (NJ), Princeton University Press, 1968, pp. 356-385. The unusual structure of the autograph score of Vinci's *La Rosmira fedele* in the British Library, one of Vinci's only two known autograph manuscripts, confirms Freeman's fortuitous discovery that the work is based on pre-existing material. The autograph manuscript in the British Library (Add. 14,232) consists of independently numbered fascicles, each beginning with a recitative and ending with an aria. These fascicles allowed the recitatives and any internal pieces, such as the occasional arietta, *coro* or sinfonia, to be copied first, at the beginning of each fascicle — the arias being added later as they were composed. When

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Ex. 5: Vinci, *La Rosmira fedele*, “Spiegati, e di’ che l’ami” (Rosmira, 1.4), bars 1-10.

Allegro

The musical score consists of two systems of staves. The first system contains bars 1 through 5, and the second system contains bars 6 through 10. The staves are labeled VI I, VI II, Viola, and Basso. The music is written in a 2/4 time signature with a key signature of one flat (B-flat major). The tempo is marked 'Allegro'. The score features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some syncopation in the violin parts. The bass line provides a steady accompaniment with eighth notes and rests.

Eraclea, “In vano s’affanna”, which is distinguished by its strident unison theme and extended sequential passages. Among the latter are the sequential subsidiary phrases in the ritornello, where the lazy bass produces dissonant seconds. Vinci straightened out the syncopations in the violin parts of the original, replacing them by repeated semiquavers (bars 9-13), as if trying to make Partenope’s version of the aria sound a bit more Vivaldian (Ex. 6).

A conspicuous use of sequences employing more than three repetitions, evident both in this aria (bars 9-13) and in “Spiegati, e di’ che l’ami” (Ex. 5, bars 4-7), while frequently encountered in the music of Vivaldi, is not common in the music of Vinci, in which sequence is generally used with more restraint. Although some of the arias in *La Rosmira* are clearly derivative of Vivaldi, others continue the stylistic innovations of *Eraclea*. The aria “Sento che va comprendo” begins as a Vivaldian ‘tempesta di mare’,

the newly composed arias were copied into these fascicles, the shorter pieces gave rise to blank pages at the end of the fascicles, while the larger pieces required a second fascicle — hence the numerous blank pages throughout the manuscript. Frequently, the endings of Sarro’s recitative had to be adjusted in order to accommodate Vinci’s arias, even if the restricted key possibilities and the flexible key relationships between recitative cadence and aria did not require the recitative cadence to be replaced in every instance. The majority of the music was probably composed in Venice; the autograph manuscript is written on a type of manuscript paper different from that used by Vinci in his Neapolitan and Roman operas, bearing a watermark of three crescent moons (*tre lune*), a generic feature of paper manufactured in the Veneto. *La Rosmira* received its modern premiere in an edition prepared by Dinko Fabris at the Festival dell’Aurora in Crotona in June 2004, in a performance by the *Cappella della Pietà dei Turchini*, conducted by Antonio Florio.

Ex. 6: Vinci, *La Rosmira fedele*, “In vano s’affanna” (Partenope, II.5), bars 1-20.

Vivace

The musical score consists of four staves: VI I (Violin I), VI II (Violin II), Viola, and Bass. The music is in 3/8 time and B-flat major. The tempo is marked 'Vivace'. The score is divided into three systems of six bars each. The first system (bars 1-6) shows the initial rhythmic pattern. The second system (bars 7-12) continues the pattern with some rests. The third system (bars 13-18) shows a key signature change to C major at bar 14. The final bar (bar 20) ends with a double bar line and a fermata.

with the orchestra rattling away on the tonic until the introduction of dissonant seconds. At this point, where one would expect Vivaldi to start piling on more seconds, Vinci resolves the second, slows down the rhythm in the bass and introduces a new phrase more reminiscent of Mozart (Ex. 7). Chromaticism is introduced later in conjunction with syncopated Lombardic groups on a melisma to depict the phrase “quest’alma il suo dolor” (this sorrow of the soul).

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Ex. 7: Vinci, *La Rosmira fedele*, "Sento che va comprendo" (Arsace, II.4), bars 9–16.

(Allegro)

VI I

VI II

Arsace

Basso

Sen - - - to che va com - pren - - - do

violetta col basso

12

pri - va del - la sua cal - ma que-st'al - ma il suo do - lor, que-

15

- st'al-

THE VENETIAN CARNIVAL, 1726

The success of Vinci's *Ifigenia in Tauride* and *La Rosmira fedele* led to another commission for the following year — a prestigious one involving a collaboration with the new star of the operatic world, Pietro Metastasio, in a revival of the poet's first drama, *Didone abbandonata*, in Rome and a new drama for Venice. By this time, the Vivaldian influence

is not quite as apparent, although it runs through all three operas that Vinci wrote during this very busy season, when he produced three new operas in as many months in three different cities. The style becomes something of a liability in the first opera, *Astianatte*, premiered at the Teatro S. Bartolomeo, Naples, in December 1725²⁷. In this opera the style of Vivaldi is employed in some of the least successful arias in the drama. At the first dramatic reversal the hero, Oreste, sings a plodding concertante aria featuring two *corni da caccia*. Although this aria is reminiscent of the music that Vivaldi wrote in hunting scenes, it lacks the lively harmonies and tuneful melodies of the older master. Then, in Act II, Andromaca, torn between maternal love and marital fidelity, sings of her plight in a routine unison aria, enlivened with some busy arpeggiated figuration à la Vivaldi.

However, in the new opera for Venice, *Siroe, re di Persia*, Vinci integrates the Vivaldianisms into his emerging mature style more successfully²⁸. As in his previous Venetian opera, *La Rosmira*, there is a definite suggestion of Vivaldi in the opening aria, Cosroe's "Se il mio paterno amore", as exemplified by the fanfare ritornello theme, with its teasing mix of anapaests and dactyls, together with its cascading scales (bars 1-3) and syncopated subsidiary sequences (bars 4-5), all supported by a walking bass in quavers and a trembling viola in repeated semiquavers (Ex. 8).

²⁷. *Astianatte: drama per musica del dottor Antonio Salvi Fiorentino: da rappresentarsi nel Teatro di S. Bartolomeo in quest'Inverno di quest'Anno 1725*, Naples, Francesco Ricciardo, 1725; libretto in GB-Lbm, I-Bc, I-Fm, I-Nc, I-Rsc and US-NYp; see SARTORI, Claudio. *I libretti italiani [...]*, *op. cit.* (see note 1), no. 3273. There is a single surviving score of *Astianatte*, today in the library of the Conservatorio "S. Pietro a Majella", Naples (Rari 7.3.13). The paper (with the 'rearing horse' watermark) and the scribal style suggest that this is a contemporary manuscript originating in Naples. Giuseppe Sigismondo's signature on the title page indicates that this was one of the many scores in his collection. The comic intermezzi for the characters Urania and Clito were omitted from this manuscript and cannot be found in any secondary sources.

²⁸. *Siroe re di Persia: Drama per musica di Artino Corasio Pastore Arcade da rappresentarsi nel famosissimo Teatro Grimani nel Carnevale dell'anno, 1726*, Venice, Marino Rossetti, 1726; libretto in F-Pn, I-Bc, I-Fm, I-G, Ivadi, I-MOe, I-Rig, I-Rsc, I-Vgc, I-Vnm, SL-Ls and US-LAu; see SARTORI, Claudio. *I libretti italiani [...]*, *op. cit.* (see note 1), no. 22096. There are four known manuscript scores of *Siroe, re di Persia*, three of which are in England. The score at the Royal Academy of Music, London (MS 82), is part of a set that represents the Metastasio productions at the Teatro S. Giovanni Grisostomo during the period 1726-30, and was acquired by Sir John Buckworth, an aristocrat actively involved in Italian opera in London. The score in the Royal College of Music, London (1173), is identical in content to the Royal Academy score, right down to the similar title pages for each act. This score originally formed part of the collection of the Concerts of Ancient Music, founded in 1776. The score in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge (Mu. Ms. 14 v. 1-3), probably also originated in Venice and was acquired by the famous collector Richard, Viscount Fitzwilliam, in the late eighteenth century (an inscription on the title page reads: "Fitzwilliam 1782"). This score differs from the other two in tempo indications and barring in certain arias. The fourth manuscript, contained in the Santini Collection, Münster (4246), originated in Rome and is initialled and dated October 1728 by the Roman theatre copyist Francesco Cantoni. It is one of several Vinci scores that were copied in Rome even though the operas had been originally produced elsewhere.

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Ex. 8: Vinci, *Siroe, re di Persia*, “Se il mio paterno amore” (Cosroe, I.1), bars 1–10.

[Allegro]

VI I
VII I
Viola
Cosroe
Basso

4
8

Se il mio pa-ter-no a-mo-re sde-gna il tuo cuo-re, al-te-ro più

The influence of Vivaldi is even more apparent in Cosroe’s second aria “Dal torrente, che ruina”, with its prominent unison theme followed by sequences and tremolo passages. In “Benché s’asconda” in Act II, the heroine Emira, disguised as the Persian minister Idaspe, uses a simile aria to cover up her failed assassination attempt on King Cosroe. However, in the second section, when the malicious line “in dentro il nido l’assalirò” (I will attack the snake in the nest) allows Emira obliquely to express her real intentions, the music takes off in a Vivaldian flurry of sequential coloratura and tremolos before returning

to the neutral material of the first section via the *da capo* repeat. The unusual orchestral accompaniment of “Fra sdegno ed amore”, on the other hand, is made up of gamelan-like rhythmic layers: ornamented Scotch snaps in the first violins, triplet semiquavers in the second violins and reiterated quavers in the basses — the type of ‘colouristic’ and ‘impressionistic’ textures that Pincherle singled out in several of Vivaldi’s concertos, notably the *Larghetto* from Op. 3 no. 10 and the *Largo* from the famous *Primavera* concerto²⁹. In contrast to the latter, this texture appears to have no descriptive intent but merely provides a neutral backdrop for the powerful declamatory melody through which Cosroe, convinced that his son Siroe is plotting to overthrow him, sings of his conflicting emotions of parental love and royal disdain.

The second emotion triumphs, and Cosroe orders the execution of Siroe. After Emira casts aside her disguise, telling him that Siroe was innocent and she was behind the conspiracy, the horrified king reacts to this *peripezia* in the aria “Gelido in ogni vena”. Strohm notes the similarity of Vinci’s aria to Vivaldi’s setting of the same text from the following year³⁰. The two arias employ a similar phrase structure in the vocal part, presenting a series of one-bar phrases separated by a caesura and rest, with a syncopated tremolo accompaniment, all of which suggests that Vivaldi was familiar with Vinci’s setting (compare Exx. 9a, 9b and 10). In such an intense dramatic situation a modern audience would probably prefer Vivaldi’s *furioso* F minor setting to Vinci’s heroic B flat major one, especially since the first aria is based on the celebrated *L’inverno* from *Le quattro stagioni*. The connection with the concerto comes from the opening line, “Gelido in ogni vena” (“I freeze in every vein”), the measured tremolo, the staggered imitative entries and the grinding seconds depicting the frozen imagery (see Ex. 9a).

Whereas in the concerto the “nevi argenti” (frozen snows) theme is broken up by a swirling violin solo depicting the “orrido vento” (horrid wind), in the aria the initial freezing theme is broken up by streams of legato descending scales in semiquavers accompanied by syncopated repeated quavers alternating between the first and second violins in forte-piano contrast; these later return to accompany and depict the phrase “scorrer mi sento” (I feel the blood surge [in my veins]), shown in Ex. 9b.

In Vinci’s aria the seconds are generated by a lazy bass that changes a half-beat late: a device that can be regarded as a *Trommelbaß* version of the familiar bass suspension. The ‘trembling’ takes place in the second violin, as if to suggest an internal trembling and trepidation (already anticipated in “Se il mio paterno amore”, Ex. 8), characterized by the spiky staccato leap near the end of each trembling group, which gives the impression of

²⁹. PINCHERLE, Marc. *Vivaldi: Genius of the Baroque*, translated by Christopher Hatch, New York, Norton, 1957, pp. 100–106.

³⁰. STROHM, Reinhard. *Italianische Operarien des frühen Settecento (1720-1730)*, 2 vols., Cologne, Arno Volk Verlag, 1976 (*Analecta musicologica*, 16), vol. I, pp. 51–55; both arias are transcribed in vol. II, pp. 93–100; Ex. 9 is based, with permission, on Strohm’s transcription (*ibidem*, pp. 96–97).

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Ex. 9a: Vivaldi, *Siroe, re di Persia*, “Gelido in ogni vena” (Cosroe, III.5), bars 1-4.

Larghetto

senza cembali

f p f p f p

physically striking the first violins, thereby setting in motion the palpitating syncopations in the vocal coloratura (Ex. 10)³¹.

Both the Vinci and Vivaldi arias are examples of what the Abbé de Saint-Non termed *arie d'ostinazione* — a type of aria characterized by its conspicuous independent accompaniments that “maintain a consistent and sustained pace which depicts the subject or movement, of water or some other continuous sound, presented through different modu-

³¹. Helga Lühning provides a detailed analysis of Hasse’s setting of ‘Gelido in ogni vena’ from his 1733 *Siroe* for Bologna and his revision of this aria from his 1763 *Siroe* for Dresden, comparing it not only with Vinci’s, Vivaldi’s and Handel’s settings of the text but also with other pieces that she sees as parallels, including the famous chorale from J. S. Bach’s cantata BWV 147 of 1723, *Herz und Mund und Tat und Leben*; the connection with the latter comes when Hasse seizes upon the imagery of the second line, “Scorror mi sento il sangue”, and writes an obbligato part for unison violins in triplet semiquavers to depict the blood coursing through the veins (the same phrase that generated the flowing descending scales in Vivaldi’s ritornello); see LÜHNING, Helga. ‘Cosroes Verzweiflung, Regel und Erfindung in Hasses Seria-Arien’, in: *Colloquium Johann Adolf Hasse und die Musik seiner Zeit*, edited by Friedrich Lippmann, Laaber, Laaber-Verlag, 1987 (*Analecta musicologica*, 25), pp. 79-130.

Ex. 9b: Vivaldi, *Siroe, re di Persia*, “Gelido in ogni vena” (Cosroe, III.5), bars 8-11.

(Larghetto)

VI I

VI II

Viola

Cosroe

Basso

(senza cembali)

10

Ge - li - do in o - gni ve - na scor - rer mi sen - to il san - gue.

L'om - bra del fi - glio, e - san - gue, l'om - bra del fi - glio, e - san - gue m'in-

lations”; according to Saint-Non, “the goal of the composer is thus to produce surprise and fear” — which is certainly accomplished in both arias³².

During this season, Vinci and Vivaldi once again found themselves pitted in rivalry against each other. Vivaldi’s new opera, *La fede tradita e vendicata*, was, like Vinci’s *Siroe, re di Persia*, produced at the end of the carnival season. In this rivalry Vinci obviously enjoyed

³². SAINT-NON, Jean Claude Richard de. *Voyage Pittoresque ou description des Royaumes de Naples et de Sicile*, 4 vols., Paris, [Clousier], 1781-86, vol. I, p. 169; since Saint-Non stated that he knew of “no other composer who has succeeded like Leo” in *arie d’ostinazione*, one might be tempted to regard Vinci’s “Gelido in ogni vena” as exemplifying the influence of Leonardo Leo in the wake of coming up against the latter’s *Il trionfo di Camilla* in Rome earlier that season; however, Vinci had composed an even finer example of this type of aria the previous year in Eraclea’s “Son ombre di Eraclea”, where the orchestra depicts the ghostly imagery of the text through the use of an eerie ostinato.

KURT MARKSTROM

Ex. 10: Vinci, *Siroe, re di Persia*, “Gelido in ogni vena” (Cosroe, III.5), bars 8-14.

The musical score consists of five staves. The top three staves are for instruments: VI I (Violin I), VI II (Violin II), and Viola. The bottom two staves are for the vocalists: Cosroe (Soprano) and Basso (Bass). The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The time signature is common time (C). The lyrics are: "Ge - li - do, in o - gni ve - na scor - rer mi sen - to — il san - gue" and "L'om-bra del fi - glio, e - san - gue m'in - gom bra di ter -ror, — l'om-bra del fi - glio, e san - - -".

the upper hand, boasting the latest drama by the new literary star of opera seria, staged at the grandest, most prestigious theatre in Venice. Vivaldi's *La fede tradita*, in contrast, was a new setting of an old drama, from 1704, by Francesco Silvani, produced at his usual venue, the modest Teatro S. Angelo³³.

³³. *La fede tradita e vendicata: dramma per musica da rappresentarsi nel teatro di Sant'Angelo il carnevale dell'anno 1726*, Venice, Marino Rossetti, 1726; libretto in F-Pc, GB-Ckc, I-Fnm, I-Mb, I-Pci, I-Vcg, I-Vgc, I-Vnm, I-Bc, SL-Ls, US-LA and US-Wc (entry no. 19.1 in BELLINA, Anna Laura - BRIZI, Bruno - PENSA, Maria Grazia. *Op. cit.* [see note 1], pp. 65-66).

EXCHANGING LIBRETTI

Vinci undoubtedly attended performances of Vivaldi's *La fede tradita* at the Teatro S. Angelo. His next opera, *L'Ernelinda*, is based on the very same dramma per musica by Francesco Silvani. *L'Ernelinda* was premiered at the Teatro S. Bartolomeo on 4 November 1726³⁴. Although it seems likely that Vivaldi's *La fede tradita* provided the inspiration for Vinci's *Ernelinda*, the former's version of the libretto did not serve as the model for Vinci's — the two libretti have only a single aria text in common: the heroine's arietta "Tuo mal grado, o Nume". Vinci's libretto is based on a Neapolitan adaptation of Silvani's drama by Carlo de Petris, made for a production in Naples in summer 1707. Whereas the de Petris libretto contained nine replacement arias, by the time Vinci's collaborator, Carlo de Palma, finished his revision, only six of Silvani's original texts were available for the composer to set.

Although Vinci's opera was written for Naples, several arias in *L'Ernelinda* exhibit characteristics associated with the style of Vivaldi. In *L'Ernelinda*, as in *Astianatte*, Vinci reserved the Vivaldian style for expressions of bellicose anger and revenge. In "L'impero ha nel mio petto" the heroine's father, Rodoaldo, has the audacity to curse the villain,

³⁴. *L'Ernelinda: drama per musica da rappresentarsi nel Teatro di S. Bartolomeo nel di 4. Novembre 1726*, Naples, Angelo Vocola, 1726; libretto in I-Nc and US-NYP; see SARTORI, Claudio. *I libretti italiani [...]*, *op. cit.* (see note 1), no. 9166. There are two surviving scores of *L'Ernelinda*. A complete score containing both the drama and the intermezzi for Erighetta and Don Chilone, which formerly belonged to the Neapolitan aristocrat Don Vincenzo Bovio, is now in the library of the Abbey of Montecassino (126 E22, 1 vol. 20 x 28 cm.). The score at the Royal College of Music, London (Ms. 633), from which the example is taken, is also of Neapolitan origin; it belonged to the Concerts of Ancient Music and was listed in the society's catalogue of 1827. As in the sole surviving source of *Astianatte*, this score lacks the accompanying intermezzi.

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EX. 11: Vinci, *L'Emelinda*, "L'impero ha nel mio petto" (Rodoaldo, 1.13), bars 5-16.

(Allegro) Largo

[Allegro]

8

p

p

- pe - ro, l'im - pe - ro,[ha] nel mio pet - to e l'o - dio,ed il fu - ro - re. E

Ricimero, after being released by him from prison. This aria demonstrates how Vinci could successfully adapt the Vivaldi style, combining a concise, balanced theme (bars 8-10), a unison transition (bars 11-13) and sequential, instrumentally conceived coloratura, all enveloped by percussive string fanfares (bars 5-7), shown in EX. 11.

The isolated *largo* phrase on the initial word "L'impero" seems to call for some type of defiant gesture, while its downward octave leap dominates the subsequent material, giving full expression to the implications of this initial motto. For example, the motive of the coloratura sequence, which outlines the octave, is repeated five times. This type of sequential abundance has already been encountered in other Vivaldi-inspired arias. Not all the Vivaldian pieces are as skilful, and the first dramatic climax of the opera is unhappily saddled with one of Vinci's more inept imitations of Vivaldi's style. When the hero, Vitige, comes to the aid of Rodoaldo in the face of Ricimero's threats, the latter explodes in anger and condemns both men to death. This stern sentence is reiterated in his aria "Si sveni, sî, s'uccida", a plodding concertante aria for horns similar, musically and dramatically, to Piro's anti-climatic concertante arias in *Astianatte*.

The image displays two systems of musical notation for a vocal and instrumental ensemble. The first system, starting at measure 11, features a vocal line with lyrics: "sem - pre a tuo di - spet - to lo - sde - gno - mio - vi - vrà". The vocal line is accompanied by two staves of strings (violin and viola) and a bass line. Dynamics include *f* (forte) and *ff* (fortissimo). The second system, starting at measure 14, shows a more complex instrumental texture with alternating *p* (piano) and *f* (forte) dynamics across the string staves, and a vocal line with a fermata. The bass line continues with a steady rhythmic pattern.

In a similar manner, Vivaldi would, in turn, set *Siroe, re di Persia* to music the following year for the Teatro Pubblico in Reggio Emilia during the Ascension season of 1727³⁵. Although the score of Vivaldi's *Siroe, re di Persia* does not survive, some of its arias can, fortunately, be found within other operas: for example, "Gelido in ogni vena", (described above) was preserved in a revival of *Farnace*³⁶. Vivaldi's setting of this revised version of the drama that Lucchini had written for Vinci in 1724 was premiered at the Teatro S. Angelo in February 1727, a few months before his *Siroe*³⁷. The surviving scores

³⁵. *Siroe re di Persia: drama per musica da rappresentarsi nel teatro dell'illustriss. publico di Reggio in occasione della fiera dell'anno 1727*, Reggio, Vedrotti, 1727; libretto in I-REm, (2 copies); arias in F-Pc, I-Fec and US-Wc (entry no. 45.I in BELLINA, Anna Laura - BRIZI, Bruno - PENSA, Maria Grazia. *Op. cit.* [see note 1], pp. 105-106).

³⁶. Strohm, *Italienische Opernarien des frühen Settecento* [...], *op. cit.* (see note 30), vol. 1, p. 52.

³⁷. *Farnace: drama per musica da rappresentarsi nel teatro di Sant'Angelo nel carnevale dell'anno 1726* [1727]. Venice, Marino Rossetti, 1726[1727]; libretto in I-ROac, I-Vnm, I-TVc, I-Vcg, I-Vnm, I-Bc, I-Fm, I-Mb, I-PAc, I-Rsc, US-LA, US-Wc, F-Pc (entry no. 18.I in BELLINA, Anna Laura - BRIZI, Bruno - PENSA, Maria Grazia. *Op. cit.* [see note 1], pp. 65-66).

of *Farnace*, however, date from the 1730s, when “Gelido in ogni vena” and several other arias were taken into the score for the 1731 revival³⁸. Because of the loss of the scores of Vivaldi’s *La fede tradita e vendicata* and *Siroe, re di Persia*, *Farnace* is the first opera via which one may assess the influence of Vinci after their 1726 encounter. However, leaving aside the borrowed “Gelido in ogni vena”, one would be hard pressed to find specific examples of this Vincian influence — perhaps the two back-to-back arias at the beginning of Act II, Berenice’s “Langue misero quel valore” and Gilade’s “C’è un dolce furore”, which are both characterized by balanced periodic melodies, thin transparent textures and varied rhythms (Lombardic groups in the former and triplets in the latter). To venture a generalization, one might say that *Farnace* represents, depending on one’s perspective, either a ‘retrogressive’ turn away from these new influences or a return to the ‘real’ Vivaldi, perhaps conditioned by the composer’s return to his home turf at the Teatro S. Angelo. It is rather ironic that in this veering away from Vinci Vivaldi created his most successful opera. Vivaldi’s *Farnace*, in fact, replaced Vinci’s setting on the revival circuit, even if Lucchini’s tightening-up of his rather prolix drama undoubtedly contributed to its success³⁹.

On the other hand, the influence of Vinci and the Neapolitans is rather more noticeable in Vivaldi’s next opera, *Orlando*, produced later that year at the Teatro S. Angelo⁴⁰. The background on the opera is complex, going back to autumn 1713, Vivaldi’s first season as an opera impresario in Venice, when he directed an *Orlando furioso* by Giovanni Alberto Ristori, set to a libretto by Grazio Braccioli⁴¹; when Vivaldi revived this opera a year later in 1714, he tacitly replaced most of Ristori’s arias with ones of his own⁴². In his 1727 remake, now titled simply *Orlando*, the new style is displayed in several of the arias written for the composer’s

³⁸. There are two scores of Vivaldi’s *Farnace* preserved in Turin: the first (Giordano 36, ff. 2-139) is partly autograph and is thought to relate to the revival in Pavia in 1731, when the aria was added, while the second (Giordano 37, ff. 58-160) is wholly autograph, lacking Act III and relating to the aborted 1739 revival in Ferrara; see RYOM, Peter. ‘Les doubles dans les partitions d’opéra de Vivaldi’, in: *Informazioni e studi vivaldiani*, xv (1994), pp. 5-49: 18-19.

³⁹. There was a revival at S. Angelo in autumn 1727, followed by productions in Prague (1730), Pavia (1731), Mantua (1732), Florence (1733) and Treviso (1737), as well as plans for productions in Livorno (1729) and Ferrara (1739), both of which were cancelled — the latter, however, yielding one of the two surviving scores; the other score most likely originates, notwithstanding minor textual deviations, from the Pavia production. See entries nos. 18.1-18.9 in BELLINA, Anna Laura - BRIZI, Bruno - PENSA, Maria Grazia. *Op. cit.* (see note 1), pp. 59-65; facsimiles of all the title pages are included in plates 4-5.

⁴⁰. *Orlando: drama per musica da rappresentarsi nel teatro di Sant’Angelo l’autunno del’anno MDCCXXVII*, Venice, Marino Rossetti, 1727; libretto in I-Bc, F-Pc, I-Mb, I-Rsc, I-TVc, I-Vcg, I-Vgc, I-Vnm, SL-Ls, US-BE and US-LA (entry no. 36.1 in *ibidem*, p. 85).

⁴¹. Although the original version of the libretto does not survive, that for the revival of 1714 is extant: *Orlando Furioso: dramma per musica da rappresentarsi la seconda volta nel teatro di Sant’Angelo l’autunno 1714 del dottor Grazio Braccioli*, Venice, Marino Rossetti, 1714; libretto in I-Bc, I-Mb, I-MOe, I-Vcg, I-Vgc and I-Vnm (entry no. 38.1 in *ibidem*, pp. 88-89).

⁴². *Orlando finto pazzo: dramma per musica da rappresentarsi nel teatro di Sant’Angelo l’autunno 1714 del dottor Grazio Braccioli*, Venice, Marino Rossetti, 1714; libretto in I-Mb, I-MOe and I-Vcg (entry no. 37 in *I libretti*

THE VIVALDI-VINCI INTERCONNECTIONS, 1724-26 AND BEYOND

EX. 12: Vivaldi, *Orlando*, “Amorose ai rai del sole” (Alcina, 1.13), bars 18–25.

(Allegro)

VI I

VI II

Viola

Alcina
A - mo - - - ro - se ai rai del so - le

Basso

22

son le ro - se e le vi - o - le,

protégée, Anna Girò, in the role of Alcina⁴³. For example, the melancholy minor-mode “Amorose ai rai dei sole” features a lilting, syncopated melody in neat four-bar phrases delimited by *Nachschlag* caesuras supported by an incessant *Trommelbaß* (Ex. 12)⁴⁴.

vivaldiani, pp. 86–87); the score of Acts I and II of Ristori’s setting, with Vivaldi’s additions and substitutions, is preserved in Turin (Giordano 37, ff. 161–250).

⁴³. A mainly autograph score survives in Turin (Giordano 39bis, ff. 2–153). Exx. 12 and 13 from *Orlando* are based on photocopies of the respective arias kindly made available by Reinhard Strohm.

⁴⁴. According to Heinrich Christoph Koch (1793), the *Nachschlag* is a “striking afterwards [of] other tones contained in the triad at its basis”; see KOCH, Heinrich Christoph. *Introductory Essay on Composition: The*

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Ex. 13: Vivaldi, *Orlando*, “Così potessi anch’io” (Angelica, II.11), bars 11–24.

(Andante molto)

VI I
VI II
Viola
Angelica
Basso

15
Co - si po - tes - si an -

19
- ch' i - o go - der con l' i - dol mi - o la

Mechanical Rules of Melody, translated by Nancy Kovaleff Baker, New Haven (CT), Yale University Press, 1983, p. 23; for example, if the caesura note is the third of the tonic or the dominant triad, as it often is, the *Nachschlag* would be either the root or the fifth; although Koch gives numerous examples of the *Nachschlag*, many typical of the later eighteenth century, those “mixed with passing tones” represent the typical elaboration used by Vinci and his successors; see MARKSTROM, Kurt. ‘Burney’s Assessment of Leonardo Vinci’, *op. cit.* (see note 9), p. 145.

22

pa - ce che tro - var non può il mio cor —

As in several of Vinci's minor-mode arias (such as "Tormentosa crudel gelosia" from *La Rosmira*), much of its character derives from its distinct inability to remain in the minor mode: no sooner is the tonic established than there is a modulation to the relative major. Vivaldi makes up for this major-mode bias in the second vocal period, which returns to the tonic after a single bar and remains, leaving aside an extended sequential passage, moored to the tonic, which creates a dark, muted effect. A similar situation occurs in Angelica's "Tu sei de gl'occhi miei", but in this aria there is some powerful Vincian declamation on the imperative "Soffri", as the singer commands her lover Medoro to grin and bear her flirtations. The aria "Così potessi anch'io" from Act III is particularly Vincian, its balanced periodic phrases featuring sighing caesuras, and its accompaniment of repeated chords to the lovely main theme heightened by the elegant triplet sequences of the subsidiary material, the sequential progressions limited to three statements (EX. 13).

In its overall style and its position within the opera, where it depicts the heroine's sense of resignation before the *peripezia*, "Così potessi anch'io" can be regarded as a counterpart to the finale to Act II of Vinci's *Siroe*: Emira's "Non vi piaque"⁴⁵.

CATONE AND THE 'DEAD HAND' OF VINCI

One further interaction between these two composers would occur in Vivaldi's setting of Metastasio's *Catone in Utica*, premiered in Verona in May 1737 at the Teatro Filarmonico⁴⁶. This is Vivaldi's last wholly original surviving opera, although, sadly, only

⁴⁵. The successful revival, in 1980, of Vivaldi's *Orlando* (under Braccioli's original title of *Orlando furioso*), directed by Claudio Scimone with Marilyn Horne in the title role, led to an award-winning recording and a multi-authored monograph (in many ways a prototype for the present volume): *Opera & Vivaldi*, edited by Michael Collins and Elise K. Kirk, Austin, University of Texas Press, 1984.

⁴⁶. *Catone in Utica: drama per musica del Sig. abate Pietro Metastasi da rappresentarsi nel famoso teatro dell'Accademia Filarmonica di Verona nella fiera di Maggio 1737*, Venice, G. Savioni, 1737; libretto in I-Bc and

the score of Acts II and III survives⁴⁷. In the original *Catone in Utica*, as in the original *Siroe, re di Persia*, Metastasio collaborated with Vinci⁴⁸. The premiere of Vinci's opera in Rome during the carnival of 1728 proved controversial because of the novel Piranesi-style stage sets and the tragic ending. The latter, based on the innovative tragic ending from Metastasio's *Didone abbandonata*, takes the tragedy a couple of steps too far by depicting the suicide of Catone on stage. For his own setting, Vivaldi used Metastasio's revised version of the drama, which dispenses with the Piranesian stage set and discreetly moves Catone's suicide to the wings, in accordance with normal eighteenth-century stage etiquette. The *Argomento* justifies the alternate ending with the words: "To render the drama shorter and more pleasant in this spring season, the death of Catone is omitted"⁴⁹.

It is possible that the Vincian influence in Vivaldi's setting is filtered through Leonardo Leo's setting, which was premiered at the Teatro S. Giovanni Grisostomo during carnival 1729⁵⁰. If one compares the settings by Leo and Vinci of *Catone in Utica*, one notices many correspondences — too many, in fact, to be dismissed as coincidence or the product of a common style⁵¹. Some of these same parallels extend to Vivaldi's setting, linking it

I-Mb (entry no. 11.1 in BELLINA, Anna Laura - BRIZI, Bruno - PENSA, Maria Grazia. *Op. cit.* [see note 1], pp. 47-48); an autograph score of the first two acts is preserved in Turin, Foà 38, ff. 110-184; EXX. 14-16, taken from *Catone in Utica*, are based on photocopies of the respective arias kindly made available to me by Reinhard Strohm.

⁴⁷. Regarding the later operas, the scores to *L'oracolo in Messenia* (S. Angelo, December 1737) and *Feraspe* (S. Angelo, November 1739) do not survive, while the score to *Rosmira* (S. Angelo, January 1738) is preserved — but this is a pasticcio. In a letter dated 3 May 1737 Vivaldi mentions the success of *Catone in Utica* and offers to write a similar work for Ferrara which, he adds, should be composed "peraltro in parte d'altre teste" (quoted in STROHM, Reinhard. 'Vivaldi's Career as an Opera Producer', *op. cit.* [see note 19], p. 161); while we know indeed that Acts II and III of *Catone* are authentic Vivaldi, it is possible that the missing Act I was the handiwork of "altre teste" — which might also explain why the volume containing this act is not preserved together with the rest of the work.

⁴⁸. *Catone in Utica: Tragedia per Musica di Artino Corasio, Pastore Arcade Da rappresentarsi nel Teatro detto delle Dame nel Carnovale dell'anno 1728*, Rome, Bernabò, 1728; libretto in I-Bc, I-Fm, I-Mb, I-M (Gentili Tedeschi), I-MOe, I-Rsc, I-Vgc, I-Vnm, B-Bc, US-AUS, US-BE and US-Wc; see SARTORI, Claudio. *I libretti italiani [...]*, *op. cit.* (see note 1), no. 5232.

⁴⁹. Quoted in BELLINA, Anna Laura - BRIZI, Bruno - PENSA, Maria Grazia. *Op. cit.* (see note 1), p. 47.

⁵⁰. The score in the Royal Academy of Music (belonging to the same collection as Vinci's *Siroe, re di Persia*), has been published in facsimile as: *Leonardo Leo, Catone in Utica*, vol. [LXX] of the series *Italian Opera 1640-1770*, edited by Howard Mayer Brown, New York, Garland, 1983. The score includes three 'baggage arias' added to the score by the *primo uomo*, Farinelli; two of these were taken from Vinci's *Medo* ("Cervo in bosco" and "Scherzo dell'onda") and belonged to the great castrato's favourite arias.

⁵¹. For example, in both scores "Non ti minaccio" begins without any opening ritornello, voice and violins proceeding in unison; "O nel sen di qualche stele" is set in D major, with triadic themes and busy figuration; "Se in campo armato" is set in D major, in duple metre, for trumpets and oboes, with initial coloratura flourishes on the word "armato"; "Dovea svenarti allora" is conceived as a *aria parlante* in the minor mode and in duple metre; "Confusa, smarrita" is set as a duple-metre *aria parlante* in F minor, with chromaticisms and the same interlocking three-note rhythmic patterns between voice and bass.

to Vinci's setting, perhaps via Leo. However, one may remain sceptical about whether Vivaldi actually had an opportunity to attend Leo's *Catone in Utica*, since he was personally involved in the production of his *Ateniade* in Florence that season, this production falling between his recent trip to Carniola, where he played court to Emperor Charles VI, and his presumed visit to Prague in the spring of 1730⁵². But the coincidences between the three settings are sufficient to suggest that Vivaldi had some sort of access to at least one of the earlier operas, either in performance or in score. Given the continual re-setting of Metastasio's dramas, musical parallels become something of a tradition⁵³.

Metastasio based his drama on an episode from the civil war between Caesar and Pompey: the defeat of the Republican forces of Marcus Porcius Cato the Younger by Julius Caesar in 46 BC. Although the historical outlines of the drama can be found in Plutarch, much of the action is fanciful elaboration⁵⁴. The heart of the opera centres on a series of dialogues between Catone and Cesare in Act II. Although based on Cato's correspondence with Octavian and Lucius Caesar during the actual siege, these dialogues, in which the ideals of the old Roman Republic contend with those of the newly established Roman Empire, are based directly on similar dialogues between the hero and the imperial emissary in Joseph Addison's tragedy *Cato*⁵⁵. At the end of their discussions, after Catone has scornfully rejected his second and third offers of peace — in the process, calling into question his courage and honour — Cesare declares for war in the aria “Se in campo armato”. Although, in Vinci's aria, the coloratura and full orchestration complement the emperor's heroic pose, these additions do not fully compensate for a certain lack of inspiration at this point in the score. Vinci's Cesare is at his best as a languishing lover, as displayed in his arias “Chi un dolce amor condanna” in Act I and “Quell'amor che poco accende” in Act III, which both have a rapturous — one might say, narcissistic — beauty, almost as if the singer, the great Giovanni Carestini, were meditating upon his own voice. In Vivaldi's setting of *Catone in Utica*, Cesare's amorous aria “Se mai senti spirarti” partakes

⁵². TALBOT, Michael. *Vivaldi, op. cit.* (see note 19), pp. 57–59; Vivaldi was not the only Italian artist heading north during the spring of 1731: Metastasio, having been appointed as poet laureate to the court of Emperor Charles, travelled to Vienna to take up his position, while his collaborator, Vinci, requested, and was granted, a special leave of absence, presumably in order to accompany Metastasio to Vienna — but his mysterious death in May 1730 prevented this.

⁵³. These parallels facilitate comparisons between composers, as drawn in WOLFF, Hellmuth Christian. ‘Italian Opera 1700–1750’, *op. cit.* (see note 7).

⁵⁴. PLUTARCH. *The Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans*, translated by John Dryden, revised by Arthur Hugh Clough, New York, The Modern Library, 1912; the preface to the standard modern collected edition of Metastasio's *opere* lists some more recent sources, among them a *Caton D'Utique* by François Michel Chrétien Deschamps (1715) and Matteo Noris's *Catone Uticense* (1701); see METASTASIO, Pietro. *Tutte le opere*, edited by Bruno Brunelli, 5 vols., Milan, Mondadori, 1947–1954, vol. I, p. 1357.

⁵⁵. Although Metastasio could not read English, an Italian translation of Addison's *Cato* was used for a performance in Livorno in 1715 and published that same year in Florence as *Il Catone, tragedia: tradotta dall'originale inglese*, Florence, Stamperia di S. A. R., 1715.

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Ex. 14: Vivaldi, *Catone in Utica*, “Se in campo armato” (Cesare, II.9), bars 20–38.

(Allegro)

The musical score is arranged in a system with six staves. From top to bottom, the staves are: Trombe (Trumpets), VI I (Violin I), VI II (Violin II), Viola, Cesare (Soprano), and Basso (Bass). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/8. The tempo is marked '(Allegro)'. The score begins with a flourish for the Trombe. The vocal parts enter with the lyrics 'Se in cam - po ar - ma - to'. The instrumental parts provide a rhythmic and harmonic accompaniment. The score includes dynamic markings such as *p* (piano) and *tr* (trill). The lyrics are: 'Se in cam - po ar - ma - to, se in cam - po ar - ma - to vuoi ci - men - tar - mi vie - ni ch'il fa - to'.

of a similar lyricism, but is balanced by his call to arms, “Se in campo armato”, which is in Vivaldi’s finest heroic style with trumpets — undoubtedly, one of the highlights of the opera. Vivaldi’s aria is in triple rather than quadruple metre, with an initial flourish (a

33

fra l'i-re.e l'ar-mi la gran con-te-sa de-ci-de-rà

Devise) on “armato”, followed by the statement of the actual theme: a powerful unison idea that broadens out into a spirited lyricism (Ex. 14). (Vivaldi creates a similar sort of lyricism for Asprano in *Moteczuma* in the rapturous “Nell’aspre sue vicende” at the end of Act I, which is, in its turn, counterbalanced by the martial splendour of his “D’ira e furor armato” in Act II.)

After spending much of Acts I and II trying to bring about a peace between Catone and Cesare, Marzia, in desperation, admits to her father her secret love for his enemy. Enraged, Catone raises his hand to strike her, an action prevented by Arbace’s restraining hand and eighteenth-century stage etiquette⁵⁶. Catone then expresses his outrage to Marzia and his bewilderment to Emilia and Arbace in the G minor aria, “Dovea svenarti allora”. Instead of adopting a sectionalized *da capo* structure of the type that he had recently experimented with in his most recent opera, *La caduta de’ Decimviri*, Vinci wrote a continuous, monothematic aria — in fact, the standardized binary form of the first section is avoided, as if to emphasize the continuity. In the first vocal period, Catone rushes through the expected relative major before coming to cadence in the dark region of the subdominant minor (bar 27), as shown in Ex. 15.

⁵⁶. Catone’s violent rejection of his daughter appears to have its roots in an argument with his son, who had a servant hide his (Cato’s) sword to prevent him from committing suicide; in his anger, Cato struck the servant so hard that he hurt his own hand and for this reason botched his suicide, hence his long, agonizing death; the account comes from PLUTARCH. *The Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans*.

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Ex. 15: Vinci, *Catone in Utica*, "Dovea svenarti allora" (Catone, II.13), bars 22-29.

VI I

VI II

Viola

Ad Emilia e ad Arbace

Catone

Basso

Di - te, un pa - dre, ed u - na - fi - glia

per - fi - da, al par di lei, mi - se - ro, al par di me, al

par di me. Do - vea sve - nar - ti, sve - nar - ti, al - lo - ra

(first vocal period ends) (second vocal period begins)

Ex. 16: Vivaldi, *Catone in Utica*, “Dovea svenarti allora” (Catone, II.11), bars 11-20.

(Allegro)

VI I
VI II

Viola

Catone

Basso

Do - vea sve - nar - ti, al - lo - ra ch'a - pri - sti al di le

15

ci - glia. Di - te, di - te, di - te: ve - de - ste an - co - ra un pa - dre

The short fragmented phrases begin, or end, with downward leaps, suggesting some type of dramatic gesture on the part of Catone. Vivaldi’s setting of Catone’s “Dovea svenarti allora” is conceived, like the others, as an agitated *aria parlante*, with similar vocal phrasing, prominent downward octave leaps and a measured tremolo on the strings (Ex. 16).

As in Vinci, Vivaldi modulates through the relative major but ends up in the dominant minor rather than the more unexpected subdominant minor — in both cases, the swerve from the bright relative major to the darker minor mode adds to the tempestuous effect. The overall style of these Presto minor-mode arias, as well as their tonal relationships, anticipate the so-called *Sturm und Drang* of the later eighteenth century, which ultimately finds its roots in the agitated *aria parlante* of opera seria.

This proto-*Sturm und Drang* style is reserved for one further explosion: Marzia’s violent outburst at the beginning of Act III as she makes her frantic farewell to Cesare, in the process creating a worthy counterpart to Catone’s “Dovea svenarti allora”. Vinci set

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Ex. 17: Vinci, *Catone in Utica*, “Confusa, smarrita” (Marzia, III.2), bars 1-10.

Presto

VI I

VI II

Viola

Marzia

Basso

Con - fu - sa, smar - ri - ta, spie - gar - ti vor - re - i che

fo - sti ... che se - i ... In - ten - di-mi, oh Di-o! oh Di - o! Par - lar non pos - s'i-o, oh Di - o! Mi

Marzia’s aria “Confusa, smarrita, spiegarti vorrei” as an agitated F minor *aria parlante*. The first three lines of the *senario* aria text are treated as if *ternario* couplets and set as short fragments of three quavers each; these, in their turn, interlock with the syncopated accompaniment of the bass, giving the aria a surging, breathless quality (Ex. 17).

This effect is enhanced by the lack of any opening ritornello and the confused interruptions in Marzia’s speech, indicated in the libretto by ellipses and realized in the music with grand pauses and the frenzied repetitions of “oh Dio” — a phrase that had greater impact at the time than nowadays — hence the need for an apologetic *Avviso* at the beginning of most Italian opera libretti. In the second vocal period, when more extended

Musical score for Ex. 18, Vivaldi's *Catone in Utica*, Marzia's aria "Se parto, se resto" (Marzia, III.2), bars 7-11. The score is in G minor, 3/4 time, and consists of five staves. The vocal line (Marzia) is on the second staff from the top, with lyrics: "sen - to mo - rir, oh Di - o! Mi sen - to mo - rir, mi sen - to mo - rir." The music features a breathless, repetitive melodic pattern in the vocal line, supported by a rhythmic accompaniment in the other staves.

EX. 18: Vivaldi, *Catone in Utica*, "Se parto, se resto" (Marzia, III.2), bars 7-11.

Musical score for Ex. 19, Vivaldi's *Catone in Utica*, Marzia's aria "Se parto, se resto" (Marzia, III.2), bars 12-16. The score is in G minor, 3/4 time, and consists of five staves. The vocal line (Marzia) is on the second staff from the top, with lyrics: "Se par to, se re sto, con - fu - sa mi per - do. L'af fan - no, la pe - na m'af - fli ge, mi sve na, e mi - se - ra". The music features a breathless, repetitive melodic pattern in the vocal line, supported by a rhythmic accompaniment in the other staves.

phrases are formed, the melody tends to hang upon a single note and its octave, creating a frozen, almost zombie-like effect, which is already anticipated in the intermediate cadence (at the end of Ex. 17)⁵⁷. In Vivaldi's opera, Marzia is likewise given an agitated *aria parlante* at the beginning of Act III, Metastasio's "Confusa, smarrita" being replaced by a free varia-

⁵⁷. Although these breathless enchainments in a minor-mode presto aria were to become a standard formula for distressed heroes and heroines of the mid-eighteenth century, the first example of this device in Vinci occurs, ironically, in a comic context: Flacco's "Mistiro sbadiglio" in his previous opera, *La caduta dei Decemviri*.

tion, “Se parto, se resto”. This crucial text was adapted to fit an aria, “La madre, lo sposo”, that Vivaldi had composed for Anna Girò in the revival of *Farnace* in 1732 and then re-used in *Moteczuma* in 1733 as “La figlia, lo sposo”; after its adaptation in *Catone in Utica*, the aria was employed yet again in a revival of *Siroe, re di Persia* in Ferrara during carnival 1739⁵⁸. Like the corresponding aria by Vinci, “Se parto, se resto” is an agitated minor-mode aria in duple metre, chromatically inflected and using the same interlocking three-note rhythmic patterns between voice and bass (Ex. 18).

As Strohm has pointed out, this is exactly the type of aria that Anna Girò requested in Goldoni’s oft-quoted anecdote about his collaboration with Vivaldi⁵⁹. In their first meeting, Vivaldi is reported to have told him:

Mlle. Giraud is not fond of languishing songs; she wishes something expressive and full of agitation, an expression of the passions by different means, by words interrupted, for example, by sighs, with action and motion⁶⁰.

By the second quarter of the eighteenth century, the agitated *aria parlante* had come to rival the pathetic lament as one of the principal highlights of any opera seria — hence Girò’s request to replace the “languishing songs” in *Griselda*.

CONCLUSION

The influence of Vivaldi on Vinci was on the whole very positive. Although in the operas from the mid-1720s it created some awkward, uninspired moments, by the late 1720s the influence was better integrated, becoming an integral part of his mature style. Thus the influence of Vivaldi on Vinci is rather like the influence of Vivaldi on Bach: an essential ingredient in the creation of the composer’s mature style, albeit creating a very different sort of style.

This subtle, integrative influence of Vivaldi is particularly apparent in Vinci’s use of Lombardic rhythms and the *Trommelbaß*. Although the latter device, like Lombardic rhythm, was to become a hallmark of the new Neapolitan style of Vinci and Porpora, it appears to be by origin a Venetian technique, Marcello refers disapprovingly to it as “ten thousand low Es in the basso continuo above which complete and original operas will

⁵⁸. VICKERS, David. ‘Unearthing a Treasure: The Rediscovery of *Moteczuma*’, booklet note accompanying the recording *Vivaldi: Moteczuma* (DGG Archiv 00289 477 5996), See also BELLINA, Anna Laura – BRIZI, Bruno – PENZA, Maria Grazia. *Op. cit.* (see note 1), pp. 183 and 215.

⁵⁹. For a detailed analysis of this aria, with a complete score, see STROHM, Reinhard. *Italianische Operarien* [...], *op. cit.* (see note 30), vol. I, pp. 63–65; the complete aria is transcribed in vol. II, pp. 115–119.

⁶⁰. GOLDONI, Carlo. *Memoirs of Carlo Goldoni: Written by Himself*, translated by John Black, edited by William A. Drake, London, Knopf, 1926, pp. 162–163.

be composed [...] all this a present from several modern composers”⁶¹. Vivaldi, to whom Marcello frequently alludes in his satire, appears to be a key figure in its cultivation, since his first opera, *Ottone in villa* (1713), already contains several notable examples. According to Strohm, the quantum increase in the use of the *Trommelbaß* occurred during the 1720-21 season, when Vivaldi, along with his colleagues-cum-rivals Orlandini, Porta and Chelleri, made an attempt to create a “lighter and much more modern style”, as exemplified in *La verità in cimento*, produced at S. Angelo in autumn 1720⁶². Although Vinci used the *Trommelbaß* sparingly in his comic operas, it is employed with greater frequency in his first two surviving heroic operas, its slowly changing harmonies perhaps suggestive of the heroic stance⁶³. Beginning with the season of 1724-25, there is a further increase in the use of this accompanimental technique, which from that point onwards remains constant for the rest of his career⁶⁴. This subsequent increase in the use of the *Trommelbaß* was probably inspired by his first-hand acquaintance with the music of Vivaldi and the Venetians during the years 1724 and 1725. Like Lombardic rhythms, the *Trommelbaß* was to become forever associated with the Neapolitan style. Since the style developed by Vinci and his Neapolitan colleagues was later taken up by composers throughout Europe, this simple accompanimental technique became a defining characteristic, complementing and supporting the balanced phrases of Vincian periodic melody. By this time, the *Trommelbaß* had become so standardized that composers no longer bothered to write out the individual notes, but simply notated a single breve or semibreve, which orchestral players would know how to interpret in performance (Vivaldi does this too, but he normally first provides a fully-written-out model before going over to a string of minims and crotchets accompanied by a direction such as “crome”, as indeed occurs in “Dovea svenarti allora”). The *Trommelbaß* is one of the main contributors to the overall slowing-down of harmonic rhythm that is a defining characteristic of the emerging Classical style.

The influence of Vinci and the Neapolitans on Vivaldi, on the other hand, is not quite so straightforward, and not quite so positive. First of all, it created problems with regard to his own career as an opera composer. Even though Vivaldi’s *Giustino* may have been just as successful as Vinci’s *Farnace* and his subsequent setting of *Farnace* would replace Vinci’s opera on the Italian opera circuit, *Giustino* proved to be Vivaldi’s last Roman opera commission, while it was Vinci who “was called upon to furnish at least one opera every year” — as Burney points out in his *General History*. Moreover, the success of Vinci in

⁶¹. PAULY, Reinhard G. ‘*Il teatro alla moda*, Part II, by Benedetto Marcello’, in: *Musical Quarterly*, xxxv (1949), pp. 85-105: 102.

⁶². STROHM, Reinhard. ‘Vivaldi’s Career as an Opera Producer’, *op. cit.* (see note 19), pp. 148-149.

⁶³. For example, the *Trommelbaß* is employed in three out of twenty-nine arias (10%) in *Li zite ‘n galera*, whereas it appears in thirty-three out of seventy arias (47%) in *Silla Dittatore* and *Farnace*.

⁶⁴. The *Trommelbaß* is employed in 278 out of the 380 arias (73%) occurring in the operas from *Eraclea* and *La Rosmira* up to *Alessandro* and *Artaserse*.

Venice would initiate a period of pronounced Neapolitan influence in *La Serenissima*, in which the principal commissions went to visiting Neapolitan composers, such as Vinci, Porpora (who in fact became a long-term resident), Leo and Hasse, rather than to local composers such as Vivaldi, Porta and Ristori⁶⁵. This trend is exemplified in Burney's *General History of Music*, where not only is the chapter on eighteenth-century Venetian opera dwarfed physically by the following chapter on Neapolitan opera, but the former is even dominated by references to works by Neapolitan masters! According to Burney, 1725 was the year when "the Venetian theatre first heard the natural, clear, and dramatic strains of Leonardo Vinci, in his two operas of *Ifigenia in Aulide* and *La Rosmira fedele*"⁶⁶. Although Neapolitan influence never attained the same level of hegemony as in Rome, on account of the multiplicity of the theatres and the great local operatic tradition, it was not until the advent of Galuppi that a native Venetian could challenge the popularity and prestige of the Neapolitan masters. Despite the dominance of the Neapolitans, Vivaldi still continued to receive opera commissions; the only difference was that, after this time, it was not quite so easy to obtain commissions in the major centres of Venice and Rome, not to mention Naples⁶⁷. Vivaldi was thus compelled to pick up commissions in smaller cities, such as Mantua and Ferrara, or manufacture opportunities for himself via independent impresarial activity.

To a certain extent, the influence of Vinci on Vivaldi is rather like the influence of Vinci and the Neapolitans on Bach and Handel: something of a one-off thing that the composer would throw out now and then for contrast and colour — like the "Laudamus te" in the *Mass in B minor* or "Benché mi sprezzi" from *Tamerlano* and "Dopo notte, atra e funesta" from *Ariodante*. Therefore, like many other composers of his generation, Vivaldi learned how to write in the new style; in fact, he learned very quickly, as "Mio dolce amato sposo" and "Il piacer della vendetta" from *Giustino* exemplify.

One could, however, advance the further argument that the influence of Vinci and the Neapolitans on Vivaldi was later co-opted into the Vivaldian style, becoming an integral part of it, just as the style of Vivaldi percolated into Vinci. In fact, it is this integration of the style of Vinci and the Neapolitans that distinguishes Vivaldi's late style, creating a divide between the pre-*Giustino* and post-*Giustino* operas. This influence is manifest in a rather subtle manner in the surviving works written for Venice soon after his last season in

⁶⁵. Compare the lists before and after Vinci's *Ifigenia* presented in WIEL, Taddeo. *I teatri musicali veneziani del Settecento: catalogo delle opere in musica rappresentate nel secolo XVIII in Venezia*, Venice: Visentini, 1897, p. 76.

⁶⁶. BURNEY, Charles. *A General History of Music* [...], *op. cit.* (see note 17), vol. II, p. 908; perhaps with Gluck's recent masterpieces in mind, Burney got his *Ifigenias* in *Aulide* and *Tauride* mixed up.

⁶⁷. The only Venetian composer to obtain a commission for an opera from the viceregal court in Naples during this period was Giovanni Porta, whose *Amore e fortuna* was performed for the Emperor's birthday in 1725; Porta was the last Venetian composer to have an opera staged in Naples until Galuppi in 1755; see the list of productions at the Teatro S. Bartolomeo in FLORIMO, Francesco. *La scuola musicale di Napoli e i suoi conservatori*, 4 vols., Naples, 1880-1882, reprint Bologna, Forni, 1969, vol. IV, p. 20.

Ex. 19: Vivaldi, *Motezuma*, “Quel rossor ch’in volto miri” (Ramiro, II.3), bars 11-20.

VI I

VI II

Viola

Ramiro

Basso

Quel rossor ch'in volto miri senza cembalo non accusa il mio rispetto,

Rome, *Farnace* and *Orlando*, and in a more pronounced manner in his later works, by which time he had discovered the music of other Neapolitan-trained or -influenced composers, such as Hasse and Giacomelli, both of whom feature prominently in his pasticcios⁶⁸. This process of integration is exemplified in Vivaldi’s late operas — *Catone in Utica*, *Griselda* and *L’Olimpiade* — as well as in *Motezuma*, or at least in the complete act and extensive surrounding portions that have been rediscovered and form the subject of the present book.

⁶⁸. See the list of arias by other composers included in Vivaldi’s pasticcios in RYOM, Peter. ‘Les doubles dans les partitions d’opéra de Vivaldi’, *op. cit.* (see note 38), pp. 18-19, and also STROHM, Reinhard. *Italianische Opernarien* [...], *op. cit.* (see note 30), vol. I, pp. 267-285.

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15

3

3

tr

tr

tr

tr

tr

e non so - no, i miei so - - - spi - ri

17

3

tr

3

tr

3

tr

3

con - tras - se - - -

The strong influence of the Neapolitans is singled out by David Vickers in his article accompanying the recording of *Motezuma* (see note 58). Mention has already been made of Asprano's arias "Nell'aspre sue vicende" and "D'ira e furor armato" and of Mitrena's "La figlia, lo sposo". In this regard, one must also single out Ramiro's "Quel rossor ch'in volto miri", which is rather similar to "Mio dolce amato sposo" in its balanced periodic phrases demarcated by 'sighing' appoggiaturas, its extended and very ornate coloratura passages and its garlands of accompanimental violin arabesques consisting of triplets, mixed with dotted rhythms (Ex. 19).

Moreover, the second phrase of each aria is almost identical (compare Ex. 3a). In "Quel rossor ch'in volto miri" the simple *Trommelbaß* quavers are grouped into the syncopated

three-note accompanimental figure that Vivaldi also used in “Se parto, se resto / La figlia, lo sposo”, albeit without the frenetic enchainments with the voice. However, in contrast to “Mio dolce amato sposo”, which stands out amid all the arias borrowed from operas of previous decades — stretching from *Ottone in villa* and *Orlando finto pazzo* to *Tito Manlio* and *Teuzzone* — “Quel rossor ch’in volto miri” fits in perfectly with its stylish neighbours: “S’impugni la spada” from I.16, with its sonorous orchestral horns and billowing waves of sequential coloratura supported by an incessant *Trommelbaß*; the minuet aria “Un guardo, oh Dio” from II.13, with its short phrases (of one and a half bars, the half-bar accommodating the caesura) set in rigorous alternation with a powerful instrumental motto based on a violin wedge; and “Sei troppo, troppo facile” from II.7, with its sprightly, Vincian theme based on repeated notes and its subsidiary material based on an energetic ascent to a suspended *b* and a precipitous scalewise descent of two octaves (Ex. 20).

These arias represent the type of music that Vivaldi could not have composed before the fateful carnival season of 1724. Ten years later, however, they represent the new norm, the new reality, displaying a distinctly different aspect of the composer of *L’estro armonico* and *Le quattro stagioni*. And yet: despite these abundant influences from Vinci and the Neapolitans, one is not likely to mistake the music from Act II of *Motezuma* for that of a Neapolitan composer: the imprint of the *Prete rosso* remains everywhere in evidence⁶⁹.

One could even be bolder and assert, first, that *Giustino*, *Farnace* and *Orlando* do not represent the Vivaldi operatic apex that they are sometimes considered to be, but are, rather, transitional works leading to the masterpieces of his final years; second, that

⁶⁹. The following musings are an amplification (one might say a taking to extremes) of some ideas from Michael Talbot’s essay for this book, which I was able to read in advance.

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Ex. 20: Vivaldi, *Motezuma*, “Sei troppo, troppo facile” (Fernando, II.7), bars 1-8.

Allegro

VI I

VI II

Viola

Basso

6

Vivaldi’s operatic style needed to incorporate fully the lyrical precision and affluence of Vinci, Porpora and Hasse to reach its full potential; and, third, that it is these late works, comprising *Griselda* and *L’Olimpiade* as well as the surviving torsos of *Catone in Utica* and *Motezuma*, that represent the composer at the summit of his operatic art, the true counterpart to the orchestral masterpieces of his early career. This view would also counteract the conventional view of Vivaldi by the lay public, which too often relegates him almost to the status of a ‘flash-in-the-pan’ composer, who in *L’estro armonico* and *La stravaganza* produced a series of highly innovative works that influenced the great J. S. Bach but then spent the rest of his career repeating himself (the ‘not 600 concertos but one concerto 600 times’ fellow) — a view that has its origin in the circumstances of his initial revival as Bachian source material. The new vision that I advocate would allow Vivaldi to emerge as a major composer possessing the traditional tripartite division of career and oeuvre — with distinctive early, middle and late styles determined primarily by his relationship to the innovations of Vinci and the Neapolitan school.

CHAPTER SEVEN

VIVALDI'S 'LATE' STYLE: FINAL FRUITION OR TERMINAL DECLINE?

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NO ONE CAN QUARREL WITH PLACING *Motezuma* among the works of Vivaldi's later years, but can one reasonably assign it to the 'late period' of its composer's career? The second proposition is problematic, since 'period' implies a set of common characteristics setting apart the works composed during the chosen time-frame. Moreover, it implies conformity to a paradigm of periodization most familiar from the threefold schema (early-middle-late) applied to Beethoven by Johann Aloys Schlosser (1828) but since then widely used for other composers¹.

The objective basis for such periodization is not precisely laid down. From the nineteenth century onwards, composers have commonly espoused the ideal of a lifetime oeuvre exhibiting many-sidedness (equally of genre and of character) and constant self-renewal. Many composers — including figures as diverse as Schumann and Verdi, Stravinsky and Shostakovich — seem to have been active participants, so to speak, in their own periodization, knowing exactly when to move on to a new genre or manner. But composers of Vivaldi's day, unless they had already become classic figures during their own lifetimes (and one might indeed argue that Corelli, Handel and J. S. Bach achieved this to some degree), had no interest in — indeed, rarely any practical possibility of — contemplating as a unity an oeuvre comprising everything that they had previously composed and planned to compose in the future. Their concern was with success and survival in the here and now. Most were content to comply with the general public expectation that they would establish a personal musical language in their twenties and thereafter would every so often update it in line with the general evolution of style and fashion. An ageing composer was not someone to admire for the perfection of his technique or the profundity of his thought

¹. SCHLOSSER, Johann Aloys. *Ludwig van Beethoven: Eine Biographie desselben, verbunden mit Urtheilen über seine Werke*, Prague, Buchler, Stephani und Schlosser, 1828.

but rather someone to pity for his physical infirmity (actual or potential) and his growing inability to compete successfully against younger talents.

However, even if Vivaldi and his colleagues were fundamentally uninterested in their own musical evolution and the creative periods into which their lives might later be subdivided, this does not mean that we, whether as students of music history or as music-lovers, need to remain so innocent. For better or for worse, we have all become what in an earlier essay I described as ‘composer-centred’ (rather than ‘performer-centred’ or ‘genre-centred’) consumers of music². To make sense to us, a musical composition has to be placed in relation to relevant comparators, foremost among which is the totality of other works by the same composer that we call his oeuvre. When we study or listen to a piece, we like, at least in our more sophisticated moments, to locate its position on an evolutionary graph. All other things being equal, we are pleased to see evidence of stylistic progress. At the very least, it proves that the composer is not stuck in a rut or capitalizing complacently on earlier successes. At the same time, however, progress carries risks, since the example that the composer attempts to follow may be bad (either in its own right or in relation to his capacity to imitate it successfully); it may prove, whatever its merits, to be an artistic dead-end³. Exactly the same is true of innovations made by a composer on his own initiative.

Nowhere within music history is the ascription of positive aesthetic value to stylistic progress more contested than in the central decades of the eighteenth century, even if prodigious attempts to rehabilitate this period have been made in recent years⁴. The lack of a stable nomenclature for the music of the period represented by Tartini, the Sammartini brothers, Galuppi and Jommelli (English has ‘galant’, ‘rococo’, ‘pre-classical’ and latterly even ‘post-baroque’) itself conveys uncertainty, even a hint of disparagement. It follows, then, that any discussion of Vivaldi’s later music and its artistic worth brings us face to face with this generalized prejudice, by which it is still hard for the scholar to remain unaffected. To pass critical judgement on Vivaldi’s last compositions is *ipso facto* at least in part to express a view on the *galant* style of the mid-eighteenth century.

Ultimately, any attempt to periodize a composer’s output has to base itself solely on the evidence supplied by the works themselves. Changes in a composer’s circumstances — his domestic life, his collaboration with others, his employment, his success with the public, his enjoyment of patronage, his travels and so forth — cannot be presumed automatically

². TALBOT, Michael. ‘The Work-Concept and Composer-Centredness’, in: *The Musical Work: Reality or Invention?*, edited by Michael Talbot, Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 2000 (Liverpool Music Symposium, 1), pp. 168-186.

³. The opinion that Vivaldi’s later concertos succumbed to bad influences through the composer’s involvement with operatic music is voiced in QUANTZ, Johann Joachim. *Versuch einer Anweisung die Flöte traversiere zu spielen*, Berlin, Voss, 1752, p. 309.

⁴. Most exhaustively and persuasively in HEARTZ, Daniel. *Music in European Capitals: The Galant Style 1720-1780*, New York-London, W. W. Norton, 2003.

to alter anything in his musical language. Clearly, however, they can provide triggers and channels for such changes. In our attempt to discover whether the concept of a 'late period' has any relevance to Vivaldi, it makes sense to begin by exploring his biography to see whether there are any landmark events that map neatly on to stylistic change.

Since we are concerned mainly with the end of Vivaldi's life, a good starting point is the mid-1720s, when his Europe-wide reputation had just reached its apogee⁵. But at this very moment a shock wave hit Venice — an event with whose consequences all established Venetian composers would have to live for the rest of their careers. This was the advent of Neapolitan (more accurately, 'Naples-trained') composers on the Venetian operatic scene. Historically, Venice had been an exporter rather than importer of operatic styles and personnel, so the rapid move to a position of dominance of not only the composers in question but also the librettists with whom they collaborated (foremost among them, Pietro Metastasio) and the leading singers for whom they wrote (such as Faustina Bordoni and Farinelli) inevitably delivered a jolt to the city's musical psyche.

Reinhard Strohm has examined in depth the process whereby the Neapolitans took control of the commanding heights of Venetian opera in the late 1720s and early 1730s⁶. The rapid internationalization of the 'Neapolitan' style and its eager absorption by younger composers all over Italy (which turns such native-born Venetian composers as Galuppi and G. B. Pescetti into 'honorary' Neapolitans from the very start of their careers) means that its effect cannot be measured by crude statistics alone. Strohm observes correctly that of the seventy-eight *drammi per musica* produced in Venice from 1721 to 1736 no fewer than thirty (ignoring possible Neapolitan participation in operas of anonymous or mixed authorship) employed Naples-trained composers⁷. But in fact the dominance was more marked than these figures suggest, as TABLE 1, which lists the thirty operas, shows. True to its pioneering spirit, the S. Angelo theatre led the way in carnival 1723 with one full opera by Leonardo Leo and the same composer's contribution of arias to another opera (from which Strohm infers, surely correctly, that Leo was the musical director of the season). But S. Angelo, which entrusted its productions one season at a time to a succession of hired impresarios, had little continuity of artistic policy⁸, and waited until 1731 before playing host again to a Neapolitan composer. The decisive move occurred in 1725 when

⁵. The *Mercure de France* for October 1725 described Vivaldi (p. 2418) as "le plus habile compositeur qui soit à Venise" — no small praise when the candidates for this distinction included Albinoni, Biffi, Lotti, Benedetto Marcello and Porta.

⁶. STROHM, Reinhard. 'The Neapolitans in Venice', in: ID. *Dramma per musica': Italian Opera seria of the Eighteenth Century*, New Haven-London, Yale University Press, 1997, pp. 61-80. On Neapolitan style, see ID. *Italienische Opernarien des frühen Settecento (1720-1730)*, 2 vols., Cologne, Arno Volk Verlag, 1976 (*Analecta musicologica*, 16).

⁷. ID. 'The Neapolitans in Venice', *op. cit.* (see note 6), p. 65.

⁸. See TALBOT, Michael. 'A Venetian Operatic Contract of 1714', in: *The Business of Music*, edited by Michael Talbot, Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 2002 (Liverpool Music Symposium, 2), pp. 10-61.

Venice's premier opera house, S. Giovanni Grisostomo, staged two operas by Leonardo Vinci. From that point onwards it favoured Neapolitan composers consistently; during the time-frame covered by the table it staged almost twice as many operas by Neapolitan as by non-Neapolitan composers. The other theatre owned by the Grimani family, S. Samuele, which hosted operas during the Ascension season, continued, however, to favour non-Neapolitan — indeed, locally based — composers. This may have been either in order to reduce expenditure or simply because of the reduced availability of non-resident composers outside the principal autumn-carnival season. Vivaldi's commission for the 1735 Ascension season at S. Samuele, which resulted in *Griselda*, RV 718, appears less surprising (given his failure to secure a single commission from S. Giovanni Grisostomo during his entire career) in that perspective. Two Venetian theatres active during the same period, S. Cassiano and S. Moisè, ignored Neapolitan composers completely, but probably only because they could not afford them: they certainly had no objection to composers who wrote in the new style.

TABLE I: VENETIAN PRODUCTIONS OF OPERAS BY NAPLES-TRAINED COMPOSERS, 1723-36

YEAR, SEASON	THEATRE	COMPOSER	TITLE
1723 carn.	S. Angelo	Leo	<i>Timocrate</i>
	S. Angelo	Leo	<i>I veri amici</i> (arias contributed to)
1725 carn.	S. Gio. Grisostomo	Vinci	<i>Ifigenia in Tauride</i>
	S. Gio. Grisostomo	Vinci	<i>Rosmira fedele</i>
1726 carn.	S. Gio. Grisostomo	Porpora	<i>Siface</i>
	S. Gio. Grisostomo	Vinci	<i>Siroe, re di Persia</i>
1726 aut.	S. Gio. Grisostomo	Porpora	<i>Imeneo in Atene</i>
1727 carn.	S. Gio. Grisostomo	Porpora	<i>Meride e Selinunte</i>
1727 aut.	S. Gio. Grisostomo	Porpora	<i>Arianna e Teseo</i>
1728 carn.	S. Gio. Grisostomo	Leo	<i>Argene</i>
1728 aut.	S. Gio. Grisostomo	Porpora	<i>Ezio</i>
1729 carn.	S. Gio. Grisostomo	Leo	<i>Catone in Utica</i>
	S. Gio. Grisostomo	Porpora	<i>Semiramide riconosciuta</i>
1730 carn.	S. Gio. Grisostomo	Broschi	<i>Idaspe</i>
	S. Gio. Grisostomo	Hasse	<i>Artaserse</i>
1730 asc.	S. Samuele	Hasse	<i>Dalisa</i>
1730 aut.	S. Gio. Grisostomo	Sarri	<i>Didone abbandonata</i>
1731 carn.	S. Gio. Grisostomo	Vinci	<i>Siroe, re di Persia</i>
1731 aut.	S. Angelo	Porpora	<i>Annibale</i>
1732 carn.	S. Gio. Grisostomo	Hasse	<i>Demetrio</i>
1732 asc.	S. Samuele	Hasse	<i>Euristeo</i>
1733 carn.	S. Gio. Grisostomo	Sellitti	<i>Nitocrì</i>

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1733 asc.	S. Samuele	Sellitti	<i>Ginevra</i>
1734 carn.	S. Gio. Grisostomo	Araya	<i>Berenice</i>
	S. Gio. Grisostomo	Hasse	<i>Artaserse</i>
1735 carn.	S. Gio. Grisostomo	Leo	<i>La demenza di Tito</i>
	S. Angelo	Araya	<i>Lucio Vero</i>
	S. Angelo	Hasse	<i>Cajo Fabrizio</i>
1736 carn.	S. Gio. Grisostomo	Hasse	<i>Alessandro nelle Indie</i>
	S. Angelo	Fiorilli	<i>Mandame</i>

Overt Neapolitan hegemony eased after 1730: Vinci died in 1730 and Porpora moved temporarily to London in 1733. But its essential work had been done in the second half of the 1720s and no longer needed the guiding presence of the triad of composers (Leo, Vinci, Porpora) who had established the bridgehead.

Of the three men, Porpora is perhaps the most relevant to Vivaldi. Born in 1686, he was the closest in age to our composer and departed less radically than either Leo or Vinci from the musical language of the Gasparini-Scarlatti generation. In that sense, he provided an easier and perhaps more palatable model to follow. Because of his long periods of residence in Venice and service as *maestro di coro*, at different times, to three of the four *ospedali grandi* of Venice (Incurabili, 1725-33, 1737-38, 1742-43; Pietà, 1742-43; Derelitti, 1743-47) Porpora became, during this central part of his career, almost Venetian by adoption. Vivaldi must often have crossed paths, if not swords, with him⁹. On his arrival in Venice in 1725 Porpora was received by native-born composers with great hostility, especially after the success of his first Venetian opera, *Siface*; the visiting theatrical agent Owen Swiney, having praised the music, noted that the local composers looked on its author as an interloper¹⁰. Even greater must have been their chagrin when Porpora was chosen later in 1726 as the composer for the gala opera *Imeneo in Atene* (based on an earlier serenata) decreed by the Venetian state in honour of Cardinal Pietro Ottoboni¹¹. Very likely, however, this opposition became muted over time. After all, from the time of Willaert and Monteverdi *forestieri* had become absorbed successfully into the heart of Venetian musical life.

It was not only in opera that Venice felt the effects of the Neapolitan wave. Quite naturally, small-scale secular vocal genres (cantata and serenata) followed suit instantly.

⁹. Vivaldi and Porpora set the same cantata texts on at least two occasions.

¹⁰. On Porpora's reception in Venice, see TALBOT, Michael. *The Chamber Cantatas of Antonio Vivaldi*, Woodbridge, The Boydell Press, 2006, p. 148.

¹¹. See STROHM, Reinhard. 'The Neapolitans in Venice', *op. cit.* (see note 6), p. 75. On Ottoboni's Venetian sojourn, see TALBOT, Michael. 'Mythology in the Service of Eulogy: The Serenata *Andromeda liberata*', in: *Mediterranean Myths from Classical Antiquity to the Eighteenth Century*, edited by Metoda Kokole, Barbara Murovec, Marjeta Šašel Kos and Michael Talbot, Ljubljana, Založba ZRC, 2006, pp. 131-159: 135.

Sacred vocal music moved more cautiously and gradually in the same direction, helped along by the employment of Naples-trained musicians as *maestri di coro* or *maestri di maniera*, which began with Porpora's first period of service at the Incurabili in 1725 and continued with Hasse. A restraining factor, however, was the immovability of the singers at S. Marco and the *ospedali* alike, who frequently remained in post for several decades and imposed a brake on rapid change¹². In the sphere of instrumental music Neapolitan composers and performers occupied a minor position, but, given the fact that operatic style was the motor that drove style in all genres except (for absolute diehards) church music, the downward percolation of its general features was inevitable.

It cannot be argued that Vivaldi took on board the 'Neapolitan' innovations that we shall discuss later in an immediate, complete or straightforward way. By 1725 he was approaching the age of fifty — too old for the systematic overhaul of his musical language, even if he had swallowed enough pride to undertake this. What he did instead was to graft on to his style, piecemeal and at different times, selected features of the new musical language — enough to provide at least a veneer of modernity. Vivaldi also made adjustments to his strategy as an *operista* in order to weather the competition. He increasingly sought impresarial engagements in order to guarantee commissions for his own operas, often moved out of Venice into the provinces to avoid direct competition with his rivals, tried as far as possible to create for himself a 'stable' of affordable middle-ranking singers conversant with, and loyal to, his style (of which his regular *prima donna* Anna Girò is only the best-known member) and showed tolerance towards allowing arias by younger masters into his operas, whether as *arie di baule* forced on him by singers or as his own selections.

Alongside this seismic shift, little that happened in Vivaldi's well-ordered life seems relevant to our discussion. His visit to 'Germany' (comprising Bohemia and perhaps also Austria) in 1729–30 left little permanent mark, unless the exoticism of his *Conca* concerto (RV 163), which imitates the Bohemian *Wettertrompete* (a folk instrument consisting of a conch with an added mouthpiece), is paralleled in other works not yet spotted¹³. His move into the last and grandest of his Venetian apartments in May 1730 brought no changes. His decision after Op. 12 (1729) not to publish any further collections of his instrumental music had no effect (in general, it appears that what Vivaldi supplied to private customers was in no way different in style or specification to what he committed to print). Even the death of his father in 1736, after over four decades of successful collaboration, seems to have made little impact, though the resulting loss of the composer's most reliable and calligraphic

¹². This stability of personnel occasionally caused the repertory and style of performance at an *ospedale* to lag behind public taste, as occurred notably at the Derelitti, where it precipitated a crisis in 1739. See TALBOT, Michael. *Beneditto Vinaccesi: A Musician in Brescia and Venice in the Age of Corelli*, Oxford-New York, Clarendon Press, 1994 (Oxford Monographs on Music), pp. 76–77.

¹³. See ID. 'Vivaldi's Conch Concerto', in: *Informazioni e studi vivaldiani*, v (1984), pp. 66–81.

copyist must have been sorely bemoaned. Vivaldi must have been disappointed, too, in the failure of his nephew Pietro Mauro to establish himself during the 1730s as an operatic tenor and impresario (and dismayed even more by his involvement in an unsavoury sex scandal), but we should not expect any trace of this to show¹⁴. After the reverses of his operatic fortunes in Ferrara in the late 1730s there is no change of direction or existential crisis: Vivaldi simply picks up the pieces and carries on. Nor is there evidence of declining health presaging his sudden death in Vienna in July 1741. We have Charles de Brosses's testimony that Vivaldi in 1739 still possessed his old "furie de composition", and if his last compositions show occasional evidence of inattention (through missing notes, contrapuntal solecisms or the like), it is not as if those of his maturity are wholly immune from the same venial faults¹⁵. It is impossible not to conclude that the only significant external influence on Vivaldi's musical style at any point in his life was his own perception of its reception by patrons, customers and the opera-going public.

If we are going to establish a 'late period' for Vivaldi, we are not going to be able to have one with clear boundaries or within which perceptible incremental stylistic evolution does not occur. Many years ago, Walter Kolneder made the important point that although Vivaldi willingly admitted accretions to his style, he was unwilling to jettison existing elements altogether¹⁶. The result is a style that, starting just after 1700 from neo-Corellian beginnings, becomes increasingly heterogeneous and eclectic — but also rich and versatile. The style is rarely less than perfectly Vivaldian, and this is because of the constant presence of idiosyncratic elements. But the significant fact is that these idiosyncrasies (leaving aside certain notational aspects to be discussed later) are not strongly period-related: the Vivaldian turn of phrase that gives us a jolt in his music of the 1730s is likely to be one that he has cultivated since his earliest works. So the only reasonable point at which to commence Vivaldi's late period occurs as early as 1725 (the year when Vinci's operas conquered Venice) or perhaps even already in 1723 (the year of Leo's appearance at S. Angelo), if one believes that the apparent foretastes of Neapolitan style to be seen in Vivaldi's operas for Rome of 1723 and 1724 (*Ercole sul Termodonte*, RV 710; *Il Tigrane*, RV 740; *Giustino*, RV 717) reflect prior acquaintance with it. Thereafter, the stylistic progress is too incremental, too gentle, to suggest an alternative division — with one important reservation that will be mentioned further on.

If we cautiously take 1725 as the starting point of Vivaldi's final period, what portions of his oeuvre lie within it? Of his operas (including pasticcios) eight post-1725 works are

¹⁴. Discussed further in the present volume in WHITE, Micky - TALBOT, Michael. 'Pietro Mauro, detto "il Vivaldi": Failed Tenor, Failed Impresario, Failed Husband, Acclaimed Copyist'.

¹⁵. BROSSES, Charles de. *Lettres historiques et critiques sur l'Italie*, 3 vols., Paris, Ponthieu, 1799, vol. II, p. 299.

¹⁶. KOLNEDER, Walter. 'Gibt es einen Vivaldistil?', in: *Informazioni e studi vivaldiani*, I (1980), pp. 9-16: 12-13.

preserved complete (in chronological order: *Farnace*, RV 727; *Orlando*, RV 728; *L'Atenaide*, RV 702; *La fida ninfa*, RV 714; *L'Olimpiade*, RV 725; *Il Tamerlano*, RV 703; *Griselda*, RV 718; *Rosmira fedele*, RV 731)¹⁷, while substantial sections survive of two further works (*Motezuma*, RV 723, and *Catone in Utica*, RV 705). Of his three surviving serenatas, two (the *Wedding Serenata*, RV 687, of 1725¹⁸ and *La Senna festeggiante*, RV 693, of c. 1726) belong to the start of the period. A majority of the chamber cantatas (the major exception being those written in Mantua during the period 1718–20) appear to lie within the period, although only *Vengo a voi, luci adorate*, RV 682, dates from after 1734. A large part of his sacred vocal music, including all the works *in due cori* except RV 602 (the earliest of the three versions of the *Laudate pueri Dominum* in A major), can be placed, albeit without great precision, within the time-frame 1725–35, while six compositions written for the Pietà early in 1739 (*In exitu Israel*, RV 604, *Beatus vir*, RV 795, *Confitebor tibi Domine*, RV 789, *Nisi Dominus*, RV 803, *Magnificat*, RV 611) are extant¹⁹. The gap of at least four or five years between the last works in the ‘main’ group (the *Confitebor tibi Domine*, RV 596, and the *Dixit Dominus*, RV 807) and the ‘1739’ group is useful for analytical purposes, since it provides clues towards establishing which Neapolitan features were absorbed quickly by Vivaldi and which only towards the end of his life. The chronology of Vivaldi’s post-1725 instrumental works (we are talking mainly of concertos and sinfonias, since sonatas appear to dry up during Vivaldi’s final decade of life) is known only sketchily, but it seems clear that these are fairly numerous, being well represented in the Turin manuscripts²⁰. Conveniently, we possess the three concertos and one sinfonia performed at the Pietà, together with Gennaro d’Alessandro’s serenata *Il coro delle Muse*, before Crown Prince Friedrich Christian of Saxony–Poland in March 1740²¹; these, at least, provide a satisfactory finishing post for Vivaldi’s endeavours in the instrumental sphere.

In attempting to establish the defining characteristics of Vivaldi’s ‘late’ period and to describe the evolution that took place within it, I shall first turn my attention to two aspects that have little or nothing to do — at least, directly — with the ‘neapolitanization’ of his style and in that respect are especially important, since they form no part of a general pattern that affected other Italian composers of his generation (Albinoni and Dall’Abaco spring immediately to mind) with similar force. The first is his intensive

¹⁷. The description ‘complete’ ignores the possible non-preservation of the introductory sinfonia.

¹⁸. This is the work sometimes known today — rather absurdly — as “Gloria e Himeneo” after the two characters listed on the first page of music (the gathering containing the sinfonia, which will certainly also have contained the serenata’s proper title, is lost).

¹⁹. RV 789 is preserved only fragmentarily; RV 611 and RV 795 are new versions, with substituted movements, of earlier compositions. On the 1739 psalm cycle, see TALBOT, Michael. ‘Recovering Vivaldi’s Lost Psalm’, in: *Eighteenth-Century Music*, 1 (March 2004), pp. 61–77.

²⁰. Moreover, many of the concertos published in Opp. 9–12 lie within the period, even if these collections also include works composed in some shape or form before 1725.

²¹. Respectively, RV 540, 552, 558 and 149.

and ambitious cultivation of fugue and fugal texture between the mid 1720s and some point in the early or mid 1730s; the second is his adoption, in movements in moderate or quick tempo, of 'diminuted' metre in which the effective beat-note is halved (in common time this results in the replacement of the crotchet by the quaver; in 3/8 metre, the semiquaver replaces the quaver).

In the early part of his career Vivaldi made neither more nor less use of fugue than one would expect in a composer following in the footsteps of Corelli, Torelli and Albinoni. The early trio sonata RV 60 has a full-scale fugue as its third movement, while half the trio sonatas in Op. 1 (1705) and five of the solo sonatas in Op. 2 (1709) display fugal or canonic texture in at least one movement²². The pioneering concertos of Op. 3, *L'estro armonico* (1711), contain a celebrated fugue in the eleventh concerto, RV 565, and a further movement (the second movement of the twelfth concerto, RV 265) whose ritornello is, in a rather simple way, also fugal. The fugues and *fugati* of this period are very traditional in technique and expression: the example in RV 565 even looks back to Seicento practice in having no full statement of its minor-key subject in the major mode.

Vivaldi maintains his occasional employment of fugal and canonic texture, perhaps even with slight retrenchment, during the 1710s and into the third decade. In the published concertos we meet it in Op. 4 no. 7 (RV 185) and Op. 8 nos. 5, RV 253 (*La tempesta di mare*), and 11 (RV 210)²³. Otherwise, we see it used in the internal slow movement of a solo sonata (RV 53 for oboe), and in the first Allegro movement of a violin sonata (RV 26) that here follows an obvious Corellian model. Fugal ritornellos occasionally surface in unpublished concertos of the same years. In Vivaldi's sacred vocal music composed, mainly for the Pietà, during the second decade we find fugal conclusions in the *Stabat Mater* of 1712, the C minor *Laudate pueri Dominum*, RV 600, and the primitive ('Prague/Osek') version of the *Magnificat*, RV 610; the last work contains a further fugal movement ("Et misericordia ejus"). The single-movement *Credo*, RV 591, has a brief fugato for the concluding Doxology. But when weightier fugal movements are required — as in the *Gloria* settings, RV 588 and 589, and the 'Prague' *Dixit Dominus*, RV 595 — Vivaldi ducks the challenge and surreptitiously dips into his stock of music by other composers, even if the borrowings are far from mechanical.

²². On the authenticity of RV 60, long suspected of being spurious, see SARDELLI, Federico Maria. 'Le opere giovanili di Antonio Vivaldi', in: *Studi vivaldiani*, v (2004), pp. 45-78. Constructed largely on the "chamber" pattern, with most movements cast in binary form, the sonatas of Opp. 1 and 2 offered the composer no scope for full-scale fugues. Op. 1 displays fugal and/or canonic elements in sonatas 2, 3, 4, 5, 8 and 10; Op. 2 in sonatas 1, 4, 7, 9 and 11. Vivaldi's fugal expositions sometimes begin (as in Op. 2 no. 9, Preludio) with imitation at the octave or unison before introducing imitation at the fourth or fifth (the *conditio sine qua non* of fugue) at a later stage.

²³. The fugal finale of Op. 7 no. 9 (RV 373) does not count, since the work, like certain others in the same collection, is clearly spurious.

Had Vivaldi died in 1720, it would have been quite fair to assume that he had ‘gone over’ absolutely and definitively to continuo-homophony and that such fugal elements as remained were throwbacks to a dying language. But during the 1720s (perhaps with a few anticipations during his Mantuan period of 1718–20) we witness an extraordinary revival of fugue in Vivaldi’s hands, and this time bearing a strongly personal stamp. The revival is concentrated in two areas: the concerto without soloist (also called *concerto a quattro* or ‘ripieno’ concerto) and sacred vocal music employing choir. There is an obvious connection between the two areas in that the absence of solo display creates space for contrapuntal elaboration (if that is desired), and this connection is brought out vividly in RV 129, entitled *Concerto madrigalesco* by the composer, which is an anthology, now in a purely instrumental realization, of choral movements taken from at least two different sacred vocal works²⁴.

Fourteen *concerti a quattro* and both of the two-movement sonatas in the style of Viennese *sepolcro* overtures (RV 130, the *Suonata a 4 al Santissimo Sepolcro*, and RV 169, the *Sinfonia al Santo Sepolcro*) contain at least one movement styled either as a full-length fugue or as a motto-form structure in which the motto opening successive periods is a fugato²⁵. Two concertos — RV 153 and RV 160 — probably date from the Mantuan period²⁶, but most of the rest appear to belong to later in the 1720s and even beyond. There are various indices to suggest this, such as the employment of ‘large 3’ time signatures (in RV 123, 143 and 152), the occasional evidence of paper-type (RV 155, for instance, is a product of Vivaldi’s Bohemian sojourn of 1729–30)²⁷, the date of publication of RV 124 (which as Op. 12 no. 3, issued by Michel-Charles Le Cène in 1729, is a lone specimen of its genre within Vivaldi’s published oeuvre), thematic links to other works and general stylistic character. It is quite likely that several works of this type originated during the period 1723–29, when Vivaldi supplied over 140 instrumental works to the Pietà in fulfilment of his contract, as an external supplier, with the *ospedale*; the traditional association of fugue with church music and the elevated style would have made it a welcome ingredient.

A similar picture emerges in the sacred vocal works that Vivaldi wrote (generally not for the Pietà) during the second half of the 1720s and for a few years after. The *Kyrie*, RV 587, the respond *Domine ad adjuvandum me festina*, RV 593, the ‘Turin’ *Dixit Dominus* (RV 594) the *Beatus vir* in C major RV 597 (much later to be reworked as RV 795) and

²⁴. TALBOT, Michael. *The Sacred Vocal Music of Antonio Vivaldi*, Florence, Olschki, 1995 (Quaderni vivaldiani, 8), pp. 349–350.

²⁵. The concertos are: RV 119, 120, 123, 124, 126, 128, 129, 130, 134, 143, 152, 153, 155 and 160.

²⁶. This dating is based on the paper types used. See EVERETT, Paul. ‘Towards a Vivaldi Chronology’, in: *Nuovi studi vivaldiani. Edizione e cronologia critica delle opere*, edited by Antonio Fanna and Giovanni Morelli, Florence, Olschki, 1988 (Quaderni vivaldiani, 2), pp. 729–757: 754.

²⁷. *Ibidem*, p. 739.

the recently discovered 'Dresden' *Dixit Dominus* RV 807 all contain at least one full-scale fugue designed to impress as such. Alongside these we find occasional movements in church aria form (equivalent to the A section of a *da capo* aria) with 'fugued' ritornellos closely comparable with those found in concerto movements. Noteworthy among these are the opening movement of the G minor *Salve regina*, RV 618, and the "Intellectus bonus" and concluding "Sicut erat in principio" terzets of the *Confitebor tibi Domine*, RV 596²⁸.

To some extent, Vivaldi's fugal *estro* carries over, in the 1720s, into genres and movement-types where such intensive contrapuntal treatment had become less usual. We find traces of it in the trio sonata RV 74 and in the "Alleluia" of the solo motet *Sum in medio tempestatum*, RV 632 (dating from c. 1733), and more overt exhibitions in the serenata *La Senna festeggiante*, RV 693 (in the imitation of a French overture heading the work's second part, cunningly adapted from a terzet by Lotti), the cantata aria "Passa di pena in pena" (from *Amor, hai vinto, hai vinto: ecco il mio seno*, RV 683), the aria "Al vezzegiar d'un volto" (*Farnace*, I.9) and the terzet "S'egli è ver che la sua rota" (*La fida ninfa*, I.12). Allied to this interest in fugue, we discern, in the works from the same period, a new-found predilection for more complex textures, of which the terzet "A battaglia, a battaglia t'aspetta" in *Motezuma* (II.5) is a typical expression.

In the later 1720s the character of Vivaldi's fugues crystallizes. On one hand, the composer is keen to put on display his mastery of traditional fugal devices and techniques. We find long pedal-points (strangely reminiscent of those accompanying the *perfidie* and pedal-cadenzas of his more virtuosically conceived music!), multiple invertible countersubjects, strictly maintained²⁹; generous exploitation of modal contrast in the middle entries of the subject, diminution applied to the subjects³⁰, subjects treated first in separate expositions and then combined³¹, independent bass parts in ostinato figuration³², episodes based strictly on elements taken from the subjects themselves and subjects of striking, non-traditional character³³. Although many of these fugues are fairly long movements, they carry no fat: Vivaldi refrains admirably from padding them out with all-purpose passage work or with virtuosic elaboration.

²⁸. The second of these movements appears to be a contrafactum of the terzet "S'egli è ver che la sua rota" in *La fida ninfa* (I.12). The earliest known fugal ritornello for a Vivaldi movement in church aria form is probably that in the first movement of the *introduzione* RV 638 (*Jubilate, o amoeni chori*), dating from around 1715.

²⁹. As many as three concurrent countersubjects are employed in the last movement of the *Dominus ad adjuvandum me festina*, RV 593.

³⁰. In the concluding fugues of the *Dixit Dominus* settings RV 594 and RV 807.

³¹. In the "In memoria aeterna" terzet of the *Beatus vir*, RV 597/795.

³². In the last movement of RV 593 and the fifth movement, "Juravit Dominus", of RV 807.

³³. An example of the latter would be the subject of the fugue forming the third movement of the violin concerto RV 247, which begins on the submediant of D minor (B flat), rising directly via an augmented second to C sharp.

At some point after c.1732 and before c.1738 Vivaldi's interest in fugal writing and, indeed, in independent middle parts *tout court* waned. None of the movements composed for the 1739 group of psalms plus Magnificat, nor those of the four instrumental works written for the Saxon prince's visit in 1740, nor those surviving in the Pietà's repertory for the years 1738-40³⁴ contain anything of the kind. What we do not yet know is whether the retreat from fuge was gradual or abrupt. Should it prove to have been abrupt, we would have a justification for dividing the 'late' period into two.

As regards diminuted metre in contexts other than slow movements, it is important to establish at the outset that one is not speaking of time signatures with unusually large denominators in the spirit of the 18/16 introduced by J. S. Bach in the twenty-sixth of the *Goldberg Variations* or the 6/16 and 12/32 employed in the final movement of Beethoven's piano sonata Op. 111: this metre is implicit, not explicit. It surfaces first in violin sonatas acquired by Pisendel in 1716-17 (RV 10, first movement, and RV 29, fourth movement). Thereafter, it becomes increasingly common, especially in the 1730s. Ex. 1 is instructive, since it shows how essentially the same musical material can be presented alternatively in diminuted and non-diminuted notation. Ex. 1a, the opening of the concerto for two horns RV 538, uses conventional notation and retains an *Allegro* tempo marking. Ex. 1b, the opening of the opening aria, "Dalle amene franche arene", from the *Wedding Serenata*, employs diminuted notation and in consequence scales the tempo marking back to *Andante* in order to compensate for the shorter note-values. Karl Heller showed many years ago that in Vivaldi's later works the simple direction "Allegro", which implies a relatively inelastic, conventionally accepted tempo appropriate for the 'sewing machine' rhythms, dominated by semiquaver movement, of his early works, fractures into a variety of 'nuanced' Allegros (*Allegro ma poco*, *Allegro non molto*, *Allegro molto* etc.), which can be either faster or slower than the traditional Allegro³⁵. Diminuted metre makes the use of an alternative to bland "Allegro" almost imperative. Most often, as in Ex. 1, the tempo is slowed, but there are also a few instances where diminuted metre seems not to be accompanied by any increase of beat duration: see, for example, the first movements of the violin sonata RV 29 and the third movement of the *concerto a quattro* RV 145, where a "Presto" marking makes the point.

Throughout his career, conversely, Vivaldi shows himself curiously resistant to 'augmented' metre (cut time, 3/2 etc.). His aversion to *alla breve* notation stands in stark

³⁴. Preserved in the Fondo Correr (Esposti) of the Conservatorio Statale di Musica "Benedetto Marcello", Venice.

³⁵. HELLER, Karl. "Tendenzen der Tempo-Differenzierung im Orchester Allegro Vivaldis", in: *Die Blasinstrumente und ihre Verwendung sowie zu Fragen des Tempos in der ersten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts: Konferenzbericht der 4. Wissenschaftlichen Arbeitstagung Blankenburg/Harz, 26.-27. Juni 1976*, edited by Eitelfriedrich Thom, Magdeburg, Rat des Bezirks-Leipzig, Zentralhaus für Kulturarbeit, 1977 (Studien zur Aufführungspraxis und Interpretation von Instrumentalmusik des 18. Jahrhunderts, 4/2), pp. 79-84.

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Ex. 1a: Vivaldi, Concerto for two horns, RV 538, first movement, bars 1-6.

Allegro

Ex. 1b: Vivaldi, *Wedding Serenata*, “Dalle amene franche arene” (Imeneo, first aria), bars 1-3.

Andante

contrast to the favour it enjoyed with composers of the Neapolitan school, who happily extended its use from its traditional heartland, sacred vocal music, to secular genres, both vocal and instrumental. If one searches Vivaldi's music for instances of cut time, one discovers that nearly all the cases occur in one of three situations: either the work is spurious, as in RV 58, 89, 102, 132, 373, 404, 415, 456, 464 and 465; or the movement is a borrowing (as in the “Cum Sancto Spiritu” fugues of RV 588 and RV 589)³⁶; or the source is — or, if published, is based on — a northern European copy, as in RV 74, 147, 193, 208a, 294a, 351, 377, 385, 562a and 751. (It is readily observable that in northern Europe the cut time signature was employed routinely by many scribes for music in common time. Tellingly, the autograph concordances of RV 208, 294 and 562 employ normal common time signatures.) Authentically Vivaldian employment of cut time is confined to a mere

³⁶. In fact, the appearance of cut time in a movement of a Vivaldi opera, such as the aria “La rondinella” (by Antonio Mazzone) in *Rosmira*, is a *prima facie* indication that the movement is an import by a different composer.

handful of works: the sonatas RV 9 and RV 16 (but in the two gavottas in question the sense is 2/4, not 2/2!), the orchestral works RV 147, 150, 166, 201, 355/355a, 552 and 765/767, and the operas *Farnace* (I.7: “Nell’intimo del petto”) and *Catone in Utica* (II.12: “Il povero mio core”). The most familiar instance occurs in the first movement of RV 552, this being the concerto in A major from the 1740 group. Along with the third movement of RV 147, the first movement of RV 150 (with the same main theme as RV 147) and the two arias, this movement offers evidence for Vivaldi’s belated, if still very sporadic, adoption of ‘classic’ *alla breve* notation, in which the effective beat-note remains the minim throughout. At least here, perhaps, it is legitimate to suspect Neapolitan influence.

Vivaldi is hardly more hospitable towards 3/2 metre, mainstay of the Corellian (and also Torellian) Grave. Two Op. 1 works — the first (RV 73) and tenth (RV 78) sonatas — employ it, as do similar slow movements in the early quartet sonata RV 779, the concerto in D major for two trumpets (or oboes), RV 781, and the oboe sonata RV 53, preserved in Dresden and probably dating from 1716–17 or not long before. Thereafter, 3/4 and 3/8 (soon to be indicated indifferently as “3”) are preferred in all contexts. A solitary later instance occurs in the aria “Pietà, dolcezza” in *La Senna festeggiante* — but here the welter of semibreves and minims seems designed to pay homage to the *notes blanches* of French music, in a rather ineffectual allusion to the subject of the serenata.

We now have to consider those features associated specifically with the Neapolitan style. These can first be summarized as a series of points³⁷.

1: The music is more treble-dominated than before. Basses are slower-moving (or use simple devices such as repeated notes to achieve animation) and highly functional. The harmonic rhythm is generally slower. There is a thinning and dilution of content in the middle layers of the music — in extreme cases, the texture reduces to a simple treble-bass opposition.

2: The melodic line (in the voice or the violins) is rhythmically very diverse and fussy in its details. The ‘sewing-machine’ style of the 1710s is abandoned.

3: Specific melodic and rhythmic devices are favoured: trills, appoggiaturas, Lombardic rhythms (inverted dotted groups), triplet semiquavers and syncopated groups are especially prominent.

4: Points are specifically created (the end of the second vocal section is a favourite spot) for the performance of vocal cadenzas.

5: Major-minor shifts become a favoured expressive device.

6: The phrase structure becomes increasingly quadratic; the role of *Fortspinnung* is reduced, and the organization of musical periods becomes increasingly paratactic (additive),

³⁷. This summary is adapted from the one presented in TALBOT, Michael. *The Chamber Cantatas of Antonio Vivaldi*, op. cit. (see note 10), pp. 64–65.

making considerable use of reduplication, strict or free (as in the pattern A, A, B, B, C, C, C, D, D)³⁸.

It needs first to be emphasized that several of the above features did not have to wait for the arrival of the Neapolitans in the mid-1720s to become part of Vivaldi's musical language. One cannot exclude either that Vivaldi had earlier exerted an influence on Neapolitans of the Leo-Porpora-Vinci generation (receiving this back 'with interest', so to speak) or that he had been subject to Neapolitan influence prior to the 1720s. Quantz even credited Vivaldi, not the Neapolitans, with the introduction of the Lombardic style, referring to his Roman operas of 1723-24³⁹. Major-minor shifts were part of Vivaldi's daily music language from at least the time of *L'estro armonico*. These mostly took the form of 'pathetic' parentheses (minor inserted within major) using contrasting material, but there is one striking instance in *Il Tigrane* (the aria "Mi vedrai con lieta fronte", II.3) where major-minor alternation is applied to a single principal theme⁴⁰. However, in this matter and others there can be no doubt that the example of the Neapolitans imparted a further spin to what Vivaldi was already doing. A movement such as the finale of the *concerto a quattro* RV 159 (twelfth concerto of the 'Paris' set dating from the mid-1720s), in which major and minor modality are systematically alternated without pause gives a foretaste of what Domenico Scarlatti was to achieve in K. 444: it marks a genuine change in musical sensibility.

To consider the above points one by one: Vivaldi was partial ever since the time of his first concertos to lean textures. If we leave aside the special case of the orchestral unison (not invented by Vivaldi but certainly popularized and universalized by him), we find one-strand (continuo or *bassetto*) and two-strand accompaniments to solo lines throughout his career. In lighter movements, such as the finales of sinfonias, we also find *ripieno* writing in two parts, with violins in unison and violas doubling the bass. There is initially no noticeable change in this pattern after 1725, but in the mid-1730s what one may term 'extreme treble-bass polarity' begins to become common for the first time also in weightier musical sections such as ritornellos. The massive ritornello opening the first movement of RV 558 (the "concerto con molti istrumenti" from the 1740 group) is a case in point. Despite the multiplicity of instruments (recorders, theorbos, mandolins, chalumeaux, *violini in tromba marina*) available for the filling up of the middle of the texture, Vivaldi is mostly content to let them double the outer parts, so that the music proceeds effectively in two, or at the most three, real parts. This is not mere laziness on Vivaldi's part: it conforms exactly

³⁸. This reliance on short, balancing phrases, several presented twice or three times in succession, corresponds to what Newman called "phrase grouping" (see NEWMAN, William S. *The Sonata in the Baroque Era*, Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press, 1959, p. 68).

³⁹. QUANTZ, Johann Joachim. 'Herrn Johann Joachim Quantzens Lebenslauf, von ihm selbst entworfen', in: MARPURG, Friedrich Wilhelm. *Historisch-kritische Beyträge zur Aufnahme der Musik*, 5 vols., Berlin, Lange, 1754-1778, vol. 1, pp. 197-250: 223.

⁴⁰. The passage is quoted in TALBOT, Michael. 'Modal Shifts in the Sonatas of Domenico Scarlatti', in: *Chigiana*, N.S. 20 (1985), pp. 25-43: 33.

to the prevailing taste of the time, as exemplified by Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater* (1733) and *La serva padrona* (1736) or by Domenico Scarlatti's *Essercizi per gravicembalo* (1738).

The increased rhythmic diversification of melodic lines, spreading from slow movements also to quick ones, is evident to anyone who compares Vivaldi's Op. 8 concertos of 1725 to those of his Op. 9, published only two years later, in 1727⁴¹. In movements from solo concertos and arias alike, rhythmically homogeneous ritornellos become the exception rather than the rule (and the same goes for harmonic rhythm). Vivaldi now favours intricacy of melodic contour, using the idiomatic devices listed under the third point above; he willingly sacrifices monumentality to *cantabilità*.

In his vocal music, and generally also in his instrumental music, Vivaldi indicates the presence of cadenzas by a fermata placed in all parts, normally over a pre-cadential dominant chord. Whereas his introduction of cadenzas for solo violin (placing himself in the spotlight!) in concerto movements and operatic arias alike goes back as least as far as RV 212, the "Concerto per la solen[n]ità della S. Lingua di S. Antonio in Pad[o]a" of 1712, cadenzas for singers of arias, normally placed at the end of the second vocal section, do not start to arrive until the mid-1720s — precisely at the point of the Neapolitan impact (or, more exactly, the impact of the singers associated with the new Neapolitan style) in Venice. For instance, among his motets and *introduzioni* the four works containing fermatas for vocal cadenzas (RV 627, 629, 632 and 637) can all be assigned to the post-1725 period. All five movements for solo voice substituted for the original movements in the *Magnificat* of 1739 (RV 611) feature pre-cadential fermatas, whereas none of the original movements did. The cessation, within the operatic aria, of the instrumental cadenza and its replacement by the vocal cadenza marks a shift in the balance of power among the participants in the genre.

Passing over major-minor shifts (discussed earlier), we arrive at what is perhaps the most interesting evolutionary area within Vivaldi's later music: phrase structure. This is the one musical parameter in which Vivaldi permits himself to be more wedded to complexity than Bach (or any other contemporary). The devices that Vivaldi employs to achieve such complexity are various but include asymmetry between antecedent and consequent, ternary rather than binary division of units of phrasing and the interlocking of phrases (i.e., where the end of one phrase doubles as the beginning of its successor). For a long time, Vivaldi's music resists the simplification and rationalization of phrase structure characteristic of the Neapolitans. This can be illustrated by quoting, as Ex. 2, the first vocal period of the aria "Dovea svenarti allora" from *Catone in Utica* (1737). Everything else about the music — including the complete renunciation of *Fortspinnung* in favour of phrase grouping — is Neapolitan-influenced, but the phrase structure remains obstinately Vivaldian. Bars 11–15 have an elongated (three-bar) consequent that robs them of symmetry. Bars 16–22 group

⁴¹. The true chronological gap between the two collections is in reality wider than two years on account of the exceptionally long lead time preceding the publication of the earlier opus. On the date of composition of the Op. 8 works, see EVERETT, Paul. *Vivaldi: "The Four Seasons" and other Concertos, Op. 8*, Cambridge (UK)–New York, Cambridge University Press, 1996 (Cambridge Music Handbooks), pp. 7–25.

VIVALDI'S 'LATE' STYLE: FINAL FRUITION OR TERMINAL DECLINE?

Ex. 2: Vivaldi, *Catone in Utica*, "Dovea svenarti allora" (Catone, II.12), bars 11-33.

(Allegro)

VI I
VI II

Viola

Catone

Basso

Do - vea sve - nar - ti al - lo - ra ch'a - pri - sti al di le

15

ci - glia. Di - te, di - te, di - te: ve - de - ste an - co - ra un

20

fp *fp*

fp *fp*

fp *fp*

pa - dre ed u - na fi - glia per - fi - da al par - di -

fp *fp*

67

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25 *fp* *fp* *fp* *fp*

le - i, per - fi - da al par - di - le - i,

29 *p* *f* *f* *f* *f*

mi - se - ro al par di me, al par - di - me, al par - di - me?

themselves in ternary (2 + 2 + 3), not binary, fashion. The sequence in bars 23-28 is itself symmetrical but based on a three-bar, not two-bar, unit. Finally, bars 29-33 (overlapping, via the terminal cadence, into the succeeding phrase) once again feature an elongated consequent. There is, perhaps, an underlying background symmetry modelled on the 16-bar period, but the actual length has grown to 23 bars.

In his final years, however, Vivaldi at last capitulates to fashion and increasingly opts for quadratic phrase structure. This transformation is often made more evident by the reduplicative presentation of phrases, which often brings to mind Domenico Scarlatti or Domenico Paradies. The opening ritornello of RV 558 would serve as an apt example, but an even clearer demonstration is provided by the opening period of a *concerto a quattro*, RV 158. The manuscript source of this concerto is undated, and there are no bibliographical or musical concordances that would enable us to date it objectively. However, the advanced stylistic features that the concerto reveals in all its movements leave no room for doubt that this is a product of the later 1730s. The passage is shown as Ex. 3.

VIVALDI'S 'LATE' STYLE: FINAL FRUITION OR TERMINAL DECLINE?

Ex. 3: Vivaldi, "Concerto Ripieno", RV 158, first movement, bars 1-18.

Allegro molto

Musical score for Vivaldi's "Concerto Ripieno", RV 158, first movement, bars 1-18. The score is in G major and 3/4 time, marked "Allegro molto". It features four staves: Violin I (VI I), Violin II (VI II), Viola, and Bass. The first system (bars 1-3) shows the Violin I and II parts with melodic lines and the Viola and Bass parts with rhythmic accompaniment. The second system (bars 4-6) continues the melodic development in the Violin parts and the rhythmic accompaniment. The third system (bars 7-9) shows the Violin parts with more complex rhythmic patterns and the Viola and Bass parts with a steady accompaniment. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings like "p" (piano).

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10

13

16

7

6
4

5
3

7

Bars 1-3 constitute a single bar twice repeated reduplicatively, each time with variation. Bars 4-5 make up a single bar and its repetition. Bars 6-8 repeat the pattern of bars 1-3, except that this time the repetition is sequential, not at the original pitch. Bars 9-10 (note the modal shift!) form a simple pair, as do bars 11-12 (though here with

complementary rather than identical cadences). Bars 13–14, back in the major mode, form another simple pair. Bars 15–16, making a brief dominant preparation for the cadential phrase, are ostensibly an undivided single unit, but the symmetry of their components enables us to discern the familiar 1 + 1 structure. Finally, bars 17–18 make up another reduplicative pair. One is grateful for the two instances of ternary phrase structure (bars 1–3 and 6–8) that subvert an otherwise perfect quadraticism.

CONCLUSIONS

Even though the imperfect chronology that we have for Vivaldi's works should induce caution, there are some clear propositions to make on the basis of the present study. The first is that the middle of the 1720s forms a stylistic watershed in Vivaldi's music, and that most of the change was at least triggered, if not actually caused, by the advent of the Neapolitan style. Some changes, such as the introduction of vocal cadenzas and the rhythmic diversification of melodic lines, occurred quickly and painlessly. Others, such as the dominance of quadratic phrase structure, the preference for phrase grouping over *Fortspinnung* and the tendency towards polarized textures with amorphous or absent middle strands, took somewhat longer to manifest themselves. The sudden flowering of interest by Vivaldi in contrapuntal textures, notably fugue, in the late 1720s and 1730s stands as a kind of counter-current, albeit one that petered out at some point in the mid or late 1730s. With more information, it may become possible to divide Vivaldi's late period into a 'first' (1725–c. 1735) and a 'second' (c. 1736–41) phase.

As regards the quality of Vivaldi's music composed during the late period as a whole, the verdict must remain at a more personal level. I would regard the music of the years stretching from the publication of Op. 8 (1725) to *Griselda* (1735) as the summit of Vivaldi's creativity. True, nothing in his oeuvre can equal *L'estro armonico* (and the early concertos in general) for historical importance, but the works of this first period, and even those of the second half of the 1710s, simply do not attain the refinement of compositional technique displayed in such diverse works as *La Senna festeggiante*, the operas *Orlando* and *L'Olimpiade*, the 'Dresden' *Dixit Dominus* or the 'Paris' concertos.

That said, an unevenness of quality, a coarsening that one could even describe as creative exhaustion, begins to set in — not uniformly but perceptibly — in the later 1730s. One senses the *disagio* of a composer not fully at home with the requirements of the situation. The special instrumental effects introduced in RV 558 and in the 'Dresden' *Nisi Dominus* (RV 803) risk appearing as a surrogate for, rather than an enrichment of, musical inspiration. There is too much perfunctory routine in the fashioning of accompanying parts. De Brosses noted the decline in Vivaldi's public image since the glory days of the

previous decade⁴². But self-esteem and economic necessity kept him ‘on the road’ (both figuratively and literally!) to the very end, well beyond the point when most composers would have bowed out. For that we can be grateful, since the last works intermittently offer music of great value (a signal example would be the concerto for viola d’amore and lute, RV 540, from the 1740 group).

The question posed by the title of this chapter therefore demands a nuanced answer. If the chronological boundaries (1725 and 1741) of the ‘late’ period are agreed, then this encompasses in successive phases *both* a “final fruition” *and* a “terminal decline”. That the latter occupies only the last five years, at most, of the composer’s relatively long life is a tribute to Vivaldi’s energy, self-belief and capacity for creative renewal.

⁴². BROSSES, Charles de. *Lettres historiques [...]*, *op. cit.* (see note 15), vol. II, p. 299.

CHAPTER EIGHT

VIVALDI IN SCENA: THOUGHTS ON THE REVIVAL OF VIVALDI'S OPERAS

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VIVALDI'S *MOTEZUMA* FOR A LONG TIME represented an inaccessible El Dorado for modern directors, whose curiosity had been fired by the novelistic evocation of this opera in Alejo Carpentier's *Baroque Concerto*¹. As the truculent narrator of an imaginary meeting in a Venetian *bottega* between a rich Mexican disguised as an Aztec emperor and the Red Priest, the Cuban novelist conjures up a false Motezuma who relates to the tipsy composer the tale of the deposed monarch, who has lived "among temples, lakes and *teocallis*, the ruler of an empire that was wrested from him by a handful of bold Spaniards with the help of an Indian woman who was in love with the chief of the invaders"². A promising setting that causes Vivaldi (and, after him, opera directors) to exclaim: "Good story. Good theme for an opera", bringing to mind the "smoking mountains, apparitions of monsters, and earthquakes with collapsing buildings" and the "sorcerers' spells, human sacrifices and choirs on tragic nights" that such a subject offers³.

Alas! Until the rediscovery of its incomplete score in the archives of the Sing-Akademie of Berlin, the most tragic and at the same time most exotic opera even penned by the Red Priest has remained a simple title in books of music history — promising great things, to be sure, but offering for consultation only a libretto. This libretto has exercised fascination on account of its unusual geographical setting and original subject, and especially for its bold words that denounce the violence of the earliest European colonization with a force that for its time appears inconoclastic. In addition, it possesses a plot that is solidly developed, presents a set of psychologically complex characters —

¹. CARPENTIER, Alejo. *Baroque Concerto*, translated from the Spanish by Asa Zatz, London, André Deutsch, 1991.

². *Ibidem*, p. 60.

³. *Ibidem*.

notably those, masterfully drawn, of the Aztec empress Mitrena and the leader of the Conquistadors, Fernando (Hernán) Cortés — and includes several powerfully written scenes of pure tragedy. These are reasons enough to turn *Motezuma*, in the form of a text lacking music, into an attractive but also a terribly frustrating proposition for directors. The attraction was so great that in 1992, lacking the means to give expression to the dream otherwise, the music director Jean-Claude Malgoire and the stage director Aries Garcia Valdes decided, on the 500th anniversary of the discovery (for Europeans) of the New World, to invent a chimerical *Motezuma*, which they put together with the aid of music by Vivaldi taken from diverse sources and then brought to the stage with some brilliance, but with very little respect for authenticity⁴.

The rediscovery, in 2003, of a large part of the music of the ‘real’ *Motezuma* allows us henceforth to look forward to a more rigorous realization of this dream. But at the same time it raises (or, rather, it reactivates) a multitude of questions regarding the manner in which this realization should occur in order to restore in its integrity and magnificence the complete dramatic spectacle combining music, scenery and dancing that was the *Motezuma* presented to the public at the Teatro S. Angelo of Venice in the course of the autumn season of 1733, for which Antonio Mauro designed and painted the scenery and Giovanni Gallo choreographed the ballets.

How should one produce *Motezuma* at the dawn of the twenty-first century? To ask this question is really to raise the broader question of how Vivaldi’s operas should be produced in modern times. More than three quarters of a century after his *drammi per musica* began their climb out of obscurity, this is a question that has already been posed and, to the best of their ability, answered by numerous directors who, cautiously or recklessly, have explored the full gamut of possible solutions, ranging from the attempt to make a historical reconstitution to essays in Expressionist transposition. The singular case of *Motezuma* therefore offers a suitable opportunity to examine the most contentious issues and to make a critical inventory of their resolutions, in order to sketch out the contours of what could be the ideal style of production for a Vivaldi opera: one that respects the integrity of the composer’s work and the dramaturgical specifics of the libretto, but succeeds at the same time in winning over a large public.

From the epoch-making unveiling of *L’Olimpiade* in September 1939 in Siena, the first staged performance of a Vivaldi opera in modern times⁵, to the production of *Bajazet* in July 2006 at Montpellier, which is the most recent at the time of writing⁶, the staging

⁴. Premiered at the Opéra de Monte Carlo on 8 May 1992, under the musical direction of Jean-Claude Malgoire.

⁵. At the Teatro dell’Accademia dei Rozzi on 19 September 1939, under the musical direction of Antonio Guarnieri, with Virgilio Marchi as stage director.

⁶. At the Opéra-Comédie on 24 and 25 July 2006, under the musical direction of Fabio Biondi, with Davide Livermore as stage director.

of Vivaldi's works has travelled a long and rewarding road. In the course of this wide span of time several dozen directors, from the most humble to the most celebrated, have successively given us their vision of a modern scenography for those Vivaldi operas that have survived. The style of acting and movement on stage, the decorations, the costumes and the lighting have consequently been approached in very diverse, often opposing, ways, so that an observer today is privy to a remarkable catalogue of ideas and perspectives towards which to direct his thoughts. Three major trends reveal themselves within this catalogue: transposition (in the broader sense), adaptation and reconstitution: we will examine each in turn.

1: TRANSPOSITION

The particular structure and the specific conventions of the *dramma per musica* very often throw into disarray the directors of today, for whom baroque dramaturgy remains, both culturally and affectively, a *terra incognita*. This closed, codified universe, consigned to almost total oblivion in cultural history for almost two centuries before being timidly exhumed, unsettles them even more for belonging to a period when their profession was unknown. Many of them must be thinking: how is one to draw in a modern public with material that is so archaic, whose dramatic contours are so obsolete? The only way, it seems, is to winkle out from these outmoded libretti the timeless themes that animate them, and to convey these to a modern audience via a convenient footbridge: that of a *transposition* into the universe of today. After all, is Motezuma not closer to us if he exchanges his Aztec costume for the fatigues of a Cuban guerilla chief, and is Cortés not infinitely more credible if he dons the trainers of George Bush junior in place of his boots? By this reckoning, Farnace is much more presentable on stage if he presents the image of a Saddam Hussein playing opposite a Berenice transformed into Condoleeza Rice, and Megacle would triumph in the Olympic Games on behalf of Licida more convincingly if he availed himself of anabolic steroids. We can repeat the exercise *ad infinitum*, passing from a Teuzzone transmuted into a son of Mao Tse-Tung to an Orlando high on Ecstasy.

At a juncture where historically informed musical performance has won the day, it is hardly surprising that the above-mentioned anti-historical tendency on the part of numerous stage directors has rapidly degenerated into polemics. The conflict between the orchestra pit and the stalls has quickly become as public as it is bitter. Philippe Beaussant sums it up with a mixture of forcefulness and humour when he denounces what he has aptly baptized "*la malscène*"⁷: "If one is to believe the historians of the seventeenth century" — so writes this French musicologist — "stage directors did not yet exist. What a fortunate

7. BEAUSSANT, Philippe. *La malscène*, Paris, Fayard, 2005. This neologism could be translated as 'stagesickness', punning on the French word *malsaine* (sickly).

age! One could attend an opera without having to close one's eyes. One could take delight in it, listen to it and watch it at the same time, without feeling welling up within oneself, scene by scene, *crescendo*, *rinforzando*, that dull anger which is very bad for one's peace of mind"⁸. And Beaussant continues with ferocity:

Poppea disguised as a prostitute. Or Ulysses as a tramp. Or even — I have seen this done — Venus dressed as a sexy nymphet with blow-dried hair. And Hercules in his battledress. Then, of course, SS men everywhere, with ad hoc helmets, a black cloak with golden buttons, boots and much springing to attention. [...] Perhaps you have even seen, as I have done, potatoes being peeled at the front of the stage during the whole two hours of the performance⁹.

By chance, Vivaldi's operas have up to now remained apart from these wild excesses. Indeed, it is remarkable to be able to say in favour of the many experiences that they have undergone during their modern stage history, that they have been spared, for the most part, the *malscène* excoriated by Beaussant. This is a situation that one can probably attribute to the relative lateness of the full-scale revival on stage of Vivaldi's operas, a recentness that has sheltered them from the megalomaniacal ravings of which Mozart and Handel have been for over twenty years the resigned victims. It is just a discreet echo of this shock treatment that has, here and there, touched the Vivaldian stage in a few productions that have surrendered to the Sirens of simplistic transposition. One example was the rather vulgar 're-reading' of Vivaldi's *Orlando furioso* offered in 2002 at the Festival of Barga by a director who reduced the subtle drama of jealousy, chiselled by Braccioli from Ariosto's epic poem, to a smutty bout of post-party coupling.¹⁰ This was a production that, by transporting a drama full of make-believe to a glaucous gathering of the jet set, reduced it to a series of clichés that eclipsed all the dreaminess and all the tragic poetry of the original libretto. The conception was simultaneously horribly banal and sadly reductionist, completely at odds with the magnificent work carried out on behalf of the music by the conductor and his orchestra of old instruments. The production of *La verità in cimento* by Christian Gangneron in 2002 constitutes another notable example of this flourishing

⁸. ID. 'La malscène', in: *Le Monde de la Musique*, April 2005, pp. 50-53: 50: "Si l'on en croit les historiens du 17^{ème} siècle les metteurs en scène n'existaient pas. Quelle heureuse époque! On pouvait assister à un opéra sans avoir à fermer les yeux. On pouvait y prendre plaisir, l'écouter et le regarder en même temps, sans sentir monter en soi, de scène en scène, *crescendo*, *rinforzando*, cette colère sourde qui est très mauvaise pour la paix de l'âme".

⁹. *Ibidem*: "Poppée déguisée en pute. Ou bien Ulysse en clodo. Ou encore, je l'ai vu, Vénus en nombrette avec top glamour et brushing. Et Hercule en treillis. Puis, naturellement, des SS partout, avec casquette ad hoc, casaque noire à boutons dorés, bottes et garde-à-vous [...]. Peut-être même avez-vous vu comme moi, durant deux heures de spectacle, éplucher des pommes de terre au premier plan, sur le proscenium".

¹⁰. At the Teatro dei Differenti on 19, 21 and 22 July 2002, under the musical direction of Federico Maria Sardelli.

on the Vivaldian stage of echoes of *la malscène* — this time, minus the vulgarity¹¹: by transporting the Orient (as viewed through a Venetian lens) of Palazzi's libretto, with its adulteries and its polygamy, to the artificial, aseptic world of a modern principality in the grip of 'people' fever, Gangneron effectively descends to the level of the nods and winks familiar to a public brought up on a diet of scandals pertaining to the princely house of Monaco and the royal house of Windsor. But in doing so, he upsets the delicate balance of a libretto poised between the comic and the serious, which is so rich in deeper dramatic resources and scenographic potential.

Nevertheless, one must not shirk the main question: are such transpositions always illicit? To those who unreservedly condemn this practice in the name of the historical singularity of the work and the need to preserve its essence, its partisans will doubtless reply in the spirit of the put-down uttered by Vivaldi in Carpentier's novel to the 'false' Motezuma, who reproaches him for twisting historical facts: "Stop giving me that history crap"¹². And it is true that History and its teachings should not become tyrannical dogmas for the director, who may legitimately ask for as much freedom as the composers and librettists of the Settecento took in their treatment of major events and great historical figures. Certainly — but with the firm proviso of not forgetting the corollary proposed by the pseudo-Vivaldi to his drinking companion: "Poetic illusion is what counts in the theatre"¹³. That is indeed what the whole debate is about.

In *Baroque Concerto*, Carpentier places in the mouth of the valet Filomeno the following reflection:

And of what good is the illusion of theatre if not to remove us from where we are and take us to where we can't get on our own? [...] Thanks to the theatre, we can go back in time and live in periods forever gone¹⁴.

This question-cum-affirmation of Filomeno sounds here like the best advice for someone confronted by these pseudo-symbolical transpositions that claim to work towards the recovery of a lost art by sterilizing it in a bath of everyday triviality. One finds here an echo of the apt words of Philippe Beaussant, for whom every opera is nothing more than the development in music and on the stage of 'Dormo ancora, o son desto?' from Monteverdi's *Ulisse*, "the first phrase of the first scene of the first real opera in history"¹⁵. "Am I dreaming or am I awake?" — that, Beaussant tells us, is the whole business of

¹¹. Premiered at the Quartz of Brest on 11 January 2002, under the musical direction of Jean-Christophe Spinosi.

¹². CARPENTIER, Alejo. *Op. cit.* (see note 1), p. 103.

¹³. *Ibidem*.

¹⁴. *Ibidem*, p. 110.

¹⁵. BEAUSSANT, Philippe. 'La malscène', *op. cit.* (see note 7), p. 52: "première phrase de la première scène du premier véritable opéra de notre histoire".

operatic stagecraft: “We are there, in this auditorium, so that a space for dreaming is created between the singers and ourselves”. And Beaussant ends with this resounding aphorism: “Every stage director who prevents the public from dreaming is a malefactor”¹⁶.

That is all there is to say.

II: ADAPTATION

Luckily for the opera-going public of today, a good number of stage directors remain perfect benefactors. These strive above all — even if the rules governing a *dramma per musica* of three hundred years ago have long fallen into disuse — to create “a space for dreaming” between auditorium and stage. Rather than ransacking these allegedly outmoded libretti to search for fake psychoanalytical or geopolitical themes to develop via a sterile transposition, they prefer, in their approach, to privilege the mild method of adaptation. Starting from the principle that the habits of the public have changed over time, just as fashions and styles have done, they promote the idea of a serene ‘acclimatisation’ of the old baroque opera to the modern stage. Auditoriums have become different, and opera-goers and performers alike have undergone a deep sociological metamorphosis. So the followers of this school find it appropriate to reinvent the baroque ‘dream’ using the tools of our own time. The *mervaviglioso* has to be modernized, the finery has to be given a face-lift, and tragedy has to be renovated, all the while respecting the spirit of a complex art filled with codes and symbols.

Indisputably, it has been this school of the ‘happy medium’ that has for over thirty years dominated the Vivaldian stage. Following in the footsteps of Pier Luigi Pizzi and his memorable production of *Orlando furioso*, the dominant tendency has been a neo-classicism notable for its balanced approach. It has one foot in the historical world of the Settecento, the other — more venturesome — in our own age, and its spirit is suspended between these two poles. Pizzi was the first director to suggest this middle way, in which a few props, such as gilded statues and plumed helmets, and a sophisticated use of gesture become absorbed into an otherwise resolutely modern production that has no intention of being a historical reconstitution, and which magnifies the magic of the *dramma per musica* with the aid of state-of-the-art technical resources. Twenty years later, Pizzi repeated the experiment when staging *Bajazet* in Istanbul, brilliantly demonstrating once more how to adapt a *dramma per musica* by stylizing its basic framework with the help of a sober decor employing clean lines, at the same time offering a good contrast to the painted canvas and props (for settings such as the prison tent of *Bajazet* that disappears when Tamerlano arrives to make way for a reception tent, the military camp awaiting the arrival of the

¹⁶. *Ibidem*: “Nous sommes là, dans cette salle de spectacle, pour qu’entre les chanteurs et nous s’installe l’espace du rêve”. “Tout metteur en scène qui empêche le public de rêver est un malfaiteur”.

Princess of Trebizond, the throne room for the end of Act II and the gloomy prison for the opening of Act III), elegant costumes evoking the conventional Orient as viewed through the prism of the European Settecento, and a direction of the movements of the characters on stage that emphasized their aesthetic function and the important dramatic role assigned to gesture¹⁷. Pizzi, a firm advocate of a directorial approach that makes no attempt whatever to reconstitute historical reality, seeks to show that the production of a baroque opera can move a twentieth-century audience by seeking inspiration from its codes and practices while retaining complete freedom of action. The *meraviglioso* and the dreamlike thus reassert their rights through a reordering of the components of baroque scenography that takes the form of free variations around the historical material.

Eric Vigié, the noted author of a splendid production of *Dorilla in Tempe* (the first in modern times) at Nice in 1993, was one of the first directors to pick up the torch of Pizzi, fifteen years after *Orlando*¹⁸. Likewise rejecting the idea of a manner of representation based on treatises or historical practices, Vigié defends in the opera house, as in his notes on the production, what amounts to a complete theory concerning the adaptation of the drama per musica to the modern stage. He writes: «Living in the twentieth century, I intend to view a score of this kind, with its specificity and its strangeness, neither with the reflexes of an admirer besotted with a devout respect of a vanished epoch, nor with the discomfort produced by a transposition that the music renders, in my opinion, doomed from the start»¹⁹. And Vigié, illustrating his argument by his scenographic choices, makes himself a spokesman for the views of Filomeno and Beussant by avowing, as a profession of faith, the primacy of preserving the 'marvellous'. He continues:

The 'neo-classicism' of my scenography is the guarantee of what, for me, is essential in this opera: the marvellous. The marvellous in the costumes taken from the beginning of the eighteenth century, the marvellous in the contemporary lighting for a deliberately white decor, the marvellous in the pyrotechnical effects, the marvellous in the presence of Apollo: I place more trust in the living, the spectacular, than in a reconstitution that would anyway remain hypothetical²⁰.

¹⁷. At the Haigia Eirene Museum on 11 and 13 June 1999, under the musical direction of Fabio Biondi.

¹⁸. At the Acropolis on 17 and 18 March 1993 under the musical direction of Gilbert Bezzina. On this production, see DELAMÉA, Frédéric. 'Les opéras de Vivaldi au xxème siècle', in: *Cinquant'anni di produzioni e consumi della musica di Vivaldi, 1947-1997*, edited by Francesco Fanna and Michael Talbot, Florence, Olschki, 1998 (Quaderni vivaldiani, 10), pp. 197-198.

¹⁹. VIGIÉ, Eric. Statements collected by Olivier Cautrès and published in the programme for the performances of *Dorilla in Tempe* at the Opéra de Nice during March 1993: "Vivant au 20ème siècle, j'entends regarder une telle partition avec sa spécificité, son étrangeté, sans les réflexes d'un adorateur crispé sur le respect dévot d'une époque disparue, ni malaise traduite par une transposition que la musique rend, selon moi, vouée d'avance à l'échec".

²⁰. *Ibidem*: "Le 'néo-classicisme' de ma scénographie garantit ce qui pour moi est essentiel dans cet opéra: le merveilleux. Merveilleux des costumes du début du 18ème siècle, merveilleux des éclairages contem-

Five years later, when producing *Catone in Utica*, the director Gildas Bourdet adopted a similar procedure, opting, like Vigié, for an adaptation with mixed elements²¹: on one hand, there was a symbolical, denuded Utica, represented by a sober decor consisting in the main of geometrical flats in primary colours evoking the desert, the sea and the sky: on the other hand, there were some effects produced by machinery that were directly inspired by the Settecento, a direction of the actors that privileged gesture invested with meaning and, above all, sumptuous costumes exhibiting a sublimated classicism. Once again, adaptation succeeded in bringing baroque opera back to life by retaining its fundamental historical properties while updating its conventions, without recourse to the sad remedy of transposition, whether in a didactic or a mocking spirit.

So would the 'ideal' production of Vivaldi's *Motezuma* de Vivaldi draw inspiration from this approach to baroque theatre, which seeks a harmonious blend of naturalism and neo-classicism? The answer should not be too swift, but it is relevant to point out that it was precisely in the *Motezuma* 'invented' par Jean-Claude Malgoire that this school of thought gave the public, in 1992, one of its happiest realizations of a Vivaldi opera²². This is a school that could be described as one of "prudent modernity" (*sage modernité*), to use an apt phrase coined by the opera critic Sylvie Haugel, who observed after the work's première:

In scenic terms, Ariel Garcia Valdes and the designer Jean-Pierre Vergier have opted for a prudent modernity, using an elevated platform as the sole theatre of action: the scenery and props represent labyrinths, and there are some lateral elements evoking the ramparts of a fortified city; décor with few changes, sober costumes and carefully devised lighting²³.

This was a commendable stylization of Aztec architecture, over which were violently superimposed, as the action advanced, the symbols of the triumph of the Christian West (such as a giant cross rising above the debris of battle and a cathedral emerging from the ruins of the vanquished city).

Without doubt, this idea of a scenography that acclimatizes the drama per musicato the modern stage, with the potential to enlarge the aesthetic and dramatic uniqueness of baroque opera while bypassing its system of codes, is clearly one of the most seductive

porains sur un décor volontairement blanc, merveilleux des effets pyrotechniques, présence merveilleuse d'Apollo: je parie ainsi plus sur le vivant, le spectaculaire, que sur une résurrection toujours hypothétique".

²¹. Premiered at the Théâtre Municipal de Tourcoing on 12 May 1998, under the musical direction of Jean-Claude Malgoire.

²². Despite the singular character of this musically 'reinvented' *Motezuma*, the case is significant insofar as the reconstruction by Malgoire accorded scrupulous respect to the libretto of 1733 in respect of the casting and the unfolding of the plot, with the sole exception of an exchange of vocal registers between Motezuma and Fernando in relation to the original cast.

²³. Premiered on 21 March 2003 under the musical direction of Gilbert Bezzina.

paths to follow in the revival of Vivaldi's operas. But it cannot be regarded as a panacea. This modernized vision of the opera does not, indeed, provide a protection against all ills. A case in point is the production of *Ottone in villa* at Essen in 2001, the first modern staged performance of Vivaldi's first opera, which had a scenography inspired by the examples of Pizzi and Vigié (an elegant decor of neo-Palladian stucco representing the interior of an imperial villa, complemented by attractive costumes in eighteenth-century style designed by Hermann Feuchter) that provided a promising framework for Lalli's heroic-erotic-comic drama. However, these hopes were dashed by a calamitous direction of the singers that confused the comic with the ridiculous, and erotic allusion with plain vulgarity²⁴.

At this point, we need to consider the third way.

III: RECONSTITUTION

In order to restore to the *dramma per musica* its full power and significance, it has to be reconstituted just as it was conceived by its authors. This is the message from the partisans of this new approach, which aims to reconstitute the scenography of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. With a consistency that is hard to fault, these advocates of an extension to the stage of the revolution wrought in the opera pit by the *Baroqueux* (this is a favourite French term for the devotees of baroque music who support historically informed performance) maintain that it would be good to restore authenticity to the staging of opera, having already succeeded in doing so as regards the singing and playing of the music. This aim is seductive, but the task is complex, requiring much research and the attentive consultation of the original sources (libretto, score, contemporary descriptions, treatises, iconography), not forgetting the surviving evidence relating to costumes, accessories and stage machinery. Let us examine this problem after briefly relating the place occupied by reconstitution in the scenography of modern productions of Vivaldi operas.

Experiments with Vivaldi Operas

The idea of reconstituting the original scenography of baroque operas is an old one that has already been applied to many of Handel's operas, with a greater or lesser degree of success, in the hallowed venues of Drottningholm and Göttingen, which are two of the main European baroque theatres that have kept their original stage machinery, in working order. Vivaldi's operas, however, have not up to now benefited, a few experimental essays apart, from this type of treatment. A modest but promising beginning was made with

²⁴. Premiered at the Aalto Musiktheater on 20 October 2001, under the musical direction of Andreas Sperring and Rasmus Baumann.

Orlando finto pazzo, as directed in 2000 by the Czech conductor Ondřej Macek in the historic theatre of the castle of Český Krumlov, with its superb preserved machinery²⁵. Equally modest but less successful was the *Tigrane* conducted by Pál Németh in Budapest (2004)²⁶.

Alongside these attempts, the idea of a production directly inspired by the problems of historical reconstitution while making no claim to have solved them has been explored successfully by the director Gilbert Blin in connection with the production of *Rosmira fedele* by the Opéra de Nice in 2003²⁷. In this sequel to his *Orlando furioso* produced in Prague at the State Opera in 2001 Blin became the first stage director genuinely to lift the veil from the prospects offered by a return to the sources, by conceiving a sophisticated production of Vivaldi's last *pasticcio* that drew directly on the historical sources pertaining to baroque scenography. But even though he stated, in his turn, that the authenticity of the musical interpretation had to find its counterpart in the staging, Blin was careful to introduce a caveat to his maxim aimed at avoiding what he termed “a sterile reconstitution of drawings” (*une reconstitution stérile de dessins*)²⁸: the authenticity of the musical interpretation, he added, must be accompanied by fidelity to the artistic project of Vivaldi the impresario, who conceived *Rosmira* not as a newly minted work but as a *pasticcio*. So, in a certain way, his production has the character of a scenographic *pasticcio*. This production gives us not the first real attempt at the historical restitution of the production of a Vivaldi opera but, in an extension of the kaleidoscopic character of the musical work, the reconstitution of a “possible scenography after the method of Vivaldi himself: selecting elements taken from the historical reality of the work in order to form them into a new structure”²⁹. Blin's scenography is thus founded on an assortment of costumes inspired by the drawings of Antoine Daniel Bertoli and decor painted according to models supplied by the Bibiena family (notably, some canvases and frames made by Carlo Bibiena, the last artist of this distinguished line, preserved today in the theatre of the castle of Drottningholm in Sweden). So this is a free creation modelled on contemporary artefacts rather than a recreation of those artefacts themselves.

This stimulating experiment should not, however, distract us from investigating the possibility of making a genuine attempt at a scenic reconstitution of Vivaldi's operas according to the historical sources. The rediscovery of the score of *Motezuma* — incomplete, but sufficiently complete to be treated, for our purposes, in the same way

²⁵. Single performance on 21 October 2002.

²⁶. Premiered at the Kiscelli Museum on 1 October 2004.

²⁷. Premiered on 21 March 2003, under the musical direction of Gilbert Bezzina.

²⁸. BLIN, Gilbert. *Rosmira fedele, Principes de dramaturgie* (text published in the programme for the performances of *Rosmira fedele* at the Opéra de Nice during March 2003).

²⁹. *Ibidem*: “scénographie possible en suivant la méthode de Vivaldi lui-même: sélectionner des éléments de la réalité temporelle de l'œuvre, afin de les réordonner dans une structure nouvelle”.

as the operas preserved in their entirety — gives us the ideal opportunity to explore this route, taking full account of the special interest of this work, as described earlier, and also of the great value of the sources of information on its original production that are currently available to us.

The Original Production of Motezuma

Detailed examination of the libretto printed in 1733 and its complementary sources gives the lie to the idea, far too widespread, that the sources relevant to Vivaldian scenography are lost. The libretto, which actually contains numerous spectacular scenes of an attractiveness equal to those evoked by the false Motezuma of Carpentier (including battle scenes, a double conflagration, ritual sacrifice and a scene of triumph) gives us, indeed, an impressive amount of useful information on the scenographic materials as a whole.

Scenery and Scenic Transformations

More than the visual framework of the spectacle, the decor and the scenic transformations constitute the very essence of baroque theatrical production in the early eighteenth century: its principle and its aim. They form the foundation of its scenic 'grammar' — an ostentatious assertion of the spectacle's artifice and also its transience. The message is clear: in the real world, as in that of the 'marvellous', the climate and people's moods change abruptly. Nothing persists in the Republic of Pleasures: there, everything charms and everything vanishes. What one beholds is simultaneously a beautiful vision and a *trompe l'oeil*. The scenography, accordingly, is conceived as the graceful and perpetual pirouette. In Gilbert Blin's words: "This idea of change is very important in its own right: movement, metamorphosis, the fluctuating and renewed image, are indeed principles that baroque aesthetics take to insane lengths"³⁰. It is therefore not without reason that the majority of the libretti of *drammi per musica* insist on recording minutely each stage set and each of its changes, just as the libretto for *Motezuma* does, both when it summarily lists, between the *Argomento* and the cast list, the full series of *scene mutabili* and also when it refers to them separately in the body of the text itself.

So the wealth of information gathered in this way allows us to know, with absolute precision, the exact scenographic framework used for the première of *Motezuma* at the Teatro S. Angelo of Venice, as given below:

ACT I

³⁰. *Ibidem*: "cette idée de changement est elle-même très importante: le mouvement, la métamorphose, l'image fluctuante et renouvelée sont en effet autant de principes que l'esthétique baroque modèle jusqu'à la folie".

Scenes 1-7: Part of the lagoon of Mexico that separates the imperial palace from the Spanish quarter via a magnificent bridge, whose two levels are joined; remains of a battlefield.

Scenes 8-14: Room with a working door at its middle on the ground-floor apartment.

ACT II

Scenes 1-5: A hall for public audiences with two seats, situated in the Spanish quarter.

Scenes 6-14: A wide expanse beside a creek, near the encampment.

ACT III

Scenes 1-4: A distant part of the city, with a tower and a working door.

Scenes 5-10: A temple, of which one sees, in the background, the closed main door. At the side, a statue of Uccilibos the Great, god of the Mexicans, with an altar decorated for sacrifice.

Scenes 11-12: A great square in Mexico City festooned for a triumph. Mexican slaves.

In these stage sets one finds the pictorial vocabulary so familiar from the scenes of baroque opera: the ‘lagoons’, ‘palace’, ‘battlefield’, ‘magnificent bridge’, ‘hall for public audiences’, ‘creek’, ‘encampment’, ‘tower’, ‘temple’ and ‘great square’ belong, indeed, among the most common elements of the theatrical rhetoric of the time, on which painters and designers visited an infinity of variations, whenever they were not content to re-use or adapt canvases painted for an earlier production. The way is therefore clear for painters and designers of today who desire to revive the Vivaldian style of decor without borrowing from a parallel universe, since, even if we lack closer descriptions of the original sets for *Moteczuma*, extant historical documentation gives us several examples of canvases painted or sketched by artists active in Venice during the same years, notably those made by Canal, father and son, and by Francesco Bibiena, who are all recorded as having worked as scenery painters for some productions of Vivaldi operas. Doubtless, the reconstitution of certain aspects of the scenography (for instance, the statue of Uccilibos the Great and the altar decorated for sacrifice in accordance with Aztec ritual) could prove more difficult to realize in authentic manner, given the specificity of these scenographic elements. But our knowledge of the entrepreneurial practices of the period, which were dominated by a tolerant pragmatism, would enable us to circumvent the obstacle, since it is probable that the designers of *Moteczuma* were satisfied with giving Uccilibos the features of any other exotic god who had already graced the local stage³¹.

³¹. It should be remembered that, just as librettos, musical scores and singers passed regularly from one theatre to another during Vivaldi’s time, so, too, the stage sets themselves frequently travelled from one locale to another. One example of this practice is mentioned in a letter from the Marquis Luca Casimiro

Accessories and Costumes

The libretto of *Motezuma* is equally ready to give precise information about this second aspect. It invites props managers of today to consult the abundant iconography of the period in order to make a perfect replica of the two seats in the Spanish hall for public audiences, in which the second act opens, of the sword (I.1) and bow (I.4) of Motezuma, of the dagger of Mitrena (I.2), and of the Spanish brigantines and Mexican canoes (II.10) required by the plot.

As regards the costumes, many indications provided by the libretto likewise point to a direction of research. Motezuma disguised in Spanish dress (I.8), the Spanish and Mexican soldiers who make appearances throughout the work, and the Mexican slaves in the final scene: all are easily reconstructable, thanks to the iconography of the period, which drew much inspiration from the great chronicles of the Conquistadors and of the travellers who followed in their wake. The same goes for the costume of the priests of the Aztec temple (II.13), for whom the indications provided in the fifth scene of Act II specify the wearing of white clothing. As for the singers, who appear frequently in the paintings of Longhi and the caricatures of Ghezzi and Zanetti, their costumes, which are as sumptuous as they are unconnected to the subject of the drama, are sufficiently well known to be reproducible with fidelity. It is as well to remember the case of the singers in the Vivaldi pasticcio *Nerone fatto Cesare* who, eighteen years before *Motezuma*, on the same stage, donned, for their depiction of ancient Rome a mish-mash of French, Spanish and Persian garments. One may likewise recall the singers in Vivaldi's *Tito Manlio*, performed at Mantua in 1719, who wore the same court costumes that they had used for his previous Mantuan opera, *Il Teuzzone*, which had themselves served three years earlier for a performance at court of a spoken drama, *Alessandro*. To use the same costumes for Greek heroes (*Alessandro*), Chinese courtiers (*Il Teuzzone*) and Roman dignitaries (*Tito Manlio*) speaks volumes about baroque usage with regard to the singers' wardrobe, and about the practice of an age when the essential function of stage costume was to flatter the wearer without allowing the demands of realism or of expressionism to ruffle the ego of the true gods and goddesses of *dramma per musica*.

degli Albizzi, impresario of the Teatro alla Pergola of Florence, to Michele Grimani, the proprietor of the Teatro S. Giovanni Grisostomo of Venice on 5 October 1726. Albizzi writes: "Avvendo osservato che nel teatro dell'Eccellenza Vostra fu rappresentato il dramma dell'*Ipermestra* l'anno 1724, nel quale v'ho osservato una decorazione di lume di luna ed un'altra del sole, quando più non se ne servissero e che fossero questo trasportabili, le preghierei a dirmi di che costo fossero e poi di che materia facevano l'illuminazione, e con qual moto li facessero comparire. Perche facendo io la medesima opera nel Teatro di via della Pergola, se bene d'altro poeta, potrei includervi le dette deccorazioni, che naturalmente dovrebbero piacer al publico e forse non saranno ora d'alcun servizio per l'Eccellenza Vostra". Cited in HOLMES, William C. 'Vivaldi e il teatro la Pergola', in: *Nuovi studi vivaldiani. Edizione e cronologia critica delle opere*, edited by Antonio Fanna and Giovanni Morelli, Florence, Olschki, 1988 (Quaderni vivaldiani, 4), pp. 117-130: 121.

Movements on Stage

The libretto of *Motezuma* contains, finally, many instructions relevant to the important matter of movement on stage, which shed light on contemporary ideas about stage production. The four Mexican characters (Motezuma, Mitrena, Teutile and Asprano), the two Spaniards (Fernando et Ramiro) and also the groups that succeed one another on stage (Spanish soldiers, Mexican soldiers, priests of the temple, Mexican slaves) become in this way the object of a series of minute directions.

These include instructions:

- to speak as an aside or to oneself (*à parte* and *fra se*);
- to exteriorize inner feelings (Teutile *agitated* then *anxious* in 1.9);
- to address another character (*à Motezuma*, *à Mitrena* etc.);
- to perform specific actions (Motezuma, with a sword in his hand, in 1.1; the same character fitting an arrow to his bow and then shooting it in 1.4; Fernando letting his eyes wander over the stage in 1.10; Mitrena sitting down, and Fernando rising from his seat, in 11.4);
- for combined movements of the characters (Motezuma giving Mitrena a dagger in 1.2; Mitrena passing the dagger on to Teutile in 1.3; Ramiro arresting Motezuma, then pushing him towards the door, in 1.9);
- for collective movements by groups of characters (the arrival of Cortés with a retinue of Spaniards who descend from the bridge, the soldiers putting chains on Motezuma, in 1.14; the entry of Ramiro with a group of soldiers after the door of the temple has been thrown down, in 11.6).

One may judge the degree of precision with which these movements are described by examining the directions for scenes 1.13 and 1.14:

- Motezuma rushes up, sword in hand, and raises his sword against Fernando; it is immediately snatched away by Ramiro; disarmed, Motezuma draws back again.
- Fernando, turning in the direction from which the noise is coming, sees Ramiro, who is carrying a sword.
- Motezuma emerges impetuously from his hiding place.
- The soldiers put chains on Montezuma.
- Fernando exits, followed by Ramiro.

And similarly in 11.9:

- Fernando presses hard upon Motezuma.

- Motezuma and Fernando fight a duel.
- They start fighting again.
- They withdraw, still fighting.
- The Mexican soldiers round on Fernando. The Spanish soldiers intervene and attack the combatants.
- The fight ends and all withdraw.
- Ramiro exits and stops a section of the Spaniards who are appearing to flee.

Or, again, at the start of the third act, in the tragic chain of events that leads Asprano to set fire to the tower where his emperor is, believing that in so doing he is bringing death to the leader of the Conquistadors (III.1 to III.3):

- Ramiro guiding Fernando out of the tower, by the door. One sees, at the foot of the latter, some dead Mexicans.
- Motezuma with soldiers.
- Ramiro and the Spaniards retire.
- Motezuma's soldiers depart.
- Sword in hand, the latter advances towards the tower.
- Motezuma enters the tower.
- Ramiro and the soldiers exit.
- The soldiers close the door of the tower.
- Asprano and a retinue of soldiers beat down the door of the tower and set fire to it from all sides.
- Motezuma appears at the top of the tower.
- Asprano turns round and sees Motezuma at the top of the burning tower.
- Motezuma withdraws.

This extreme precision of the libretto reflects an age when dramatists took it upon themselves to govern, down to the smallest details, the movements of the actors, thereby giving stage directors of today a complete and unequivocal guide to the restoration of a spectacle of the past in its full authenticity. For that to happen, however, directors will have to give up treating the stage as a mirror reflecting their ego, and singers will have to consent to reoccupying a space for expression abandoned two centuries ago to the former and to relearning largely forgotten techniques. The putting into operation of the instructions contained in baroque libretti presupposes that directors and singers alike readmit to the heart of their art the idea of gesture, a principal element of baroque lyric theatre but today completely fallen into disuse. According to the singer and musicologist Michel Vershaeve, a recognized specialist in the area:

The art of singing in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was not based on the voice alone. Gesture fulfils a role of equal importance in the music of that time. It is content not merely to express the affects: it has an enormous influence on the vocal material, which it colours and animates. Creating in this way an intensification of the consonantal system, it allows the text to be communicated more successfully. [...] The message in the medium of sound can be extended by the eyes. In the quest for emotion, sight is the ally of hearing. The voice is never alone. To move an audience, it needs a support that projects it physically. The relationship between gesture and singing strengthens the conviction of a text and augments its expression. The body participates and acquires 'eloquence'³².

Singers having relearned their art according to the precepts of Tosi after decades of singing in an opposed manner, the time has indeed come for actors in baroque theatre to relearn their craft as practised in the Settecento. In order to accomplish this, every stage director, every music director and every singer concerned with the performance of a baroque opera ought to ponder Vershaeve's writings, with a view both to becoming convinced of the fundamental role of this art that has disappeared from the theatrical agenda and to appreciating the importance of the individual involvement of the artist in what should never descend to the mere trotting out of formulas and clichés. On the latter point, Vershaeve writes:

We know that a knowledge, however perfect, of the rules required for the correct performance of an opera will not necessarily lead to a successful show, talent being as important as learning. The performer must be free to declaim a recitative in his own rhythm, free to perform an ornament or not, free to emphasize a word, free to express his artistic intention. In this way, reconstitution will become a true resurrection — with the score always remaining the guide³³.

³². VERSHA EVE, Michel. *Le traité de chant et mise en scène baroques*, Bourg-la-Reine, Zurfluh, 1997, p. 101: "L'Art du chant aux XVII^eme et XVIII^eme siècles n'est pas exclusivement basé sur la voix. Le geste remplit un rôle tout aussi grand dans la musique de cette époque. Il ne se contente pas d'exprimer les affects mais influe énormément sur le matériau vocal qu'il colore et anime. Créant aussi une intensification du système consonantique, il permet une meilleure communication du texte. [...] Le message sonore peut-être entendu par les yeux. Dans la recherche de l'émotion, la vue est complice de l'ouïe. La voix n'est jamais solitaire. Pour atteindre le public, il lui faut un support qui la lance matériellement. La relation geste-chant renforce la véracité d'un texte et dilate l'expression. La corps participe et devient 'éloquence'".

³³. *Ibidem*, p. 231: "Nous savons que la connaissance, même parfaite, des règles exigées pour une reconstitution correcte d'un Opéra, ne produira pas obligatoirement un bon spectacle, le talent étant aussi important que le savoir. L'interprète doit être libre de pouvoir déclamer un récitatif à son rythme, libre d'effectuer un agrément ou non, libre de mettre un mot en valeur, libre d'exprimer sa volonté artistique. La reconstitution se transformera alors en une véritable résurrection — la partition demeurant toujours le guide".

Choreography

There would finally remain, to perfect this reconstitution of *Motezuma*, the task of recreating the ballets of Giovanni Gallo, which were probably inserted between the acts, but whose music and choreography are entirely lost. Reconstitution here being impossible, the goal would be to find a suitable replacement, following a renewed period of 'apprenticeship' carried out with the aid of treatises and reports pertaining to baroque choreography and applied to the dance music then current in Italy or to compositions by Vivaldi based on dance rhythms. This would await the discovery of new sources or of our acquisition of a new understanding of the submerged past.

The relativity that prevails here brings an opportunity to repeat, in conclusion, that the reconstitution of works of the past, whether musical or theatrical, cannot set itself the aim of establishing or imposing at any cost a perceived truth, but must be content with the more modest objective of seeking out this truth. The project remains in reality only an ambition. It imposes on its practitioners a duty relating to the means, not an obligation relating to the outcome. The guiding principle of humility and relativity in the quest for authenticity, something that both its partisans and its detractors have too often forgotten, is something that Gustav Leonhardt has enunciated with clarity and authority in his characterization of the researches conducted for over a half-century around the subject of authenticity in relation to musical performance:

These researches have unfolded gradually. We, the musicians, are certainly aware that a number of these elements still elude us, as regards the interpretation of the notation, the manufacture of the instruments, the acoustic conditions, the make-up of the ensemble and many other matters. We have no illusions: our goal has not yet been reached. What matters is our attitude, our deep aspirations, our idealism and our conviction (which everybody, incidentally, does not share) that only by traversing this path will we render full justice to music³⁴.

And also to the theatre, one should add.

³⁴. Cited *ibidem*, p. 5: "Ces découvertes se sont déroulées progressivement. Nous, les musiciens, réalisons certainement que nombre de ces éléments nous échappent encore, aussi bien sur le plan de l'interprétation de la notation, de la facture d'instruments que de données acoustiques, des effectifs d'ensemble et plus encore. Nous ne nous faisons pas d'illusion: le but n'est pas encore atteint. Mais il en va en réalité de notre attitude, de nos aspirations profondes, de notre idéal et de notre conviction (que tout le monde d'ailleurs ne partage pas) qu'en parcourant ce chemin là alors seulement nous rendrons pleinement justice à la musique".

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