

Italian *operisti*, Repertoire and the *aria di baule* Insights from the Pirker Correspondence

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Only relatively recently did scholarship begin to understand the variability of the musical content of 18th-century Italian opera, an understanding which emerged in opposition to inherited notions of a singular work set as fixed and final by the composer and distributed as such. This variability puts into perspective the term “pasticcio opera” already discussed in the 1970s, which, against the backdrop of the progress in research just alluded to, appears like a rather fuzzy term, hard to define with clarity.¹ Engagement with the period’s singers and their creative influence on the processes of making and adapting operatic works has further contributed to a change in perspective. If the participatory aspect is no longer regarded as a form of rebellion against a composer’s supposed intention, but as a foundational element of practice, this relativizes categories such as those of a composer’s singular authorship, of an ‘original version’ set in stone by the ‘premiere’ (in German, the *Uraufführung*). Furthermore, close engagement with the sources of frequently performed works from the period points to their modification from performance series to performance series, so that the commonly practiced principle of basing critical academic editions on the score of a first performance has come to seem problematic. The notion of there being an ‘Ur-Version’ created by the composer that then undergoes a ‘process of decay’ marked by interpolations and other interventions² does not do justice to 18th-century thought. What was to be performed was determined by success, by its suitability for the singers, and by the level of the audience’s enjoyment. The composer’s intention was secondary.

In what follows, there will first be some observations about the dissemination paths and the related variability of Italian opera around the mid-18th century, and, subsequently, the focus will be placed on the phenomenon of the *aria di baule* from the perspective

1 POLIN, 2009, pp. 325-363.

2 FEDER, 1987, p. 156.

of the exchange of letters between the *operisti* Franz and Marianne Pirker, which has been the subject of a research project conducted by the author of this article at Salzburg University.³

Due to the flexible day-to-day mechanisms and practices of the opera, it seems unlikely that it will ever be possible to analyze exhaustively the questions of who among those involved in opera (*operisti*), and under which institutional circumstances, affected the shape of an opera. Nevertheless, case studies can exemplify a range of possibilities. The fact that the singers' mobility significantly impacted a work's score and realization in performance is undisputed. For the burgeoning, innovative *opera buffa* of the late 1730s, the singers – carrying and disseminating scores and initiating performances – were of great importance. Singers such as Francesco Baglioni took operatic works that supplied them with successful parts from Rome to northern Italy, thus popularizing the genre.⁴ It was taken for granted that the text of a particular work would be adapted to accommodate both the performance location and the participants. Even traveling ensembles of a relatively stable make-up would still make adjustments, and would do so irrespective of whether the cast of singers changed or remained constant.⁵ By contrast, in the second half of the century (from c. 1760), we can observe in *opera buffa* an increased circulation of scores not directly tied to particular persons or casting constellations in spite of the interpreters' continued mobility. A plausible pattern for this form of distribution might be the following: an *opera buffa* is to be performed in City A, so the impresario obtains a version of the work's score that is then produced and performed in accord with the singers contracted as well as with the aesthetic expectations of the given city (which may have also involved, for example, legal considerations, censorship, and so on). In the performance version thus established, the work's score subsequently travels on in order to be staged anew in City B with different artists and in an altered form.⁶

We can see in this model a network taking effect without which the opera business in this period would be unthinkable: that of the *operisti*. The singers in particular played an important role, their mobility giving the network an extensive reach. Its influence was heightened by contact with other networks such as diplomatic ones, as well as by the fact that it comprehended, across genres, the opera business for both *opera seria* and *opera buffa*. In spite of some uncertainties presented by the period's communication and transport routes (it took days for mail to be delivered by coach or, possibly, boat), these channels functioned very well even across larger distances and assisted the distribution of information as well as of musical material and librettos across the whole of Europe. In their trunks ("bauli"), singers carried both arias and textbooks (one can hence also speak of 'libretti di baule') as these could serve as proof of their "meriti", of their artistic merit, and were hence of great importance in building up renown – in turn determining one's

3 *Italian Operisti as Cultural Network: Insights and Contexts of the Pirker Correspondence* (Universität Salzburg, 2015-2018).

4 MACKENZIE, 1993, pp. 256-296.

5 BRANDENBURG, 2017, pp. 21-23.

6 *IBID.*, pp. 23-26.

remuneration. Complete opera scores were and did not normally form part of the singers' 'standard luggage'. In order to acquire a score, a singer had to have it copied, and the cost of copying was prohibitive. Nevertheless, it was customary – not only in *opera buffa*, but also in *opera seria* – for soloist singers to actively support a piece being adopted from one stage to another. For instance, documents show how the castrato Giovanni Carestini argued for bringing Christoph Willibald Gluck's 1742/43 opera *Demofonte* from Milan to Padua's Teatro degli Obizzi,⁷ in this case, however, to no avail.

The wide dissemination of printed librettos that resulted from the communication routes sketched can especially assist us in following, at least by means of a comparative view from the outside, the changes a work underwent when staged anew. The broad-ranging study of the text and music used in different performance versions allows us to trace the trajectories of individual arias from one work to the next, from one performance to the next, and allows us to link them, where applicable, to particular singers. In this regard, however, we can only consider the result, as the processes – everyday working practices – usually remain hidden due to the lack of personal written statements on the part of those involved.

It is for this reason that the exchange of letters between the married musicians Franz and Marianne Pirker is so illuminating. Around the mid-18th century, both worked in Italian opera – Franz as violinist and arranger, Marianne as singer – and belonged for several opera seasons to the troupe of the Venetian impresario Pietro Mingotti.⁸ The exchange of letters stems from a temporary geographical separation of the couple due to a failed *scrittura* in London between 1746-1748. As the impresario Charles Sackville Earl of Middlesex continued to owe the Pirkers their fee, in August 1748 Marianne initially returned alone to Pietro Mingotti's troupe, Franz remaining in London in the hope of still being able to collect the outstanding payment.

From the point of Marianne's departure to Franz's arrival at Mingotti's in Copenhagen near the end of 1749, an exchange of letters developed between husband and wife that not only gives us interesting insights into the daily life and intellectual world of 18th-century opera artists, but also conveys details of the artistic processes found in the professional world. Criteria for the selection of arias and ways of acquisition are repeatedly addressed by the couple. They also discuss the possible influence of third parties and unwelcome competition from colleagues. Such exchange of thoughts is prompted by how the Mingotti troupe carried – not least in the years 1748-1749 – a stock of operas that aimed to continuously realize the concept of the "new". In this regard, generally speaking, it was the performance place or geographical space in which the production occurred, and hence ultimately the audience, that determined which music or combination of arias was "new". Exactly when the music as such had been composed, whether much earlier or only recently, however, was only of limited importance. The surviving sources of the troupe's repertoire from the given period are all, to a varying degree,

7 SPALLANZANI, 1841-1843, Bd. 4, pp. 54-56; BRANDENBURG, 2015, pp. 85f.

8 THEOBALD, 2015, pp. 21-26, 28f., 53f.

committed to this idea.⁹ Operatic works from only ‘one’ textual poet and ‘one’ composer were viable only under particular institutional circumstances, as one-off productions.¹⁰

The Pirkers’ exchange of letters provides excellent insight into the question of how such continuous ‘innovation’ was realized. The following will aim to shed light on some striking examples.

In a letter from 11 September 1748, Marianne writes to her husband from Hamburg, informing him of the troupe’s schedule and regretting that she had not got in touch earlier with Mingotti, as this meant that she would not yet be included in the pasticcio *Arsace* but only in the second opera programmed, Johann Adolph Hasse’s *La clemenza di Tito*. The latter, however, the artist continues, was specially chosen by the impresario as she was to be given a notably fine part in the role of Sesto.¹¹ Initially, however, she is concerned with the musical realization of her part (that of Asteria) in *Bajazet*, the final opera scheduled for Hamburg, and it is in this context that she first provides a view of her artistic decisions: her husband is to obtain for her the aria “Cara sposa, amato bene” from Handel’s opera *Radamisto* (I,4) in the version from 1720, i.e. from roughly 28 years earlier.¹² Most likely she had encountered the piece during her stay in London, and for this reason wanted to present it, slightly adapted, as a novelty: indeed, the piece appears in the libretto of *Bajazet* (Hamburg 1748) under the title of “Caro sposo, amato bene” (that is, with a male figure addressed).¹³ Two days later, on 13 September 1748, she continues her account engaging more closely with Hasse’s *La clemenza di Tito*: “[...] the first aria I will sing is ‘parto ma tu ben mio’ from the original, I don’t think it would be possible to find a more beautiful one, and because of the oboe it is impossi-

9 MÜLLER VON ASOW, 1917, Anhang II, pp. XLIII-CLXVII. The Operas *Arsace* and *Bajazet* are to be considered pasticcios, *La clemenza di Tito* was basically performed with Johann Adolph Hasse’s music (libretto by Metastasio). In the case of *Artaserse* the libretto was basically by Metastasio. Part of the music was composed by the troupe’s composer and orchestra leader Paolo Scalabrini. However, it cannot be excluded that arias by other composers were also inserted into this opera over time. *Il Temistocle* was presented with music by Filippo Finazzi and a libretto mainly by Metastasio.

10 See e.g. Christoph Willibald Gluck’s Opera *La contesa dei numi* performed 1749 by Mingotti’s ensemble in Copenhagen on the occasion of the birth of the Danish heir to the throne.

11 Letter no. 16: “die erste opera ist arsaces la quale parte fa haagher, la seconda ove reciterò io sarà la clemenza di tito, ove farò la parte di sesto, e questa è molto bella[,] scelta a posta acciò ch’io avessi una buona parte, o dio s’io avessi risposta al principio subito, addresso sàressimo fuori dei guaj, perché tutti hanno avuto molti regali. [...]” All the letters are cited as in the forthcoming edition of the correspondence. Publication is scheduled for 2021.

12 Letter no. 16: “onde vi prego di farmi subito subito copiare l’aria cara sposa amato bene perché mi dovrà servire nel altra opera [...]” The opera she alludes to was *Bajazet*.

13 Müller von Asow was not able to identify the provenance of this aria, see MÜLLER VON ASOW, 1917, Anhang II, p. LXX.

ble, there are none here, and in Copenhagen it is even worse with wind instruments.”¹⁴ Which “original” Marianne is referring to remains unclear as there are various versions of the opera by Hasse himself,¹⁵ although not all are extant. On 19 September 1748, her husband supports her judgement, describing the part of Sesto as “incomparable” and cautioning that the part’s arias could not be easily substituted. This may be read as advice against the wish to replace the arias and as a prompt for her to resist the possible exertion of influence from third parties: “Be resolute in the rehearsals, make your weight felt a little, make your thoughts known to Monsieur Gluck [...], he is sure to bring the orchestra to reason after all.”¹⁶

More generally, *Kapellmeister* Gluck, responsible for the troupe’s arrangements, seems to have interfered with musical concerns in manifold ways. On 11 October of the same year, Marianne reports that the “parts” for *Bajazet* – in the sense of the material sheets used by the singers to study their individual sections – were now being written down, with her as Asteria being the *prima donna* and Teresa Pompeati the *seconda donna*. Even though the opera had already featured as a set component of the Mingotti repertoire, it seems that the adaptations were so far-reaching that it was necessary to produce new scores. It also seems as if the run-up had been conflictual, as the following remark may suggest: “Gluck and Pompeati are mortal enemies due to the selection of arias [...]”¹⁷

That the selection of arias should lead to dispute is based on the fact that for the soloists they carried importance beyond the individual performance. The already mentioned “meriti” played a decisive role in the *operisti*’s artistic thought as they formed an important component of the individual singer’s “symbolic capital”. This defined a singer’s position in the ensemble hierarchy, in the role hierarchy on stage, and ultimately their payment. Conversely, the part’s rank, as well as the number and choice of arias, confirmed a status already achieved, a status in turn subjected to constant competition by

14 Letter no. 17: “die erste aria so ich sing[en] werde ist parto ma tu ben mio del originale, ich wüste keine schönere zu find[en], und weg[en] der hoboe ist es unmöglich, es sind keine hier, und zu Copp[enhagen] ist es noch ärger mit d[en] blaßent[en] Instrument[en].”

15 See MELLACE, 2016, pp. 226–228.

16 Letter no. 21: “Wann es Clemenza di Tito, so habe observiret, daß dein Part unvergleichlich, aber für die Arien ist es eben so leicht nicht welche a propos zu finden. Die vom Hasse sind schön in dieser Opera, wann du sie hättest, und just wegen der ersten war ich besorget. Ich hoffe, du wirst nicht zu kurz kommen, und dir vileicht besser zu rathen wissen als andere. Seye beherzt beym Proben, und giebe dir ein wenig Aire, sage deine Meinung Monsieur Gluck /: dem ich mich empfehl[en] lassen wie auch allen andern guten Freünden :/ er wird das Orchester schon zu raison bringen.”

17 Letter no. 49: “nun siehe meine opera geht erst künftig[en] Montag an. indeß[en] schreibt mann an denen parten von den bayazet, allwo ich die Asteria nemlich prima donna mache, die pompeati ist die seconda allezeit, dießes kanst du kek sag[en], und anbey das die pompeati die seconda macht. [...] Klug ist tod feind mit der pompeati, weg[en] der scielta der arien in der neu[en] opera.”

colleagues.¹⁸ The communication networks of the diplomatic world also played a role: the former British ambassador to Hamburg, Sir Cyrill Wych, for instance, personally esteemed some of Marianne's competitors and had excellent contacts in the Hanseatic city. For this reason, she entreats her husband not to pass on her artistic reflections to the diplomat: "Don't talk too much about the arias with Wych: he is a fool, it'll come back here in writing from him and he has a very bad reputation."¹⁹ In particular, Marianne feared the intrigues of the "fat pig" Giustina Turcotti, who was envious of her role as Asteria (the *prima donna* in *Bajazet*).²⁰ On 25 October 1748, she writes: "On Monday, the new opera, the *Bajazet*; God help me, for the devil will rage in the fat pig."²¹

Which arias Marianne herself chose for *Bajazet* we only learn in relation to the programming for Copenhagen in winter 1748/49. In this context, we can see the manifold points of origin the pieces could take. On 26 November 1748, she tells her husband that she would be singing the arias "Voi che sciolto il piede avete", "La bella Irene", "Leon cacciato in selva" and "Cara sposa amato bene". The first of these is from Baldassare Galuppi's *Enrico* (libretto by Francesco Vanneschi, London 1743), the second from Andrea Bernasconi's *Il Bajazet* (libretto by Agostino Piovene, Teatro San Giovanni Grisostomo, Venice 1742), the third from Galuppi's *Scipione in Cartagine* (libretto by Vanneschi, London 1743)²² and the fourth from Handel's *Radamisto*. In the case of the first two, she justifies her selection by pointing out that the pieces had already been interpreted by her colleague Domenica Casarini. In the case of the aria from *Bajazet*, however, Marianne emphasizes that she wanted to sing the version "dell'originale", in this case from Bernasconi's scoring, which hence may also have provided the framework of the version played by Mingotti's company.²³ Marianne explicitly asks her husband to send her the third aria, "Leon cacciato in selva". None of these arias, then, corresponds to the

18 "Symbolic capital" is a term created by Pierre Bourdieu and recently used in this context by Michael Walter. See WALTER, 2016, pp. 283-288.

19 Letter no. 30, 27 September 1748: "raisonire nicht viel von de[n] arien mit d[em] waiz, er ist ei[n] narr, schreibt alles wieder hieher und ist in ein[em] sehr schlecht[en] credit [...]"

20 Letter no. 53, 15 October 1748: "nun habe ich den part von der asteria in bajazet, und die dike sau bleibt auß, du kanst dir den lerm vorstell[en], mir ist gar nicht wohl dabey, gott wird mir aber helfen, [...]"

21 Letter no. 60: "montag ist die neue der bajazet gott helf mir, denn die dike sau wird des teufels."

22 This opera seems to be a pasticcio with music by Baldassare Galuppi and others, performed in London in 1742. The aria "Leon cacciato in selva" concludes Act I of this opera and is sung by the character Arsinoe. A single manuscript of an aria with this textual incipit in the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris (<https://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb41031018j>, 03.02.2020) is attributed to Galuppi's *Adriano in Siria* (Metastasio), even if this text originally is not included in Metastasio's libretto.

23 Letter no. 77: "Die arien in bajazet sind. voi che sciolto il piede avete so die casarina gesung[en]; e piaceva assai a hamburgo. 2: la bella Irena del original. 3. leon cacci[a]to in selva so die casarini gesung[en]. 4. cara sposa amato bene so du mir geschickt hast und

common *cliché* of the *aria di baule* (the “trunk aria”) in the sense of a successful piece tried and tested by the interpreter herself, to be freshly launched elsewhere. That said, the exchange of letters provides us with an example of this kind, too:

For Paolo Scalabrini’s opera *Artaserse*, scheduled for Copenhagen, Marianne planned to draw on at least one of her previous successes by replacing the aria “Per quel paterno amplesso” with Domingo Terradella’s version, which she had previously performed in Venice in 1744.²⁴ Her husband, however, recommended to her two other versions, by Hasse and Vinci, as Terradella’s version required two flutes and the situation with wind instruments in Copenhagen was difficult.²⁵ Nevertheless, on 13 December 1748, he seems to have sent her a kind of *particell* or compressed score to be further prepared by the troupe’s copying department.²⁶

ei[n] halbes duetto mit d[em] Haager, welches sehr schön ist. Die andern alle hab[en] nur 3. Arien.”

24 SARTORI, 1990, p. 315 (no. 2980).

25 Letter no. 83, 10 December 1748: “Knowing that you are going to perform *Artaserse* I will send you the aria ‘Per quel paterno’ in portions and the first part with the next post. I suppose that you are asking for Teradella’s version, but I want to tell you that it does not have effect without the two flutes and that I like much more the versions of Sassone and Vinci. Nevertheless, you can rely on me and you will get it in time.” (“gleichwie ich dir die Aria Per quel paterno Stückweise, und also mit erster Post eines davon schicken werde, nachdem ich weiß, daß ihr den Artaserse machet. Ich Supponire, daß du die vom terradellas verlangest. Ich muß aber auch anbey melden, daß sie ohne 2 Flüte traversen nichts machet, und daß die von Sassone und Vinci mir besser gefallen. An mir solle es nicht mangeln, du solst sie a tempo haben.”).

26 Letter no. 84: “Now you are going to receive the aria and if it is possible, insert it, because in the meantime I have come to the conclusion that it will have a great effect. If you don’t have the flutes, even if you have to try hard to get them, let the part be played by two [solo] violins without *sordini*, the others playing with them. This solution may cause a great loss of effect but it will work. Please note particularly the last rest or fermata ‘Addio’. You can never take too long as you need to give enough time for removing the *sordini* and for the *lazzo* and action. This should be the best moment of the whole aria. In Italy we performed a transposed version, at the San Giovanni Grisostomo it was composed and sung in c minor. I don’t know in which tuning you are there and you may decide by yourself which register may be more comfortable to you, but this piece cannot be transposed to any other key because of the minor third. It [the manuscript] should be copied and I hope you may manage with the actual original. You absolutely have to copy it in seven parts and on the same number of staves: 1. Violino 1^{mo}. 2. Violino 2^{do}. 3. Flauto 1^{mo}. 4. Flauto 2^o. 5. Viola. 6. Voice. 7. Basso. The *Andante* may be written down on five staves, as usual, as the flutes don’t have to play anything in it. To save paper I patched the parts together, and where I patched the flutes together with the two violins you will easily understand me doing that in order to avoid two further staves, and where I wrote *tacet*, in the extended original there are to be signed the same number of bar rests on their staves. In the second part after the *Andante*

The musico-scenic effect thus formed an important criterion for the choice of arias, which had to have been tested either by the respective singer herself or by a successful colleague;²⁷ further factors included an appropriate instrumental orchestration and, possibly, the composer's reputation. For Hasse's *La clemenza di Tito*, Marianne listened to her husband's advice in taking on for Sesto's part all arias as originally intended by the score Mingotti had to hand. This was possible as the impresario must doubtlessly have had at his disposal a kind of library of complete original scores that could provide him

32 bars are the same as at the beginning and therefore it was superfluous to write them down again, specially sending it by mail. I only wrote down the first bar passing over the remaining 31 up to the point where it continues in another way. In the new copy it should be written out. The *pianos* and *fortes* are indicated accurately and I recommend the same accuracy in copying them and in the performance. In case of any doubt Monsieur Gluck, to whom I send my greetings, will help you. But I hope it will not be necessary." ("Nun schicke ich dir die Aria, und so du kanst, so giebe sie hinein, denn ich habe es seitdem selbst gefunden, daß sie einen grossen Effect thun müsse. Kanst du keine Flute traverse nicht haben, welches du dir \doch/ eüsserst must angelegen seyn lassen, so lasse 2 Violin ohne Sordins, die übrigen alle mit Sordins davor spielen. Sie verlieret freilich viel, allein sie wird gleichwohl thun. Ich recomandire den allerletzten pausen od[er] fermata Addio. Du kanst sie niemahls zu lang aushalt[en], sowohl der Zeit die Sordins wegzunehmen, als des Lazzo und Action wegen. Dieses muß das beste in der ganzen Aria thun. Wir haben sie in Italien so transponiren lassen, componirt und producirt ist sie a S[an] Gio[vanni] Gris[os]t[o]mo aus den Cmol. Ich weis nicht wie ihr dort stehet, und was dir für ein thon comoder falle, das must du zusehen, aber sonst kan mans in keinen andern thon transponir[en] wegen der terz minor. Es muß wohl abcopirt werden, und ich hoffe du wirst aus gegenwärtigen Original kommen. Du must sie absolute a 7 Stimmen und so viel Linien copiren lassen nemlich. 1. Viol[i]no 1mo. 2. V[iolin]o 2^{do}. 3. Flauto 1^{mo}. 4. Fl[auto] 2^o. 5. Viola. 6. Sing Stimme. 7. der Basso. Das Andante kan mit 5 Linien geschrieben werden, wie ordinair, weil die Flut traversiers nichts darin zu thun. Ich habe des Papiers wegen so geflikt, und gespart, und wo ich die Flauten zwischen den 2 Viol[i]nen hineingeflikt, wirst du leicht versteh[en], daß ich es die 2 Zeilen wegen zu ersparen so gemacht, und so oft ich tacet geschrieben, so macht man ihnen im grossen Original so viele pausen als tacte in ihren Linien. Im anderten Theil nach dem Andante sind 32 tacte accurat wie im Anfang, derowegen wäre es überflüssig gewest solche 2 mahl, in specie auf der Post, zu schreiben, derohalben habe ich nur den ersten tact gesetzt \die übrige 31 tacte ausgelassen/ und so dann wo es anfängt anders zu gehen. Im Original muß es ganz ausgeschrieben werden. Die Piano und forte habe ich accurat ausgesetzt, diese recomandire ich gleichfalls im copiren, und in der Production. sollst du in etwas anstehen, so wird dir Monsieur Gluck, dem ich mich empfehle, schon helfen, ich hoffe aber, daß es nicht nöthig seyn solle.")

27 Two of the arias chosen had been successfully performed, as mentioned above, by Doménica Casarini.

with material for fresh arrangements and for the substitution of arias as well.²⁸ It must have consisted of mostly hand-written materials as, due to the Italian practice of constant re-working, operas did not appear in print. Nevertheless, neither Mingotti nor Marianne could escape the gains of industrialisation creeping in, namely, the advantages of printed scores. Both Marianne's personal store of arias, which she carried in her trunk, and the impresario's library featured the aria collections published by London-based publisher Walsh.

In October 1748 Marianne had already urgently commissioned her husband with obtaining for Mingotti "five or six printed books of arias", ²⁹ and in early June 1749, Franz comes back to the topic of musical prints, asking his wife which printed operas ("opere stampate") she already owned. This was due to the occasion of the London-based publisher Walsh issuing five collected volumes under the title of *Delizie dell'opere* (Figure 1), with – as Franz puts it – "beautiful arias by Galuppi and others".³⁰ A few weeks later, on the 19th of the same month, the reader can catch a glimpse of Marianne's collection, as she reports that she is in possession of printed aria collections of Terradella's *Mitridate*, Gluck's *Artamene*, Domenico Paradis' *Fetonte* and *Bellerofonte*, and Handel's *Alessandro*.³¹ Franz subsequently obtains for her and Mingotti, respectively, the desired materials, posting them to Dresden for the impresario and to Stuttgart for Marianne, where she was trying to find employment at court. In a letter from 6 September 1749, Franz justifies his selection for Marianne as follows: "You will probably criticize me for the music selected, but take into consideration what you can make use of for the theater in Stuttgart. I have intentionally chosen the operas by Galuppi and others who are not widespread in Italy and who are hence, in a certain way, exclusive rarities."³²

28 Reinhard Strohm supposes that there should have existed such a library of the troupe, see STROHM, 2005, p. 40; STROHM, 2004.

29 Letter no. 60, 25 October 1748: "Signor Mingotti läst dich schönstens bitt[en] du möchtest ihm 5: oder 6: gedruckte Bücher von Arien schick[en], komst du so bringe sie gleich mit, wo nicht so schicke sie unverzüglich hieher an nach Hamburg [...]"

30 Letter no. 151, 6 June 1749: "Scrivetemi ancora, che opere Stampate che tenite? perché qui il Walsh [h]a stampato 5 Volumi, ciascheduno per un guiné le chiama delizie dell'Opere pp e ci sono arie bellissime del Galuppi ed altri, che pochi [h]anno, e si può avere a parte senza dover prendere tutti i volumi. Io ne porterò qualcheduno."

31 Letter no. 169: "Le opere stamp[ate] che tengo sono due esemplare del Midridate di Terrad[ell]as l'artamene di Kluk. il phaeton, e bellerephonte e l'allessandro del hendel, ma giusto l'aria il cor mio non v'è perché ho due esemplari con l'istesse arie, [...]"

32 Letter no. 217: "Mi rimproverate forse la Musica ma considerate un pocco quanto avete bisogno per il Teatro e per Stoutgart, ed io ho scielto apposta le opere di Galuppi ed altri, che l'Arie non sono divulgate in Italia, e così in una certa maniera rare."

Figure 1: *Delizie dell'opere*, vol. 5, London c. 1748, title page and index.



LE DELIZIE DELL' OPERE
VOL. V.

A Table of the Songs contain'd in this Book.

A		Page.	Operas.	P		Page.	Operas.
+	Ah mi dividon	116	<i>La Ingratitudine</i>		Propeccatis sue gentis, <i>Duetto</i>	10	<i>Pergolisi</i>
	Amo sospiro e peno	121	<i>Punita</i>		Per quel paterno	27	<i>Terradella</i>
	Amor per me non senti	133	<i>Mitridate</i>		Perdona amato bene, <i>Duetto</i>	53	<i>D?</i>
	A fuo piacer l'agnella	155	<i>D?</i>		Per mai piu non amar	113	<i>La Ingratitudine</i>
	Ah! fe amante	172	<i>Bellerofonte</i>		Per quell istesso	149	<i>Mitridate</i>
					Paffi di bella	190	<i>Phaeton</i>
C		Page.	Operas.	Q		Page.	Operas.
	Cajus animamgementem	4	<i>Pergolisi</i>		Que me rebat	7	<i>Pergolisi</i>
	Con fervati fedde	68	<i>Terradella</i>		Quis est homo	9	<i>D?</i>
	Con fola il mio mar	91	<i>D?</i>		Quando corpus morietur, <i>Duetto</i>	23	<i>D?</i>
	Chi puo trovar	124	<i>La Ingratitudine</i>		Quando ti acquisto	152	<i>Mitridate</i>
	Chi fingere non fa	136	<i>Mitridate</i>		Quel core all arti	162	<i>D?</i>
	Chi nacque alle pene	146	<i>D?</i>				
	Cara trai dolci amplexi	181	<i>Bellerofonte</i>				
+	Che giubbilo che speme	193	<i>Phaeton</i>				
	Chi non fa che fia	195	<i>La Ingratitudine</i>				
D		Page.	Operas.	R		Page.	Operas.
+	D'un genio che m'accende	43	<i>Terradella</i>		Raffembro un passaggio	158	<i>Mitridate</i>
+	Diro che fida fei	102	<i>Dido</i>				
	Di fedelta de almeno	202	<i>Phaeton</i>				
	D'un genio che m'accende	88	<i>Semiramide</i>				
E		Page.	Operas.	S		Page.	Operas.
	E ia mater istud, <i>Duetto</i>	16	<i>Pergolisi</i>		Stabat mater	2	<i>Pergolisi</i>
F		Page.	Operas.		Saneta mater istud, <i>Duetto</i>	16	<i>D?</i>
	Facut ardeat, <i>Duetto</i>	15	<i>Pergolisi</i>		Se miro quel volto	51	<i>Terradella</i>
	Facut portem Christi	20	<i>D?</i>		Se d'un amor tiranno	74	<i>D?</i>
+	Figlio ascolta	64	<i>Terradella</i>		Sentir fi dire dal caro	78	<i>D?</i>
+	Fuggi dagl'occhi	130	<i>Semiramide</i>		Se vi lascio o luci	81	<i>Semiramide</i>
+	Felici belve che in liberta	178	<i>Bellerofonte</i>		Se resto fullido	98	<i>Dido</i>
I		Page.	Operas.		Se spuntan vezofe	140	<i>Mitridate</i>
	Inflammatu et accensus, <i>Duetto</i>	21	<i>Pergolisi</i>		Se piangete o luci	143	<i>D?</i>
N		Page.	Operas.		Se perde l'usignolo	174	<i>Bellerofonte</i>
+	No sperar che cangi	57	<i>Terradella</i>		Spera il pastor	185	<i>Phaeton</i>
	Nel duol che prova	110	<i>Dido</i>		Se spunta il giglio	199	<i>D?</i>
+	Non fo fe fdegno	138	<i>Mitridate</i>				
O		Page.	Operas.				
	Oh quam tristis, <i>Duetto</i>	6	<i>Pergolisi</i>				
	Oh dei qualmi sorprende	60	<i>Terradella</i>				
	Ombra cara	105	<i>Dido</i>				
V		Page.	Operas.				
	Vidit suum dulcem	10	<i>Pergolisi</i>				
	Voi non fa pete quanto	31	<i>Terradella</i>				
	Vorrei spiegar l'affanno	39	<i>D?</i>				
	Va lusingando amore	93	<i>Dido</i>				
	Vorrei spiegar l'affanno	84	<i>Semiramide</i>				
	Volgi a me gli affetti	96	<i>Dido</i>				
	Vorrei da lacci	127	<i>La Ingratitudine</i>				
	Un folo amante	169	<i>Bellerofonte</i>				

As can be seen from the examples drawn from the exchange of letters discussed, the form of the modification or adaptation of an operatic score depended on a variety of parameters: the novelty of the music to be performed, personal vocal skills, aesthetic preferences and artistic ambitions of the singers planning their career in a context of hard competition, the wishes and ambitions of impresarios and composers, the parameters of production, such as the musical instruments available in the orchestra, etc. The selection and acquisition of arias was subject to manifold institutional circumstances which – as we can surmise from the exchange of letters – far exceeded the practice of the *aria di baule*, of the solo number carried in the trunk from place to place. While this makes research into the phenomenon difficult, it can also serve as proof of the liveliness of the operatic world of the period, its capacity for continuously offering fresh materials to audiences, of stirring interest and hence of realizing a successful formula making Italian opera, in terms of the cultural world, the glue binding Europe together.

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